

May 2004

Frank W. Nelte

SOME SCRIBE CHANGED THE TEXT OF DEUTERONOMY 16:1-6

NOTE! The evidence for the fraudulent changes explained in these articles is internal. It is found in the pages of the Bible itself. In each case it involves a Scripture that is absolutely vital to upholding some Jewish belief, which would without this changed text be unbiblical according to all the other Scriptures in the Old Testament. So the motive for the change is very easy to see. The evidence consists of exposing the incompatible, contradictory and/or illogical statements in the changed text. Typically, the person who altered the text overlooked something which exposes his fraudulent tampering with the text.

THE SCRIPTURE CONCERNED

Observe the month of Abib, and keep **THE PASSOVER** unto the LORD thy God: for in the month of Abib the LORD thy God brought thee forth out of Egypt by night. Thou shalt therefore sacrifice **THE PASSOVER** unto the LORD thy God, of the flock and the herd, in the place which the LORD shall choose to place his name there. Thou shalt eat no leavened bread with it; seven days shalt thou eat unleavened bread *therewith, even* the bread of affliction; for thou camest forth out of the land of Egypt in haste: that thou mayest remember the day when thou camest forth out of the land of Egypt all the days of thy life. And there shall be no leavened bread seen with thee in all thy coast seven days; neither shall there *any thing* of the flesh, which thou sacrificedst the first day at even, remain all night until the morning. Thou mayest not sacrifice **THE PASSOVER** within any of thy gates, which the LORD thy God giveth thee: But at the place which the LORD thy God shall choose to place his name in, there thou shalt sacrifice **THE PASSOVER** at even, at the going down of the sun, at the season that thou camest forth out of Egypt. (Deuteronomy 16:1-6)

When we examine the above six verses, it will become clear that at some point some Jewish scribe ALTERED THE TEXT OF THESE VERSES! Specifically, he removed the expression "the Feast of Unleavened Bread" and instead repeatedly inserted the word "PASSOVER" into the text of these verses.

The evidence for this alteration is presented below. So consider the following points.

THE USE OF THE HEBREW WORD "CHAG"

The Hebrew "chag" is the word that means "FEAST"! The Hebrew word "mow'ed", which is in places incorrectly translated as "feast" really only means "Holy Day". A careful examination of the Old Testament reveals that there are ONLY THREE "CHAG" OCCASIONS IN THE YEAR, and they are the FEAST of Unleavened Bread, the FEAST of Weeks or Pentecost, and the FEAST of Tabernacles. No other days are ever called "chag" in the Old Testament. Let's examine three different passages to see how the word "chag", correctly translated as "feast", is used.

1) EXODUS CHAPTER 23

Verse 15 = the Feast of Unleavened Bread

Verse 16 = the Feast of Pentecost and the Feast of Tabernacles

Verse 17 = "THREE TIMES in the year" refers to these three "chag" occasions.

COMMENT: The PASSOVER is not mentioned at all in this chapter.

2) EXODUS CHAPTER 34

Verse 18 = the Feast of Unleavened Bread

Verse 22 = the Feast of Pentecost and the Feast of Tabernacles

Verse 23 = "THREE TIMES in the year" refers to these three "chag" occasions.

Verse 25 = this verse was also ALTERED, as explained in the article on "Exodus 34:25".

COMMENT: The PASSOVER is also not mentioned at all in this chapter, except fraudulently in verse 25. See the separate article on that Scripture.

3) DEUTERONOMY CHAPTER 16

Verse 10 = the Feast of Pentecost

Verse 13 = the Feast of Tabernacles

Verse 16 = "THREE TIMES in the year" refers to the "chag" occasions.

COMMENT: The same reference to "three times in the year" in Exodus 23 and in Exodus 34 makes it quite clear that with "three times in the year" God ALWAYS means the Feasts of "Unleavened Bread, plus Pentecost, plus Tabernacles".

BUT THE REFERENCE TO "THE FEAST OF UNLEAVENED BREAD" IS MISSING IN THIS CHAPTER! WHY? WHY DOES THIS CHAPTER INSTEAD MENTION "THE PASSOVER", WHICH IS NEVER MENTIONED IN EXODUS 23 OR IN EXODUS 34?

