

The Incredible PASSOVER PLOT

Thousands of years ago, about a thousand years before the present era, an incredible plot was hatched to destroy and bury the true Passover. That masterful "Passover Plot" has continued down through the centuries, growing and developing, and deceiving millions. Among its victims are even the End-Time Churches of God! Truly Satan the devil, that arch-enemy of all mankind, has "deceived ALL NATIONS" (Rev.12:9). Could YOU be a modern victim of his fiendish, mind-boggling "Passover Plot"?

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Strange as it may seem, there really was a "Passover Plot" that has been carefully nurtured and fostered down through the ages to obscure and hide the truth of God, and to replace the truth with confusion, and ancient PAGAN rites and ceremonies! Very few understand the significance of this fact, or know how the plot began, how it was perpetuated, and how it continues, even down to our very day, today!

Truly, Satan the devil has deceived "the whole world" (Rev.12:9). Are you, perchance, one of the deceived, deluded victims of this insidious, nefarious, cleverly devised and concealed PLOT to hide the plain truth about the Passover, and its correct time and observance?

The Mysterious Passover Plot

How has Satan the devil, the master of intrigue, disguises and deceptions, pulled off one of his greatest deceptions and coups of all time? One so beguiling and clever that even many of God's own "elect" have fallen victim to its influence and error?

You need to know and understand the TRUTH!

The time has come for all God's people, and those who think they are God's own chosen and elect few, to RE-EXAMINE this issue, very carefully. As the apostle Paul says, to "PROVE ALL

THINGS!" (I Thess.5:21). As Paul also wrote, "Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall" (I Cor.10:12). Are you willing to look into this matter, objectively, and with an open mind, to PROVE the truth of God? Or will you just "assume" that your present practice and belief is right, and continue right along in error? Solomon wrote centuries ago, "There is a way that SEEMETH right unto a man, but the END thereof are the ways of DEATH" (Prov.14:12; 16:25).

The Original Passover

God gave the Passover to Israel when they came out of Egyptian bondage, in the middle of the second millennium before Christ. God Himself delivered Israel from the hands of the Egyptian oppressors, with a series of mighty miracles, leading up to the greatest miracle of all - the divine intervention of God to slay all the Egyptian firstborn the night of the Passover, when God "passed over" the families of the Israelites, every household that had obediently slain a lamb and sprinkled its blood over their door posts and lintels. They were then to eat the lamb, roasted, along with bitter herbs and unleavened bread (Exodus 12:1-11).

This Feast was to become a perpetual observance. God declared, "This is a day you are to commemorate; for the generations to come you shall celebrate it as a festival to the LORD -- a lasting ordinance" (Exo.12:14).

That Passover lamb was to be slain "between the two evenings" (Exodus 12:6) -- that is, as the sun goes down in the afternoon, "in the evening AS THE SUN GOES DOWN" (Deut.16:6) -- not after sunset, when the sun has already gone down. The Hebrew expression, "Between the two evenings," is the time the priests were to sacrifice the second lamb of the daily burnt offerings -- one in the morning, and the second one in the evening, or literally, "between the two evenings" (Numbers 28:4, 8). Since each day begins at sunset, and ends at sunset (see Lev.23:32), the second sacrifice of the "daily sacrifice, which was offered "between the two evenings," had to be sacrificed *before sunset!* Otherwise, if it was killed *after sunset*, it would have been sacrificed at the beginning of the next day, which began at sunset!

The Jews have always understood this expression "between the two evenings" to mean between noon when the sun starts to go down, and sunset, when it has completely disappeared beneath the horizon and has "gone down." In historic Judaism, the Passover lambs were generally slain between 3 and 5 o'clock in the afternoon of Nisan 14, the "appointed time."

However, the ancient sect of the Samaritans understood it differently, and so did the Sadducees. Says the *Critical Experimental Commentary* by Jamieson, Fausset and Brown,

"In the early period of their history the Hebrews had no proper divisions of time, and accordingly periods of the day were indicated in a very loose and general manner . . . 'Between the evenings' is a phrase of similar import, denoting the part of the day between the *declining and the setting sun*, or between NOON AND SUNSET. As the slaughtering of the numerous victims required would of necessity occupy a considerable time, no particular hour was specified . . . But in order to be within the limits defined, it was necessary that it should be begun and completed between the commencement of the first and the termination

of the second evening. . . In later times a controversy arose in reference to the time thus marked. The *Samaritans and Karaites considered it as the interval between sunset and darkness*. But the Pharisees and Rabbinites, who maintained that the first evening began after noon, and the second with the sunset, taught that the paschal lamb was to be killed in the interval between the ninth and eleventh hour, which, at the time of the equinox, corresponded to one, three and six o'clock P.M. Josephus states that such was the practice of the Jews in the time of our Lord" (vol.1, p.310).

Adam Clarke's Commentary elucidates this vital point of truth further:

"The Jews divided the day into morning and evening: till the sun passed the meridian, all was morning or forenoon; after that, all was afternoon or evening. Their first evening began just after twelve o'clock, and continued till sunset; their second evening began at sunset and continued till night. . . .

"The day among the Jews had twelve hours, John 11:9. Their first hour was about six o'clock in the morning with us. Their sixth hour was our noon. Their ninth hour answered to our three o'clock in the afternoon. By this we may understand that the time in which Christ was crucified began at the third hour, that is, nine o'clock in the morning, the ordinary time for the DAILY MORNING SACRIFICE, and ended at the ninth hour, that is, three o'clock in the afternoon, THE TIME OF THE EVENING SACRIFICE, Mark 15:25, 33, 34, 37. Wherefore their ninth hour was their HOUR OF PRAYER, when they used to go into the temple AT THE DAILY EVENING SACRIFICE, Acts 3:1; and THIS was the ORDINARY TIME for the PASSOVER" (vol.1, p.350-351).

Many Scriptures show that the Passover was to be slain on the 14th of Nisan, which ended at SUNSET. For the Jews, each day begins and ends at SUNSET. Concerning the Day of Atonement, God inspired Moses to write: "Mark, the *tenth day* of this seventh month is the Day of Atonement. It shall be a sacred occasion for you. . . On the ninth day of the month *at evening*, FROM EVENING TO EVENING you shall observe this your sabbath" (Lev.23:26-32, the Tanakh).

Notice! The holy day of Yom Kippur, or Atonement, was the 10th day, and it began at evening, or sunset. Yet the instructions of God clearly state: "From the ninth day, at evening." Thus in God's sight, the "evening" portion of a day is the latter part of the day, or the afternoon, before sunset! Thus we are to celebrate Yom Kippur from the evening of the ninth day, sunset, which follows the afternoon, till the evening (afternoon) of the tenth day, until sunset.

