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Frank W. Nelte

THE TALMUD PROVES IT ... THE O.T. PASSOVER WAS AT THE BEGINNING OF NISAN 14TH

Recently I wrote an article in which I explained that in Egypt Israel observed the original Passover at the start of Nisan 14th, and NOT at the end of Nisan 14th as became the later Jewish custom. TODAY the Jews don't do anything regarding "Passover" on Nisan 14th, not even in the latter part of that day. Today the Jews don't start any part of their "Passover" until Nisan 15th has started.

A number of people responded by REASONING, but without any kind of scriptural support that Israel "must have" kept the Passover at the end of Nisan 14th before supposedly leaving Egypt just before dawn on Nisan 15th. In so doing such reasoning carefully avoided the biblical evidence I had presented and instead relied on traditional Jewish explanations, namely, that late afternoon is also part of "the evening".

HOWEVER:

The authors of such views did not bother to check out as to HOW the Jews actually concluded that "between the evenings" must refer to the late afternoon of Nisan 14th. They apparently simply assume that to the Jews the Hebrew phrase involved is clearly a reference to the late afternoon of Nisan 14th. But they seem to be unaware of the specious reasoning the Jews employ in order to be able to reach such a conclusion.

So in this article I will present some quotations from the Talmud that PROVE quite clearly that the Jews understand that THE BIBLE instructs the Passover to be observed between sunset and darkness. I am also including a number of quotations from the Jewish Publication Society's Translation of the Old Testament (JPS), that make this equally clear.

The quotations from electronic computer version of the Talmud that I will present are all taken from the Soncino edition of the Jewish Talmud. All capitalization, all punctuation, spelling mistakes, etc. are exactly as they appear in the Talmud. I have not made any changes to the text. There is a lot of capitalization employed, but that is how it appears in the Talmud.

The format I will use with these quotations is as follows:

First there is a section of the text from the Talmud. Embedded within the text are numbers from "1" into the "50's" and even higher. These numbers refer to footnotes that follow each section of text. So, where appropriate, I then present the relevant footnotes themselves. Only after that will I present my comments on the text and/or footnotes in question.

Now let's first examine a number of quotations from the JPS translation of the Old Testament.

THE WORD "DUSK" IN THE JPS OLD TESTAMENT

The word "DUSK" appears 11 times in the JPS ... FIVE TIMES IT IS USED TO REFER TO THE PASSOVER!

Here are the FIVE places where the JPS states that the Passover was "AT DUSK":

"In the fourteenth day of this month, AT DUSK, ye shall keep it in its appointed season; according to all the statutes of it, and according to all the ordinances thereof, shall ye keep it.' And Moses spoke unto the children of Israel, that they should keep the passover. And they kept the passover in the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month, AT DUSK, in the wilderness of Sinai; according to all that the LORD commanded Moses, so did the children of Israel." (Numbers 9:3-5 JPS)

"in the second month on the fourteenth day AT DUSK they shall keep it; they shall eat it with unleavened bread and bitter herbs;" (Numbers 9:11 JPS)

"and ye shall keep it unto the fourteenth day of the same month; and the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it AT DUSK." (Exodus 12:6 JPS)

"In the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month AT DUSK, is the LORD'S passover." (Leviticus 23:5 JPS)

Besides these 5 references to the Passover being "at dusk", there are 6 other places where the JPS has translated the Hebrew text, though not in the context of the Passover, into English as "dusk". Here are those 6 references:

Exodus 16:12; Exodus 29:39; Exodus 29:41; Exodus 30:8; Numbers 28:4; Numbers 28:8.

In all 6 of these verses the KJV states "AT EVEN", where the JPS states "AT DUSK". Of note is that two of those places (i.e. Exodus 30:8 and Numbers 28:4) use the Hebrew for "BETWEEN THE EVENINGS", the identical Hebrew expression used in Exodus 12:6 for the Passover; and both of these the JPS has also rendered as "AT DUSK".

So we have in fact THREE places in the Old Testament where the JPS shows that "between the evenings" means "AT DUSK". They are Exodus 12:6, Exodus 30:8 and Numbers 28:4.

This understanding of dusk being the period prescribed by the Bible is very evident in the Jewish Talmud, as we will see from the quotations I will present. Thus there is no need to attempt to find some kind of fault with the translator involved in translating the JPS text of these verses (e.g. "The translator was probably a secular Jew who didn't believe the Old Testament ...", etc., etc.). The JPS translation of "AT DUSK" is in fact in total agreement with the Jewish understanding over the past nearly 2000 years, as reflected in the Talmud.