Deuteronomy 16:16 is a summary statement and it DEMANDS that the Feast of Unleavened Bread must have been discussed prior to this verse. Notice this verse:

Three times in a year shall all thy males appear before the LORD thy God in the place which he shall choose; in THE FEAST of unleavened bread, and in THE FEAST of weeks, and in THE FEAST of tabernacles: and they shall not appear before the LORD empty: (Deuteronomy 16:16 AV)

This verse lists the THREE occasions that have been discussed in the preceding 15 verses, all three of them being "chag" occasions. But the text we have available to us only lists TWO of those three occasions, Pentecost and Tabernacles. It should be obvious that some dishonest scribe CHANGED the text of the first 8 verses in order to make those verses refer to the Passover instead of to the Feast of Unleavened Bread. He very deliberately DELETED the words "chag of Unleavened Bread" from some of those 8 verses and replaced this expression with the word "Passover".

We'll see a lot more evidence in a moment. But meanwhile we should recognize that the summary

statement in verse 16 REQUIRES "the Feast of Unleavened Bread" to have been discussed in the preceding section. That is very clear from the way Exodus 23 and Exodus 34 present the same subject matter.

IN THE DAYS OF SOLOMON

In the days of King Solomon, long after Moses, we have this statement.

Even after a certain rate every day, offering according to the commandment of Moses, on the sabbaths, and on the new moons, and on the solemn feasts (mow'ed), (and) THREE TIMES IN THE YEAR, in THE FEAST (chag) of unleavened bread, and in THE FEAST (chag) of weeks, and in THE FEAST (chag) of tabernacles. (2 Chronicles 8:13 AV)

This book of Chronicles was written by Ezra, and he points out that Solomon also observed the THREE "chag" occasions in the year. This verse specifically mentions "the Feast of Unleavened Bread" and the Passover is NOT mentioned or singled out for any special attention. The reference "according to the commandment of Moses" would INCLUDE Exodus 23, Exodus 34, Leviticus 23 and Deuteronomy 16. At the time when Ezra wrote 2 Chronicles, the text of the first 8 verses in Deuteronomy 16 had obviously not yet been altered.

Now let's notice some inaccurate statements in the first 8 verses of Deuteronomy. These statements are inaccurate if "the Passover" is supposedly the subject here; but they are fine if the subject is indeed "the Feast of Unleavened Bread".

When we really understand this correctly, we have here in Deuteronomy 16 a parallel to what has happened to 1 John 5:7-8. In 1 John 5:7-8 some Catholic scribe EDITED THE TEXT in an attempt to lend credibility to the pagan Catholic teaching about the trinity. This particular fraud in 1 John 5:7-8 has long been identified as having been introduced in the 16th century. The fraud in Deuteronomy 16 was made from the exact same motivation, in this case to provide biblical support for the unbiblical Jewish customs regarding the Passover.

Let's now examine this text in detail.

INACCURATE STATEMENTS IN DEUTERONOMY 16

1) Note the text of verse 1.

Observe the month of Abib, and keep THE PASSOVER unto the LORD thy God: for in the month of Abib the LORD thy God BROUGHT THEE FORTH OUT OF EGYPT BY NIGHT. (Deuteronomy 16:1 AV)

This verse was edited to read "THE PASSOVER". It originally must have read:

Observe the month of Abib, and keep THE FEAST OF UNLEAVENED BREAD unto the LORD thy God: for in the month of Abib the LORD thy God brought thee forth out of Egypt by night. (Deuteronomy 16:1)

The proof is that God did NOT bring them "out of Egypt" on the Passover. They came out of Egypt on THE FEAST OF UNLEAVENED BREAD, as shown in Numbers 33:3.

And they departed from Rameses in the first month, on the fifteenth day of the first month; ON THE DAY AFTER THE PASSOVER the children of Israel went out with an high hand in the sight of all the Egyptians. (Numbers 33:3)

Comment: The KJV expression "on the morrow after" in the Hebrew means "on the DAY after". This is correctly translated in the NAS as follows:

And they journeyed from Rameses in the first month, on the fifteenth day of the first month; ON THE NEXT DAY AFTER THE PASSOVER the sons of Israel started out boldly in the sight of all the Egyptians, (Numbers 33:3 NAS)

As the text of Deuteronomy 16:1 stands in our Bibles, with the words "the Passover" in this verse, it is simply an inaccurate statement! In every other place the Bible states very clearly that they went out of Egypt on the day following the Passover, but NOT on the Passover day itself! The "night" in which they came out of Egypt was NOT "the night of the Passover", but the FOLLOWING night.