The ninth day ENDED at evening, or sunset, and the 10th day BEGAN at sunset, which began the "second evening." Thus when God told Israel to keep the Passover lamb until the 14th day of Nisan, and then "kill it in the evening" (KJV), the evening of the 14th of Nisan would have been the afternoon portion of the day, leading up to sunset! Since the Passover was to be killed in the "evening" of the 14th, it means it was to be killed in the LATE AFTERNOON of Nisan 14. If the Israelites had slain the lamb after sunset, it would have been Nisan 15 -- the following day! But God clearly said they were to keep the lamb until the 14th of Nisan, and slay it on that day, not on Nisan 15 (Exodus 12:6). They were to slay it between

noon and sunset, in the afternoon of Nisan 14 -- which corresponds to THE VERY TIME JESUS CHRIST OUR MESSIAH WAS SLAIN FOR OUR SINS, AS OUR PASSOVER LAMB (I Cor.5:7). Thus Jesus Christ, Yeshua Moshiach, *fulfilled the symbolism of the Passover lamb perfectly, both as to type, and the time and date of His crucifixion and death, atoning for our sins!*

Further evidence of this truth concerning the Passover comes to us from the *New Westminster Dictionary of the Bible*. It tells us about Passover:

"Passover. Heb. pesah from pasah (to pass over in the sense of sparing) . . . It was instituted in Egypt to commemorate the culminating event in the redemption of the Israelites (Ex.12:1, 14, 42; 23:15; Deut.16:1,3). THAT NIGHT was to be much observed to the Lord, when he smote all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, but passed over the houses of the Israelites where the blood had been sprinkled and the inmates were standing, staff in hand, awaiting the deliverance promised by the Lord. The festival began on the 14th of Abib AT EVENING, THAT IS, IN THE BEGINNING OF THE 15TH DAY, with the sacrificial MEAL (Lev.23:5-6). A lamb or kid was slain between the evenings, that is, TOWARD SUNSET (Exo.12:6; Deut.16:6; cf. between the 9th and 11th hours, Josephus, *War*, vi .9, 3) . . ." ("Passover," p.705).

During the Feast of Unleavened Bread, no leaven was to be found throughout the homes of the Israelites. God says, "For seven days you are to eat bread made without yeast. On the first day remove the yeast from your houses, for whoever eats anything with yeast in it from the first day through the seventh must be cut off from Israel" (Exo.12:15). Some have been confused about which day this would have been. The "first" day, however, of the entire sequence of Passover events, begins with Nisan 14, when the Passover lamb was slain. Therefore, the leaven was to be put out on the 14th of Nisan -- not on the first Holy Day of Nisan 15, a day in which no "work" was to be done except that required for cooking (Lev.23:6-7). They could not have been instructed to wait until Nisan 15, and then to put the leaven out, for verse 19 explains, "For SEVEN DAYS NO YEAST IS TO BE FOUND in your houses." This does not say 6 1/2 days, or 6 days and part of a seventh day, but SEVEN (WHOLE) DAYS. The Jews have always understood it thus.

Hastings Bible Dictionary points out:

"On the evening of the 13th [end of the 13th] the head of the family searched the house with a lighted candle, that he might seek out all the leaven. The hour on the 14th at which one must refrain from eating leavened cakes was variously fixed. It was always before noon, however, the precise time being indicated by the disappearance of two cakes which were exposed before the temple. When the signal was thus given, all leaven must be burned or scattered to the winds. . . . Work ceased on the morning, or at noon, of the 14th, save in a few occupations (tailors, barbers, laundresses). . . .

"The time of the Passover sacrifice is defined in the Law as 'between the two evenings' . . . This was interpreted by the Pharisees and Talmudists to mean FROM THE HOUR OF THE SUN'S DECLINE UNTIL ITS SETTING; and this was the LATER TEMPLE PRACTICE

. . . *The Samaritans, Karaites, and Sadducees*, on the other hand, held that the *period between sunset and dark* was intended" (vol.3, "Passover," p.691).

This ancient controversy, over the meaning of "between the two evenings," and its erroneous interpretation by the Samaritans, Sadducees, and their successors the Karaites in the eighth century after Christ, has led to serious consequences and errors as to the observance of Passover, even today among the end-time churches which have sought to observe this holy celebration ordained by God!

Even today, strangely, we see people attempting to keep and observe the PASSOVER -- and they call it precisely that -- not at the time the Jews observe this annual festival dinner, at night on Nisan 15, AFTER the Passover lambs were slain and roasted. Rather, we see people attempting to observe this sacred memorial at the BEGINNING of Nisan 14, twenty-four hours too early! Why is this? How did this happen? How did Satan the devil deceive so many into following the errors of the Samaritans, Sadducees, and Karaites, and misunderstanding the Passover?

Satan's Great Deception and Hoax

The *Universal Jewish Encyclopedia* states: "Paschal Lamb. The Pharisees and the Sadducees had a dispute as to the time when the slaughtering should take place; the former held it should be in the last three hours before sunset [near the end of the 14th], the latter, between sunset and nightfall [beginning of 15th] . . . *The Samaritans have retained the ancient rite to the present day*" (vol.8, p.406).

The Samaritans and Sadducees claimed that they observed the laws of God according to the strict "letter" of the law. They, as well as the Pharisees and Rabbis, knew that the Passover was to be slain on Nisan 14. However, since they interpreted the expression "between the two evenings" as meaning "AFTER SUNSET," they waited until sunset, when Nisan 15 began, and then sacrificed the Passover, after preparing for the sacrifice on the afternoon of Nisan 14.

We read in the book *The Jewish Festivals: History and Observance*, by Hayyim Schauss,

"The Samaritans and the Jews became blood-enemies who hated and despised each other, just as in later years the Karaites and the Rabbinic Jews hated each other.

"In the days of the second Temple almost the entire central part of Palestine between Judah and Galilee, was thickly populated with this Jewish sect of Shechem; there were also many followers of the sect in southern Syria and in other eastern lands. Today, however, there are barely two hundred left; they speak Arabic and inhabit a special quarter in Nablus. They have a synagogue there and a High Priest, who is their teacher and spiritual leader.

"These two hundred Samaritans observe Pesach to this day on Mount Gerizim, in a manner that other Jews ceased practicing thousands of years ago. The custom of offering sacrifices has died out with the

Samaritans, except on the fourteenth day of Nisan, when they offer the ceremonial Pesach sacrifice" (p.61).

Schauss points out that these Samaritans go up to Mount Gerizim, and half an hour before sunset, as the 14th of Nisan draws to a close, the High Priest leads the assembly in silent prayer. "Exactly at sunset the High Priest faces westward and reads that portion of the Pentateuch which orders the slaughtering of the Pesach sacrifice. About twelve or fourteen of the younger Samaritans busy themselves, meanwhile, with preparing the sacrificial animals. They form a circle about the pit of fire, holding the lambs between their legs, and as the High Priest utters the words, 'And the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it at dusk,' they utter a benediction and throw the lambs, throats to the pit, where they are slaughtered by two ritual slaughterers. Six or seven sheep are slaughtered" (p.63).

Who were these strange people known in history as the "Samaritans"? And how did their practice influence people of later generations, including end-time remnants of the Church of God?