Before we look at those quotations, let's also see the above 11 verses in "Green's Literal Translation", published in 1993.

The above 11 passages are translated by Green as follows:

"BETWEEN THE EVENINGS" in: Exodus 12:6; 16:12; 29:39; 29:41; 30:8

Leviticus 23:5; Numbers 9:3; 9:5.

But in Numbers 9:11 Green translates it as "AT DUSK" !

Numbers 28:4 Green translates as "between the TWO evenings"

Numbers 28:8 Green translates as "between the evenings".

Here is Numbers 9:11, which speaks about keeping the Passover "in the second month":

> "In the second month, on the fourteenth day AT DUSK, they shall keep it; they shall eat it with unleavened cakes and bitter herbs;" (Numbers 9:11 GREEN'S LITERAL TRANSLATION, 1993)

So Green renders all of the references to the Passover that the JPS translates as "dusk" into "between the evenings", EXCEPT for Numbers 9:11, which Green ALSO renders as "AT DUSK". I don't think Green had any specific view on start-or-end-of-14th to defend. By translating Numbers 9:11 as "at dusk", it tells me that Green ALSO equates "between the evenings" to be another way of saying "at dusk".

So, to summarize this section: the JPS shows quite clearly that the Jews understand that the biblical instructions for the killing of the Passover refer to being carried out AT DUSK! Green in his "Literal Translation" makes the same point, by translating the passages involved either as "BETWEEN THE EVENINGS" or as "AT DUSK", using these terms in an interchangeable way.

Now let's look at some passages from the Talmud.

QUOTATION #1 FROM THE TALMUD

Talmud - Mas. Eiruvin 36b

For it was taught:41 If a man buys wine from among the Cutheans42

he may1 say: `Two log2 which I am about to set aside3 are terumah, ten4 are first tithe and nine4 are second tithe', and this5 he redeems6 and may drink [the wine] forthwith;7 so R. Meir,8 but R. Judah, R. Jose and R. Simeon forbid [this procedure].9

(1) If the purchase took place on the Sabbath eve immediately before dusk (when there is no time to remove these priestly and levitical dues from the wine) and he requires the wine for the Sabbath. It is prohibited to separate priestly or levitical dues on the Sabbath, v. Bez. 36b.

(2) A log (v. Glos.) is c. 549 cubic centimeters.

(3) For the hundred log contained in the cask he bought.

(4) `Log which I am about to set aside'.

(5) The second tithe

(6) With money (cf. Deut. XIV, 25) that he has at home or anywhere else.

MY COMMENTS:

Notice the following point from footnote (1), which talks about a man buying wine from the Cutheans. Footnote (1) explains what a man "MAY" do in this situation.

The situation they explain is if the man buys the wine late on Friday afternoon (which the Jews call "the Sabbath eve", even though the Sabbath has CLEARLY not yet started ... the man is still BUYING things). The reference to "IMMEDIATELY BEFORE DUSK" shows that they understood quite clearly that with "DUSK" a new day starts (in this case the Sabbath).

This quotation makes clear that the Jews understand that DUSK starts a new day.

QUOTATION #2 FROM THE TALMUD

Talmud - Mas. Eiruvin 41b

C H A P T E R I V

IT ONCE HAPPENED THAT THEY18 WERE COMING FROM BRINDISI19 AND WHILE THEIR SHIP WAS SAILING20 ON THE SEA,21 R. GAMALIEL AND R. ELEAZAR. B. AZARIAH WALKED ABOUT THROUGHOUT ITS AREA,22 BUT R. JOSHUA AND R. AKIBA DID NOT MOVE BEYOND FOUR CUBITS BECAUSE THEY DESIRED TO IMPOSE A RESTRICTION UPON THEMSELVES.23

ONCE [ON A SABBATH EVE] THEY DID NOT ENTER THE HARBOUR UNTIL

DUSK.24 `MAY WE DISEMBARK?'25 THEY ASKED R. GAMALIEL. YOU MAY', HE TOLD THEM, `FOR I26 HAVE CAREFULLY OBSERVED [THE DISTANCE FROM THE SHORE AND HAVE ASCERTAINED] THAT BEFORE DUSK WE WERE ALREADY

WITHIN THE SABBATH LIMIT'.27

MY COMMENTS:

Notice again that the Jews at the time of "R. Gamaliel" understood that with dusk a new day starts! And "dusk" is NOT before sunset. In this case Gamaliel reasoned as follows:

"Since we were "within the Sabbath limit" "BEFORE DUSK" (i.e. before the Sabbath started!), THEREFORE it is okay to disembark." So dusk is clearly the start of a new day.

