

### DEUTERONOMY

#### Lesson 20 - Chapter 16

Deuteronomy chapter 16 is a rather expansive portion of the 5<sup>th</sup> book of Torah that begins with describing the 3 major Pilgrimage festivals, then moves into discussing the requirements and expectations of the civil and governmental leaders, and finally renews instructions concerning proper worship practices as well as reiterating banned ones.

As always we must keep in mind the context of this book in general, and the context is that Moses is making his final address to the people of Israel only days before he will die. As he stands before Israel in the mountains of Moab that overlook the Jordan Valley and the long hoped for permanent home of God's people, if there is one underlying theme that Moses is attempting to project it is probably best summed up by the words of one of Israel's most notable kings: Solomon, son of David.

In the book of Ecclesiastes King Solomon reaches this conclusion in chapter 12 verse 13 after his long essay on the meaning of life: <sup>RSV</sup> **Ecclesiastes 12:13 *The end of the matter; all has been heard. Fear God, and keep his commandments; for this is the whole duty of man.***

The whole duty of man is obey the commandments of God. The word used for man in Hebrew is **adam** and it means man in general; so in the sense of this verse it means mankind as a whole. This verse in no way limits its audience to Hebrews; it is referring to all (gentile or Hebrew) that worships the God of Israel. I point this out because it has been the tendency of Believers to want to make some laws and commands ONLY for Israel while others are ONLY for gentiles, and we tend to be pretty arbitrary about which is which. Let us always remember that God's written commands are contained in His Law and that Yeshua says that the Law has never ceased and that it will not until the heavens and the earth is passed away. What Moses is saying applies to us, Messiah's ecclesia, just as much as it does to the Hebrew people in general.

Let's read Deuteronomy 16 together.

**READ DEUTERONOMY CHAPTER 16 all**

The Feasts of Israel are central not only to Israel's worship practices but to establishing their identity as people of God. The 7 Biblical Feasts are among what the Lord calls His appointed times; these are cyclical events based on the calendar that Yehoveh has established in order that Israel would have cause to pause and reflect on just who they are and who their God is. Of those 7 Feasts three are especially important and their importance is emphasized by the command that the Hebrews are to make a pilgrimage (a journey) to the location of the central sanctuary in order to present themselves before the Lord on those occasions. Since the Lord's presence was seen as residing above the Ark of the Covenant, then to present oneself to the Lord meant that one must come to the location of the Ark, which of course was the Tabernacle and later the Temple.

By Law it is the adult males who were obligated to make these pilgrimage journeys. Their home's distance from the sanctuary is generally no excuse to forgo these 3 yearly festivals. We have already seen that all of these pilgrimage festivals are family occasions and so the entire family is urged to come but that is left to the preference of each household. In reality the family regularly accompanied the males because these were such special and anticipated celebrations that all desired to be present.

While so much of how Israel lived and operated was quite similar to how their neighbors did, the act of making a pilgrimage for a religious festival to a god was not known. These 3 pilgrimages marked the Hebrews as a different people who worshipped a different God in a different way from all other peoples and nations. The Hebrew word for pilgrimage is **chag**; and some 2000 years after the Lord mandated these 3 yearly pilgrimages a new and rival Middle Eastern religion was formed that incorporated the same idea: Islam. In fact Islam borrowed the Hebrew word for pilgrimage so in Arabic it is called **haj**.

Although we've had several lessons on the Biblical Feasts we're going to spend some time with these 3 pilgrimage feasts of Deuteronomy as there are some aspects of them that aren't readily apparent (especially to gentiles). Even more, since virtually every great happening in Christ's life centered on one or another of these Pilgrimage feasts we should immediately suspect that the timing was no coincidence.

The first feast that is discussed in chapter 16 is Passover, or in Hebrew **Pesach**. In verse 1 Israel is told to observe the month of Aviv and to offer a Passover sacrifice to God because this was the night that Yehoveh redeemed Israel; He freed Israel from the clutches of Egypt. If we were to point to one thing that most graphically identifies the people of Israel as set apart for God, and which also stirs the very depths of the souls of the Jewish people, it must be Passover. It was that act of saving Israel from Egypt and setting them apart as an identifiable people group with Yehoveh as their God and king that established them as the nation of God.

