

THE CHRONOLOGY OF THE PASSOVER AND OF THE PASSION

According to the Bible, the Astronomy, and the Spirit of Prophecy

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Recently I received the manuscript of a book on the Passover chronology which I believe may generate more confusion than clarification on the subject. I will not mention the name of the author because the manuscript has not yet been published. I read it to refresh my memory of this subject which has been a topic of discussion among Jews and Christians throughout the centuries. There are many issues involved in the matter which are especially important to us because they have to do with the fulfillment of the prophecies of Dan 8 and 9.

After concluding my renewed study on this subject (I had already summarized it in my 2014 book *The Apocalyptic Times of the Sanctuary* [offered also in Kindle by Amazon]) our son Daniel called me asking about one of the topics that an atheist had broadcasted to deny the inspiration of the Bible. A friend of his was confused and he wanted to help him. The controversial point had to do with some apparently contradictory texts of the Bible regarding the time of the crucifixion. I was happy to be able to offer the correct and well documented answer. In this study, we will consider the basic points that have to do with the discussion on the date of the Jewish and Christian Passover.

The most relevant points in this subject

We will not introduce here the various modern conspiracy theories about a supposed redactional development of the Pentateuch. We will try to understand the problems that readers themselves may find in order to understand the chronology of the Jewish Spring feasts, taking the text as a unity, and looking for a satisfactory solution. The points under question are as follows:

1. If the feast of the Passover fell on Thursday or Friday in the year of crucifixion

a) If the paschal lamb was sacrificed before sunset on the 14th day as prescribed by the law, the event would have to have taken place on a Thursday evening. That night being already Friday the 15th according to the biblical reckoning would have corresponded to the first day of the Unleavened Bread (when the lamb and the meal of the feast would be eaten).

PRIESTLY CALENDAR (From Sunset to Sunset)							
Thursday 14 Abib/Nisan		Friday 15 Abib/Nisan		Saturday 16 Abib/Nisan		Sunday 17 Abib/Nisan	
Night	Day	Night	Day	Night	Day	Night	Day
Passover		1st. day Unleavened Bread		2nd. day Unleavened Bread		Firstfruits of Barley	
	Paschal sacrifice, (Evening before sunset)	Paschal meal with unleavened bread	Crucifixion of Jesus (Evening) Jesus in the grave	Jesus in the grave		Jesus in the grave	Resurrection at dawn
Thursday (26-4-31)		Friday (27-4-31)		Saturday (28-4-31)		Domingo (29-4-31)	
Julian Calendar (From Midnight to Midnight)							

b) If the paschal lamb was sacrificed after sunset, the Passover as well as the paschal meal would have begun the 14th day of the feast, pointing to Friday as the first day of the Passover, and the Sabbath as the 15 day, the first day of the Unleavened Bread.

PRIESTLY CALENDAR (From Sunset to Sunset)							
Thursday 13 Abib/Nisan		Friday 14 Abib/Nisan		Saturday 15 Abib/Nisan		Sunday 16 Abib/Nisan	
Night	Day	Night	Day	Night	Day	Night	Day
		Passover -1rst. day Unleavened Bread		1rst. day Unleavened Bread		2nd. Day Unleavened Bread Fristfruits of Barley	
		Sacrifice and Paschal meal with unleavened bread	Crucifixion (Evening) Jesus in the grave	Jesus in the grave		Jesus in the grave	Resurrection at dawn
Thursday (26-4-31)		Friday (27-4-31)		Saturday (28-4-31)		Sunday (29-4-31)	
Julian Calendar (From Midnight to Midnight)							

2. The value of astronomy to elucidate the conflict

a) Since the Jews began the first month from when they could first see the lunar crescent, in modern times many Christians have resorted to astronomy to determine when that lunar crescent could be seen in the month and year of crucifixion.

b) How accurate is the astronomical information? According to the manuscript that I received, astronomy is not an exact science, and the ancient people of Israel would have never reckoned the months by looking for the lunar crescent.

3. What does the Spirit of Prophecy says and what not on the subject?

This point has to do with a methodological problem. Should we first study what the Bible says, and then consider the statements of E. G. White on the biblical content?

Unfortunately, many modern commentaries of the Bible resort to conspiracy theories regarding how the Bible text would have been presumably edited in different historical moments in history. Therefore, their historical reconstructions cannot help us to understand the text as a unity, as it came to us. In our view, the testimony of the Bible is clear, and we will try to offer here a simple analysis, well founded, that brings into consideration the basic Bible texts, in a way that could be easily understood by the readers.

I. The Biblical Information on the Chronology of the Passover and of the Passion

Let us start by saying that the Hebrew term *pasah*, according to the rabbis and modern Jewish interpreters, does not mean “to pass over,” as translated by the LXX, the Vulgate, and the English version, calling it Passover. The meaning of *pasah* in Exod 12:13 and 23 is “nothing but protection”, as in Isa 31:5: “shielding and saving, *protecting* and rescuing.” God protects the Israelites from the destroyer angel (J. O. Milgrom, *Leviticus* (2004), 276), and the Jewish commentaries in *The JPS Torah Commentary*.

1) The moment of the day when the Passover was to be sacrificed in the OT (14 Abib/Nisan)

Exod 12:6: “The fourteenth day [of the first new moon] the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel will slaughter it *between the evenings*” (*‘arbayim*).

Lev 23:5: “On the fourteenth of the first month *between the two evenings* (*‘arbayim*), is the Lord’s Passover (“protection”).

Deut 16:6: “At the place which the Eternal your God will choose as a dwelling for his Name, you will sacrifice the passover in the evening (*‘ereb*), at the going down of the sun (*kebo‘ hashemesh*; see Deut 24:13; 1 Kgs 22:36), at the appointed time [*mo‘ed* as in Ps 75:2; 102:13] when you came forth out of Egypt.”

Josh 5:10: “On the evening (*‘ereb*) of the fourteenth day of the month... on the plains of Jericho, the Israelites celebrated the Passover. The day after the Passover, that very day, they ate some of the produce of the land: unleavened bread and roasted grain.”

Num 9:5: “They kept the passover on the fourteenth day of the first month between the two evenings (*‘arbayim*) in the wilderness of Sinai; according to all that the Eternal commanded Moses, so did the sons of Israel.”

2) The meaning of the terms *‘ereb* (“evening”), *‘arbayim* (“between the two evenings”), and *kebo‘ hashemesh* (“at the going down of the sun”)

The determination of the moment when the sacrifice took place depends, to a large degree, on the way we interpret these terms; if it took place at the conclusion of the 14th day before sunset, or at the beginning of the 14th day after sunset. In the context of the crucifixion, Thursday before sunset would have been the 14th day, and Thursday night (already Friday according to the Bible reckoning), would have begun the 15th day when Christ was crucified. For the author of the aforementioned paper, the 14th day would have started on Thursday night (already biblical Friday), and the 15th day (Unleavened Bread) would have begun on Friday night (already biblical Saturday).

I don’t agree with this latter view as it creates more problems than solutions. Because these terms are employed to depict a time before sunset, or during sunset, and even extending beyond sunset. For this reason, in order to understand the laws and history of Passover, we have to check the context of those terms in connection with the sacrifice.

A) The paschal Lamb was sacrificed before sunset at the conclusion of the 14th day

Our interest is focused on the terms “evening,” “vesper,” “at the going down of the sun,” in the context of the sacrifice. Let us see:

1) In order to specify the night, Exod 12:8 employs the word *lailah* (“night”), not *‘ereb* (“evening”) as in v. 6. Therefore in Exod 12, the evening takes place before night. By saying “that night,” the text means the night that followed the evening of the former day (always according to the Bible reckoning that ends the former day at sunset, and at the same time starts the new day). We can see this principle confirmed in Lev 23:27,32. The day of atonement was kept on the tenth day of the seventh month, from the evening of the ninth day to the evening of the tenth day (“from evening to evening”: *ba‘ereb me‘ereb*).

2) The evening sacrifice of the 14th day took place before beginning the 15th day after sunset. In Num 28:3-4 we read that the *‘arbayim* evening burnt offering ended the day. The “continuous” or “regular” morning and evening burnt offerings (*tamid*), were offered the same day. The text says,

literally, “this is the fire offering you are to present to the Eternal: ‘*Each day* [the same expression in Exod 5:13; equivalent to “each Sabbath” in Num 28:10, and “each new moon” in Num 28:14], present two unblemished year-old male lambs as a regular burnt offering (*tamid*). Offer one lamb in the morning (*boqer*), and the other between the two evenings (‘*arbayim*)’”. This shows us that the sacrifice of the Passover which was offered “between the two evenings,” according to Exod 12:6; 23:5, and Num 9:5,11, took place before the following biblical day, before sunset.

The rabbis understood the word ‘*arbayim*, “between the two evenings,” as embracing the space between afternoon—when the shadow of the sundial needle began to turn down toward the east—and sunset (*Pesachim* 5:1; 58^a). There is a Spanish equivalent in the word “poniente” (“setting”) in reference to the West (“saliente” [“rising”] in reference to the East). The sun places itself in the “poniente” in the afternoon. This seems to be the meaning of Jer 6:4 and 5, when it says that “the day declines, for the shadows of evening lengthen!”

Others have understood the word ‘*arbayim* as pointing to the twilight, that is, the space between sunset and the darkness of the night. In the context of the sacrifice that we are considering, the rabbinic position is correct. According to what we will see in the next point, the parallelism between ‘*arbayim* and ‘*ereb* means “evening” before sunset.

3) In 1 Chr 16:40 we read that the burning sacrifice was offered “regularly” (*tamid*), in the morning (*boqer*) and in the evening (‘*ereb*). Thus, when in Deut 16:6 we are told that the people were to sacrifice the Passover “at evening” (‘*ereb*), “at the going down of the sun” (*kebo ‘hashemesh*), we have to understand it also as toward evening, before sunset, on the same day as the sacrifice of the morning. A Greek equivalent to “at the end of the afternoon” found in Matt 27:57, clearly referred to a time prior to sunset (compare it with Luke 23:56).

Some see in Mark 1:32, a Greek equivalent pointing to a moment after sunset. Other versions, however, understand that Jesus started to heal the people around sunset: “evening having come, when the sun went down” (*Berean Literal Bible*); “in the evening at the going down of the sun” (*Aramaic Bible in Plain English*).