QUOTATION #3 FROM THE TALMUD

Talmud - Mas. Eiruvin 45a

MISHNAH. IF A MAN SAT DOWN48 BY THE WAY49 AND WHEN HE ROSE UP50 HE OBSERVER THAT HE WAS NEAR A TOWN51 HE MAY NOT ENTER IT,52 SINCE IT HAD NOT BEEN HIS INTENTION53 TO DO SO;54 SO R. MEIR. R. JUDAH RULED: HE MAY ENTER IT.55 SAID R. JUDAH, IT ONCE ACTUALLY HAPPENED THAT R. TARFON ENTERED A TOWN56 THOUGH57 THIS WAS NOT HIS INTENTION [WHEN THE SABBATH HAD BEGUN].

(49) On the Sabbath eve before dusk.

(50) After dusk when the Sabbath had already begun.

(51) I.e., the town was within his Sabbath limit.

(52) Sc. he is not allowed to move freely about the town as the people who were in it at the hour the Sabbath had commenced.

(53) At the time the Sabbath had set in.

MY COMMENTS:

Again it is quite clear that the Pharisees (whose teachings the Talmud expounds!) understood that the day started AT DUSK! It follows that Nisan 14th had to start at sunset and not with darkness. "Dusk" is always the start of a new day.

QUOTATION #4 FROM THE TALMUD

Talmud - Mas. Eiruvin 76a

Rehaba tested the Rabbis: If there were two courtyards and between them two houses3 and a tenant4 of the one [courtyard] came through the one [house] and deposited his `erub in the other5 while a tenant6 of the other [courtyard] came through the latter [house] and deposited his `erub in the former, do they7 thereby acquire the privileges of `erub8 or not? Do we regard each house in relation to the one [courtyard]9 as a house and in relation to the other [courtyard]10 as a gate-house?11 _ Both,12 they replied, do not acquire the privileges of `erub. For, whatever you assume, [this must be the result]. If you regard either house as a gate-house, `an `erub deposited in a gate-house, exedra or balcony is not a valid `erub';13 and if you regard either as a proper house, the tenants would be carrying objects into a house which was not covered by their `erub.14 But why should this ruling be different from that of Raba,15 who laid down: If two persons said to a third party, `Go and prepare an `erub on our behalf' and, after he had prepared an `erub for the one while it was yet day16 and for the other at twilight,16 the `erub of the man for whom it was prepared while it was yet day was eaten up at twilight while the `erub of the man for whom it was prepared at twilight was eaten up after dusk, both17 acquire the privileges18 of `erub?19 _ What a comparison!20 There21 it is doubtful whether twilight is day-time or night-time, a point that cannot be definitely determined;22 but, in this case, if a house is to be regarded as a proper house in relation to the former it must be so regarded in relation to the latter also, and if it is regarded in relation to the latter as a gate-house it must also be so regarded in relation to the former.23

(16) Of the Sabbath eve.

(17) Since it is uncertain whether twilight is to be regarded as day or as night.

(18) In the former case it is assumed that twilight is night and, since the `erub was in existence before twilight when the Sabbath commenced, the `erub is valid. In the latter case it is assumed that twilight is still day and, since the `erub was prepared before twilight and was still in existence when the Sabbath commenced, the `erub is valid. Now why, it is asked, if twilight is here assumed to be day for one individual and night for another could not a house also be assumed to be a gate-house for one and a proper house for another?

(19) Shab. 34a.

MY COMMENTS:

Notice Footnotes 16 - 18.

This makes quite clear just how the Jewish "religious authorities" PUSH THE FACTS AROUND!

When it suits them, THEN twilight belongs to the start of the day. And when it suits them, THEN twilight belongs to the end of the day!

Isn't it obvious that WHEN IT SUITS THEM, then 3:00 p.m. represents the start of the evening. And at other times, when they have nothing to defend, THEN they will acknowledge that the evening is at dusk.

There are many HUNDREDS of just such double-talk examples throughout the Talmud. AT NO STAGE

do they ever accept GOD'S STANDARDS OR DEFINITIONS! That is just so glaringly obvious when you examine the Talmud. Thus how God defines a day in Genesis chapter 1 never enters the discussion.

Keep in mind that this was written by Jews who understood Hebrew very well! Notice that they do NOT base their understanding on any inherent LINGUISTIC features of the Hebrew words or expressions used! They have simply "reasoned" regarding what seems expedient or suitable to them. And in so doing two men who both understood Hebrew as well as the other man, reach diametrically opposite conclusions ... placing the period of twilight at opposite ends of a day!

