

PASTOR GENERAL'S REPORT

TO THE MINISTRY OF THE
WORLDWIDE CHURCH OF GOD



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WAS PASSOVER THE FOURTEENTH OR FIFTEENTH?

by Leroy Neff

Some of the ministers have asked about the Church teaching regarding the time of the Old Testament Passover. This question comes as a result of certain papers that were circulated that concluded that the Bible account could be explained in a plausible way for the killing of the lamb on the afternoon of the fourteenth of Nisan, and then eaten later in the evening of the fifteenth. Even this paper admitted that it could not be proved conclusively either way, and that Christ kept the Passover on the evening of the 14th, not the evening of the 15th, setting us an example to follow today.

Hopefully the following comments will make it clear that the Church teaching has been correct, regardless of the teaching and practice of Jews or others.

A part of the problem lies in the meaning of the words "in the evening" of Exodus 12:6. There are two schools of thought about this term literally meaning "between the two evenings." One is that the "two evenings" are "noon and sunset", the other "sunset and dark". The New Bible Dictionary under the article PASSOVER states that this "can scarcely be determined by etymology." It further states that the two variant renderings are "based on community practice."

The scriptures make it plain that the passover was killed and eaten on the 14th. Exodus 12:6 shows it was killed the evening of the 14th and eaten "in that night" (verse 8), not the next night. The instructions in Leviticus 23 show that the Passover is on the even of the 14th (verse 5) and the Feast is the 15th (verse 6) which is 24 hours later.

In Numbers 9:5 we are told that they kept the Passover (not just a part of the ritual) on the fourteenth day. The following verses tell of the second Passover one month later when on the fourteenth they are to "keep it and eat it."

In the plains of Jericho (Joshua 5:10) they kept the Passover (not just part of the ceremony) "on the fourteenth day of the month at even." The next day they ate unleavened cakes (verse 11).

Ezra records (Ezra 6:19) that the people who returned to Jerusalem "kept the passover upon the fourteenth" and then (afterwards) kept the Feast (verse 22).

These texts should make it clear that the Passover sacrifice was originally killed and eaten on or during the 14th and then the Feast was celebrated during the 15th, 24 hours later, regardless of later practice or interpretation.

OFFICIAL RULING ON PASSOVER

By Herbert W. Armstrong

It is difficult for me to understand why some ministers (probably no longer with the Church) should be mixed up about whether the Passover was on the 14th or the 15th of Abib (or Nisan).

As Mr. Neff states in the preceding, "certain papers were circulated that concluded that the Bible account could be explained in a plausible way" to mislead the Church.

First, let's get settled once and for all: HOW HAS JESUS CHRIST, THE HEAD OF THE CHURCH, ALWAYS PUT HIS TEACHINGS AND DOCTRINES INTO GOD'S CHURCH? Search the book of Acts. Search the writings of Paul. The Church always, from the beginning, received its teachings, doctrines and practices FROM THE APOSTLES! And where did the Apostles obtain these teachings? Direct from Jesus Christ who taught them IN PERSON. Jesus was the PERSONAL Word of God. The Bible is the WRITTEN Word of God--the same teachings and truths precisely. Some of the teachings and practices injected into the Church were obtained by the Apostles from the PROPHETS. The Church is founded on the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ being chief cornerstone. ALL official teaching, doctrine, and practice in God's Church today has been put in the Church by Jesus Christ THROUGH HIS CHOSEN APOSTLE!

God says He is a jealous God. That is, He does not allow any other to usurp His place or authority! Each of you ministers should feel the same way about anyone else jerking the rug out from under you or usurping, without authority, your place. I feel that way about the Apostleship Jesus Christ has conferred on me.

Now let me, once and for all, take space to MAKE CRYSTAL CLEAR the truth about whether the Passover is on the 14th or the 15th. UNDERSTAND this! Teach it to your congregations!

