

Did Yeshua Keep The Last Passover?



¹⁵ And he said unto them, **With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer:** ¹⁶ **For I say unto you, I will not any more eat thereof, until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God.**”

(Luke 22:15-16, KJV)

A recent trend has appeared among the Sabbatarians which “*claims*” that Yeshua did not keep the Passover observance just before His crucifixion. Some say that “*the last supper*” which Yeshua partook of was simply that and that it was not a Passover observance. Many “*claim*” that He simply “*desired*” to observe the Passover with His disciples, but that He was prevented by the events preceding His arrest, trial, and crucifixion. Some “*state*” that He could not have been observing Passover because He did not eat it at the same time that the Jews ate their Passover. Still, others believe the phrase “*For I (Yeshua) say unto you, I will not any more eat thereof*” (Luke 22:16b, KJV) means He would not even eat of the Passover meal that was before Him—that He would not eat Passover at all until it was fulfilled in the Kingdom. It appears that the focus of this trend is a deep-seated belief that it was necessary for Yeshua’s observance to somehow fit neatly together with the religious observances of the Jewish nation at that time.

We have to ask, “*Which of these views, if any, is true? And is it necessary—or **right**—to use Jewish traditions as the standard for judging Yeshua’s actions during His ministry?*”

We will address the last of the above viewpoints first. In Luke 22:16, the words “*not any more*” comes from Strong’s #G3765—*ouketi*—its roots is “from Strong’s #G3756 and #G2089—*not yet, no longer*”—which is translated most often as “*no more*” in the New Testament, which is otherwise translated “*any more*,” “*after that*,” “*not as yet*,” “*hereafter*,” “*no longer*,” etc. If we consider all of these interpretations within the context of the passage, we will see that Yeshua is clearly stating His *intent* to eat that present Passover with His disciples before His death, “*for (because—#G1063) I say... I will not any more eat thereof...*” The structure of the sentence tells us His meaning: He does not say that He had *desired* to eat it **in spite of** the fact that He would not eat it again, but **because of** the fact that He would not eat of it after that until its fulfillment. Rather than suggesting Yeshua’s refusal to eat that last Passover, the context *demand*s the understanding that Yeshua did eat that Passover, because there would be no more after it for Him until its fulfillment in the Kingdom.

However, this alone is not enough to truly clarify this issue, so we must go on to the *claim* that Yeshua did not truly eat the Passover because He did not eat it at the same time as the Jews did. The truth is that **Yeshua did not eat the Passover of the Jews**—John 18:28 bears this out. When Yeshua was led from Caiaphas to the judgment hall—after His Passover meal—this verse states that “*they themselves (His captors) went not into the judgment hall, lest they should be defiled; but **that they might eat the Passover***.” It is obvious that whatever observance Yeshua kept before His arrest, it did not coincide with the Jews’ observance of Passover.

Is there any other support for the idea that Yeshua’s Passover observance was kept early on the 14th of Abib, well before the Jews’ observance? Yes there is. We find very clear support for this in John 13. After Yeshua has given Judas the sop and Judas had left the table, verses 28-29 tell us, “Now no man at the table knew for what intent He spake this unto him. For some *of them* thought, because Judas had the bag, that Yeshua had said unto him, ***Buy those things that we have need of against the feast***; or, that he should give something to the poor.” If Yeshua and His disciples had kept their Passover late on the 14th of Abib as the 15th of Abib began, the disciples would never have thought that Yeshua was sending Judas to buy anything, because the 15th of Abib is a High Holy Day and it is a High Sabbath Day wherein no buying or selling was to be done (Nehemiah 10:31). However, if Yeshua and His disciples were observing their Passover early on the 14th of Abib, then there would be no problem with this scenario since the 14th of Abib is not an annual High Sabbath. Clearly, Yeshua and His disciples kept this Passover early on the 14th of Abib according to Yahweh’s instructions given to Moses in Exodus 12:1-11.

Since the Passover that Yeshua observed with His disciples did not coincide with the Passover of the Jews’, does this mean that Yeshua’s Passover was not a true Passover meal? Absolutely Not! In fact, if we *carefully* examine the events of the *original* Passover in the book of Exodus, one *fact* becomes *very clear*: Yeshua kept His last Passover at the same time the *original* Passover was observed by Moses and all the

children of Israel when they were in the land of Egypt. The first Passover lambs were slain at the beginning of the 14th of Abib, notwithstanding Jewish tradition of Yeshua's time or our own. Exodus 12:6 teaches us, "*And ye shall keep it (the Passover lamb) up until the fourteenth day of the same month (Abib): and the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it **in the evening***" (Strong's #H6153 - "dusk"). A firestorm of debate has sprung up around the meaning of the phrase "*in the evening*," with many rightly stating that it literally means "*between the evenings*"—that is, between sunset and darkness of any one day: the root of the word *evening* (#H6150) proves this. Even though different interpretations of this phrase abound, if we look to the Scriptures and we use common sense, the truth shall emerge.

When we examine the usage of Strong's #G6153 in Scripture, it becomes obvious that this phrase means after sunset but before it becomes completely dark, i.e., dusk—see Genesis 8:11; Exodus 18:13-14; Leviticus 11:24, 25, 27, 28, 31, 39; **Numbers 28:4 and 8 (where the specific phrase “between the evenings” is used)**; etc. To further understand the phrase “between the evenings,” we will now take a closer look of this phrase looking at the Hebrew of this phrase.

Before we go any further, it is necessary for us to take a side step here and look at a few Hebrew terms and phrases in order to understand the exact timing of when Passover is in order to see if Yeshua did indeed observe Passover or did He merely have a last supper with His disciples.

***BEN HA ARBAYIM*—“Between the Two Evenings”**

We will examine Yahweh's commands that He gave to the children of Israel through Moses for observing the Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread. In the book of Leviticus we read,

“⁴ These are the appointed seasons of the LORD, even holy convocations, which ye shall proclaim in their appointed season. ⁵ In the first month (Abib—March/April), on the fourteenth day of the month **at dusk**, is the LORD's passover. ⁶ And on the fifteenth day of the same month (Abib) is the feast of unleavened bread unto the LORD; seven days ye shall eat unleavened bread. ⁷ In the first day ye shall have a holy convocation; ye shall do no manner of servile work. ⁸ And ye shall bring an offering made by fire unto the LORD seven days; in the seventh day is a holy convocation; ye shall do no manner of servile work.”

(Leviticus 23:4-8, emphasis added, Jewish Publication Society of America)

The above Scripture verses specifically state that the Passover is on the 14th day of the month (Abib) “*at dusk*.” The Hebrew phrase that is translated as “*at dusk*” in this passage from the JPSA version is “***ben ha arbayim***.” This same Hebrew phrase is also translated as “*at even*” in the King James Version. The use of these words by the

translators of the KJV has led many to confuse the phrase *ben ha arbayim* with another Hebrew phrase that is also translated “*at even*,” or “*evening*.”

It will be shown that the words “*at even*” do not accurately represent the Hebrew wording that is used in the Passover command. In some editions of the KJV, they add a marginal notation with the words “*between the two evenings*.” This is a “*literal*” translation of the phrase “*ben ha arbayim*.” (It must be noted that the phrase *ben ha arbayim* is spelled phonetically as *beyn ha’ arbayim*. However, we will retain the spelling of *ben ha arbayim* throughout this study.)

Now, in order for us to understand Yahweh’s commands for the observance of the Passover, it is vital for us to understand the meaning of this “*key*” Hebrew phrase.

Relying solely on Strong’s Concordance Leads to Misunderstanding

It is not possible to understand the meaning of the phrase “*ben ha arbayim*” by relying solely on Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible. The reason for this is Strong’s makes **no distinction** between the two different Hebrew phrases that are translated into the English words “**at even**” and “**evening**.” Strong’s numbers **every occurrence** of “**even**” and “**evening**” in the KJV as #H6153, and also in the Strong’s Hebrew and Chaldee Dictionary that word is also listed and defined as “*ereb*” which is also spelled “*erev*.” In all eleven passages where “*ben ha arbayim*” is used in the Scriptures, Strong’s Concordance numbers defines it as #6153, including it with *ereb*. The Hebrew noun *ereb*, or *erev*, which refers to the setting of the sun, is used numerous times throughout the Old Testament Scriptures in the phrase “*ba erev*,” and it is generally translated as “*evening*” or “*at even*” in the KJV.

While it is typically acceptable to translate the phrase “*ba erev*” as “*evening*” or “*at even*,” it is neither proper nor acceptable to translate “*ben ha arbayim*” in this manner. The two phrases have COMPLETELY DIFFERENT MEANINGS.

Despite the distinct differences between *ba erev* and *ben ha arbayim*, these two phrases are listed together by Strong’s under the single Hebrew word *ereb*. There are two reasons for this misleading listing in Strong’s Concordance. First, Strong’s Concordance does not have a listing for these phrases, because Strong’s Concordance only list single words. Strong’s does not have a listing for either *ba erev* or *ben ha arbayim*. All occurrences of the phrase *ba erev* are accordingly listed under the noun *ereb*, or *erev* in Strong’s Concordance. Second, because *arbayim* is formed from the root word *ereb*, all occurrences of *arbayim* are also listed under this Hebrew noun. The word *ben*, or *beyn*, which is a Hebrew preposition, is listed in Strong’s as #H996. The definite article “*ha*” is not listed by Strong’s.

Thus, the meaning of the phrase *ben ha arbayim* cannot be determined simply by consulting a Biblical Concordance, such as Strong’s, nor even a Hebrew Lexicon, which lists *only* the individual words. Hebrew words can vary widely in their meaning, and depending on how they are used in the Hebrew text, they have different meanings. The

structure of the Hebrew text is not explained in any Concordances and Lexicons. This information can only be found in books on Hebrew grammar and syntax.

Only by numbering and defining every occurrence of the phrase *ben ha arbayim* under the noun *ereb* has Strong's Concordance added to the confusion about the correct timing for observance of the Passover. Many pastors, preachers, ministers, Christian Theologians and church congregations have been led to a false understanding of the commanded time of when Passover is to be observed because they have relied solely for the most part on Strong's word numbering and definitions. While Strong's Concordance may be a valuable tool for study, it should never be used as a determining factor in establishing doctrine, nor should it be used to define complex linguistic expressions such as the phrase that is used in the Passover command. The true meaning of the phrase "*ben ha arbayim*" cannot be determined by basing one's understanding on Strong's word numbering and definitions. We can come to a *true understanding* of the commanded time for the Passover observance by *carefully* studying the use of "*ben ha arbayim*" in its Scriptural context. It all boils down to keeping things in "*context*."

Looking at this Hebrew phrase, which occurs in the Passover command in we see in Leviticus 23, it is also used in the command to keep the Passover in Numbers 9:

"¹ And the LORD spoke unto Moses in the wilderness of Sinai, in the first month (Abib-March/April) of the second year after they were come out of the land of Egypt, saying: ² Let the children of Israel keep [Hebrew *asah*] the Passover in its appointed season. In the **FOURTEENTH DAY** of this month (Abib-March/April), **AT DUSK** [Hebrew *ben ha arbayim*], ³ you shall keep [Hebrew *asah*] it in its appointed season; according to ALL the statutes of it, and according to ALL the ordinances thereof, shall you keep it."

(Numbers 9:1-3, emphasis added, Jewish Publication Society of America)

Everett Fox's translation is a more precise translation of the Passover command in Leviticus 23:4-6:

"⁴ These are the appointed-times of YHWH, proclamations of holiness, which you are to proclaim at their appointed-times: ⁵ on the first New-Moon [month], on **the fourteenth** after the New Moon, **between the setting-times** [Hebrew *ben ha arbayim*] (is) Passover to YHWH. ⁶ On **the fifteenth day** after this New-Moon (is) the pilgrimage-festival of *matzot* [unleavened bread] to YHWH..."

(The Schocken Bible: Volume I, emphasis added)

Fox's translation of Numbers 9:2-5 also shows us the *precise* meaning of the Hebrew text for the timing of the Passover:

"² The Children of Israel are to sacrifice the Passover-offering at its appointed time: ³ on the **fourteenth day** after this New-Moon, **between**

the setting-times [Hebrew *ben ha arbayim*], you are to sacrifice it at its appointed-time; according to all its laws, according to all its regulations, you are to sacrifice it. ⁴ So Moshe [Moses] spoke (instructions) to the Children of Israel, to sacrifice the Passover-offering. ⁵ And they sacrificed the Passover-offering in the first (New-Moon) [month], on **the fourteenth day** after the New Moon, **between the setting-times** [Hebrew *ben ha arbayim*], in the Wilderness of Sinai. According to all that YHWH had commanded Moshe [Moses], thus did the Children of Israel.”

(The Schocken Bible: Volume I, emphasis added)

When we look closely at Numbers Chapter 9, it clearly confirms that Yahweh’s command to keep the Passover on the 14th day of the first month (Abib-March/April) was not on the 15th of Abib. According to what is recorded in Numbers Chapter 9, all nine of the requirements for the Passover ceremony—ALL THE STATUTES and ALL THE ORDINANCES, were to be observed on the 14th of Abib. Under the Old Covenant, the Passover ceremony began with the slaying of the lambs. Exodus Chapter 12 shows us the set time for slaying the Passover lambs:

“⁵ Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year; ye shall take it from the sheep, or from the goats; ⁶ and **ye shall keep it unto** [until] **the fourteenth day** of the same month (Abib-March/April); and **the WHOLE ASSEMBLY of the congregation of Israel** shall kill it **AT DUSK** [Hebrew *ben ha arbayim*].”