Aviv is the Hebrew name for the month that Pesach is to be celebrated and it literally means, “new ears of grain”. The reference to grains indicates the agricultural connection of this celebration that moves in parallel with the Exodus-from-Egypt connection. Aviv corresponds to our modern months of March-April, so we’re dealing with the Spring season. Aviv is also the first month of the Hebrew religious calendar year. I mentioned last week that we should not confuse the Hebrew religious calendar year with the Hebrew CIVIL calendar year that makes Tishri its 1<sup>st</sup> month. In the religious calendar year Tishri marks the 7<sup>th</sup> month (which is the Fall season). So while Aviv begins anew the cycle of the religious calendar year, the 1<sup>st</sup> day of Aviv is NOT New Years Day; rather the 1<sup>st</sup> day of the month of Tishri is Jewish New Year.

So why does God ordain this separate religious calendar year with Aviv as its beginning? Because it was the month of Aviv that marks the official beginning of Israel as a set-apart nation and the Lord as the God of that nation; Aviv marks the beginning of Israel.

Let’s recall that the reason that Passover is called Passover is because on a singularly dreadful and yet wonderful night the Lord (Himself) passed through the whole land of Egypt and killed the firstborn males (animals and humans) of every household EXCEPT for those folks who trusted Him and so followed the instruction to sacrifice a yearling lamb and painted its blood on the doorposts of their homes. Those families who did this as an act of obedience and submission to Yehoveh (these were primarily, but not universally, Hebrew families) were not touched by death on that night; and this devastating divine judgment caused Pharaoh to finally understand that he could not maintain his grip on God’s people any longer. The following morning Israel massed together up in the land of Goshen (the fertile delta region of Egypt where most Israelites resided) and with Moses leading they marched away from centuries of slavery and oppression.

While I’m sure that in English Passover will always be called Passover, in reality the Hebrew word Pesach (that is translated as Passover) does NOT mean to “pass over”. It comes from the verb **pasach**, which means “to protect”. Therefore in verse 2 where we read that, “you shall slaughter the Passover sacrifice”, what it says in Hebrew is that they shall slaughter the **Zevah Pesach**. Literally it means the “protective sacrifice”, referring to the fact that Israel was protected from God’s final and deadly plague upon Egypt. It was only the RESULT of that protection that one could say they were passed over; and that name, Passover, has stuck since Jerome retranslated the Latin Vulgate version of the Bible in the 5<sup>th</sup> century AD and chose the term “Passover” to translate Pesach.

Rabbis have long recognized that there are differences between the way the very first Pesach was observed in Egypt, and the way it was thereafter celebrated. Before I demonstrate some of those differences let me point out something that confuses Christian and Jew alike about the Passover celebration.

Pesach (Passover) is but a ONE-DAY feast that is to occur every year on Aviv 14<sup>th</sup> (or as it was later called in the Babylonian tongue, Nisan 14<sup>th</sup>). The following day, Aviv 15<sup>th</sup> begins another and different SEVEN-DAY biblical feast called The Feast of Unleavened Bread, or in Hebrew the Feast of Matza. Then in the midst of the 7 days of the Feast of Matza, yet another biblical festival occurs in an overlapping fashion, **Bikkurim** (Firstfruits) which happens on the 16<sup>th</sup> of Aviv. So in rapid succession we have Passover on Aviv the 14<sup>th</sup>, then the start of Matza on the 15<sup>th</sup>, and then Firstfruits on the 16<sup>th</sup>. While Passover and Firstfruits are but one-day events, Matza goes on for 7 days and Firstfruits happens during Matza.

