

Joan H. Richardson

MYSTERIES
of the
ANCIENT WORD

Unlocked Treasures Hidden for the End of Days

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CHAPTER 5

The Lamb's Last Passover

On the tenth day of the first month, Abib [Nisan], five days before the LORD's Passover, the Jews took their best year-old lambs into their homes as the Lamb of God entered Jerusalem.

22 The Festival of Unleavened Bread, which is called Passover, was drawing near. ...

⁷ Then the Day of Unleavened Bread came when the Passover lamb had to be sacrificed. ⁸ Jesus sent Peter and John, saying, "Go and prepare the Passover meal for us, so we can eat it."

⁹ "Where do you want us to prepare it?" they asked Him.

¹⁰ "Listen," He said to them, "when you've entered the city, a man carrying a water jug will meet you. Follow him into the house he enters. ¹¹ Tell the owner of the house, 'The Teacher asks you, "Where is the guest room where I can eat the Passover with My disciples?"' ¹² Then he will show you a large, furnished room upstairs. Make the preparations there."

¹³ So they went and found it just as He had told them, and they prepared the Passover.

¹⁴ When the hour came, He reclined at the table, and the apostles with Him. ¹⁵ Then He said to them, "I have fervently desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer. ¹⁶ For I tell you, I will not eat it again until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God." (Luke 22:1, 7-16 HCSB)

The Feast of Passover began in Egypt when God gave His people their first month, Abib. On its 14th day, Hebrews slew the passover as God prescribed, sprinkling its blood on the doorposts and lintels of their homes. That night the death angel passed over the firstborn Hebrews but killed the firstborn Egyptians.

Some 1,500 years later, Peter and John prepared the passover for the Seder. Keeping its ancient feast, Yeshua and His apostles ate the meal in an upper room as night fell in Jerusalem on Abib 14, 3790. Though He was innocent, Jesus became our Passover, i.e., our Sacrifice, the next day. Crucified, He became sin for us, like Moses' serpent, raised on a pole. (Exodus 12; Num. 21:8-9)

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⁴ These are the LORD's appointed feasts, the sacred assemblies you are to proclaim at their appointed times:

⁵ The LORD's Passover begins at twilight on the fourteenth day of the first month. 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. ⁷ On the first day hold a sacred assembly and do no regular work. ⁸ For seven days present an offering made to the LORD by fire. And on the seventh day hold a sacred assembly and do no regular work. (Lev. 23:4-8 NIV)

Yeshua ate the Passover meal the night before the Feast that "is called Passover" (in Luke 22:1). The ceremonial meal at night on the 14th isn't the same as the Feast of Unleavened Bread, a Sabbath on the 15th whose Preparation Day was on the 14th after dawn. Just before the Feast of Matzah, Israel slew their sacrifices as Jesus died. [Jews still debate the two days.]

Sabbaths are special days ordained by God throughout the year; they're holy convocations, religious assemblies. Each has a specific reason for the people to gather and rest from their labors.

The Feast of Unleavened Bread [matzah] begins its festival on a Sabbath and ends on a Sabbath. All the Days of Unleavened Bread were eight, including its *Seder* meal, Passover, on the 14th. First kept in Egypt as *the LORD's Passover*, it's fully described in Exodus 12. Its day would be the watershed of history.

On Abib 14, 3790, the priests didn't know what God in His wisdom had hidden, for they called the next night "the Passover," perhaps considering its festal Sabbath the more important event or maybe thinking the two were one and the same, but they were not. Preparation Day on the 14th was not a Sabbath, but the night before, Jesus ate the Passover that Moses had called *the LORD's Passover*. That settles the debate; these were two events.

Fifteen centuries earlier, the Hebrews quickly slew, drained, and roasted sacrificed lambs with their internal organs intact on Abib 14. God had ordered the consumption of the whole lamb, an object lesson for us to live by every word of God, not just the parts we like. As they ate the passover, they expected to leave Egypt and were not reclining at the table, but dressed to go. Its day was not a Sabbath, but its date may fall on the seventh day.