4) In Num 28:9-10, we see that the morning and evening sacrifices were offered within the Sabbath. This proves that the term “evening” corresponds to the same day as the term “morning,” not the following day. On the Sabbath, the regular burnt offering was doubled, that is, within the Sabbath, not after sunset which corresponds to the following day. “There could be no offering after the *tamid* of the evening” (Jacob Milgrom, *Numbers* (The JPS Torah Commentary, 1989), 341. The lamps were lightened in the context of the evening *tamid*. “When Aaron lights the lamps at evening (‘*ereb*), he will burn incense” (Exod 30:8; Lev 24:3).

Let us keep in mind that there was no electric light in ancient times. The priests had to add oil to the lamps, so that the wicks of the lamps would not burn. Those lamps had to burn till morning. According to Josephus and the *Talmud*, the central lamp or three of the seven lamps, remained burning during the whole day so that the light would not be quenched. The other lamps were lit again to join the remaining lamps already burning (*Tractate Shabbat* 22b; see 1 Sam 3:3). This is understandable if we keep in mind that the Holy Place of the tabernacle had no windows.

5) The idiomatic expression “when the sun goes down” in Deut 16:6, is equivalent to “when evening shadows” in Neh 13:19, and related to “evening” (‘*ereb*). In Neh 13:19 we find that “when evening shadows” mean a moment when the sun begins to decline in the afternoon, and points out to a time “before (*lip^ene*) the Sabbath,” that is, before sunset. Let us not forget that old sundials marked the shadow of the day with a needle. After noon, the light of the sun begins to shadow the eastern side of the sundial.

6) The sacrifices of the Passover were offered before the regular evening burnt offering. We can clearly see this in the Passover festival in Ezekiah's times, who tried to do everything according to the law of Moses. We are told in 2 Chr 35:10-14, that the priests offered first the Passover sacrifices, and then the vesper burnt offerings. It is obvious that they had to begin the thousands of paschal lambs early in the afternoon, not after sunset. The impressive amount of animals offered didn't allow them to complete the sacrifice of burnt offerings before sunset.

In his Jewish commentary on Num 28, Jacob Milgrom wrote: "there could be no offering after the *tamid* of the evening" (Jacob Milgrom, *Numbers* (The JPS Torah Commentary, 1989), 341. This was also understood by the Jews of *Qumran*, who wrote: "[Let] them [prepare on the fourteenth] day of the first month... They shall sacrifice (it) before the evening offering and shall sacrifice ... men from twenty years of age and over shall prepare it. They shall eat it at night in the holy courts" (*The Temple Scroll*, XVII).

The Book of Jubilees also confirms that the Passover was sacrificed before sunset on the 14th day, and eaten after sunset at the beginning of the 15th day. "Remember the commandment which the Lord commanded thee concerning the passover, that thou shouldst celebrate it in its season on the fourteenth of the first month, that thou shouldst kill it before it is evening, and that they should eat it by night on the evening of the fifteenth from the time of the setting of the sun" (*Jubilees* 49:1). In his book *Special Laws*, Philo of Alexandria also understood the time of the Passover sacrifice, according to Exod 12:6; Lev 23:5; Num 9:3, as corresponding "from noon till eventide" (F. H. Colson, *Philo. Volume VII* (Appendix 145), 627.

"The first festival consists of two distinct institutions, the *pesah* ('Passover'), which refers only to the sacrifice offered at the end of the fourteenth day of the first month, and the Feast of Unleavened bread, which technically refers only to the seven-day festival that begins on the fifteenth day (see Lev 23:6; Num 28:17)... Since the two institutions occur on consecutive days, and since unleavened bread was also eaten along with the *pesah* sacrifice, the latter could be spoken of as part of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, as in verses 4 and 16", J. H. Tigay, *Deuteronomy* (JPS, 1996), 152. "The sacrifice is made at sunset (v. 6). It has to be eaten through the night and finished by morning, in imitation of the original *pesah* sacrifice in Egypt (Exod 12:8)" (*ibid*, 155). This modern Jewish commentary interprets Deut 16:8 as follows: "After leaving for home on the first day (v. 7), you shall eat unleavened bread for six days more" (*ibid*, 155).

Curiously, the rabbis of Jerusalem, who also sacrificed the paschal lamb in the evening of the 14th before sunset, and ate it after sunset on the 15th day, had a slightly different prescription for when the Passover fell before Sabbath. According to *Mishnah*, they advanced the burning sacrifice several hours to be able to sacrifice the paschal lamb before sunset (*Pesachim* 5:1). The rabbinic practice of advancing the time for the sacrifices before Sabbath is understandable by the fact that they didn't manage theories, but had to fulfill the law in facts, and needed time to offer the festal sacrifices so as not to be found sacrificing during the night.

7) In Num 33:3-4 we are told that the Israelites left Egypt "on the fifteenth day of the first month, the day after the Passover." Moses had already specified it when he said in Exod 12:17: "Celebrate the Festival of Unleavened Bread, because it was on this very day that I brought your divisions out of Egypt. Celebrate this day as a lasting ordinance for the generations to come." As already seen, the paschal lamb was sacrificed before sunset. Therefore, the Israelite departure on the 15th day, the day after the Passover, corresponds to that night near dawn (Deut 16:1: "by night": *laylah*). Otherwise the divine order to eat the Passover in haste would have made no sense.

"This is how you are to eat it: with your cloak tucked into your belt, your sandals on your feet and your staff in your hand. Eat it in haste; it is the Lord's Passover" (Exod 12:11). "Sacrifice sheep and cattle for

the Passover to the Lord your God at the place where the Lord your God will choose to establish his name. Do not eat leavened bread with it. For seven days you are to eat unleavened bread with it, the bread of hardship—because you left the land of Egypt in a hurry—so that you may remember for the rest of your life the day you left the land of Egypt” (Deut 16:2-3). They ate it so fast that they didn’t have time to prepare a normal meal. They had to cook bread without yeast (Exod 12:39).

Neither Moses nor the people knew when exactly they would be permitted to leave. Therefore Moses commanded the people not to go outside their doors during the night. The only protection from the destroyer angel was within their homes, because the blood “on the sides and tops of the doorframes” would cover only those who would be within. They had to stand within their homes, awaiting the order to depart that would be imminent (Exod 12:22; see the expression found in John 20:1: “early [in the morning]..., when it was still dark”).

“At the time of their deliverance from Egypt, the children of Israel *ate the Passover supper standing*, with their loins girded, and with their staves in their hands, *ready for their journey*. The manner in which they celebrated this ordinance harmonized with their condition; for *they were about to be thrust out of the land of Egypt*, and were to begin a painful and difficult journey through the wilderness” (DA 652). “Their speedy departure” didn’t take them unprepared, because “the Israelites obeyed the directions that God had given. Swiftly and secretly they made their preparations for departure. Their families were gathered, the paschal lamb slain, the flesh roasted with fire, the unleavened bread and bitter herbs prepared...” (PP 243).

The Pharaoh “called for Moses and Aaron *by night*, and said, Rise up, and get you forth from among my people, both ye and the children of Israel; and go, serve the Lord, as ye have said. Also take your flocks and your herds, as ye have said.... And be gone; and bless me also.” The royal counselors also and the people entreated the Israelites to depart “*out of the land in haste*; for they said, We be all dead men” (PP 244). “With their loins girt, with sandaled feet, and staff in hand, *the people of Israel had stood* [Éx 12:11], hushed, awed, yet expectant, awaiting the royal mandate that should bid them go forth. *Before the morning broke*, they were on their way... During the plagues..., the Israelites had gradually assembled themselves in Goshen; and notwithstanding the suddenness of their flight, some provision had already been made for the necessary organization and control of the moving multitudes, they being divided into companies, under appointed leaders” (PP 245).

8) The feast of the Passover and of the Unleavened Bread were often taken as a unity. This is the reason why sometimes they referred the Passover feast by the name Unleavened Bread, and the feast of Unleavened Bread by the name of the Passover. We will see this again in the New Testament. We must take into account this fact to avoid falling into the literary criticism of those who believe that this is a contradiction only explicable by different traditions in a theoretical evolution of the ritual. See, for instance, Santos Ros Garmendia, *La Pascua en el Antiguo Testamento* (1978), 17, and some Jewish commentaries in JPS.

The consideration of the two feasts as a unity can be seen in Exod 12:18, where we are told that they had “to eat bread made without yeast, from the evening of the fourteenth day until the evening of the twenty-first day.” But in Lev 23:6; Num 28:17; 33:3-4, and Eze 45:25, we are told that the feast of Unleavened Bread started on the 15th day. It is evident that in Exod 12:18, Moses is using the criteria of Lev 23:17,32 to mark the day. The tenth day of the seventh month began at sunset of the ninth day, lasting until sunset of the next day (the 10th day). The sun marked a transition between the former day and the new day.

The author of the aforementioned manuscript suggests that the Israelites ate the unleavened bread at the beginning of the 14th day, after a presumable sunset on a 13th day. But this supposition brings him to affirm that the first meal of unleavened bread did not form part of the feast of Unleavened Bread that God

required for the paschal night. This is nonsense, because in this case, the first day of the feast of Unleavened Bread would have started 24 hours after the first time they ate unleavened bread. If we move that supposition to the gospels, this would mean that Jesus ate unleavened bread in the Holy Supper on Thursday night, but the order of not eating bread with yeast during the festival of seven days would have started rather on Friday night, one day later. No! The Feast of Unleavened Bread started on Friday the 15th day with that first paschal supper, of course, after Thursday the 14th day which ended at sunset.

The divine order of sacrificing the Passover was accompanied by the order banishing all yeast from the houses (Exod 12:15,19; 13:7). This elimination of yeast must be performed at the conclusion of the 14th day (Exod 12:18), so that the houses could be free from yeast on the 15th day. From that day until the 21st day, the houses were to be free from yeast, so that even during the 22nd day the feast which started on the 15th day could finish without any vestiges of yeast in the midst of God's people. Since the sacrifice of the Passover on the afternoon of the 14th day, and its meal at the beginning of the 15th day, were intimately associated, it was common in Israel to fuse both feasts. As we will see in the following point, E. G. White in the book *Great Controversy*, also does this when she deals with the paschal sacrifice on the 14th day as a unity with the Holy Supper that followed after sunset.

Let us not forget the double Bible reckoning of days and years. For example, the law of the firstfruits of wheat, known later as Pentecost, was also called the feast of the weeks (Exod 34:22; Num 28:26), because it had to be celebrated seven weeks after the barley firstfruits, exactly 49 days later. However, that feast was called Pentecost, which means 50. The same happens with the law of Jubilee. The year 49 was also referred to as the year 50, in a Hebrew reckoning style which sometimes count complete days or years, and other times compute inclusive days or years (Lev 23:15-16; Lev 25:8-11). See A. R. Treiyer, *The Apocalyptic Times of the Sanctuary* (2014), 86-89.

