

Scripture Standard

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Pleading for a total return to New Testament principles.

contend earnestly for the faith
Jude 1:3

Leavened or Unleavened

Did Jesus observe the Passover the week he died?

Allan Ashurst, Stretford

A.G.Arnott¹ claims that "The Last Supper" was not at the regular time for the Passover Feast, consequently the loaf was leavened bread. He rightly points out that in the phrase "unleavened bread" (in Matthew 26:17, Mark 14:12 and Luke 22:7) the AV translators have added the word "bread." They added words they thought were needed to make sense in English and they usually indicated this by putting them in italics. However in these verses the word "bread" is not in italics. Matthew 26:17 (AV./KJV.) reads:

Now the first *day of the feast of unleavened bread* the disciples came to Jesus, saying unto him, Where wilt thou that we prepare for thee to eat the Passover? [Emphasis mine].

The words "*day*" and "*feast*" have been added, but so have the words "of the" and "bread." There is no Greek for these words, even so they are not in italics. Yet A.G. Arnott confusingly focused on the word "bread" as the basis of his claim that Jesus and his Apostles did not eat unleavened bread at "the last supper." Read on: The Greek for the phrase "unleavened bread" is "των αζυμων" [phonetically: "ton azumon." Pronounce "o" as in tone and "u" as in tune] where "των" means "the" and "αζυμων" is a **plural** genitive adjective, simply meaning "of the unleaveneds." Oh! Simply, unleaveneds' what?

Literal renderings of the passages in question could be:

Matthew 26:17

But on **the unleaveneds' first***, the disciples came to Jesus saying to him "where do you intend that we should prepare for you to eat the Passover?"

The "unleaveneds' first" what?

Mark 14:12

And the **first day* of the unleaveneds'** when they were killing the Passover, his disciples are saying to him "Where do you want *to be* going. We could prepare, so you could eat the Passover?" [I've added "*to be*"].

It is the unleaveneds' first day.

Luke 22:7

but **the day of the unleaveneds'** occurs, in the which *it* was necessary *for* the Passover to be killed. [I've added "*it*".]

So "the unleaveneds' - first day" was the day the Passover had to be killed, which was the 14th of Aviv.³

In English grammar an adjective must qualify a noun, but not always so in NT Greek grammar. Sometimes, as here, an adjective is used like a noun. In English, translators have to add a noun to the adjective. Since the adjective "ἄζυμων" is plural any noun supplied must be plural. The question is "What noun?" Should it be the word "*loaves*", or simply a noncommittal "*things*"? Let's consider the context?

LET'S CONSIDER WHAT WAS DONE ON THE 14TH.

Hebrew days were from sunset to sunset.² Sunset of the 14th. was the start of day 15, the day when the Passover meal had to be eaten.³ Unleavened bread was eaten at the Passover meal. The 15th of Aviv was the feast of the Passover, then for seven days all bread eaten **had to be** unleavened.³

The 14th of Aviv was the preparation day for the Passover meal³ This involved in not only removing even the tiniest scrap of any

leaven from their homes but also preparing unleavened loaves ready for observing the Passover feast which began at sunset.^{2,3} So the 14th was **the unleaveneds' first day** of matters to do with unleavened loaves. So the correct noun to insert is "*loaves*."

THE FOCUSING ON THE WORD "BREAD" WAS A MISTAKE

A.G. Arnott's focus on "bread" was a mistake. The focus should be on the added words, "of the *feast*," in Matthew 26:17:

Now the first *day of the feast* of unleavened bread the disciples came to Jesus, saying unto him, Where wilt thou that we prepare for thee to eat the Passover? (AV) [Emphasis mine].

The phrase "of the *feast*" is not in the Greek. Its insertion brings it into conflict with Leviticus 23:6 which says:

the fifteenth day of the same month **is the feast of unleavened bread** unto the LORD. (AV) [Emphasis mine].

The Greek text does not say that it was "**the first day of the feast**" when the disciples asked where they should prepare the Passover. So there is no conflict with Leviticus 23:6.

