

Appendix O

Numbers 33:1-4

Numbers 33:1-4 reads: "These *are* the journeys of the children of Israel, which went forth out of the land of Egypt with their armies under the hand of Moses and Aaron. And Moses wrote their goings out according to their journeys by the commandment of the LORD: and these *are* the journeys according to their goings out. **And they departed from Rameses in the first month, on the fifteenth day of the first month; on the morrow after the passover** the children of Israel went out with a high hand in the sight of all the Egyptians. For the Egyptians buried all *their* firstborn, which the LORD had smitten among them: upon their gods also the LORD executed judgments."

The chain of events related to the Exodus begins in Verse 2 of Numbers 33 and continues through Verse 3. An analysis of the phrases that are used in these verses will help us establish the exact timeframe of these events.

Numbers 33:3 tells us:

"And they departed from Rameses

in the first month,

on the fifteenth day of the first month;

on the morrow

after the passover

the children of Israel went out
with a high hand in the sight of
all the Egyptians."

Those who teach that the Passover lambs were eaten at the beginning of Nisan 15 claim that the word "morrow" in Numbers 33:3 means "morning," and that the Exodus did not begin until sunrise on Nisan 15.

Is this a legitimate interpretation of Numbers 33:3?

To answer this question we must examine the meaning and import of three prepositional phrases strung together in Verse 3. They are: "**And they departed from Rameses in the first month, on the fifteenth day of the first month; on the morrow after the passover....**"

The Hebrew phrase translated "in the first month" is: בַּחֹדֶשׁ הַרְּאִשׁוֹן *bāh 'ghōh'-desh*

2320 *ha ree-shohn'* 7223. The preposition בַּהּ *bāh* is used here in its spatial sense, i.e., it simply references a point located somewhere within the month of Nisan.

The Hebrew phrase translated "on the fifteenth day" is: בַּחֲמִישֵׁהוּ עָשָׂר יוֹם *bāh ha 'ghāh-mehsh'* 2568 *gāh-sāhr'* 6240 *yōhm* 3117. The use of the preposition בַּ *bāh* in this case is not spatial but temporal; i.e., it defines the location of the above point within the month of *Nisan*-- the fifteenth day.

The Hebrew phrase translated, "on the morrow after" is: מִמָּחָרָה *m moh-'ghorahth* 4283. The preposition מִן *mn* is used here in its temporal sense, not spatial. Waltke describes the temporal use of the preposition מִן *mn*: "Temporal uses of *mn* vary in relation to **the beginning point**, which may be included ('from, *on*, in', #5) or not ('after', #6). Temporal *mn* can also **mark a block of time ('after', #7)**" (Waltke, *An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax*, p. 212).

The beginning point described by מִן *mn* is that point in time immediately ending Nisan 14. That this is so is attested by the use of the preposition "after" in this phrase. After describes the block of time which just beginning--Nisan 15. This fact is made evident by the structure of the Hebrew. The prepositional phrase, "on the day after the passover," is composed of the preposition מִן *mn* and the noun מִמָּחָרָה *moh-'ghorahth'* 4283. There are no other prepositions in the phrase, yet two are used in its translation: "on" and "after."

In Numbers 33:3 the preposition מִן *mn* specifies a block of time that commenced with a special event. That block of time commenced at sunset at the end of Nisan 14 and ran to Sunset at the end of Nisan 15. The special event was the departure from Rameses.

The phrase "on the fifteenth day" thus specifies the beginning point from which the block of time expressed by מִן *mn* commences.

That the express point in time of Israel's departure was at the beginning of Nisan 15 and not later in the day is also made evident by the fact that Verses 2 and 3 are used in consecution; i.e., each begins with a consecutive *waw*.

The use of consecutive or relative *waw* in Verses 2 and 3 of Numbers 33 limits the events that are recorded in each verse to the subject under discussion--the departure of Israel from Rameses on Nisan 15. The structure of the Hebrew does not allow the events in one time unit to extend into the following unit of time. The keeping of the Passover is restricted to Nisan 14, and the celebration of the Exodus is restricted to Nisan 15--the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread.