The children of Israel were slaves in Egypt, living in the sector of Goshen. Through Moses God was about to deliver them from that slavery and lead them out of it. You and I have been in slavery to SIN. It has been God's purpose to lead us out of it into the FREEDOM of God's righteousness!

Through Moses and Aaron, God had sent a number of plagues on Egypt. He took their various objects of worship and turned them into plagues that tormented the Egyptians. In God's LOVE for the Egyptians, He was showing them that their false gods were enemies, not benefactors!

Finally there was one last plague. God would strike dead the first-born in each household. He gave instructions to the Israelites that at even (between the two evenings--"dusk," American Jewish translation) on the 14th of Nisan they were to kill a lamb. This lamb was a type of Christ, to be slain for our sins.

They were to take the lamb on the 10th day of Nisan (Exodus 12:3). They were to "keep it up until the fourteenth day of the same month" (verse 6) and "kill it in the evening" (between the two evenings, Margin--

verse 6). Now was this the late afternoon near the end of the 14th day, or between sunset and dark (dusk) at the beginning? The following Scriptures make this abundantly CLEAR for those willing to receive GOD'S TRUTH!

Next, verse 7, they were to strike the lamb's blood on the two side-posts and upper doorpost of each house.

That night the death angel was to come by striking dead the first-born in all Egypt except where the blood was on the housefront. The angel was to "PASS OVER" all those houses protected by this blood.

They were to eat the roast lamb that night with bitter herbs and unleavened bread. They were to eat it with staff in hand and prepared to flee.

Nothing was to remain until the morning (daylight), yet in the morning they were still there, for then they were to burn what remained with fire (verse 10). Again (NOTE CAREFULLY!) on that night none of the Israelites were to go outside his house: "and none of you shall go out of the door of his house until the morning" (verse 22).

IF, as some would TWIST God's sacred Word, they killed the lamb late afternoon near the end of the 14th day, then they were to remain in their houses all the night of the 15th, until morning, and in the morning burn what was left of the lamb. HOW, then, could they have gone out of Egypt on the 15th of Nisan (or Abib) BY NIGHT? "For in the month of Abib the LORD thy God brought thee forth out of Egypt BY NIGHT" (Deut. 16:1).

Notice Numbers 33:3: "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 a high hand in the sight of all the Egyptians."

They went out of Egypt on the morrow after the Passover, on the 15th, and BY NIGHT!

Put this together. At dusk, the beginning of the 14th, they killed the lamb and sprinkled its blood on the doorposts outside their houses. They remained in their houses all that night. Their only protection was remaining IN THE HOUSE WHERE THE BLOOD was sprinkled on the outside door. They DID NOT DEPART FROM EGYPT ON THE SAME NIGHT THEY KILLED THE PASSOVER!

Next morning, daylight the 14th, they burned the leavings of the lamb, then spoiled the Egyptians, gathering their gold and silver. Then that night, after sunset, beginning of the 15th, the morrow after the Passover, they started out of Egypt BY NIGHT!

Notice Numbers 28:16-17: "And in the fourteenth day of the first month is the passover of the LORD. And in (not after) the fifteenth day of this month is the feast: seven days shall unleavened bread be eaten."

Now to the New Testament.

Obviously it was IMPOSSIBLE for Jesus to be crucified at dusk on the beginning of the 14th day of Abib and also take the Passover--when He changed it into the NEW Testament Passover--at one and the same time. So

Jesus took the Passover, INSTITUTING AND SETTING THE TIME OF THE NEW TESTAMENT PASSOVER on the evening of the 14th--same time the lamb had been killed in ancient Israel--but the ROMANS crucified Him in the afternoon of the same 14th day. It was the ROMANS who did their part (crucifying) at a different time of day. But Jesus instituted the New Testament Passover at the precise time of day we take the Passover today.

But by that time the Jews had begun to call the seven days of unleavened bread by the name "Passover."

Jesus had sent disciples to prepare the Passover. "Now when the even (dusk) was come, he sat down with the twelve" (Matt. 26:20).