QUOTATION #5 FROM THE TALMUD

Talmud - Mas. Eiruvin 105a

R. SIMEON SAID etc. What does R. Simeon refer to?28 _ He refers to a previous statement29 where we learned: If a man was overtaken by dusk even when only One cubit outside the Sabbath limit, he may not enter it. R. Simeon ruled: Even if he was fifteen cubits away he may enter, since the surveyors do not measure exactly on account of those who might err.30 The first Tanna having thus ruled: `he may not enter', R. Simeon said to him, `He may enter'.31

MY COMMENTS:

Note the comment "overtaken by dusk", again showing that DUSK was the first part of the new day. As Genesis chapter 1 tells us: AND THE EVENING AND THE MORNING WERE THE FIRST DAY .... etc..

Note also that they are arguing about "a couple of feet" (i.e. from half a yard to less than 10 yards) beyond "a Sabbath day's journey". How would someone possibly be "overtaken by dusk" and be only two or three feet outside the limit of "a Sabbath day's journey", a distance he could easily cover in less than five seconds? The whole argument is extremely silly.

QUOTATION #6 FROM THE TALMUD

Talmud - Mas. Pesachim 59a

Our Rabbis taught: The [evening] tamid is [sacrificed] before the Passover offering, the Passover offering is [sacrificed] before the [burning of the evening] incense, the incense before [the kindling of] the lights; let that in connection with which ba-'ereb [at evening] and ben ha-'arbayim [between the evenings]1 are said be deferred after that in connection with which ba-'ereb is not said, save ben ha-'arbayim alone.2 If so, let [the burning of] the incense [and the kindling of] the lights also take precedence over the Passover offering, [for] let that in connection with which ba-'ereb and ben ha-'arbayim are stated be deferred after that in connection with which nought save ben ha-'arbayim alone is said?3 _ There it is different, because Scripture expressed a limitation, `it'. For it was taught: [Aaron and his sons shall set it in order, to burn] from evening to morning:4 furnish it with its [requisite] measure, so that it may burn from evening to morning. Another interpretation: you have no [other] service which is valid from evening to morning save this alone. What is the reason? Scripture saith, `Aaron and his sons shall set it in order, to burn from evening to morning': `it' [shall be] from evening to morning, but no other thing shall be from evening until morning;5 and [the burning of] the incense is likened to [the kindling of] the lights.6

(1) E.V.: `at dusk'.

(2) This is why the evening tamid is before the Passover sacrifice. For in connection with the latter both these expressions are used: Ex. XII, 6: and the whole assembly . . . shall kill it at dusk (ben ha-'arbayim); Deut. XVI, 6: thou shalt sacrifice the passover-offering at even (ba-'ereb).

(3) For only ben ha-'arbayim is stated in connection with the former two, Ex. XXX, 7f: And Aaron shall burn thereon incense of sweet spices . . . And when Aaron lighteth the lamps at dusk (ben ha-'arbayim), he shall burn it, `ben ha-'arbayim' applying to both the burning of the incense and the lighting of the lamps.

(4) Ex. XXVII, 21.

MY COMMENTS:

Notice that the Talmud ALSO translates the phrase

"BEN HA-'ARBAYIM" as "DUSK". See footnotes (2) and (3).

So there is no point in trying to explain away (as I have sometimes seen people attempt to do) WHY the translators of the "older" JPS happened to translate references to the Passover as being at "DUSK"! The Talmud is here quite clear! It commonly refers to the Passover instructions in the Bible applying to "dusk".

QUOTATION #7 FROM THE TALMUD

Talmud - Mas. Pesachim 61a

MISHNAH. IF HE KILLED IT FOR THOSE WHO CANNOT EAT IT OR FOR THOSE WHO ARE NOT REGISTERED FOR IT, FOR UNCIRCUMCISED PERSONS OR FOR UNCLEAN PERSONS, IT IS UNFIT. [IF HE KILLED IT] FOR THOSE WHO ARE TO EAT IT AND FOR THOSE WHO ARE NOT TO EAT IT, FOR THOSE WHO ARE REGISTERED FOR IT AND FOR THOSE WHO ARE NOT REGISTERED FOR IT, FOR CIRCUMCISED AND FOR UNCIRCUMCISED, FOR UNCLEAN AND FOR CLEAN PERSONS, IT IS FIT. IF HE KILLED IT BEFORE MIDDAY, IT IS DISQUALIFIED, BECAUSE IT IS SAID, [AND THE WHOLE ASSEMBLY . . . SHALL KILL IT] AT DUSK.7 IF HE KILLED IT BEFORE THE [EVENING] TAMID, IT IS FIT, PROVIDING THAT ONE SHALL STIR ITS BLOOD UNTIL [THAT OF] THE TAMID IS SPRINKLED;8 YET IF IT WAS SPRINKLED,9 IT IS FIT.

