

**You Can Pray
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Contributors: Martin G. Collins, Dwight Fleming, Wayne Schatzle, Nestor A. Toro

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Have a Great Sabbath!

Articles

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The ancient king of Israel has more of his prayers recorded than any other figure in Scripture. Examining them allows us to deepen our relationships with our Creator.

King David was a man so extraordinary that, in **Acts 13:22**, God described him as "a man after My own heart, which shall fulfill all My will."

That is a huge compliment from the God of the universe. How would you like to be referenced as a role model of righteousness?

As was the case with other great servants of God, David was not perfect. In **1 Chronicles 28:3**, he described why he was not allowed to build a Temple: "God said unto me, you shall not build an house for My name, because you have been a man of war, and have shed blood."

Despite his mistakes, God used King David as His human leader over the Kingdom of Israel because, overall, he remained humble, repentant, and yielded to God's will. While this remarkable man lived millennia ago, there is much to learn from his powerful example.

The best way to absorb the traits of a man who lived "after God's own heart" is to consider David's heart itself.

Christ instructed how to discern a man's heart in **Luke 6**: "A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth that which is good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart brings forth that which is evil: for of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks" (**vs. 45**).

Psalms is filled with the "good treasure" recorded straight out of King David's heart. He authored about half—at least 73—of the 150 psalms. These psalms are essentially prayers (**Psalms 17**, for instance, begins: "A Prayer of David") that were set to music for ancient Israel to hear publicly. But they were also written so we could study them and learn what the prayers that came out of the king's mouth were like.

With this in mind, there are four qualities of David's prayers that made them effective.

Praise

One quality David exhibited throughout his psalms was an abundance of praise. He showed boundless reverence to the true God. He understood his insignificant place in comparison to the Being that made all things that exist and lauded Him liberally. That much is evident in **Psalms 8:3-4**, where he stated, "When I consider Your heavens, the work of Your fingers, the moon and the stars, which You have ordained; what is man, that You are mindful of him?"

The king also wrote: "Bless the LORD, O my soul: and *all that is within me*, bless His holy name" (**Psa. 103:1**). A closer examination of this passage reveals an attitude of complete submission. The Hebrew word translated "bless" can also mean "to kneel" and the term translated "that is within" is just one word that can mean "inward part...as faculty of thought and emotion...entrails (of sacrificial animals)," according to *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible*.

This suggests David considered every cell in his body and every emotion and thought in his mind to be "kneeling"—or humbling itself—before God, as if a living sacrifice (**Rom. 12:1**). Have you ever had *this* image of yourself when bowing your head, or going down on your knees to pray?

Here are additional excerpts of psalms in which David opens with unparalleled praises to God. You may wish to think on and use these passages as you come before God's throne in your personal prayers and incorporate some of these words

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as you honor the great God of heaven and Earth.

- “I will love You, O LORD, my strength. The LORD is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer; my God, my strength, in whom I will trust; my buckler, and the horn of my salvation, and my high tower. I will call upon the LORD, who is worthy to be praised...” (**Psa. 18:1-3**).
- “The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament shows His handiwork” (**19:1**).
- “The earth is the LORD’S, and the fullness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein” (**24:1**).
- “O God, You are my God; early will I seek You: my soul thirsts for You, my flesh longs for You in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is; to see Your power and Your glory, so as I have seen You in the sanctuary. Because Your lovingkindness is better than life, my lips shall praise You. Thus will I bless You while I live: I will lift up my hands in Your name” (**63:1-4**).

When we give honor to God, we remind ourselves of His awesome power. It helps us learn to fear Him. Be sure to think about what God has done—from the awesome handiwork of Creation to the intricate details in His Plan for mankind—and talk about them bountifully in your intimate prayers.

Gratitude

The second trait is closely related to the first. King David did not spare in giving thanks to God. He knew that, while he lived, he would practice a life of thankfulness. “For in death there is no remembrance of You: in the grave who shall give You thanks?” (**Psa. 6:5**).

Read the verses that follow and see David’s grateful attitude toward the God that gave him everything.

- “Therefore will I give thanks unto You, O LORD, among the heathen, and sing praises unto Your name” (**18:49**).
- “Sing unto the LORD, O you saints of His, and give thanks at the remembrance of His holiness” (**30:4**).
- “You have turned for me my mourning into dancing: You have put off my sackcloth and girded me with gladness; to the end that my glory may sing praise to You, and not be silent. O LORD my God, I will give thanks unto You forever” (**30:11-12**).
- “I will give You thanks in the great congregation: I will praise You among much people” (**35:18**).