(Exodus 12:5-6, emphasis added, Jewish Publication Society of America)

We have seen in Leviticus Chapter 23 and Numbers Chapter 9 verses above that the phrase *ben ha arbayim* has been translated as “*at dusk*” in the JPSA. In the KJV, this same Hebrew phrase has been translated “*at even*” in Numbers 9:3 and “*in the evening*” in Exodus 12:6, but with the accompanying marginal definition “*between the two evenings*.” Again, we will take a look at Fox’s translation of Exodus 12:6 for better clarity:

“It [the Passover lamb] shall be for you in safekeeping, **until** [up to] **the fourteenth day** after this New Moon [month of Abib-March/April], and they are to slay it—the entire assembly of the community of Israel—**between the setting-times** [Hebrew *ben ha arbayim*].”

(The Schocken Bible: Volume I, emphasis added)

In order for us to understand the exact time of day on the 14th of Abib that the Passover lambs were to be slain, we need to determine the Scriptural meaning of the phrase ***ben ha arbayim***. This specific Hebrew phrase reveals the time of day that the Passover was to begin.

Now, we need to ask ourselves a few questions:

- ✿ What is the meaning of the phrase *ben ha arbayim*, “*between the two evenings*” or “*between the setting-times*”?
- ✿ Does the phrase *ben ha arbayim* mean the time between the evening of one day and the evening of the next day?
- ✿ Could the Passover lambs be slain at any time during this 24-hour period?
- ✿ Does *ben ha arbayim* mean between noon, the point at which the sun is at its highest point, and sunset when the sun has completed its descent?
- ✿ Does *ben ha arbayim* mean from the mid-point in the afternoon, say approximately 3 PM until sunset ending the 14th of Abib?
- ✿ Does *ben ha arbayim* mean from sunset until dark, at the beginning of the 14th of Abib?
- ✿ Should we rely on scholars’ interpretations of this ancient Hebrew phrase *ben ha arbayim*?
- ✿ Can these scholars’ give us an accurate definition and proper understanding of the Hebrew phrase *ben ha arbayim*?
- ✿ Do these scholars’ honestly and objectively examine the Scriptural usage of how *ben ha arbayim* is used? And if not, why not?
- ✿ So, can we really know?

Should we “*blindly*” accept the traditional Jewish interpretation of *ben ha arbayim*, which arose many centuries *after* Passover was instituted by Yahweh in Egypt? The Jews “*claim*” that *ben ha arbayim* is the time from mid-afternoon to sunset. Does this interpretation fit the ordinances of the Passover that Yahweh commanded through Moses when they were in Egypt?

Is it possible that the Jewish Rabbis are Correct in Their Traditional Explanation of *ben ha arbayim*?

What does *ben ha arbayim* really mean? The Jewish rabbis “*claim*” to know the answer. We will examine their traditional rabbinical explanation of this Hebrew phrase to see if it lines up with the Absolute Written Word of Almighty Yahweh. We would all expect it be a natural thing for the Jewish rabbis to know the true meaning of *ben ha arbayim* because, after all, they “*profess*” to be the authorities in the Hebrew text. Most certainly, they should be the experts in the Old Testament text, shouldn’t they?

Since the Jewish rabbis “*claim*” to be the teachers of the Hebrew Scriptures, we will put them and their explanations of *ben ha arbayim* to the acid test, to see whether they are “*rightly dividing the Word of Yahweh,*” or whether they have replaced the truth of Yahweh’s Written Word with their own traditions.

First, we will examine the works of one of the most renowned mystic and Kabbalist Jewish scholars, Rabbi Rashi. His work on the Hebrew Scriptures (Old Testament) has been published in Hebrew with a Hebrew commentary and an English linear translation. His work on the Hebrew Torah is considered to be one of the best, perhaps the very best, that is available to the general public to this day.

Here is what Rashi writes in his commentary about the usage of the term *ben ha arbayim* in Exodus 12:6:

“At dusk—From six hours (after noon) and upward is called *ben ha arbayim*, when the sun declines towards the place of its setting to be darkened. And the expression *ben ha arbayim* appears in my sight (to refer to) those hours between the ‘evening’ of day, and the ‘evening’ of night; the ‘evening’ of day is at the beginning of the seventh hour [1 PM] from (the time that) ‘the shadows of evening are stretched out,’ and the ‘evening’ of night is at the beginning of night.”

(*The Pentateuch and Rashi’s Commentary*, Exodus 12:6, p. 102)

In Rashi’s own words stated above, he states that *ben ha arbayim* literally means “between the setting-times” with the starting time being at 1 PM and he is calling it the “evening” of the day, and it goes until sunset, which he calls the “evening” of the night. Rashi’s definition clearly places the slaying of the Passover lambs during the afternoon of the 14th of Abib. Specifically, Rashi is stating that from 1 PM until sunset on the 14th of Abib is the timing for the slaying of the Passover lambs. His interpretation of *ben ha arbayim* does not allow time to complete ALL NINE ORDINANCES of the Passover—including roasting and eating of the Passover lamb, and burning the remains—ON THE 14TH of Abib-March/April, as commanded in the Scriptures.

Even though the Hebrew text teaches us the “exact” timing of when the Passover lambs are to be slain, the Jews from before the time Yeshua came until today, have elected to ignore what the Hebrew text “clearly” teaches and thus, they follow their own “man-made” Jewish traditions when it comes to the slaying of the Passover lambs and the observance of Passover. The Jewish people for many centuries have and continue to uphold this faulty definition of *ben ha arbayim*. They continue teaching that the Passover lambs are to be slain late on the 14th of Abib and that they are to eat the Passover lamb after sunset of the 14th of Abib which is the beginning of the 15th of Abib. It is “clear” that the “traditional” rabbinical interpretation of *ben ha arbayim* conflicts with the clear written instructions/commands of Yahweh which is recorded for us in the books of Exodus, Leviticus and Numbers. The commands in Exodus Chapter 12 specifically specify that the Passover lambs were to be slain, roasted and eaten on the 14th of Abib. When we look at the command in Leviticus 23:5, it confirms the observance of the Passover on to be on the 14th day, and again in Numbers 9:3, it clearly shows us that it was absolutely “mandatory” to fulfill ALL the ordinances of the Passover on the 14th of Abib. Scripture is very clear, there is no wiggle room whatsoever

for even one ordinance of the Passover to be omitted on the 14th day! It simply is not there. It is obvious that the Jewish rabbis have and continue to be blinded by their man-made Jewish traditions.

We have seen from the above that Rashi's interpretation of *ben ha arbayim* does not line up with what is written in the Scriptures. Now, we will take a look at yet another Kabbalist scholar, Rabbi Aryeh Kaplan, and see how he defines *ben ha arbayim*. Here is what he says:

“Hold it [the Passover lamb] in safekeeping until the fourteenth day of this month. The entire community of Israel shall then slaughter [their sacrifices] **in the afternoon.**”

(Exodus 12:6, emphasis added, The Living Torah)

It is clear from the above that Rabbi Aryeh Kaplan teaches that he, like Rabbi Rashi, is of the same interpretation on the phrase *ben ha arbayim*. They both teach that the timing of the slaying of the Passover lambs is to be “**in the afternoon.**” Both rabbi's teachings on *ben ha arbayim* do not line up with the Hebrew text.

Before we move on, let us see what Rabbi Alfred Edersheim who is a noted Messianic rabbi says on the timing of the slaying of the Passover lambs. He does not define the phrase *ben ha arbayim*. Rather, he gives us the schedule of events for the Temple sacrifice of the Passover lambs from his book “*The Temple, Its Ministry and Services, As They Were at the Time of Christ.*”¹ In his description of the Temple and its services, he describes the daytime portion of the 14th as the “*eve of the Passover,*” supporting a 14th/15th Passover sequence in which the Passover lambs were killed at the temple late on the 14th and they were eaten on the 15th. In Edersheim's book, he assumes that the disciples Peter and John went to the Temple to have the Passover lamb sacrificed. The account of Yeshua's last Passover in the Gospel of John clearly shows that this assumption is incorrect. This is what Edersheim has written in his book:

“While the Saviour still tarried with the other disciples outside the city, Peter and John were completing their preparations. They followed the motley crowd, all leading their sacrificial lambs up the Temple-mount. Here they were grouped into three divisions. Already the evening sacrifice had been offered. Ordinarily it was slain at 2:30 PM, and offered at about 3:30. But on the eve of the Passover, as we have seen, it was killed an hour earlier; and if the 14th of Nisan fell on a Friday—or rather from Thursday at eve to Friday at eve—two hours earlier [1:30 PM], so as to avoid any

¹ “*The Temple, Its Ministry and Services, As They Were at the Time of Christ*” by Alfred Edersheim, <http://grace-ebooks.com/library/Alfred%20Edersheim/The%20Temple%20Its%20Ministry%20And%20Services.pdf>.

needless breach of the Sabbath [According to Scripture, the days of the week are reckoned from sunset to sunset; hence the weekly Sabbath begins with Friday evening.].”

(*“The Temple, Its Ministry and Services, As They Were at the Time of Christ”* by Alfred Edersheim, pages 222-23)

Edersheim’s above description basically concurs with the interpretation given by Rabbi Rashi and Rabbi Kaplan that *ben ha arbayim* is the time period from approximately 1 PM to sunset. Edersheim’s historical narration he is describing in his book is the typical Temple sacrifice of the Passover lambs the Jews were doing during the time when Yeshua was here. We see that Edersheim’s narrative of the Temple sacrifice of the Passover lambs took place on the afternoon of the 14th of Abib.

We have, at this point, taken a look at what Rabbi Rashi, Rabbi Aryeh Kaplan and Messianic Rabbi Alfred Edersheim have stated as the timing of the slaying of the Passover lambs, but is their interpretations correct? Does the Jewish “*traditional*” Temple practice of sacrificing the Passover lamb in accordance with the Scriptural commands Yahweh gave us for sacrificing the Passover line up with Scripture? Were the Passover lambs always slain on the afternoon of the 14th of Abib? Is this the true meaning of the command we read in Exodus Chapter 12? Or does the Scriptural command differ from what has been described by Rabbi Rashi, Rabbi Aryeh Kaplan and Messianic Rabbi Alfred Edersheim?

We must always remember that Scriptures interpret the Scriptures. We must ***never*** permit the religious traditions of Judaism or any other religion for that matter to influence or sway us to believe anything other than what is clearly written in the Scriptures. A person’s interpretations of the Scriptures should always be “*clearly*” noted as their interpretations, and their personal opinions. They should never come across as being anything other than their interpretation and/or their personal opinions. Human logic should never be placed above the authority of the written Scriptures, which is inspired by Yahweh. Those who choose to alter or misinterpret the Scriptures to further their traditions will receive the Yahweh’s Righteous Judgment! WOE be to those who have and still do this to this day. Repent!

Looking at a Hebrew-Chaldee Lexicon, we will find this explanation of the phrase *ben ha arbayim* under the listing for *erev*:

“Between the two evenings, Ex. 16:12; 30:8, [is] used as marking the space of time during which the paschal lamb was slain, Ex. 12:6; Lev. 23:5; Num. 9:3; and the evening sacrifice was offered, Ex. 29:30, 41; Num 28:4.”

(*Gesenius’ Hebrew-Chaldee Lexicon to the Old Testament*)

As we can see from Gesenius’ Hebrew-Chaldee Lexicon, it has correctly stated that the Passover lambs were slain during the same space of time that the evening sacrifice was offered—*ben ha arbayim*, or “*between the two evenings*.” However, Gesenius gives two conflicting views of the specific time of day that this phrase is designating:

“...according to the opinion of the Karaites and Samaritans (which is favoured by the words of Deut. 16:6), the time between sunset and deep twilight. The Pharisees, however, and the Rabbinites considered the time when the sun began to descend to be called the *first evening* (Arab. ‘little evening’; when it begins to draw towards evening); and the second evening to be the real sunset.”

(Gesenius’ *Hebrew-Chaldee Lexicon to the Old Testament*)

From what we have looked at thus far, it is clear that the Rabbinic as well as the Pharisaic teachings teach that *ben ha arbayim* is the period of time before sunset. This teaching has been this way for many centuries and it is a time honored Jewish tradition of the Jews as well as a fundamental teaching of Judaism. As a result of this interpretation of *ben ha arbayim*, until the destruction of the Second Temple many Jews killed their Passover lambs late on the afternoon of the 14th of Abib. They participated with the priests and Levites in *their* traditional sacrifice of *their* Passover. Josephus gives us his account of the Temple sacrifice of the Passover lambs as follows:

“So these high priests, upon the coming of their feast, which is called Passover, when they slay their sacrifices from the ninth hour to the eleventh [approximately 3 PM to 5 PM]...”

(*Wars of the Jews*, Book VI, Chapter IX, Section 3)

We need to note here that this is a historical record of an afternoon sacrifice which relates *only* to the killing of the Passover lambs at the Temple. We looked at what Josephus wrote above and he is not describing the domestic sacrifice of the Passover lambs at the houses of the people as commanded by Yahweh. It is important to understand here that the Temple sacrifice of the Passover lambs was LATER INSTITUTED by the Jews. This change by the Jews was introduced about 800 years after Israel’s first Passover.

In Josephus’s narration of Israel’s first Passover, he shows us that the Scriptural ordinances for observing the Passover—which included the domestic sacrifice of the Passover lambs was on the 14th of Abib—were still being practiced by the Jews during his lifetime. He writes,

“But when the fourteenth day was come, and all were ready to depart, they offered the sacrifice, and purified their houses, using bunches of hyssop for that purpose; and when they had supped, they burnt the remainder of the flesh, as just ready to depart. Whence it is that WE DO STILL OFFER THIS SACRIFICE IN LIKE MANNER TO THIS DAY, and call this festival *Pascha*...”

