

## PART 2

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# PROOFS THE LAST SUPPER WAS NOT THE PASSOVER

## PROOFS THE LAST SUPPER WAS NOT THE PASSOVER

The majority of this section covers the various proofs that the Last Supper was not the Passover, with additional information that the ritual of Communion was not something the Messiah or the early believers wanted or taught. The “Template Challenge” forces various beliefs to logically lay out certain scriptural events with the Jewish template of the Passover feast. Then the “Three Keys” chapter takes those scriptures that seem to so clearly have Jesus eating the Passover at the Last Supper and shows what they actually mean in the original Greek. This is followed by the “Fifty Reasons” chapter, which attempts to group all the proofs that the Last Supper was not the Passover into a single chapter.

“Between the Evenings” explores various Jewish laws and idioms that show the proper time and day to slay the Passover, which are vital in disproving several false theories. Other important truths are also seen in this chapter. And finally we take a close look at whether the scriptures actually teach a ritual of Communion in the chapter “The Ritual—Why Didn’t the Jewish Disciples Teach It?”

## PART 2

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# THE TEMPLATE CHALLENGE

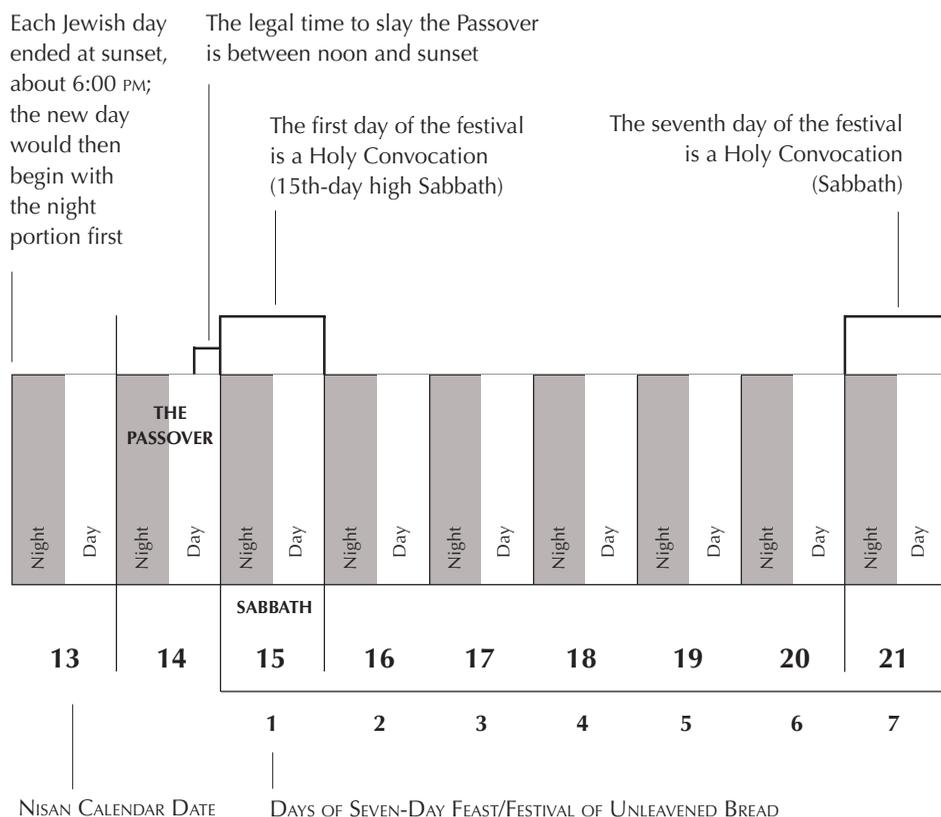
To maintain the integrity of scriptures, the following time-specific events must all align with the Jewish timeline with respect to Passover and the seven-day Festival of Unleavened Bread.

### The Challenge

The challenge is to place all 10 events into the template for this Jewish feast:

1. Jesus being in the heart of the earth three days and three nights.
2. The Last Supper.
3. The 14th-day Passover sacrifice.
4. The time of Christ's death.
5. The 15th-day Sabbath that follows the 14th-day Passover sacrifice.
6. The Saturday Sabbath.
7. The seven-day Festival of Unleavened Bread.
8. Sunday—the first day of the week (Luke 24:1).
9. The day Jesus was condemned and crucified, such that it fulfills Luke (24:1, 20, 21), which says Sunday was “the third day since these things happened” (with “these things” being the condemnation and Crucifixion).
10. The day his disciples questioned Jesus about where they should prepare for the Passover (Matthew 26:17; Mark 14:12; Luke 22:9).

In the following pages we will consider various doctrinal beliefs to see which one meets the test. The final templates in this chapter will show how these events had to occur, but first we will consider the template of the Passover and the seven-day Feast/Festival of Unleavened Bread, as commanded by God to Moses:



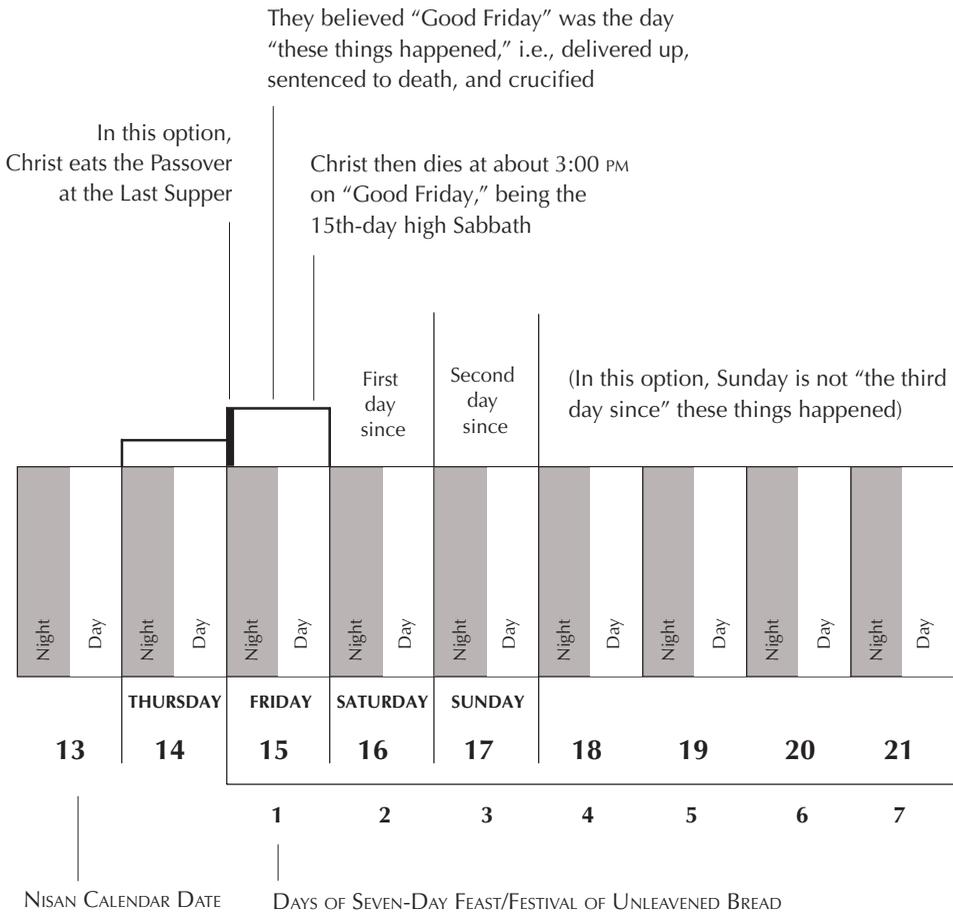
**Figure 1. Template challenge: the template of the Passover and the seven-day Feast/Festival of Unleavened Bread, as commanded by God.**

<sup>JPS</sup> Numbers 28:16–18, 25 And in the first month, on the **fourteenth day** of the month, is the LORD’S **passover**. And on the **fifteenth day** of this month shall be a feast; **seven days** shall unleavened bread be eaten. In the **first day shall be a holy convocation**; ye shall do **no manner of servile work**; And on the seventh day ye shall have a holy convocation; ye shall do no manner of servile work.

Unfortunately, three of the most popular theological doctrines—namely, the Early Roman Catholic Option, the Double Passover Option, and the Saturday Resurrection Option—all violate certain scriptures when overlaid on the template.

As we will see, only one possible option exists to place all these events within the template of this feast, such that no scripture is broken.

But first we will consider these three most popular options.