Do we show thankfulness to God as David did? He was a king over Israel, and we were called to become kings (**I Pet. 2:5; Rev. 1:6; 5:10**). We should therefore develop this kingly quality!

There should be no shortage of things to thank God for in your prayers. He called you, gave you His Spirit, and offers you protection—not only now, but also for serious, prophetic events just over the horizon (**Psa. 62:2**).

Perhaps you can recount a time He healed you or performed a miracle. Be thankful for this. Today we enjoy niceties David himself could not have dreamed of, especially in the modern nations of Israel. Express gratitude for the things you have that most others throughout history and even throughout the world today do not. The list of things to be grateful for could go on—refer to additional psalms for guidance.

A Contrite Heart

The third trait highlights David’s desire to repent and have a contrite heart. It is no secret that at times he sinned “big.” He committed adultery with Bathsheba and killed her husband, Uriah the Hittite, one of his faithful mighty men (**II Sam. 23:39**). He also broke God’s command to not number the armies of Israel (**I Chron. 21**), which eventually led to the deaths of 70,000 people.

Yet when confronted about these and other sins, David was always contrite and genuinely changed his heart. It was this willingness to repent that made him a “just man” in spite of his failures (**Pro. 24:16**).

The following verses evidence David’s serious regret over his sins and his subsequent desire to change:

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- “O LORD, rebuke me not in Your anger, neither chasten me in Your hot displeasure. Have mercy upon me, O LORD; for I am weak...” (**Psa. 6:1-2**).
- “Have mercy upon me, O God, according to Your lovingkindness: according unto the multitude of Your tender mercies blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me. Against You, You only, have I sinned, and done this evil in Your sight: that You might be justified when You speak, and be clear when You judge...Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow...Hide Your face from my sins, and blot out all my iniquities. Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from Your presence; and take not Your Holy Spirit from me...You desire not sacrifice; else would I give it: You delight not in burnt offering. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, You will not despise” (**51:1-4, 7, 9-11, 16-17**).

David meant these words. He is a dynamic “ensample” for us (**I Cor. 10:11; Rom. 15:4**). As with him, we should ask for the gift of repentance regularly and remain humble enough to implore our God to purge us from our sins whenever necessary.

Sincerity

David’s fourth prayer trait involves the *manner* in which we are to serve God. As Christians, we are to always “fear the LORD, and *serve Him in sincerity* and in truth...” (**Josh. 24:14**). The Hebrew word translated “sincerity” also appears throughout David’s psalms as “upright” and “perfect.” One such place is **Psalm 15**: “LORD, who shall abide in Your tabernacle? Who shall dwell in Your holy hill? He that walks *uprightly* [sincerely], and works righteousness, and speaks the truth in his heart” (**vs. 1-2**).

David was a genuine and sincere person, and it came through in his heartfelt prayers, and God was pleased by this. Think. How many other servants did He use to record prayers that would be read by His servants for all time? (More on the significance of this later.)

A sincere heart offers a tremendous return. Notice in **Psalm 18** how God rewards our sincerity: “I was also *upright* before Him, and I kept myself from my iniquity. Therefore has the LORD recompensed me according to my righteousness, according to the cleanness of my hands in His eyesight. With the merciful You will show Yourself merciful; with an *upright* man You will shew Yourself *upright*...” (**vs. 23-26**).

God reacts to our sincerity with sincerity of His own! He is open with those who are sincere. He showed David things that would not be fully understood until our days.

David did not “fake” his faith in God. In **Psalm 17:1**, he asked God to “attend unto my cry, give ear unto my prayer, that goes not out of feigned lips.”

When we pray, we should be ready to hold ourselves confidently to the same high standard of integrity with God’s help.

Pour Your Heart!

The psalms reveal other traits that David demonstrated through his prayers, including passion, zeal, and attention to detail. All-in-all, he poured his heart out. From a young age, David had a uniquely bold personality and a lot of faith. Even as a shepherd, he chased after a lion and killed it with his bare hands (**I Sam. 17:34-35**), and later confronted the giant Goliath—who terrified the entire army of Israel (**vs. 10-11**)—with just a sling and a few stones.

That is boldness. Though we may not have David’s level of faith—yet—we should be growing toward it. We can start by praying as he did.

Considering all that we can learn about his attitude toward God, it could be said that the Psalms were David’s greatest legacy for us to learn from.