THE BIBLE NEVER REFERS TO THE 15TH DAY AS "THE PASSOVER"! NUMBERS 33:3 SHOWS THAT THEY COULD NOT POSSIBLY HAVE LEFT EGYPT "ON THE PASSOVER"!

The Jews today do not keep "the Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread", as commanded in Leviticus 23. And Deuteronomy 16:1 was altered by some dishonest scribe to support the Jewish customs, even though this contradicts Leviticus 23, as well as other Scriptures.

2) Notice verse 2.

Thou shalt therefore sacrifice the passover unto the LORD thy God, OF THE FLOCK AND THE HERD, in the place which the LORD shall choose to place his name there. (Deuteronomy 16:2 AV)

The words of interest here are "of the flock and of the herd". The Hebrew word for "flock" is "tseown" and refers to: "flock, sheep, cattle". And the word for "herd" is "baqar" which means: "ox, herd, cattle". The point is this: while the Hebrew for "flock" may refer to either sheep or to cattle, THE HEBREW WORD FOR "HERD" NEVER REFERS TO SHEEP OR GOATS.

But the initial Passover instructions clearly state: "... you shall take it out from the sheep, or from the goats" (Exodus 12:5). So what this means is this:

THE STATEMENT "AND THE HERD" IN DEUTERONOMY 16:2 CANNOT POSSIBLY BE A REFERENCE TO THE PASSOVER!!

The Passover animals were never, never to be taken "out of the herd", because cattle were never used for the Passover.

What happened is as follows: The original unaltered instruction in Deuteronomy 16:2 talked about sacrifices brought during THE FEAST (chag) of Unleavened Bread, and such sacrifices would certainly include sheep and cattle. But the forger overlooked this technicality, that the PASSOVER animals could NEVER be taken "from the herd", and thus he omitted to edit this particular expression as well. This exposes his fraudulent alteration.

3) The expression "THE PLACE WHICH THE LORD SHALL CHOOSE":

Except for Joshua 9:27, this expression is used ONLY IN the Book of DEUTERONOMY. This expression always refers to either the Temple, which would be built in the future, or it refers to THE THREE

ANNUAL FEASTS!

The six times this expression is used in Deuteronomy chapter 16 represent about one third of all the times this expression is used. So let's notice how it is used in this chapter.

A) Deuteronomy 16:11 uses this expression to refer to the Feast of Pentecost.

B) Deuteronomy 16:15 uses this expression to refer to the Feast of Tabernacles.

C) Deuteronomy 16:16 uses this expression to refer to THREE ANNUAL OCCASIONS, all of them "Feasts": Unleavened Bread, Pentecost, and Tabernacles.

D) But Deuteronomy 16:2, 6, 7 all SUPPOSEDLY use this expression to refer to the Passover? And God supposedly IGNORED the Feast of Unleavened Bread, even though He specifically mentions it in verse 16? Did God here have a lapse of memory??

In the body of the Old Covenant, God had made the following statement:

THREE TIMES thou shalt keep a feast unto me in the year. Thou shalt keep THE FEAST OF UNLEAVENED BREAD: (thou shalt eat unleavened bread seven days, as I commanded thee, in the time appointed of the month Abib; for in it thou camest out from Egypt: and none shall appear before me empty:) And THE FEAST OF HARVEST, THE FIRSTFRUITS OF THY LABOURS (Pentecost), which thou hast sown in the field: and THE FEAST OF INGATHERING (Tabernacles), *which is* in the end of the year, when thou hast gathered in thy labours out of the field. (Exodus 23:14-16 AV)

The "three times" in this passage refers to going to the place which God would choose! And here God very clearly named "the Feast of Unleavened Bread" as the first of those occasions.

So the expression "in the place which the Eternal shall choose" in Deuteronomy 16:2 is another proof that this verse is speaking about the Feast of Unleavened Bread and NOT about "the Passover".

4) Notice verse 3:

Thou shalt eat no leavened bread with it; SEVEN DAYS SHALT THOU EAT UNLEAVENED BREAD THEREWITH, *even* the bread of affliction; for thou camest forth out of the land of Egypt in haste: that thou mayest remember THE DAY WHEN THOU CAMEST FORTH OUT OF THE LAND OF EGYPT all the days of thy life. (Deuteronomy 16:3 AV)

This verse is another very clear reference to the Feast of the SEVEN Days of Unleavened Bread. "Seven days" has nothing at all to do with "the Passover". Eating unleavened bread "therewith" is a reference to any sacrifice brought during those seven days, and NOT a reference to the Passover. The expression "the day when you came forth out of the land of Egypt" again identifies the First Day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread.