We find the same thing in Matt 17:1 and Mark 9:2, where we are told that the transfiguration took place "six days after" Jesus announced His death, while in Luke 9:28 we are told that this happened "about eight days later." Many commentators explain the eight days of Luke as including the final fractions of the day of the conversation, and the beginning day of transfiguration. The six days of Matthew are six complete days elapsing among them, and together with Mark, they employ the exclusive or complete method, while Luke resorts to an inclusive reckoning.

So also the paschal sacrifice on the fourteenth evening marked at the same time the transition to the supper of the 15th day. In this way, to say that it had to be celebrated from 14th day to the 21st, or from 15th day to 22nd, it would be the same.

9) Other examples of the merging of both feasts in the Bible, Jewish literature, and E. G. White.

In Exod 23:14-15 mention is made to the first pilgrimage of the year as the feast of Unleavened Bread, without mentioning the Passover. In the theological projection made by Ezekiel for the future temple, he says, literally: "In the first month on the fourteenth day you are to observe the Passover, a festival lasting seven days, during which you shall eat bread made without yeast" (Eze 45:21,23), something expected to happen at the Unleavened Bread feast on the 15th day (see Num 28:17). Thus the Passover feast marked the entire seven days of the Unleavened Bread.

With this Old Testament background, let us go to the New Testament. Luke the evangelist makes the following clarification. "Now the Festival of Unleavened Bread, called the Passover, was approaching" (Luke 22:1). "Then came the day of Unleavened Bread on which the Passover lamb had to be sacrificed. Jesus sent Peter and John, saying, 'go and prepare for us to eat the Passover'" (Luke 22:7-8). In the same vein of Exod 12:18 and Luke 22:1,7, we find the testimony of Matthew and Mark regarding Thursday the 14th day of the first month: "*On the first day of the Festival of Unleavened Bread*, when it was customary

to sacrifice the Passover lamb, Jesus' disciples asked him, 'Where do you want us to go and make preparations for you to eat the Passover?'" (Mar 14:12,15; Matt 26:17). John, thinking of the Passover feast wrote: "Now before the feast of the Passover, Jesus, knowing that His hour had come that He would depart out of this world to the Father, having loved the own who were in the world, He loved them to the end. Now when it was time for supper, the devil had already put it into the heart of Judas ... to betray him" (John 13:1).

We can clearly see here that the Passover feast was linked to the feast of Unleavened Bread, which started on Thursday which preceded the day of crucifixion on Friday. The same is found in Isa 30:29. Though the paschal sacrifice was performed before sunset, the Passover was celebrated at night. Notwithstanding, the context of this text seems to point out the night of the feast of Tabernacles, when all Israel stayed overnight in booths for seven days (Lev 23:34: *hag*).

The same language of a merged feast is found in the Spirit of Prophecy. "The Passover was followed by the seven day's feast of unleavened bread" (PP 539). "*The use of unleavened bread* also was significant. It was expressly enjoined in the law of the Passover, and as strictly observed by the Jews in their practice, that no leaven should be found in their houses during the feast" (PP 278). "The Jews were anxious to hasten the trial and execution of Jesus, because if it were not brought about at once *there would be a delay of a week on account of the immediate celebration of the passover*" (3 SP 127). "Soon after the Passover week was ended..." (DA 809).

It is also in this context of two merged feasts that we must understand the following statement of E. G. White: "On the fourteenth day of the first Jewish month, the very day and month on which for fifteen long centuries the Passover lamb had been slain, Christ, having eaten the Passover with His disciples, instituted that feast which was to commemorate His own death as 'the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.' That same night He was taken by wicked hands to be crucified and slain" (GC 399). Here, she is employing the language of Exod 12:18, without denying the explanation of Lev 23:6. The immolation of the paschal lamb took place on the 14th day before sunset, and it was eaten after sunset on the beginning of the 15th day, replacing it with the institution of the Holy Supper (see details below).

E. G. White was writing to an audience accustomed to reckon the day from midnight to midnight. So, it is also plausible that she included the paschal meal in her initial mention of the 14th day, which for us is "the same day." In other words, E. G. White would be implying in the story of the Passover, a Julian day like we have today.

10) There is no denunciation by Christ of the Pharisees for the day chosen to celebrate the Passover. No surprise or concern is found by the disciples for the date of the celebration, which suggests that they agreed with the interpretation of the law regarding the time of the sacrifice and the paschal supper carried out by the leaders of the Jewish nation.

The weekly meal of the Passover

During the entire Passover week the people and the priests offered burnt offerings and sacrifices of peace, as we can see in the celebration organized by king Hezekiah (2 Chr 30:21-22; cf. Lev 7:11-15). The law was clear on this point. "You are to offer to the Lord your God the Passover sacrifice from the herd or flock in the place where the Lord will choose as a dwelling for His Name... *For seven days you are to eat with it unleavened bread*, the bread of affliction, because you left the land of Egypt in haste" (Deut 16:2-3). "To eat the Passover" was therefore extended to the entire week.

In Christ' day, the rabbis also understood that, differing from the first Passover which required that the blood be put on the doorframes of their houses on one day, "the Pesach of generations obtains all seven"

days (*Pesachim* 9:5). And the paschal weekly meal included what they called also “sacrifices” like cereals, unleavened bread (*Pesachim* 7:4), and the *shellamim* (“sacrifices of peace”) (*Pesachim* 5:2). It is in the same vein that Josephus says: “we keep a feast for eight days, which is called the feast of unleavened bread” (*Antiquities of the Jews*, Book 2, chapter 15, 1). If we read well, we will see that Josephus is not saying that they had to eat unleavened bread for eight days. He is simply taking the feast of both Passover and Unleavened Bread as a unity. That feast which could be labeled, indistinctly, as Passover or Unleavened Bread, lasted eight days in total.

The rabbinic texts warned about the danger of being defiled for one week by contact with human blood or a corpse during the feast, because this would hinder them from eating the Passover (*Pesachim* 5-7). Their warning to avoid being disqualified for one week because of impurity was based on Lev 12, 15, and Num 19. In addition, to avoid being defiled in a pagan milieu, the Jewish leaders avoided entering the praetorium. They knew the inhuman treatment given by Romans to those who were condemned, and didn’t want to be defiled with human blood. Contact with human blood or a corpse would have prevented their partaking of the entire weekly meal which had already started (John 18:28). See A. R. Treiyer, *The Day of Atonement and the Heavenly Judgment*, cap 3. *The Glorious Promises of the Sanctuary*, cap 3-4.

The day of preparation

The apostle John informs us that Friday “at noon” was “the day of preparation of the Passover” (John 19:14). What does he mean by “day of preparation”? We saw that the disciples had prepared the Passover on Thursday, but this Thursday was not called “the day of preparation of the Passover,” and certainly no Bible testimony can be invoked to identify a presumable day of preparation for the Passover. Therefore, “the day of preparation” referred to by the apostle John during that Friday was the preparation for the weekly Sabbath in that weekly paschal feast. Actually, John clarifies this in the same chapter. He says that the day of preparation for the weekly Sabbath was Friday (John 19:31,42). Even modern Greek calls Friday *paraskeu * (“preparation”). Notice these additional passages.

“It was Preparation Day (that is, the day before the Sabbath). Joseph of Arimathea went to Pilate to request the body of Jesus and so avoid exposing it during the sacred day (Mark 15:42). “It was Preparation Day, and the Sabbath was about to begin” (Luke 23:54). “The next day, the one after Preparation Day [the weekly Sabbath that followed Friday], the chief priests and the Pharisees went to Pilate” to ask him to put a stone on Jesus’ grave, and guardians to keep it (Matt 27:62-63).

“A high [or special] Sabbath” (John 19:31)

“It was the day of Preparation, and the next day was a High Sabbath.” What Sabbath is John referring to when he says that the day following the day of preparation was a “great” or “high” or “special Sabbath? It could not be a ceremonial yearly Sabbath as some have interpreted the first day of the feast, but a “special” Sabbath because it occurred within a whole week of feast, and which required a special sanctification like that of not eating breads with yeast. Some brought into consideration the Greek text of Isa 1:13 (LXX), as a reference for a “great day” for all the feasts. The text says: “I cannot bear your new moons, and your sabbaths, and *the great day*” (*Brenton Septuagint Translation*). Were the Greek translators thinking of holy assemblies that fell on weekly Sabbaths? Regardless, the Hebrew text does not employ the term “great,” but mention Sabbaths and Holy Assemblies. The context shows us how that hypocritical celebration of their most sacred festivities was repugnant to God.

Was the term “the great day” of the LXX pointing to the last and solemn day of the yearly feast, that fell on the eighth day in the Feast of Booths? John wrote: “on the last and greatest day of the festival” of Tabernacles (John 7:37). The first day of the Feast of Booths or Tabernacles also prohibited laborious work. However, for the apostle John, that first ceremonial Sabbath was not “the great day of the feast,”

but only the last one. The reason is that the great eighth day was the last festal day of the year. For this reason, we cannot apply a “high day” to every annual feast. Neither does the text dealing with the Feast of Tabernacles say that the last day was a “high Sabbath,” because although that day was a yearly Sabbath, it was not a “high Sabbath as when the seventh day of the week fell on a day of feast or, more definitely, in the only week which forbade leaven bread.

Holy convocations – yearly Sabbaths – weekly Sabbaths

A careful reading of Lev 23 allows us to conclude that the Spring feasts were not Sabbath festivals. Only the autumnal feasts were labeled as “sabbaths,” and not all the days of the last week of feast were sabbaths, but only the first and the eighth (Lev 23:24,32,39). Many modern Jewish and Christian interpreters agree on this point (see among others, the *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia* on Lev 23:11,15-16).

The requirements for a weekly Sabbath were more strict than for a 15th day of Abib on which the people were permitted to cook meals (Exod 12:16). The only thing that was not permitted on Holy Assemblies was “laborious work,” but on weekly Sabbaths and on the Day of Atonement it was required not to do “any work,” without exception (Exod 20:10; Lev 23:28). The same distinction is brought out with the word Sabbath. “Sabbath and Yom Kippur alone are described as *shabbat shabbaton* (e.g., Exod 16:23), which can only mean ‘absolute rest.’ The nonlaborious work permitted on the festivals is not defined, except for the explicit permission to prepare food on the first and last days of the Passover (Exod 12:16)” (J. Milgrom, *Numbers*, 243).