Who Were the Samaritans?

The *Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible* declares concerning the Samaritans and their observance of the Passover:

"The sacrifice still survives in the dwindling *Samaritan* community at Nablus, Jordan. This *schismatic* Jewish group SEPARATED from the temple at Jerusalem in ca. the fourth century B.C. . . . The slaughter is made at the foot of Mount Gerizim, precisely at sunset rather than earlier . . . The actual communal eating of the sacrifice does not occur until after midnight and is done in great haste . . ." (article "Passover," vol.3, p.665).

Putting the evidence together, it is obvious that the Samaritans, who long preceded the Karaites and Sadducees in existence, were the ones who began the observance of "Passover" by slaying the Passover lamb after sunset of Nisan 14, instead of in the afternoon of Nisan 14. Thus they actually slew the Passover after sunset -- at the beginning of Nisan 15. The Samaritans also had their own calendar, and own leap year system, and did not follow the Jews of Jerusalem. They even had their own temple at Mount Gerizim where they sacrificed their lambs.

The Ancient Samaritans Unmasked

Just who were the ancient Samaritans, who took it upon themselves to observe the Passover at a different time than the Pharisees and the main body of the Jews?

In 718-721 B.C., Sargon, king of Assyria, conquered the northern kingdom of Israel and led them off into captivity beyond the Euphrates River. Israel had plunged into Baal worship, provoking the LORD to anger. Despite repeated warnings, they remained obstinate in their rebellion and idolatry, and would not listen to God's prophets -- which seems to be the eternal

truth of how Israel deals with true prophets of God. The Scriptures say, "They followed worthless idols and themselves became worthless. They imitated the nations around them" (II Kings 17:15). We read, "So the LORD was very angry with Israel and removed them from his presence. Only the tribe of Judah was left" (v.18). They were exiled into Assyria.

Replacing the Israelites in northern Israel, to occupy the vacated land, "The king of Assyria brought people from Babylon, Cuthah, Avva, Hamath and Sepharvaim and settled them into the towns of Samaria to replace the Israelites" (v.24). However, lions had multiplied in the area, and killed some of the people, creating fear. They saw that God was responsible for the lions, so they besought the king of Assyria to send them an Israelite priest to teach them the laws of the God of the land (v.27-28). This priest was one of the priests teaching the doctrines of Jeroboam, who led Israel into sin (compare verse 16 with I Kings 12:25-33). He lived at Bethel, the religious site for Jeroboam's false system of worship (I Kings 12:33; II Kings 17:19).

As a result of this policy, elements of the truth of Scripture, and misinterpreted Scripture, began to be mixed together with elements of pagan worship and idolatry. The priest taught them a schismatic system to worship the Lord, the system imposed by Jeroboam to wean his people away from the worship of the Jews and the Temple at Jerusalem. "Nevertheless, each national group made its own gods in the several towns where they settled, and set them up in the shrines the people of Samaria had made at the high places. . . . They worshipped the Lord, but they also appointed all sorts of their own people to officiate for them as priests in the shrines at the high places. They worshipped the Lord, but they also served their own gods in accordance with the customs of the nations from which they had been brought.

"TO THIS DAY THEY PERSIST IN THEIR FORMER PRACTICES. *They neither worship the LORD nor adhere to the decrees and ordinances, the laws and commandments that the LORD gave the descendants of Jacob, whom he named Israel . . . [They] persisted in their former practices. Even while these people were worshiping the LORD, they were serving their idols. TO THIS DAY their children and grandchildren continue to do as their fathers did"* (II Kings 17:29-41).

The Samaritans were PAGANS to the core! Their paganism was not rooted out of them. They had a false, perverted, syncretic system of worship -- combining their interpretation of the "Torah" or five books of Moses with a huge dose of PAGANISM! Subtle differences were introduced in the observances and festivals of God. Instead of following the official Jewish practices, as were maintained by the Pharisees, they opted for their OWN PRIVATE INTERPRETATIONS. Rather than slay the Passover lamb in the late afternoon of Nisan 14, they slew it AFTER SUNSET -- at the BEGINNING of Nisan 15! Therefore, they ate their "Passover" very late on the night of Nisan 15, whereas the faithful body of Jews in Judea ate the Passover earlier during the night of Nisan 15, which they had slain late in the afternoon of Nisan 14!

Says the *New Westminster Dictionary of the Bible* about the Samaritans:

"They erected images of their gods on the high places of the Israelites, and COMBINED their idolatries with the worship of Yahweh . . . This DUAL

WORSHIP they kept up until after the fall of Jerusalem" ("Samaritans, p.823).

This authority continues:

"There was early an antipathy on the part of most of the Jews to social and religious association with the Samaritans, and this feeling developed into intense antipathy as years rolled on (Ezra 4:3; Eccclus.50:25-26; Luke 9:52-53; John 4:9; 8:48). The Samaritans were neither of pure Hebrew blood NOR OF UNCONTAMINATED WORSHIP. . .

"There is no agreement on the date of the BREACH between the Samaritans and the Jewish community, but it seems to have started in the time of Ezra and Nehemiah and gradually widened. The political separation of Judah and Samaria and the work of Ezra made the SCHISM inevitable. It may be that the Samaritans did not build a temple at the beginning of the cleavage because they hoped that someday they would secure at least partial control of the Temple in Jerusalem. Sanballat declared his allegiance to Alexander the Great and asked to build a temple where his son-in-law might be the high priest. Alexander gave his consent and Sanballat built the temple. . . .

"During the persecution under Antiochus Epiphanes they declared that they were not of the same race as the Jews, and gratified the tyrant by expressing a desire that their temple on Mt. Gerizim might in future be dedicated to Jupiter, the Friend of Strangers (II Macc.6:2). About 128 B.C. John Hyrcanus took Shechem and Gerizim, destroying the Samaritan temple (Jos. Antiq. XIII, 9, 1); but the worshipers continued to offer their adorations on the summit of the hill where the sacred edifice had stood. They did so when our Lord was on earth (John 4:20-21)" (p.824).

The Samaritan religion was a syncretic blend of paganism and misinterpretations of the Torah, or the Law. They outright rejected the prophets and writings, and only accepted their version of the "Law" of Moses. They rejected the "oral law" handed down from Moses through the elders of Israel, the scribes, and to the Pharisees as not binding or authoritative, despite the great problems this would create concerning the holy calendar and holy day regulation! They even devised their own sacred calendar, and tried to frustrate the Jewish calendar authorities by imitating the fires the Jews originally used to notify those far from Jerusalem of the new moons.

The Samaritans, following the paganized footsteps of King Jeroboam of Israel, REJECTED the revelation of God, and put their OWN interpretations on the Passover and Pentecost, and the Word of God! But where did they obtain their heretical views and practices concerning God's Holy Days? The answer to this question reveals how subtle and sly that old serpent the devil has been in deceiving and deluding one generation after another!