VERSE 3 MAKES QUITE CLEAR THAT THE FEAST OF UNLEAVENED BREAD IS THE SUBJECT OF THESE INSTRUCTIONS, AND NOT THE PASSOVER!

The fact that the forger himself did not pick up this anomaly shows that he made this forgery at a time when the Jews had already resorted to referring to the whole Feast of Unleavened Bread as "the Passover", something God NEVER does in the Old Testament (apart from this falsified text). The forger didn't like the expression "the Feast of Unleavened Bread" because by his time the Jews had dropped that expression in favour of calling the whole period "the Passover", and so he simply altered the text to

fit in with current customs.

Notice what Luke stated in his gospel account:

Now THE FEAST OF UNLEAVENED BREAD drew nigh, WHICH IS CALLED THE PASSOVER. (Luke 22:1 AV)

Already by the time of Christ's ministry the Jews referred to what GOD calls "the Feast of Unleavened Bread" as "the Passover". They still do so today. And so some dishonest scribe obligingly changed the text of Deuteronomy 16 to justify this unbiblical Jewish custom.

5) Notice verse 4:

AND THERE SHALL BE NO LEAVENED BREAD SEEN WITH THEE IN ALL THY COAST (QUARTERS) SEVEN DAYS; neither shall there *any thing* of the flesh, which thou sacrificedst the first day at even, remain all night until the morning. (Deuteronomy 16:4 AV)

This is a repetition of Exodus 13:7, which says:

Unleavened bread shall be eaten SEVEN DAYS; and THERE SHALL NO LEAVENED BREAD BE SEEN WITH THEE, NEITHER SHALL THERE BE LEAVEN SEEN WITH THEE IN ALL THY QUARTERS. (Exodus 13:7 AV)

These two verses use the same Hebrew word for "coast" in Deuteronomy 16:4 and for "quarters" in Exodus 13:7. So the first part of Deuteronomy 16:4 is in fact IDENTICAL to the statement God Himself made in Exodus 13:7. And Exodus 13:7 is a clear statement about THE FEAST OF UNLEAVENED BREAD; it is not at all about the Passover! The repeated reference to "seven days" in Deuteronomy 16:4 also makes this clear.

BUT THE SECOND PART OF DEUTERONOMY 16:4 IS VERY CLEARLY A FORGERY, AN UNAUTHORIZED ADDITION TO THE TEXT!

Notice the second part of this verse:

"... NEITHER SHALL THERE *ANY THING* OF THE FLESH, which thou sacrificedst the first day at even, REMAIN ALL NIGHT UNTIL THE MORNING." (Deuteronomy 16:4 AV)

Now notice Exodus 12:10:

And YE SHALL LET NOTHING OF IT REMAIN UNTIL THE MORNING; and that which remaineth of it until the morning ye shall burn with fire. (Exodus 12:10 AV)

The first part of Deuteronomy 16:4 is an obvious and irrefutable and crystal-clear reference to the Seven-Day Feast of Unleavened Bread. And then the SECOND PART of Deuteronomy 16:4 is supposedly a reference that backtracks to the Passover BEFORE the Seven-Day Feast of Unleavened Bread? Has God again forgotten that the Passover is supposed to come BEFORE the Days of Unleavened Bread? Can God not keep the sequence of events clearly in mind without getting confused? "I speak as a fool" (2 Corinthians 11:23).

The second part of Deuteronomy 16:4 is clearly a forged attempt to insert the thought FROM THE ORIGINAL PASSOVER INSTRUCTIONS in Exodus 12:10 into the context of Deuteronomy 16:4. But this forged attempt is an incomplete instruction, and it is out of sequence in the context into which it was

fraudulently inserted.

Understand this!

For Jews, whose traditions refer to their "Passover" day as the first day of the seven day period, the statement "THE FIRST DAY AT EVEN" seems like a perfectly natural statement, with which they would mean their own "Passover observance" at the beginning of the 15th day. But from a biblical perspective the word "FIRST" can never, never refer to "the Passover" when "the first of SEVEN days" is clearly implied. From a biblical point of view the word "first" in this context can ONLY apply to the first of the Seven Days of Unleavened Bread, but not to the Passover.