(*Antiquities of the Jews*, Book. II, Chapter 14, Section 6, emphasis added)

We can see that Josephus is clearly referring to the Passover ordinances in Exodus Chapter 12, as he *specifically* names several of them in this account of how the Passover ceremony was observed. Josephus shows us in the above narration that all the

ordinances of Yahweh for the domestic as well as the Temple sacrifice of the Passover lambs were still being observed side-by-side during his lifetime. All of the statutes and all of the ordinances that were observed at Israel's first Passover—including the domestic sacrifice of the lambs—are included in his statement: "WE DO STILL OFFER THIS SACRIFICE IN LIKE MANNER TO THIS DAY [emphasis added]."

Some scholars ignore what Josephus has documented about the domestic as well as the Temple sacrifice of the Passover lambs taking place at the same time during his lifetime. They only acknowledge the Temple sacrifice of the Passover lambs being offered at the Temple. Their one-sided explanation makes it appear that the domestic sacrifice of the Passover lambs was no longer being practiced, and that the original ordinances given to Moses in Egypt for of the Passover were now no longer valid. Since these scholars, for the most part, have chosen to only recognize the Temple sacrifice of the Passover lambs, it has and continues to present a false view of history of what really took place during the first century when the Temple was still in place before it was destroyed in 70 C.E. Thus, by these scholars ignoring that there was a domestic offering going on of the Passover lambs, it has opened the door up for them to support the traditional Jewish practice of killing the lambs late on the afternoon of the 14th of Abib and eating the Passover on the 15th of Abib. Some "*claim*" that this Jewish tradition was introduced centuries after the first Passover in Egypt and this is the way Passover has always been observed.

Many churches have been taught to rely on Jewish traditions as a guide for observing the Passover ceremony. The churches have been wrongly taught by pastors, preachers, ministers, and Christian Theologians alike that the Bible supports a 15th Passover observance. Many Christians who listen to their congregational leaders have fallen prey to such teachings do not realize that these scholars are following the interpretations of men. These Christian congregational leaders and scholars are ignoring the clear commands written in the Bible in Exodus Chapter 12 and Numbers Chapter 9, they have accepted the Rabbinic and Pharisaic interpretation of *ben ha arbayim* as their authority. When we read what these Christian congregational leaders and scholars have written, we can see that they clearly support the traditional Jewish view. Look at this:

"But exactly what did the term '*between the two evenings*' include? We know that the LATER JEWS DEFINED IT as the period between about mid-afternoon and sundown. Is this interpretation a permissible one? ONE PASSAGE certainly gives us GOOD REASON TO THINK that the term between the two evenings includes a period before sunset. Ex. 29:38-39 states: 'This is that which you shall offer upon the altar every day on a continual basis: two yearling rams, the one in the morning and the second between the two evenings' (JPSA). (Also in Num. 28:3-8.) These ARE APPARENTLY THE ONLY PASSAGES which give any precise information about '*between the two evenings*.' They INDICATE that the daily offering consists of a morning offering and an offering BEFORE SUNSET when the

new day began. Yet, the second offering that day was offered ‘*between the two evenings*,’ showing that the first evening took place before sunset.”

(Dr. Robert L. Kuhn and Dr. Lester L. Grabbe, *The Passover in the Bible and the Church Today*, p. 13, emphasis added)

In the above scholars’ statements there are key phrases which have been emphasized to help show the weakness in their arguments. The limited perspective of their research is revealed by their words “the LATER JEWS DEFINED IT.” Plainly this is saying that they are taking the word of the Jews over what is clearly written in the Bible. After defining *ben ha arbayim* as “*between about mid-afternoon and sundown*,” they ask, “Is this interpretation a PERMISSIBLE ONE? Their response shows a lack of conclusive evidence: “ONE PASSAGE...GOOD REASON TO THINK...ARE APPARENTLY THE ONLY PASSAGES...INDICATE.” ”

It is a shame and a disgrace to the scholarly community and especially to the Body of believers in Yeshua that this kind of *slanted* presentation is being put forth as objective research by these noted scholars! This is truly backwards reasoning by using a much later Jewish practice to define the original meaning of the ancient Hebrew phrase *ben ha arbayim*. Needless to say, these passages are not addressed by these scholars in their writings. Is it possible that these other Scriptures were deliberately ignored in order to gain acceptance for the traditional Jewish interpretation?

What is really sad is these scholars who are promoting the later Rabbinic view, some of them admit that *ben ha arbayim* was originally understood to mean the period of time following sunset. They clearly admit this. Check their admission:

“ ‘Between the two evenings’ is usually taken to mean between sundown and dark, a period of about an hour or so....This may be correct as far as the original Passover instructions were concerned. At least some later Jewish groups interpreted the original instructions in this way, including the Karaites and Samaritans. However, such a narrow definition is possible only where a small number of animals are slain or where all can be slain at the same time as was the case with the original Passover.”

(Dr. Robert L. Kuhn and Dr. Lester L. Grabbe, *The Passover in the Bible and the Church Today*, p. 12, emphasis added)

Is this not a remarkable admission in light of the *fact* that these scholars have dedicated their entire dissertations to denouncing and rejecting the definition of *ben ha arbayim* as the period of time between sunset and dark! It is clear that these scholars are aware that this definition fits the Passover instructions perfectly that is given in Exodus Chapter 12, but they have rejected it because it does not fit the Jewish tradition of the Temple sacrifice of the Passover lambs. What these scholars are not aware of is they are rejecting the ordinances Yahweh gave Moses in Egypt and they are choosing the Jewish traditions of men.

These scholars have stated their position as follows:

“If there was any other legitimate way to interpret the expression [*ben ha arbayim*] when considerations of the time [required for the temple sacrifice] did not allow slaughter of the Passover lambs in the twilight period, WE HAVE NO RECORD OF IT.”

(Dr. Robert L. Kuhn and Dr. Lester L. Grabbe, *The Passover in the Bible and the Church Today*, p. 13, emphasis added)

Anyone who challenges these scholars will be shut down. They have it all figured out and they have come to the point that they are not teachable. They believe themselves to be the final authority on this matter. Their scholarship over-rides the Written Word of Yahweh. They boldly state,

“ANY ATTEMPT to make the phrase ‘*between the two evenings*’ [*ben ha arbayim*] refer to the beginning of the 14th is CONTRARY to all ancient scholarship known and also GOES AGAINST modern scholars who have discussed the subject.”

(Dr. Robert L. Kuhn and Dr. Lester L. Grabbe, *The Passover in the Bible and the Church Today*, p. 32, emphasis added)

The definition of *ben ha arbayim* as the beginning of the 14th of Abib which comes immediately after sunset, is not “*contrary to all ancient scholarship*,” nor is it contrary to modern scholarship. Everett Fox is a leading authority in Biblical Hebrew. He defines the phrase *ben ha arbayim* as the time between sunset and dark. To determine whose definition is correct, we will examine all the available evidence—both Scriptural and historical. This evidence will expose the false scholarship of men and their misinterpretations of the Word of Yahweh.

Defying False Scholarship

There is a legitimate, Biblically sound, chronologically defined, Scripturally documented way to determine the original meaning of *ben ha arbayim*, and to prove beyond any shadow of doubt whatsoever that *ben ha arbayim* is the time period from sunset until dark, at the beginning of the day.

Understanding the Hebrew Term Ba Erev

We have learned that the commanded time for slaying the Passover lambs was *ben ha arbayim*—“*between the two evenings*,” or “*between the setting-times*.” The slaying of the lambs was the first of nine ordinances to be fulfilled on the Passover day. When we examined the interpretation of *ben ha arbayim* given by rabbis and scholars, we saw that they define “*between the two evenings*” as the period from a short time after noon until sunset. To support *their* definition, they point to the historical example of the

Temple sacrifice of the Passover lambs, which occurred in the afternoon of the 14th day of the first month.

It is evident that the rabbis and scholars are relying on the traditions of Judaism to interpret the meaning of *ben ha arbayim* rather than the Scriptures. But we do not have to depend on the traditions of men to understand the meaning of this Hebrew phrase. Yahweh has given us an easy-to understand, chronological sequence of events in His Word that reveals the *true* meaning of *ben ha arbayim*. When we examine the Scriptural usage of this Hebrew phrase, we will see that the Bible does not support Judaism's traditional interpretation of "*between the two evenings*" as the afternoon of the day.

In order to understand the Scriptural usage of *ben ha arbayim*, we must first understand the meaning of the Hebrew phrase *ba erev*, which is used numerous times in the Old Testament to denote time. The Scriptural definition of *ba erev* is the *key* that unlocks the true meaning of *ben ha arbayim*. When we understand the Scriptural meaning of these two Hebrew terms, we will be able to determine the precise time that the Passover was to be kept, beginning with the slaying of the lambs.

Leviticus 23 Defines BA EREV

Leviticus Chapter 23 will help us to understand the Scriptural meaning of *ba erev*. This chapter lists all the days that Yahweh set apart for His people to assemble before Him—including the weekly Sabbath, Passover, and the seven annual Holy Days of Yahweh. Each of these commanded convocations has a special meaning and significance, but it is Yahweh's commands for the Day of Atonement that is of particular importance to our understanding of *ba erev*. Let us examine His commands:

“²⁷ Also, on the tenth day of this seventh month, is the Day of Atonement. It shall be a holy convocation to you. And you shall afflict your souls [by fasting without food or water; see Psa. 35:13, Ezra 10:6] and offer an offering made by fire to the LORD. ²⁸ And you shall do NO WORK in that same day, for it is the Day of Atonement, in order to make an atonement for you before the LORD your God, ²⁹ for whoever is not afflicted [fast without food and water] in that same day, he shall be cut off from among his people. ³⁰ And whoever does any work in that same day, the same one WILL I DESTROY from among his people. ³¹ You shall do NO MANNER OF WORK. It shall be a statute forever throughout your generations in all your dwellings.”

(Leviticus 23:27-31)

Notice how important the Day of Atonement is! NO FOOD OR WATER COULD BE CONSUMED AND NO MANNER OF WORK COULD BE DONE WHATSOEVER! DEATH AND DESTRUCTION WOULD STRIKE THOSE WHO DID NOT FAST AND

AFFLICT THEIR SOULS, OR WHO DID ANY MANNER OF WORK ON THE DAY OF ATONEMENT.

Because of the severe punishment for violating the Day of Atonement, Yahweh did not want the children of Israel to be in any doubt whatsoever as to *when* that day would begin and when it would end! What a tragedy it would have been if some had claimed that the Day of Atonement began in the late afternoon, before sunset, and others had claimed that the Day of Atonement began when a person could see three stars at night, after sunset. There would have been as much as a six-hour difference in observing the Day of Atonement, if it were based on these differing interpretations and opinions of the rabbis. What confusion it would have created! Those poor souls who happened to follow the wrong opinion would have broken the Day of Atonement, which would have cost them their lives!

Since the punishment for breaking the Day of Atonement was DEATH, Yahweh left absolutely no wiggle room for doubt as to the exact time of the beginning and ending of the day. It is for this very reason that Yahweh issued a specific command pinpointing the exact beginning and ending of the Day of Atonement. Here is how Yahweh defines the day:

“It shall be unto you a sabbath of solemn rest, and ye shall afflict your souls; IN THE NINTH DAY OF THE MONTH AT EVEN, FROM EVEN UNTO EVEN, shall ye keep your Sabbath.”

(Leviticus 23:32, emphasis added, Jewish Publication Society of America)

The words “*at even*” in this verse are translated from the Hebrew phrase *ba erev*, meaning “*at sunset*.” This Hebrew phrase is formed from the preposition *ba* and the noun *erev*. The Hebrew noun *erev* literally means “*the entering*.” Its specific meaning depends on the context in which it is used and the form in which it appears in the text. When used with the preposition *ba*, *erev* specifically refers to sunset. This definition is established by its usage in numerous Old Testament passages and it has traditionally been acknowledged in the Jewish observance of the Day of Atonement.

The Schocken Bible reflects the *precise* meaning of *ba erev* in Leviticus 23:32:

“It is Sabbath, a Sabbath-ceasing for you, you are to afflict yourselves; on the ninth (day) after the New-Moon, at sunset [Hebrew *ba erev*], from sunset to sunset, you are to make-a-ceasing of your ceasing!”

(The Schocken Bible)

“*At sunset*,” or *ba erev*, is a very short period of time. It begins when the sun appears to touch the horizon, and ends when the sun drops below the horizon. The total duration of its setting is no more than 3-5 minutes. The term *ba erev* is very specific! This is why Yahweh commanded that the Day of Atonement be observed from *ba erev* to *ba erev*. The use of the preposition *ba* with the Hebrew noun *erev* eliminates any doubt or confusion as to the time at which the day begins and ends:

“...in the ninth day of the month at even [Hebrew *ba erev*, beginning at sunset], from even [Hebrew *mn erev*, from sunset] unto even [Hebrew *ad erev*, to sunset], shall ye keep your Sabbath.”

(Leviticus 23:32, Jewish Publication Society of America)

The use of the preposition *ba* with the Hebrew noun *erev* eliminates any doubt or confusion as to the time at which the day begins and ends.

The fact that each day begins and ends at sunset is clearly established in Leviticus 23. In verse 27, we find a specific command that the Day of Atonement be observed on the tenth day of the month. In verse 32, *ba erev* on the ninth day of the month is clearly designated as the beginning of the Day of Atonement. These two Scriptural commands make it absolutely clear that *ba erev* marks the end of the ninth day and the beginning of the tenth day. The tenth day of the seventh month is from sunset, or *mn erev*, of the ninth day, until sunset, or *ad erev*, of the tenth day. There is no wiggle room for any other interpretation of Leviticus 23:32. The beginning and ending of the Day of Atonement is firmly established by the Scriptural record of Yahweh’s command.