**Figure 2. The early Roman Catholic option.**

### The Early Roman Catholic Option

The first of these popular options is based on Christ being crucified on "Good Friday" after eating the Passover at the Last Supper. By looking closely at the timing of events, it is easy to see that this position cannot be true. This early Roman Catholic option does not fit the scriptures for several reasons:

1. It fails to fit the clear time-specific events in Luke 24, wherein the disciples speak on Sunday—the first day of the week (verse 1)—about Jesus having been delivered up and crucified (verses 19–20). The disciples say that it is now the *third day since* these things happened

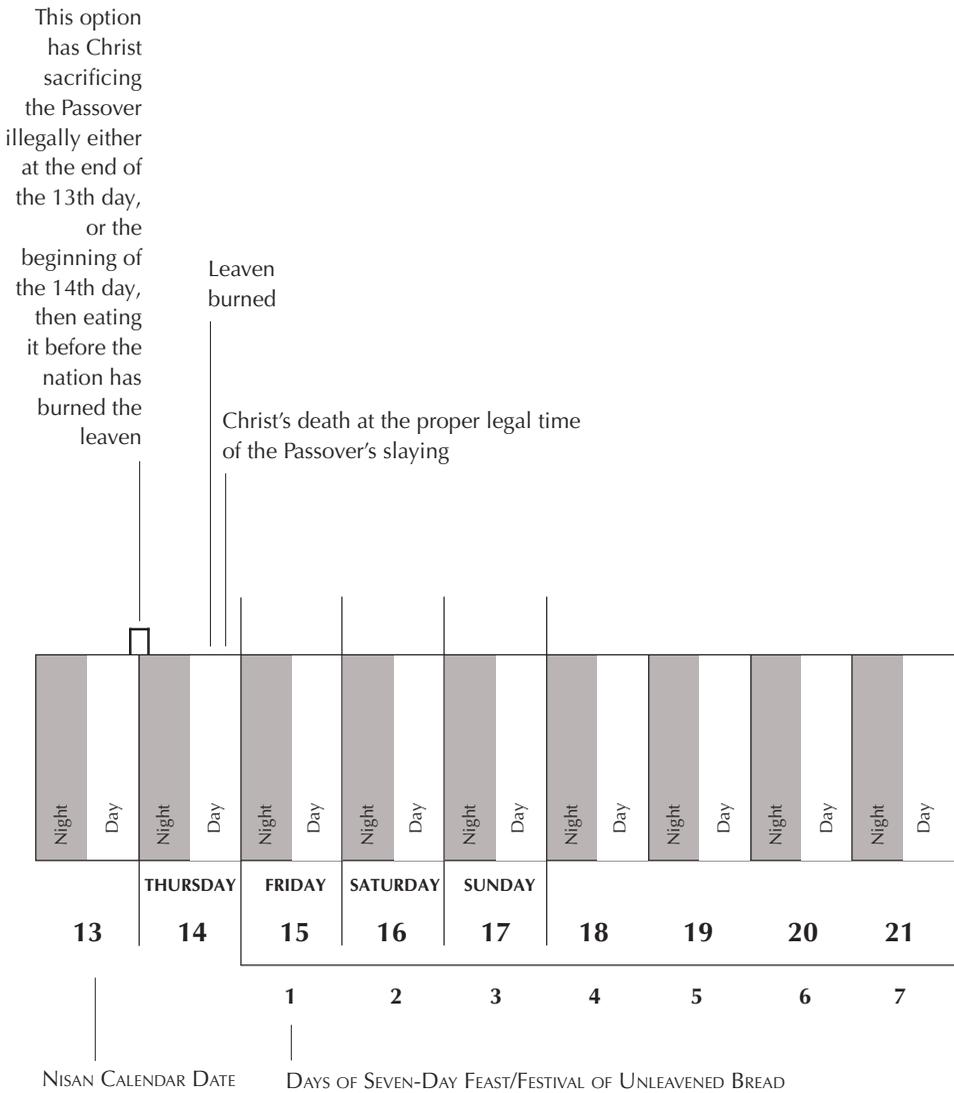
(verse 21). Yet if Christ had been crucified on Good Friday, Sunday would only be the *second day since* these things happened.

2. Jesus would have been in the tomb only two (not three) nights. From the first-century Jewish perspective, this would be the night portion of Saturday and the night portion of Sunday (shown in the template diagram above). However, Jesus said he would be in the tomb three days and *three nights* (Matthew 12:40).
3. Had Jesus eaten the 14th-day Passover at the Last Supper, Jewish Sabbath laws would have been completely violated by having the Crucifixion of Jesus on the 15th-day Sabbath.<sup>240</sup>
4. Jesus would have been buried on the 15th-day Sabbath, also completely illegal under Jewish law.
5. It goes against the almost unanimous *early* church history that the Crucifixion was on the 14th day.<sup>241</sup>
6. Having Jesus eat the 14th-day Passover at the Last Supper and believing he was crucified on Good Friday (the 15th day) would contradict God's foreknowledge whereby He instructed Moses to sacrifice the Passover on the 14th day. This option thus implies that Christ was our "one-day-late" Passover.

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240 See the chapter "50 Reasons the Last Supper Was Not the Passover" for many more proofs that Christ was not crucified on the 15th-day Sabbath.

241 As seen in the chapter "Setting the Table 1: The Jewish Disconnect and the Fourteenthers."



**Figure 3. The double Passover option.**

### The Double Passover Option

Clarke's Commentary on Matthew 26:20<sup>242</sup> espouses a double Passover option. This second of the widely held doctrinal options has Jesus somehow both *eating* a Passover at the Last Supper at the start of the 14th day (i.e., just into the nighttime portion), and then *being crucified as* the Passover in the daytime portion of this 14th day.

242 Clarke, *Clarke's Commentary*, vol. 3, p. 248.

Many believe that both are true, not understanding the contradiction that—under Jewish law—if Jesus ate the Passover at the Last Supper, he could not have died at the time of the Passover sacrifice the following day. Those who believe the double Passover concept point out that each Jewish day ended and the new one began at sundown, so if Jesus sacrificed a Passover at the end of the 13th day (just after sundown), it would actually occur on the 14th day.

However, Adam Clarke’s double Passover option does not fit the scriptures for the following reasons:

1. God commanded that the Passover be sacrificed on the 14th day between the evenings,<sup>243</sup> and Jewish authorities always understood this time as between noon and sunset. Yet in this option Jesus would be slaying an *illegal* Passover either late on the 13th day or at night as the 14th day began, then roasting and eating it at the Last Supper with his disciples. This would have been completely illegal according to God’s laws, and Temple authorities would never have allowed it, because they understood God’s commandments that a legal Passover must be sacrificed on the 14th day between noon and sunset. As Alfred Edersheim writes, the idea of sacrificing a Passover early is untenable:

Equally untenable is it, that Christ had held the Paschal Supper a day in advance of that observed by the rest of the Jewish world—a supposition not only inconsistent with the plain language of the Synoptists, but impossible, since the Passover Lamb could not have been offered in the Temple, and, therefore, no Passover Supper held, out of the regular time<sup>244</sup>

By not understanding the correct translation<sup>245</sup> for certain scriptures that portray the Last Supper as the Passover, many commentators (even Edersheim) erroneously defend the long-held tradition that the Last Supper was the Passover. Although Edersheim correctly disputes the double Passover concept, he and most other commentators do believe that Jesus ate the legal Passover at the Last Supper. However, this would then have Jesus crucified the *day after* the Passover lambs were sacrificed,

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243 See the proof for the legal time to slay the Passover in the chapter “Between the Evenings.”

244 Edersheim, *Life and Times*, Book 5, ch. 9, p. 482.

245 See the chapter “The Three Major Greek Keys That Unlock the Gospels” for the correct meaning of the original Greek and how the English translations erred.

and right on the 15th-day high Sabbath, the most holy day of the Festival (which would have been blatantly illegal under Jewish law).

Returning to the double Passover option, Temple authorities would never permit someone to wander in a day early, or after sundown as the 14th day began, and attempt to slay the Passover illegally. The Passover had to be sacrificed in the Temple at the *appointed time* and day as specified to Moses by God's foreknowledge:

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

The Talmudic and bible scholar John Lightfoot (a believer in the Messiah) also states that eating the Passover at the wrong time would have been "a heinous offense":

Let them tell me now, who suppose that Christ ate his Passover one day sooner than the Jews did theirs, how these things could be performed by him or by his disciples in the Temple, since it was looked on as a heinous offense among the people not to kill or eat the Passover in the due time.<sup>246</sup>

2. God commanded that the Passover not be sacrificed while leaven was still present among the people (Exodus 23:18; 34:25). Since the legal time to slay the Passover was *after* noon on the 14th day, it was ruled that all leaven must be removed *before* noon on the 14th day.<sup>247</sup>

For Jesus to slay a Passover before all leaven was removed (i.e., any time before noon on the 14th day) was unthinkable, as this would break God's law. The Jewish writer Philo, a contemporary of Christ, further affirmed that sacrifices were not offered at night: "...it was not the custom to offer a sacrifice in darkness..."<sup>248</sup>

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246 Lightfoot, *Commentary of the New Testament from the Talmud and Hebraica*, vol. 2, p. 342.