Here's the thing: because these 3 springtime Biblical Feasts are so tightly interwoven, and because the feast that sits in the center of the 3 is called the Feast of Matza, it has become standard practice to refer to the entire bundle of 3 feasts as simply the Feast of Matza (Unleavened Bread). But what makes the whole thing even more problematic is that it became just as common to call the same entire bundle of 3 feasts, Pesach (Passover), because the Passover is so symbolic of Israel's passage from Egypt. Do not think that this is simply about our modern tendency towards bumper-sticker theology or sloppy Biblical scholarship; nor is it the result of gentile errors in understanding the Hebrew language. Far from it; long before Christ's era these two names (Passover and Unleavened Bread) were used interchangeably by the Hebrews. Therefore not surprisingly, that is exactly the way the New Testament deals the springtime biblical feasts. One time The Gospels will refer to the single day of Passover as Passover; another time it will refer to the entire bundle of 3 feasts as Passover; one time it will call the 1<sup>st</sup> day of Matza plus the 6 following days the Feast of Unleavened Bread and then at other times it will call the entire bundle of 3 feasts Matza (the Feast of Unleavened Bread). Confusing? You bet it is and that is why one must always look at Holy Scripture (OT and NT) from a Hebrew mindset (existent especially in the era those certain passages were written) or we'll at times wander off into the weeds thinking something is simple and straightforward when in fact the meaning is buried deep in Hebrew culture, thought and tradition.

I'll be giving you some examples of that momentarily but first let's get back to the differences of the way these 3 spring feasts were celebrated on their inauguration in Egypt as opposed to how they would be observed out in the Wilderness; and then how that would change again as they settled in Canaan; and then how the observances evolved over the centuries as the Jewish people dispersed into the gentile nations of the world.

The original Passover in Egypt was observed in the home. The firstborn of each household behaved more or less as the family priest (although that firstborn son did not hold the title of priest nor was he regarded as a priest) and so usually led the various rituals if he was old enough. It was the firstborn who appropriately slaughtered the lamb and painted its blood on the doorposts of his family's home because a) it was his job, and b) it was HIS life that would be protected by this act. Remember: the firstborn was the ONLY family member in danger because it was only the firstborns (meaning, by definition, a family's first born son) who were being threatened by death at the hand of God.

While Israel was in Egypt there was not as yet an official priesthood established (this would happen at Mt. Sinai, a couple of months after they left Egypt). Yet many of those Hebrews in Egypt had a distant memory of certain religious rituals that were handed down from Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and so followed the customs of that era by each family recognizing the firstborn male present within each household as the officiator over whatever traditional rituals they retained.

So while the original Pesach was to take place within the residence of each family, once the Law was given to celebrate it as an annual observance the condition changed and now the Pesach sacrifice and the eating of the sacrificial lamb was to take place **ONLY** at the centralized sanctuary. That is the meaning of the words in verse 2 where it says the sacrifice is to take place at the location where the "Lord establishes His Name". In addition the Levite Priests became the **SOLE** authorized officiators of sacrificial ritual and thus they replaced the firstborn sons as the spiritual leaders of the families.

The next difference between the original Passover and those subsequent to it are that the sacrifice can be an animal from the flock **or** the herd. This means lambs, goats, and possibly even cattle. The passages of the book of Exodus (when discussing the required animal) say that it must be of the flock (meaning a sheep or goat). The Rabbis have had a difficult time with this and generally have simply decided that it would be best to follow the original instruction, which was to use a lamb. Some of the reasons stated for these differing instructions are that a sheep or a goat would be suitable for the amount of meat needed for a typical family of around 10 or so individuals. But once Israel settled in the Land of Canaan it would be possible for a number of families to share one larger animal like a cow. Further the general evidence is that because Egyptians much preferred cattle to sheep, and since Hebrews (as far as we know) raised sheep and goats and not cattle at that time, it would have been necessarily for a Hebrew to buy a cow from an Egyptian for the sacrifice (something that really wouldn't have been appropriate for what was about to occur on that first Passover night).

Be that as it may the use of the lamb as the sacrificial animal became the generally accepted practice and the use of cattle was limited to other kinds of required sacrifices that usually occurred at the Tabernacle and Temple during the same time as the biblical feasts were occurring. Verses 5 through 7 spell out the need for bringing the lamb to the central sanctuary for slaughter under all circumstances but it also establishes the time of day on the 14<sup>th</sup> of Aviv/Nisan that the slaughtering is to occur; it is in the evening at sundown. Now let's be clear as to just what this means because it will lend much to our understanding of just what happened at Jesus' death and resurrection.