(7) Ex. XII, 6; lit., `between the evenings'.

MY COMMENTS:

Here the biased Jewish reasoning is clearly exposed!

THEY ACKNOWLEDGE THAT THE BIBLE SAYS "... and the whole assembly shall kill it AT DUSK"! They don't deny that "at dusk" is a correct translation of the Hebrew term used, which literally means "between the evenings". But THEY REASON that this means that one cannot kill the lamb "BEFORE MIDDAY"!

If the Jews themselves admit that "AT DUSK" is a correct translation of the expression used in the Bible, how can non-Hebrew-speaking members of the Church of God possibly claim that the Hebrew expression refers to "BEFORE DUSK"? Are people in God's Church ALSO going to define "DUSK" as "any time after 12:00 noon"?

QUOTATION #8 FROM THE TALMUD

Talmud - Mas. Pesachim 78b

For it was taught, R. Nathan said: How do we know that all Israel can discharge [their obligation] with one Passover-offering? Because it is said, and the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it at dusk:11 does then the whole assembly kill? Surely only one kills! But it teaches that all Israel can discharge [their duty] with one Passover-offering.12 Perhaps it is different there, because if some withdraw it is fit for the others, and if the others withdraw it is fit for these?13 _ Rather it is this [dictum of] R. Nathan.

MY COMMENTS:

AGAIN it is clearly stated that the Bible says that the congregation of Israel shall kill it AT DUSK!

I am trying to show that we are NOT dealing with some isolated and unintentional or careless translation of the Hebrew! The Jewish scholars understood very well that the Bible states "AT DUSK"!

This has nothing to do with "how well we may be able to reconcile all kinds of statements in the OT". It is simply a clear matter that the Bible refers to the Passover being killed AT DUSK ... which the Jews acknowledge, but then twist to supposedly mean any time after 12:00 noon.

Understand that the Jews themselves in their writings don't make a difference between "in the evening" and "at dusk" ... they apply BOTH to, when it suits them, mean any time after 12:00 o'clock noon. Those of you who have accepted the Jewish reasoning that "the evening" can be a reference to the late afternoon ... do you ALSO accept their reasoning that "DUSK" can mean "any time after 12:00 o'clock noon"?

Can we not see the specious reasoning that is employed in order to justify Jewish traditions?

Note one other point in this quotation. Israel's obligation to keep the Passover could, according to some teachers, be discharged by killing one single Passover animal for all the people. This is OBVIOUSLY contrary to the biblical instructions (Exodus 12:3 reads: "... they shall take to them EVERY MAN A LAMB, according to the house of their fathers ..."). The specious reasoning used in THIS example should be obvious for one and all to see.

Question: How can ANYBODY possibly look for spiritual understanding (i.e. correctly understanding the Word of God) to a people who argue about being two feet outside of "a Sabbath day's journey" and who expound the idea that killing ONE Passover lamb was sufficient for the whole nation? Yes, I understand that there is only one REAL "Passover Lamb" (i.e. Jesus Christ); but the O.T. instructions are very explicit that each family was to kill a lamb. If Jewish religious leaders cannot agree on this, then they are totally unfit for being looked up to for spiritual understanding IN ANY AREA OF THE BIBLE!

QUOTATION #9 FROM THE TALMUD

Talmud - Mas. Yoma 46a

Raba said: Who is it that does not care what flour he grinds?6 Have we not learnt: On all other days?7 [These were four]-This is a real difficulty. Now he [Bar Kappara] disputes with R. Huna who holds: The continual offering suspends the Sabbath only at its beginning, but not at its end.8

(7) Which includes the Sabbath.

(8) This offering is sacrificed on the Sabbath day, notwithstanding the fact that the labour involved many kinds of work expressly forbidden on that day. But only at the beginning. i.e., if the beginning of that sacrifice has to be made on the Sabbath. Of the Friday dusk-offering, however, the limbs must be

smoked before the Sabbath. Since it belongs to Friday it would be desecration to continue it on the Sabbath. (9) Cf. supra 6b.

MY COMMENTS:

Footnote 8 shows that they understood that the "Friday dusk-offering" was really on the Sabbath. So they understood quite clearly that "THE EVENING SACRIFICE" always took place at dusk, at the start of a new day. They understood that "evening sacrifice" refers to "DUSK".