Now Mark 14:1-2: "After two days was (omitting uninspired italicized words) the passover, and of unleavened bread; and the chief priests and the scribes sought how they might take Him by craft, and put him to death. But they said, 'Not on the feast day [annual holy day--Abib 15] lest there be an uproar of the people.'"

So notice, Jesus was not to be taken and crucified on the annual holy day, the 15th.

Now notice Luke's account. "Then came the day of Unleavened Bread, on which the passover lamb had to be sacrificed" (Luke 22:7, RSV). It does not say "Feast of Unleavened Bread" but "day" of unleavened bread. Unleavened bread was to be used at Passover, but unleavened bread was NOT to be removed from the house until during the next day--the "preparation" day before the annual Sabbath.

And when the hour was come, Jesus sat down with the disciples. At this last Passover they partook of roast lamb and a meal. But after that, same evening, Jesus introduced the NEW TESTAMENT service of the bread and wine.

After this Passover, beginning of the 14th, after sunset, Jesus and the disciples went outside. Later that night the bloodthirsty men, headed by Judas Iscariot, came and seized Jesus.

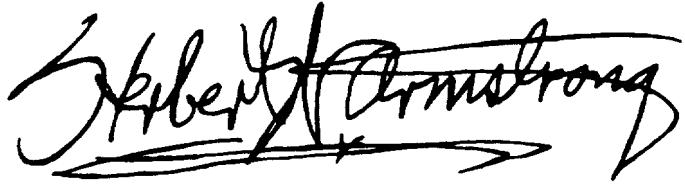
All through that night--the 14th--the night before the annual Sabbath, they took Jesus to be tried before one judge and another. Finally, by daylight, still the 14th, Jesus was brought before Pilate. Unbelieving Jews cried out for His crucifixion.

Finally that morning, the 14th, Jesus was scourged, beaten severely with stripes, then ordered to carry his own cross to Golgotha outside the city wall. He was crucified at about 9 a.m. He died at about 3 p.m. Joseph of Arimathaea took His dead body. His own new and unfinished tomb was directly below Golgotha. He had to hasten to have the body properly prepared and buried before the holy day came on at sunset.

I think this sets the record straight. The Passover, officially, is the eve of the 14th day--the night before the preparation day for the annual holy day which comes on at sunset.

God commands us through Paul that we all speak the same thing (I Cor. 1:10), that there be no divisions among us!

Judaism today keeps ONLY the Feast. They reject Christ, so could not celebrate the memorial of His death. But they call it "Passover."



IMPORTANT BILL BEFORE CALIFORNIA STATE LEGISLATURE

The California State Legislature is considering a bill that would virtually eliminate all the "supervisory powers" which the Attorney General has been claiming in the California Corporations Code (not that he has actually had them under the higher law of the federal Constitution). As you will recall, his claims were originally based on a portion of the California Corporations Code (section 9505) which became infamous when it was used against God's Church in January 1979.

State Senator Petris' bill (which is a political hot potato) would, if passed, substantiate that the California legislature realizes that there has been a gross overstepping of the law. The bill is strongly supported by other California churches and the ACLU who are alarmed by the invasion of The Worldwide Church of God in 1979 and the Attorney General's continued attempts to interfere with the Church's internal workings.

Following is an article from the Pasadena Star News (dated March 20th) which reported on this significant bill designed to repeal part of the California Corporation's Code.

Church chiefs back probe-law repeal

SACRAMENTO (AP) — A group of religious leaders, representing major Protestant and Jewish organizations, backed legislation Wednesday to repeal a new law giving the state attorney general power to inspect church records.

The churchmen were backed by Brent Barnhart, a lawyer for the American Civil Liberties Union.

At a Capitol news conference, the group announced support for SB1493 introduced by Sen. Nicholas Petris, D-Oakland, which would repeal a law effective since Jan. 1 giving the state attorney general power to examine church records when he determines there are "reasonable grounds."

