

*Lesson 39 – On the Road to Jerusalem
About 3/28/30 AD*

Last Visit to Jericho – Friday - Five Days before the Crucifixion - 3/28/30 AD

All three of the synoptic Gospels record Jesus' encounter with Bartimaeus outside of Jericho. There are two difficulties with this passage. The first difficulty is that Mark and Matthew record the encounter with Bartimaeus as occurring when Jesus was "leaving" or going out of Jericho, while Luke records it as occurring "near Jericho," before His encounter with Zacchaeus "in" Jericho. The second difficulty is that Mark and Luke have the record of one blind man being healed. Matthew records two.

In interpreting the Gospels, we always must keep in mind that we are never told more than a fraction of the full scene. John summarized the reason for this very well in the last verse of his Gospel:

John 21:25 "Jesus did many other things as well. If every one of them were written down, I suppose that even the whole world would not have room for the books that would be written."

This much we do know. Jesus didn't just make an uninterrupted progression through the city. Luke tells us that Jesus spent at least parts of two days and at least one night in Jericho. Luke tells us that Jesus spent at least one night with Zacchaeus. Luke tells us that Jesus entered the city during the day, and then had dinner with Zacchaeus in the city that night. He left the next day. That leaves us to speculate on the unrecorded details of the rest of His visit. What did he do during that time? What was typical of most of His days at this time? According to Mark one of the things He would almost always do was to teach the crowds that came to Him:

Mark 10:1 "Jesus then left that place and went into the region of Judea and across the Jordan. Again, crowds of people came to him, and as was his custom, he taught them."

We also know that when people came to Him, He not only taught them, but He also healed them:

Luke 9:11b "He welcomed them and spoke to them about the kingdom of God, and healed those who needed healing."

We have to assume that Jesus' progress through Jericho was slowed by the crush of crowds who were bringing their sick to be healed. It is also logical to assume that, being surrounded by such a large multitude, Jesus would have looked for an opportunity to teach them. I think it is reasonable to suppose that Jesus might have taken the occasion to exit the city for a short time to find a place where He could teach the multitude. Jericho was moderately large and one of the most prosperous cities in that part of the world. The land around Jericho was fertile and well-watered and supported large and profitable date palm and balsam ¹ groves. Jericho was also

located on one of the main trade routes. Some have claimed that as many as a quarter of all the priests in Israel lived there. That would have meant that the number of priests in Jericho was in the thousands. A generation before, Herod the Great had made Jericho his winter capital ² and had spent a great deal of money beautifying it. However, there was no place inside Jericho where Jesus could have addressed one of His typical large crowds of thousands. I don't doubt that He probably found such a place in a field or on a hillside near the city. Thus, Jesus might well have encountered the blind men as He was "leaving" the city for this purpose (as in Mark and Matthew). Yet it would still have been accurate to say He encountered the blind men "near to Jericho," yet before He encountered the tax collector Zacchaeus inside Jericho (as in Luke).

Matthew 20:29-30a As Jesus and his disciples were leaving going out of ³ Jericho, a large crowd followed him. Two blind men were sitting by the roadside,

Mark 10:46 And they came to Jericho: and as he went out of ⁴ Jericho with his disciples and a great number of people, blind Bartimaeus,⁵ the son of Timaeus, sat by the highway side begging. KJV

Luke 18:35 As Jesus approached was near to ⁶ Jericho, a blind man was sitting by the roadside begging.

These verses bring up the question: Why were there two blind men recorded in Matthew while Mark and Luke only record one? I suggest that it was because Matthew was present at the event. He wrote his Gospel within five years of the event, and so he recorded it exactly as he had witnessed it. He saw two blind men. On the other hand, Mark and Luke were not present. Mark lived with his parents in Jerusalem at that time, and Luke was living in Asia Minor. Both

¹ *Balsam is the resinous exudate (or sap), which forms on certain kinds of trees and shrubs. Balsam (from the Hebrew בִּשְׂמָן {bosem}). It owes its name to the biblical "Balm of Gilead." The resinous sap which is exuded is used as a base for certain fragrances and medical and cosmetic preparations.*

² *Jerusalem is 2500 feet above sea level, Jericho is about a thousand feet below. In the winter Jerusalem is rainy, Jericho is dry.*

³ *The Greek word here ἐκπορεύομαι {ek-po-ryü'-o-mī} could be translated "going out of" referring to a temporary departure.*