Now here is A VITAL FLAW in this second part of Deuteronomy 16:4! And that is simply put this: IT IS AN INCOMPLETE STATEMENT!

In other words, God would NEVER give the instruction of "neither shall there anything remain until the morning" WITHOUT ALSO SPELLING OUT WHAT WAS TO HAPPEN IF SOMETHING DID REMAIN UNTIL THE MORNING! There are any number of reasons why in some circumstances something could indeed be "left over until the morning", and then people need clear instructions what to do in such situations.

The forgery is once again exposed as flawed! In Exodus 12:10 God clearly spells out what was to happen when something OF THE PASSOVER ANIMAL "remained until the morning"; it was to be burned. But the dishonest scribe who changed the text of Deuteronomy 16:4 didn't think of that. He simply wanted to give "a very strong hint" that this was supposed to be a reference to the Passover lamb. But he certainly didn't understand how God would have worded this, if it was really an instruction from God. And he didn't remember the whole statement from Exodus 12:10.

Let's continue.

6) Notice verses 5-6:

THOU MAYEST NOT SACRIFICE THE PASSOVER WITHIN ANY OF THY GATES, which the LORD thy God giveth thee: But at the place which the LORD thy God shall choose to place his name in, THERE THOU SHALT SACRIFICE THE PASSOVER AT EVEN, at the going down of the sun, at the season that thou camest forth out of Egypt. (Deuteronomy 16:5-6 AV)

This is another major forgery!

For a start, THE INSTRUCTIONS regarding how they were to keep the Passover were given in Exodus chapter 12, before they left Egypt. Those instructions as to HOW they were to keep it were never repeated again, except for this fraudulent reference here in Deuteronomy 16:5-6. So the only place we can compare these statements in Deuteronomy 16:5-6 to is Exodus 12, because no other place in the Old Testament expounds any details regarding how they were to observe the Passover.

AND DEUTERONOMY 16:5-6 STANDS IN CLEAR CONTRADICTION TO EXODUS CHAPTER 12!

When God gave the instructions for the Passover in Exodus chapter 12, they were very clearly instructed to KEEP IT "WITHIN THEIR GATES"! They were to keep it at home, already selecting the animal four days in advance, then keep the Passover in a family context, not go out of their homes at all that night, and burn any remains the next morning. IT WAS A FAMILY OCCASION, OBSERVED IN THEIR HOMES!

Let's notice where this expression "not within any of your gates" comes from, and also to what it was intended to apply.

When Moses wrote Deuteronomy Israel was still wandering in the wilderness. So Moses gave some instructions for after they would have crossed the Jordan. Notice:

But *WHEN YE GO OVER JORDAN*, and dwell in the land which the LORD your God giveth you to inherit, and *when* he giveth you rest from all your enemies round about, so that ye dwell in safety; (Deuteronomy 12:10 AV)

Notice the first thing Moses mentioned in this connection:

Then THERE SHALL BE A PLACE WHICH THE LORD YOUR GOD SHALL CHOOSE to cause his name to dwell there; THITHER SHALL YE BRING ALL THAT I COMMAND YOU; your burnt offerings, and your sacrifices, your tithes, and the heave offering of your hand, and all your choice vows which ye vow unto the LORD: (Deuteronomy 12:11 AV)

The next verse shows that this was to be THE PLACE WHERE THEY WOULD OBSERVE THE THREE ANNUAL FEASTS.

AND YE SHALL REJOICE BEFORE THE LORD YOUR GOD, ye, and your sons, and your daughters, and your menservants, and your maidservants, and the Levite that *is* within your gates; forasmuch as he hath no part nor inheritance with you. (Deuteronomy 12:12 AV)

The "rejoicing before God" was typical of the annual Feasts. The specific things listed in verse 11 for "this place" are:

1. Burnt offerings
2. Sacrifices
3. Tithes
4. Heave offerings
5. Choice vows

BUT NONE OF THE ABOVE APPLY TO THE PASSOVER!

The Passover is not one of the categories listed in verse 11. The Passover is not one of the occasions for which Israelites were here instructed to go to the place which God would choose, but the Feast of Unleavened Bread is one of those occasions.

Let's continue:

Take heed to thyself THAT THOU OFFER NOT THY BURNT OFFERINGS IN EVERY PLACE that thou seest: (Deuteronomy 12:13 AV)

Now we are getting to the restrictions. The next verse spells out what they were to do.

