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The Gospel of John and the Second Passover

Abstract

The difference in the chronology of Passion Week between the Synoptics and in the Gospel of John is often the focus of scholarly attention.

In the Synoptics Jesus dies on the Feast of Unleavened Bread, on the first day following the Passover meal in the evening. In John, Jesus dies on the “Day of Preparation” prior to the Passover sacrifice and meal.

By factoring in biblical festivals named in calendrical texts from Qumran, and the law on the Second Passover (Num 9:6–14), which is named “the Second Passover” פסח השני in the Qumran calendars of the priestly courses (*mišmarot*), I argue that the Johannine writers describe a different timeline of the Passion Week to that of the Synoptics.

This study examines the question of whether Jesus was corpse contaminated at Passover (John 11:55), and his attitude to the law of Num 9:6–14 with respect to the narrative of Lazarus. It concludes that Jesus died on the day of the Second Passover, which began that evening (John 12–19).

The authors of the Fourth Gospel thereby preserve an interest in Jewish festivals after the destruction of the Second Temple in 70 CE.

Introduction

The variant narratives between the Synoptics and the Gospel of John are well known (as well as the differences in texts between the Synoptics themselves). Among some major discrepancies between the Synoptics and the Fourth Gospel are the chronologies of the last week of the life of Jesus and the resurrection of Lazarus (John 11–12). Some scholars including Raymond E. Brown have proposed that John 11–12 is a possible later addition.¹

Brown suggests that the Fourth Gospel has a first, second and third Passover, covering the last three-year period of Jesus’s life.² The theory that there was a three-year Passover cycle in the Fourth Gospel is not uniform. Michael A. Daise, for example, argues that the Passover cycle in John covers one full year, from Passover to Passover, with John 6:4

¹ Raymond E. Brown, *The Gospel According to John I–XII* (The Anchor Yale Bible Commentaries 29; Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1966), 427–30; Frank R. Zindler, “The Raising of Lazarus (Secret Mark, John 11:1–44),” A paper prepared for the Sonoma California meeting of the Jesus seminar (1993).

² Brown, *Gospel According to John I–XII*, 114, note to *Passover*, John 2:13, which Brown describes as “the first of three Passovers mentioned in John ([the second and third Passovers are] John 6:4, and John 11:55).”

describing the Second Passover (Num 9:6–12), the deferring of Passover for a month for a person who has been contaminated by being in contact with a corpse, or is away on a journey at the time of the festival. He argues that there is a Second Passover after John 6:4, and that, furthermore, John 5 and 6 are transposed. The main problem here, is that there is no corpse defilement nor a long journey here to justify a Second Passover and Daise does not offer any motivation for it in the narrative.³ There is no scholarly consensus on the order and specificity of all the festivals concerned (such as the unnamed festival in John 5:2), nor on the length of time of the chronology of John’s Gospel.⁴

This paper partly agrees with Brown’s assessment that the Fourth Gospel covers a three-year cycle, and partly with that of Daise, that there is a Second Passover in John (but not that there is a Second Passover at John 6:4). My proposal is that the Second Passover is one month after the third Passover mentioned in John 11:55, and that this is the Passover of the Passion Week.

The question of corpse impurity

According to Num 9:10–11, anyone who is impure because they have touched a corpse or is away on a long journey must celebrate the Passover on the 14th day of the second month at twilight. The deferred Passover sacrifice is not named “the Second Passover,” in Numbers 9:10–12, nor does the legislation occur in any other biblical text. The deferred Passover is called פסח, the Passover sacrifice, and it is not given a different name.

³ Michael A. Daise, *Feasts in John. Jewish Festivals and Jesus’ ‘Hour’ in the Fourth Gospel* (WUNT 229; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck), 1, 9–30, 104–112, 113, Table 16, 118, 173 (The three-year cycle of feasts are: [first] Passover [John 2:13]; an anonymous festival at 5:1; a second Passover at 6:4; the Feast of Tabernacles at 7:2, the Feast of Dedication at 10:22–23, and a final Passover at 11:55; Daise’s hypothesis is that chapter 5 and 6 were inverted at an earlier stage of composition).