SEQUENCE OF EVENTS

The following sequence of events is the same in all four gospels. Therefore it must refer to events from the disciples preparing the Passover on day 14 to the Lord's execution on day 15.

1. During the 14th of Aviv, the disciples ask Jesus about preparing the Passover.
Matthew 26:17..., Mark 14:12..., Luke 22:9...
2. At sunset (i.e. day 15) Jesus and dines with the disciples.
Matthew 26:20..., Mark 14:17..., Luke 22:14..., John 13:1...
3. That night, they leave the building.
Matthew 26:30..., Mark 14:26..., Luke 22:39..., John 18:1...
4. They go directly to the Garden.
Matthew 26:36..., Mark 14:32..., Luke 22:40..., John 18:1...
5. Whilst in the Garden Jesus is arrested.
Matthew 26:47..., Mark 14:43..., Luke 22:47..., John 18:2...
6. Jesus was tried in the high priest's palace.
Matthew 26:57..., Mark 14:53..., Luke 22:54..., John 18:15...
7. Jesus was taken before Pilate.
Matthew 27:1,2..., Mark 15:1..., Luke 23:1..., John 18:28...

8. Jesus was executed on the 15th, of Aviv.

Matthew 27:35..., Mark 15:25..., Luke 23:33..., John 19:18....

9. Jesus yields up His spirit. on the 15th.

Matthew 27:50..., Mark 15:37, Luke 23:46, John 19:30

In Mark's account (see Mark 14:12 above) there seems to be an unsettled sense of urgency expressed in the disciples' persistent, disjointed questioning. Numerous crowds were to-ing and fro-ing, to prepare for the Passover, to get their lamb sacrificed, dressed and roasted and their meal ready for sunset. Time was getting short. The disciples were desperate. Where could they prepare for Jesus to observe the Passover? Read Mark 14:13 to 17. Was Jesus unprepared? Remember when Jesus said to them "Oh ye of little faith." Matthew 6:30, 8:26 & 16:8. Jesus would not be unprepared. He was determined to eat "this Passover" Luke 22:15.

TO BE CONCLUDED

STEPHEN THE FIRST MARTYR

Exodus 3:5-10

PART 2

Acts 7:33-34

"HOLY GROUND"

John Kneller, Tranent.

In my previous article I asked the question, 'Why was Stephen the first Christian martyr?'

Acts chapter 7 reveals Stephen as a very powerful preacher and debater whose logic could not be resisted. So he is brought before the council to give an account of his teaching and to defend himself against the charges made against him.

His defence starts by going back to the nation's early leaders and their relationship with God. He shows that God can and does work through the most unlikely people and in the most unexpected places.

First then, he goes back to Abraham, the Friend of God and the father of the faithful. He immediately goes back to Abraham's origins in Ur of the Chaldeans which is a part of Babylonia.

[This is the land of Nebuchadnezzar, the destroyer of Solomon's temple and of Jerusalem. The land of the hated Captivity.] That is where Abraham, the father of their nation, came from.

Then God had Abraham move to the country in which they lived. Acts 7:4. God told him to "Go ...to the land which I will show you." He wasn't left wandering aimlessly, God showed him the way. He followed even when it seemed dangerously life threatening. [See Genesis chapter 12]

The LORD's promise was "Fear not, Abram, I am your shield; your reward shall be very great," He said that he would have a son who would be his heir from whom would come numerous offspring 'and he believed the Lord, and He counted it to him as righteousness' (see Genesis 15:1-6). This is the verse that the apostle Paul used in Romans 4 v3 as the basis for his teaching on faith, and all this took place before his circumcision [Genesis 17:10]. Abraham believed God and **went as God directed**. Yet he did not receive so much as 'a foot's length' in the promised land. He saw, He was promised, He believed God. Abraham's faith was not some academic acquiescence to the reality of God but going and doing as God instructed. So much so that Paul in the Roman epistle, in his first reference to faith, refers to the **'obedience of faith'** in Romans 1 v5. In the closing words of Romans Paul again refers to the **'obedience of faith'** Romans 16:26. In Romans 4,12 he speaks about Abraham's "steps of faith."