The new law was part of a massive rewrite of the statute concerning non-profit corporations, which

was passed by the Legislature last year with the backing of the State Bar. Barnhart said the provision about church inspections attracted little notice.

It was under the former law that records of the Pasadena-based Worldwide Church of God were placed in receivership by the Los Angeles Superior Court in January 1979 in a state investigation of alleged misuse of church funds by church leaders.

The church has the case before the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals claiming an unconstitutional violation of freedom of religion.

The attorney general brought suit against the church and church leaders, claiming church funds are a charitable trust governed by state law and which the attorney general must protect.

It is not certain whether the new state law or its repeal would have an effect on the state's case against the Worldwide Church of God since the attorney general's action was based on the former law.

FROM MINISTERIAL SERVICES

With the Passover fast approaching, several men have been asking about whether or not children, teenagers, prospective members or interested unconverted individuals could attend the Passover service. Mr. Armstrong has instructed us that only baptized members are to attend or participate in the Passover service.

Once again several Pasadena ministers will be able to visit some of the field churches during the Days of Unleavened Bread. On the first day of Unleavened Bread, Mr. Ellis LaRavia will speak to the combined services of the Tampa, St. Petersburg, and Lakeland, Florida churches; Mr. Dean Blackwell will speak to the Peoria, Illinois Church; Mr. Burk McNair will speak to the Rochester, New York Church, and Mr. Dick Ames will be speaking to the Bakersfield, Fresno and Visalia churches.

The schedule for the last day of Unleavened Bread is as follows:

Mr. Dave Albert	Midland, TX
Mr. Greg Albrecht	Riverside, CA
Mr. Richard Ames	Santa Rosa, CA Modesto, CA Fairfield, CA Sacramento, CA
Mr. Dean Blackwell	Sioux Falls, SD Watertown, SD
Mr. George Geis	Las Vegas, NV
Mr. Carlton Green	Garden Grove, CA
Mr. John Halford	Fayetteville, AR Ft. Smith, AR Mena, AR
Mr. Burk McNair	Houston, TX
Mr. Raymond McNair	Chicago, IL
Mr. Leroy Neff	Nashville, TN Cookeville, TN Murfreesboro, TN
Mr. Richard Rice	Baton Rouge, LA LaFayette, LA New Orleans, LA

Scheduled for the Sabbath of April 5th are:

Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong	Chicago, IL
Mr. John Halford	Joplin, MO

Mr. Burk McNair

Lake Charles, LA
Beaumont, TX

Mr. Leroy Neff

Dickson, TN
Jackson, TNPlaying Mr. Armstrong's Bible Study Tapes

Mr. Armstrong is making the Bible study tapes primarily for use at Bible studies, rather than Sabbath services. He feels that the brethren need to hear their pastor speak at services. The tapes should be used at Bible studies and eventually all of them should be played.

This does not mean, however, that they must be played every week. There are often studies that a pastor needs to bring to his congregation on a special subject, or at a particular time. If you get behind on the tapes, don't worry about it. Just play them in the correct order and as often as is practical. The tapes are very important, containing much vital instruction and teaching. Don't neglect them. But Mr. Armstrong doesn't want you to neglect the special needs of your particular congregation either. Both are extremely important to the growth of God's people.

Occasionally you may want your whole congregation to hear a particular Bible study tape, because of instruction in it that you feel all the brethren really need. In a case like that it is fine to play the tape for Sabbath services. After a tape is played, it should be placed in the Church library for future reference by the brethren.

If any other questions arise concerning Mr. Armstrong's Bible study tapes, please write in.

More Good News From Canada

And everyone thought January was a big month! Once again February produced record-breaking figures all around. Incoming mail shows a 264.5% increase over this period last year. Responses to this year's special newspaper flyer campaign have pushed the year-to-date figure for ad responses 3,066% ahead of last year! In the first two months of 1980, the office has received 82,025 ad responses--more than the combined total of the past three years. Every other category of incoming mail also shows a positive indicator. Regular mail is up 61.9%, donation mail 9% and the very significant indicator, income, is up 26% giving a year-to-date financial increase of 20%.