The great significance to our understanding of the events of Numbers 33:2-3 is embodied in the syntactic fact that **none** of the Passover events expressed in the previous unit of time; i.e., those of Nisan 14, can be logically intermingled with the events expressed in the second and succeeding unit of time; i.e., those of Nisan 15. And, eating

the Passover is definitely a Passover event. In order to legitimately include the eating of the Passover on Nisan 15 we would have to go into the Hebrew and rewrite the temporally defined events of Numbers 33:2-3 as logically entangled events. Then and only then, could we take from these verses a meaning allowing for any carry-over or entanglement of events from one day to another.

Thus the clause, "**on the morrow after the Passover**" is considered the "possession" of the fifteenth day of the first month (the subject of this verse) on which Israel set out from Rameses (the action taken). This construction of the text demonstrates that the Israel's departure from Rameses took place on the day that followed **all** Passover events. The words "**morrow after**" **cannot be interpreted as "morning after."** These words specifically refer to the **following** twenty-four hour day--not to any period of time on the *same* day. The use of the consecutive *waw* and the *Qal* verb in construct with the Hebrew preposition מָחָר *mn* prohibits this interpretation. Those who claim that the Israelites ate the Passover on the night of Nisan 15--the *same day* that they departed Ramses are contradicting the record that God has preserved in the Hebrew text. **The only eating that took place on Nisan 15 was of the produce of the land--not of the Passover lamb.**

It is a gross violation of Scripture to shift the Passover to the night of Nisan 15 by claiming that "**the morrow after**" the Passover means "the *morning* after." The Hebrew text clearly shows that this interpretation is false. This false interpretation of Numbers 33:3 requires further distorting of the Scriptural timeframe. Those who shift the Passover to the night of Nisan 15 are forced to shift the Exodus from that night to the sunrise of Nisan 15. They somehow ignore Exodus 12:42: "It is a **night** to be much observed unto the LORD for bringing them out from the land of Egypt.

Those who promote a 15th Passover also blind their eyes to Deuteronomy 16:1: "...for in the month of Abib the LORD thy God brought thee forth out of Egypt **by night**." If the children of Israel had eaten the Passover on the night of Nisan 15, they could not have left Egypt during that same night. They were commanded by God to remain in their houses eating. They could not leave their houses until the morning, or sunrise (Hebrew בֶּקֶר *bōh'-ker* 1242).

It was utterly impossible for Israel to eat the Passover and depart from Egypt during the same night. And because the Scriptures record that the children of Israel began their Exodus **on the night of Nisan 15**, it is an outright rejection of the Scriptural facts to claim that the Passover was also eaten on that night.

As recorded in Numbers 33:3 the only event that took place on Nisan 15 was the departure from Rameses:

not the roasting of the Passover lambs.

not the eating of the Passover lambs.

not the slaying of Egypt's firstborn.

not the spoiling of the Egyptians.

not Israel's gathering at Rameses.

All these events had already taken place on Nisan 14--before Israel departed from Rameses on the night of Nisan 15.

Those who reject the plain facts of Scripture that are recorded in the Old Testament also ignore the plain command of Jesus Christ that is recorded in the New Testament. In I Corinthians 11:23, Paul appeals to the direct teaching of Jesus Christ when he writes, "**For I received of the Lord that which I also delivered unto you: That the Lord Jesus the same night in which He was betrayed took bread...**" In Verses 1 and 2 of this chapter, Paul plainly states that he had delivered to the Corinthians the ordinances that he had received from Jesus Christ, and that they should follow these same **ordinances**, exactly as he did.

Let us not reject these inspired words of Scripture, as some do. Let us hold fast to the faith once delivered, and let us keep the true Passover observance that Jesus Christ has delivered to us on the night of Nisan 14, the night in which He instituted the new symbols for Passover. And as we partake of those symbols representing His body and blood, let us rededicate ourselves to follow His teachings, not the teachings of men who reject the truth of Scripture and follow the distorted interpretations of rabbinical tradition.