Think about this. Why would God inspire so many of one man’s prayers to be documented? Was it so we would all “eat

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humble pie” and think to ourselves, *Wow, David was so good at talking to God. I wish I could pray like him.*

Of course not! God wants us to imitate David’s example by incorporating what worked for him.

The next time you come before God in prayer, come full of praise. Offer plentiful thanks for everything—blessings and trials—because we learn and grow from both. Present yourself with a contrite heart for those things in which you fall short, because, as David’s own wise son Solomon prayed, “There is no man that sins not” (**I Kgs. 8:46**).

And lastly, let your prayer be sincere.

If you work to apply these four traits, your prayers will be precious, effectual (**Jms. 5:16**), and important to God. With effort, you can be a man or woman “after His own heart.”

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Our Savior [Jesus Christ](#) tells the woman at the well in Samaria, “But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him” ([John 4:23](#)). As the first great commandment ([Matthew 22:37-38](#)) suggests, true worship of [God](#) and *agape* love are entwined.

In flagrant contrast, most people in this world celebrate their holidays, not in spirit, truth, and love, but in fleshly practices, lies, and in the case of Saint Valentine’s Day, lust. Sexual immorality has always been the essential ingredient in the observance of Valentine’s Day—in direct contrast to the [seventh commandment](#). How did such an anti-God celebration become so accepted in mainstream Christianity?

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Origins

History substantiates that the origins of Valentine’s Day predate Christianity. The Roman god Lupercus is of the same origin as the Greek god Pan. The Phoenicians and Semites called him “Bal” or “Baal.”

The original biblical name for the central figure of Valentine’s Day was “Nimrod the mighty hunter before the LORD” ([Genesis 10:9](#)), a man who was decidedly not a saint. A better rendering of his description in Genesis 10 is that he was “a fearless hunter *in defiance of the LORD*” (*International Standard Version*; emphasis ours). He lived and taught a way of life in opposition to God’s way of love. According to secular history, Nimrod was a vicious murderer and an abuser of women.

Nimrod’s birth date was believed to be January 6 (which, by the way, was chosen in ancient times as Jesus’ birthday, a custom still held in the Eastern Orthodox Church; it has no foundation in fact). According to tradition, his mother presented herself for purification forty days later, on February 15. On this date, pagan Rome celebrated—beginning the evening before, February 14—a sensuous festival of idolatrous worship in honor of Lupercus, the deified “hero-hunter of wolves.” This festival was known as the Lupercalia.

The ancient Roman practice especially encouraged young people who were attracted to each other to indulge in licentious acts of sexual immorality. Roman church leaders in the fifth century AD eventually included the Lupercalia in the church’s liturgical calendar due to its immense popularity among the Roman citizenry. The Catholic Church introduced this pagan festival into Christianity wholesale except for the more extreme sensual observances. Seeking to infuse a more Christian element into the festival, church authorities renamed it “Saint Valentine’s Day.”

This practice of fusing differing beliefs into a single religious system is called *syncretism*. We see this same kind of blending in the celebrations of Groundhog Day, May Day, and [Halloween](#), all of which scholarship has traced back to various pre-Christian superstitions and practices. Some members of the greater church of God have naively followed the world’s form of Christianity on these matters.

Lupercalia

The “Valentine’s Day” of Roman times was less refined than its modern counterpart. After the sacrifice of goats and a dog, the priests (called *Luperci*) traditionally split into two bands and ran a marked course around the city on this day, scantily dressed only in goatskin girdles. They carried strips of goatskin to strike women, supposedly to remove their infertility. The strips bore the name *februa*, a word connected with *februare*, meaning “to purify.” Therefore, the day was called Februatus, and the month, Februarius.

Lupercalia was, or became, connected with the legendary she-wolf (in Latin, *lupus* means “wolf”) who suckled Remus and Romulus, the traditional founders of Rome. In Rome, “wolf” was slang for a sexually available woman. In this way, the day became connected with Venus, goddess of sexual “love.”

Venus’ son, Cupid, also played a central part in this “love feast” (or, more correctly, *lust* feast). Roman mythology ascribes to mother and son the power to instill sexual passion in people. By using their love potion, they supposedly could also make love cease.

Artwork often portrays Cupid shooting arrows into the hearts of his victims. Usually naked, winged, and armed with a bow and arrow, cupids are still portrayed in modern times on Valentine’s cards, in theater décor, and so on. As can well be imagined, a lewd festival of sex and lust was popular with the Romans, much as it is today. Our society’s celebration may not be as overtly sexual, but it is just as popular.