⁴ *The Greek word here is ἐκπορεύομαι {ek-po-ryü'-o-mī}. It is often used to refer to a temporary departure.*

⁵ *The Hebrew name Bartimaeus means "Son of Timaeus" The meaning of Timaeus is debated because the origin of the name is in dispute. If "Timaeus" is Aramaic in origin it is derived from the Hebrew word תִּמְאָה {tä-mā'} which means "defiled." If it is Greek in origin it is derived from the Greek word τιμή {tē-mā'} which means "gift."*

⁶ *The Greek word here is ἐγγίζω {en-gē'-zō} which is literally "to come near to." In other words, this only implies that Jesus was near Jericho, not that he was entering it for the first time..*

of them recorded in their Gospels, an event that had been described to them by others. The accounts of Mark and Luke were probably written twenty to thirty years after Matthew wrote his Gospel. They only recorded the key figure in the drama. Mark was the only one who recorded the name of one of the beggars as Bartimaeus. That may indicate that Mark had personally heard the story from the formerly blind man whose life had been profoundly changed by the incident. It would not be surprising if Bartimaeus had followed Jesus all the way up to Jerusalem and had later become a member of the Church in Jerusalem which met in Mark's parents' house.

Matthew 20:30b-31 **and when they (*the two blind men*) heard that Jesus was going by, they shouted, “Lord, Son of David, have mercy on us!” The crowd rebuked them and told them to be quiet, but they shouted all the louder, “Lord, Son of David, have mercy on us!”**

Mark 10:47-48 **When he (*Bartimaeus*) heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to shout, “Jesus, Son of David,⁷ have mercy on me!” Many rebuked him and told him to be quiet, but he shouted all the more, “Son of David, have mercy on me!”**

Luke 18:36-39 **When he (*the blind man*) heard the crowd going by, he asked what was happening. They told him, “Jesus of Nazareth is passing by.” He called out, “Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!” Those who led the way rebuked him and told him to be quiet, but he shouted all the more, “Son of David, have mercy on me!”**

It is my belief that Jesus had gone out of the city to teach the multitudes and that the two blind men had probably heard about it and had hurried out to be by the road that Jesus would travel back into the city. When Jesus passed by, they cried out. By addressing Jesus as the “Son of David” they recognized that He was the promised Messiah.

Matthew 20:32-34 **Jesus stopped and called them. “What do you want me to do for you?” he asked. “Lord,” they answered, “we want our sight.” Jesus had compassion on them and touched their eyes. Immediately they received their sight and followed him.**

Mark 10:49-52 **Jesus stopped and said, “Call him.” So they called to the blind man, “Cheer up! On your feet! He’s calling you.” Throwing his cloak aside, he jumped to his feet and came to Jesus. “What do you want me to do for you?” Jesus asked him. The blind man said, “Rabbi, I want to see.” “Go,” said Jesus, “your faith has healed you.” Immediately he received his sight and followed Jesus along the road.**

Luke 18:40-43 **Jesus stopped and ordered the man to be brought to him. When he came near, Jesus asked him, “What do you want me to do for you?” “Lord, I want to see,” he replied.**

⁷ *It was understood that to call Jesus the “son of David” was to call Him the promised Messiah. Two days later the crowds took up this call when they welcomed Him with palm branches into Jerusalem.*

Jesus said to him, “Receive your sight; your faith has healed you.” Immediately he received his sight and followed Jesus, praising God. When all the people saw it, they also praised God.

The blind men couldn't approach Jesus because they couldn't see Him. Jesus stopped and had them brought to Him. Originally, they had asked for mercy. Then they asked for their sight. Jesus not only gave them their physical sight, but their spiritual sight, so they followed Him. Mark's account, which had given Bartimaeus' name, gives us more detail about his reaction. That helps persuade me that this account was originally given to Mark by Bartimaeus himself.

The Encounter with Zacchaeus in Jericho

We also know that at this time Jericho contained a large Royal Palace and was flanked by four fortresses. We also know that thousands of priests were residents of Jericho.⁸ We know that, during this transit of Jericho, Jesus had attracted quite a crowd. Many of them had gathered in the streets. We can only suppose that part of the reason such a crowd had gotten the chance to gather was because Jesus' progress through the city would have been slow since many would have approached Jesus for healing. The encounter with Zacchaeus is only recorded in Luke.