Another distinction between the Lord’s Sabbath and ceremonial sabbaths and holy convocations can be seen when we compare Lev 23:37-38 with Lev 23:3 and 32. The ceremonial Sabbaths are distinguished as “your sabbath” (Lev 23:32), and the feasts and holy convocations as “your feasts,” “your solemn feasts” (Isa 1:13-14; Hos 2:11; Am 5:21). Those feasts and holy convocations must be observed “in addition to the Lord’s Sabbath” (Lev 23:38), which was the seventh day of the week (Lev 23:3). “This distinction provides another reason why the Sabbath day is superior to the Day of Purgation [Atonement]: it pertains to creation (Gen 2:1-3), because it became sanctified as YHWH’s day of rest (Exod 20:11)” (J. Milgrom, *Leviticus* [2004]).

Some have tried to deny the occurrence of a Friday the 15th day of Nisan in the week of the Passion, because Jesus became a servant when washed his disciples feet, something supposedly not permitted on a Holy Convocation (Lev 23:7-8). But we don’t know if that washing ceremony took place before or after sunset. I advised the friend who advanced this idea not to wash the feet to anyone during the holy communion services we have on Saturdays. He answered that today this is merely a symbol. I exhorted him not to change his interpretation of the law by his tradition.

Let us notice what E. G. White wrote on this point. “*At a feast it was customary for a servant to wash the feet of the guests, and on this occasion preparation had been made for the service*” (DA 644). The three pilgrim feasts of the year were the Passover, Pentecost, and the Feast of Tabernacles. It was normal to end the journey with dust on the feet, requiring them to be washed. Why was it customary to wash the feet at a feast? All feasts had holy convocations, and when the feast lasted seven days, the first and the last day of the feast were holy convocations (Lev 23:7-8,35-36). Did they violate the law of not doing laborious work on those holy convocations for that custom of washing the feet? Were servants free to presumably profane those holy convocations?

“The whole life of Christ had been a life of unselfish service [including Saturdays]. ‘Not to be ministered unto, but to minister’ (Matthew 20:28) [even on Saturdays: (Mat 12:12; Mar 3:4)], had been the lesson of His every act. But not yet had the disciples learned the lesson. At this last Passover supper, Jesus repeated

His teaching by an illustration that impressed it forever on their minds and hearts” (DA 642). In consequence, the argument that the washing of feet could not be performed in a festive holy convocation requires to become more strict than a Pharisee.

In addition to permission to cook on a day of holy assembly, there were other authorizations that distinguished it from a weekly Sabbath. For instance, they were not permitted to travel on weekly Sabbaths. God told Israel: “Remain each of you in his place; let no one go out of his place on the seventh day” (Exod 16:29). The Pharisees understood by “place” the city everyone was found on the Sabbath day, plus the common land which involved the land for the animals. So, everyone could walk within the city anytime he wanted. Since the only definite urbanization found in the Pentateuch were the Levite cities, they were taken as a base. The common land of everyone of those cities are defined as 2000 cubits (Num 35:5; Josh 3:4: about 1 km). Therefore, the “sabbath journey” is, in principle, 1 km. from the Israelite home.

According to the *Talmudic* tractate called *Erubin*, if the Israelite fixed a camp 1 km. from his house, that distance could be widened to 2 kms. from the nearer synagogue. In order to do this, he had to set the camp with food provision on Friday before sunset, and could return home to sleep. Thus, he could walk after sunset during the Sabbath to the camp, and from there to the synagogue, without violating the radius of 1 km. from one extreme to the other from his camp.

In Acts 1:12 we read: “the apostles returned to Jerusalem from the hill called the Mount of Olives, a Sabbath day’s walk from the city.” Between the eastern wall to the traditional place of Jesus’ ascension there are nearly 700 meters as the crow flies, making it longer if one had to walk there. On one occasion Jesus “went through the grainfields on the Sabbath” (Matt 12:1), which could be interpreted as violating this rule. He was confronted by the Pharisees for the fact that His disciples were picking some heads of grains to eat on Sabbath. He had obviously not taken care of preparing a camp the day before with food provision, to have an additional kilometer to walk. After that He went to the synagogue, and healed a man with a shriveled hand (vv. 9-10). He concluded by saying that “it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath” (v. 12).

These Pharisaic sabbatical restrictions were not prescribed for the non-sabbatical “holy convocations.” The fifteenth of the first month, on the first day of the Unleavened Bread, there was a Holy Convocation and the requirement of not doing “laborious work” (Lev 23:6-7). But it signified the day on which the people of Israel began their historic exodus. “On the day after the Passover, the people of Israel went out triumphantly in the sight of all the Egyptians” (Num 33:3). And this experience had to be commemorated by the Israelites through their generations. So, the argument that the Friday of the crucifixion could not be a 15th day of Holy Convocation because the Romans caused Jesus and the foreign bystander Simon of Cyrene to bear the cross, makes no sense. Even the fact that Simon was coming from the country did not imply that he had been working. He could have been a foreigner who had lodged at a farm and was now continuing on to another place. As already seen, even on a weekly Sabbath, Jesus went through the grainfields on the Sabbath, and His disciples picked grain to eat.

We already saw that when the Passover fell on Friday, a day before Sabbath, the rabbis advanced the hour of sacrifices to be ready for the Sabbatical rest (*Pesachim* 5:1). This fact proves that for the rabbis, the weekly Sabbath was more sacred than a 15th day of holy convocation. As a matter of fact, the 15th day always followed the 14th day, no matter what day of the week this might take place in a year, and they didn’t advance the hour of sacrifice before that holy convocation.

It is true that on Friday the 15th Joseph of Arimathea bought the death clothing to bury Jesus. Since the Sabbath was more sacred than a day of holy convocation, the Jews didn’t want the bodies of Jesus and the robbers to be exposed during the weekly Sabbath (John 19:31). Doubtless Joseph of Arimathea knew who

had a linen cloth to cover a corpse, and went to his house to acquire it (Mar 19:45-46). Burying a person was not an ordinary task for Joseph. On special occasions, the Jewish law permitted someone to leave a garment pledge in order to pay the cost after the Sabbath. How much easier would it have been for Joseph of Arimathea to do the same on a day which was not as sacred as the weekly Sabbath?

Let us read the *Tractate Shabbat* 23:1 found in the *Talmud of Babylon*, which quotes the *Mishnah*: “A man may borrow of an acquaintance jugs of wine or oil (on Sabbath), provided he does not say to him: ‘Lend (them to) me.’ A woman may also borrow bread from her acquaintance. If the man is refused (by his acquaintance), he may leave his upper garment (as a pledge) with the lender, and settle his account after Sabbath”. The women, however, went early in the morning to the grave to embalm Jesus, and bought salves after Sabbath (Mar 16:1), because they didn’t have the urgency to bury Him.

Neither was it a crime to arrest a person on a weekly Sabbath. This is what the Israelites did in the desert when one of them violated the Sabbath (Num 15:32-36). Would not they arrest Jesus a 15th day Thursday for considering Him a danger for the nation?

Let us not forget that in their hatred against Jesus, the rabbis violated several of their laws. In the book *Desire of Ages*, E. G. White mentions some of them. For instance, they judged Jesus at night, when it was their duty to judge Him during the day, in order to avoid the delay of a week to condemn him. They wanted to have the case already decided by the morning. For this reason they woke Pilate up to obtain His condemnation, something that irritated the Roman procurer. From that moment, it was the Romans who would condemn and kill Jesus, not the Jews.

They also violated the law requiring that every man be treated as innocent before proven guilty (*DA* chap 75). In the presumably unusual case of judging a person during the day of a holy convocation, we should not be surprised about a violation on that matter either. For the leaders of that nation, it had to do with an emergency case. In their fury they went too far, even to the point of resigning the theocracy, when they stated before Pilate that they had no king but Caesar (John 19:15).

“From profane, blasphemous lips went forth the words, ‘We have no king but Caesar.’ Thus by choosing a heathen ruler, the Jewish nation had withdrawn from the theocracy. They had rejected God as their king. Henceforth they had no deliverer. They had no king but Caesar. To this the priests and teachers had led the people. For this, with the fearful results that followed, they were responsible. A nation's sin and a nation's ruin were due to the religious leaders” (*DA* 738-9).

“The day after the Sabbath”: the feast of firstfruits

The third yearly feast must be celebrated within the seven days of unleavened bread. That feast, which consisted in offering the firstfruits of barley was not a day of holy convocation, much less a Sabbath. It had to be observed “the day after the [weekly] Sabbath,” and count seven “Sabbaths” from there, to offer the firstfruits of wheat after the seventh Sabbath (Lev 23:11,15-16). Although there was no agreement among the Jews if the law pointed out a day after the weekly Sabbath or a day after a yearly Sabbath, the context seems clear. They had to always be celebrated on the first day of the week. The following proofs are given for this.

1. The law said that they had to count “seven complete Sabbaths” (*sheba' shabbatot*), that is, seven weeks containing seven Sabbaths (Lev 23:15-16). Since during those seven weeks there were no ceremonial yearly Sabbaths, they had to be weekly Sabbaths. They had to wait 49 days after the weekly Sabbath to offer the wheat firstfruits (Exod 34:22), as they had done for the barley firstfruits. Let us keep in mind that the day before Pentecost was also not a yearly feast. Pentecost was also celebrated the day after the Sabbath, obviously, a weekly Sabbath.

Some have wanted to argue that the term *shabbah* could sometimes refer to a week. We agree, but when the Sabbath completed an entire week. Thence Lev 23:15 speaks of “seven complete Sabbaths.” It is more or less equivalent to say “I have 40 Aprils” of age (in Spanish it is common to say “tengo 40 abriles o eneros,” depending on the birthday month). For this reason, instead of translating Luke 18:13, “I fast twice a week” (*sabbátou*),” some versions like the *Jubilee Bible 2000*, translate it: “I fast two meals every sabbath.” And in Mark 16:9, the same version translates it: “Jesus rose early the first of the sabbaths (*sabbátou*),” and the *Young’s Literal Translation*, “risen in the morning of the first of the sabbaths.” This means, the first day of the Sabbath weeks, from the day after the seventh day Sabbath to the following Sabbath day.

We find the same principle in the law of Jubilee. The Israelites had to count seven weeks of years, not starting at any year, but at the former Jubilee year which was a Sabbath year like all the other seven sabbatical years (Lev 28:8-11). When Scripture wants to point out a period of time of seven days, it says “a feast of seven days” (Eze 45:21). But when it points out a week by the term “sabbath,” it has to do with a week which begins on Sunday and ends on a seventh day Sabbath. A similar expression is found in Num 28:10: “each Sabbath.”