The Path of Syncretism

Once the Roman emperors embraced counterfeit Christianity, the Catholic Church exploded across the empire. To “convert” the pagan populace as quickly as possible, Roman church leaders felt that they should not be too strict with prospective members. Some reasoned that if Christianity was to conquer [the world](#), it could best do so by relaxing the principles of Christ’s teachings, as they knew their converts would perceive them as much too rigid. The same thinking infested the church of God more than once in recent memory.

The Catholic leadership found that an effective way of gaining members was to blend or syncretize popular pagan beliefs

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and practices with Christian ones. Realizing that they could not persuade the masses to relinquish their superstitious customs, they attempted to overlay Christian concepts on the existing pagan feasts. The historical development of the Roman church shows that, for almost every heathen celebration, some Christian rite was superimposed.

Thus, the Roman populace could still attend their “love feast,” but it was no longer dedicated to Venus, the goddess of love, but to the Virgin Mary and the saints. In AD 496, Pope Gelasius, bishop of Rome, officially “Christianized” the pagan Lupercalia by renaming it “Saint Valentine’s Day,” moving the day of observance from the fifteenth to the fourteenth of February. On each February 14, Roman church members were now to center their attention on “Christian saints.” People could still draw lots for their “Valentines,” but with the names of saints written on them instead.

After the Protestant Reformation in the sixteenth century, Saint Valentine fell into the background since Protestants did not believe saints to be worthy of veneration. People returned to drawing names of ordinary young men and women as Valentines, in this way choosing themselves partners for the festival.

In subsequent centuries, neither saints nor Christian teachings were significant parts of Valentine’s Day. However, Cupid was still there, and so were his arrowed hearts. People still drew lots as chance directed. Despite the years, the day was still the original Roman celebration with a few modifications, and it was as popular and pagan as ever.

An Unbiblical Holiday

The Bible neither mentions nor espouses Valentine’s Day or its practices. However, God informs ancient Israel in [Deuteronomy 12:29-31](#) that He had chosen them to represent true religion, and He warns them not to mix pagan customs with worshipping Him as the one true God:

When the LORD your God cuts off from before you the nations which you go to dispossess, and you displace them and dwell in their land, take heed to yourself that you are not ensnared to follow them, after they are destroyed from before you, and that you do not inquire after their gods, saying, “How did these nations serve their gods? I also will do likewise.” You shall not worship the LORD your God in that way; for every abomination to the LORD which He hates they have done to their gods.

In [1 Corinthians 10:19-21](#), the apostle Paul compares mixing paganism with Christianity—syncretism—to worshipping demons:

What am I saying then? That an idol is anything, or what is offered to idols is anything? Rather, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice they sacrifice to demons and not to God, and I do not want you to have fellowship with demons. You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cups of demons; you cannot partake of the Lord’s table and of the table of demons.

This principle includes giving one’s time or interest to things of pagan origin.

Beyond their obvious heathen origins, holidays like Saint Valentine’s Day continually secularize, transforming into reflections of the world’s present culture and falsifying the religions from which they sprang. Most people in this world, becoming increasingly materialistic, could not care less if Valentine’s Day originated in the Roman Lupercalia or early Roman church doctrines. Religion—true, syncretized, or pagan—has little influence on them. All they care about is whether they enjoy the celebration. This apathy about how to worship the true God and its corresponding moral decay is the result of watering down truth, minimizing its authority, and appealing to people’s base desires, that is, their human nature ([Romans 8:7](#); 1 John 2:16).

Even some Christians who reject religious holidays with roots in paganism, like [Christmas](#) and [Easter](#), see nothing wrong with holidays like New Year’s Day, Valentine’s Day, and Halloween despite their pagan origin. Their faulty human reasoning—their rationalization or justification for it—goes like this:

Christmas and Easter must be rejected because they attempt to [worship God](#) with pagan customs. The other holidays, though, while people may have once used them to worship God, are now deemed entirely secular. And since God actually forbids using pagan customs to worship Him, we are free to practice pagan worship customs if we are not now using them for worship purposes.

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Yet, this bit of twisted logic ignores the fact that God tells the Israelites to eradicate all vestiges of pagan worship from their presence ([Deuteronomy 12:2-4](#)), not merely from their worship of Him. Moreover, the New Testament teaches that a Christian’s life is to be one of worshipping and honoring God in *all* we do ([1 Peter 4:11](#)).