The Apostasy of King Jeroboam

This great Apostasy actually began during the days of Jeroboam, king of Israel. After God gave him ten of the tribes of Israel to rule over, because of the wickedness of King Solomon, Jeroboam grew worried that the people of his kingdom might revert in their loyalty to the King of Judah, Rehoboam, because the Temple and Priesthood and religious center of

worship for all Israel was then in Jerusalem!

This caused Jeroboam and his advisers no end of anxiety, doubt, and worry. Jeroboam, therefore, decided to set up a **COMPETING RELIGIOUS THEOLOGY**, also based on the Torah, or five books of Moses, but with an **ALTERNATIVE INTERPRETATION** of basic concepts and doctrines. Most importantly, his priests rejected the teachings of the Jews, and Levites in the southern kingdom of Judah, and presented to the people a contrary view of Passover and Pentecost -- as well as a celebration taking the place of the Feast of Tabernacles which occurs in the seventh month, delaying their harvest festival until the eighth month. Thus Jeroboam introduced changes in all three of the "pilgrimage festivals," so that the people would not go up to Jerusalem to keep God's Laws. They undoubtedly kept "Passover" at Mount Shechem or Samaria, or Gerizim, or at the place he placed his two golden calves, one in Bethel and one in Dan. We read of his plot to subvert the truth of God as follows:

"Then Jeroboam fortified Shechem in the hill country of Ephraim and lived there. From there he went out and built up Peniel. Jeroboam thought to himself, 'The kingdom will now likely revert to the house of David. If these people go up to offer sacrifices at the temple of the LORD in Jerusalem, they will again give their allegiance to their lord, Rehoboam king of Judah. They will kill me and return to Rehoboam.

"After seeking advice, the king made **TWO GOLDEN CALVES**. He said to the people, 'It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem. Here are your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of Egypt.' One he set up in Bethel, and the other in Dan. And this thing became a **SIN**; the people went even as far as Dan to worship the one there.

"Jeroboam built **SHRINES** on high places and **APPOINTED PRIESTS** from all sorts of people, even though they were not Levites. He **INSTITUTED A FESTIVAL** *on the fifteenth day of the eighth month, like the festival held in Judah*, and offered sacrifices on the altar. This he did in Bethel, sacrificing to the calves he had made. And at Bethel he also **INSTALLED PRIESTS** at the high places he had made. On the fifteenth day of the eighth month, a month of **HIS OWN CHOOSING**, he offered sacrifices on the altar he had built at Bethel. So he instituted the festival for the Israelites and went up to the altar to make offerings" (I Kings 12:25-33).

This great Apostasy, therefore, began during the days of Jeroboam, king of Israel, who began to reign in 975 B.C. We do not know a great deal about all the alterations Jeroboam and his new hierarchy of priests made to the Laws of God by direct evidence, as little has been preserved. However, we do know that the **SAMARITANS** got their interpretations of the Torah and laws of God from the renegade priests of Jeroboam's competing religion, because of their fear of being devoured by the lions of the land (II Kings 17:24-28).

By carefully studying the beliefs and traditions and practices of the Samaritans, we can get an idea of just what the subtle and devious doctrinal changes to the Laws of God, inaugurated by king Jeroboam, actually involved! These changes even Scripture says pointedly **INVOLVED THE DATES AND TIMES OF GOD'S FESTIVALS!** The celebration of the Feast of Tabernacles, the great Harvest festival, was delayed one month -- to October/

November. There can be no doubt that Jeroboam also altered the dates of Passover and Pentecost, since Pentecost depends on Passover, and because Passover is the SINGLE MOST IMPORTANT of all the Jewish or Hebrew Festivals, mentioned 77 times in the Scriptures, far and away more often than any other Feast of God!

The Samaritans, therefore, obtained their heretical, schismatic, divergent theology of the "two evenings" and the time of slaying of the "Passover lambs," and their "Sunday Pentecost," derived from counting the "weeks" till Pentecost from the Sunday that fell during the Days of Unleavened Bread, from the apostate king JEROBOAM and his heretical advisers!

Those who today follow the Samaritans, are therefore actually following *the ancient, original APOSTASY OF KING JEROBOAM who introduced the two calves into the worship of the Northern Kingdom* -- probably as two representations of the two "Elohim" that brought Israel out of Egypt, the two representations of the Godhead! This was utter idolatry -- the original APOSTASY! Continuing this ancient heresy and apostasy, the Samaritans calculated Passover and Pentecost differently from the Jews. They followed a different, alternative path to that followed by the Jews, the Pharisees, and Rabbinic Judaism -- that of the apostate Jeroboam and his priests personally chosen by himself of the lowest of the people in the northern kingdom!

Interestingly Jesus Christ Himself addressed the religious beliefs of the Samaritans, as we find in the Gospel account of John. What did He say about the religious teachings of the Samaritans? Did He endorse them, give them credit for maintaining the truth, or show respect for their divergent teachings?

What Jesus Said about the Samaritans!

What was Jesus' attitude toward the Samaritans? Jesus had no racial prejudice against them or any other race or group. He praised the "good Samaritan" whom He used as an illustration of brotherly love and kindness, because he stopped to help a man who had fallen among thieves, and was left along the roadside wounded and bleeding (Luke 10:30-36).

However, when it came to religious doctrine and teaching, Jesus said to a Samaritan woman whom He met at Jacob's well: "*You Samaritans WORSHIP WHAT YOU DO NOT KNOW*; we [Jews] worship what we do know, for SALVATION IS FROM THE JEWS" (John 4:22).

How plain! How crystal clear!

Jesus brooked no nonsense. He didn't stop using plain language just because the woman could become offended. He spoke the TRUTH. He made it absolutely PLAIN. The Samaritans, who observed different Passover traditions, WERE SACRIFICING TO DEMONS, and not to the true God!

When they continually observed "Pentecost" on a Sunday, the day of the SUN GOD BAAL, they were guilty of IDOLATRY!

What Jesus Said about the Sadducees

The teachings and doctrines of this ancient conspiracy continued through the vehicle of the Sadducees, a sect of Jews during the time of Jesus. The Sadducees were a sect of Jews, primarily among the wealthy and aristocratic community, with a number of the priests, who followed the Samaritan interpretation of many tenets of the Law and belief. They, like the Samaritans, considered "between the two evenings" to mean after sunset, not before, and considered the day of the "wave sheaf offering" to be the Sunday following the Sabbath which fell during the Days of Unleavened Bread. They, like the Samaritans, did not believe in a literal resurrection from the dead. Says *The New Bible Dictionary* about this Jewish heretical sect:

"In manner the Sadducees were rather boorish, being rude to their peers as to aliens, and counting it a virtue to dispute with their teachers. THEY HAD NO FOLLOWING AMONG THE POPULACE, but were restricted to the well-to-do. They were more severe in judgment than other Jews. Many, but not all, priests were Sadducees; nearly all Sadducees, however, appear to have been priests, especially of the most powerful priestly families. . . . Under the Herods and the Romans the Sadducees predominated in the Sanhedrin. *The party died out with the destruction of the Temple in AD 70.* Josephus says that, even when in power, the Sadducees were compelled for fear of the people to CONCUR WITH THE PHARISEES" (p.1124).

