

הַיּוֹם בַּאֲשֶׁר קוֹמַם יֵשׁוּעַ
הַמָּשִׁיחַ מִן־הַמָּוֶת



**The Resurrection Day
Of Messiah Yeshua**

When It Happened

According To The Original
Texts

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adopting the reading “Passover” instead of “unleavened bread” the text is shown to refer to Nisan 14 instead of Nisan 15. I attribute Luke’s different expression to his target audience, namely non-Jews speaking Greek who would not comprehend the archaic Judeo-Greek or the Hebrew behind in in Matthew and Mark.

Now I return to Exodus 12:15, Matthew 26:17, and Mark 14:12. The same solution pertains to each of them. (1) **בְּיוֹם הַרְאֵשׁוֹן** = *on the day the-head most one*. The only thing that needs to be mentioned is that it appears that it was acceptable to use the word **רְאֵשׁוֹן** in such a way at the time of the Exodus. The word “head” itself may mean at the head of something, which is to say before it, or it may mean the first part of it. The difference between *rosh* and *rishon* in Hebrew is more akin to the difference between *head* and *header* in English than *head* and *first*. The adjective *rishon* appears to be formed by the combination of *rosh* + *on*, **רֵאשׁוֹן**. The suffix -on means ‘most.’ (See the discussion starting on page 315 eg. **עֲלִיוֹן**, ‘most high.’) Thus, the literal sense ‘head most.’

It is possible that the first occurrence of **הַרְאֵשׁוֹן** in Exodus 12:15 was pronounced slightly different than the second occurrence (perhaps: **רְאֵשׁוֹן**), or if not, then the ambiguity was then accepted in Hebrew. However, later the literalism, ‘head most’ gave way to the almost exclusive usage of *rishon* as ‘first’; if ‘head most’ was pronounced different than *rishon* then the difficulty is in ascribing uniform vowel points to an unknown period. So there are logical, though speculative, reasons why this word has a *hapax* sense in Exodus 12:15. It is more likely that a literalism was recognized in the word due to the context and the obvious need to remove the leaven before the first of the seven days, and thus it was taken in the first instance as ‘head most’ rather than first of the seven days.

Jewish practice recognizes that the command is to remove the leaven on the day before, and thus ascribes that sense to *bayom harishon* in Exodus 12:15. The explanation of Matthew 26:17 and Mark 14:12 then is nothing more than an archaic throw back to the usage in Exodus 12:15, sense that would be non-existent in contemporary Greek, but would be explained by the ancient Hebrew in Exodus 12:15. That the Greek may be bent this way into an ancient Hebrew

mold is possible:

Now on the day before Unleavened Bread the disciples came to Yēshua, saying, “Where do you desire we should prepare for you to eat the Passover?” (Matthew 26:17).

‘Before, or ‘ahead of’: See Exodus 12:15: בְּיוֹם הַרְאֵשׁוֹן, ‘on the day the-head most’; רֵאשׁוֹן: ‘earlier, former’ (HALOT); ‘previous’; ‘before’ (BDB 3a). So also the word here, πρῶτη, ‘earliest’, ‘earlier’, ‘before’ (BDAG, 3rd, 1β). The context also confirms this meaning. It is too late to prepare for Passover on Nisan 15.

Now the day before Unleavened Bread, (when they sacrificed the passover), his disciples said to him, “Where do you desire going we should prepare that you may eat the Passover?” (Mark 14:12).

‘Day before or ‘ahead of’: It was Nisan 14 reckoned from sunset to sunset, and it was at the very beginning of it, just after sunset at the end of the daylight portion of the 13th day; ‘before’ (see πρῶτη 3rd ed. BDAG, 1β). The usage is a Hebraism from a literal, and archaic sense of *rishon*, meaning ‘head’; the same word is used for ‘first’ and for something that is ‘previous’ to the first. John 15:18, ‘ye know that it hath hated me **before** you’ (YLT), ‘γινώσκετε ὅτι ἐμὲ **πρῶτον** ὑμῶν μεμίσηκεν’; John 1:15, ‘for he was **before** me’ (YLT), ‘ὅτι **πρῶτός** μου ἦν’; Job 8:8, ‘generation ahead’ or ‘former generation’ (YLT): לְדֹר רֵאשׁוֹן; LXX: γενεὰν πρῶτην. Job 15:7, ‘Ahead of man were you born?’, LXX: πρῶτος ἀνθρώπων, אֶדָּם הַרְאֵשׁוֹן אָדָם, or ‘before men’, ‘previous to men.’ See Exo 12:15 for the parallel solution. ‘Head-most (of)’ recommended itself as the concordant gloss.

I favor the above solution because it is linguistic, agrees with the context and does not rely on tradition. However, there are several other solutions worth mention, which I will offer with my criticism. The first of these is that according to dispersion tradition the 14th of Nisan was called the ‘first day of unleavened bread.’ Thus we find Josephus saying ‘we keep a feast for eight days, which is called the feast of unleavened bread’ (Ant. 2:317). We also have the circumstance that the dispersion Jews would have to keep the feast this long on account of doubt as to when the new moon was declared

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