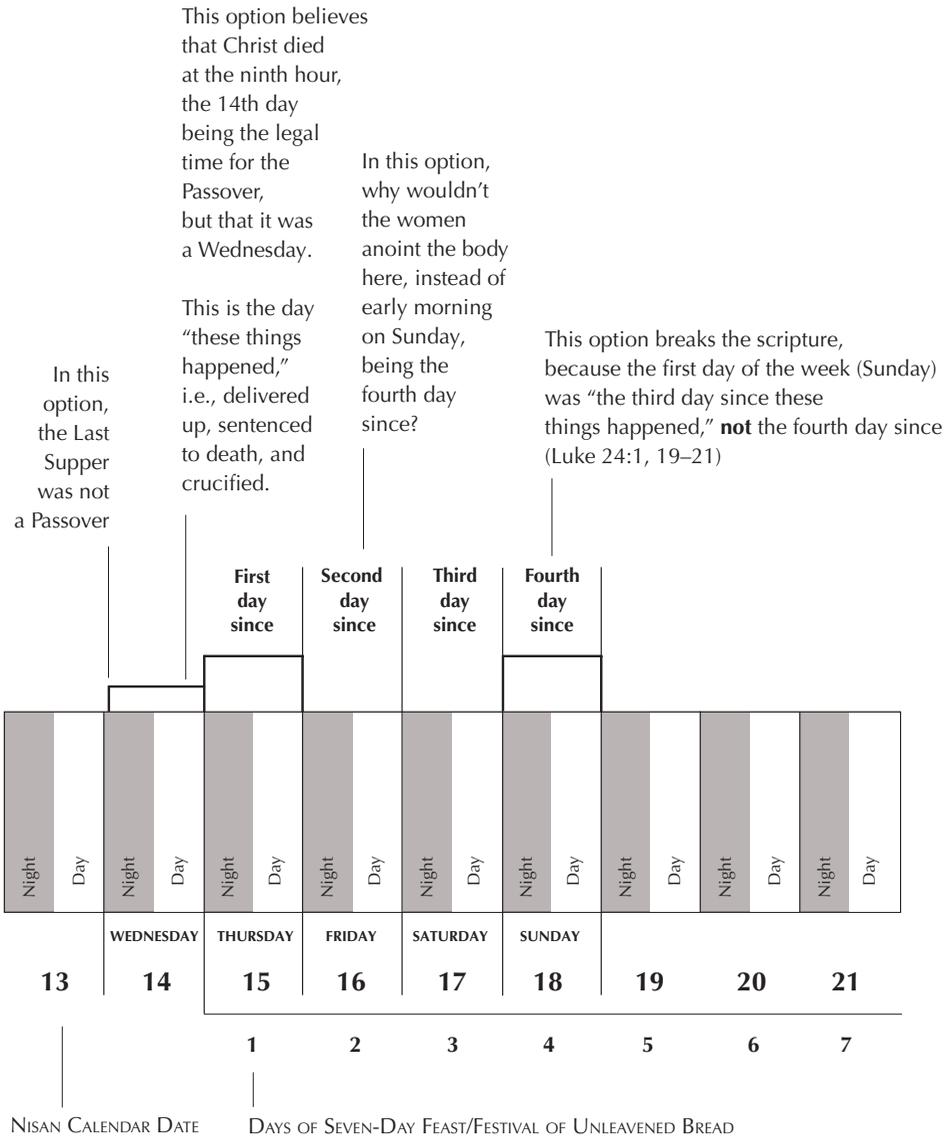
247 As covered in the quotes from the Talmud in the chapter "Between the Evenings."

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

3. All 10 scriptures that refer to “bread” at the Last Supper use the Greek word *arton* for regular leavened bread and not the Greek word for *matzah* (i.e., *azumos*). Had this meal been the Passover, the scriptures certainly would not have presented the Messiah and his disciples eating regular bread with it. Furthermore, had this meal been the Passover, God by His foreknowledge would not have portrayed the Messiah’s betrayal with “bread” (Psalm 41:9, *lechem* in Hebrew) but with *matzah*.<sup>249</sup>
4. Those who espouse the double Passover option would still have to explain Luke 22:7, which *seems* to clearly show that the Last Supper was to be the eating of the Passover: “Then came the day...when the passover must be killed” (KJV). Obviously for those who believe the double Passover option, Luke would be saying that this daylight period before the Last Supper was the 14th day when the Passovers were killed. However, this would put the Crucifixion on the 15th-day Sabbath, which would have Christ as our day-late Passover. Luke does not say, “Then came one of the days” or “one of the two days” to kill the Passover, but “**the day**,” showing that there was one day to sacrifice the Passovers. (In the “Three Keys” chapter, Luke 22:7 is explained using the accepted rules of Greek grammar.) If adherents to Adam Clarke’s double Passover version don’t agree, they would still have to explain the verse without breaking the scripture.
5. To slay a Passover before noon on the 14th day would have been an illegal sacrifice. As we saw in Course 1, even a high priest would be whipped if he were to eat meat from a sacrifice slaughtered illegally (referred to as “piggul”). Yet this double Passover option would have us believe that after Jesus and his disciples slaughtered an illegal Passover on the 13th day (or in the darkness of the 14th day), they then ate from that illegal sacrifice at the Last Supper. Are we to believe that the powerful Jewish Temple authorities would soundly whip their own high priest for doing this, but for Jesus and his disciples, they would just wink and let it go?

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249 See the section “Last Supper Prophecy, Betrayed with Bread” in “Course 1: Last Supper Ritual or Parable?”



**Figure 4. The Saturday Resurrection option.**

### The Saturday Resurrection Option

The third widely held doctrinal option assumes a Saturday Resurrection and usually teaches a Wednesday Crucifixion (which in this belief was the 14th day that year). The Saturday Resurrection option is popular among those who understand Jewish

law concerning the point that Jesus would never have been crucified on the 15th-day high Sabbath.

But here is why this option does not fit the scriptures:

1. *No early historian even mentions a Saturday Resurrection*, because all sides in the early disputes agreed on the Sunday Resurrection. The Messianic Fourteenthers<sup>250</sup> wrote of a Sunday Resurrection, as did those called Church Fathers in Rome. Although the early Fourteenthers disputed the Roman concept of a 15th-day Crucifixion, both sides in these early doctrinal disputes wrote of and agreed on the Sunday Resurrection.
2. Paul called Jesus the “first fruits” because his Resurrection on Sunday (the *morrow of the Sabbath*) fulfilled this offering (Leviticus 23:10–14; 1 Corinthians 15:20, 23). Early church writer Clement of Alexandria, a Fourteenthers,<sup>251</sup> wrote that the Resurrection was on the morrow of the Sabbath (i.e., Sunday), when the priest was to offer up this sheaf of the first fruits. In the following quote Clement shows how Christ fulfilled this offering: “He certainly rose on the third day, which fell on the first day of the weeks of harvest, on which the law prescribed that the priest should offer up the sheaf.”<sup>252</sup> Forcing a Saturday Sabbath Resurrection would render Christ as our “day-early first-fruits” offering.
3. Those who teach this Saturday Resurrection usually believe in a Wednesday Crucifixion, but this would make Sunday the *fourth day since* Jesus was delivered up, condemned, and crucified instead of the *third day since* “these things” happened (Luke 24:1, 19–21; John 20:1). This Saturday option cannot fit the scriptures, and the Messiah said the scriptures cannot be broken (John 10:35). There is no Greek variant in these verses that would change this timing.
4. Some say that the Saturday Resurrection is the only way to fulfill the three days and three nights *exactly* by having the Messiah resurrected late Saturday afternoon, exactly 72 hours after he entered the “heart of the earth” (Matthew 12:40). But the Jews did not have stopwatches or

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250 See the chapter “Setting the Table 1: The Jewish Disconnect and the Fourteenthers.”

251 Meaning he understood that Jesus was crucified on the 14th day.

252 Roberts and Donaldson, *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, vol. 2, p. 581. The full quote containing additional important information can be found later this chapter in “The 13th-Day Question” subsection.

atomic clocks to mark exact times, so when Jesus said “three days and three nights,” he did not mean *exactly* 72 hours to the minute. In Old Testament interpretation, even a portion of a day or night counted as the whole day (such as for ritual cleansings). Jesus said he would be in the “heart of the earth” for three days and three nights just as Jonah was in the whale, and no proof exists that Jonah fulfilled this timing to the exact minute.