Unger's Bible Dictionary adds,

"The price at which the Sadducees had to secure themselves power at this later period was indeed a high one, for they were obliged in their official actions actually to *accommodate themselves to Pharisaic views.* With the fall of the Jewish state the Sadducees *altogether disappear from history*" (p.954).

The Sadducees disagreed with the Pharisees on religious matters! They were HERETICS! Says the *James Hastings Dictionary of the Bible* of this ancient sect:

"The Sadducees were the spiritual descendants of the priestly part in Jerusalem, which, toward the close of the Greek period of Israel's history, was ANXIOUS TO HELLENIZE THE PALESTINIAN JEWS. . . .

"The successors of the Hellenizers, on the other hand, were in full sympathy with the secular policy of the Hasmonean princes, and, unlike the Pharisees, *took no exception to the illegitimacy of their high priesthood.* They entered the services of the new princes as soldiers and diplomatists, and . . . formed the party, to which was given their family name of Zadokites or Sadducees. Taught by experience, this party made no violent attempts to introduce Greek customs; but they were a PURELY POLITICAL PARTY; their main interest was in the Jewish State as an independent State, and not, like that of the Pharisees, in the LEGAL PURITY OF THE JEWS as a religious community. . . .

"Herod further diminished their influence by *appointing and removing high priests according to his own pleasures,* and by filling the Sanhedrin with his own creatures. . . [The Pharisees] were the real possessors of power; for, in

order to render themselves tolerable to the people, the Sadducees were compelled to act *IN MOST MATTERS IN ACCORDANCE WITH PHARISAIC PRINCIPLES*. And when Jerusalem was destroyed and Israel ceased to exist as a nation, *they speedily disappeared entirely from history*" (vol.4, "Sadducees," p.349).

The Sadducees never had power over the preservation of God's Word or Laws. They were a political, Hellenistic party, which is why they curried favor and obtained it from the Herod family and the Romans. Their beliefs never took hold of a large following among the faithful Jews. But what did Jesus Christ, our Messiah and Saviour, have to say about this Hellenizing, pagan-influenced religious sect?

The Words of Jesus Christ about the Pharisees

Jesus plainly tells us that in all matters of the LAW of God, we should follow the teachings of the Pharisees -- NOT the Sadducees or Samaritans! He, our Messiah and Savior, declared:

"The teachers of the law and the PHARISEES *sit in Moses' seat*. So you must obey THEM [that is to say -- the Pharisees!] and do *EVERYTHING THEY TELL YOU*. But do not do what they do, for they do not practice what they preach" (Matt.23:2-3, *New International Version*).

Notice! Jesus did not say that the Sadducees or Samaritans sat in "Moses' seat" -- only the PHARISEES! Jesus plainly showed that the Pharisees were the legal, authoritative descendants of Moses, as the rulers and leaders of the Church of God of that time. They sat in Moses' seat of authority over religious matters.

But of the Sadducees, who numbered some among the priests and ruling classes, who even denied the truth of the resurrection and the existence of angels, He said, "YOU ARE IN ERROR because YOU DO NOT KNOW THE SCRIPTURES or the power of God" (Matt.22:29). Or as the *King James Version* has it, He told them, "Ye do err, not knowing the Scriptures, nor the power of God." They were "off base," as another translation has it. They were WRONG! They were IGNORANT of the Bible!

Why, then, do some modern end-time churches of God choose to follow their example, and practice? Why, why, *why*? The very idea leaves me cold. It astonishes me. It leaves me perplexed. Truly, Satan *has* deceived the "whole world" -- and many of God's people have been led off the right path, and seduced, in this manner, by his subtle and malicious errors!

Jesus said the Sadducees were ignorant of the Scriptures -- yet they, like the Samaritans, sacrificed the Passover after sunset, and always observed Pentecost on Sunday! They were so far out of the picture that they denied the existence of a spirit world, angels or demons (Acts 23:8). But Jesus rejected the Sadducees, and plainly said only the scribes and Pharisees sat in Moses' seat -- *not the apostate Sadducees!*

The Old Heresy Revived by the Karaites

Even though the Sadducees perished when the Temple was destroyed, their beliefs and teachings were resurrected in the eighth century by another heretical sect of the Jews -- the Karaites. In 762, when the Jewish leader Solomon the Exilarch died, his nephew Anan ben David was in line for the succession, as the new governor of the Jews throughout Arab lands. However, the leaders of the two primarily Jewish colleges at Sura and Pumbeditha instead turned to Anan's younger brother as the new Exilarch.

After this bitter defeat and political powerlessness staring him in the face, Anan denounced the centers of Jewish learning, which carried on the teachings of Judaism and preserved the Scriptures, and fled to Palestine where he established his own synagogue and taught once again that only the Torah was to be obeyed, denouncing the oral laws and traditions of the Jews. The Karaites became numerous in Palestine, Egypt and Spain. They declined in the twelfth century, and only a small surviving core, a vanishing remnant, survived in Turkey, South Russia, and Arabia. They have made a comeback, however, during the present end of the age, and it is they who currently regulate the liturgical calendar by observing the new moons in Israel and beginning a new month with a literal new moon.

Enter the Twentieth Century Churches of God

But, strange as it may seem, the peculiar heterodoxy of the Karaites, Sadducees, and Samaritans, did not die out with the meager remains of that sect. Not at all! In this modern twentieth century, factions and groups of the End-Time Church of God have bought into some of their perverted beliefs and practices, as they concern the Holy Days of God!

Today, groups such as the Worldwide Church of God, Church of God International, Philadelphia Church of God, Global Church of God, and United Church of God, and other smaller groups, have determined to follow the Sadducean practice of assuming the Passover lambs were killed after sunset. Herbert Armstrong taught that "between the two evenings" meant after sunset, between sunset and dark. This led him to believe that the lambs had to be slain after sunset of Nisan 13, when the 14th of Nisan began. He believed that the Jews of Jesus' time had lost track of the true Passover, and were observing it a day late, eating it on the 15th of Nisan!

Thus Herbert Armstrong and the Worldwide Church of God observed a "Passover" consisting of the elements of unleavened bread and wine at the *beginning* of Nisan 14. He also followed the Sadducean practice of counting Pentecost from the weekly first day -- Sunday -- that falls within the Feast of Unleavened Bread!

Thus this age-old Satanic conspiracy -- which I call the real "PASSOVER PLOT" -- has taken hold once again in this END-TIME! Once again the pagan beliefs and heretical practices of Jeroboam the Apostate, and the pagan Samaritans, have been dusted off, shined up, and polished, as if they were the truth of God, deceiving THOUSANDS!

The Mystery of Iniquity -- a FALSE "Passover"!