"In the evening, at sundown" **MEANS** towards the end of the day **BUT** before darkness sets in. The reason for this requirement is quite simple; first, this is how it was done in Egypt. Second the Hebrew 24 hour day is counted differently than it is in the western culture. In western culture a clock measures a day (we don't go by the position of the sun in the sky or whether it

is darker or lighter outside). We long ago arbitrarily established a time called midnight (12 o'clock) as the moment at which one day ends and the next day commences. But that is NOT a biblical day and it NOT when days ended and began in Israelite or Middle Eastern culture in general. The Hebrew (and therefore biblical) day ended at sundown, which of course is the moment at which a new day also began. Generally speaking it came to be defined as that instant when the sun set over the horizon AND a certain group of 3 stars became visible in the evening sky because the sunlight had diminished enough for them to be seen. So our problem is always to reconcile the western day with the Hebrew day when reading about WHEN certain things happened during the day in the Bible.

So the point of this passage in Deuteronomy is that the Pesach lambs must be slaughtered towards the end of the day on Aviv 14<sup>th</sup>, AT the Tabernacle, BUT before it becomes dark enough that the new day begins. Obviously if they waited too long to begin slaughtering the thousands of lambs that would involved the day would change over from the 14<sup>th</sup> to the 15<sup>th</sup> and the law would be broken. Therefore when Israel settled in Canaan and began regularly observing Passover, scores of thousands of people would show up at the Tabernacle/Temple and wait until the end of the day for their lambs to be slaughtered with the help of a Priest. In time the logistics of slaughtering all those thousands of lambs in such a short time span at the end of the day became nearly impossible and so a shift in the definition of the meaning of the word "sun set" was instituted. Since the Hebrews marked mid-day by the sun reaching its zenith (its highest point in the sky that we call noon), then from that point forward the sun is beginning to set as it starts to head downward. In Jesus' day it was about 3 hours after the sun's zenith (what we would call 3 pm) that the slaughtering of the lambs commenced on Aviv 14. Generally speaking it ended about 6 pm because since it was springtime the day would change to the new day somewhere between 6:30 and 7:00 pm by the way we would measure it today on a clock (assuming we were in approximately the same latitude as Jerusalem).

One other important difference in the celebrations between the very first one in Egypt and all the later ones is that the first Passover had no connection to agriculture; it was ALL about the Exodus from Egypt. Later the element of agriculture would be added.

Let's talk about that for just a moment because when we discuss Shavuot I'll fill in some additional information that will help bring some pieces together. The agricultural element was added to the Passover bundle of feasts by the ordination of a feast called Firstfruits that occurred the 2<sup>nd</sup> day after Passover. The usual explanation for this is that the first of the Barley harvest (the first type of grain to ripen in the fields) was brought in on Firstfruits and then several weeks later there was another harvest but this time it was the wheat (that ripened later than Barley) that was harvested. Technically Firstfruits was NOT indicative of the beginning of the Barley harvest. Rather the procedure was that a sheaf of UNRIPENED Barley (green Barley) was brought in to be waved by the Priest at a Tabernacle ceremony. Some days later when the Barley actually ripened and turned brown the harvesting would commence. The exact day that the actual harvesting commenced varied from year to year; any farmer knows that you can't set a day of harvest by the calendar, you have to wait until you observe that the

grain or fruit or grapes or whatever has actually achieved the exact point of ripening that is optimum and of course that will vary randomly from year to year. So the Firstfruits Feast Day observance on Aviv 16th was really more of a pre-harvest festival; it was a day to ANTICIPATE the soon-coming Barley harvest. It was NOT a time when the harvest was actively occurring and so the first of the actual usable harvest was presented to the Lord. In fact, the Rabbis explain that by bringing the not-yet-ripened sheaf of Barley before the Lord they were beseeching Him to give them a good harvest. At this point they didn't know yet what the result of the harvest would be.