King Josiah prepared the greatest Passover of all, beginning and ending the same day, the 14th of Abib. (2 Chr. 35) In Egypt

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the Hebrews quickly killed and ate the passover on that date, and Josiah rushed to finish it on time. (Ex. 12:11, 17, 27, 48; Lev. 23:5-6)

Unlike the first Passover, the Feast of Matzah on the 15th was first celebrated after crossing the Red Sea when God shielded the Hebrews but drowned the Egyptians. Its two Sabbaths are seven days apart and are usually additions to the weekly Sabbath.

The Feast on the 15th is not a more significant day than the Passover on the 14th. The LORD's Passover saved Hebrew lives and changed Pharaoh's mind to let His people go. It's important to realize that without the Passover, Jews would not have a Feast of Matzah to celebrate their freedom from slavery.

¹⁷ And He took the cup and gave thanks and said, "Take this and divide it among yourselves. ¹⁸ For I tell you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes."

¹⁹ Then He took the bread, and when He had given thanks, He broke it and gave it to them, saying, "This is My body which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of Me."

²⁰ In like manner, He took the cup after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood which is shed for you. (Lk. 22:17-20 MEV)

At its meal, Yeshua called the elements of Passover His own body and blood; the next day, He'd give up His life for our sins. Afterward, each time His disciples ate its unleavened bread and drank its wine, they'd remember His death till He comes.

Jesus perceived all the world as God's spiritual metaphor. He grew in stature and wisdom, learning in ways no one else has ever known. His disciples were often baffled by His words; they didn't make sense to a natural man. Many others left Him when He said they must eat His flesh and drink His blood to have everlasting life, but He spoke in metaphors. Nearly everything was a metaphor to Him because He was a spiritual man. One with the Spirit, He was the Word of God. The Scriptures reveal why His words offended them who doubted Him, but His closest disciples remained because they knew the man:

¹⁰ 'And whatever man of the house of Israel, or of the strangers who dwell among you, who eats any blood, I

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will set My face against that person who eats blood, and will cut him off from among his people. ¹¹ For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you upon the altar to make atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that makes atonement for the soul. ¹² "Therefore I said to the children of Israel, 'No one among you shall eat blood, nor shall any stranger who dwells among you eat blood.' ¹³ "Whatever man of the children of Israel, or of the strangers who dwell among you, who hunts and catches any animal or bird that may be eaten, he shall pour out its blood and cover it with dust; ^{14a} for *it is the life of all flesh. Its blood sustains its life.*

(Leviticus 17:10-14a NKJV)

Following the meal, Jesus led His twelve disciples across the Kidron Valley to the garden where the Savior agonized in prayer while they slept. Then under cover of night, Judas, the betrayer, brought *a multitude* of temple guards, soldiers, and bystanders to arrest the Lord, fulfilling more prophecies. (Zec. 11:13; John 13; Mat. 26; Mk. 14; Lk. 22) It was against their law to put a man to death on the Sabbath. Knowing Preparation Day on the 14th was not a Sabbath, they chose its day for His crucifixion. At daybreak before the festal Sabbath that evening, they led Yeshua to the high priest where false witnesses brought charges against Him. He told them they would see Him *seated on the right hand of power and coming in the clouds of heaven*, and they called Him a blasphemer though He was the Prophet God promised by Moses. (Deut. 18:18-19)

That Preparation Day

After the governor of Judea Pontius Pilate sent Him to Herod the tetrarch, they returned Him to Pilate who yielded to the mob: *The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take council together, against the LORD and against His anointed one, saying, Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us.* (Ps. 2:2-3) Pressured by the people, the priests, and the Jewish legal council, Pilate stood up high on the judgment bema and sentenced the Savior to death; then, washed his guilty hands.