What more diabolical deception could the devil concoct than to deceive the very Church of God as to the REAL PASSOVER? The Passover symbolizes our very belief and acceptance of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, our Passover Lamb, for the payment of the penalty of all our sins (II Cor.5:21). Jesus Christ DIED for us! The original Passover FORESHADOWED that awesome event -- the original Passover lambs foreshadowed God's Perfect Passover Lamb! As the apostle Paul wrote, "For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed" (I Cor.5:7). "So Christ was sacrificed ONCE to take away the sins of many people" (Heb.9:28).

To be mixed up on the right time and day to eat the Passover is a very serious error, indeed! Yet two errors contributed to Herbert Armstrong's selection of the beginning of Nisan 14 as the time to celebrate the "Passover." He was deceived by the deception that "between the two evenings" meant after sunset, dusk, or late evening. And he assumed that the final meal Jesus ate with His disciples was the original Passover, celebrated at the normal, customary time! As it turns out, neither assumption was correct, and therefore scores of thousands of people have been celebrating a false Passover at the wrong time for the last fifty or more years, during the twentieth and twenty-first centuries!

A Mournful Wake and Funereal?

But in addition to observing the Passover at the wrong time, the churches of God have been observing it in the wrong manner! The original Passover, as observed by the Jews down through the centuries, and by Jesus and His family, "after the custom of the feast" (Luke 2:41-42), was a joyous affair -- a family celebration of deliverance and freedom, rescue from oppression and slavery. It was celebrated by a few families together, or about 10-20, as many as could eat one lamb (Exodus 12:3-4). It was not a big "church" event, much like a church service, with no talking, no laughter, no fun and games, no enjoyment!

But the churches of God in this end-time, omitting the true Passover from their observance, instead celebrated what more or less imitates a Roman Catholic "mass" -- a solemn, sanctimonious and quiet "Communion" with worshippers reflecting on their sins and being remorseful and sorrowful. How sad. How tragic. Those kinds of introspections and thoughts more properly belong at the "Season of Awe," the time from Rosh Hashanah till Yom Kippur, the time which celebrates God's coming judgment upon us all!

Why is it that the churches all keep a mournful "wake" version of Passover, on the eve of Nisan 14, instead of a Passover FEAST celebrating joy and deliverance? Should we not be celebrating our deliverance from the bondage to SIN, and freedom from the clutches of SATAN, the god of this world? Shouldn't we be rejoicing in the GREAT GIFT of eternal life that Jesus Christ has bought and paid for, redeeming us from the penalty of SIN?

The Real Meaning of the "Last Supper"

At the "Last Supper," Jesus and His disciples did not partake of the Passover -- they were

still making plans for it, since it was scheduled to come the NEXT evening. So when Judas left that dinner early, the other apostles thought he was going out to do more food purchasing, for the up-coming Passover (John 13:25-30). The true Passover had not yet come (John 13:1; 18:28, 39; 19:14, 31). They all thought they would be observing it the following evening. They must have thought this "dinner" before the true Passover was a special celebratory meal *before* the Passover. There is no evidence or indication that Jesus Christ told them in plain language anything different!

Notice!

The "Last Supper" Jesus held with His disciples was not a true "Passover." Although there were some similarities, there were also distinctive differences. Notice! In John 13:1 we read that this "last supper" occurred "BEFORE the feast of the Passover"! Therefore, it could not be a regular, normal, usual Passover! Secondly, John nowhere calls it the "Passover." He most certainly knew the difference! He simply calls it "supper" (John 13:2, 4). Thirdly, there is no mention of LAMB being served at this meal, yet lamb would have been necessary for it to have been the Passover, celebrated in Jerusalem (compare Deut.16:6). It was the central feature of the feast! Fourthly, they ate "bread" at that meal. Jesus gave a "sop" -- a morsel of bread dipped in sauce or gravy -- to Judas (v.26-27). This was regular bread, or *artos* in Greek, as is shown by the gospel accounts of Matthew, Mark and Luke. Regular bread, or leavened bread, was never eaten at the true Passover, but only UNLEAVENED bread, called *azumos* in the Greek!

Fifthly, when Judas got up to go and betray Christ, leaving in the middle of the dinner, none of the other disciples wondered how he could be committing sacrilege by leaving the Passover celebration before its conclusion. They thought he was going to go out and buy groceries and things needed for the upcoming Passover (John 13:29). They would have been horror-struck if this had been the actual Passover itself, and would never have assumed he was going for groceries *in the middle of the celebration of the Passover seder!*

The Holy "Kiddush"

Rather, this final "meal" Jesus held with His disciples was a kind of "going-away" banquet. It was similar to the Passover, because He considered the disciples as "family." He taught them during this final dinner. He gave them a new ordinance, the washing of feet, to observe. He also gave them the *Kiddush* -- a very special bread and wine ceremony -- explaining to them that the bread represented His body given for us, and the wine represented His blood, shed for us (I Cor.11:24-25). This ancient tradition actually goes back to the time Melchisedek met Abraham. Melchisedek, the king of Salem -- the One who actually was the Logos, and who became Jesus Christ (compare Heb.7:1-4 and John 1:1-3) -- "brought forth bread and wine" (Gen.14:18). How interesting that some 2,000 years later, this same "Person" brought forth bread and wine to His disciples, but enveloping it with new significance and revelation!

This *Kiddush* the apostle Paul explains should be celebrated "often" during the year -- it is not referring to the annual celebration of the Passover, with unleavened bread, bitter herbs

and vegetables, and lamb (Exodus 12:8). It is a very special observance which has been confused with the Passover and therefore neglected by multiple thousands of end-time Christians and people of God! How wonderful it is to partake of this ceremony, many times during the year, each time reflecting on the NEW and PROFOUND meaning and significance it has for us as Christians who follow Christ the Messiah, knowing the bread represents His body, and the wine His blood! Paul PLAINLY shows this should be observed often during the year, for he says, "*For AS OFTEN AS ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come*" (I Cor.11:26).

Satanic Deception and the Early Church

But after the time of Christ and the early apostles, the church came into vicious persecution. After the destruction of the Temple by the Romans, the Jews themselves cast the Christians out of the synagogues and pronounced them as "cursed" in their daily *Amida* synagogue prayer. Likewise, in 135 A.D., when Emperor Hadrian defeated the Jewish rebellion under Simon Bar Kochba, he expelled all Jews from Jerusalem, and cast out the Jewish-Christian church, replacing it with a Gentile church which observed Sunday, and had nothing to do with "those detestable Jews." The split between Christians and Jews widened into a chasm and more and more the remaining Christians forsook their natural ties to Judaism, the Jewish Scriptures, and the Jewish Sabbath and Holy Days.