According to the Scriptural method of reckoning time, each day extends from sunset to sunset. This principle applies to the weekly Sabbath day. The Bible clearly teaches that the SEVENTH DAY is the Sabbath of the Lord. From sunset of the sixth day until sunset of the seventh day is the weekly Sabbath day. This is the true definition of the Sabbath day as reckoned scripturally from sunset to sunset.

Now, let’s apply the Scriptural method of reckoning time to Yahweh’s instructions for observing the Feast of Unleavened Bread, as recorded in Exodus Chapter 12. Using the Scriptural definition of *ba erev*, we can determine the precise time at which the Feast of Unleavened Bread begins and ends.

Fox’s translation of this verse confirms that *ba erev* is referring to sunset:

“In the first (month), on the fourteenth day after the New-Moon, AT SUNSET, you are to eat matzot [unleavened bread], until the twenty-first day of the month, AT SUNSET.”

(Exodus 12:18, emphasis added, The Schocken Bible)

“In the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month AT SUNSET [Hebrew *ba erev*], you shall eat unleavened bread, until [up to that point in time] the twenty-first day of the month AT SUNSET [Hebrew *ba erev*].”

(Exodus 12:18, emphasis added)

This verse clearly shows that the Feast of Unleavened Bread begins at sunset, or *ba erev*. The command of Yahweh in Leviticus 23:6 shows that it is sunset which ends the 14th and begins the 15th day of the month. Counting forward seven days from the sunset ending the 14th, we arrive at the sunset ending the 21st day, or *ba erev* “on the one and twentieth day.” That is when the Feast of Unleavened Bread ends or a duration of seven full days.

By letting the Scriptures interpret Yahweh's command in Exodus Chapter 12, we can see how Yahweh Himself defines the duration of the Feast of Unleavened Bread. His Absolute Written Word reveals the beginning point and the ending point of the Feast of Unleavened Bread. There is no doubt or confusion when the Scriptural method of reckoning His time is understood and *correctly* applied. The phrase *ba erev* removes any doubt as to when the seven days of unleavened bread begin and end.

The use of *ba erev* in Exodus Chapter 12 in the command for the Feast of Unleavened Bread is consistent with its use in Leviticus Chapter 23 for the command for observing the Day of Atonement. The use of *ba erev* in both commands confirms that this Hebrew term marks the beginning and end of each day.

The Jews Understand that BA EREV Ends One Day and Begins the Next Day

The manner in which the Jews have traditionally harvested the wave sheaf shows their understanding of the Scriptural meaning of *ba erev*, or “*at sunset*.” Their traditional practice requires absolute confirmation that the sun has set before the one who has been appointed to cut the sheaf can raise his sickle.

The wave sheaf was offered in conjunction with the Feast of Unleavened Bread. Yahweh's instructions for this special wave offering are found in Leviticus Chapter 23:

“⁹ And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, ¹⁰ ‘Speak to the children of Israel and say unto them, “When you have come into the land which I give to you, and shall reap the harvest of it, then you shall bring the premier sheaf of the firstfruits of your harvest to the priest. ¹¹ And he shall wave the sheaf before the LORD to be accepted for you. On the next day after the Sabbath [in conjunction with the Feast of Unleavened Bread] the priest shall wave it.”

(Leviticus 23:9-11)

Note: There was a dispute between the Pharisees and the Sadducees as to which Sabbath this verse is designating. The Pharisees applied this command to the first Holy Day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, which is the 15th day of the first month, or Abib. In *their* view, the “morrow after the Sabbath”—the day for harvesting the wave sheaf—was always the 16th of Abib. On the other hand, the Sadducees, who were in charge of the Temple during the days of Yeshua, understood that Yahweh's command in Leviticus 23:11 was referring to the weekly Sabbath which occurred in conjunction with the Feast of Unleavened Bread. In years when the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread fell on the weekly Sabbath, both the Sadducees and the Pharisees would observe the 16th of Abib as the day for the wave sheaf offering. Although the Sadducees and the Pharisees generally disagreed over the correct DAY for the wave sheaf offering, there was never any question about the correct TIME of the day for harvesting it.

Alfred Edersheim, a converted Pharisaic rabbi, records the details of the harvesting of the wave sheaf in his book *“The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah.”*² His description of the traditional practice shows that the Jews have from ancient times understood and acknowledged that the day ends at sunset, or *ba erev*. They are fully aware that as soon as the sun has dropped below the horizon, it is the beginning of the next day.

As the children of Israel had done in Old Testament times, the Jews in New Testament times waited until the sun had gone down before harvesting the wave sheaf. They knew that “the next day after the Sabbath” began at sunset. The sunset that ended the Sabbath began the new day, “the next day after the Sabbath,” on which the harvesting of the wave sheaf was to be done. No harvesting was permitted until the Sabbath was over. Once the sun dropped below the horizon, the Sabbath was past. It was the first instant of the next day, by Scriptural reckoning, and harvesting could be done.

Here is Alfred Edersheim’s description of the harvesting of the wave sheaf:

“This Passover-sheaf was reaped in public the evening before it was offered, and it was to witness this ceremony that the crowd had gathered around the elders. Already on the 14th [of] Nisan the spot whence the first sheaf was to be reaped had been marked out, by tying together in bundles, while still standing, the barley that was to be cut down, according to custom, in the sheltered Ashes-Valley across Kidron. When the time for cutting the sheaf had arrived—that is, on the evening of the 15th [of] Nisan [by Pharisaic reckoning], even though it were a Sabbath [the journey to harvest was undertaken before the end of the Sabbath, but was within the prescribed traditional “Sabbath day’s journey”], just as the sun went down, three men, each with a sickle and basket, set to work.

Clearly to bring out what was distinctive in the ceremony, they first asked of the bystanders three times each of these questions: ‘HAS THE SUN GONE DOWN?’ ‘With this sickle?’ ‘Into this basket?’ ‘On this Sabbath? (or first Passover-day)’—and lastly, ‘Shall I reap?’ Having each time been answered in the affirmative, they cut down barley to the amount of one ephah, or about three pecks and three pints of our English measure.”

(The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah, p. 619)

Remember that it takes only 3-5 minutes for the sun to set from the time that it first appears to touch the horizon. Considering the short duration of sunset, or *ba erev*, it is evident that the sun had dropped below the horizon by the time the traditional questions were answered and before the sheaf for the wave offering was cut. Edersheim

² “*The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*” by Alfred Edersheim,
<http://www.ntslibrary.com/PDF%20Books/The%20Life%20and%20Times%20of%20Jesus%20the%20Messiah.pdf>.

confirms this *fact* by going on to state that the sun had fully set and that it was, at the time of the cutting, the next day, the 16th of Nisan.

In another book, which also describes the harvesting of the wave sheaf, Alfred Edersheim inserts the following footnote:

“It was really done after sunset on the 15th, which was the beginning of the 16th of Nisan.”

(The Temple, Its Ministry and Services, As They Were at the Time of Christ, p. 258)

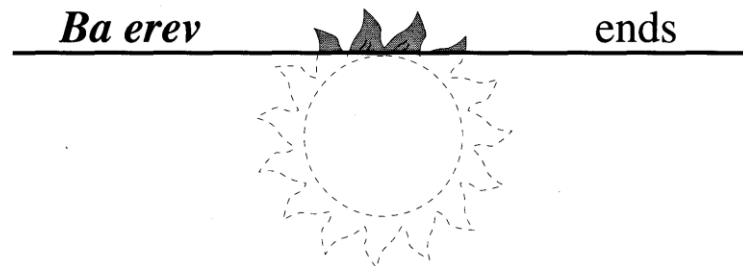
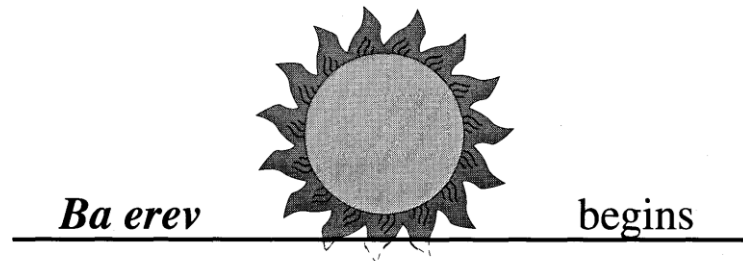
Edersheim’s statements show conclusively that *ba erev*, “*at sunset*,” was fully understood by the Jews as the point at which the present day ended and the next day began. His description of the ceremony for harvesting the wave sheaf also verifies that *ba erev* was a very short duration of time. The time of *ba erev* is correctly translated by Everett Fox and Fred R. Coulter as “*at sunset*.”

In summarizing what we have looked at here on the phrase *ba erev*, or “*at sunset*,” it is evident that, although the leaders of Judaism dispute the meaning of some Hebrew terms used in Scripture, the meaning of *ba erev* is without controversy: The Hebrew phrase *ba erev*, or “*at sunset*,” designates the end of one day and the beginning of the next day. Judaism acknowledges, in both teaching and practice that as soon as the sun has set below the horizon, a new day has begun.

We have seen that the Scriptures define *ba erev*, or “*at sunset*,” as the point at which one day ends and the next day begins. By applying the Scriptural definition of *ba erev*, we have shown the meaning of the much disputed term *ben ha arbayim*.

Ba erev, or “*at sunset*” is the three-to-five minute period of time that begins when the sun appears to touch the horizon until the sun disappears below the horizon. To help illustrate this, please see the illustration below.

Ba erev, “at sunset,” is the three to five minute period of time that begins when the sun appears to touch the horizon and ends when the sun disappears below the horizon.



Now that we have looked at the phrase *ben ha arbayim* and *ba erev*, we will now determine the Scriptural meaning of the phrase *ben ha arbayim*.

Determining the Scriptural Meaning of Ben Ha Arbayim

What is the true meaning of the Hebrew phrase *ben ha arbayim*? The traditional Jewish interpretation defines it as the time from shortly after noon until sunset. Rabbi Aryeh Kaplan has accordingly translated *ben ha arbayim* as “afternoon” in the Passover command in Exodus 12:6. He has done the same thing in Exodus 16:12 where he says:

“I have heard the complaints of the Israelites. Speak to them and say, In the afternoon [Hebrew *ben ha arbayim*], you will eat meat and in the morning, you will have your fill of bread....That evening [Hebrew *ba erev*], a flock of quail came and covered the camp.”

(Exodus 16:12-13, The Living Torah)

Does this translation by Kaplan accurately convey the true meaning of *ben ha arbayim* as used by Yahweh in the Scriptures? Or does it present a false view of *ben ha arbayim* that does not come from the Absolute Written Word of Yahweh but from the man-made traditions of ancient rabbis? Yeshua condemned the religious leaders in His day for replacing Yahweh's commandments with their own traditions:

“And He said unto them [the scribes and Pharisees], **Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition.**”

(Mark 7:9)

There is no need to rely on any of the rabbinic traditions or any of the scholars who follow them. We have a valid, Biblically based, chronologically sound, conclusive way to determine the *true* meaning of *ben ha arbayim*. Yahweh has preserved this knowledge for us in Exodus Chapter 16. By simply examining the context and chronological order of the events that are recorded in Exodus Chapter 16, we will be able to determine the *exact* point in time at which *ben ha arbayim* begins.

The Scriptural definition of *ben ha arbayim* is there in the Bible waiting to be found. Every believer in Yeshua/Jesus can discover the true meaning of *ben ha arbayim* for himself or herself, if he or she is willing to take the time to search the Scriptures with an open mind, as did the Bereans. In the book of Acts, we see where the Bereans were commended for their zeal in seeking Scriptural truth:

“Now these were more noble than those in Thessalonica, for they received the Word with all readiness of mind and examined the Scriptures daily to see if these things were so.”

(Acts 17:11)

Let us follow the example of the Bereans and be diligent in searching for His Truths from His Absolute Written Word. Let us examine the Scriptures with readiness of mind and seek out the knowledge that God has preserved for us.

Exodus Chapter 16 Unlocks the Meaning of *BEN HA ARBAYIM*

The events which are recorded for us in Exodus Chapter 16 gives us a Scriptural *key* that will help us unlock the true meaning of *ben ha arbayim*. Exodus Chapter 16 begins with the arrival of the children of Israel at the wilderness of Sin:

“And they took their journey from Elim, and all the congregation of the children of Israel came unto the wilderness of Sin, which is between Elim and Sinai, on the fifteenth day of the second month after their departing out of the land of Egypt.”

(Exodus 16:1, Jewish Publication Society of America)

Exodus Chapter 16 continues the chronological record of the Exodus from Egypt. The first verse is important to our study because it shows the time setting of the events that follow. It is only thirty days after the children of Israel left Egypt that these events

took place, and only forty-five days after Yahweh's instructions He gave Moses for observing the Passover (Exodus 12:1-2). This is less than seven weeks that all this took place. We are not dealing with a long period of time here like a year or more, or even decades or centuries, in which changes in language could result in changes in the definitions of words. When Yahweh used the term *ben ha arbayim* in the Passover command in Exodus Chapter 12, and forty-five days later used *ben ha arbayim* again, as recorded in Exodus Chapter 16, it conveyed the same meaning in both instances. Nothing changed in that time frame!

The events that are recorded in Exodus Chapter 16 will enable us to determine the true, Scriptural meaning and timing of *ben ha arbayim*. As we study the following events in Exodus Chapter 16, we will see that they give us a clear-cut chronological framework that reveals the exact time of day at which *ben ha arbayim* begins. The account of these events shows us that the 15th day of the second month was, in fact, a weekly Sabbath. The chapter covers a whole week—from that Sabbath through the next Sabbath. As we read the account, we will see that on the morning of the following day—the 16th—the manna appeared for the first time, and it continued to appear each morning for a total of six days. No manna appeared on the seventh day because it was Yahweh's Holy (dedicated) Sabbath. Counting back from that Sabbath, we can determine that the day the manna was promised, the 15th day of the second month, was also a weekly Sabbath.