A change for the better in the number of newsstand responses has been noted over the month. The first 32-page newsstand issue for February/March has yielded four times the number of responses normally received in one month. Since the Canadian newsstand version is now bi-monthly, the figure is expected to climb yet more. The cover featured a Canadian skier and tied in with the Winter Olympics. A T.V. ad placed in three provinces produced 500 toll free calls and gave added familiarity to the magazine's cover.

Increases Continue in the United Kingdom

The Advertising Program is off to a very good start. On the 9th of February, a new year of newspaper advertising was begun with an advertisement on page 9 of the Daily Mail--a middle class newspaper which tends to avoid the worst gossip reporting, yet without being too dry and formal.

Unlike last year, it was decided not to use a booklet to interest people and then later send them the Plain Truth, but to push the magazine directly. The feeling was that this course would prove more effective--an approach positively confirmed by our new advertising agency in England which specializes in direct responses (i.e. where a coupon has to be returned).

Looking at the ad realistically caused apprehension. Even though the new advertisement had an entirely different approach, nevertheless it was felt that anticipating a cost per response of under 3:00 pounds may be over optimistic. These worries were groundless. In fact, the results have been excellent--with well over 2,000 responses to date. The cost per response now stands at just 0.72 pounds and is still falling as the last replies trickle in.

All are eagerly looking forward to the campaign spreading, not only to other newspapers in the U.K., but to the rest of English-speaking Europe.

As mentioned previously, January saw a record-breaking increase in mail income of 39% over the same month last year. This increase was the highest ever in the U.K. up to that date. However, January didn't hold the record for very long! February well exceeded it with a 50% increase in income over February of a year ago.

These figures indicate a genuine trend toward rededication to the job at hand. And though the final increase in March is not expected to be nearly as great in percentage terms--due to an exceptional 30% recorded last year--the upward trend of the income itself seems to be continuing.

--Joe Tkach, Ministerial Services

FEAST ADVISER SELECTION

Just a reminder to those ministers who have not yet mailed their feast adviser selections to Ministerial Services. Please do so as soon as possible as we plan to print the advisers' names on the festival applications. The applications are scheduled to be mailed on April 3 and 4. Thank you for your cooperation!

--Festival Operations

MAJOR BREAKTHROUGH IN PRINTING THE PLAIN TRUTH

We have another big step forward to report in the Publishing Services area of God's Work. Beginning this month we are starting a new magazine production procedure for the Philippines PT, normally printed in Manila, and for the Caribbean PT, normally printed in Bogota, Columbia.

This month will be our first run here in the United States with what we refer to as "compatible printing." We in Publishing are very excited about this because it is something we have worked on with the various PLAIN TRUTH editors since 1971. Now, through the help of Dr. Hoeh and Dexter

Faulkner and the cooperation of the overseas editors, we will realize the fruition of nearly ten years of work. Compatible printing is very simple but involves a very close team effort between Editorial and Production.

Simply stated, compatibility means that each different version of the international PLAIN TRUTH (including the foreign language versions) uses the same color pictures in precisely the same position, the only thing that changes is the text. Believe it or not, we do have about 17 different versions of the PLAIN TRUTH around the world. All of them are put together here in Pasadena. Imagine the tremendous amount of time and money that would be consumed if each of these versions used different pictures and layouts. Well, that was the situation in the past! Now we not only have a consistent message, but also a basic approach to PLAIN TRUTH production worldwide.

Compatibility is very important to the Work because for the first time ever it enables areas like the Philippines and the Caribbean, each with its own very small budget, to take advantage of the long U.S. PT print run. Having their 32-page PT tagged on the end of the U.S. PT edition printed here in the United States saves a considerable amount of money.