5. This option rejects Mark 16:9, which states (in Greek) that Jesus arose early on the first day of the week—our Sunday. Also, if Jesus had arisen on Saturday, why would he have waited more than twelve hours (until the following day) to reveal himself? Some say that the scripture in Matthew 28:1, translated as “in the end of the Sabbath” by the King James Version, shows a Saturday Resurrection. But the Greek actually says “*after* the Sabbaths,” with the plural “Sabbaths” probably referring to the 15-day Sabbath (Friday that year) and the Saturday Sabbath that followed it.
6. Luke 24:1 and John 20:1 show Mary Magdalene and the others leaving very early in the morning (while it was still dark) with spices to anoint the body. If Jesus had been crucified on Wednesday, why would these women have risen and left home in the darkness of Sunday morning when they had all day Friday to complete this task? After all, if the 14th-day Crucifixion was Wednesday and the 15th-day Sabbath was Thursday, then Friday would not have been a Sabbath—and that would have been the obvious time to anoint the body, rather than waiting until the fourth day when decay would have set in.
7. Mark 16:1 specifies that the women “bought” the spices and were now coming to anoint the body. Therefore, they probably purchased the spices right after the Crucifixion (as Thursday the 14th day was ending) and before the 15th-day high Sabbath set in, as Luke makes clear (23:55, 56). It would also have been legal to make this purchase anytime after sundown of the Saturday Sabbath.
8. The proof for the Sunday Resurrection is quite strong; it is the only possible way to fit the template challenge, whereby all the scriptural time keys harmonize and make sense (as we will see in the template “Sunday, the Third Day Since”). While it is true that when Mary Magdalene

and the others arrived early Sunday morning, Jesus had already arisen, it must be remembered that anytime *after sundown on Saturday* would then be Sunday.

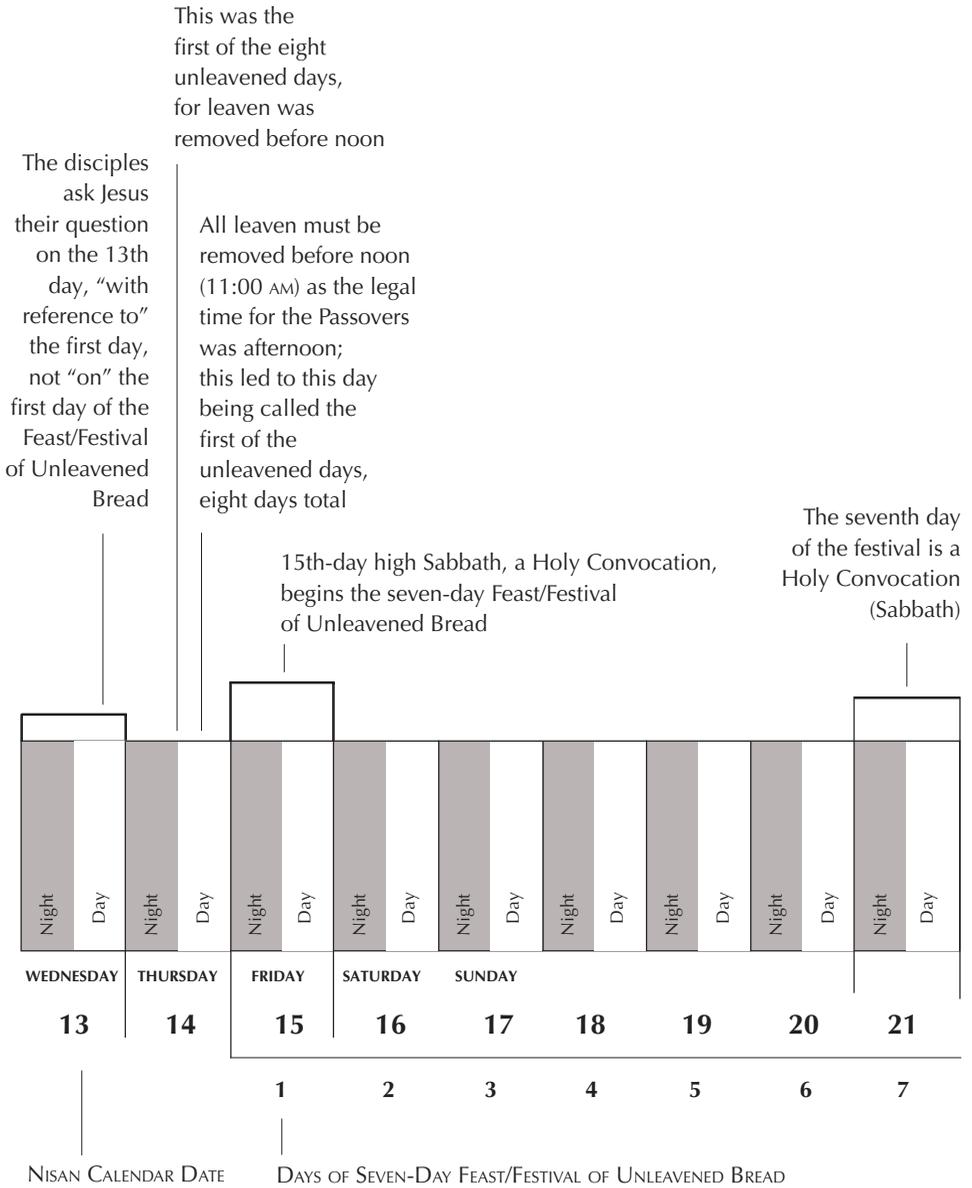
9. Any option that does *not* have Jesus eating the Passover at the Last Supper would still have to explain Matthew 26:17, Mark 14:12, and Luke 22:7, which on the surface *appear* to show it was the Passover. The “Three Major Greek Keys That Unlock the Gospels” chapter lists what I believe is the proper way to interpret these scriptures, using the accepted rules of Greek grammar.

### **The True Scriptural Option**

Up to now we have looked at the three widely held positions and seen that none of them aligns properly with the scriptures:

1. Early Roman Catholic option
2. Double Passover option
3. Saturday Resurrection option

So here we turn to the one true scriptural option that fits the template for this Israelite feast. The following is a day-by-day explanation (beginning with the 13th day) to show the only way for all the time-specific events listed at the beginning of this chapter to fit the template.



**Figure 5. The true scriptural option: the 13th-day question.**

***The 13th-Day Question***

To properly locate the Last Supper on the template, one has to decide which day it was that the disciples asked their question about making preparations for Passover—for it was later this evening that they gathered for what would be the Messiah’s final meal. The only possible way to have the 10 time-specific events fit into the template, such that the Crucifixion of Jesus happens on the 14th day and fulfills the Passover

sacrifice, is if the disciples asked this question on the 13th day. The Last Supper (which happened later this evening) would therefore not have been a Passover, especially since the Messiah ate regular leavened bread at this meal. (A subsequent chapter details more than 50 such proofs<sup>253</sup> that the Last Supper was not the Passover, notwithstanding the English translations that *appear* to show that it was.)

Therefore, it was on the 13th day of this month that the disciples asked Jesus where to make the necessary preparations<sup>254</sup> for the impending Passover:

<sup>NIV</sup> Matthew 26:17 **On** the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, the disciples came to Jesus and asked, “Where do you want us to **make preparations** for you to eat the Passover?”

<sup>GNT</sup> Matthew 26:17 Τῇ δὲ πρώτῃ τῶν ἀζύμων προσῆλθον οἱ μαθηταὶ τῷ Ἰησοῦ λέγοντες, Ποῦ θέλεις ἐτοιμάσωμέν σοι φαγεῖν τὸ πάσχα;

Let us examine what this verse truly says, since the original meaning of the Greek has been altered by most English translations.

This particular translation says it was “On” the first day that the disciples came asking their question. In the Greek, however, the article Τῇ (translated here as “On”) does not actually mean “On” the first day in this case but rather “To” the first day. In English this Greek dative should be translated as “With reference to”<sup>255</sup> the first day. Since the deadline for ritual purification is drawing close, the disciples are very concerned *with reference to* the first day, since under Jewish law they need to be ritually prepared before the Passover sacrifice arrives.

The next point concerns two words that have been *added* to the English translation. Neither “Feast” nor “Bread” appears in the Greek of this scripture; Matthew 26:17 just says “first of the unleavened.” The English is misleading because the *first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread* is actually the 15th day—the first day of this seven-day Festival. In contrast, the *first of the unleavened* is the 14th day, because all traces of leaven had to be removed before noon<sup>256</sup> on this Passover day.

So this verse really means that they are now in the 13th day of Nisan, and the Lord has yet to direct his disciples about required preparations (such as finding a location, removing leaven, etc.) for the next day (the 14th-day Passover).

253 See the chapter “50 Reasons the Last Supper Was Not the Passover.”

254 The chapter “The Three Major Greek Keys That Unlock the Gospels” further explores what the phrase “make preparations” means in the first-century Jewish idiom.

255 This Greek dative and why it should be translated “with reference to” is fully covered in the section “Dative of Reference” in the chapter “The Three Major Greek Keys That Unlock the Gospels.”