We should see the things in which we participate in the context of bringing glory to Him. This does not mean we cannot have fun; God wants us to enjoy life. But our fun should not be independent of Him (see the principle in [Ecclesiastes 11:9](#)). All that we think, say, and do should be to the glory of God ([1 Corinthians 10:31](#))!

No true Christian in good conscience would want to be someone’s Valentine, and he certainly would not wish someone a “Happy Valentine’s Day!” We must speak the truth in godly love ([Ephesians 4:15](#)), not carnal lust. In its fleshly and sensual practices, Valentine’s Day falls far short of “worship[ing] the Father in spirit and truth.”

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Jesus Our Passover

Dwight Fleming (Oroville, California)

The Crucifixion of Jesus of Nazareth marked a turning point in the history of the Jewish people and led to the birth of the church of God forming the spiritual body of Christ. Concerning the death of Jesus, the Lamb of God, the apostle Paul states, “For even Christ our **passover** is sacrificed for us” (1 Corinthians 5:7).

The term “passover” refers back to the Israelites’ sojourn in Egypt when God commanded them to slay a lamb then put its blood upon the lintel and doorposts of their dwellings. The lamb’s blood would cause the destroyer to “passover” their dwellings thus sparing their firstborn from death. God gave a specific timeframe when this “passover lamb” was to be slain. Notice: “ye shall keep it up until the fourteenth day of the same month: and the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it in the evening [between the two evenings]” (Exodus 12:6).

It was critical that they kill this lamb on the right evening. If they had gotten the time wrong, then they would have suffered the death of their firstborn as did the Egyptians. Jesus is often referred to as the Lamb of God. Why? Because by His shed blood death would passover us allowing us to escape the penalty of sin. To be our Passover, Christ would then have to die at the time prescribed in Exodus 12:6.

Yet there are ministers who want you to believe that Jesus died at the wrong time, but it doesn’t matter because He ate the Passover at the right time. Wait a minute! What kind of illogical thinking is that? Did Jesus become our Passover by **dying** at the right time or by **eating** at the right time?

This is at the heart of any debate regarding the correct time of the first Passover in Egypt and at the time of Christ’s death. Those who believe that Christ ate the Passover at the right time must concede that Jesus died at the wrong time and in effect make Him a fake with their misunderstanding. Others believe that Christ had to eat the Passover one night early since He knew that He would be dead by the time when the Jews normally ate the Passover. But then Christ would have eaten a fake Passover lamb since it was not killed at the prescribed time.

Jesus Christ IS NOT A FAKE!!! The apostle Paul clearly states that Christ died “according to the scriptures” (See 1 Corinthians 15:3). What scriptures? Those of the Bible of their day which we call the Old Testament. This would include the time prescribed by Exodus 12:6.

The Lamb of God, our Passover, would have to die on the 14th day of the first month at even, or, more specifically, between the two evenings. There has been much debate on exactly what “between the two evenings” mean. But even more basic to the argument and which everyone has overlooked is when was the 14th day? When did it begin and when did it end?

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As you know, God gave Moses specific instructions for when to kill the Passover lamb and also when to keep a feast of unleavened bread for seven days. Exodus 12, verse 18 reads, “In the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month at **even**, ye shall eat unleavened bread, until the one and twentieth day of the month at **even**.”

There are those who believe that the days of unleavened bread begin at the beginning of the 14th day of the first month and believe that the New Testament supports this thinking. This misunderstanding stems from the assumption that God meant the even that **begins** the 14th day rather than **ends** the 14th. Herein lies a simple truth that everyone has overlooked.

How did the Israelites of the Exodus know which evening God meant? Lives were at stake! There could be no confusion. Furthermore, notice the particular wording of God’s instruction. Why didn’t God just say, “from the **ending** of the 14th day until the **ending** of the 21st day, you shall eat unleavened bread for seven days”?

Today we follow the Gregorian Calendar in our everyday lives. How do you explain to someone unfamiliar with the Sabbath when to keep it? You could just say that it is on the seventh day of the week which is Saturday. But would that be completely accurate? Not really. So, to be more explicit, you would probably state that it is from Friday sunset until Saturday sunset. Why would you have to explain it this way? Because a calendar day on the Gregorian Calendar begins and ends at midnight and not at sunset. Whoa!!! Stop the presses!!!