While I've listed some differences in how the Passover feast was observed from the original to later times, for the most part the ritual has remained the same (at least for so long as the Temple stood). For instance the lamb is to be roasted over a fire and no part of it is to be left raw and none of its bones are to be broken. But perhaps the most symbolic of the protocol that was never altered is that only unleavened bread is to be eaten alongside the eating of the lamb and for the entire period of the combined feast days.

This gives us a good segue into a discussion of another Feast that begins on the day following Passover, which is called The Feast of Unleavened Bread or Matza. Notice how in Deuteronomy 16:8 we simply pass from Pesach to Matza (without it being highlighted); that is we move from the Feast of Passover right into the Feast of Unleavened Bread without a break in the passages. And there it speaks of continuing to eat unleavened bread during the whole time of the feast (the end 3 spring feasts is marked with a special gathering). This gathering does NOT take place at the Tabernacle; it takes place in small groups back in whatever village or town each family lived.

Let me back up and summarize just a bit to get us re-leveled. This 16<sup>th</sup> chapter of Deuteronomy is primarily dealing with the 3 God-ordained Pilgrimage (**chag**) festivals: The Feast of Matza, the Feast of Weeks (Shavuot), and the Feast of Tabernacles (Sukkot). The first is a springtime feast, the 2<sup>nd</sup> is a summer feast, and the last is a fall feast.

However I have been talking to you so far ONLY about the springtime feast of Matza. The confusing part of this is that the springtime feast of Unleavened Bread ITSELF is part of a 3 feast bundle of feasts: Passover, Unleavened Bread, and Firstfruits. So don't mix up the name given to the bundle of 3 springtime feasts that occur in rapid succession with the 3 rather spread-out pilgrimage feasts that are the main thrust of this chapter. So far we're only discussing the first of the 3 pilgrimage feasts, the springtime Pilgrimage Feast of Matza.

Of this bundle of 3 springtime feasts it is the Feast of Matza that is actually the Pilgrimage Feast; Passover is NOT technically a pilgrimage feast nor is Firstfruits a pilgrimage feast. However since one is required to journey to be at the Tabernacle for the Pilgrimage Feast of Matza, it follows that the Passover Lamb is to be slaughtered there (the day before Matza) as

well, as much from a matter of practicality as anything.

Now let me add one more important element that explains why even though Passover is not a Pilgrimage feast that it was STILL a requirement that the Passover lamb HAD to be slaughtered at the central sanctuary. God declared in Leviticus that the first day of the Feast of Matza and the last day of the Feast of Matza were Sabbath days (not THE Sabbath day, the 7<sup>th</sup> day Shabbat, but rather these were special days when no regular work was to be done so there could be preparation for the Feasts). Since the first day of Matza was declared a Sabbath day, the law did not allow a Hebrew pilgrim to travel on that day. Therefore the Israelites had to do they're traveling to the Tabernacle some days earlier than the 1<sup>st</sup> day of Matza, which was Aviv 15<sup>th</sup>. That means they AUTOMATICALLY were at the Tabernacle or Temple on Aviv 14<sup>th</sup> (Passover) or some days earlier (to avoid traveling on the Sabbath day of Aviv 15) thereby making it necessary that it was at the Tabernacle where the lambs had to be slaughtered anyway. In other words if it was necessary for you to travel to be somewhere on Wednesday morning, but for some reason travel on Tuesday was an impossibility, you would be forced to travel and arrive on Monday (or even earlier). For the Jews that one day earlier was the Feast of Passover so there was no other choice but to slaughter and cook your lamb at the Temple.

I told you this was complicated. But hang in there with me because if you ever hope to understand what went on with Jesus Christ, the Last Supper, His death and resurrection, you need to understand what it is we're discussing.