256 See the chapter “Between the Evenings” for this historical proof.

The English translations cause confusion when they say it was “*on* the first day” instead of “*with reference to* the first day” that the disciples came to Jesus with their question. In the Jewish idiom, the 14th day was often called the “first” of the unleavened because on this day leaven was removed before noon. When combined with the seven-day Feast of Unleavened Bread, this made eight days of unleavened.

Josephus likewise refers to this whole festival as having eight<sup>257</sup> days of unleavened.<sup>258</sup>

Luke also aligns, showing that the 14th day (when the Passovers were sacrificed) was considered one of the eight unleavened days:

DBY Luke 22:7 And **the day of unleavened** bread came, in which the passover was to be killed.<sup>259</sup>

Mark, too, makes it clear that the 14th day (when the Passover was sacrificed) was the **first** of these eight days of unleavened:

NAS Mark 14:12 And **on**<sup>260</sup> the **first day of Unleavened Bread, when the Passover lamb was being sacrificed**, His disciples said to Him, “Where do You want us to go and prepare for You to eat the Passover?”



In both Hebrew and Greek, the word “first” can also be translated as “previous.” The Talmud makes it clear that when God called the 14th day the “first” day (Exodus

257 Some say that Josephus is referring to the rabbinic custom of adding a second day to certain festival high Sabbath days (thus making eight days for Passover), but this is not accurate. Although scripture proclaimed *one day* for the Festival Sabbaths, later history shows that (probably after Rome destroyed the Temple) the rabbis proclaimed that those in the Diaspora were to keep certain Festival holy days for *two days*. This was to avoid desecrating the Sabbath, for those in outlying areas would have no way of knowing which day had been determined by the Sanhedrin as the first of the month (i.e., the new moon, which was always either 29 or 30 days after the previous new moon). Therefore they might not have known which was the 15th-day Sabbath of Passover, so an additional day was to be kept by those in distant locations. However, an extra day was never added in Jerusalem while the Temple existed, so it has no bearing on this Last Supper controversy. Rather, Josephus is counting the 14th day together with the seven-day Festival, which makes eight unleavened days.

258 Whiston, *The New Complete Works of Josephus*, “Jewish Antiquities,” 2.15.1, p. 107.

259 Although Luke 22:7 is another scripture that seems to show that the disciples asked this question on the 14th day, it is another of the scriptures that will be correctly interpreted in the chapter “The Three Major Greek Keys That Unlock the Gospels.”

260 The Greek word translated as “on” here is also a dative of reference and should have been translated as “with reference to” or “concerning.” See “The Three Major Greek Keys That Unlock the Gospels” chapter for more on this.

12:15, the day to remove the leaven), He did not mean the *first* of the seven-day Feast of Unleavened Bread, for if you waited until the 15th day to remove the leaven you would have already broken the law to have no leaven during the seven-day Festival. Therefore the obvious way to understand “first” here is “previous”—the day *preceding* the Feast (i.e., the 14th day):

GEMARA: We see thus, that at the **commencement of the sixth hour**, all agree, Chometz<sup>261</sup> must be burned. Whence do we adduce this? Said Abayi: From two passages, viz. [Exod. xii. 19]: “Seven days no leaven shall be found in your houses,” and [ibid. 15]: “But on the **first day** ye shall have put away leaven out of your houses.” According to this, then, on the **first day** there would still be leaven in the house and this would be contrary to the ordinance of the first passage? Hence we must say, that by “the first day” is meant **the day preceding the festival. Then why say the sixth hour?** Say that already early in the morning of the day preceding the festival (leaven should be burned). The word “but” with which the passage commences divides the day into two parts, so that in the morning leavened bread may be eaten **while in the afternoon it must not.**<sup>262</sup>

They continue by explaining that Exodus 34:25 is God’s directive of why leaven had to be removed by noon of the 14th day (called the “first” day):

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

Rabha said: “The reason may be inferred from the passage [Exod. xxxiv. 25]: ‘**Thou shalt not offer the blood of my sacrifice with leaven;** neither shall be left unto the morning the sacrifice of the feast of the passover,’ **which signifies, that the Passover sacrifice must not be offered up as long as there is yet leaven.**” If that be the case, then it might be said that the leaven should be burned by each man immediately before offering his passover sacrifice; **why designate the sixth hour? The passage means to state,**

261 “Chometz” refers to that which is fermented or leavened.

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

**that when the *time* for the Passover sacrifice arrives, there must no longer be any leaven on hand.**<sup>263</sup>

And now a quote from early church writer and Fourteenth Clement of Alexandria (ca. AD 150 to ca. AD 215), where he describes how the disciples asked their question of Jesus on the **13th day**:

From the Last Work on the Passover, quoted in the *Paschal Chronicle*:

Accordingly, in the years gone by, Jesus went to eat the Passover sacrificed by the Jews, keeping the feast. But when he had preached He who was the Passover, the Lamb of God, led as a sheep to the slaughter, presently taught His disciples the mystery of the type **on the thirteenth day, on which also they inquired**, “Where wilt Thou that we prepare for Thee to eat the passover?” It was on this day, then, that both the consecration of the unleavened bread and the preparation for the feast took place. Whence John naturally describes the disciples as already previously prepared to have their feet washed by the Lord. And on the **following day our Saviour suffered, He who was the Passover**, propitiously sacrificed by the Jews.

Clement continues, and shows that Christ suffered on the 14th day:

Suitably, therefore, **to the fourteenth day, on which He also suffered**, in the morning, the chief priests and the scribes, who brought Him to Pilate, did not enter the Praetorium, that they might not be defiled, but might freely **eat the passover** in the evening. With this precise determination of the days both **the whole Scriptures agree, and the Gospels harmonize. The resurrection also attests it.** He certainly rose on the third day, which fell on the first day of the weeks of harvest, on which the law prescribed that the priest should offer up the sheaf.<sup>264</sup>

John also makes it clear that the disciples came to Jesus on the 13th day when he shows that the day *after* the disciples asked their question was the Crucifixion (the

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

264 Roberts and Donaldson, *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, vol. 2, p. 581.

14th day). We know this because on this Crucifixion day the Jewish guards were concerned with the purification required so they could eat the Passover:

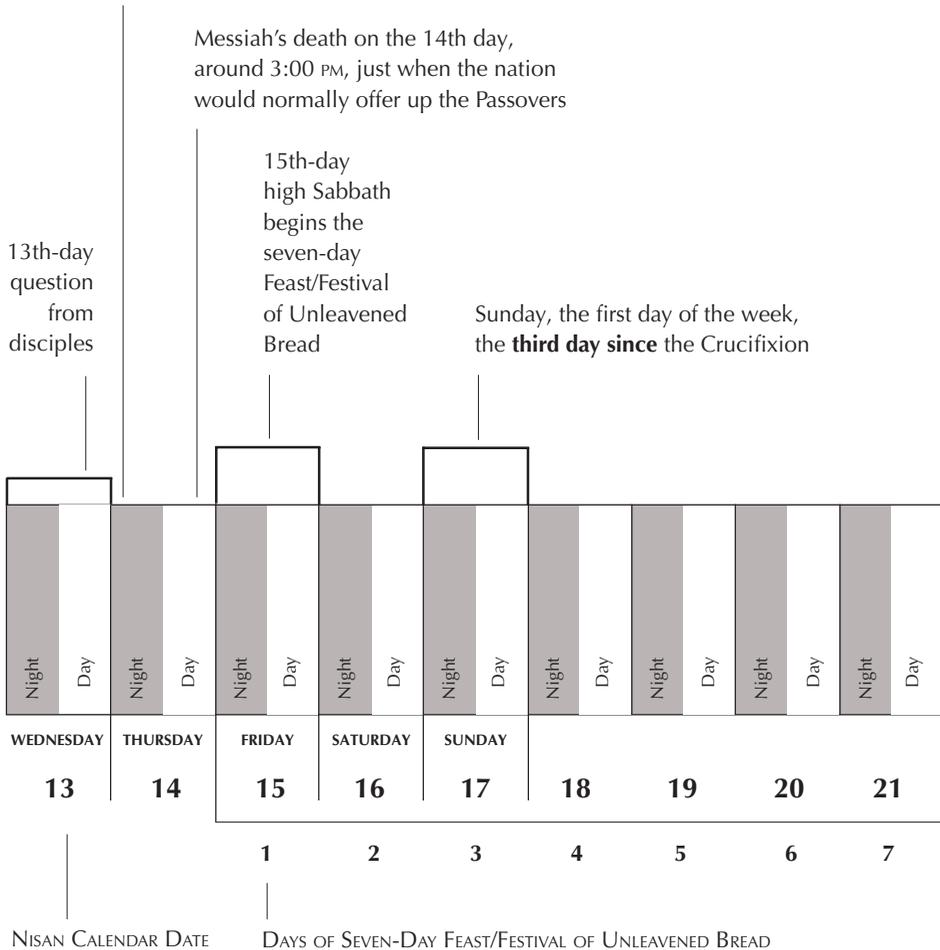
<sup>NAS</sup> John 18:28 They led Jesus therefore from Caiaphas into the Praetorium, and it was early; and they themselves did not enter into the Praetorium **in order that they might not be defiled, but might eat the Passover.**

With crowds streaming into Jerusalem and time running out, why would Jesus have waited so long to choose a location?