²⁸ Then they led Jesus from Caiaphas to the Praetorium. It was early. Yet they themselves did not enter the Praetorium, so that they might not be defiled, but might eat the Passover. (John 18:28 MEV)

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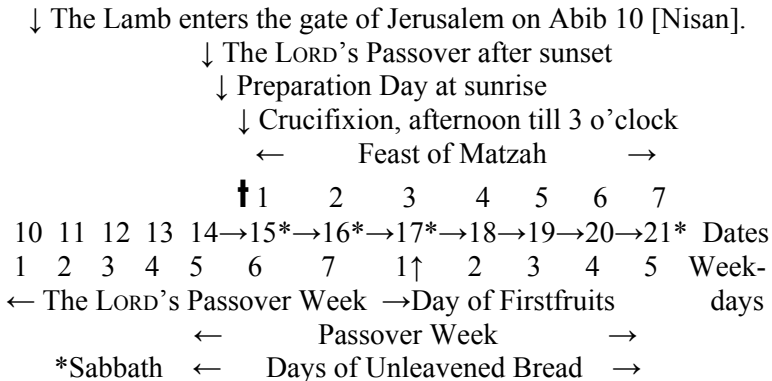
Committed to the Father's will from the wood that bore His body, Yeshua was the Isaac of God who'd provide the sacrifice: *And Abraham said, My son, God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering: so they went both of them together. (Gen. 22:8)* Like Isaac, Christ was not alone when He approached the fire.

Raised on a cross above the crowd, His body hung ravaged; His bones, out of joint. Pierced by a soldier's iron spear, blood and water gushed from His wounded side. Between two Passover meals and between two thieves, the Lamb of Life was dead. Two faithful friends buried His body in a rich man's tomb at sunset.

⁴² When the evening had come, because it was the Day of Preparation, that is, the day before the Sabbath, ⁴³ Joseph of Arimathea, an honorable member of the Council, who also waited for the kingdom of God, came and went in boldly to Pilate, and requested the body of Jesus. ⁴⁴ Pilate wondered if He were already dead. And calling for the centurion, he asked him whether He had been dead for a while. ⁴⁵ When he learned about it from the centurion, he granted the body to Joseph. (Mark 15:42-45 MEV)

⁴¹ Now in the place where He was crucified there was a garden, and in the garden was a new tomb in which no one had ever been buried. ⁴² So because of the Jewish Day of Preparation, and since the tomb was nearby, they buried Jesus there. (John 19:41-42 MEV)

Yeshua's Last Passover Week



The days and dates on the chart correspond to Yeshua's last Passover Seder and should not be confused by years when it falls

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on another weekday. The 2022 Gregorian calendar tells the story with its dates corresponding to the dates of Abib in 3790: Christ entered Jerusalem on Abib 10; Palm Sunday is April 10, 2022. Resurrection Day on April 17 came on Abib 17 when Jesus rose for the Day of Firstfruits as *the firstfruits of the dead*.

By prayerful study, the truth appears: After the crucifixion its Feasts were three Sabbaths, back-to-back: the **first day**, Preparation Day, preceded the **first night**, the Feast of Matzah, a Sabbath till the **second day** ended; its weekly Sabbath was the **second night** on the 16th and ended after the **third day**. The **third night** began on the 17th when darkness fell. Yeshua rose before dawn on the Day of Firstfruits, the first day of the week, its third Sabbath. Three days and three nights came in that order.

The corrected Hebrew calendar records Abib 10, 3790, on Sunday; the 14th on Wednesday; the 15th on Thursday, and the resurrection on Sunday morning, April 17, 30 AD.

God ordered the days as evening, then morning; but Yeshua said He'd be in the heart of the earth three days and three nights, reversing its normal paradigm.

The women stood at the portal of an empty tomb as the third night was ending before dawn, Abib 17. Mary Magdalene was lingering to weep by the tomb when Christ first appeared. Not surprisingly, she thought He was the gardener. Before He was in the flesh, He was with the Father when He planted the garden in Eden. (Gen. 2:8; cf. Jn. 20:15)

Like Jonah

³⁹But He answered them, "An evil and adulterous generation seeks after a sign, and no sign will be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah. ⁴⁰For 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.
(Matthew 12:39-40 MEV)

Jonah and David described the heart of the earth where, once condemned, they found no hope or comfort, but were cast into its overwhelming abyss. David cried out, *Thou hast delivered my soul from the lowest hell. (Ps. 86:13b)* And again, *he drew me out of many waters. (Ps. 18:16b; 116; 142.)*

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2 Then Jonah prayed to the LORD his God from the belly of the fish. ² He said:

“I called to the LORD out of my distress,
and He answered me.