There are some who *claim* that the 15th day could not have been a Sabbath of rest because Israel came to the wilderness of Sin “*on the fifteenth day*.” They argue that this phrase indicates that Israel was still journeying after the 15th day had begun at sunset. Is this a correct interpretation of the Scriptural account? We need to examine the phrase “*on the fifteenth*” in the Hebrew text.

The phrase that is translated “*on the fifteenth*” begins with the Hebrew preposition *ba*, which is the same preposition that is used to form the phrase *ba erev*. The preposition *ba* is used to denote “*an actual time in, at or when*” (Waltke, *An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax*, p. 196). *Ba* may also be translated “*on*,” as it is in the phrase “*on the fifteenth*” in Exodus 16:1. Does this phrase show that Israel was traveling on the 15th day?

In the King James translation of Exodus 16:1, it appears that the children of Israel arrived at the wilderness of Sin *after* the 15th day had begun. However, the Hebrew text does not link their arrival with the 15th day. In the Hebrew text, the phrase “*on the fifteenth day*” is linked with the complaining of the children of Israel—not with their arrival. Consequently, this phrase should not have been interpreted as showing that the children of Israel were traveling for a period of time on the 15th day.

Again, we will take a short side-step to take a look at a detailed exegesis of Exodus 16:1 on our quest for His Truths in understanding the timing of Passover.

Exodus 16:1-2

“And they took their journey from Elim, and all the congregation of the children of Israel came into the wilderness of Sin, which is between Elim and Sinai. And on the fifteenth day of the second month after their departing out of the land of Egypt, then the whole congregation of the children of Israel murmured against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness.”

This translation makes it appear that Israel arrived at the wilderness of Sin while the 15th day was in progress. The Hebrew text, however, does not support the assertion that Israel traveled on the 15th day. The presence of a major logical pause between the verb “came” and the words “on the fifteenth day” verifies this fact. This logical pause is denoted by the use of the *atnah* (^), which resembles an upside-down “v,” under the Hebrew word for “Sinai” (See *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia*).

The *atnah* (^) and other accents are essential to understanding the thoughts that are being conveyed in the Hebrew text. These accent marks are all part of a system that

“**punctuates the text** and is therefore a very important feature in its syntactic analysis.... This feature of Hebrew grammar is so important for understanding that medieval Jewish sources paid more attention to it than to establishing the correct pronunciation of words.”

(Waltke, *An introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax*, p. 29)

Waltke describes the use of the *atnah* and other accents to express divisions of thought in the Hebrew text:

“Accents in the MT [Masoretic Text] are of two kinds: disjunctives and conjunctives. Disjunctive accents, euphemistically dubbed ‘lords’ by earlier scholars, mark the length of pauses from full stop [complete break in logical thought] to various shades of shorter pauses [partial breaks in logical thought]; conjunctives, dubbed ‘servants,’ control the text up to the disjunctive. According to W. Wickes’s comprehensive study of the accents, the disjunctives mark a continuous ‘dichotomy’ of the verse, that is, **they divide larger units [of thought], beginning with the verse itself** (marked off by silluq closing the verse), into successively smaller half-units on a syntactic (or logico-syntactic) basis. A unit ending with a disjunctive of one grade is divided into halves, and its halves in turn are divided into smaller units by other disjunctive signs until the whole verse is divided into single words, or groups of words joined by conjunctives. Israel Yeivin groups the major disjunctive accents as follows: ‘**Generally *atnah* divides the verse**, *zaqef* the verse halves, *pashta* or *revia* the unit ending with *zaqef*, and so on.’ ”

(Waltke, *An introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax*, p. 29, emphasis added)

In translating Exodus 16:1, Owens indicates the presence of the *atnah* by parsing the Hebrew word for Sinai as “*pr.n.paus*” (*proper noun pausal*). The division of thought that is expressed by the *atnah* is illustrated in his translation below:

“They set out
from Elim
and came
all the congregation of
the people of Israel
to the wilderness of
Sin
which is
between Elim
and Sinai

(logical pause)

on the five
ten
day
of the month
second
after they had departed
from the land of Egypt

and murmured
the whole congregation of
the people of Israel
against Moses
and Aaron
in the wilderness.”

(*Analytical Key to the Old Testament*, Vol. 1)

The logical pause in Exodus 16:1 divides the thoughts that follow from the preceding thoughts that are expressed in the verse. The Septuagint, which follows the logical markings of the text very closely, translates this passage as follows:

“And they departed from Elim, and all the congregation of the children of Israel came to the wilderness of Sin, which is between Elim and Sinea;
and on the fifteenth day, in the second month after their departure from the land of Egypt all the congregation of the children of Israel murmured against Moses and Aaron.”

The presence of the logical pause in Exodus 16:1 shows that Israel had come to the wilderness of Sin and they made camp by the beginning of the fifteenth day. When the fifteenth day arrived, Israel complained to Moses that Yahweh had brought them to the desert to die. Thus, there is no basis for the claim that Israel was traveling on the 15th day.

Now, we will pick up where we left off with the above section titled “Exodus Chapter 16 Unlocks the Meaning of BEN HA ARBAYIM.”

Here is the correct translation and sequence of events:

“And they took their journey from Elim, and all the congregation of the children of Israel came into the wilderness of Sin, which is between Elim and Sinai. And on the fifteenth day of the second month after their departing out of the land of Egypt.”

(Exodus 16:1)

The phrase “*on [ba] the fifteenth*” must be interpreted in the context of the entire chapter. It is unwise to use this phrase to argue that the fifteenth day of the second month was not a weekly Sabbath when the events that are recorded in Exodus Chapter 16 clearly offer conclusive evidence that it was the Sabbath. The account that we are given in this chapter enables us to determine the exact day of the week on which the 15th fell—and that day was indeed the seventh day of the week.

Keeping in mind this chronological setting, let us continue our examination of the account in Exodus Chapter 16. Verses 2 and 3 record that after arriving at the wilderness of Sin, the children of Israel complained and grumbled to Moses and Aaron about the lack of food and meat to eat, saying that they wished they had died in the land of Egypt (vs. 2-3).

This murmuring took place on the 15th day. After hearing their complaints, here is what Yahweh said to Moses:

“⁴ Behold, I will rain bread from the heavens for you. And the people shall go out and gather a certain amount every day, that I may prove them, whether they will walk in My law or not. ⁵ And it shall come to pass on the sixth day, they shall prepare what they bring in. And it shall be twice as much as they gather day by day. ⁶ And Moses and Aaron said to all the children of Israel, AT SUNSET [Hebrew *ba erev*, ending the 15th day, a weekly Sabbath], then you shall know that the LORD has brought you out from the land of Egypt. ⁷ And at sunrise [Hebrew *boqer*], you shall see the glory of the LORD, for He hears your murmurings against the LORD. And what are we that you murmur against us? ⁸ “And Moses said, You will see when the LORD shall give you flesh to eat at sunset [Hebrew *ba erev*, ending that Sabbath day], and bread to the full at sunrise, for the LORD

hears your murmurings which you murmur against Him. And what are we? Your murmurings are not against us, BUT AGAINST THE LORD.”
(Exodus 16:4-8)

These verses hold a lesson for us today because human nature has not changed. People still complain against Yahweh. But He is still merciful and long-suffering, even as He was to the children of Israel in the wilderness. He did not punish the people when they murmured against Him, but rather He sent them manna from heaven to eat, and the manna continued for forty years without fail (Exodus 16:35 and Joshua 5:12).

The manna was indeed a miracle food for the children of Israel during the forty years of their wanderings in the wilderness! Yahweh supernaturally blessed them with this manna. He provided for His people in one of the most desolate wildernesses in the world:

“...And at sunrise [Hebrew *boqer*, sunrise of the next day, the first day of the week] the dew lay all around about the camp. And when the layer of dew had gone up, behold, there was a small round thing upon the face of the wilderness, small as the hoar-frost upon the ground. And when the children of Israel saw it, they said one to another, ‘What is that?’ For they did not know what it was. And Moses said to them, ‘This is the bread which the LORD has given you to eat. This is the thing which the LORD has commanded. ‘Each man gather of it according to his eating; an omer for each one, according to the number of your persons. Each one shall take for those who are in his tent.’ ”

(Exodus 16:13-16)

LESSONS OF THE MANNA

The miracle of the manna is a striking illustration of Yahweh’s mercy. It is also a powerful lesson in the importance of resting on the seventh day, which He has appointed and sanctified as the weekly Sabbath.

Every morning for six days in a row, Yahweh sent the manna for the children of Israel to eat. On days one through five, He commanded them to gather only what they could eat each day. They were not to keep any manna until the next morning (verses 19-20). Needless to say, some disobeyed Him and they kept it until the next morning, and it bred worms and rotted.

On the sixth day of that week, they gathered twice as much as they did on the first five days. Here are Yahweh’s instructions through Moses for the sixth day, in preparation for the weekly Sabbath:

“²³ This is that which the LORD has said, Tomorrow is the rest of the HOLY SABBATH TO THE LORD. Bake what you will bake today, and boil what you will boil. And that which remains over [the extra omers of manna

for the Sabbath], lay up for yourselves to be kept until the next morning. ²⁴ And they laid it up until the next morning as Moses said. And IT DID NOT STINK; NEITHER WAS THERE ANY WORM in it.”

(Exodus 16:23-24)

Here is another miracle of the manna: If the manna was kept overnight during the five working days of the week, it bred worms and rotted. But on the sixth day, they could gather twice as much and keep half of the manna for the Sabbath day, and it did not breed worms or rot (verse 24). That in itself was a miracle from Yahweh that the manna did not spoil and rot which was held over to be used on the Sabbath.

How plain and unmistakable! By these daily and weekly miracles of the manna, the children of Israel always knew which day was the Sabbath. Remember that the manna continued to come six days a week for forty years, but not once did it appear on the seventh day. Yahweh used the miracles of the manna to impress on His people the importance of keeping the seventh day as the weekly Sabbath.

Only twenty-two days after sending the first manna, Yahweh gave the Ten Commandments (Ten Words). We know the Fourth Commandment is the command to rest on the seventh day, the weekly Sabbath. The importance of keeping the Fourth Commandment is magnified when we fully understand the miracles of the manna:

“⁸ Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy. ⁹ Six days you shall labor and do all your work. ¹⁰ But the seventh day is the Sabbath of the LORD your God. In it you shall not do any work, you, nor your son, nor your daughter; your manservant, nor your maidservant, nor your livestock, nor the stranger within your gates; ¹¹ for in six days the LORD made the heaven and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and sanctified it.”

(Exodus 20:8-11)

Yahweh created the weekly Sabbath by sanctifying the seventh day as a day of rest for all mankind. He Himself rested on the first Sabbath day, and He blessed it, and He set it apart as a Holy time from the creation of this world (Genesis 2:1-4). The Sabbath was given to mankind in order that all might rest from their labors and seek fellowship with Him. The Sabbath is not to be used for the labor of earning our daily bread! This is the lesson of the miracles of the manna.

Most of humanity down through the ages to this very day has not learned this basic lesson. The nations of this world long ago rebelled against Yahweh and they rejected the seventh-day Sabbath which He established. Many in the Christian-professing world keep the first day of the week—Sunday. In their misguided self-righteousness, they declare that Sunday is the Lord’s Day. But, Yahweh did not sanctify Sunday, and nowhere in Scripture is the first day of the week called Holy! The Scriptures shows us

that He sanctified the seventh day of the week from the beginning, and that He made it unmistakably clear to His people that only the seventh day is Holy.

Some *claim* that it makes no difference which day they keep. They have forgotten the lesson of the manna. They have rejected the Holy Sabbath of Almighty Yahweh! People today would not continue to reject Yahweh's Holy Sabbath for long if their food would breed worms and rot, would they?

Here is Moses' message on the next seventh day, the second weekly Sabbath of Exodus 16:

“... ²⁵ Eat it today, for today is a Sabbath to the LORD. Today you shall not find it in the field. ²⁶ Six days you shall gather it, but on the seventh day, the Sabbath, in it there shall be none. ²⁷ And it came to pass that some of the people went out on the seventh day in order to gather, but they did not find any.”

(Exodus 16:25-27)

What important lesson does this account teach us about Yahweh and the Sabbath? **GOD HONORS HIS OWN SABBATH!** He did not send the manna on the seventh day. It was His Holy Sabbath! He was teaching the people not to break His commandments and laws. He set the example for the people by honoring His own Sabbath. He was grieved when some stubbornly attempted to gather manna on the seventh day:

“²⁸ And the LORD said to Moses, How long do you refuse [those who went out to gather manna on the Sabbath] to keep My commandments and My laws? ²⁹ See, because that the LORD has given you the Sabbath; therefore He gives you the bread of two days on the sixth day. Let each one stay in his place. Do not let any one go out of his place on the seventh day.’ ³⁰ So the people rested on the seventh day. ³¹ And the house of Israel called the name of it Manna...”

(Exodus 16:28-31)

Today, people should ask themselves this question: “Am I grieving God by **REFUSING TO KEEP HIS COMMANDMENTS?**” The lesson of the manna teaches that He will provide for us at all times when we honor the seventh day, the weekly Sabbath of Yahweh. But, if we rebel and refuse to obey Him, His blessings cease, and we are subject to His wrath!

The miracles of the manna and all the events that are recorded in Exodus Chapter 16 illustrate the high value that He places on His Holy Sabbath. It is imperative that we understand the events of Exodus Chapter 16 in this context. With this understanding, we will be able to determine the true meaning of *ben ha arbayim* as it is used by Yahweh in His inspired Written Word.

Now, let us go back and look at the account of the first Sabbath, before the manna was given. On this Sabbath—the 15th day of the month—Yahweh said that He would

provide bread and meat from heaven for the people to eat. We know that He sent them manna from heaven on the next day, early in the morning at sunrise. But *when* did He send them meat from heaven?