Let us notice also that again, the *Jubilee Bible 2000* version translates 1 Cor 16:2 not as “first day of the week,” but “*each first sabbath* let each one of you set aside in store, as God has prospered him, that there be no collections when I come.” Would it be a reference to each first sabbath of the month, or to a first day of a week which ends with the seventh-day Sabbath? The *International Standard Version* renders the same text, “after the Sabbath ends.” In Matt 28:1, the *Jubilee Bible 2000* translates it: “well along on the sabbath, as it began to dawn on the first of the sabbaths,” that is, in the first day of weeks which ends on Saturday.

[Let me add here that many evangelicals try to deny that Paul met “the next Saturday” with the gentiles, to preach the gospel to them (Acts 13:42,44). They resort to the same argument of taking the term Sabbath as week, to argue that the meeting would have taken place the following week, without reference to the seventh day Sabbath. But I don’t know any version which translates these verses as the next week instead of the next Sabbath, because the context doesn’t allow that at all].

2. The only two feasts that are not prescribed for a specific day of the month are the two feasts of firstfruits which had to be celebrated “the day after the Sabbath.” Why did God not tell the Israelites that they had to celebrate that presumable ceremonial Sabbath on the 16th, 17th, or 18th day? All the other festivities clearly specified the day of the month. The answer is simple. Because the weekly Sabbath did not depend on the seven days commanded for the feast of the Unleavened Bread. J. Milgrom, *Numbers* (JPS), 244, concludes by saying that “like the Sabbath, the Feast of Weeks [Pentecost] is independent of the lunar calendar. It marks the beginning of the wheat harvest, which occurs seven weeks after the beginning of the barley harvest (Lev 23:15-16).”

J. de Oliveira rightly concludes that “if the ‘sabbath’ of Lev 23:12 [23:11] was considered the 15th day of Abib/Nissan and the firstfruits the 16th day, which could fall at any day of the week, Pentecost would not be the day ‘after the seventh Sabbath’ required by the Bible text” (*Astronomía*, 275).

3. Some rabbis linked Pentecost with the promulgation of the law. But we are told nothing of this presumable link. Exod 19:1 tells us that “on the third new moon after the people of Israel had gone out of the land of Egypt, on that day [pointed out by the new moon], they came into the wilderness of Sinai.” This is the way many modern versions understand this text [see <https://biblehub.com/exodus/19-1.htm>].

On the other hand, we have to take into account that “the day” in the Bible sometimes has the meaning of “occasion” or “time” or “when.” So, Exod 19:1 could be also interpreted as “on the third new moon when [or “in the time when”] the people of Israel had gone out of the land of Egypt. Lev 7:37-38 says, for instance, “this is the law of the burnt offering, the grain offering, the sin offering, the guilt offering, the ordination offering, and the peace offering, which the Lord gave Moses on Mount Sinai *on the day* He commanded the Israelites to present their offerings to the LORD in the wilderness of Sinai.” Those laws were not given in a single day. Moses spent 40 days on the mountain receiving divine instruction. The text is clearly referring to the occasion when God prescribed the laws of the sanctuary. Consequently, it is hard to chronologically link the promulgation of the law with Pentecost.

In Numbers 7 we have again the word “day” with the meaning of “when,” “in the time or occasion when,” without implying a single day. We find there what the prince is required to offer at the dedication of the altar. The Jewish rabbis speculated on the exact date when these twelve days took place. Many concluded that the twelve days should follow the first seven days, bringing the sanctification and dedication of the temple and its priesthood to 19 or 20 days in total. But then, did they neglect the Passover that should be observed on the fourteenth day? Of course not!

The text says that this offering was to be brought “on the day when,” which is interpreted as “when” the sanctuary was inaugurated (Num 7:1), that is, when the tabernacle was anointed (v. 10), more definitely “after” completing its erection and priestly anointing (v. 84), without specifying a definite day. The altar, for example, was not sanctified in only one day, but lasted seven days (Exod 29:30,36-37; Lev 8:33,35).

On the other hand, the offering of the princes of Israel could not be brought before the second month when the census took place (Num 1:1), because those princes contributed to taking the census that also determined the service of the Levites (Num 3 and 4). How could they bring the offering for the services of the Levites before they were nominated? In addition, that offering was being brought to the temple for twelve days, according to the twelve tribes of Israel, not to be offered by the princes every day in the case of the sacrifices, but for its usage by the priests (Num 7). See J. Milgrom, *The JPS Torah Commentary. Numbers* (The Jewish Publication Society, Philadelphia-New York, 1990), 362-364,366.

Christians are not required to celebrate a Passover week

Our interest in the chronological study of the Passover and of the Passion lies in its prophetic projection seen in Dan 8 and 9. However, we are not required to observe a Passover week feast. The apostle Paul said that the yearly sabbaths with their ritual sacrifices and the holy convocations were a “shadow of Christ.” Therefore no one is permitted to judge us for what we eat or don't eat on those days, or for not keeping them in the way Jews did (Col 2:16-17). Nor do we need to eat the Holy Supper on a fixed day of the year, nor less than in seven consecutive days. The gospel mission is universal (Matt 28:19-20; Acts 1:8), and we cannot be ruled by the seasons of Palestine.

“Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed,” and we are required to clean the old spiritual leaven at any time, to be transformed into a “new lump,” which is the same as to say “new man,” “new spiritual nature” (Eph 4:22-24; Col 3:10; 1 Cor 5:17).

We have already seen that the weekly sabbath was instituted in Eden, in the very week of creation, and its observance was included in the fourth commandment (Exod 20:8-11). Though on the weekly Sabbaths the sacrifices were doubled, which were a shadow of Christ; the celebration of the Sabbath days was not a shadow, because it recalled God's creation which should last for all eternity in the new creation (Isa 66:22-23: we will go each seventh day Sabbath to the city of God to worship the Creator, and each new moon to eat the fruit of the tree of life which gives each month its fruit”: Rev 22:2).

II. The value of the astronomical information to confirm the week of the passion

In order to deny what we have been studying, the manuscript that I received has to face the impressive astronomical confirmation of the year 31 for the Passion week. How does it do that? The document tries to throw in a red herring to muddy the waters of the astronomical data so as to prevent anyone from appealing to that information. As a matter of fact, that manuscript tries to prove at any cost that astronomy is not an exact science, and that every attempt to date past events has ended in utter chaos. Therefore the idea of determining the beginning of the month by the appearance of the lunar crescent is discarded. Instead it offers an allegedly “better” solution than the one chosen by God for his people, supposedly to solve the lunar chaos. Briefly, for the author of that manuscript, the Hebrew calendar would have been schematic, that is, not dependable of the crescent lunar. He took that idea from an Evangelical theologian.

Never forget that, according to the Bible, there are laws that control the motion of the moon and of the stars. Only here on earth the divine laws are violated. Well the Lord stated through prophet Jeremiah: “This is what the Lord says, he who appoints the sun to shine by day, who decrees the moon and stars to shine by night, who stirs up the sea so that its waves roar—the Lord Almighty is his name: ‘Only if this fixed order departed from My presence, declares the Lord, would Israel’s descendants ever cease to be a nation before Me’” (Jer 31:35-36).

If the astronomic science did not offer precise data, then NASA would have never been able to put a man on the moon, and send spaceships to all the other planets of our solar system. Before the appearance of personal computers, NASA and the American army developed big and expensive computers. But the outcome of all that information which was being developed in spatial laboratories to become more and more accurate, measured with laser beams and other methods, has reached our computer screens. So today we know the behavior of the stars better than ever before.

Comparison between the astronomy programs with the tablets of Babylon

Many issues are to be taken into account to measure the behavior of the stars, the moon, and the meteorites, even the rotation length of the earth. Thanks to more sophisticated measures that have been developing especially after the telescopic era in the year 1600, that behavior of the heavenly bodies may be better computed in recent years. We calculate today with atomic and laser beams that allow more definite measures. This also allows for more accurate measurement regarding the passover.

The question is: how may we know, for example, if any variation in the speed of the rotation of the earth has occurred from ancient times to our present day? Oceanic tides and alterations in global ice formations may also change the regular speed in seconds or fraction of seconds. Would these affect the ability to correctly perceive the positioning of the moon and stars at different historical moments in time?

Thanks to records of former centuries a slowing of the earth’s rotation has been computed in seconds. As we go back in time with these variations in mind, scientists have been comparing the dates obtained from records left by ancient civilizations like those of the Greeks and, formerly, the Chinese and Babylonian cultures. This has allowed them to further adjust the astronomical measures of both the past and the future. That comparison allows them to obtain the average variation of the earth’s rotation, as the sighting of the moon and of the planets, and to include that information in a coherent system to measure historical events.

New compilations of records of ancient and medieval eclipses in the period 720 BC to AD 1600, and of lunar occultations of stars in AD 1600–2015, have permitted verification that the length of a day is increasing at a rate of one minute eight seconds per century. This means that if we could live one more

millennium, we could enjoy about 11 minutes more per day. See:
[<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5247521/>].

Numerous other measurements of both lunar and solar eclipses from Babylon enable the variation of *Delta T* [rotative variation of the earth] to be traced with tolerable accuracy between about 700 BC and 50 BC (F. Richard Stephenson, *Harold Jeffreys Lecture 2002*, April 2003 Vol 44). But let us go to more specific samples.

A tablet corresponding to the 37th year of Nebuchadnezzar recorded that “on the 14th, one god was seen with the other; sunrise to moonset: 4°.” The 14th day corresponds to May 6, 568 BC. That is, the Sun was seen with the Moon for 4 time degrees (which corresponds to 16 minutes) from sunrise to moonset in the morning. The astronomical program shows that the sunrise took place at 5:14 AM, and the moonset at 5:29 AM, a difference of 15 minutes. This shows that the difference between the astronomical program and the Babylonian tablet was one minute. An impressive precision. See documentation in the document Year 37neb.docx in the webpage of Juarez de Oliveira on [<http://bit.ly/profeciadaniel>].

In the same document, p. 45, we can see that sunrise took place at 5.14 on May 6 and moon set at 5.23 in another astronomical program (9 minutes between sunrise and moon set). But the Babylonian Diary report of 16 minutes between sunrise and moon set on the same day, shows us a mismatch of 7 minutes between that astronomical program and the Babylonian records. Why does one program find a difference of one minute, and the other a difference of 7 minutes? Because one program takes into account the *Delta T* (rotation speed variation of the earth), and the other does not. For all practical purposes, as it applies to the sighting of the new crescent moon in the past, the difference is irrelevant.