The point of all this is that Abram was "the friend of God" (James 2:23) and the father of the faithful (Romans 4:16) before he was circumcised, long before the Law and much longer before a temple was built. In short Stephen's argument is that we do not need temple, law or circumcision to be approved by God. God approves those who are by faith obedient to Him where ever they are and of any nation.

Stephen then moves on to the time of Moses and the Egyptian slavery. Moses fled Egypt and is keeping Jethro's sheep in the

wilderness of **Midian**. Bear in mind that it was Midianites who took Joseph into slavery in Egypt. In this wilderness Moses sees a bush burning, and it keeps on burning and burning. Curiosity at this phenomenon leads him to investigate and God speaks to him out of the burning bush. [Exodus 3:5]

Then the LORD said to him, "take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is **holy ground**." Acts 7:33.

This 'Holy Ground' is far away from Judah and the land of promise, nor had the law been given or any temple erected. So again we see a personal encounter with God far removed from all that the Jews held dear and that place was declared holy by God himself.

All this national history and these events took place **before** the Law was given or the temple built and for Abraham and Moses before the land of Israel. Therefore their relationship with God was NOT dependant on either law or temple or country. So Stephen reasons that the charges against him are groundless and pointless. Even so Stephen doesn't hesitate to quote Isaiah 66v1 which says:

Yet the Most High does not dwell in houses made by hands, as the prophet says: "Heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool. What kind of house will you build for me, says the Lord, or what is the place of my rest? Did not my hand make all these things?" Acts 7:48-50.

In the later part of the chapter Stephen declares the Jewish failure to worship God faithfully. They had in fact often persecuted the prophets sent to the nation by God and had become the betrayers and murderers of God's Righteous One. [Acts 7:52].

That strikes me as being extremely perceptive on Stephen's part. It exhibits a deep understanding of his nation's real history and in particular the way forward with the gospel. Stephen is a true visionary who can see God's purpose in the OT and realises its

outworking in the gospel which will be preached to all men. It is his forthright declaration of these truths that outrage the council and lead to his death.

This is what sets Stephen apart. He appears to be the first person to have grasped that the gospel is for all men of every nation and location. That God will freely choose by the gospel people of every race to worship him. So I want to present to you Stephen the visionary preacher!! A man who understood the range and extent of the gospel even before the apostles and certainly before Saul who, sadly, was consenting to his death.

Saul has still to be converted and is planning a major persecution of the Christians. In Acts 22 vv19-21 Paul is defending himself before the Jews in Jerusalem. He reminds the people that he was a persecutor of the Christians. Notice how he tells of his part in Stephen's death and also connects it to Jesus' instruction to go and preach to the gentiles.

Yet when Peter is called to go to see Cornelius he needs three visions to convince him that this is the will of God. It seems as though Stephen is way out in front of even the apostles. Maybe there were others who shared his vision but Stephen seems to be the spokesman and front runner and that is what led to his death.

It would seem that Stephen got there before them all. The references to his spirituality are not just complimentary plaudits but statements about the man's real ability and spirituality. His defence before the rulers is powerful and irrefutable and all they could do to resist his arguments was kill him.

As we reflect on the manner of his death. The awfulness of it all. When they drag him out and he realises that this is how his life will end, we wonder how he could pray for their forgiveness? **"Lord do not hold this sin against them."** What is it that makes a man at the point of death act like this?

Finally consider this. What was God's promise to Abraham and

Moses? They saw the promised land but did not possess any of it. It was a great promise, a tremendous promise, and sufficient for them. Stephen, however, saw into heaven and saw the glory of God and the Lord Jesus standing in welcome.

Have vision brethren, remember where you are going, whose you are and glorify him in your life and he will glorify you throughout eternity.

Faithful Daniel

Derek L. Daniell, Tunbridge Wells.