⁴ James Jonrow, “The Relation of Festivals in the Jewish Calendar Year to the Structure of the Fourth Gospel” (University of Edinburgh, 1955), online, <http://hdl.handle.net/1842/36214>
Guilding argues the narrative follows the Palestinian Triennial Cycle; furthermore, that John 5 and 6 are transposed, and that John 5:1 refers to Shavuot (Feast of Weeks/ Pentecost), or Rosh Hashanah, in Aileen Guilding, *The Fourth Gospel and Jewish Worship: A Study of the Relation of St John’s Gospel to the Ancient Jewish Lectionary System* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1960), B[sic] –3, 72. Brown, *Gospel According to John I–XII and XIII–XXI* (2 vols), 278–80, 953, partially accepts with caution Guilding’s theory that John follows lectionary time over three years. Daise disagrees with Guilding’s methodology, Daise, *Feasts*, 81–87, but he takes on board her argument that John 6 is related to the Passover (re: Guilding, *The Fourth Gospel*, 60–68). He concludes that John 6:4 refers to the Second Passover, Daise, *Feasts*, 2, 147–52. Daise also suggests that John 5:1 refers to Shavuot (Pentecost, Feast of Weeks), *Feasts*, 104–52. The idea that John 6:4 refers to the Second Passover is partly based on the idea that “five barley loaves” (John 6:9) could not have been eaten until Passover had passed (Lev 23:9–14) [because unleavened bread must be eaten during Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread], Daise, *Feasts*, 3, 150–51. Daise proposes that Exod 16 coincides with John 6:4 in the ancient triennial cycle. Daise, *Feasts*, 138–49. (Exod 16 is read in the mid-first month, Nisan, in the second year of the Palestinian Triennial Cycle, at the time of Passover).

In the Fourth Gospel, the authors refer to the Passover at the end of Jesus's ministry as follows: John 12:1 (Passover); 12:12 (ἑορτή) (“festival” [trans. NRSV]); 13:1 (Passover); 18:28 (Passover); 19:31 (μεγάλη ἡ ἡμέρα) (“a day of great solemnity” [trans. NRSV]).

Philo extends the conditions for the postponed Passover sacrifice, on the fourteenth day in the second month with his own interpretations. He speculated that Moses found it convenient to have two separate Passover sacrifices to help prevent overcrowding in Jerusalem during the Passover of the first month, and that diaspora Jews could make use of the Second Passover.⁵

Later rabbinic writings sought to clarify certain aspects of the practice of the “First and Second” Passovers. This included establishing how far was too far from Jerusalem to attend the Passover; whether a proselyte who had converted to Judaism between “the First and Second” should observe the Second Passover; and whether a single woman should have her own sacrifice at either Passover, or whether she should be included in that of others.⁶ Daise observes that the Second Passover “enjoyed great currency in Second Temple and Tannaitic discussion and thus, could have readily fallen within the purview of the Fourth Evangelist.”⁷

According to Num 19:11–22, 31:19 ritual corpse contamination lasts for seven days and requires a process of ritual purification on the third and seventh day in order for the defiled person to become clean.⁸ The codes concerning impurity from contact with the dead in Num 19 and Num 31:19 do not mention Passover.⁹ The only biblical passage that

⁵ F. H. Colson, *Philo*. Vol. 6. (LCL 289; Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1950), *Moses II*: 225–233 (esp. 232c: “For those who are travelling in a foreign land, or dwelling in some other country, do no wrong, so as to deserve to be deprived of equal honour with the rest, especially since one country will not contain the entire nation by reason of its great numbers, but has sent out colonies in every direction”). See also, Daise, 119–20, 137.

⁶ Daise, *Feasts*, 132–34, see also below, nn. 29, 30, 31.

⁷ Daise, *Feasts*, 118–19.

⁸ These time scales are not repeated in the law codes of Num 9:6, 9–14, nor in Lev 21:1, Lev 22:4. For a summary of corpse impurity in the Dead Sea Scrolls, see, Jonathan Klawans, “Purity in the Dead Sea Scrolls,” in *The Oxford Handbook of the Dead Sea Scrolls*, ed. Timothy H. Lim and John J. Collins (Oxford: Oxford University Press), 377–402 (390–393); further references below. The Temple Scroll paraphrases the regulations on contact and indirect contact with a corpse and other sources of defilement; for example, an unclean person cannot enter the Temple until they have purified themselves (after seven days), based on Lev 22:1–9, (11Q19 45–46, 49–51; 11Q20 12, 14–15), Yigael Yadin, *The Temple Scroll*. 3 vols. (Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society; Institute of Archaeology of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem; The Shrine of the Book, 1977–1983), 2.191–194, 211–229; Florentino García Martínez and Eibert J. C. Tigchelaar, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Study Edition*. 2 vols. (Leiden Brill, 1996–1997), 2.1262–1269, 1298–1303.