The most updated astronomical program is called Almsun astronomy. Everyone may buy it because the price is accessible [<http://almsun.webd.pl/en/index.htm>]

Metonic cycles and the sighting of the new crescent moon

Some have resorted to the Metonic Cycle to measure historical times, in honor of the Greek astronomer called Meton, who confirmed what the Babylonians had already found. The metonic cycle has to do with the initial position of the moon repeating itself every 19 years. But that cycle is insufficient to measure long periods of time, because for each 219 years there is an error of one day, and six centuries elapsed from Babylonian times to the year of the Passion. For this reason God gave Israel a lunisolar calendar, which allowed them to reckon time more easily, in connection with the Spring equinox to determine what new moon to choose as the first one of the year.

It is true that after the destruction of Jerusalem in the year 70 AD, and the consequent Jewish diaspora, it was harder for the Jews to determine the first new moon. The divine instruction to fix the dates of the feasts used as a reference the place where God would chose to put there His Name. This is the reason why the rabbis believed that in order to obtain the correct information regarding the new crescent moon, they had to find out when this new moon could be seen in Jerusalem. The headquarters of those rabbis was set in Jamnia, so they depended on witnesses who would bring the report. The attempt to send the information through signs of fire was often adulterated by falsified signs of their enemies.

We can say the same about the Muslim method of marking the changes of the moon, which became still more complicated because their calendar was strictly lunar. Thus, their feasts ended up falling in different seasons, a phenomenon that persists till today. Since Islam expanded, the date for beginning their feasts changed according to the geographic place they lived. But originally, in Israel that problem didn't exist, because the observation of the moon didn't depend on witnesses who lived near Jerusalem. The Lord had determined that their festal laws were to be proclaimed in the place where God puts His Name (Lev

23:2,4,21; Deut 12:5-7; 16:6; Neh 8:15). Due to this historical fact, the attempt to label this simple divine requirement to measure time as chaotic is pure fantasy, a desperate effort to avoid confirming by astronomy, that the 14th Abib/Nisan fell on Thursday in the year 31. This precision fit the succession of events recorded in the gospels for the week of Passover and the Passion.

What happened when the moon was obscured by cloud cover? The solution was simple. Since the days of the lunar month could not have less than 29 days, and more than 30 days, if the new crescent moon could not be sighted on 29th day, they began the 30th day independently of the weather conditions. Let us notice that Jonathan told David: “tomorrow is the new moon” (1 Sam 20:18). How could Jonathan know that the month would start the next day, if the new crescent moon had not yet been sighted? Because the crescent moon had not been seen his current 29th day. He knew that the next day would be the 30th day, which would end at sunset, pointing out the beginning of the next day and month of the year. The Babylonian tablets confirm this manner in which ancient peoples could choose when to start the new moon.

In my book *The Apocalyptic Times of the Sanctuary* (2014), (which is also offered in kindle by Amazon), I give references to sundials employed by the Israelites to mark the years and the seasons. Even the entrance of the very temple of Jerusalem was toward the east, so that the first sun beams on its doors pointed out the Spring equinox, helping them to determine when to start the year and, together with this, the first new moon of the year. God had synchronized the movement of the sun and of the moon on the fourth day of creation, to help men to mark the days, the months, and the years, as well as the appointed times with their seasons (Gen 1:14). “He made the moon for the appointed times (*mo’adim*), and the sun knows when to go down” (Ps 104:19).

“Observe the new moon of barley ears” (Abib), was the divine instruction to start the first month of the year (Deut 16:1). The verb *shamar* employed in this verse means “to watch,” “to observe,” “to pay attention,” “to keep.” It is thirty times translated “to observe” in our versions. So, the command of watching the moon to mark the time comes from the creation itself. God required His people in ancient times to watch it in order to determine the beginning of the first month of the year. It is not an invention brought in after the year 70 AD. Old civilizations also resorted to the same method to reckon time that comes from the creation.

How may we know that the weather conditions did not hinder the demarcation of the first crescent moon in the year 31? Because the historical events recorded in the gospels in connection with the paschal week, the Holy Supper, the crucifixion, and the resurrection of Christ were fulfilled in the precisely foretold date. Now I will share a summary of the astronomic dates offered by the program *Lode Star Plus* which my uncle Adolfo Lista (an accredited Uruguayan astronomer) used for dating the week of the Passion. This program is introduced as “a powerful program capable of plotting an accurate and detailed map of the sky for any place on Earth at any time between 9999 BC and 9999 AD.” [<https://www.worldcat.org/title/lodestar-plus/oclc/23242766>]. This program was prepared taking into account “the necessary correction of the precession, aberration, paralax, and refraction” (A. Lista, *Evidencias Astronómicas sobre la Profecía de los 2300 Días* (2015), 21).

According to the program *Lode Star Plus*, “1 % visibility of the crescent moon coincides with the limit of what can be seen in a normal condition. In other words, some persons can see it, and other persons cannot. In principle, this situation shows a possible observation corresponding to a percentage of illumination larger than 1 %” (110).

Let us take into account that 1 % like that which took place on April 11 in the year 31, can be sometimes seen and other times not. We have to take into consideration what is called “photopic vision,” the human optical adaptation to the light, which in turn requires a certain time to become accustomed to darkness,

which is known as scotopic vision. It takes about one hour to adapt the human eye to totally adapt to darkness.

A comparison of the astronomical programs with the Babylonian tablets in Nebuchadnezzar’s times, shows an impressive correspondence. There is a minimum variation, too little to affect the clearly evident correlation. If this occurs with records found two millenniums and a half ago, how much more accurate would be the correspondence between astronomy and the history of the Passion more than six centuries later? As we can see, astronomy and the Bible go hand by hand.

On April 11 of the year 31 AD, the moon is found under the nautical twilight (when the sun is 12 degrees under the horizon), “in a zone from which astronomers flee because the light coming from a star, has a longer travel in the turbulent part of the atmosphere touched by the earthly surface, and also by the irregularities of the horizon” (122). When the sun is 18 degrees below the horizon for the astronomic twilight (the program does not offer 18 degrees, but another with one second difference before and after), the twilight... under the horizon coincides with the limit of a normal human vision” (124).

“At that moment the moon had an altitude of - 5 30’32”. In other words, it was under the horizon and, therefore, it could not be seen because a lot of time before the twilight clarity would have disappeared” (125). “The hour of concealment was 19h 23m 15.5f. If we add the time that took the dark side of the moon to be completely hidden in the horizon, we move away more and more from the end of the nautical twilight. It was therefore not necessary to reach the end of the astronomical twilight to conclude that the Moon was not discernible the day 11” (126).

“This fact fully justifies to place the new moon Abib/Nisan 1 on April 12 of the Julian year 31” (127). 14 days later leads us to Thursday when the paschal sacrifice was offered, which was eaten at night (at the beginning of biblical Friday), on the first day of Unleavened Bread. On that very day, at evening, the Son of God was crucified, who died at the time of the evening sacrifice, before sunset. The book *Desire of Ages* comments that at the moment of Jesus’ expiration, the lamb of the vesper sacrifice was untied by invisible hands, and escaped from the priests who were ready to immolate it. Since the sacrifice of the Passover took place before the evening sacrifice, that sacrifice must have been offered the former day, on Thursday the 14th.

Astronomical dates of the new year

Year	March	April
29	Saturday 5: 2 %	Monday 4
30	Friday 24: 4 %	Sunday 23
31	Tuesday 13: 2 %	Thursday 12: 4% Passover Thursday 26 Crucifixion Friday 27
32	Monday 31	Tuesday 29: 2%
33	Friday 20: 2%	Sunday 19

What E. G. White wrote

Our biblical analysis of the chronology of the Passion, confirmed by the current astronomical programs for the year 31, produced the following outcome. The day of the Passover corresponded to the 14th day of the first Jewish month, when the disciples prepared the paschal supper, and sacrificed the paschal lamb

before sunset. That night, already Friday the 15th according to biblical reckoning, was the first day of the feast of Unleavened Bread. Jesus instituted then the Holy Supper to replace the Paschal meal. He was crucified before sunset the same day, Friday. Two days later (or three if we reckon the days with the inclusive way), He rose from the dead as firstfruits of the final harvest that will take place at the resurrection of all the righteous at the end of the world.

We could already see that the feast of the Passover and the feast of the Unleavened Bread was merged to the point where both testaments refer the whole week of Unleavened Bread as the Passover, and the same word Passover is applied to that whole week of Unleavened Bread. This is what we also find in the writings of E. G. White. For instance, in connection to that feast, she wrote in her book *The Great Controversy*:

“These types were fulfilled, not only as to the event, but as to the time. *On the fourteenth day of the first Jewish month*, the very day and month on which for fifteen long centuries the Passover lamb had been slain, Christ, having eaten the Passover with His disciples, instituted that feast which was to commemorate His own death as ‘the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.’ That same night He was taken by wicked hands to be crucified and slain. And as the antitype of the wave sheaf our Lord was raised from the dead *on the third day*, ‘the first fruits of them that slept,’ a sample of all the resurrected just, whose “vile body” shall be changed, and “fashioned like unto His glorious body” (*GC 399*).

Juarez de Oliveira comments on this statement by saying that “when the text above is read, it must be borne in mind that time is passing as we advance from the time the lamb is slain to the time the lamb is eaten. During the passage of time we go from the fourteenth to the fifteenth, as the sun sets. For this reason, she says: ‘that same night He was taken by wicked hands to be crucified and slain.’ Was He crucified that same night?” (*Chronological Studies*, 63).

I would add that E. G. White wrote that book for an audience which doesn’t reckon the days by sunsets, but from midnight to midnight. Even so, de Oliveira finds in the law of the Day of Atonement (*Lev 23:32*) an equivalent statement. The text says: “From the evening of the ninth day of the month until the following evening you are to observe your sabbath.” It is evident that the Day of Atonement was the 10th day, not the 9th day of the seventh month. This verse tries to delimit the time of the 10th day. This is the reason why it is focalized in the “evening.” Therefore, the Day of Atonement begins at sunset which closes the 9th day and begins the 10th day, and extends to the following sunset which closes the 10th day and opens the 11th day.