The story of Daniel in the lion's den is often thought of as a lesson for young people. It is usually grouped in a set of children's books alongside Jonah and the Big Fish or David and Goliath. That's because we picture Daniel as the same young man who distinguished himself in the first chapter with his fellow "youths" Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego. But by the time you get to Daniel 6, over sixty years have passed. Babylon was no longer the ruling power. A new king was on the throne. And Daniel was probably past eighty years old.

All of us young and old, men and women alike live in the lions' den. Our world is shrouded in darkness with dangers seemingly around every corner. Our great adversary, the devil, "prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour"(1 Peter 5:8). We are in this lair like Daniel, so what we need is to be like Daniel so that we survive in the lions' den!

A Constant Character?

That distinguished Daniel from his contemporaries was his "extraordinary spirit"(6:3). When his fellow officials tried to discredit him by uncovering some scandal or skeleton in his closet, "They could find no ground of accusation or evidence of corruption"(6:4). In fact, they concluded that the only way they were going to remove him from power was to find a ground of

accusation "with regard to the law of his God"(6:5). Daniel was outnumbered 122 to 1. But his constant character was unmatched.

If people were to examine our daily lives, would they find any evidence that we were not who we claimed to be? What signal would our life messages send and what trail would our footsteps leave behind? The world is watching to either accuse us for judging them or to justify what they're doing. Let them see our consistency. as they saw with Daniel, for even the king noticed that he "constantly" served God (6:16). It is what we must do to keep from getting devoured'

A Respect for Right?

Under the government of the Medes and the Persians, the law ruled that even king Darius, as powerful as he was, did not have the authority to make Daniel an exception. Once he signed the law that forbade anyone from making a petition to any god or man besides the king for thirty days, it "could not be revoked" (6:8). Yet Daniel "continued kneeling on his knees three times a day, praying and giving thanks before his God, as he had been doing previously."(6:10). He didn't do so to openly show his defiance of the law, but he didn't change the habits of his daily worship to avoid the consequences either because he had respect for a higher authority.

Such boldness is needed by all disciples of our day. We must display the courage of Peter and John who, when commanded to preach no more in the name of Jesus, said, "We cannot stop speaking what we have seen and heard" Acts 4:20. As the laws of our land lead people further away from the law of the Lord, we should be counted with the apostles who also testified, "We must obey God rather than men." Acts 5:29. Instead of cowering to political correctness, let us stand up and "teach the word" 2.Timothy 4:2. It is always the right thing to do.

An Unfailing Faith?

Even in a crisis, Daniel did not give up on God. He could have easily quit serving the Lord in all those years of captivity, but He refused to forsake the One God that had never forsaken him. When Daniel was brought up out of the lions' den, "no injury whatever was found on him, because he had trusted in his God" (6:23). It was the same faith that had delivered him from every other trial and without fail. Faith in God is what will see us through as well. When the Philistines seized David, he wrote, "In God I have put my trust; I shall not be afraid. What can mere man do to me?" Psalm 56:3-4.

No matter what our opposition, we must believe that God can shut the lions' mouths of fear, worry, discouragement, temptation, and persecution. In the great hall of faith, Daniel is referenced simply as among "the prophets" who "shut the mouths of lions." Hebrews 11:33. So how did he do that? "By faith." So let us be certain we have faith within us when in the lion's den.

The apostle Paul reminds us that to run the race of life we need to discipline our body to obtain the imperishable crown, (1 Corinthians 9:24-27). The apostle John reminds us not to fear suffering as a Christian in this life, "but to be faithful until death to receive the crown of life," Revelation 2:10.

John Mark

Jonathan Ashurst, Byron, GA.