The fact is that Jesus knew very well that he would *not* be present to eat the Passover with his disciples, which is partly why he did not give them direction sooner. Jesus understood himself to be the New Covenant fulfillment of the 14th-day Passover lamb. He also knew he would be cut off in the middle of the week (Daniel 9:24–27, i.e., after three and a half years of ministry). And at the very time the Israelites would have offered their Passovers, Jesus was crucified—between the evenings on the 14th day (Matthew 26:2; 27:46, 50).

To recap, the disciples came to Jesus sometime during the 13th day to ask where they should make preparations for the soon-coming Passover. They did not come asking their question *on* the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread or *on* the first of the eight unleavened days (the 14th day in their idiom), but rather *in reference to* this 14th day.

The Last Supper took place after sunset; Jesus knew he was now in his final day, and the "hour" had come (John 13:1; 17:1); the "supper" was not a Passover



**Figure 6. The true scriptural option: the 14th-day true Passover.**

***The 14th-Day True Passover***

God commanded for the Passover to be sacrificed between the evenings (between noon and sunset) on the 14th day of the month called Nisan:

<sup>YLT</sup> Leviticus 23:5 in the first month, on the **fourteenth** of the month, **between the evenings**, is the **passover** to Jehovah;

<sup>YLT</sup> Leviticus 23:6 and on the **fifteenth** day of this month *is* the **feast of unleavened** things to Jehovah; seven days unleavened things ye do eat;

Moses again shows the 14th day as the Passover in Numbers:

<sup>NAS</sup> Numbers 28:16 ‘Then on the **fourteenth** day of the first month shall be the LORD’s Passover.

<sup>NAS</sup> Numbers 28:17 ‘And on the **fifteenth** day of this month *shall be* a feast, unleavened bread *shall be* eaten for **seven days**.

As covered in Setting the Table 1, the early Messianic Fourteenthers understood that Jesus was crucified on this 14th day, himself being the true fulfillment of this sacrifice. Of course the Messiah also understood this typology, and in fact just a couple of days before it happened, he said he would be crucified at that soon-coming Passover:

<sup>NAS</sup> Matthew 26:2 “You know that after two days the **Passover** is coming, and the Son of Man is *to be* delivered up for **crucifixion**.”

Although some Jewish writings, such as the Talmud, refer to the 15th day as the Passover, Jesus was referring to the more conventional usage of Passover (the 14th day), for he would have known the impossibility of a crucifixion on the 15th-day high Sabbath.

The Sanhedrin also knew the impossibility of arresting and slaying Jesus during this time, and commanded that Jesus **not** be arrested **during** the (seven-day) Festival, lest a riot occur:

<sup>NAS</sup> Matthew 26:4–5 and they plotted together to seize Jesus by stealth, and kill *Him*. But they were saying, “**Not during the festival**, lest a riot occur among the people.”

Had Jesus been arrested after eating the Passover at the Last Supper, the arrest would have taken place exactly *during* the Festival. However John shows it was “*before* the Feast,” *not during* it, that Jesus and his disciples ate the Last Supper (i.e., shortly into the night-time portion of the 14th day):

<sup>NAS</sup> John 13:1 Now **before the Feast** of the Passover, Jesus knowing that His hour had come that He should depart out of this world to the Father, having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end.

He was arrested that same night and crucified during the daylight that followed, the very predetermined 14th day in which the nation would be ready to sacrifice the Passovers. We see this in the scripture mentioned earlier:

<sup>NAS</sup> John 18:28 They led Jesus therefore from Caiaphas into the Praetorium, and it was early; and they themselves did not enter into the Praetorium in order that they might not be defiled, but might eat the Passover.

And this was the very 14th day that God, by His foreknowledge, gave to Moses for the Passover sacrifice, the day that He knew that the Messiah would fulfill this type:

<sup>NAS</sup> Acts 2:23 this *Man*, delivered up by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God, you nailed to a cross by the hands of godless men and put *Him* to death.

We saw that it was on the 13th day that the disciples asked Jesus their question as to where they should make preparations. According to God's word they needed to prepare a location that was ritually pure by having all leaven removed. Other preparations were also involved (both inward and outward); all these needed to be completed *before noon* of the 14th day. Because of God's commandments that the Passover not be sacrificed while leaven was still present among the people (Exodus 23:18; 34:25), all leaven needed to be removed before this time because after-noon was when the Passover sacrifices could legally begin:

<sup>DBY</sup> Exodus 12:6 And ye shall keep it until the fourteenth day of this month; and the whole congregation of the assembly of Israel shall kill it **between the two evenings**.

As Alfred Edersheim correctly explains:

The period designated as "between the two evenings" when the Paschal lamb was to be slain, was past. **There can be no question** that, in the time of Christ, it was understood to refer to the interval between the **commencement of the sun's decline** and what was reckoned as the hour of his final disappearance (about 6 PM).<sup>265</sup>

265 Edersheim, *Life and Times*, Book 5, ch. 9, p. 490.

As referenced earlier in “The 13th-Day Question” subsection, the Talmud also pinpointed the beginning of the sixth hour (around 11 AM) on this 14th day as the time for all leaven to be removed. This makes perfect sense, for it was *after* this sixth hour that the Passover could be legally slaughtered. With Passover blood soon to be shed, no leaven could still be on hand (Exodus 34:25).



One of the tricky points regarding this 14th-day Passover presents itself in Luke 22:1, which says the Feast of Unleavened Bread itself is *called* the “Passover”:

<sup>NAS</sup> Luke 22:1 Now the Feast of Unleavened Bread, which is **called** the Passover, was approaching.

Whenever you see someone writing about the Passover, it is necessary to understand exactly what time period they mean by this. The 14th day was most often referred to as Passover, as seen earlier in scriptures from Moses (Numbers 28:16; Leviticus 23:5) and the Messiah (Matthew 26:2). Yet many Jewish writings often refer to the entire seven-day Feast as the Passover. In calling the seven-day Feast itself the Passover, Luke above indicates that this usage was also common in his day. Still other Jewish writings (such as the Talmud) often refer to the 15th day as the Passover, since it was the high Sabbath and the entrance into the seven-day Feast. It was, after all, the 15th day that the LORD “passed over” after the first Passover sacrifice in Egypt.

Alfred Edersheim describes this duality:

The cycle of Temple-festivals appropriately opens with ‘the Passover’ and ‘Feast of Unleavened Bread.’ For, properly speaking, **these two are quite distinct** . . . , the ‘Passover’ taking place on the 14th of Nisan, and the “Feast of Unleavened Bread” commencing on the 15th, and lasting for seven days, to the 21st of the month (Exod. 12:15). But from their close connection **they are generally treated as one**, both in the Old and in the New Testament (Matt. 26:17; Mark 14:12; Luke 22:1); and Josephus, on one occasion, even describes it as “**a feast for eight days**” . . . .<sup>266</sup>

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266 Edersheim, *The Temple*, p. 162.

The following line, excerpted from the Talmudic quote given earlier in “The 13th-day Question” section, shows how Jewish sources often refer to the 14th day as the “eve of Passover”:

The reason that Chometz must be removed on the 14th (of Nissan) (**the eve of Passover**) is because that day is referred to as the first day (of the festival) . . . .

The Messianic Fourteenters understood the Messiah was crucified on the 14th day. And this meaning of “eve of Passover” shows that even Talmudic scholars agree that Jesus was slain on the 14th day of Nisan:

On the eve of the Passover Yeshu [the Nasarean] was hanged.<sup>267</sup>

Just as “Christmas Eve” represents the six-hour period before Christmas arrives, so the “eve of Passover” approximates the period of time before the (seven-day Festival called) Passover actually begins. *The Jewish Encyclopedia* elaborates on this:

The **eve** of Jewish holidays is therefore not the evening of the festival, but **the day preceding it**<sup>268</sup>

*The Jewish Encyclopedia* continues explaining this eve of Jewish holidays by quoting from the Talmud:

“He who engages in regular work **late** in the afternoon of the **eve of the Sabbath or holiday** will receive no blessing upon his work” (Pes. 50b)<sup>269</sup>

In other words, to work in the late afternoon of the day before a “holiday” (i.e., one of the seven Festival Sabbaths) or Saturday Sabbath was to show irreverence for the soon-coming Sabbath. Although this was the Talmudic view and not commanded by God, this quote establishes the “eve of the Sabbath” in the Jewish idiom as a period of time the day before a Sabbath. So the “eve of the Passover” denoted this period of time before the 15th-day Sabbath of the Passover Festival.