In a similar way, E. G. White didn’t intend to teach that Jesus died on the 14th day of the first month, but that over the centuries, the paschal lamb was sacrificed on that date. The disciples prepared the supper on Thursday the 14th day and, after sunset, already in the first hours of the 15th day, they met to eat it. On that day, the day when the Passover was eaten, not when the lamb was sacrificed, Jesus gave his life (see J. de Oliveira, *Chronological Studies*, 63; *Astronomia*, 213, 214).

When was the Passover celebrated according to E. G. White? “On the fourteenth day of the month, at even, the Passover was celebrated, its solemn, impressive ceremonies commemorating the Annual Feasts deliverance from bondage in Egypt, and pointing forward to the sacrifice that should deliver from the bondage of sin” (*PP 490-491*). The English idiomatic words are found in a hymn which says, “at even, ere the sun was set” [https://hymnary.org/text/at_even_ere_the_sun_was_set].

When was the 14th day, according to E. G. White and the Bible? Thursday. The apostle John wrote: “Six days before the Passover, Jesus came to Bethany, where Lazarus lived, whom Jesus had raised from the dead. There they gave a dinner for him” (*John 12:1-2*). E. G. White confirms that He arrived at Bethany

on Friday, because he would not travel on Sabbath. “The Saviour had reached Bethany only six days before the Passover, and according to His custom had sought rest at the home of Lazarus. The crowds of travelers who passed on to the city spread the tidings that He was on His way to Jerusalem, and that He would rest over the Sabbath at Bethany” (DA 557). De Oliveira rightly affirms that “six days beginning on Friday take us to the Passover day on Thursday” (*Chronological Studies*, 69).

The hour of crucifixion

Between the synoptic gospels and the gospel of John there is an apparent contradiction. Mark 15:25 and 33 say that “it was third in the morning when they crucified him” (our 9 AM), and that “from the sixth hour until the ninth hour darkness came over all the land” (from noon to 3 PM). But John states that “it was about the sixth hour” [near noon] when Pilate said “to the Jews, ‘Behold your King!’” (John 19:14).

Both evangelists may have been considering the entire proceedings that began in the court of Pilate at about 9 AM, and the crucifixion nearly three hours later at noon (see Matt 27:45; Mark 15:33; Luc 23:44). It was usual in the Bible to tell a story by employing a literary figure of synecdoche, which consists in referring to an event by one of its parts. In this case, Mark could have dealt at once with all the steps taken to crucify Jesus beginning at 9 AM in the court of Pilate, until the very moment when Jesus was crucified at noon. John is not specific with the hour when Jesus was still in the Roman court. It was “about the sixth hour,” about noon. The problem seems to be, therefore, with phraseology (see below), not with the fact that Jesus was crucified and died that Friday before sunset.

We also have to take into account that Christ didn’t die when the paschal lamb was sacrificed. “It was the hour of the evening sacrifice” (DA 756), “within six hours of crucifixion” (DA 772). “Christ was nailed to the cross between the third and sixth hour, that is between nine and twelve o’ clock. In the afternoon He died. This was the hour of the evening sacrifice. Then the veil of the temple, that which hid God’s glory from the view of the congregation of Israel, was rent in twain from top to bottom” (*Sons and Daughters of God* 228).

This statement seems to be taken from the tension between the testimony of Mark and John concerning the specific hour, and could mean that God didn’t give her a special revelation of the exact hour. Anyway, she doesn’t say here that the crucifixion lasted three hours. All the process of crucifixion which began with the interrogation of Christ in the court of Pilate until the moment when he was nailed, required roughly three hours.

Jesus was expected to fulfill the whole system of sacrifices, without needing to die, for instance, on a Day of Atonement, when the temple was cleansed with the blood of the he-goat. He did it “once for all when He offered up Himself” (Heb 7:27), with His “only sacrifice” (Heb 10:10,12,14). “He Himself was the true paschal lamb, and on the day the Passover was eaten [already *Thursday* night, Abib 15], He was to be sacrificed” [Friday the 15th of Abib before sunset] (DA 642).

When did Jesus fulfill the feast of barley firstfruits?

The answer is, when He would be raised from the dead on the third day, “firstfruits” of all who will be raised in the last harvest at the end of the world (Matt 13:39), at His second coming (1 Cor 15:20,23). “As the antitype of the wave sheaf our Lord was raised from the dead *on the third day*, ‘the first fruits of them that slept’” (GC 399). This happened on the first day of the week after the Sabbath, three days after his crucifixion on the third day of the feast of Unleavened Bread. How may we understand then, the following two statements of E. G. White that are not found in the story of the Passion?

“The Passover was followed by the seven day’s feast of unleavened bread. The first and the seventh day were days of holy convocation, when no servile work was to be performed. *On the second day of the feast*, the first fruits of the year’s harvest were presented before God” (PP 539). “The Passover was followed by the seven days’ feast of unleavened bread. *On the second day of the feast*, the first fruits of the year’s harvest, a sheaf of barley, was presented before the Lord...” (DA 77).

Let us notice again that in both cases, the statement “the second day of the feast,” is given in chapters where she does not tell the story of the Passion. When she applied that feast of wave sheaf to the resurrection of Christ, she did not say “the second day.” “His resurrection took place on the very day when the wave sheaf was to be presented before the Lord” (DA 785-6), which in turn, as already seen, it was “the third day” of His death.

Let us ask ourselves again, what could E. G. White have had in mind when she wrote, “the second day of the feast”? Would it be a simple matter of phraseology, like that found between Mark 15:25,33 and John 19:14 seen above? Does it have to do with the kind of reckoning employed? For instance, if Abib 15 started with the feast of Unleavened Bread, did she begin her reckoning with the starting point or with its fulfillment after a complete day? If we are on Friday, we count two days and reach Sunday. But if our reckoning is inclusive, the second day starting on Friday would fall on Saturday.

As already seen above, this double reckoning was seen in the law of Pentecost that had to be fulfilled 49 or 50 days later, which is the same but expressed in a different way (Lev 23:15-16). We find the same double reckoning of time in the law of Jubilee, after 49 or 50 years, according to the way chosen to reckon the years (Lev 25:8-11). Theologians have been debating this issue for a long time, some arguing that it was the same day or year, others affirming that two days or years were projected.

Let us compare again these statements with that which says, “as the antitype of the wave sheaf our Lord was raised from the dead *on the third day*” (GC 399). She took this reference from the gospels (Matt 16:21; John 2:10-22; 1 Cor 15:4). No one will deny here that she is using an inclusive way of reckoning from Friday to Sunday. But the words “the second day of the feast” is not found in the festal laws of Lev 23 and Num 28. The only equivalent term found there says “the day after the Sabbath” (Lev 23:11). If we chose the second option to reckon the days and years of Lev 23:15-16 and 25:8-11, that day after the Sabbath was the first one. So also, the first day after Friday would be the first one, and “the second day” after Friday would be Sunday.

It is meaningful to notice that E. G. White did not say that *the second day* took place after a ceremonial or festal sabbath. Because—as already seen above—the 15th day of the first month was a “holy convocation,” not a yearly or ceremonial sabbath. In some years, the “holy convocation” (which was not Sabbatical in the first month of feasts), corresponding to the 15th day, could fall on a weekly Sabbath, and in that case, the words “second day” could be applied literally to the firstfruit feast.

Notwithstanding, it seems more probable that E. G. White was thinking of a second day after the weekly Sabbath of the feast. In that case, we could paraphrase her statement as “the second day [*after the weekly Sabbath*] of the feast.” We saw above a similar case in the gospel of John when he mentioned “the day of preparation [for the Sabbath] of the Passover” (John 19:14). Because no preparation day for the Passover is mentioned in the Bible, and the evangelists, including John, explained in other passages that it had to do with the preparation for the weekly Sabbath which falls always on Friday (John 19:31,42; Luke 23:54; Matt 27:62-63).

E. G. White requested the review of her book *The Great Controversy* published in 1888, for its second edition in 1911, in order to help the reader to understand what she wrote, and accepted afterwards changes in phraseology. The same could have happened in connection with her statement of the “second day,”

which does not appear edited so in the Bible. In her day, some had adopted the views of the LXX, followed by Josephus and Philo of Alexandria, the Jewish historians of the first century. Thus, she could have borrowed from others this terminology, which every certain years was literally right.

The Greek translation of Lev 23:11 renders “the morrow of the first day” (*Brenton LXX Translation*). It is understandable that Philo of Alexandria, a Greek city, borrowed the terminology of this verse by “the day of the paschal feast that comes after the first day” (Philo, *Special Laws*, 162). Josephus followed the same version when he referred “the second day of the unleavened bread, which is the sixteenth day of the month” (*Antiquities of the Jews*, 3.10.5). From this time, both Jews and Christians were divided in the understanding of whether a yearly sabbath, or a weekly sabbath preceded the barley firstfruits. But we have already seen that only the feasts of the seventh month were specified as yearly “sabbaths.”

What can we say about E. G. White’s mention of the day that the firstfruits feast was celebrated? Here the criteria each one has on how inspiration works in the mind of the prophets comes into play. We, Adventists, never believed in “verbal” inspiration. God inspires the thought of His prophets, and they dress the divine thought with the best human words they find to express it. This E. G. White herself stated clearly. So, it is not unlikely that she had taken that phraseology, “the second day of the feast,” from other authors, and without a special revelation from God.

This is what we can see notably represented in the second edition of her book *The Great Controversy* which was published in 1911. There were minor changes in matters which she took from other authors and that God did not reveal her. I give some samples on my webpage: [<http://www.adventistdistinctivemessages.com/English/Documents/Trumpetsdates.pdf>]. Her grandson Arthur, director for many years of the White Center, wrote this concerning the suggestions made by W. W. Prescott to be changed for the second edition.

“About half of his suggestions might be classified as minor, such as having to do with a precision of wording, or calling for a supporting reference. The other half were more significant, some challenging prophetic dates—such as the dating of the 1260 years—and calling into question the autumn termination of the 2300-day prophecy. His suggestions, which called for a change in teachings in the book, were not accepted (e.g., the relation of Revelation 9 to Josiah Litch’s prediction of August 11, 1840, and Revelation 11, having to do with the two witnesses and the French Revolution). These were carefully reviewed for soundness of position and buttressed with reliable documentation” (Arthur L. White, *The Prescott Letter to W. C. White*. April 6, 1915, 15).

On one occasion E. G. White reported that there were 40 rooms in a sanatorium in California. A brother of the church counted the rooms of that hospital and found that there were 38, which caused him to lose faith in her testimonies. She replied: “There has never been revealed to me the exact number of rooms in any of our sanitariums; and the knowledge I have obtained of such things I have gained by inquiring of those who were supposed to know. In my words, when speaking upon these *common subjects*, there is nothing to lead minds to believe that I receive my knowledge in a vision from the Lord and am stating it as such” (1 *SM* 38). Then, she added: “But for one to mix the sacred with the common is a great mistake. In a tendency to do this we may see the working of the enemy to destroy souls” (*ibid*).