Out of the belly of Sheol I cried,
and You heard my voice.

³ You cast me into the deep,
into the heart of the seas,
and the flood surrounded me.

All Your billows and Your waves
passed over me. (Jonah 2:1-3 MEV)

The issue is whether a man can experience hell on earth. If hell is a place for departed spirits, where does the crushed spirit go? or the downcast soul? What about the one in the midst of an inescapable nightmare? Has his soul entered hell before him? Jesus' soul sank as He faced our curse. They shouted, “Crucify Him!” He took our sins into His body with the anguish of our shame, the dread of our damnation, and the horror of our hell. No one would share His pain; nor could another die on His cross.

Hopelessness overtakes a condemned man, certain of death unless a savior comes beside him. But Jesus was alone when He gave His body for our sins and His soul for our guilt. The night before, He'd accepted the cup of death. As the sun rose, so did the dread of His descent. (See Isaiah 52:13-53:12) His enemies raged; His disciples fled; God judged Him as He would have judged us. Roman soldiers tortured and scourged Him with cords tied with stones and broken pieces of pottery, slashing his flesh. They mocked Him; pressed a crown of thorns into His scalp; then beat Him until His face and form no longer looked human. (Is. 52:14) Surrounding Him, they spat at Him, pulled out His beard, and stripped His clothes. (Ps.22:16) *And it was the preparation of the Passover, and about the sixth hour: and he saith unto the Jews, Behold your King!* (Jn. 19:14)

They slaughtered the passover in Egypt but never knew why; they'd kill the true Passover of God, still without understanding; thus, Jerusalem was like Egypt. (Ex. 12:21; cf. Rev. 11:8)

His Father forsook the One who took our place as He would have forsaken us. It had to be that way; He lived in our mortal flesh. The guards thought to break His legs, but He had already

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given up His body's spirit to fulfill the words, *He keepeth all his bones; not one of them is broken.* (Ps. 34:20; cf. Jas. 2:26) ... *neither shall ye break a bone thereof.* (from Exodus 12:46)

Death on a cross normally took days, but this Passover death was quick. The Feast of Unleavened Bread recalled the Passover, but everyone was preparing for the Feast. God had given Yeshua the right to lay down His life and raise it again. And so He died, not with a breathless whisper, but with a shout!

⁴⁶ About the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, "Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?" which means, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?" (Matthew 27:46 MEV; Psalm 22:1)

⁵⁰ And Jesus, when He had cried out again with a loud voice, released His spirit. (Mat. 27:50 MEV)

They laid His body in a tomb as His quickened Soul entered the heart of the earth. On another day the Spirit had led Him into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. He told us to pray not to be led into temptation as He'd been. But now Yeshua was the man walking alone in the fire. (cf. Dan. 3:25) By no fault of his own, Christ died because of sin. Slain for the fire, the Sacrifice entered its prison to preach to its captives. (1 Pet. 3:18-20; cf. Is. 61:1)

Three days and three nights passed. The women took spices for His body but saw the stone rolled away, revealing an empty tomb. As they stepped inside, two angels announced that Yeshua had risen indeed.