267 The Soncino Babylonian Talmud, Tractate Sanhedrin, Folio 43a, [http://www.come-and-hear.com/sanhedrin/sanhedrin\\_43.html](http://www.come-and-hear.com/sanhedrin/sanhedrin_43.html). In this source, next to “Yeshu” is a footnote that says, “Ms.M. adds ‘the Nasarean.’”

268 *The Jewish Encyclopedia*, vol. 5, p. 276, s.v. “Eve of Holidays.”

269 *The Jewish Encyclopedia*, vol. 5, p. 276, s.v. “Eve of Holidays.”

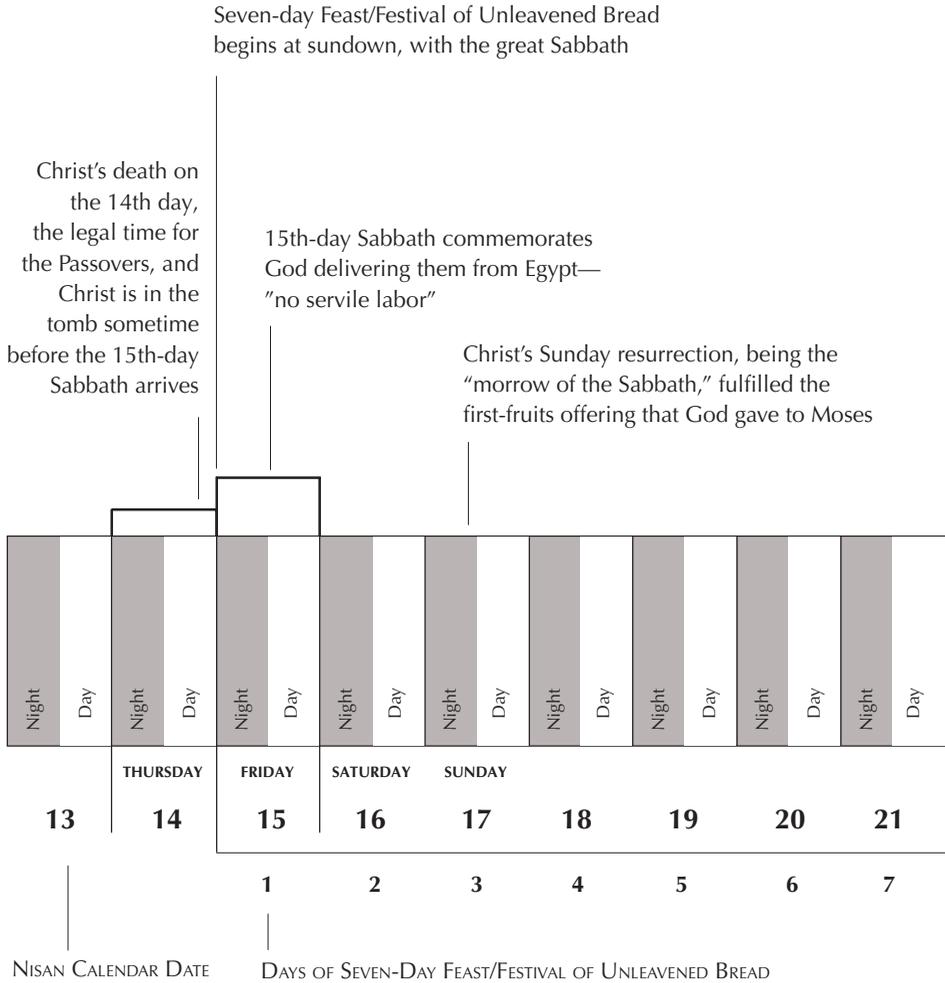
John also shows the 14th day—the day of the Crucifixion—was the day of preparation for the 15th-day Sabbath called Passover:

<sup>NAS</sup> John 19:14 Now it was the day of preparation for the Passover; it was about the sixth<sup>270</sup> hour. And he said to the Jews, “Behold, your King!”

With all these nuances and changes in idiom and language, especially with the Jewish disconnect, it’s easy to see how these concepts became confused over the last 1,700 years.

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270 The chapter “Between the Evenings” has a section (“What Does John Mean by the Sixth Hour?”) that answers the controversy concerning John portraying Jesus presented to the chief priests at the sixth hour, while Mark (15:25) showed Jesus was crucified at the third hour.



**Figure 7. The true scriptural option: the 15th-day high Sabbath.**

***The 15th-Day Sabbath***

Jesus was crucified on the 14th day of Nisan as the true Passover, and it was on this preparation day that the Jews rushed to remove the bodies from the crosses and to have the body of Jesus entombed before the revered 15th-day Sabbath began:

<sup>NAS</sup> Luke 23:54 And it was the preparation day, and the Sabbath was about to begin.

<sup>NAS</sup> John 19:31 The Jews therefore, because it was the day of preparation, so that the bodies should not remain on the cross on the

Sabbath (**for that Sabbath was a high day**), asked Pilate that their legs might be broken, and *that* they might be taken away.

Clearly the soon-coming Sabbath—the one approaching as Jesus was removed from the cross—was this great 15th day of Nisan Sabbath that always followed the 14th-day Passover sacrifice. The Pharisees and chief priests would never have pushed for his crucifixion *on* this 15th-day Sabbath (Friday that year) nor would they have performed the other illegal activities,<sup>271</sup> then suddenly become concerned with observing tomorrow’s Saturday Sabbath as per Jewish law. Even today, many Israeli Jews keep this 15th day as an important Sabbath rest day, and many businesses are closed. The first-century Jews clearly honored it as well.

It was called a high Sabbath (“high” is *megaly* in Greek) because God commanded the Israelites to commemorate this day when He delivered them out of Egypt. It was also called high (or great) because it was one of the seven additional Sabbaths connected to the three annual festivals, as enumerated in Leviticus 23:

1. The 15th day of Nisan (the first day of the seven-day Feast of Unleavened Bread)
2. The seventh day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread
3. Pentecost
4. The first day of Tishri (Rosh Hashanah—this first day of this seventh month)
5. The 10th day of Tishri (Yom Kippur—the Day of Atonement)
6. The 15th day of Tishri (the first day of Tabernacles/Booths/Sukkot)
7. The 22nd day of Tishri (the day following the seven-day Feast of Tabernacles—an eighth day to be kept as a Sabbath, with no servile work)

These sacred assembly days are also referred to as *megaly* (usually translated as “high” or “great”) in the Septuagint (Isaiah 1:13). We saw above that John used the Greek word *megaly* to describe the high 15th-day Sabbath (John 19:31) that followed the 14th-day Passover sacrifice (John 18:28). John also uses this Greek word *megaly* for another of these seven additional Sabbaths, this time the eighth-day Sabbath following the seven-day Festival of Tabernacles, translated below as “great”:

<sup>NAS</sup> John 7:37 Now on the last day, the **great day** of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, “If any man is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink.

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271 Illegal activities such as carrying torches and clubs, which are all listed in the chapter “50 Reasons the Last Supper Was Not the Passover.”

In Leviticus chapter 23, God speaks of both the Saturday Sabbath and of these additional festival-day Sabbaths (referred to as “sacred assemblies” or Holy Convocations):

<sup>NIV</sup> Leviticus 23:2 “Speak to” the Israelites and say to them: “These are **my appointed feasts**, the appointed feasts of the LORD, which you are to proclaim as **sacred assemblies**.”

<sup>NIV</sup> Leviticus 23:3 “There are six days when you may work, but the **seventh day** is a Sabbath of rest, a day of **sacred assembly**. You are not to do any work; wherever you live, it is a Sabbath to the LORD.”

He then returns to these seven other holy days each year that were connected to the three annual festivals and were considered days of no servile labor (i.e., Sabbath rest):

<sup>NIV</sup> Leviticus 23:4 “These are the LORD’s appointed feasts, the sacred assemblies you are to proclaim at their appointed times:

The first of these seven additional Sabbaths mentioned is this 15th-day Sabbath (verses 6, 7), which follows the slaying of the 14th-day Passover:

<sup>YLT</sup> Leviticus 23:5 in the first month, on the **fourteenth** of the month, between the evenings, *is* the passover to Jehovah;

<sup>YLT</sup> Leviticus 23:6 and on the **fifteenth** day of this month *is* the feast of unleavened things to Jehovah; seven days unleavened things ye do eat;

<sup>YLT</sup> Leviticus 23:7 on the first day ye have a holy convocation, **ye do no servile work**;

God commanded this day to be kept special because it marked His delivering of the Israelites out of Egypt:

<sup>JPS</sup> Numbers 33:3 And they journeyed 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,

<sup>JPS</sup> Exodus 12:17 And ye shall observe the feast of unleavened bread; **for in this selfsame day** have I brought your hosts out of the land of Egypt; therefore shall ye observe this day throughout your generations by an ordinance for ever.