But in the place which the LORD shall choose in one of thy tribes, THERE THOU SHALT OFFER THY BURNT OFFERINGS, and there thou shalt do all that I command thee. (Deuteronomy 12:14 AV)

So the restriction to not do something "within any of their gates" applied to BRINGING SACRIFICES to a specific place. And these verses in Deuteronomy 16 were speaking about the Feast of Unleavened Bread, and bringing sacrifices was a part of how they observed all the annual Feasts. But nowhere in the Bible, outside of this changed text in Deuteronomy 16, is there ever a restriction as to WHERE the Israelites were to observe the Passover. The Passover may be observed virtually anywhere on earth. And that is precisely what the Jewish people do ... they observe their "Passover" all around the world.

The restriction expressed in verses 5-6 applies to activities that required the services of the Levitical priesthood. But carrying out the activities of the Passover was never a function limited to the priesthood, as were, for example, the sacrifices. And the Jews tacitly acknowledge this because they don't have a sacrificial system today, they don't have a Levitical priesthood installed, but they DO keep their "Passover". They don't need a priesthood for this, and so they also don't need to be limited to "the place which God would choose", and neither does the limitation "not within any of your gates" apply to how they keep their "Passover".

In their religious practices (i.e. by each Jewish family keeping a "Passover" every year) they acknowledge that the restrictions of Deuteronomy 16:5-6 DO NOT APPLY TO THE PASSOVER! Otherwise Jews around the world would simply not be able to observe their "Passover" every year.

7) Now let's look at verse 7.

And thou shalt roast and eat it in the place which the LORD thy God shall choose: and THOU SHALT TURN IN THE MORNING, AND GO UNTO THY TENTS. (Deuteronomy 16:7)

This verse cannot possibly refer to the Passover, because the day after the Passover is A COMMANDED ASSEMBLY! That's what Leviticus 23:7 plainly states!

The wording of this verse refers to the end of THE FEAST OF UNLEAVENED BREAD, not to the morning after the Passover! The picture is one of people having gone to the place where God has placed His name. They have kept all Seven Days of Unleavened Bread, with sacrifices on all of those days, as stated in Leviticus 23.

But YE SHALL OFFER AN OFFERING MADE BY FIRE UNTO THE LORD SEVEN DAYS: in the seventh day *is* an holy convocation: ye shall do no servile work *therein*. (Leviticus 23:8 AV)

Deuteronomy 16:7 had to originally mean that at the end of the Feast of Unleavened Bread people were to go back home to their own tents (or later houses). A careful examination of this verse 7 once again exposed that this passage has been altered to comply with unbiblical Jewish traditions.

Let's look at the last verse in this section.

8) Here is Deuteronomy 16:8.

SIX DAYS THOU SHALT EAT UNLEAVENED BREAD: and on the seventh day shall be a solemn assembly to the LORD thy God: thou shalt do no work therein. (Deuteronomy 16:8 AV)

This too is clearly a reference to the Seven Days of Unleavened Bread, and NOT to the Passover.

So all eight verses in this context clearly apply to the Feast of Unleavened Bread, but they all pose anomalies and conflicts with other Scriptures if they were supposed to be talking about "the Passover". However, if we keep the Jewish custom of referring to the whole Feast of Unleavened Bread as "Passover" in mind, then we should be able to understand why the dishonest scribe who altered this text

didn't grasp the conflicts his alterations were creating; to him the whole period was simply something which, as Luke points out in Luke 22:1, THE JEWS call "the Passover". But GOD calls that period "the Feast of Unleavened Bread".

There is one more major mistake that our dishonest scribe made. And that is that he forgot to alter one vital Hebrew verb in this context.

9) The Hebrew verbs "zabach" and "shachat",

These two Hebrew verbs have similar meanings, but also significant differences. The information I will present about these two verbs comes from Gesenius' Hebrew-Chaldee Lexicon to the Old Testament.

Let's start with the verb "ZABACH". Gesenius defines this word as: "(1) to slaughter animals, (2) specially to slay in sacrifice, to sacrifice, to immolate." [Immolate means "to kill as a sacrificial victim".] This is the verb that is used to refer to all the sacrifices, and from which the noun "sacrifice" (i.e. "zebach") is formed. But it is NOT used to refer to the Passover, because killing the Passover was not considered as "bringing a sacrifice".