Luke 19:1-2 Jesus entered Jericho and was passing through. A man was there by the name of Zacchaeus;⁹ he was a chief tax collector and was wealthy.

Jericho was a prosperous city and would also have been one of the main entry points for trade goods from Arabia and Mesopotamia. Of all the tax collectors in Israel, Zacchaeus was probably one of the wealthiest, and consequently, one of the most despised.

Luke 19:3a He wanted to see who Jesus was,

This is not saying that Zacchaeus was not familiar with Jesus. It is just saying that when Zacchaeus saw the commotion, he wanted to see who was the cause of it. Because, later in the narrative, Jesus called Zacchaeus by name, we have good reason to suppose Jesus had met him before. Possibly, Jesus had been previously introduced to him by Matthew, the former tax collector.

Luke 19:3b-4 but being a short man he could not, because of the crowd. So he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore-fig tree to see him, since Jesus was coming that way.

To have a vantage point from which to see, Zacchaeus climbed into a fig tree. Remember, Jesus had often used the fig tree as a picture of the Israel from which He wanted to see spiritual fruit. I must wonder if the figure of Zacchaeus in the fig tree was something more than a location. In

⁸ *Edersheim's Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah, Book 1, Chapter 3.*

⁹ *Zacchaeus means "pure."*

Zacchaeus in the fruit tree, Jesus saw what some would have said was unlikely fruit. Jesus knew otherwise.

Luke 19:5 When Jesus reached the spot, he looked up and said to him, “Zacchaeus, come down immediately. I must stay at your house today.”

As I stated earlier the fact that Jesus used Zacchaeus’ name suggests that Jesus knew him already. It is also possible that the Holy Spirit had given Zacchaeus’ name to Jesus. Jesus wasn’t omniscient in His Incarnation. That was one of the powers He had laid down when He took on a body as the Second Adam. However, I believe that Jesus already knew Zacchaeus.

Luke 19:6 So he came down at once and welcomed him gladly.

This suggests that Zacchaeus had heard Jesus’ message before, and his heart had been moved to the point of faith. Remember, Jesus had recently spent most of two months visiting the towns of Judea before He had taken refuge in nearby Perea for about a month.

Luke 19:7 All the people saw this and began to mutter, “He has gone to be the guest of a ‘sinner.’”

Of course, Jesus had approached Zacchaeus in such a public way on purpose. He wanted to make a point. In the whole town of Jericho with its large population of priests, Jesus picked Zacchaeus to honor.

Luke 19:8 ~~But~~ **And**¹⁰ Zacchaeus stood up and said to the Lord, “Look, Lord! Here and now I give half of my possessions to the poor, and if I have cheated anybody out of anything, I will pay back four times the amount.”

The time when Zacchaeus stood up to make this public declaration had to have been at the subsequent dinner when they were in his house (verse 9) rather than in the noisy street. Zacchaeus understood that his new faith demanded that he replace his old priorities. Now, pursuing God had to become first.

Luke 19:9a Jesus said to him, “Today salvation has come to this house,

This indicates the location was at Zacchaeus’ house. Like the later dying thief, Zacchaeus was saved because he acknowledged Jesus as “Lord” (verse 8), not because he gave half of his possessions to the poor.

Luke 19:9b because this man, too, is a son of Abraham.

¹⁰ The Greek word here is {δέ}. It can be translated “and” or “but.” About half of the 16 translations I looked at translated it “and” here. I think “and” is correct.

Of course, as a Jew, Zacchaeus was already physically descended from Abraham. However, until the point of faith, as Paul later explained in Romans, he wasn't a spiritual descendant:

Romans 4:16-17 “Therefore, the promise comes by faith, so that it may be by grace and may be guaranteed to all Abraham’s offspring—not only to those who are of the law but also to those who are of the faith of Abraham. He is the father of us all. As it is written: ‘I have made you a father of many nations.’ He is our father in the sight of God, in whom he believed—the God who gives life to the dead and calls things that are not as though they were.”

Jesus was saying that Zacchaeus had become Abraham’s true son through faith.

Luke 19:10 For the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost.”

At these last days, Jesus was reiterating the message He had taught many times. He hadn't come to seek out the righteous. There were none who were righteous in themselves. Psalms had made that clear:

Psalms 14:2-3 “The LORD looks down from heaven on the sons of men to see if there are any who understand, any who seek God. All have turned aside, they have together become corrupt; there is no one who does good, not even one.”