<sup>NAS</sup> Exodus 12:42 It is a **night to be observed** for the LORD for having brought them out from the land of Egypt; **this night is for the LORD**, to be observed by all the sons of Israel throughout their generations.

Thus, the Passover was slain on the afternoon of the 14th day, with the 15th-day Sabbath following. Yet on this high Sabbath there was a slight relaxing of the Sabbath laws, but only to prepare food:

<sup>NIV</sup> Exodus 12:16 On the first day hold a sacred assembly, and another one on the seventh day. **Do no work at all** on these days, except to prepare food for everyone to eat—**that is all you may do**.



To emphasize that the first-century Jews kept the 15th day as a Sabbath, consider the following. God commanded that the sheaf of the first fruits be offered on the “morrow of the Sabbath” (“morrow” meaning the day after). At some point, probably after Christ’s death, a dispute arose among the Pharisees and the Sadducees as to which Sabbath the first-fruits offering was to follow—the Saturday Sabbath or the 15th-day Sabbath:

<sup>JPS</sup> Leviticus 23:11 And he shall wave the sheaf before the LORD, to be accepted for you; on the **morrow after the sabbath** the priest shall wave it.

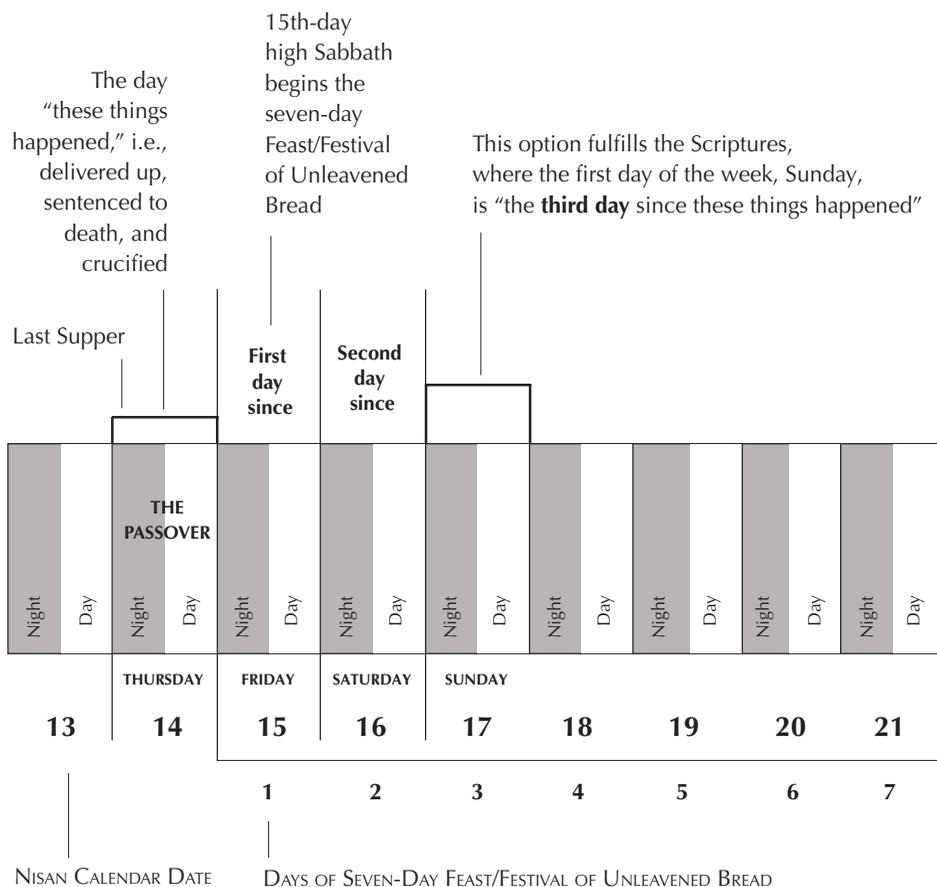
<sup>KJV</sup> Leviticus 23:15 And ye shall count unto you from the **morrow after the sabbath**, from the day that ye brought the sheaf of the wave offering; seven sabbaths shall be complete:

<sup>KJV</sup> Leviticus 23:16 Even unto the morrow after the seventh sabbath shall ye number fifty days; and ye shall offer a new meat offering unto the LORD.

While the Pharisees insisted that this offering occur on the morrow of the 15th-day Sabbath, the Sadducees argued that it was to take place on the morrow of the regular Saturday Sabbath. God answered this controversy by raising the Messiah on Sunday, the morrow of the Saturday Sabbath.

The scriptures from Leviticus above showed God's command to count 50 days from the Omer (sheaf offering) to Pentecost (the 50th day). This count was to begin on the morrow of the Sabbath and end on the morrow of the seventh Sabbath. To do this, one would need to begin counting from the day after the Saturday Sabbath (i.e., Sunday) and *not* after the 15th-day Sabbath (as the Pharisees did). This is the only way to have seven complete Sabbaths (49 days), with the following day being the "morrow after the seventh Sabbath." Clearly the Sadducees were correct here.

The point is that the Pharisees' argument holds no weight at all if the 15th was not kept as a Sabbath in their day. (The chapter "50 Reasons the Last Supper Was Not the Passover" covers this 15th day in more detail.)



**Figure 8. The true scriptural option: Sunday, the “third day since.”**

***Sunday the Third Day Since***

This final template focuses primarily on the scriptures that show Sunday to be *the third day since* Christ was delivered up and crucified. With Sunday being “the third day since these things happened” and the first day of the Jewish week, Thursday had to be the day of Crucifixion. The following several scriptures in Luke make this clear:

<sup>NAS</sup> Luke 24:1 But on **the first day of the week**, at early dawn, they came to the tomb, bringing the spices which they had prepared.

A little later that same day (still Sunday), the disheartened disciples lament Christ’s death, their hopes now seemingly dashed. They declare that it is now the “third day since these things happened,” with “these things” representing the delivering up, sentence of death, and the Crucifixion:

<sup>NAS</sup> Luke 24:19 And He said to them, “**What things?**” And they said to Him, “The things about Jesus the Nazarene, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word in the sight of God and all the people,

<sup>NAS</sup> Luke 24:20 and how the chief priests and our rulers **delivered Him up to the sentence of death, and crucified Him.**

<sup>NAS</sup> Luke 24:21 “But we were hoping that it was He who was going to redeem Israel. Indeed, besides all this, **it is the third day since these things happened.**

Only one option exists for all these time-specific events to fit this festival template:

- The Crucifixion and burial happen on Thursday with the soon-coming high Sabbath approaching.
- The 15th-day high Sabbath happens on Friday that year.
- The Saturday Sabbath follows.
- Then Christ is resurrected during the night portion (sometime before sunrise) of Sunday, the “third day since” the Crucifixion.

This is the only possible way to maintain the integrity of the scriptures in Luke while also having Jesus in the tomb for (a portion of) three days and three nights.<sup>272</sup>

This explains why the women waited through two Sabbaths (Friday the 15th and Saturday) until very early Sunday morning before rushing out into the darkness to anoint the body. It also explains why the high Sabbath of the 15th day commences at the end of Christ’s Crucifixion day (Luke 23:54; John 19:31) and why no Sabbath occurs after the Last Supper.

This true option has Christ crucified on the legal 14th day of the Passovers. It proves that on the previous night at the Last Supper, he would not have eaten the Passover, for the day following the Last Supper was not the 15th-day high Sabbath.

The English translations of Matthew, Mark, and Luke that *seem* to so clearly portray the Last Supper as the Passover are fully explained in the next chapter, “The Three Major Greek Keys That Unlock the Gospels,” using proper Greek grammar

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272 Jesus saying he would arise from the dead the third day (compare Luke 24:21 with Luke 24:46) does not contradict what he said about being in the heart of the earth for three days and three nights. The former statement meant the third day following his crucifixion, and the latter statement was fulfilled exactly as he meant it (see item 4 in the “Saturday Resurrection Option” section). The same is true for when he said he would arise *after* three days (Mark 8:31), meaning it would occur after *the portion of* three days (and three nights, Matthew 12:40) were fulfilled. Some have attempted to prove a contradiction here, but none exists.

rules. Those Greek language keys truly solve the longstanding controversy as to whether or not the Last Supper was the Passover. They also show that the four Gospels harmonize on this matter and explain why Jesus could legally eat regular bread at the Last Supper. In turn, this opens the door to question the current Communion ritual with unleavened bread at Catholic and Protestant churches.

Later we examine any supposed scriptural proof for a Communion ritual in “The Ritual—Why Didn’t the Jewish Disciples Teach It?”