⁹ Kazen argues that the laws on corpse impurity in Numbers are later than the purity laws in the Holiness Code in Leviticus which refer to corpse impurity in relation to priests (Lev 21: 4, Ezek 44:25), the High Priest (Lev 21:11), and, briefly, for common people (Lev 22:4). He states that the Holiness Code was not compiled until the fifth century BCE whereas the laws on corpse impurity in Numbers were part of a redaction process that took place in the fourth century BCE, Thomas Kazen, *Scripture, Interpretation or Authority? Motives and Arguments in Jesus' Halakic Conflicts* (WUNT 320; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2013), 144.

specifically deals with purity before Passover is Numbers 9:6–12 and the impurity concerned is corpse contamination only.¹⁰

Numbers 9: 9–12: “...Anyone of you who is defiled by a corpse (נפש) or who is on a long journey would offer a Passover sacrifice to the Lord, they shall offer it on the second month, on the fourteenth day of the month between the evenings. They shall eat it with unleavened bread and bitter herbs, and they shall not leave any of it over until the morning...” [trans. JPS]

The Num 9 text itself does not specify the cause of corpse defilement: such as touching a person that died in a specific way, or the place of death (within a desert environment). The specifics are in Num 19: a person is unclean, if they touch any dead person (Num 19:11 במת לכל נפש אדם); or a dead body in the open; or a person who was killed by the sword (Num 19:16a בחלל הרב), or a person who died naturally, (Num 19:16b במת), or a human bone, or a grave (Num 19:16c).¹¹

An unclean person can contaminate another person or object (Num 19:22). Cleansing and laundering rituals with the ashes of the red heifer and the water of purification on the third and seventh day must be observed in order for the corpse-contaminated person to become clean (Num 19). It is not necessary to touch a corpse inside a tent to become contaminated for seven days (Num 19:14), and open vessels without a lid fastened down inside the tent become unclean (Num 19:15).

Furthermore, anyone who has killed a person (Num 31:19 כל הרג נפש) or touched a slain corpse (Num 31:19 חלל [and lit: pierced]¹²), must stay outside the camp for seven days, and also cleanse themselves on the third and seventh day. Porous objects, such as all garments, articles made of hide, everything made of goats' hair, and wooden objects must be purified (Num 31:20). The biblical commands on purifying oneself from corpse defilement are the same for touching a slain person, or for touching the body of someone who had died naturally outside, or for entering a tent where a person has died (where no touch is required to become unclean).

¹⁰ Cf. Lev 22:4; the Passover is not postponed for individuals suffering from scale disease, those who have a bodily discharge, or for women who have just given birth (the other conditions of impurity) (Lev 12–15). (Biblical translations: JPS).

¹¹ For further discussion, see Vered Noam, “Corpse-Blood Impurity: A Lost Biblical Reading?” *JBL* 128 (2009): 243–51.

¹² *The Dictionary of Classical Hebrew* (CDCH), ed. David J. A. Clines (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix, 2009), 119; *Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament*, 5 vols. ed. Ludwig Koehler, Walter Baumgarten, M. E. J. Richardson, Johann Jakob Stamm. (Leiden: Brill, 1994–2000), 1.320.

Hannah Harrington notes that Num 5:1–4 represents a different tradition. Those who are corpse defiled (טמא לנפש) are grouped together with those who have skin afflictions, and anyone with a bodily discharge, and sent out from the camp.¹³ There is neither the ritual of the red heifer, nor laundering clothes, and bathing (Num 19:11–22; Num 31:19 cf. Lev 14: 46–47). No time is specified for their exclusion from the group, and no secondary pollution of objects is mentioned.