In his life, John Mark experienced many dramatic and historical events. He is mentioned in several New Testament books, and according to church tradition, he was also the author of the gospel according to Mark.⁽¹⁾

It seems that John Mark was present in the Garden of Gethsemane at Jesus' arrest.⁽²⁾ All the apostles had just fled. As Jesus was being taken away, "a certain young man" started to follow. However, when the young men around took hold of his

tunic, he ran away without it. (see Mark 14:50-52)

Jesus was condemned to death, accused by the Jews and crucified by the Romans. But three days later, he rose from the dead! After he appeared to his followers and ascended to heaven, the apostles waited in Jerusalem until the day of Pentecost. It was then that the Holy Spirit came upon them. Jews from all around the Roman world heard the good news that Jesus was the Messiah. (see Acts 1-2)

Later, the apostle Peter was arrested. After an angel miraculously released him, Peter went quickly to the house where John Mark's mother lived. It was there that many of the believers were praying for Peter.

So, when he had considered this, he came to the house of Mary, the mother of John whose surname was Mark, where many were gathered together praying. Acts 12:12

The next time John Mark is mentioned is Acts 12:25. Here, he accompanies Barnabas and Saul on their way from Jerusalem to Antioch. In Acts 13:5, the Holy Spirit sent Barnabas and Saul on their first missionary journey. They brought John Mark with them as well. However, John did not remain with them for the entire trip.

...They also had John as their assistant. Acts 13:5 b

Now when Paul and his party set sail from Paphos, they came to Perga in Pamphilia; and John, departing from them, returned to Jerusalem. (Acts 13:13)

Paul and the others eventually returned to Jerusalem. There they discussed the issue of whether Gentile Christians were required to follow the Mosaic law (Acts 15). Afterwards, Paul wanted to go on another journey. Barnabas wanted to take John Mark again, but Paul refused. This led to a heated disagreement. In the end, they parted ways; Paul travelled with Silas, but Barnabas went with John Mark to Cyprus. (Acts 15:36-41)

Thankfully, the breach between Paul and Mark was later restored. In Colossians 4:10-11, Paul refers to Mark as a fellow

worker and a comfort to him.

Aristarchus my fellow prisoner greets you, with Mark the cousin of Barnabas (about whom you received instructions: if he comes to you, welcome him), and Jesus who is called Justus. These are my only fellow workers for the kingdom of God who are of the circumcision; they have proved to be a comfort to me. Colossians 4:10-11

We also see in this reference that Mark was the cousin of Barnabas. In Philemon 1:24, Paul lists Mark as one of his "fellow labourers." Near the end of his life, Paul asks Timothy the following request:

Get Mark and bring him with you, for he is useful to me for ministry. 2 Timothy 4:11

Peter also referred to Mark near the end of one of his letters:

She who is in Babylon, elect together with you, greets you; and so does Mark my son. (1 Peter 5:13)

Perhaps Peter was the one who led Mark to Christ and disciplined him in the faith, in this way acting as a spiritual father-figure.⁽³⁾

It is interesting to note the various influences in this young man's life. His very name, John Mark, is a combination of a Hebrew name (John) and a Roman name (Mark).⁽⁴⁾ John Mark knew and assisted several prominent figures in the early church. He would have had opportunities to meet people from all over the Roman world, both in Jerusalem and during his travels. Reading the gospel of Mark gives us further insights into his life, character, and experiences.

The Lord gave John Mark many opportunities. It is heartening to read of John Mark's growth in maturity and the renewed trust others placed in him as a fellow servant in the kingdom.

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The Widening Gap

Ezekiel 22: 30-31

Kim J Boland, Great Barr, Birmingham.

Many good living people are saddened by the state of our world. Immorality has become so bad that there is no longer any shame in living an immoral life. The names of God and Jesus are frequently used in profane ways, such that now there are even acronyms to make this easier on social media. Is it really any wonder that the world is becoming unruly and increasingly violent? Christians should be standing against these trends. Indeed other religious groups do resist these habits and are called "fundamentalists" for their stand against evil ways.

Do people think God is not watching this, and that there will be no judgement for their actions? They are much mistaken.