BA EREV—A Key Time in the Sequence of Events

As Yahweh had set a specific time of day to send the manna, He chose a specific time to send the people meat from heaven. That time is revealed to us in the message that Moses delivered to the people during their first Sabbath in the wilderness of Sin:

“⁶ And Moses and Aaron said unto all the children of Israel: ‘At even [Hebrew *ba erev*, “*at sunset*,” ending that Sabbath], then ye shall know that the LORD hath brought you out from the land of Egypt’....⁸ And Moses said: ‘This shall be, when the LORD shall give you in the evening [Hebrew *ba erev*, “*at sunset*”] flesh to eat, and in the morning bread to the full....’ ”

(Exodus 16:6, 8, Jewish Publication Society of America)

Notice that the JPSA has translated *ba erev* as both “*at even*” and “*in the evening*.” Fox’s translation conveys the *precise* meaning of the Hebrew text:

“⁶ Moshe [Moses] and Aharon [Aaron] said to all the Children of Israel: At sunset [Hebrew *ba erev*] you will know that it is YHWH who brought you out of the land of Egypt.... ⁸ Moshe [Moses] said: Since YHWH gives you flesh to eat at sunset [Hebrew *ba erev*], and at daybreak, bread to satisfy (yourselves)...”

(Exodus 16:6, 8, The Schocken Bible)

“⁶ And Moses and Aaron said to all the children of Israel, “At sunset, then you shall know that the LORD has brought you out from the land of Egypt. ⁷ And at sunrise, you shall see the glory of the LORD, for He hears your murmurings against the LORD. And what are we that you murmur against us?’ ⁸ And Moses said, ‘You will see when the LORD shall give you flesh to eat at sunset and bread to the full at sunrise, for the LORD hears your murmurings which you murmur against Him. And what are we? Your murmurings are not against us, but against the LORD.’ ”

(Exodus 16:6-8)

The account in Exodus Chapter 16 explicitly tells us that Yahweh promised to provide meat for the people *at sunset*. Looking at verse 13, we read that He fulfilled His promise at that exact time: “And it came to pass **AT SUNSET** [Hebrew *ba erev*, the sunset ending that Sabbath], that the quails came up and covered the camp...”

The Scriptural account leaves no wiggle room for arguing or debating the timing of this event. Fox’s translation *pinpoints* the specific time of day that is designated in the Hebrew text:

“Now it was **AT SUNSET** [Hebrew *ba erev*] a horde-of-quail came up and covered the camp...”

(Exodus 16:13, emphasis added, The Schocken Bible)

Our study of Leviticus Chapter 23 has confirmed that the day ends “*at sunset*,” or *ba erev*. And our study of the account in Exodus Chapter 16 has clearly demonstrated that the 15th day of the second month was the weekly Sabbath. The reason the quail were not sent until the day had ended at sunset, or *ba erev*, is that He was teaching the people of Israel to rest on the Sabbath. Yahweh did not want the people of Israel to transgress the Sabbath day by gathering the quail. Neither did He want them doing the work involved in killing, cleaning, and roasting the quail on the Sabbath.

If Yahweh had sent the quail BEFORE sunset—BEFORE the Sabbath had ended—and if He had allowed the people to gather, clean and roast the quail on the Sabbath day, why would He have condemned some of the people on the next Sabbath day when they went looking for manna? Had He done this, He would have contradicted Himself. He is not double-minded nor is He a hypocrite! With Yahweh, there is NO VARIABLENESS, neither shadow of turning (James 1:17). It is impossible for Him to lie (Hebrews 6:18).

THE ACCOUNT OF THE EVENTS IN EXODUS CHAPTER 16 MAKES IT ABSOLUTELY CLEAR THAT THE QUAIL DID NOT COME BEFORE THE SABBATH DAY HAD ENDED AT SUNSET, OR BA EREV.

When did the people begin to eat the quail? The time of their eating is clearly recorded for us in the Scriptures:

“And the LORD spoke unto Moses, saying: ‘I have heard the murmurings of the children of Israel. Speak unto them, saying: AT DUSK [Hebrew *ben ha arbayim*, “*between the two evenings*”] YE SHALL EAT FLESH, and in the morning ye shall be filled with bread; and ye shall know that I am the LORD your God.’ ”

(Exodus 16:11-12, emphasis added, Jewish Publication Society of America)

The words “*at dusk*” is translated from the Hebrew phrase *ben ha arbayim*—the same phrase that is used in the Passover command in Exodus Chapter 12. As in Exodus Chapter 12, Fox’s translation again shows the *literal meaning* of this phrase:

“¹¹ YHWH spoke to Moshe [Moses], saying: ¹² I have hearkened to the grumbings of the Children of Israel—speak to them, and say: Between the setting-times [Hebrew *ben ha arbayim*] you shall eat flesh, and at daybreak you shall be satisfied with bread, and you shall know that I am YHWH your God.”

(Exodus 16:11-12, emphasis added, The Schocken Bible)

“¹¹ And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, ¹² ‘I have heard the murmurings of the children of Israel. Speak to them, saying, “*Between the two evenings* you shall eat flesh, and in the morning you shall be filled with bread. And you shall know that I am the LORD your God.’ ”

(Exodus 16:11-12, emphasis added)

The sequence of events in the miracle of the quail is the *key* that unlocks the Scriptural meaning of *ben ha arbayim*—“*between the two evenings*,” or “*between the setting-times*.” When Yahweh promised to provide meat for the children of Israel, He said that they would be able to eat the meat “*at dusk*,” or *ben ha arbayim*. Since the children of Israel could not eat the flesh of the quail before the quail had arrived, and since He did not send the quail until the Sabbath had ended at *sunset*, or *ba erev*, we know that they ate the quail **AFTER SUNSET**. And since Yahweh Himself said that they would eat flesh during the time known as *ben ha arbayim*—“*between the two evenings*,” or “*between the setting-times*”—we know without a shadow of a doubt that *ben ha arbayim* IS THE TIME PERIOD THAT IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWS SUNSET.

The Scriptural account makes it absolutely clear that the quail arrived at *ba erev*, or *sunset*. Then the quail covered the camp; that is, they were sent by Yahweh into the camp of Israel, not outside the camp. This event was another miracle of Yahweh. To fulfill His promise, He instantly created the quail and caused them to fall into the camp. Apparently, when the quail came, they literally fell out of the sky onto the camp grounds, and on the tents, which made gathering them a very easy task. Since the sun had set, He did not want the people to wander out into the desert looking for quail and be overtaken by the darkness of night. The miracle of the quail is another example of Yahweh’s lovingkindness and mercy toward the children of Israel.

There are three key factors in the timing of this miracle:

- 1.) The promise of the quail was given on the fifteenth day of the second month. The context reveals that this day was a weekly Sabbath.
- 2.) Yahweh said that the people would *begin* to EAT the quail during *ben ha arbayim*—“*between the two evenings*,” or “*between the setting-times*.”
- 3.) Yahweh did not send the quail until the Sabbath day had ended “*at sunset*,” or *ba erev*.

These key chronological facts are clearly documented in the Scriptural account. There can be no doubt whatsoever concerning their accuracy!

The Traditional Definition of BEN HA ARBAYIM Does Not Fit the Scriptural Facts

The Scriptural record of the miracle of the quail leaves no room for placing *ben ha arbayim* before *sunset*. The children of Israel could not eat the quail before the quail had arrived at *sunset*, or *ba erev*. It would be absurd even to suggest that could even

happen. However, many people seem to believe that it did happen. They insist on defining *ben ha arbayim* as the *afternoon hours before sunset*. Do you remember what Rabbi Kaplan's translation of this account was? If not, here it is again:

“...Speak to them and say, In the AFTERNOON [translated from *ben ha arbayim*], you will eat meat....That EVENING [translated from *ba erev*] a flock of quail came and covered the camp.”

(Exodus 16:12-13, emphasis added, The Living Torah)

Rabbi Kaplan's translation is based on the *traditional* interpretation of *ben ha arbayim* as the time *from just after noon until sunset*. But, it is ABSOLUTELY IMPOSSIBLE to make this Jewish definition fit the Scriptural account of the miracle of the quail. Rabbi Kaplan has attempted to make it fit by translating *ba erev* as “*evening*” clearly ignoring the *fact* that ***ba erev specifically refers to sunset***, and it implies that it includes the afternoon of the day, which he views as *ben ha arbayim*.

Rabbi Kaplan's translation of *ben ha arbayim* and *ba erev* stands in sharp opposition to the Scriptural usage of these phrases. The use of *ba erev* in Leviticus Chapter 23 and many other passages clearly demonstrates that this phrase does not in any way refer to an extended period of time as does the word “*evening*” but rather to ***the setting of the sun at the end of the day***. It is a gross distortion of Scripture to expand the meaning of *ba erev* to include the late hours of the day. This is clearly a case of eisegeses—reading into the text what one wants it to say based on their theology.

Only by acknowledging the Scriptural meaning of *ba erev*—“*at sunset*”—can we unlock the true meaning of *ben ha arbayim*. The use of *ba erev* in the sequence of events in Exodus Chapter 16 makes it absolutely clear that ***ben ha arbayim does not occur in the afternoon, or between noon and sunset—IT IS IMPOSSIBLE!*** BEN HA ARBAYIM, AS DEFINED IN SCRIPTURE AND AS USED BY YAHWEH HIMSELF, DOES NOT BEGIN UNTIL THE SUN HAS SET!

The chronological events that are recorded for us in Exodus Chapter 16 clearly defines *ben ha arbayim*—“*between the two evenings*,” or “*between the setting-times*” as the time period that ***immediately FOLLOWS sunset***, or *ba erev*. ***Ben ha arbayim does not begin UNTIL THE SUN HAS SET BELOW THE HORIZON***. It is the period of time that begins the new day and not the late portion of the day from noon to sunset! Any other interpretation, Jewish or otherwise, is opposing the inspired Written Word of Almighty Yahweh. Those who insist that *ben ha arbayim*—“*between the two evenings*,” or “*between the setting-times*” is the time period between noon and sunset are relying on the *traditions of men* rather than on the Written Word of Yahweh!

The Scriptural Definition of BEN HA ARBAYIM

Affirmed by Some Scholars

Unlike Kuhn, Grabbe and Rabbi Kaplan, who hold to the *unscriptural definition* of the rabbis, there are some scholars who acknowledge that *ben ha arbayim* is the beginning portion of the day:

“Accordingly, on the evenings of the new moon the duration of twilight from the moment of the crescent’s appearance is divided into two unequal parts, which the Jews called ‘*the two evenings*,’ or in Hebrew *arbayim*. The first evening formed an interval of about half an hour, during which, as it was still sufficiently light to be considered as a continuation and part of the preceding day, the common occupations of the day could be attended to; that interval, in fact, which we call the ‘*twilight of the civil day*.’ The second evening lasted nearly an hour....In the Pentateuch we find use made several times of the expression *ben ha arbayim* (‘*between the two evenings*’) to indicate the moment which separated the two periods described above, and marked for the Jews the beginning of the civil and religious day.”

(G. Schiaparelli, *Astronomy in the Old Testament*, p. 93, emphasis added)

The International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia³ confirms that *ben ha arbayim* was originally defined as the period of time from sunset until dark:

“As there were no definite measurements of the time of the day [no timing devices such as clocks], the various periods were indicated by the natural changes of the day; thus ‘*midday*’ was the time of the day when the sun mounted its highest, *cohorayim*; afternoon was that part of the day when the sun declined, *ntothhayom*; and evening was the time of the going down of the sun, *erev*. ‘*Between the evenings*,’ *ben ha arbayim*, was the interval between sunset and darkness. The day was not divided into hours until a late[r] period.”

(s. v. “*Day and Night*,” 1956 edition, p. 798, emphasis added)

In the same encyclopedia, under “*Even, Evening, Eventide*,” the following definitions are given for *ba erev* and *ben ha arbayim*:

“The words are used in slightly different meanings: (1) The time of sunset, the beginning of the Heb. day, as in Lev 15, where the directions are given for the removal of uncleanness, which took place at sunset [*ba erev*]. (2) Twilight, the time approaching darkness when the lamps [in the temple] are lighted [*ben ha arbayim*]; Ex 30:8 (lit. ‘*between the two evenings*’);

³ *The International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia*,
<https://www.christianresearcher.com/uploads/1/6/2/9/16298120/isbevol1.pdf>.

Jer 6:4 ('the shadows of the evening'). (3) The early part of night (Prov 7:9; Ezk. 12:7)."

(s. v. "Day and Night," 1956 edition, p. 1041, emphasis added)

The above reference to Leviticus Chapter 15 is a good example of the Scriptural usage of *ba erev*. In Leviticus Chapter 15, *ba erev* is used in the context of those who were ceremonially unclean, who had to wait until the day had ended before they could become clean. They could not be ceremonially cleansed in the middle of the afternoon, but they had to wait until sunset, when they could bathe themselves and enter into the camp. Sunset ended the day of their defilement, and they began the new day in a state of cleanness.

The use of *ben ha arbayim* in Exodus 30:8 in the context of lighting the Temple lamps helps us to clarify the time of day that this phrase is designating. It is obvious that the priests did not light the lamps in the middle of the afternoon, before sunset. As the article states, the lamps were lit at "twilight, the time approaching darkness...." This definition is supported by the Scriptural usage of *ben ha arbayim* as the period of time that follows sunset.