Now let's talk about this Sabbath matter. Generally speaking there were two KINDS of Sabbaths: the weekly 7<sup>th</sup> day Sabbath, and then the various extra Sabbath days that were assigned to the Biblical Feasts. There were not only different kinds of Sabbaths but also what was prohibited and what was permitted on each kind of Sabbath varied. The 7<sup>th</sup> day Sabbath was an entirely different observance than these additional special Sabbath days that were attached to the feasts, AND they were created for different purposes. The word Sabbath doesn't so much mean to rest as it means to "cease". It means to **stop** doing the work you normally do to make your livelihood or to accomplish your regular household chores. It means to stop your creative efforts. It doesn't mean that you have to lie on a couch all day; it doesn't mean you can't play with your children or grandchildren. The 7<sup>th</sup> day Sabbath that occurs every week had the most stringent of all the Sabbath requirements that even included NOT preparing any meals because that is how it was observed in the Wilderness when God fed Israel by means of Manna. Recall that on the 6<sup>th</sup> day of the week, the day before the Sabbath, Israel was to gather double the amount of Manna as normal and to cook it and prepare it however they chose in order that they would eat that extra portion (without any further preparation) on the 7<sup>th</sup> day Sabbath.

These additional Sabbaths that were attached to the various feasts had different requirements; the requirements for some were more rigid than for others. The requirements for the extra Sabbaths attached to the springtime feasts were that on these particular Sabbaths food



preparation COULD continue. Gathering up animals that one might bring on the journey and other preparations for travel in order to arrive at the Temple in time to sacrifice COULD continue. Some of these festival Sabbaths didn't even begin and end at the normal start and stop times for a 24 hour day; some might begin the moment the day changed to the Festival Sabbath day, but end by noon or a little thereafter part-way through the day. At other times a particular Festival Sabbath might not START until noon or thereafter so great was the variation.

Let me again affirm that I'm NOT talking about the 7<sup>th</sup> day Sabbath; its schedule and ritual was fixed, firm, and did not change. These Festival Sabbath days are additional days where the work schedule was modified and limited and preparation for the coming Biblical Feast to which they were attached were authorized by the Lord to continue to varying degrees. It is important that we recognize that when the Scriptures are referring to the special Feast Sabbaths as opposed to the standard 7<sup>th</sup> day Sabbath.

Please notice: since Passover, which is a one day event, and then the Feast of Matza, which is a 7-day event, begins one right after the other, we have an overall springtime feast period of 8 days. This means that during this festival period AT LEAST ONE 7<sup>th</sup>-day Sabbath was bound to occur, and depending on the year, TWO 7<sup>th</sup>-day Sabbaths might come around. Therefore the festival Sabbath days (special Sabbaths established usually for the purpose of preparation) would be in addition to the one or two 7<sup>th</sup> day Sabbaths that occurred during that 8-day Feast period.

Let's wrap up today's lesson by applying this to Yeshua's last Passover celebration. I'll only go so deep with this and will peel the onion back another layer or two in another lesson.

In the Gospels we find that Yeshua was killed, put into the rocky tomb, and arose during the springtime feast days. We are unequivocally told that He died on Passover day and arose on the 1<sup>st</sup> day of the week. We also know that there was at least ONE Sabbath in between those times.....the kind of Sabbath that is the regular 7<sup>th</sup> day Sabbath. Christian tradition is that Passover in the year Yeshua died was on a Friday, the 6<sup>th</sup> day of the week. Therefore we have established a Christian traditional observance that we call Good Friday and say that this was the day Christ was crucified.

There is a problem with that traditional Christian schedule; it is that the story of Jonah being in the belly of the fish for 3 days and 3 nights was supposed to be the pattern of the time period from Jesus' death until His resurrection. Christian and Jewish scholars and teachers.....myself included.....have attempted all kinds of ways to figure out how we can turn Friday night and Saturday night in the tomb into 3 nights instead of only 2 so that Jonah's prophecy is properly fulfilled. But no matter how one attempts to get around this problem, if as is usual we have Jesus crucified on Friday afternoon, going into the grave before Friday night, and arising about

sunrise on Sunday morning, we just can't get past the obvious Friday night, Saturday night, and then Sunday morning problem; we simply can't cram 3 nights into this scenario.....although there has been some pretty creative attempts at it.