In the latter part of the second century, Samuele Bacchiocchi points out in his new book *God's Festivals in Scripture and History*, the Christians who had been celebrating and keeping Passover along with the Jews, on Nisan 15, now began to introduce subtle changes! He writes: "We have found that Christians celebrated Passover at the *same time as the Jewish Passover*, beginning at sundown on Nisan 14 and continuing their vigil until the next morning. For this reason they are called 'Quartodecimans,' the Latin for 'fourteeners.' They did not eat the Passover lamb but fasted in memory of Jesus' death and, possibly, in reparation for the rejection of Jesus by the Jews. They read and expanded the Passover story in Exodus 12, applying it to the suffering and death of Jesus. They engaged in prayers and singing until dawn when they broke their fast with the Lord's Supper, commemorating Jesus' expiatory suffering and death" (p.126).

Bacchiocchi further states:

"Most of the early Christians were Jewish converts accustomed to the Jewish calendar. Consequently, they observed Passover *at the same time as the Jews*, irrespective of the day of the week. *Like the Jews, they began their celebration of Passover on the evening of Nisan 14 and continued until the early morning of the 15th.* But UNLIKE THE JEWS, who spent their Passover night 'feasting' on their Paschal meal of the roasted lamb, bitter herbs, unleavened bread, and other ceremonial foods, the Christians FASTED DURING THE NIGHT UNTIL DAWN when the fast was broken with the celebration of the Lord's Supper" (p.130).

But why would the Christians turn to "fasting" on this holy festival night, ordained by

God to be a "memorial," a "feast to the LORD" to be kept "by an ordinance FOR EVER" (Exodus 12;14)? Should men FAST when God commands FEAST? The Passover was commanded by God to be a 'FEAST' of the LORD, not a "FAST day"! What occurred, to cause "Christians" to begin to deviate from the plain Word of God and the sacred and holy observance of the Passover?

Bacchiocchi goes on, partly giving the answer:

"Anti-Judaism reached a high point when Emperor Hadrian ruthlessly crushed the Barkokeba revolt (A.D. 135), rebuilt a new Roman city, *Aelia Capitolina*, on the ruins of Jerusalem, and promulgated the most repressive anti-Judaic legislation prohibiting the practice of Judaism, in general, and *Jewish festivals, in particular. JEWS AND JEWISH-CHRISTIANS WERE EXPELLED FROM JERUSALEM, and only Gentile Christians were allowed to settle in the city.*

"The new Gentile Christians who settled in Jerusalem after A.D. 135 apparently differed from the Jewish-Christians not only ethnically but also theologically. *According to the Palestinian historian Epiphanius (ca A.D. 315-403), they stirred up the PASSOVER CONTROVERSY by adopting and promoting Easter-Sunday.* This action was apparently motivated by a desire to show separation and differentiation from the Jewish religion that at that time was considered illegal" (p.127).

How plain! Persecution set in, and to protect themselves, Christians began to compromise with the Roman authorities. They began to "cave in" and water down and dilute the truth of God, and even entertain pagan practices and holidays. This shift insofar as the Passover was concerned at first involved changing the celebration from one of God-ordained family festival joy and rejoicing to one of *fasting and self-denial, all evening and all night long.* You can imagine how this changed the "Passover" from something desirable and glorious to something hated, despised, repudiated, and rejected -- thus paving the way for the substitution of the pagan Easter Sunday in its place!

Sabbath Fasting Replaces Sabbath Feasting

The devil inspired the same diabolical trick concerning the Sabbath day, which God ordained to be a day of rest, rejoicing, celebration and feasting. In the Roman Empire, the Sabbath became a day of mourning, fasting, and sadness to professing "Christians," whereas Sunday became a "little Easter," with rejoicing each week in place of the Sabbath! Samuele Bacchiocchi writes in *From Sabbath to Sunday: A Historical Investigation of the Rise of Sunday Observance in Early Christianity*:

"That the weekly Sabbath fast was introduced early in Rome is clearly implied by a statement of Hippolytus (written in Rome between A.D.202-234) which says: 'Even today some . . . order fasting on the Sabbath of which Christ has not spoken, dishonoring even the Gospel of Christ.'"

Bacchiocchi continues:

"Hippolytus does not explain who are those who 'order fasting on the

Sabbath.' However, since such a liturgical custom such as Sabbath fasting could be rightfully enjoined only by official ecclesiastical authority, and since Bishop Callistus, according to the *Liber Pontificales*, did intensify at that time a seasonal Sabbath fast, it would seem reasonable to assume that the writer was indirectly referring to the very hierarchy of the Roman Church as responsible for the ordinance" (p.191).

The Roman "custom of fasting on the Sabbath was *not* however unanimously accepted by Christians everywhere. Opposition to it, in fact, seems to have been known even in Rome" (*ibid.*, p.192). The Sabbath fast spread beyond Rome. The Christians were enjoined to fast on Sabbath "on account of the disobedience of our brethren [i.e., the Jews] . . . because thereon the People killed themselves in crucifying our Saviour" (quoted from *Apostolic Constitutions*, 5, 18, ANF VII, p.447). Pope Sylvester, in fact, declared:

"If every Sunday is to be observed joyfully by the Christians on account of the resurrection, then every Sabbath on account of the burial is to be regarded in *execration of the Jews*. . . . *In fact, it is not proper to observe, because of Jewish customs, the consumption of food and the ceremonies of the Jews*" (quoted by S. Bacchiocchi from S.R.E. Humbert, *Adversus Graecorum calumnias* 6, PL, 143, 937. Cardinal Humbert wrote the treatise in about 1054 in an attempt to persuade the Greeks to stop venerating the Sabbath, etc.).

Says Bacchiocchi, "Christians are enjoined to mourn and abstain from food on the Sabbath, not only on "account of the burial" of Christ, but also to show contempt for the Jews and for their Sabbath feasting" (*From Sabbath to Sunday*, p.195).

Samuele Bacchiocchi concludes on this subject:

"In the light of the cumulative evidence, it appears that the Church of Rome played a key role in early Christianity in emptying the Sabbath of its theological-liturgical significance and in urging the abandonment of its observance. The injunction to fast on the Sabbath, accompanied by the prohibition to celebrate the Lord's Supper and to hold religious meetings on this day, represent definite measures taken by the Church of Rome, on the one hand, to wean Christians away from the veneration of the Sabbath, and, on the other hand, to enhance Sunday worship exclusively. The reason for such an intransigent attitude toward Jewish institutions such as Sabbath-keeping can be found in the need for a radical differentiation from Judaism which was particularly felt in the early part of the second century" (*ibid.*, p.197-198).

Satan subtly introduced "fasting" in place of Feasting, on both Passover, and the seventh-day Sabbath, to "wean" Christians away from observing God's Holy Passover, as well as the Sabbath day of God, both of which are "THE FEASTS OF THE LORD" (Leviticus 23;1-6, etc.).

Satan the devil has had a "field day" in promoting his "holidays" in place of God's holy days and commanded celebrations and observances. He has suckered the "whole world" into following him, masquerading as "an angel of light" (II Cor.11:13-15). His ministers also,

therefore, appear "as ministers of righteousness," while they deceive and delude millions (same verses).