Whether references to the daily sacrifices place the expression "the morning sacrifice" before the expression "the evening sacrifice" or not has nothing to do with this! The Jewish understanding is quite clearly revealed in this footnote, namely, that the evening sacrifice took place AFTER SUNSET! I mention this because some people have tried to reason that the expression "the morning sacrifice and the evening sacrifice" IMPLIES that "the morning sacrifice" is at the start of the day, and "the evening sacrifice" is at the end of the day ... thereby supposedly making "the evening" a time before sunset.

THIS QUOTATION is quite candid in showing that "the evening sacrifice" took place AFTER SUNSET, when a new day had started! The "Monday dusk-offering" and the "Thursday dusk-offering" etc. were ALL performed AFTER SUNSET. It is precisely for this reason that FOR THE "FRIDAY DUSK-OFFERING" they devised a custom to deviate from this norm ... on Fridays they started work on the "dusk-offering" BEFORE sunset, reasoning that this was better than doing the physical work involved after sunset on the Friday evening. They didn't seem to understand 1 Samuel 15:22, which tells us: "... TO OBEY IS BETTER THAN SACRIFICE"! We need to obey God, rather than reasoning our way into doing something differently from the way God has instructed us to do it.

So there is no justification in drawing conclusions from the sequence of words in the expression "the morning sacrifice and the evening sacrifice", trying to imply that because of the sequence of words in this expression THEREFORE "the evening" must be the few hours before the end of the day. This quotation shows quite clearly that ONLY ON A FRIDAY EVENING did the Jews perform the "evening sacrifice" before sunset; on the other six evenings in the week this sacrifice was performed AFTER SUNSET! So for six evenings every week they performed the sacrifice at the correct time that God had instructed; but for the Friday evening sacrifice THEY REASONED themselves into doing it at an earlier time than God had instructed. Their Friday evening sacrifice was thus NOT at the time that God had instructed.

QUOTATION #10 FROM THE TALMUD

Talmud - Mas. Yoma 46b

[consequently] in the case of the law of levitical impurity, since it is suspended at the beginning it is also suspended at the end, but with regard to the Sabbath, since it is not suspended at the beginning1 it is also not suspended at the end. Nor is there any difficulty according to R. Hisda: He does not hold that the end is like the beginning: [consequently] with regard to the Sabbath, since it is inoperative when a community sacrifice is concerned, it is suspended also at the end of the sacrifice, whereas as regards the law of levitical uncleanness, since in the face of a community sacrifice it is only suspended,2 it is suspended only at the beginning which is essential for [the obtainment of] atonement, but not at the end, which is not essential for atonement.

(1) The Friday dusk-offering must be offered before Sabbath since the blood of the offering would become useless, invalidated, if not sprinkled before sunset.

(2) Only `with difficulty' but never imperative, every attempt must be made to prepare the sacrifice in levitical cleanness. V. Supra 7b.

MY COMMENTS:

Notice footnote 1: THEY REASON that the Friday EVENING SACRIFICE, which they freely call "the Friday DUSK-offering" (because the Hebrew uses the word for 'evening'), should be made BEFORE SUNSET!

Note that this also shows that they understand that "DUSK" starts AT SUNSET!

Realize that for the OTHER DAYS OF THE WEEK they understand that the "evening sacrifice" should be brought AFTER SUNSET, AT DUSK! But for a Friday evening they use human reasoning to get to a different conclusion. I would call that "carnal reasoning"!

QUOTATION #11 FROM THE TALMUD

Talmud - Mas. Zevachim 11b

Hence he informs us [that it is not so]. But surely it is written, At dusk?27 _ Said `Ulla the son of R. Ila'i: [That means,] Between two evenings.28 Then [will you say] that the whole day is fit for the daily offering too, seeing that at dusk29 is written in connection therewith? _ There, since it is written, `The one lamb thou shalt offer in the morning', it follows that `at dusk' is meant literally. Yet say, One [must be offered] in the morning, while the other [may be offered] the whole day?- [Scripture prescribes] one for the morning and not two for the morning. Again, will you say that the whole day is fit for [the lighting of] the lamps, since `at dusk' is written in connection therewith?30 _ There it is different, because it is written, [to burn] from evening to morning,31 and it was taught: `From evening to morning': Furnish it with its [requisite] measure, so that it may burn from evening to morning. Another interpretation: You have no other [service] valid from evening to morning save this alone. Now [will you say] in the case of incense too, where `at dusk' is written,32 that the whole day is fit [for the burning thereof]?-incense is different,

(28) This being the literal meaning of the Hebrew "..... ..." (Hebrew letters in original but not available in my word processor). I.e., between the evening of the fourteenth (which he counts as until dawn) and the evening of the fifteenth, hence the whole day of the fourteenth.