"The Spirit is the One who gives life. The flesh doesn't help at all. The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and are life. (Jn. 6:63 HCSB)

As the second Adam, he was a natural man at death but took away Adam's sin. He endured to the end by faith in the Father's promises. *The body without the spirit is dead.* (from Jas. 2:26):

And when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, he said, Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit: and having said thus, he gave up the ghost. (Luke 23:46)

For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit: by which also he went and

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preached unto the spirits in prison. (1 Pet 3:18-22) As He'd led Christ into the desert to be tempted after His baptism, the Spirit led His Soul into the heart of the earth after His baptism into death. *If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: If I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there.* (Ps. 139: 8)

When the centurion, who was standing opposite Him, saw the way He breathed His last, he said, "This man really was God's Son!" (Mark 15:39 HCSB)

And all the people that came together to that sight, beholding the things which were done, smote their breasts, and returned. (Luke 23:48)

He gave up His spirit to the Father when the darkness and guilt of our sins overwhelmed Him. Then the Holy Spirit revived His Soul ... *for love is strong as death;* (SS 8:6b)

Many waters cannot quench love, nor can the floods drown it; if a man would give all the substance of his house for love, it would be utterly contemned.

(Song of Songs 8:7)

¹⁷ For this reason the Father loves Me, because I lay down My life so that I may take it again. ¹⁸ No one has taken it away from Me, but I lay it down on My own initiative. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This commandment I received from My Father. (John 10:17-18)

Keeping the Law

He ate the Passover the eve of Preparation Day; the next day, they crucified Him. It was against Jewish law to execute a man on a Sabbath or leave his body on a cross, so they carried His body down to bury Him by sunset, the high Sabbath of the Feast:

Therefore, because it was the Preparation *Day*, that the bodies should not remain on the cross on the Sabbath (for that Sabbath was a high day), the Jews asked Pilate that their legs might be broken, and *that* they might be taken away. (John 19:31 NKJV)

Just yesterday He sat with His disciples in an upper room, eating its matzah and drinking its wine as He taught Passover's metaphors. Tonight His body lies dead in a borrowed tomb.

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Twilight began the first day of the week when the women bought the spices. The next day Jesus would rise as the night nearly ended. (Lev. 23:9-21) The Sabbath (below) was the weekly Sabbath before the Feast of Firstfruits, also a holy convocation:

16 Now when the Sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, Mary *the mother* of James, and Salome bought spices, that they might come and anoint Him. (Mark 16:1 NKJV)

It was His custom to rise early in the morning and cross the Kidron Valley to Jerusalem to teach in the Temple. (Lk. 21:37-38) When a multitude heard He was coming to the city for the Passover, they went out early to meet Him on His way to Jerusalem, nearly crowning Him King, but He was riding on a donkey's colt as a servant to suffer and die. Now He lay in the tomb. It was His custom to rise near dawn.

The Prophetic Past

We're living out the promised new covenant. It's unlike the old though Jewish history still impacts our faith. (Jer. 31:31-40) In fact we find, not just the past, but our faith and our future in its Hebrew words. The Kingdom of God belongs to the King of the Jews, the Son of God and son of David. Yeshua H'Meshiach, our Lord, came to save His people from their sins.

Although His crucifixion was prophesied, the Messiah was hidden in front of their eyes. If the temple priests had known that God's Passover would be fulfilled by the sacrifice of His own Son, they would not have planned His death at all. If its day had been revealed to them, they would have understood, but it was hidden; they never expected that *the LORD's Passover* was for the Lamb of God, their own brother, who'd come as a servant and die for their sins. His story was written throughout their inspired Scriptures, but as David and Isaiah said, their eyes were dimmed, so they didn't see. (Is. 29:10; Ps. 69:22-3) At a time when men were thoroughly versed in rabbinical teachings but not in the Bible itself, He came like a thief in the night.

Ironically, the Passover, the Feast of Matzah, and the Feast of Firstfruits are hidden from gentiles along with many prophetic signals at the end of the gentile age. Even so, we're nourished from the roots of our faith if we're grafted into its olive tree.

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³ For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, ⁴ and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures, ⁵ and that He was seen by Cephas, then by the twelve. ⁶ After that He was seen by over five hundred brethren at once, of whom the greater part remain to the present, but some have fallen asleep. ⁷ After that He was seen by James, then by all the apostles. ⁸ Then last of all He was seen by me also as one born out of due time. (Acts 15:3-8 NKJV)