

16<sup>th</sup> for Passover.<sup>15</sup> But if the dispersion Adar had 30 days, they observed the 14<sup>th</sup> and the 15<sup>th</sup> for the two Passovers. The latter was the case in A.D. 34. After arriving in Jerusalem they discovered which dates were official, however, they still applied the dispersion terms to the days that they were accustomed to, especially when communicating back home or writing about it to the dispersion.<sup>16</sup>

Now Adar that year was a full 30 days. The lunar date lines were well away from Jerusalem. In this case the dispersion, on the chance that Adar was 29 days would celebrate the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> of Nisan as the two Passovers. On the chance that Adar was one day too long, they compensated by taking every biblical observance of the month as (*date – 1*). Hence, the timing of the first Passover was at the end of the 13<sup>th</sup> day. This was not because they believed the end of the 13<sup>th</sup> was correct, but because they believed it might turn out to be the end of the 14<sup>th</sup> when they were supposed to eat the Passover.

Upon arriving in Jerusalem, they would discover that the 13<sup>th</sup> was really the 13<sup>th</sup>. They would eat a Seder without the lamb at the end of the 13<sup>th</sup>, still calling the day ‘Passover’ out of dispersion habit, and then slay it at the correct time on the 14<sup>th</sup> day and eat the actual lamb on the 15<sup>th</sup>, which was also called “Passover.” The meal at the end of the 13<sup>th</sup>, then would simply be regarded as a warm up meal or practice meal.

With the doubled Seder tradition, we can see how the 14<sup>th</sup> might be called the “first day” treating it as the 15<sup>th</sup>. However, there is a second reason why even the 14<sup>th</sup> could be called the “first day,” with no intention of treating it as the 15<sup>th</sup>. For all the Jews would be removing the leaven from their houses on the 14<sup>th</sup> day in accord with Exodus 12:15. On account of this text the day preceding the actual beginning of the seven days of unleavened bread was called the “first day.”<sup>17</sup> After combining this usage with the doubling of the days in the dispersion usage, it was possible that even the 13<sup>th</sup> of Nisan could be referred to as the “first day,” though when they arrived in Jerusalem, they might have become informed of the calendar and realized that it was not necessary to refrain from leaven so soon.

Though we can fault a misinterpretation of Exodus 12:15 for first calling the 14<sup>th</sup> the “first day”, it is possible to put another significance on the words, **בְּיוֹם הָרִאשׁוֹן**. It can be rendered *on the leading/chief day*. The day that leads the feast, then is the day of the sacrifice. This is sense that popular usage put on the 14<sup>th</sup> when so designating it.

There was however another reason why the 13<sup>th</sup> might be called the first day that year. For Mark writes “And the first day of unleavened bread, when they killed the pass-

<sup>15</sup> This would be just like the modern Rabbinic calendar in which Adar and Adar II are always fixed at 29 days. Hence the two Passovers are always the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> of Nisan. But it was not so in Temple times. Each month was determined by eyewitnesses, and because of this Adar and Adar II varied from 29 to 30 days. In A.D. 34, Adar was 30 days.

<sup>16</sup> We may suppose that they still called a Seder like meal at the end of the 13<sup>th</sup> day “Passover”.

<sup>17</sup> This traditional explanation “first day” for Ex. 12:15 is found in Rashi, who is the authoritative Jewish interpreter. Though it be tradition to call the 14<sup>th</sup> day the “first day,” it is almost certainly wrong to suppose that Exodus 12:15 so designates the day. A strict adherence to the Hebrew “you shall have caused to cease the leaven out of your houses on the first day” refers to a resultant state on the 15<sup>th</sup>. While the cause was on the 14<sup>th</sup>, the resultant state of “cessation” was on the 15<sup>th</sup>, which was the “first day” referred to in this text.

over.”<sup>18</sup> The 13<sup>th</sup> of Nisan in A.D. 34 was Tuesday. And this Tuesday was the 14<sup>th</sup> of Nisan on the Essene calendar, and it was at the end of this day that the Essenes ate their Passover lambs.<sup>19</sup> When Mark says “when they killed the Passover,” he is perhaps referring to the customary timing of the Essenes. For he says “they”. The Essenes were used to a very low key, or secretive observance of the Passover, probably often disguising their observance of Passover as one of the many regular offerings in the temple. At more remote locations, however, they simply sacrificed it themselves.

The Essene contact man was the man “with the water jar.” Being addressed “The Master says ...”<sup>20</sup> he would know that some party wanted a room for a Seder, and would willingly rent it. He may or may not have supposed Yeshua and his disciples were fellow Essenes, but he would have respected them with the utmost secrecy.

The full text “on the first day of unleavened bread when they sacrificed the Passover” (Mark. 14:12) refers to the 14<sup>th</sup> of Nisan. Here is how the calendars fell out in A.D. 34.

Orthodox	Essene	dispersion	
13 <sup>th</sup>	14 <sup>th</sup>	13 <sup>th</sup> or 14 <sup>th</sup>	Tue
14 <sup>th</sup>	15 <sup>th</sup>	14 <sup>th</sup> or 15 <sup>th</sup>	Wed
15 <sup>th</sup>	16 <sup>th</sup>	15 <sup>th</sup> or 16 <sup>th</sup>	Thur

Anything labeled 14<sup>th</sup> can be called the “first day of unleavened bread when they sacrificed the Passover”. Now when the dispersion arrives in Jerusalem, the calendar simplifies as follows.

Orthodox	Essene	
13 <sup>th</sup>	14 <sup>th</sup>	Tue
14 <sup>th</sup>	15 <sup>th</sup>	Wed
15 <sup>th</sup>	16 <sup>th</sup>	Thur

However, the Essenes were like the Samaritans. They misinterpreted “between the settings” as referring the twilight after sunset. They sacrificed their lambs after sunset ending their 14<sup>th</sup> day. This had the effect of putting their sacrifice on the same 14<sup>th</sup> day that year as the Orthodox Jews. The only difference is that the Orthodox Jews offered their lambs in the day part of the 14<sup>th</sup> after the Essenes had already offered their lambs during the preceding evening twilight.

Thus, for this year we have three ways of calling the orthodox 14<sup>th</sup> day the “first day of unleavened bread” (1) It was the Essene 15<sup>th</sup>. (2) It was a potential dispersion 15<sup>th</sup> (2) They called the 14<sup>th</sup> the “first day” anyway on account of a misunderstanding of Exodus 12:15. And all sects slew their lambs on this same day, just in different parts of it!<sup>21</sup>

<sup>18</sup> Mark 14:12.

<sup>19</sup> They used a sunrise reckoning of the 14<sup>th</sup> day. They slew their lambs between sunset and full dark at the end of their 14<sup>th</sup> day. The Essenes always had their Passover on Tuesday. Copies of their calendar were found at Qumran and Masada.

<sup>20</sup> These two details mark our man as an Essene. Only Essenes were accustomed to doing “women’s work” because they were often celibate and unmarried. They also had a strict “Master” and “neophyte” type of hierarchy. Thus a request from a “Master” would be the correct way to obtain the services of the Essene community.

<sup>21</sup> It might be stretching the day a bit, but the Samaritans slew their lambs at twilight beginning the orthodox 15<sup>th</sup>. But they would have considered this “twilight” to be part of the preceding day.