MY COMMENTS:

Footnote (28) very clearly and very honestly exposes the Jewish JUSTIFICATION for interpreting "between the evenings" to refer to the late afternoon! Could it be plainer?

Note that the expression "THE EVENING OF THE 14TH" simply MUST refer to THE START OF THE 14TH! This is because "THE EVENING OF THE 15TH" cannot refer to the end of the 15th! Also, when they REASON that "the evening of the 14th" means "from evening until dawn" (i.e. the whole NIGHT) it must again refer to the start of the 14th, BECAUSE THE DAWN MUST STILL BE ON THE 14TH!

Note very carefully!

This footnote makes quite clear that the real Jewish justification for a late-14th Passover does NOT interpret the expression "between the evenings" to refer to "between noon and sunset" or "between 3:00 p.m. and sunset"!!

This footnote shows quite clearly that the Jews simply interpret the expression "between the evenings" TO REFER TO THE ENTIRE 24 HOURS OF NISAN 14TH! And that is in spite of knowing that it really means "DUSK". Do you still desire to defend the Jewish custom of a late 14th Passover?

They KNOW what "evening" means; and they KNOW what "dusk" means. And they KNOW what the biblical instructions refer to. But they JUSTIFY their traditions by trying to make the expression refer to the whole 24-hour day!

This type of Jewish hypocrisy is repeated to an embarrassing degree in countless other examples in the Talmud. And then you have Church of God people who try to JUSTIFY such Jewish traditions. That seems so strange to me. Are we going to base our understanding on Jewish traditions ... or are we going to base it on THE BIBLE?

Next, some of the Jewish sages even claimed it was okay to slaughter the Passover ON THE MORNING OF THE 14TH! While this was not the general custom, we should recognize that they all used the same lines of reasoning ... that "evening" and "dusk" can mean things other than "evening" and "dusk"! It also further tarnishes the possibility of us looking to them for guidance regarding the original Passover instructions.

QUOTATION #12 FROM THE TALMUD

Talmud - Mas. Zevachim 11b

(This quotation appears immediately before the previous one in the Talmud.)

GEMARA. R. Eleazar said in R. Oshaia's name: Ben Bathyra declared fit a Passover-offering which one slaughtered in its own name on the morning of the fourteenth, because [he holds that] the whole day is its season.23 Then what does AS IF [etc.] mean?24 Because R.Joshua states AS IF,25 he too says, AS IF. If so, instead of disputing where it is [slaughtered] under a different designation, let them dispute where it is [slaughtered] in its own name?26

MY COMMENTS:

Again we see that some of the Jewish sages claimed it was okay to slaughter the Passover ON THE MORNING OF THE 14TH! As already stated above, we should recognize that they all used the same lines of reasoning ... that "evening" and "dusk" can mean things other than "evening" and "dusk"!

QUOTATION #13 FROM THE TALMUD

Talmud - Mas. Zevachim 22b

The Elders of the south hold: One who is unclean through a corpse can also send his sacrifices.17 But it is written, If any man of you . . . shall be unclean [by reason of a dead body] . . . yet he shall keep the Passover [unto the Lord] in the second month [on the fourteenth day at dusk they shall keep it]?18 _ That is a recommendation.19 But it is written, According to every man's .....

MY COMMENTS:

Again they freely acknowledge that the Bible states AT DUSK was to be the Passover.

I trust we can see that the translators of the JPS were also quite familiar with the Talmud, the teachings of the Pharisees. And their use of the word "dusk" in the JPS is in full agreement with how the word has been used in the Talmud for almost two millennia.

QUOTATION #14 FROM THE TALMUD

Talmud - Mas. Berachoth 26b

Our Rabbis taught: If a man erred and did not say the afternoon prayer on the eve of Sabbath, he says the [Sabbath] Tefillah1 twice on the night of the Sabbath. If he erred and did not say the afternoon Tefillah on Sabbath, he says the [weekday] Tefillah twice on the outgoing of the Sabbath; .....

MY COMMENTS:

The expression "eve of the Sabbath" is the time when THE AFTERNOON PRAYER is to be said. Then it is still Friday. The expression "the night of the Sabbath" refers to Friday NIGHT, the first part of the Sabbath.

So in speaking about the Sabbath itself, the Jews don't really use the expression "evening". The "eve of the Sabbath" is still on Friday before sunset. And then they refer to "the night of the Sabbath". But Saturday afternoon is NOT called "evening" ... it is NEVER "the evening of the Sabbath" ... that's an expression they use to refer to the time BEFORE the Sabbath even starts. So for Nisan 14th they would like to refer to the late afternoon as "the evening of the 14th" ... but for the weekly Sabbath days they don't call late Saturday afternoon "the evening of the Sabbath". Not exactly very consistent, is it?