In the days of Israel and Judah, Ezekiel told the people that their life styles were unacceptable and warned of the consequences:

¹⁹ Therefore thus says the Lord GOD: "Because you have all become dross, therefore behold, I will gather you into the midst of Jerusalem. ²⁰ As men gather silver, bronze, iron, lead, and tin into the midst of a furnace, to blow fire on it, to melt it; so I will gather you in My anger and in My fury, and I will leave you there and melt you. ²¹ Yes, I will gather you and blow on you with the fire of My wrath, and you shall be melted in its midst. ²² As silver is melted in the midst of a furnace, so shall you be melted in its midst; then you shall know that I, the LORD, have poured out My fury on you." Ezekiel 22 (NKJV).

God's people had rejected Him and gone after the ways of the world. They served idols and did not worship God in the way he had required. Even the prophets and priests were guilty of following corrupt practices. They were living immoral lives, and profaning the Sabbath. Today we have the same. Our television

encourages youth to think immoral living is acceptable, and the Lord's Day is no longer held in any respect. Christians, as the priests to whom Ezekiel spoke are no different from the rest of the world that they wish to follow and admire.

Not only did God give his warning as to what would happen to the nation which lived so corruptly, but he sought someone to stand and fill the widening gap between God and the world.

"So I sought for a man among them who would make a wall, and stand in the gap before Me on behalf of the land, that I should not destroy it; but I found no one."

Ezekiel 22:30 (NKJV).

Today God is seeking the same, He needs people to stand in the wall and condemn evil behaviour and promote His truth. Any failure of Christians to stand here will result in disaster on the day of judgement. Because no one was found God said:

"Therefore I have poured out My indignation on them; I have consumed them with the fire of My wrath; and I have recompensed their deeds on their own heads," says the Lord GOD." Ezekiel 22:31 (NKJV).

In the past mankind has become so evil that God has taken action. In Genesis we read of world flood, and a time of warning for people to correct their ways. From the time of warning to the completion of the ark (a period around 100 years), Noah spoke the word of God to the people, but they chose to ignore him. They, like those in Sodom and Gomorah paid the price for their evil ways.

⁴ For if God did not spare the angels who sinned, but cast them down to hell and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved for judgment; ⁵ and did not spare the ancient world, but saved Noah, one of eight people, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood on the world of the ungodly; ⁶ and turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes, condemned them to destruction, making them an example to those who afterward would live ungodly, ⁷ and delivered righteous Lot, who was oppressed by the filthy conduct of the wicked ⁸ (for that righteous man, dwelling among them,

tormented his righteous soul from day to day by seeing and hearing their lawless deeds). 1.Peter2 (NKJV)

We see from the above that God provides a rescue for the righteous when his judgement will come. We will not have another flood, not another destruction of a few people. We know Jesus will come again, and that the world will end. Those who have rejected God's ways will be judged. Those who have accepted Christ will pass to eternal life with Him. In the same way that Noah was saved by the water, so Christians find salvation through the waters of baptism.

There is also an antitype which now saves us — baptism (not the removal of the filth of the flesh, but the answer* of a good conscience toward God), through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, 1.Peter3:21 (NKJV)

If you have not been saved from the world in this way please contact us to help you on this path. If you have been saved, then stand like Noah to fill the gap and provide rescue from the evil of the world. [*επιρωτεμα "appeal" EDITOR]

OBITUARY

Keith Sisman

We have learned that Brother Keith Sisman, Huntington, went to be with the Lord on the 25th of August. Keith is probably best known for His detailed research into the history of the Lord's church down the ages in England published in his book, "Traces Of The Kingdom" ISBN-978-0-9564937-1-2. He was a keen Bible student and good brother in Christ.

Your prayers are requested for Keith's wife Sarah, and his children Joanna, Thomas and Tabitha. Sister Sarah's address is 22 Helens Close, Upwood, Huntington, Cambridgeshire, PE17 1QN.

NOTICES

STRETFORD, Manchester.

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- **God's Wonderful Provision** -

1 pm Lunch.

2 pm Message. John Morgan

3 pm Announcements.

2017 Saturday, March 25th.

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7.00 pm Message

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2017

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May 13th.

August 12th.

November 11th.

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