This is where our understanding of how the feast days worked (and this is according to Scripture, not conjecture) and how the various kinds of Sabbaths worked that helps us out. But there is one more important piece of information that has been glossed over that is perhaps the key to the whole thing; it is that during Jesus' era there were differing traditions among the Jews on when and how to do Passover. In fact, there were exactly 3 different traditions all in operation at the same time; there was the Judean tradition, meaning the one that was observed by those who lived in and around Jerusalem in the kingdom of Judah (Judea in the Greek). Then there was the Samaritan tradition for those who lived in Samaria, the central portion of the Holy Lands; and finally there was the Galilean tradition for those who lived in the Galilee, the northernmost area of the Holy Lands. The Samaritan Tradition revolved around their belief that Mt. Gerizim was the place where the Temple to God belonged, so the Samaritans broke loyalty with the Judeans and built their own Temple and established their own separate Priesthood. This involved doing things just a little different than what was the established protocol at the Jerusalem Temple that we are far more familiar with.

The Galilean traditions were almost identical to the Judean traditions. The Galileans recognized the authority of the Jerusalem-based priesthood, and so recognized Herod's Temple in Jerusalem as the proper place of sacrifice. But.....the Galileans had a problem. They were quite far from Jerusalem so traveling there was much more difficult, and took a much longer period of time, than those Hebrews who lived in Judah. The Galileans had to begin preparations for the Pilgrimage Feasts (especially) earlier than their Judean brothers. Therefore they tinkered a bit with the feast schedule including when the festival Sabbaths began and ended and what was permitted and prohibited on these special feast Sabbaths.

Let me cut to the chase: Yeshua and his disciples were Galileans. They naturally observed the Galilean festival traditions (it would have been unthinkable for them to do otherwise). The Judeans were somewhat understanding about the distances that had to be traveled by the Galileans and so allowed for their slightly different traditions to accommodate this difficulty; but they didn't care for a couple of other additions that BOTH the Galileans and the Samaritans made to the Passover rituals that had little to do with travel distances and times: they added in an extra ritual celebration that the Judeans did not recognize. The celebration was called ***seudah maphseket*** and it happened as the day was changing from Aviv 13 to Aviv 14. Remember, now, Passover was on Aviv 14. Also remember that the day changes at about 7 pm in the evening time.

In this celebration the Galileans and the Samaritans put an emphasis on the firstborn aspect of the Exodus, calling to mind that it was the firstborn Israelites who were protected from death and the firstborn Egyptians who were killed. So the Galileans declared that Aviv 14, the day of

Passover, was to be a day of fasting for firstborn sons of each family in honor of the Lord saving their lives. However, they also added in a ritual meal that occurred at the beginning of Passover (Aviv 14<sup>th</sup>) called ***seudah maphsehket***. Since the Hebrew day changes at sundown, the first meal of a new day for any Israelite would be dinner.....their nighttime meal, right? For a Westerner, our first meal of the day is Breakfast, because it occurs at around sunrise, which is the beginning of our day. So the firstborn sons of the Galileans (and the Samaritans) would have a meal to begin the day of Passover (a dinner meal), and then fast for the next 24 hours until it was time for the official Passover Seder (meal).

Let me repeat so we're all together: what I'm telling you is not conjecture or some new modern interpretation. This is to be found in the ancient Hebrew Mishnah fully recognized by religious Jews. By the way, this added celebration of having a dinner meal to start out the day of Passover that is called ***seudah maphsehket*** literally translates to.....**the last supper!** The last supper title for them meant that this would be the last supper for a firstborn Hebrew who lived in either the Galilee or Samaria (they would fast) until he celebrated the Passover meal along with all other Hebrews. I hope some mental light bulbs are starting to go off.

It has long been recognized that in antiquity there were two Passover Seders; one the night before Passover and other the night of Passover. It's the one that occurs on the night of Passover that Jews today celebrate, and that Christians are pretty much aware of. However since the details have been buried deep in the bowels of Jewish historical documents the realities of this dual seder, and how the two meals differed, and who participated in them, and why, and what was served has been overlooked.

I think this is enough information to digest for one day. Think about this carefully over the next several days and next week I'll lay out a timeline for you that should untangle a lot of the mystery about the death and resurrection of Yeshua at Passover.