Everyone is assuming that the 14th day in the minds of the Israelites of the Exodus began and ended at sunset. But this is a major error and false assumption that has caused gross misunderstanding as to when the first Passover was kept. If a calendar day begins and ends other than at sunset or “even,” then that means that there would only be one even or sunset per calendar day to contend with. And this is why God had to word His instructions in Exodus 12:18 the way that He did.

Let’s put things into historical context. The children of Israel had sojourned in Egypt for about 400 years. They may have been slaves for a good 100 years or more. This is uncertain. They were obviously indoctrinated in Egyptian custom by the time of the Exodus. The Egyptians are noted for their solar calendar which Julius Caesar borrowed from in developing his Julian Calendar. The Romans began and ended a calendar day at midnight as we do today. Is it possible that they also borrowed this from Egypt as well? One thing is certain is that the Egyptians did not begin the calendar day at sunset. A lunar calendar was also observed.

Thus, a calendar day for the Israelites of the Exodus either began at dawn or possibly at midnight as some scriptures indicate. The main thing to realize is that the 14th day did not begin or end at sunset. This is crucial for understanding the correct evening of the Passover. Want more proof?

In Leviticus 23, God gave Moses’ instructions for the Day of Atonement. Verse 27 says to keep it on the 10th day of the seventh month. That is simple enough. If the Israelites of the Exodus were observing a calendar day from even unto even then no further explanation would be needed regarding the time. But here is absolute proof that they weren’t observing a calendar day from even unto even. Since the Day of Atonement was to be a fast day, then it was necessary for God to tell them to start observing this annual Sabbath at even on the NINTH DAY (verse 32).

Why didn’t God just say to observe it from the very beginning of the tenth day until the very end of the tenth day? Because, for the Israelites, the tenth day did not begin at even or sunset. Ignore or argue with this all you want. But it is the “plain truth.”

This means that there was only one possible evening when the first Passover lamb was slain in Egypt. The 14th day had either begun at midnight or at dawn for the Israelites. When did God strike down the firstborn in the land of Egypt? At MIDNIGHT. This would have been the beginning of the 15th day after the slaying of the Passover lamb earlier on the 14th. And when did the Israelites depart from Egypt? Numbers 33:3 states the Israelites left on the 15th, the day AFTER Passover which was observed the evening of the 14th. It appears that midnight was the dividing line between the 14th and 15th day at that time. The Jews later moved it up to sunset perhaps during the Babylonian captivity according to some sources.

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Some contend that the Israelites were commanded to stay in their dwellings all night and not leave until the light of dawn. They contend that “morning” must mean when the sun actually rises or shortly before it. This is necessary to prove their belief that the first Passover was observed at the beginning of the 14th given a sunset to sunset reckoning. The Israelites then spent the daylight portion of the 14th spoiling the Egyptians and making ready to depart at sundown when the 15th day began. But a careful reading of scripture does not bear this out.

First of all, the Israelites were told to eat the Passover in haste with their shoes on and their staff in hand (Exodus 12:11). They needed to be ready to hit the deck running. Imagine: “You kids turn off that video game and eat your supper. We got to be ready to leave pronto. What do you mean, you can’t find your sandals? Of all times to have them in the shop for repairs. Okay, you will just have to wear your old Nikes.”

The Egyptians “were **urgent** upon the people, that they might send them out of the land in **haste** (Exodus 12:33). “And they baked unleavened cakes of the dough which they brought forth out of Egypt, for it was not leavened; **because** they were **thrust** out of Egypt, and could not **tarry** [dilly-dally], nor had they prepared provisions for themselves” (Exodus 12:39). Okay, the Israelites had all day to raid their neighbors’ jewelry box but forgot to raid the pantry to fill their ice chest with any food. Does that make any sense? No!

Exodus 11 tells us that they had already borrowed from the Egyptians before the final plague. The Egyptian populace saw the destruction all around them and wanted these Hebrew slaves gone at any price before they all became “dead men.” They left as soon as Pharaoh told Moses to “hit the road!” It was a full moon that night so it would have been no problem traveling by night. But they couldn’t leave their dwellings until daybreak, right?

Have you ever got up very early in the morning before sunlight to leave on a trip? We consider any time after midnight to be morning. Can it be morning yet still dark? Consider this example: David was not allowed to fight in the battle against Saul. He was told to rise up early in the **morning**, and when it became light enough, then to depart. See I Samuel 29:1-11.