The Scriptural definitions of *ba erev* and *ben ha arbayim* are also upheld in The New Brown-Driver-Briggs-Gesenius Hebrew-Aramaic Lexicon, which states the following:

"*erev*, (sun)set, evening; 1. a. evening, origin[ally] sunset, and hence per[haps] at the time of sunset,...in the evening Gn. 19:1, 29:23, Ex. 12:18, Dt. 16:4....as marking duration of impurity...as Day of Atonement, *ba erev*. *Ben ha arbayim*, between the two evenings... between sunset and dark."

These authoritative works by reputable scholars affirm that *ben ha arbayim*—"between the two evenings," or "between the setting times" as defined in Scripture, is the time period between sunset and dark.

How Long Is *BEN HA ARBAYIM*?

We have examined the Scriptural evidence, and we have found irrefutable proof that *ben ha arbayim*—"between the two evenings," or "between the setting-times" begins immediately after the day has ended at sunset, or *ba erev*. ***Ben ha arbayim* is the period of time that begins the new day.** That is the time Yahweh appointed for the Passover lambs to be slain, and that is the time He chose to send the quail to the camp of Israel.

The account of the miracle of the quail reveals that the children of Israel began to eat the flesh of the quail during *ben ha arbayim*. However, before they could eat the meat, they had to clean and roast the quail. These facts have led to questions concerning the actual length of time that is included in *ben ha arbayim*.

Ben ha arbayim is a relatively short period of time in the day. It begins when the sun disappears below the horizon and ends when the darkness of night has come. The length of time varies depending on the season of the year. In the winter, *ben ha arbayim* is approximately 30-40 minutes. In the spring or fall, *ben ha arbayim* lasts from approximately one hour to 1 hour and 15 minutes. In the middle of the summer, *ben ha arbayim* can last approximately 1 hour and 30 minutes. Other factors, such as cloud covering or phases of the moon, can either hasten or delay the coming of darkness, thus, shortening or lengthening the time usually allotted to *ben ha arbayim*.

In the spring, which is the season for keeping the Passover, *ben ha arbayim* is generally one hour. However, in the time of the full moon, the period of light is longer because the moon is rising as the sun is setting. Since the events in both Exodus Chapter 12 and Exodus Chapter 16 took place in the middle of the month, when the moon was full, it is possible that *ben ha arbayim* was considerably longer, lasting up to 1 hour and 30 minutes.

The exact length of time of *ba erev* and *ben ha arbayim* can be verified by personal observation from an unobstructed viewpoint. During a visit to San Antonio, Texas, during the first week in June of 1996, Fred R. Coulter who is the author of the book “*The Christian Passover*” was able to observe the time of *ba erev* and the entire duration of *ben ha arbayim* from a restaurant atop the 500-foot San Antonio Tower, which had a 360-degree view, making a perfect observation platform. Mr. Coulter observed the time of *ba erev*, or *sunset*, from the point when the sun appeared to touch the horizon until it dropped below the horizon. The exact duration of its setting was 2 minutes and 48 seconds. When it was fully set, Mr. Coulter began to time the length of *ben ha arbayim*. The total time of this period of *twilight* was 1 hour and 8 minutes. Mr. Coulter’s observation verifies that the length of *ben ha arbayim* may vary from approximately one hour to 1 hour and 30 minutes.

Exodus Chapter 16 tells us that Yahweh sent the quail as soon as the sun had set. Since *ben ha arbayim* was approximately one and a half hours long, there would have been plenty of time to catch, kill, clean, and roast the flesh. Because quail are small birds, it would take only a short period of time to roast them over campfires. It is possible that the first flesh was ready to eat only thirty minutes after being caught. Just as Yahweh had said, “...BETWEEN THE TWO EVENINGS [Hebrew *ben ha arbayim*, *between sunset and dark*] YOU SHALL EAT FLESH” (Exodus 16:12).

Some reject the Scriptural definition of *ben ha arbayim* and they insist that it would have required a much longer period of time for the children of Israel to eat the quail. They *claim* that it was impossible for such a large flock of quail to be eaten between *sunset* and *dark*. But the Scriptures do not state that the quail were consumed entirely during *ben ha arbayim*. The account simply records Yahweh’s promise that the people would be eating the quail during this time.

Other arguments are presented to support the *claim* that *ben ha arbayim* extends through the *night*, or even through the day. Some go so far as to interpret the term *ben ha arbayim* as “*between the two sunsets*.” They base their interpretation on Numbers 9:11, which they view as a command that the Passover lambs are not only to be slain but also be eaten during *ben ha arbayim*. At this point, we need to take a short side-step to look at this *claim* more closely to see if there is anything to this *claim*.

Numbers 9:9-11

“⁹ And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, ¹⁰ “Speak to the children of Israel, saying, ‘If any man of you or of your generations shall be unclean because of a dead body, or in a journey afar off, he shall still keep the Passover to the LORD. ¹¹ They shall keep it the fourteenth day of the second month between the two evenings (KJV *at even*) [*bēhn* #H996 *hā arbayim* #H6153], eating it with unleavened bread and bitter herbs.

Because the Hebrew phrase *bēhn hā arbayim* literally means “between the two evenings,” some argue that *bēhn hā arbayim* extends for a full twenty-four hours, from one evening to the next evening. According to this interpretation, *bēhn hā arbayim* includes the afternoon of the 14th.

This faulty definition of *bēhn hā arbayim* is based on a literal interpretation of the Hebrew word *arbayim* which is the plural form of *erev*, or *ereb*, meaning “*sunset*.” Those who teach this doctrine mistakenly assert that the two evenings represented by *arbayim* are two literal *sunsets* beginning and ending the day. They err because *they are assuming* that the phrase *bēhn hā arbayim* follows the rules for Hebrew duals.

While it is true that *bēhn hā arbayim* is dual in its form, it does not conform to the rules of Hebrew duals. In the Hebrew language, the rules for interpreting duals apply only to matching pairs of human and animal parts—i.e., two ears, two eyes, two feet, two hands—or to clothing or other items that are composed of pairs or matching parts, such as a pair of sandals, a pair of trousers, or a pair of scissors. These Hebrew duals are known as “*natural pairs*” (Waltke, *An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax*, p. 117). Another use of the Hebrew dual is for countable units of time or measurement, such as two days, two years, two cubits, two hundred (Waltke, *An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax*, p. 118).

The phrase *bēhn hā arbayim* does not fall under either of these types of Hebrew duals. It is neither a dual of natural pairs nor is it a countable unit of time. To the contrary, it is referred to as a “*fanciful dual*” because it has the form of the Hebrew dual but it does not function as a natural or countable dual (Waltke, *An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax*).

Because *bēhn hā arbayim* is a “fanciful dual,” its meaning cannot be determined simply by breaking it down into its components, as some have attempted to do. **As a “fanciful dual,” *bēhn hā arbayim* has meaning beyond the literal sense of its components.** (In English, it would be termed an “idiomatic expression.”) Furthermore, its components themselves may vary in meaning, depending on their usage in the Hebrew text.

To illustrate this point, let us examine the use of the preposition *bēhn* in Nehemiah 5:18:

“Now that which was prepared for me daily was one ox and six choice sheep; also fowls were prepared for me, and once in [*bēhn* #H996] ten days store of all sorts of wine...” Note that the phrase “once in ten days” contains the preposition *bēhn*. While *bēhn* is generally translated “between,” it is here translated “in” to show that an event occurred every ten days, or “during the interval often days.”

(Brown, Driver, Briggs, *Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament*, p. 107)

The use of *bēhn* in Nehemiah 5:18 clearly illustrates the diversity in the meaning of this word. It cannot be defined independently of the context in which it is used. Likewise, the expression *bēhn hā arbayim* can only be interpreted by the context in which it is used.

The Hebrew word for **noon** *tzoh'harim* #H6672 is another “fanciful dual.” *Tzoh'harini* is literally defined as the “time of the double shadow” (Waltke, p. 118). This Hebrew word is describing the time period when the shortening shadows cast by the rising sun are offset by lengthening shadows cast back toward the east as the sun approaches its apex and continues westward. If *tzoh'harim* had been literally translated into English as the “time of the double shadow,” we would be in doubt as to its actual meaning as a measure of time. Similarly, to literally translate *bēhn hā arbayim* as “between the two evenings” leaves room for much conjecture. The actual meaning of both of these Hebrew expressions must be defined by the context in which they are used.

The Hebrew text gives us specific guidelines for interpreting the meaning of *bēhn hā arbayim*. Its usage in Exodus 12:6 reveals that ***bēhn hā arbayim* begins immediately after sunset at the entering of the day.** The preposition *gad* #H5704 allows no room for any other interpretation. When we understand the structure of the Hebrew text, it is undeniably evident that the arrival of the 14th of Abib at sunset marks the beginning of *bēhn hā arbayim*.

The end of *bēhn hā arbayim* is also defined by its usage in the Hebrew text and on the established rules of the ancient language. Authorities in early Hebrew culture, Hebrew syntax, and the etymology of Hebrew words, as well as other Semitic languages of ancient times, define *bēhn hā arbayim* as “time between day and night” (Waltke, *An*

Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax, p. 118). This description limits *bēhn hā arbayim* to the time of *twilight*, which ends with the coming of darkness.

The literal meaning of *bēhn hā arbayim* is “time between the two enterings.” Waltke describes these two “enterings” as entering sunset and entering dark (Waltke, *An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax*, p. 200). This definition of the two “evenings” (*arbayim*) is confirmed by the command for slaying the lambs (Exodus 12:6), which designates the arrival of the 14th as the beginning of *bēhn hā arbayim*. The whole congregation of Israel was commanded to slay the lambs at this time—immediately after sunset—not any time of their choosing during the next twenty-four hours.

There is no basis in the Hebrew text for the claim that *bēhn hā arbayim* extends through the entire day, from sunset to sunset. The ordinances of Yahweh required not only the killing of the lambs but the entire Passover observance to be completed before the night of the 14th of Abib ended (Exodus 12:6, 8, 10, 12-13). And if, as some erroneously claim, *bēhn hā arbayim* did not end until the coming of dawn, this reasoning would still not allow an extension of *bēhn hā arbayim* into the afternoon.

We have just looked at Numbers 9:9-11 to help add to the clarity and timing of *bēhn hā arbayim*. To further our understanding, we will now look closer at Numbers 9:11.

Numbers 9:11

“They shall keep [*gāh-sāh*’ #H6213] it the fourteenth day of the second month between the two evenings (KJV, *at even*) [*bēhn* #H996 *hā arbayim* #H6153], eating [*āh-chāl*’ #H398] it with unleavened bread and bitter herbs.”

Some have interpreted the Passover commands in this verse as evidence that the lambs were to be both killed and eaten during *bēhn hā arbayim*. Because it was not possible to complete the roasting and eating of the Passover lambs during the brief period of *twilight*, they claim that *bēhn hā arbayim* extends into the dark hours after twilight, and may include the entire night.

Is there any Scriptural basis for this claim? A literal translation of the Passover instructions in Numbers 9:11 will help to clarify the meaning of the Hebrew text:

“In the second month
on the fourteenth day
between the evenings [*bēhn hā arbayim*]
they shall keep it
with unleavened bread
and bitter herbs
they shall eat it.”

In this literal translation of Numbers 9:11, there is no “and” linking the two commands because there is no *waw* in the Hebrew text. (See Owens, *Analytical Key to the Old Testament*, vol. 1.) The fact that no conjunction is used in the Hebrew text indicates that there is no connection between the first command and the second command.

The separate nature of the two commands is substantiated not only by the absence of the *waw* but also by the verb form that is used in the Hebrew text. The English expression “*they shall keep it*” is translated from two words, the masculine plural verb *gah-sah’* #H6213 translated “*they shall keep*,” and the direct object *āh-ghaz’* #H270, translated “*it*.” *Gāh-sāh’* is a *Qal* verb stem in the imperfective form. Waltke quotes Comrie’s description of the Hebrew imperfective: “...*the imperfective looks at the situation from inside, and as such is crucially concerned with the internal structure of the situation...*” (*An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax*, p. 476). The imperfective form views the Passover from the inside, giving us a step-by-step view of its events. The sacrificing of the lambs is one event, and the eating of the Passover meal is another event. These two events are separate and distinct.

The Hebrew text does not link the eating of the Passover with *bēhn hā arbayim*. In the Masoretic text of the *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia*, the command to eat the Passover is designated as a separate command by the use of the *atnah* (^), a mark that looks like an upside-down “v.” The *atnah* is one of many accent marks that are used to logically divide the thoughts that are being expressed in the Hebrew text:

“Accents in the MT [Masoretic Text] are of two kinds: disjunctives and conjunctives. Disjunctive accents, euphemistically dubbed ‘lords’ by earlier scholars, mark the length of pauses from full stop [complete break in logical thought] to various shades of shorter pauses [partial breaks in logical thought]; conjunctives, dubbed ‘servants,’ control the text up to the disjunctive. According to W. Wickes’s comprehensive study of the accents, the disjunctives mark a continuous ‘dichotomy’ of the verse, that is, **they divide larger units [of thought], beginning with the verse itself** (marked off by silluq closing the verse), into successively smaller half-units on a syntactic (or logico-syntactic) basis. A unit ending with a disjunctive of one grade is divided into halves, and its halves in turn are divided into smaller units by other disjunctive signs until the whole verse is divided into single words, or groups of words joined by conjunctives. Israel Yeivin groups the major disjunctive accents as follows: ‘**Generally *atnah* divides the verse**, *zaqef* the verse halves, *pashla* or *revia* the unit ending with *zaqef* and so on.’”

(Waltke, *An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax*, p. 29, emphasis added).

The *atnah* and other accents are essential to understanding the thoughts that are being conveyed in the Hebrew text. These accent marks are all part of a system that “...**punctuates the text** and is therefore a very important feature in its syntactic analysis.... This feature of Hebrew grammar is so important for understanding that medieval Jewish sources paid more attention to it than to establishing the correct pronunciation of words” (Waltke, *An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax*).