Now let's look at the verb "SHACHAT". Gesenius defines this word as: "(1) to slay animals, especially a victim, and even a human victim, (2) to kill persons." So while this verb also refers to killing animals, it also has the added dimension that it also refers to HUMAN VICTIMS being killed. And this is the verb that is ALWAYS used to refer to the Passover being killed. Here are these passages:

EXODUS 12:21 = ... and kill (shachat) the Passover

2 CHRONICLES 30:15 = ... they killed (shachat) the Passover

2 CHRONICLES 35:1 = ... they killed (shachat) the Passover

2 CHRONICLES 35:6 = So kill (shachat) the Passover

2 CHRONICLES 35:11 = ... they killed (shachat) the Passover

EZRA 6:20 = ... and killed (shachat) the Passover.

These are the only references in the Old Testament, apart from Deuteronomy 16, that refer to killing or sacrificing the Passover. So while the verb "zabach" is used for all the sacrifices of the whole sacrificial system, it is never, outside of Deuteronomy 16, used to refer to the Passover. As we can notice, the translators understood correctly that "shachat" doesn't really mean "sacrifice"; it really means "KILL".

But Jewish traditions didn't pay attention to these finer details. Jewish traditions had relegated the killing of the Passover animal to being a part of the whole sacrificial system. And therefore Jewish customs have no problem at all in using the verb "zabach" to also refer to the killing of the Passover animal. And "zabach" is best translated as "to sacrifice".

Now let's look again at certain verses in Deuteronomy 16 and 17:

DEUTERONOMY 16:2 = you shall therefore sacrifice (zabach) the Passover

DEUTERONOMY 16:4 = the flesh which you sacrificed (zabach) the first day

DEUTERONOMY 16:5 = you may not sacrifice (zabach) the Passover

DEUTERONOMY 16:6 = there you shall sacrifice (zabach) the Passover

DEUTERONOMY 17:1 = you shall not sacrifice (zabach) ... any bullock.

The Hebrew verb "shachat" (which refers to the Passover being killed) is never used in the entire Book of Deuteronomy.

The fact that Deuteronomy 16 uses the verb "zabach" and NOT the verb "shachat" is a clear indication that Deuteronomy 16 is not speaking about the Passover at all! The original text of Deuteronomy 16 contained the verb "zabach" because it referred to the sacrifices that were to be brought during the Seven Days of the Feast of Unleavened Bread. But later Jewish traditions had relegated the Passover to being a part of the sacrificial system. So Jewish traditions also had no problem applying the verb "zabach" to the Passover, in the same way this verb is applied to the Levitical sacrifices. Therefore it did not strike our dishonest scribe as being "unusual" to have the verb "zabach" apply to the Passover in the altered text of Deuteronomy 16.

But you and I should be able to see that this is just ONE MORE PROOF that the text of Deuteronomy 16 was indeed altered at some point, and that this changed text was then subsequently universally accepted as "authentic".

But it is a fraud!

WHY SOME SCRIBE ALTERED THIS SCRIPTURE

The motivation for this alteration, as well as the alteration in Exodus 34:25, is obvious. It was to provide "scriptural support" for the Jewish practices regarding the observance of "the Passover".

THE CORRECT MEANING OF THIS SCRIPTURE

The correct meaning of Deuteronomy 16:1-8 is that these verses are a discussion of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, and that "the Passover" does not feature at all in this discussion. Verses 9-12 are a discussion of the Feast of Pentecost, and verses 13-15 are a discussion of the Feast of Tabernacles. Verses 16-17 then provide an added factor which applies to all three of the Feasts that have been discussed in the previous 15 verses.

THE CONSEQUENCES SUMMARIZED

The main consequence of correcting this altered section of Scripture is that it removes ALL BIBLICAL JUSTIFICATION for the Jewish customs and practices surrounding the Passover.

Since the Passover was instituted by God in Exodus chapter 12, and after that chapter not mentioned again until Leviticus 23:5 (see the article on Exodus 34:25), it should be logical that anyone claiming to keep the Old Testament Passover (i.e. the Jewish people) should be able to support his practices by appealing to these two chapters (i.e. Exodus 12 and Leviticus 23), with SUPPLEMENTARY appeals to other Scriptures. Specifically, the timing of the Passover observance should be in full agreement with these two chapters.

Frank W. Nelte