Only those who knew they were lost and understood that they required the mercy of God could be helped. The self-righteous were blinded to their need for mercy.

The Parable of Ten Minas

Luke 19:11a While they were listening to this, he went on to tell them a parable,

Jesus told this parable at the dinner at Zacchaeus’ house. Most of the people at the dinner were Jesus’ disciples and were believers.

Luke 19:11b because he was near Jerusalem and the people thought that the kingdom of God was going to appear at once.

Although Jesus had told them a number of times that He would be crucified in Jerusalem, they still told themselves that the promised physical Kingdom of God (as opposed to the spiritual Kingdom of God) was about to be set up. They still didn't understand that they would have to wait for Jesus’s second coming for that Kingdom. This was even though He had just told them that He would be crucified and rejected in Jerusalem (Matthew 20:18-19, Mark 10:33-34, Luke 18:31b-34). At the dinner at Zacchaeus’ house He told them this parable. They evidently didn't understand it until later.

Luke 19:12 He said: “A man of noble birth went to a distant country to have himself appointed king and then to return.

In the parable, “the man of noble birth” represented Jesus, and the “distant country” represented Heaven to which Jesus would go and take a long time to return. That is why this parable addressed Jesus’ concern that the disciples were under the illusion that the kingdom of God would appear at once.

Luke 19:13 So he called ten of his servants and gave them ten minas. ‘Put this money to work,’ he said, ‘until I come back.’

The ten servants represented the believers Jesus would leave behind. He gave to each of them one mina. The minas represented the gifts the LORD gives to each believer. In the ancient world, one mina was equivalent to about three month’s wages for a laborer. It wasn’t a fortune, but it wasn’t an inconsiderable sum. You will notice that the gifts that each servant was given were of equal value.

Luke 19:14 “But his subjects hated him and sent a delegation after him to say, ‘We don’t want this man to be our king.’

There are two groups in the parable, the servants, and the subjects. The servants represented the Jewish believers in Jesus, the long-promised King. The subjects represented most of the Jews who would reject Jesus.

Luke 19:15a “He was made king, however, and returned home.”¹¹

In the parable, the event of being made king represented Jesus’ soon-to-be resurrection and accession to the right hand of the Father. His return home referred to His Second Advent when He will return to rule the earth.

Luke 19:15b Then he sent for the servants to whom he had given the money, in order to find out what they had gained with it.

This scene was representative of the Judgment Seat of Christ when every believer will have their life evaluated. Many believe it will occur in Heaven after the end of the Church Age, during the Tribulation. It was described by Paul in 1 Corinthians:

¹¹ *This story was actually reminiscent of the history of Archelaus, the son of Herod the Great, who upon his father’s death went to Rome to be appointed King by Augustus Caesar. Many of his own family and prominent citizens of Israel sent an embassy to Rome to oppose his appointment, but Caesar appointed him anyway. Antiquities of the Jews by Flavius Josephus, BOOK XVII, CHAPTER 9.*

1 Corinthians 3:11-15 “For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ. If any man builds on this foundation using gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay or straw, his work will be shown for what it is, because the Day ¹² will bring it to light. It will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test the quality of each man’s work.¹³ If what he has built survives, he will receive his reward. If it is burned up, he will suffer loss; he himself will be saved, but only as one escaping through the flames.”¹⁴

Luke 19:16-17 **“The first one came and said, ‘Sir, your mina has earned ten more.’ “‘Well done, my good servant!’ his master replied. ‘Because you have been trustworthy in a very small matter, take charge of ten cities.’**

The first servant had multiplied the investment of the mina by ten. He was rewarded with ten cities which were worth many thousands of times the value of ten minas.

Luke 19:18 **“The second came and said, ‘Sir, your mina has earned five more.’**

This servant used the investment of one mina to give a return of five minas.

Luke 19:19 **“His master answered, ‘You take charge of five cities.’**

This second servant was also rewarded very handsomely although on a smaller scale than the first servant.

Luke 19:20 **“Then another servant came and said, ‘Sir, here is your mina; I have kept it laid away in a piece of cloth.**

The third servant had ignored the master’s command to “put this money to work” (verse 13). Instead, he had just hidden it away.