These same contenders for an early 14th Passover, believe that Exodus 16 absolutely proves that the Hebrew term, “ben-ha-arbayim” [between the two evenings], must mean the time between **sunset** and darkness. This is why some translations render the term as “twilight.” But another Hebrew word is also rendered as “twilight” which the text supports. “He was going down the street near her corner, walking along in the direction of her house at **twilight**, as the day was fading, as the dark of night set in” (Proverbs 7:8-9 NIV).

Exodus 16 is used to support a strained explanation of “ben-ha-arbayim.” It is contended that the Hebrew word for “evening” used in verses 6, 8, and 13 must all be translated as “sunset” in order for the explanation to work. You can find this in **A Faithful Version** translation at www.afaithfulversion.org. Exodus 16 is the crux of their argument for an early 14th Passover given a sunset-to-sunset 14th day. Since it appears that Christ also kept the Passover at the beginning of the 14th, then they believe that their argument is on solid ground and airtight. Not so fast!

In the same translation, the same Hebrew word translated as “sunset” is elsewhere translated as “evening.” See Genesis 24:11, 63 as an example. To use “sunset” in these verses would not be appropriate. Could “evening” include any time prior to sunset? Notice Jeremiah 6:4: “Prepare for war against her; arise and let us go up at noon. Woe to us! For the day goes away, for the **shadows** of the **evening** are stretched out.” As everyone knows, shadows begin to grow long from about 2 or 3 pm onward.

Generally speaking, morning can be the time between midnight and noon while evening can be the time between noon and midnight for us today. The morning may include darkness and light while the evening may include light and darkness. If you rise up early when the sun comes up, then by mid-afternoon when it can get quite warm, it is best to retire or rest for the day and prepare an evening meal. Forget going to the movies or watching any TV after dark. The stars were bright and dazzling and provided stories of wonder and God’s glory and handiwork. Time for bed if you weren’t elected for doing night watch.

The Jews were human and got some things wrong but also got some things right. They teach that “between the two evenings” is from noon until sundown. This is confirmed by Deuteronomy 16:6. This is a lengthy subject beyond the

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scope of this article. See paper by T. Alex Tennent: [TMF_Between-the-Evenings \(themessianicfeast.com\)](http://themessianicfeast.com). Same with their traditions. Christ criticized their bad traditions but did follow their good traditions, such as, the Feast of Dedication (John 10:22). To assume that all Jewish tradition is bad or wrong would be a big mistake as we will soon see.

The Synoptic Gospels (Matthew, Mark, and Luke) have Jesus keeping Passover at the beginning of the 14th of Nisan (first month of the sacred year as God commanded Moses). However, the gospel of John shows the Jews keeping Passover at the end of the 14th and into the 15th. This seemingly paradox has added greatly to the debate over when the original Passover was kept.

For those who believe that the Passover lamb was slain late on the 14th day and eaten on the 15th as John confirms, then the Synoptic Gospels seem to show Christ keeping the Passover one night early since He knew that He would be dead by the following evening. As stated at the beginning of this article, that also is an erroneous assumption. If Jesus was The Passover Lamb of God, then why would He, being sinless, need to eat a physical lamb? Of course, He wanted to fulfill all righteousness as He told His cousin John who baptized Him. But would Christ keep the Passover at the wrong time? No way! Thus, we have a doctrinal dilemma.

Those who conclude that Christ must have kept the Passover at the correct time then feel compelled to make the Old Testament story of Passover agree with an early 14th Passover account. As we have already seen, this is totally incorrect. Those who see the 14th/15th as the correct time then jump to the conclusion that they must follow Moses rather than the example of Jesus Christ by partaking the bread and wine on the night of the 15th. Christ said, “The servant is not greater than his lord” (John 15:20). Yet we think that we can be more righteous than Jesus, the head of the church.

Would you rather follow the Jews who slew the Lamb of God as they did the Passover lamb or follow Jesus who became our Passover by offering Himself? We falsely assume that Jesus merely changed the “symbols” of the Passover. Such thinking robs us of our Christian calling. We are to more than spiritual Jews. Christ said, “No man can serve two masters.” Who is our master? Moses or Jesus Christ?

Christ also said, “... except your righteousness shall **exceed** the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven” (Matthew 5:20). The apostle Paul wrote, “Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ. Now I praise you, brethren, that you remember me in all things and **keep the traditions JUST AS I DELIVERED THEM to you**” (I Corinthians 11:1-2).