The purpose of the *atnah*, or *athnah*, is to indicate the end of one complete thought and the beginning of another. The presence of the *atnah* between the two Passover commands in Numbers 9:11 is conclusive evidence of the separate nature of these commands. Below is a literal translation of Numbers 9:11 showing the division that is signified by the *atnah*:

“...**between the evenings** [*bēhn* #H996 *hā arbayim* #H6153] **they shall prepare** [*gāh-sāh’* #H6213] **it**

[*atnah*]

“**with unleavened bread and bitter herbs they shall eat** [*āhchāl’* #H398] **it.**”

The placement of the *atnah* between the two commands separates the eating of the Passover from the sacrificing of the lambs at *bēhn hā arbayim*. The only event linked to *bēhn hā arbayim* in the Hebrew text is the killing of the lambs. Fox’s translation uses a semicolon to express this break in thought:

“...in the second New-Moon, on the fourteenth day, **between the setting-times** [*bēhn* #H996 *hā arbayim* #H6153], **he is to sacrifice** [Hebrew *gāh-sāh’* #H6213] **it; together with matza (and) bitter-herbs they are to eat** [Hebrew *āh-chāl’*] **it.**”

(The Schocken Bible)

The Hebrew text does not support the *claim* that the children of Israel were required to roast and eat the Passover lambs during *bēhn hā arbayim*. Thus, the Passover commands in Numbers Chapter 9 in no way contradict the Scriptural definition of *bēhn hā arbayim* as a very short period of time bounded by sunset on one side and total darkness on the other. The definition of *bēhn hā arbayim* as the twilight period of the day is fully substantiated by the Hebrew text.

Now we will resume our study on “*How Long Is BEN HA ARBAYIM?*”

That is not what Yahweh commanded in Exodus Chapter 12. The commands in Exodus Chapter 12 for observing the Passover required only that the lambs be slain during *ben ha arbayim*. Although the Passover lambs were slain at this time, they could not be eaten during *ben ha arbayim* because it takes several hours to roast a young lamb up to a year old.

Everett Fox, who is a noted authority in Biblical Hebrew, holds firmly to the definition of *ben ha arbayim* as the time between *sunset and darkness*. Here is Fox's translation of Yahweh's command in Leviticus 23:5 concerning the Passover:

“On the first New-Moon, on the fourteenth after the New-Moon, *between the setting-times* [Hebrew *ben ha arbayim*] (is) Passover to YHWH.”

(The Schocken Bible)

The Schocken Bible offers the following footnote to clarify this verse:

“Between the setting-times: Between the time that the sun is below the horizon, no longer visible, and total darkness. An idiomatic rendition would be ‘at twilight.’ ”

(The Schocken Bible, page 618, emphasis added)

In translating *ben ha arbayim* as “*between the setting-times*,” Fox specifies that this expression refers to the *twilight of the day*. His precise translation and additional clarification of the phrase *ben ha arbayim* show that he fully understands the Scriptural meaning of this term. There is not one shred of evidence that *ben ha arbayim* is used in the Scriptures to designate any other time than twilight, which begins when the sun has set.

Various Translations of the Hebrew Terms

In reading different translations of the Bible, it is understandable why so much confusion has existed over the meaning of *ben ha arbayim* and its relationship to *ba erev*. In the King James Version of the Bible, both Hebrew phrases are similarly translated “*at even*” or “*in the evening*.” The only distinction made between the two terms is that *ben ha arbayim* is footnoted with a marginal reading of “*between the two evenings*.”

The *Revised Standard Version* translates *ben ha arbayim* in Exodus 12:6 as “*evening*” and in Exodus 16:12 as “*twilight*.” Whenever *ben ha arbayim* is translated “*in the evening*,” it is footnoted “*between the two evenings*.” *Ba erev* is consistently translated as “*evening*.”

Moffat's translation of *ben ha arbayim* in Exodus 12:6 and Exodus 16:12 is “*between sunset and dark*.” In most other occurrences, he translates it “*evening*.” *Ba erev* is translated “*sunset*” or “*evening*.”

The *New English Bible* translates the term *ben ha arbayim* as “*between sunset and dark*” in Exodus 12:6 and Exodus 16:12. In all other occurrences, it is rendered the same. The term *ba erev* is consistently translated “*at evening*” or “*evening*.”

The Jewish Publication Society of America, in *The Holy Scriptures* according to the Masoretic Text, translates *ben ha arbayim* consistently as “*dusk*,” and *ba erev* as “*evening*” or “*at even*.”

The new edition by the Jewish Publication Society, *TANAKH—The Holy Scriptures*, translates *ben ha arbayim* in Exodus 12:6, Leviticus 23:5 and Numbers 9:5 as “at twilight,” and in Exodus 16:12 as “by evening.”

The *Jerusalem Bible*, in the English text by Harold Fisch, translates *ben ha arbayim* in Exodus 12:6 and Leviticus 23:5 as “towards evening,” which is the same as the Rashi and Migil linear translations. In Exodus 16:12, it is translated “at evening.” Migil adds the footnote “between the two evenings,” but Rashi does not.

The *New American Standard Bible* translates *ben ha arbayim* in Exodus 12:6, Exodus 16:12, Leviticus 23:5 and Numbers 9:5 as “at twilight.” *Ba erev* is consistently translated as “evening.”

The Scriptures plainly teach that *ben ha arbayim* is the time period between sunset and dark. It begins when the day has ended at *sunset*, or *ba erev*. That is the time specifically chosen by Yahweh for the killing of the Passover lambs. At the Passover in Egypt, the lambs were slain immediately after sunset ending the 13th day of the first month—at the beginning of the 14th day, not in the afternoon of the 14th.

What Does Numbers 28 Tell Us?

Despite the plain statements of Scripture, there are some who interpret Numbers 28:16 as showing that the Passover was observed at the end of the 14th, rather than at the beginning of the 14th. Let’s examine Numbers 28:16 to see if there is any basis for their claim:

“And in the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month, is the LORD’s Passover.”

(Numbers 28:16, Jewish Publication Society of America)

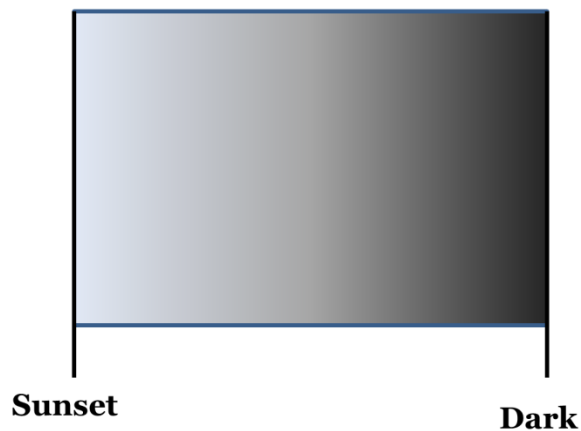
This verse simply states that the Passover is on the 14th day of the month. The verse says nothing whatsoever about the specific time of day. If we *assume* that the Passover should be kept at the end of the 14th, then the same premise must be applied to the next verse, which contains identical Hebrew and English wording, with the exception of the number of the day:

“And on the fifteenth day of this month shall be a feast...”

(Numbers 28:17)

If “on the fourteenth day” means at the end of the 14th, then by the same logic, “on the fifteenth day” must also refer to the end of the 15th. This line of reasoning would delay the Feast of Unleavened Bread until the beginning of the 16th day of the first month. It is not difficult to see the error in this interpretation. The Scriptures clearly teach that the Feast of Unleavened Bread begins on the 15th day of the first month—not on the 16th.

Why do rabbis and some Christian-professing scholars insist that Yahweh's command to keep the Passover "*on the fourteenth day*" means at the end of the 14th? Why do they *cling* to this faulty interpretation of Scripture? The answer is obvious: **THEY ARE NOT SEEKING THE TRUE MEANING OF YAHWEH'S WORD!** Rather, they are relying on the *traditional* afternoon sacrifice of the Passover at the Temple, which began approximately 800 years after the Passover in Egypt.



Ben Ha Arbayim

Between the two evenings:

Between the setting-times”

Between the time that the sun is below the horizon, no longer visible, and total darkness.

The duration is approximately 1 hour to 1 hour and 30 minutes.

Now, we will pick back up before we started the section titled “*BEN HA ARBAYIM—“Between the Two Evenings”*” and wrap up this study on “Did Yeshua Keep The Last Passover.”

In context, especially in Numbers Chapter 28, this phrase clearly indicates the dusk at the beginning of the night, in contrast to the twilight at the beginning of the day. If this is true, then the slaying of the very first Passover lamb (by heads of households, not the priests) occurred at dusk, directly after sunset on the 14th of Abib, with the meal being eaten in the night time portion of that day. (Notwithstanding past or current tradition, the original lamb could not have been slain late on the 14th of Abib, because that would have caused the Passover meal to fall on the 15th of Abib—which is **not** Passover, but the first day of Unleavened Bread.) With this in mind, we can see that Yeshua's observance of Passover early on the 14th of Abib was truly a *fulfillment* of the original observance of Passover in Egypt, and it was not merely a substitute meal forced on Him by circumstances and in contrast to the Jews' observance later on that same day.

From these *facts*, we can clearly see that Yeshua's Passover observance that took place early on the 14th of Abib did not coincide with the Jewish observance much later on that day, and that His observance ***did not have to coincide*** with the Jews' observance of their Passover, because their observance was not kept according to the instructions given to Moses by Yahweh while the children of Israel were in Egypt. Jewish tradition sprung up over time, fueled by apostasy and ignorance of Yahweh's laws (2 Kings 22:8, 10-11 and 13; 2 Chronicles 29:6-8; 30:1-4 and 15-17; 35:1, 10-13; etc.), had supplanted Yahweh's original Passover ordinances. Yeshua Himself rebuked the leaders of the Jews for allowing such things to happen. Yeshua said:

“7 Howbeit in vain do they worship me, teaching *for* doctrines the commandments of men.... 9 ...Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition.”

(Mark 7:7 and 9, KJV)

All of this shows us the futility of using Jewish traditions as a standard by which to judge Yeshua's actions.

In going on to deal with Yeshua's "*desire*" to keep the Passover, we must ask ourselves whether He was interrupted in this desire by the events of His arrest and subsequent trial, conviction, and crucifixion. Two points immediately spring to mind: the first is that we know from the above study that Yeshua could very well have kept a valid Passover observance early on the 14th of Abib, well before His arrest later in the evening, therefore making His desire to keep that Passover possible. The second is that Yeshua's *desire* to keep the Passover presupposes the idea that His *desire* could be met: if He truly knew the details of His "*decease which He should accomplish at Jerusalem*" (Luke 9:31, KJV), how could He ***not*** know that this decease was to be accomplished on the 14th of Abib? And if He knew the details, why *desire* that which He knew could not be satisfied? Simple logic (*and Yeshua Himself*) tells us that He had looked forward to it with *desire* because **He knew** that after the comfort of sharing one last Passover observance with His disciples, He would have no other until its fulfillment.

Obviously, the last three arguments listed at the beginning of this article are not valid points when tested against Scripture and common sense. The final point to address is the first one stated: Was the meal that Yeshua ate simply His "*last meal*" and nothing else? In answering this question, we find a clear and simple truth stated by Yeshua Himself which addresses not only this question, but the other three as well:

“17 Now the first *day* of the *feast of* Unleavened Bread the disciples came to Yeshua, saying unto Him, Where wilt thou that we prepare for thee to eat the Passover? 18 And He said, Go into the city to such a man, and say unto him, The Master saith, My time is at hand; I will keep the Passover at thy house with My disciples.”

(Matthew 26:17-18, emphasis added, KJV)

“¹² And the first day of Unleavened Bread, when they killed the Passover, His disciples said unto Him, Where wilt thou that we go and prepare that Thou mayest eat the Passover? ¹³ And He sendeth forth two of His disciples, and saith unto them, **Go ye into the city, and there shall meet you a man bearing a pitcher of water: follow him.** ¹⁴ And wheresoever he shall go in, say ye to the goodman of the house, The Master saith, Where is the guestchamber, **where I shall eat the Passover** with My disciples?”

(Mark 14:12-14, emphasis added, KJV)

“⁷ Then came the day of Unleavened Bread, when the Passover must be killed. ⁸ And He sent Peter and John, saying, **Go and prepare us the Passover, that we may eat...** ¹¹ And ye shall say unto the goodman of the house, The Master saith unto thee, Where is the guestchamber, **where I shall eat the Passover** with My disciples?”

(Luke 22:7-8 and 11, emphasis added, KJV)

If it is true that in the mouth of two or three witnesses a thing shall be established (2 Corinthians 13:1), then we have here three witnesses who openly testify that Yeshua by His own mouth stated that He would keep the last Passover before His death. Any attempt to read any other meaning into His words can only result in branding Yeshua as a liar—either He **did** keep the Passover as He stated *or else the statements quoted above were lies*. In the end, our simple *belief* in Yeshua as the embodiment of Truth, Who cannot lie, should put an end to the *claims* that His last meal was not His last Passover observance as well.

The most important thing we must keep in mind here as we study Scripture is that the focus of Scripture is on ***Yeshua, His Truth, and His Actions***, and not whether His Actions can be forced to fit in with the *traditions* of an apostate nation. We are to follow Yeshua’s example in ***all*** things, leaving behind the traditions of men in order to embrace His Truths, for it is only in Him that we find the fulfillment of all things.

This concludes our study on “*Did Yeshua Keep The Last Passover.*” This has been a long and detailed study. Remember, Scripture defines its own terms and phrases. All we need to do is be diligent in our search of those terms and phrases. I hope this study has been helpful and informative in your journey with our Beloved Heavenly Father.

Be blessed!

Shalom,

One Crying In The Wilderness!