Luke 19:21 **I was afraid of you, because you are a hard man. You take out what you did not put in and reap what you did not sow.’**

This man’s actions were dictated by his view of his master (Jesus). He saw him as a “hard man.” He was afraid of what would happen if he put the money to work and lost it, so instead he just hid it.

¹² *The Judgment Seat of Christ at the end of the Tribulation / beginning of the Millennium.*

¹³ *Habakkuk 2:13*

¹⁴ *As a man who escapes through the flames of his burning house brings nothing of his possessions with him.*

Luke 19:22 **“His master replied, ‘I will judge you by your own words, you wicked servant! You knew, did you, that I am a hard man, taking out what I did not put in, and reaping what I did not sow?’**

If he had believed that his master was a gracious man, he wouldn't have worried about the risks of investing. He would have obeyed him. Psalms 18:25-26 and 2 Samuel 22:26-27 recorded the principal in effect here. There it is written:

“To the faithful you show yourself faithful, to the blameless you show yourself blameless, to the pure you show yourself pure, but to the crooked you show yourself shrewd.”

This servant showed that he was unworthy of any reward because he didn't trust that the master (Jesus) was faithful, blameless, or pure.

Luke 19:23 **Why then didn't you put my money on deposit, so that when I came back, I could have collected it with interest?’**

At the very least, the servant could have invested the money at low risk and with little effort and gotten a guaranteed interest.

Luke 19:24-26 **“Then he said to those standing by, ‘Take his mina away from him and give it to the one who has ten minas.’ “‘Sir,’ they said, ‘he already has ten!’ “He replied, ‘I tell you that to everyone who has, more will be given, but as for the one who has nothing, even what he has will be taken away.**

This last servant didn't even get to keep the one mina he had been given for investment. He couldn't be trusted with it. You will notice that in this parable of the minas that Jesus told to his disciples at Zacchaeus' dinner, that the “wicked servant” wasn't cast into the outer darkness as in the parable of the talents which Jesus later told his disciples about the fate of the Jews who would reject Him (Matthew 25:14-30).

The point of the parable to this point was direct at Jesus' disciples. They were to invest the gifts that He had given them for His Kingdom until He returned. If they did, they would be handsomely rewarded.

Luke 19:27 **But those enemies of mine who did not want me to be king over them—bring them here and kill them in front of me.”**

This last sentence in the parable was directed at the enemies of Jesus. It was a warning prophecy of the destruction of the Jewish establishment who would shortly cause Him to be crucified. However, it wasn't until 70 AD, some forty years later, that Jesus brought the promised judgment on Jerusalem and the Jewish religious establishment. The city and the Temple were levelled and the population was enslaved.

Luke 19:28 **After Jesus had said this, he went on ahead, going up to Jerusalem.**

After the dinner, Jesus pressed on to Jerusalem although He knew what awaited Him there. The next passage from John records how many thousands were already gathered outside Jerusalem, mostly on the Mount of Olives just on the other side of Bethany.

John 11:55 **When it was almost time for the Jewish Passover, many went up from the country to Jerusalem for their ceremonial cleansing before the Passover.**

According to Josephus, in the First Century AD it was not unusual for over a million pilgrims to descend on Jerusalem for Passover. The choicest spot to camp was on the Mount of Olives which lay between Bethany and Jerusalem. Because they were required to purchase their “lambs without defect” for sacrifice at the Temple, probably the latest possible day to arrive was the day before the Day of Preparation on the 14th of Nisan. On the 14th the sacrificing of the lambs would commence at noon. However, many would arrive more than a week earlier because some needed to be ceremonially cleansed. According to the Law of Moses, before the Jews appeared in the Temple to offer their Passover sacrifices anyone that was ritually unclean had to be ceremonially cleansed with the water from the ashes of a Red Heifer offering (Numbers 19). The primary cause of ritual uncleanness was contact with the dead. This ceremonial cleansing took seven days; hence many people and their families would begin to arrive more than seven days before Passover. On this occasion it was five days before Passover.

John 11:56 **They kept looking for Jesus,¹⁵ and as they stood in the temple area they asked one another, “What do you think? Isn’t he coming to the Feast at all?”**

These early arrivals were anxious to see if Jesus came. They were undoubtedly aware of Jesus’ recent presence in Jericho because of the pilgrims which would have come up the road from Jericho after Jesus had arrived there. They must have also been aware that Jesus had been keeping a low profile and had avoided the area of Jerusalem since the raising of Lazarus about two months before.