Notice how they blur the distinction between "afternoon" and "evening". They talk about "the afternoon prayer", but it is something that is supposed to be said "on the EVE of the Sabbath". This shows that the designation "EVE of Sabbath" is an artificial one.

QUOTATION #15 FROM THE TALMUD

Talmud - Mas. Pesachim 58a

MISHNAH. THE [AFTERNOON] TAMID1 IS SLAUGHTERED AT EIGHT AND A HALF HOURS2 AND IS OFFERED AT NINE AND A HALF HOURS.3 ON THE EVE OF PASSOVER4 IT IS SLAUGHTERED AT SEVEN AND A HALF HOURS AND OFFERED AT EIGHT AND A HALF HOURS, WHETHER IT IS A WEEKDAY OR THE SABBATH. IF THE EVE OF PASSOVER FELL, ON SABBATH EVE [FRIDAY], IT IS SLAUGHTERED AT SIX AND A HALF HOURS AND OFFERED AT SEVEN AND A HALF HOURS, AND THE PASSOVER OFFERING AFTER IT.5

(1) The daily burnt-offering: one was brought every morning and another every afternoon. Num. XXVIII, 4.

(2) The day being counted from sunrise to sunset, i.e., about six a.m. to six p.m.

(3) The sacrificial ceremonies took an hour.

(4) The Heb. is in the plural: on the eves of Passovers.

(5) When the eve of Passover falls on a Friday, time must be left for roasting the Passover offering before the Sabbath commences; hence the earlier hour of the tamid.

MY COMMENTS:

Notice footnote (2) which shows that the daylight part of the day was counted "from sunrise to SUNSET". Thus at sunset the next day started. Then "the evening and the morning were ..." the next full day.

Once THE MORNING has come around you cannot again have "an evening" for that particular day!

Right, now we have looked at 15 different quotations from the Talmud. The repeated use of the word "dusk" makes quite clear that for the Jews it is not really a matter of not understanding what the expression "between the evenings" refers to. They KNOW that it refers to DUSK but then, TO JUSTIFY THEMSELVES, they redefine the word "dusk" to mean any time after 12:00 o'clock noon. It sounds just like the Pharisee who had been told to love his neighbour as himself, doesn't it?

As we are told:

> "BUT HE, WILLING TO JUSTIFY HIMSELF, SAID UNTO JESUS, AND WHO IS MY NEIGHBOUR?" (Luke 10:29)

And so today the Jews say: "Yes, but what is meant by 'dusk'?"

Can we not understand that Luke 10:29 exposes the reasoning that Judaism has ALWAYS USED in its dealings with the Scriptures? They have ALWAYS used the Scriptures to justify their own traditions. And so even when we find a candid admission as to the true meaning of a passage, this will almost always STILL be followed up by the attitude of Luke 10:29. Luke 10:29 shows us that one major way used by the Jews to justify themselves is TO ARGUE ABOUT THE DEFINITIONS OF WORDS!

That is precisely what the lawyer was doing ... he was questioning the definition of "neighbour". And things haven't really changed much since then.

To summarize: From the Talmud we have repeatedly seen TWO CLEAR FACTS. They are:

1) The Talmud in numerous passages makes quite clear that DUSK is the time when a new day starts.

2) The Talmud makes equally clear in numerous passages that according to the biblical instructions the Passover lambs were to be killed AT DUSK.

In recognition of this fact the JEWISH PUBLICATION SOCIETY Translation of the O.T. states in 5 different verses that the Passover was to be AT DUSK. Green's Literal Translation of the Bible also acknowledges this.

Now they simply CANNOT have it both ways! You cannot acknowledge that a new day STARTS WITH DUSK and that the Passover was also to take place at dusk ... AND THEN CLAIM that, as far as the Passover is concerned, "dusk" must refer to the late afternoon, to THE LAST FEW HOURS OF THE DAY! That line of reasoning is blatant manipulation of definitions of words to suit their own private interpretations.

In this article I have given you a fair amount of information from the Talmud. I realize that this will not necessarily result in people changing their minds. But the quotations I have presented make quite clear that it cannot be refuted that the Jews understand that the Passover was to be killed AT DUSK, "BETWEEN THE EVENINGS"! Therefore those who will continue to hold to a late-14th-Passover will now be forced to redefine the meaning of "dusk".

Frank W. Nelte