End-Time Deception

Paul foretold that Satanic deception would even enter the very Church of God. He wrote to the Thessalonians, "For the secret power of lawlessness is ALREADY AT WORK; but the one who now holds it back [the apostles themselves] will continue to do so till he is taken out of the way" (II Thess.2:7). The King James has this verse, "For the MYSTERY OF INIQUITY doth already work: only he who now letteth [hinders] will let [hinder], until he be taken out of the way" (verse 7).

It was Paul himself, and James, and the other apostles, who stood in the way of this secret, clandestine, surreptitious attempt of the devil to overcome the Church and substitute FALSE BELIEFS for the Truth of God! The apostles would never fall for a false Passover. They had observed the correct Passover ALL THEIR LIVES, and for three years they kept it with Jesus Christ, at the very same time as ALL THE OTHER JEWS! They observed it with new joy, knowing that all the hidden meanings of the Passover were spiritual, referring to Christ as our Passover lamb, Egypt as a type of Satan's world and the kingdom of SIN, and our "deliverance" being from the power of "Pharaoh"-Satan and his minions, and from the corrupting and deceptive power of "sin."

But Satan quickly moved to replace both the weekly Sabbath, and the annual Holy Days, especially the Passover, with his devilish counterfeits of Sunday, Easter, and Christmas, etc. He did this in stages, beginning by converting the Sabbath and Passover into *days of mourning and fasting instead of joy and feasting!*

Why then do even modern remnants of the Church of God erroneously observe the Passover, at the wrong time, and in a mournful, sad routine, which utterly destroys the true meaning of the Passover?

Why have they followed the error of the Samaritans, Sadducees, and Karaites in wrongly understanding "between the two evenings," and counting Pentecost from the day which corresponds to "Easter-Sunday"? It is indeed a very strange thing!

The truth is, Satan the devil has masterfully hatched and conceived a most ingenious plot -- a conspiracy -- he has cleverly devised a *COUNTERFEIT PASSOVER!*

It is not God's TRUE Passover -- which is observed on the eve of the 15th of Nisan with great joy and rejoicing. It is an altogether DIFFERENT "Passover" -- a phony "Passover" concocted by Satan the devil to deceive! Whereas God's true Passover involves eating a FESTIVE MEAL with family and friends, around the Passover dinner table, with the recitation of the history of Israel, and God's plan of redemption, the FALSE pagan Passover is a solemn, painful, sorrowful, quiet, stark ceremony much akin to a Roman Catholic (Satanic) MASS, with the congregation huddled quietly, listening to the ministers as they solemnly genuflect and intone their solemn vocalizations, and then quietly eating a piece of wafer, like the mass, and drink a tiny vial of wine.

In the Catholic mass, the believers are required to believe that the little piece of unleavened bread IS the literal body of Christ, and the wine literally becomes the BLOOD of Christ. Thus each time they take of the mass, they sacrifice Jesus Christ all over again! When the priest supposedly changes the bread and wine into Christ's body and blood, he intones the phrase, "Hoc est corpus meum." This is evidently, the expression from which we obtain the term "HOCUS POCUS" -- a seventeenth century mock Latin incantation used by jugglers as a set formula -- which means, "impostor, cheat, nonsense." It connotes a magician's trickery, deception and fraud. Satan the devil replaces God's Sabbath, His Passover, and His true Pentecost -- and says to the end-time churches of God -- HOCUS POCUS -- "*HOC EST PORCUS!*"

Are you, yourself, one of those who have been deceived?

The Catholic doctrine of transubstantiation goes back long before Christ died on the stake. It is a prime ingredient of ancient primitive pagan religion! A type of "eucharist" was celebrated in ancient Egypt, where a cake was consecrated by a priest and was supposed to become the very flesh of Osiris. This was eaten, and wine was partaken of, as part of the ritual. The cake and drink of Mithraism, also, with the idea of transubstantiation, was similar to the Catholic "eucharist" and its varying formulations in Protestantism, today!

In Prescott's *History of the Conquest of Mexico*, he writes that when the Roman Catholic missionaries first arrived in Mexico:

"Their surprise was heightened, when they witnessed a religious rite which reminded them of the Christian COMMUNION. On these occasions, an image of the tutelary deity of the Aztecs was made of the flour of maize, mixed with blood, and AFTER CONSECRATION by the PRIESTS, WAS DISTRIBUTED AMONG THE PEOPLE, who, AS THEY ATE IT, 'showed signs of humiliation and SORROW, declaring it was THE FLESH OF THE DEITY!' How could the Roman Catholic fail to recognize the awful ceremony of the Eucharist?" (William H. Prescott, *History of the Conquest of Mexico*, appendix, Part I, p.696, Modern Library, New York).

Doesn't this sound like the traditional "Passover" of some of the "end-time" churches of God? Doesn't that also resemble closely the communion service of most Protestant and Catholic churches, INCLUDING many Sabbath-observing remnant churches?

Ralph Woodrow wrote in *Babylon Mystery Religion*:

"In one form or another then, the idea of eating the flesh of the god spread to many nations and tribes. When Rome conquered the world, it absorbed many of these rites into its religious system. Later, when Christianity swept into the Empire, many noticed there were some points of similarity between the rites of the pagans and those of the Christians. Eventually the TWO SYSTEMS WERE MERGED TOGETHER. Church leaders of the fallen CHURCH DISGUISED THE PAGAN RITES with Christian sounding names and this DECEPTIVE MIXTURE HAS DECEIVED THE WORLD!" (p.131).

Could YOU have been deceived, and mistakenly been partaking of a pagan, fraudulent "Passover," kept at the wrong time, observed with all the elements of paganism, stirred up together with scraps of Christian doctrine?

Those who observe the "Eucharist," or "Lord's Supper," or "Passover," as they may call it, on the eve of Nisan 14, who imitate the Roman Catholic "mass," are not following Christ or the early apostles. Whether they realize it or not, they are walking in the footsteps of the apostate Jeroboam, the apostate Samaritans, the apostate Sadducees and Karaites. They are spurning the example and commandment of Christ Himself, who commanded us to look to the Pharisees as the authentic voice of Judaism for instruction from "Moses' seat" (Matt.23:1-2). Such "Christians" are succumbing to the wiles of the devil, and are falling, hook, line and sinker, for the greatest HOAX ever perpetrated by Satan! They are unknowingly observing a slick, smooth, ingenious COUNTERFEIT of the true Passover!

No matter what you may call it, it is still a *FRAUD!* It is a *SATANIC COUNTERFEIT!* It is nothing more than Satan's own "*hocus pocus!*"

Truly, Satan the devil has perfected a masterful "Passover Plot." It has succeeded in deceiving thousands and millions. It has grown and expanded over the centuries, taking in more and more gullible victims.

But now God Almighty has *exposed* his plot! Jesus Christ declared, "The true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in *truth*" (John 4:23). Now you know the truth. And you know what God commands you to do about it. Isn't it about time we "earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints"? (Jude 3). God will richly bless those who worship Him "in spirit and in *truth*" (John 4:23-24).