John 11:57a **But the High Priests**

The word which the NIV and many others translate as “chief priests” is ἀρχιερεῖς {är-khē-eryā's}. It should be translated “High Priests.” It is the plural of the singular ἀρχιερεύς {är-khē-eryū's} which means and is always translated “High Priest.” This term here was speaking of the two “High Priests” who held that rank at that time,¹⁶ Annas and his son-in-law Caiaphas. Although, according to the Law of Moses, there should be only one High Priest who alone

¹⁵ *Some might have looked for Jesus to come early because of his contact with the tomb of Lazarus. Of course, Jesus never needed cleansing, ritual or spiritual.*

¹⁶ *According to Luke 3:2 it was “during the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas.”*

would hold that rank until he died, the Jews had been ignoring that Law for most of the last fifty years since the time of Herod the Great.

John 11:57b and Pharisees had given orders that if anyone found out where Jesus was, he should report it so that they might arrest him.

What they wanted to know was where He was when He came to Jerusalem. They wanted to make plans so they could arrest Him quietly without all His disciples and the crowd around Him.

The Old Testament Command for the Passover

At this time, I think it might be useful to look at the original command for Passover. As I pointed out in our first lesson in this series, the prophetic meaning of the commandments related to the Feasts all seem to be fulfilled on the day they were to be ceremonially carried out. As we saw earlier in Lesson 8, the prophetic meaning of the second goat of the Day of Atonement, sent out to the desert to Azazel (Satan) was fulfilled on the Day of Atonement when Jesus was sent out to the desert to be tempted by Satan. In our next passage we will see the prophetic meaning of another ceremonial command fulfilled on the day that command was carried out. Below are the commands in the Law of Moses regarding the observance of Passover.

First were the commands given in Exodus for the first Passover.

Exodus 12:1-2 The LORD said to Moses and Aaron in Egypt, “This month is to be for you the first month, the first month of your year.

The first month in the sacred Jewish calendar referred to the first month of spring. In Moses’ time, the first day of the first month probably coincided with the spring solstice.¹⁷ In 30 AD, the first day of the first month would have fallen on our calendar day of March 21.

Exodus 12:3 Tell the whole community of Israel that on the tenth day of this month each man is to take a lamb for his family, one for each household.

The “lamb” was to be designated on the tenth day of the month.¹⁸ In 30 AD this fell on the Saturday Sabbath, the day that Jesus and his disciples rested in Bethany before preceding to Jerusalem on the day we call “Palm Sunday.”

¹⁷ *There is a great deal of evidence that in Moses’ time one cycle of the earth was 360 days and one cycle of the moon was 30 days (as opposed to the current 365¼ and 29½ days). We covered that in our first lesson on the Life of Christ, 38 lessons ago.*

¹⁸ *The first day of each month always fell at the new moon.*

The Hebrew word translated “lamb” here is the word **שֶׁה** {seh}. This word could apply to the young of either the sheep or the goats. The possible meaning according to Strong’s Hebrew Lexicon were - 1) one of a flock, lamb, sheep, goat, young sheep, young goat; 1a) sheep, goat; 1b) flock (collective).

Thus, this word can mean either sheep or goat. When John saw Christ who had been driven away into the desert on the Day of Atonement, the day of His Baptism, he said “behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world.” Jesus fulfilled, in truth, the shadow meaning of both the lamb of the Day of Atonement and the lamb of Passover.

Exodus 12:4 **If any household is too small for a whole lamb, they must share one with their nearest neighbor, having taken into account the number of people there are. You are to determine the amount of lamb needed in accordance with what each person will eat.**

Because the entire lamb was to be eaten by morning (verse 10) the lamb was to be shared out so that each family had only what they needed, and no more. In a way this echoed the provision of the manna ¹⁹ which also was a figure of Christ, the “true bread from heaven” (John 6:32-35).

Exodus 12:5 **The animals you choose must be year-old males without defect, and you may take them from the sheep or the goats.**

This meant the “lamb” had to be between one year and two years of age. In this case it was probably born the prior spring.