The same happened with the book *The Great Controversy*. She received from the Lord even in minor things the message of that book, but some other “common” information were taken from other authors. However, the historical and prophetic message of that book came from heaven. We can say the same concerning the chronological report she gave on the feast of firstfruits. The central message regarding the feast of wave sheaf is that Jesus resurrected the day after the Sabbath, which in turn was the second day after Friday fifteenth Abib.

To those who will not want to accept any reason and insist that the aforementioned sanatoriums had 40 rooms because E. G. White said this, and labeled as liars those who denied it proving that they were 38, I recommend reading the first section of the book of E. G. White, *Selected Messages*, Volume I. On the other hand, a list of biblical errors compared with some few equivalent errors of E. G. White on common issues, can be read in a document prepared by the White Center, written by Robert W. Olson, "The Question of Inerrancy in Inspired Writings"

[file:///C:/Users/atrei/Downloads/INERRANCY%20IN%20INSPIRED%20WRITINGS%20(1).pdf].

What kind of errors are found in the Bible and in the Spirit of Prophecy? Those equivalent to the rounded information of 40 rooms in a sanatorium. Historical and chronological uncertain dates, quotations attributed to another author (the content of the quotation was right, but the author referred to was wrong), grammatical imperfections, edition and phraseology, etc. Another document prepared by the same author of the White Center is found in R. W. Olson, "Ellen White's Denials", *Ministry*, February 1991, pp. 15-18 [http://documents.adventistarchives.org/Periodicals/MIN/MIN19910201-V64-02.pdf].

The Passover and the crucifixion in the different calendars on year 31 AD

New moon (april)

Julian day (astronomical day)	noon	noon	noon
	1732482 Thursday	1732483 Friday	1732484 Saturday
Jewish calendar	Sunset	Sunset	Sunset
	Thursday Adar 29	Friday Nisan 1	Saturday Nisan 2
Julian calendar (civil day)	midnight	midnight	midnight
	Thursday 12	Friday 13	Saturday 14

The Passover and the Crucifixion (april)

Julian day (Astronomical day)	midi	midi	midi	
	1732495 Wednesday	1732496 Thursday	1732497 Friday	1732498 Saturday
Jewish calendar	sunset	sunset	sunset	sunset
	Thursday – Nisan 14	Friday – Nisan 15	Saturday – Nisan 16	
		Agneau de la Pâque	Sainte Cène	Crucifixion
Julian calendar (civil day)	midnight	midnight	midnight	
	Wednesday 25	Thursday 26	Friday 27	Saturday 28

APPENDIX

A recent document on the Passover in the year of the crucifixion appeared on a webpage by an author who is critical of the Adventist Faith. His intention is to deny any evidence that the crucifixion took place in the year 31 of our era. After reading that critical document I can affirm that my study on the subject needs no correction.

Noteworthy is the number of times that critic employs dubious phrases like “probably” or “if this is so,” or equivalent terms. It has to do with a person who for several years has been trying to undermine the prophetic foundation of our church in connection with the Apocalyptic chronology of Daniel and Revelation. My advice is not to waste time in discussion with him. Because whatever biblical evidence you present to him, he will seek evidence to refute it.

In this context, in two or three places he contradicts me with arguments that I have already refuted, assuming their presumable accuracy and entirely ignoring my answers. In one instance he even misinterprets what I wrote then cites me out of context. This subject has been copiously discussed throughout the centuries. Anyone can find someone to quote to represent a wide range of conclusions which do not agree with the Bible.

For those unacquainted with the complexity of the subject, here are some examples which seek to simplify the discussion to facilitate its understanding.

1. The chronological data offered in the gospels brings us to the year 31 as the year of the crucifixion. See my book, *The Apocalyptic Times of the Sanctuary*. You may also read the doctoral dissertation on this subject by B. Owusu-Antwi, *The Chronology of Daniel 9:24-27* (ATSP, 1995), 305. The critical author I refer to ignores those documents and tries to prove without success that the date should be the year 33, using arguments that were answered beforehand in the aforementioned books.

2. We are told in Exod. 12:10 and Ps. 34:20 that no bones of the Paschal lamb were to be broken. The author of the critical work quotes John 19:36 and Num. 9:12, to conclude: “Such an allusion to the Paschal lamb would make no sense if the death of Jesus would not have fulfilled its typology,” that is, if Jesus had not died at the precise hour of the sacrifice of the Paschal lamb, supposedly Friday evening.

In my paper you have seen that with the death of Jesus, the typology of the he-goat on the Day of Atonement, as well as all the other sacrifices offered in the different feasts of the year, were fulfilled without requiring dying again when those feasts were celebrated by the Jews, because His sacrifice was unique, performed only once, as

affirmed several times by the Epistle to the Hebrews. The same was true of the Paschal sacrifice.

On the other hand—as already seen—Jesus died on the day when the Paschal lamb was eaten, not at the time of the paschal sacrifice, but at the time of the holocaust. John does not say that the bones of Jesus were not broken because supposedly nothing must be left for the next day, according to the Paschal rite. God didn't want anyone to become cannibalistic (“the flesh counts for nothing”: John 6:63). The Jewish concern to hurry the death of the crucified had to do with not leaving their bodies exposed on Saturday. The allusion of not breaking any bone fits perfectly with the day when the Passover was eaten, on Friday 15, after the biblical Thursday 14, that is, after sunset.

3. The critic argues that the gospels don't mention the sacrifice of the Paschal lamb in the temple on Thursday, before the Last Supper. But neither does he acknowledge that no mention is given to the sacrifice of the lamb in the temple for a celebration on Friday evening. We have already explained the meal referred to by John. The Passover was eaten during the entire week, not only the day 15 after the 14th sunset. See first document above.

4. John 13:1 doesn't imply that the Holy Supper took place before the Passover. It states that “before the Passover” Jesus loved His disciples till the end. Then, in v. 2, the apostle portrays the story of the Holy Supper which corresponded to the celebration of the Passover, without mentioning other former incidents referred to by the gospels.

5. Again an argument of silence is brought forth, the weakest argument to try to deny what the Bible clearly says. According to the critic, there is no mention of a lamb meal in the gospels on Thursday evening. But the paper doesn't say either that a paschal meal is not mentioned in any of the other Passover feasts in the gospels (Luc 2; John 2; Luc 19; John 6; 11; 12; 13; 18; 19). And this, doesn't mean that a lamb was not sacrificed, because this is what every Israelite did every year. If the lamb is not mentioned for the last Passover, it is because the gospels wanted to bring out the meal of the Unleavened Bread and the wine which were to replace the meal of the paschal lamb. This does not mean that they did not eat the lamb, because the lamb was eaten with unleavened bread and bitter herbs.

6. Our critic tries to deny that the Holy Supper was a celebration of the Paschal Supper. He proposes that the Holy Supper was a *se'udat mitzvah* which could be eaten any time during the year. But the Holy Supper had nothing to do with a *se'udat mitzvah*. Matt 26:18 and Luke 22:15-16 state definitely that Jesus wanted to celebrate and eat the Passover there with his disciples. And the Holy Supper meal corresponds with what the Mishnah depicts for the celebration of the Passover, something that the

Spirit of Prophecy also confirms. For this reason, the interpreters of the passages which deal with the Holy Supper recognized overwhelmingly, a Paschal rite.

7. According to the Rabbinic literature, the banishment of leaven took place on Nisan 14. During the night they inspected the closets, and always during day 14, they checked the houses without needing a candle. See Rab Itzjak Berkowitz, *La Limpieza de Pesaj Hecha Fácil* (4-4-2009). But those specifications are not found in the Bible.

8. In order to deny that the story of the gospels agree with the year 31, it is necessary to deny a second Adar (the addition of a 13th month). This is the reason why the criticism brings into consideration the fact that Peter sat near a fire in the courtyard (Luke 22:55), and this would suggest, according to the critic, that the winter was closer, without an additional month to end the former year. See the following page which shows the average temperature in Jerusalem, during the month of April, the month of the Passover with a second Adar. It was normal for this month, out in the open, to look for fire to warm oneself.

[https://www.google.com/search?q=weather+jerusalem+april&rlz=1C1GUAJ_enUS804US804&oq=weather+Jerusalem+April&aqs=chrome.0.0l4.14926j1j7&sourceid=chrome&ie=UTF-8]

9. In the astronomical context, the critic conjectures on the vernal equinox, based in part on some later rabbinic sources, when the rabbis could not observe the moon from Jerusalem because they had been expelled from there. I explain this above. He also refers to the trend to fix a calendar without waiting for a confirmation of a sighting of the moon in Jerusalem. He even quotes Mervyn Maxwell, an SDA writer, who wrongly placed Nisan 14 on Friday, the date of the crucifixion, a mistake that Maxwell recognized later after reading the book of Juarez de Oliveira on this subject.

10. In an attempt to muddy the waters, the paper that we are considering refers to a similar controversy among some Christians during the first centuries who believed that they had to keep the Holy Supper at the time of the Passover. They inherited that controversy, in part, from Jewish discussions. The paper of our “friend” does not take into account the testimony of Peter, bishop of Alexandria, who mentions in the fourth century, that the Jews had kept the Passover on the right date until the destruction of Jerusalem in the year 70. But after the destruction of the city, “they err in the recognition of the month” which had to be observed after the equinox. See reference in my book, *The Apocalyptic Times of the Sanctuary*, 61.

[<http://www.adventistdistinctivemessages.com/>]

Conclusion. Since all these speculations without foundation are introduced to choose the year 33 as the year of crucifixion instead of the year 31, we don’t see the reason to

waste time discussing with that critic, his contradictory hypothesis which, in addition, denies openly the Spirit of Prophecy. The purpose of this author is to destroy the prophetic chronology of Dan 9:24-27 and its connection with Dan 8:14. Unfortunately for him, he cannot achieve his objective.

I cannot conclude this brief analysis without warning the sincere readers who want to know the truth about the wolfs that come dressed as sheep, trying to deceive the flock. In cases like this, let us follow the biblical counsels found in Hos 4:17; Matt 7:15; Rom 16:17; 2 Thess 2:10-12; Titus 3:9-11; 2 Tim 3:7; 2 Pe 2:1; 2 John 1:10, etc.