Compatible printing also benefits the 32-page editions of the Dutch, German, Spanish and French Plain Truths which can now be printed in the same way; either here in the United States or at our Ambassador Press in the United Kingdom. Compatible printing will save God's Work many man hours and consequently thousands of dollars per year, and will especially benefit those overseas areas with limited resources.

--Publishing Services

MAIL COMMENTS

This week's mail comments begin with enthusiastic comments about Mr. Armstrong's "paratroopers," the teams of ministers from Pasadena who have been speaking in local church areas in the Southeast and showing the documentary film, THE FIRST AMENDMENT: CHURCH VERSUS STATE. Then WORLDWIDE NEWS subscribers express how much they appreciate the up-to-date coverage of Church news. Finally, listeners remark about how The WORLD TOMORROW broadcast continues to carry a strong warning message to the world.

--Mail Processing Center

G-II Tours Receive Positive Response

Last Sabbath we, the members of the Gainesville, Florida Church, had the honor to hear Mr. Neff and Mr. Snook and to see the film of our court case and legal action. It was a blessing to hear one of God's evangelists and to be drawn nearer to headquarters and you, God's apostle, as a result. Thank you for the visiting program you have instituted in order to cement the temple "tighter" together.

--Gary Bastie (Ocala, FL)

I really enjoyed the special Sabbath service we had in the St. Petersburg Church when Mr. Raymond McNair and Mr. Joe Kotora visited us. The whole service was very inspiring and uplifting. Thanks for making it possible. The G-II is really a great blessing to the Work.

--Lavene Vorel (St. Petersburg, FL)

Last Sabbath we had the team from Pasadena with the documentary film. Mr. Richard Rice gave a wonderful sermon on unity, including scriptures you want us to be familiar with. It is good to have them visit with the churches and bring your message to us.

--Marcheta Godwin (Madison, FL)

We had the documentary film and the sermon by Mr. Tkach last Sabbath and just wanted to let you know I think both were just great.

--Mrs. Arthur Tait (Punta Gorda, FL)

Members Appreciate Worldwide News

The WORLDWIDE NEWS is very interesting--at least we can believe what we read it it!

--Mrs. Gerald Shireman (Richland Center, WI)

The January 28th WORLDWIDE NEWS was encouraging. Your [Mr. Armstrong's] page one article was an excellent proof of your vitality. The article was superbly written. Keep up the good work.

--Michael Morrison (Ottawa, KS)

I just completed reading the current WORLDWIDE NEWS and was greatly impressed by the many fine articles, especially the one concerning the China trip and the State versus Church issue.

--Keith Crockett (St. Joseph, MO)

I do enjoy Mr. Rader's answers in the "Forum." It gives us more understanding of the Work and how to pray better for the Work.

--Mrs. Myrtle Hare (Morgantown, WV)

Listeners Listen to Broadcast

I was driving last night when I heard you on the radio. You were discussing how all churches possess some truth but no organized church is the true church. I reached down to change the station because I expected you to begin a fire and brimstone harangue about how sinful I was and how I must turn my life over to Jesus to be saved. But then I noticed that although some of your oratorical techniques were the same as those used by fundamentalist preachers, your message was completely different. I am very glad that I did not change the station because what followed was the most satisfying interpretation of Jesus' teachings I have ever heard.

--William Coulter (New Albany, IN)

I have heard you on radio from WPLD, Atlanta for the last few nights. Man, you were really sounding an alarm. Keep up the good work. There are so few that are these days.

--Mrs. Faye Goolsby (Douglasville, GA)

I heard your sermon over station WCKY, Cincinnati, and if there ever was a hair-raising sermon that was it. I wish everyone could have heard it. It surely would give them something to think about. But most people just go about their daily routine never giving a thought as to what is lurking in the other countries. They won't listen or heed the warning.

--Mrs. J. W. Warrick (Morrison, TN)