Exodus 12:6 **Take care of them until the fourteenth day of the month, when all the people of the community of Israel must slaughter them at twilight.**

The actual sacrifice was to happen on the 14th at twilight. The Hebrew word translated “twilight” is **עֶרֶב** {eh'·rev}. It appears here and in Leviticus 23:5. It literally means “the darkening” from a primitive root through the idea of covering with a texture. Because of the change in practice of how the lambs were to be sacrificed (*by priests in the Temple instead of by the heads of the households in front of their tents*), in Jesus’ day, the Priests had expanded the meaning so that twilight was redefined for ceremonial purposes to mean any time after the sun began to decline (12 Noon) until sunset. This allowed six hours for the tens of thousands of sacrifices to be made in the Temple for the hundreds of thousands of pilgrims who came to Jerusalem. When the Last Passover came, both the “Darkening” and 12 Noon occurred at the same time as darkness covered the earth from 12 until 3 as Christ suffered for the sins of the world thus perfectly fulfilling the Law.

¹⁹ *The command regarding manna given during the Exodus: Exodus 16:16 “This is what the LORD has commanded: ‘Each one is to gather as much as he needs.’”*

The original practice at Passover was to have the patriarch of each household perform the slaughter of their lamb at the same moment, twilight. At King Hezekiah's first Passover, the priests slaughtered many lambs for the people who were not purified. In Josiah's time the priests and the King also provided many of the lambs. By Jesus' day virtually every lamb was slaughtered in the Temple, and almost all of them were purchased there. This change had probably been encouraged by the High Priests. It increased both their revenues and control.

Exodus 12:7 Then they are to take some of the blood and put it on the sides and tops of the doorframes of the houses where they eat the lambs.

This part only applied to the first Passover when the people of Israel were still slaves in Egypt. The blood on the doorframes protected the first born sons from the Angel of Death.

Exodus 12:8 That same night they are to eat the meat roasted over the fire, along with bitter herbs, and bread made without yeast.

Immediately after the Passover sacrifice at twilight of the 14th came the Feast of Unleavened Bread, which by the Jewish calendar was the 15th day of the month. At that time, they ate the Passover lamb along with bitter herbs and unleavened bread.

Exodus 12:9-10 Do not eat the meat raw or cooked in water, but roast it over the fire--head, legs and inner parts. Do not leave any of it till morning; if some is left till morning, you must burn it.

As we saw earlier this was the reason they were to share the Passover lamb with their neighbors. The lamb, which represented Jesus, had to be roasted over fire because the fire stood for the judgment He bore for our sins.

Next were the commands given in Leviticus for all succeeding Passovers after the Exodus began.

Leviticus 23:5 In the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month at twilight is the LORD'S Passover. NAS

This is the correct translation and agrees with the KJV, NRSV, ASV. You will notice that Passover is the moment at twilight that the lamb was to be slain. It is not a day.

Leviticus 23:6 On the fifteenth day of that month the LORD's Feast of Unleavened Bread begins; for seven days you must eat bread made without yeast.

This was the command for the Feast of Unleavened Bread which immediately followed the twilight offering. It is often confusing because the first meal of the Feast of Unleavened Bread

is often called the Passover by the Jews. Strictly speaking, Passover was just the moment at twilight on the previous day when the lamb was slain.

Finally, were the commands given in Numbers.

Numbers 16:1-2 **Observe the month of Abib ²⁰ (*Nisan*) and celebrate the Passover of the LORD your God, because in the month of Abib he brought you out of Egypt by night. Sacrifice as the Passover to the LORD your God an animal from your flock or herd at the place the LORD will choose as a dwelling for his Name.**

This reiteration of the command made it clear that originally the people were to sacrifice an animal from their own flock.

Below are two other commands in the Law of Moses concerning Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread.

Numbers 9:2-5 **“Have the Israelites celebrate the Passover at the appointed time. Celebrate it at the appointed time, at twilight on the fourteenth day of this month, in accordance with all its rules and regulations.” So Moses told the Israelites to celebrate the Passover, and they did so in the Desert of Sinai at twilight on the fourteenth day of the first month. The Israelites did everything just as the LORD commanded Moses.**

This was the command which was made relating to the second Passover at the foot of Mt. Sinai.

Numbers 28:16-17 **“On the fourteenth day of the first month the LORD’s Passover is to be held. On the fifteenth day of this month there is to be a festival; for seven days eat bread made without yeast.**

This was the final reiteration of the command just before the death of Moses and just before the people entered the land.

²⁰ *After the return from the Babylonian Captivity the Jews adopted different names for the months.*