Traditions? What traditions? [Cue song from “Fiddler on the Roof”] Did Jesus Christ establish a new **tradition** for the church to follow? The Synoptic Gospels show Christ eating the “passover” earlier than called for by Exodus 12:6. As already mentioned, a lamb slain at the wrong time would be a fake. Everyone is assuming that Jesus ate a slain lamb that night because of the use of the word “passover.” What else was eaten with the Passover lamb at the time of the original Passover? “And they shall eat the flesh in that night, roast with fire, and **unleavened bread**” (Exodus 12:8).

Remember the confusion over when the Days of Unleavened Bread began that I mentioned awhile back? Do you think the Jews may have had the same problem with Exodus 12:18 as others have had? To play it safe, is it possible that a custom or **tradition** may have started somewhere along the line with eating unleavened bread at the beginning of the 14th day? When the disciples came to Jesus and asked Him where to keep the Passover, did they mean a Passover lamb or Passover **bread**? The only word used is “passover.” Thus, the confusion and error with any assumptions that a slain lamb was meant. By the time of Christ, had unleavened bread become included in the word “passover”?

“Now the feast of **unleavened bread** drew nigh, which is called the **Passover**” (Luke 22:1).

There was no lamb there that night other than the Lamb of God. Based on a Jewish tradition of eating unleavened bread on the night of the 14th, Jesus instituted an entirely new **tradition** for His disciples to follow. These symbols were to remind us that we are part of His body that was beaten and torn for us. The wine reminds us that we are of His blood that was poured out for our redemption. We are not to be as the Jews who put Christ to death and watched His agony. We are to be there with Him on the cross suffering as He suffered! To be there with Him, we have to partake of the symbols before His death not after!

“For I through the law am **dead** to the law, that I might live unto God. I am **crucified with Christ**” (Galatians 2:19-20).

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This new **tradition** started by Jesus Christ was called “the Lord’s Supper” by the apostle Paul to distinguish it from the Passover Seder observed by the Jews. When Paul said the church wasn’t observing the Lord’s supper, he obviously meant their causal practice of having a full-blown dinner party rather than a solemn occasion that truly honored the sacrifice of Jesus Christ with the partaking of the bread and the wine.

We are making the same mistake by calling the bread and wine “Passover” which adds to the confusion. Jesus Christ is our Passover. The bread and wine remind us that we are of His flesh and blood before the time of His death. So as Paul revealed, they should be partaken in the “night that he was **betrayed**” that we may properly remember His death as members of His blood and body.

Are You a Princess?

by Wayne Schatzle (West Chester, Ohio)

Some time ago I read a book about the familiar nursery rhymes and childhood stories published by the Grimm brothers in the early 1800s. Apparently these were mostly German folk stories passed down through generations by word of mouth, and we can thank the Grimm brothers for recording them for posterity. More often than not each story has a prince on a journey, a princess in danger, and an evil individual bent on coming between them.

The object of the book was to show that the point of these folklore stories was not just to entertain children but tell the wonderful message that Jesus is a magnificent prince that will one day return to destroy the evil one that persecutes the princess that he intends to marry.

Jesus is depicted in many ways in scriptures- He is our Creator; our elder brother; our healer; our banner; and as our *bridegroom*. Maybe the reason women can relate better to the Christian religion is because the church is pictured as a bride, but in analogy all Christians, both men and women, are to be brides. Notice the language in Revelation 19 of the returning King of Kings, “Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come and His wife has made herself ready.

The love affair between Jesus and the church reads as a great love novel, how the rich bridegroom seen the low-class baby born, uncared for and literally thrown in an open field to die. He saw this helpless baby girl struggle in her own blood for life. With compassion, He reached down and saved her life, washed, and clothed her. He watched her as she grew in beauty and clothed her in fine clothing and jewels. When her “time of love” came the prince was moved by the love he developed for this young woman, he swore an oath and entered into a covenant, and she became his fiancée. {Ezekiel 16}.

Just as the heroines of the Grimm’s stories, the Church is also deceived and in the clutches of the evil one and unaware of her destiny to become the bride of the King. Rarely if ever will you hear a sermon showing the reward of the saved is to become the very bride of Jesus.

Finally, we read in Revelation of the returning King to put away the evil one and marry His love of the ages- the church.

Oh yes, as the couple in the fairy tales so it is with the bride and Groom in the Bible- *they shall live happily ever after*.

Holy Days 2022

Passover – April 16, 2022 (Observed at Sunset the Evening Before)

Unleavened Bread – April 16-22, 2022

Pentecost – June 5, 2022

Trumpets - September 26, 2022

Atonement – October 5, 2022

Tabernacles – October 10-16, 2022

Last Great Day – October 17, 2022