Corpse contamination (laws) in Second Temple Judaism

There are no extant laws on corpse purification for Passover from Numbers 9 in the sectarian scrolls from Qumran. The Temple Scroll updates the laws on the rituals for corpse contamination in Numbers 19 from a desert camp setting (such as mentioning tents) to an urban context, without any reference to Num 9:6–12. The rituals on purification required after being in contact with the dead are reiterated and adapted at 11Q19:49–50, 11Q20:14 (11QTemple Scroll^a and 11QTemple Scroll^b); 4Q276 (4QPurification Rules B^a) and 4Q277 (4QPurification Rules B^b); and possibly, but not extant, in 4Q274 and 4Q278 (4QPurification Rules A and C) (also known as the 4QTohorot scrolls).¹⁴

The scrolls 4Q414, 4Q512, 4Q514 (4QRitual of Purification A, 4QRitual of Purification B and 4QOrdinances^c),¹⁵ the Damascus Document CD-A:12, 15B–20A¹⁶ (and its related Qumran texts, 4Q269, 4Q271, 4Q272, 4Q266), and 4QMMT^{a-b} (4Q394–4Q395) describe purification rituals.¹⁷

¹³ Hannah K. Harrington, *The Impurity Systems of Qumran and the Rabbis. Biblical Foundations* (SBL Dissertation Series 143; Scholars Press: Atlanta, Georgia, 1973), 76.

¹⁴ For a summary of their extant content, see Aryeh Amihay, “Tohorot,” in *T&T Clark Encyclopedia of Second Temple Judaism* (2 vols), edited by Daniel Gurtner and Loren T. Stuckenbruck (London: T&T Clark, 2019), 1.526–28.

¹⁵ For comparisons with corpse impurity rituals in Qumran texts and Second Temple literature, see Hannah K. Harrington, “Ordinances, 4QOrdinances,” in *T&T Clark Encyclopedia of Second Temple Judaism*, 1.397.

¹⁶ Charlotte Hempel, *The Laws of the Damascus Document: Sources, Traditions and Redaction* (STDJ: 29; Leiden: Brill, 1998), 160–162; cf. Dennis Mizzi, “On the meaning of טמאת האדם in the Damascus Document: A Textual Excavation of CD XII, 15B–17A,” *RevQ* 28 (2016): 15–44. Mizzi argues that the passage in the Damascus Document CD 12:15B–17A (=4Q266 9 i 2–3) refers to all human ritual impurities, not particularly to corpse contamination. See further on the Damascus Document regarding the purification of vessels, nails or pegs in the wall in the house of a corpse (CD 12:17–18, Num 19:14–15, Num 31:20), Lawrence H. Schiffman, “The Relationship of the Zadokite Fragments to the Temple Scroll,” in *The Damascus Document. A Centennial of Discovery. Proceedings of the Third International Symposium of the Orion Centre for the Study of the Dead Sea Scrolls and Associated Literature*, 4–8 February 1998, ed. Joseph M. Baumgarten, Esther G. Chazon, Avital Pinnick (STDJ 34; Leiden: Brill, 2000), 133–45 (esp. 141). Eyal Regev, “Yosef Ben Yoezer and the Qumran Sectarians on Purity Laws: Agreement and Controversy,” in *The Damascus Document. A Centennial of Discovery*, 95–107 (esp. 101–103).

¹⁷ See Ian Werrett, *Ritual Purity in the Dead Sea Scrolls* (STDJ 72; Leiden: Brill, 2007), 35–46, 136–52, 194–97, 227–36, 272–77; Hannah K. Harrington, *The Purity Texts* (Companion to the Qumran Scrolls; London: T &

Harrington notes that Num 19 is the foundation for the laws on corpse impurity in the Qumran scrolls, albeit without the Temple rituals that involved sprinkling with a mixture of living water and the ashes of the red heifer. Furthermore, other aspects of the rituals are changed, for example, the innovation of a corpse-defiled person bathing and laundering their garments on the first day of their purification.¹⁸ The Temple Scroll further revises Num 31:19, or Num 19:11–13 (regarding not entering the camp for seven days if one has slain a person, or touched a corpse, and purifying on the third and seventh day), to, arguably, not entering the city of the Temple until one is purified, due to defilement through contact with a dead person in 11Q19:45, 17 *הטמא לנפש* // 11Q20:12, 9–10.¹⁹

The Temple Scroll does not give a time-length for purification from corpse contamination, or skin affliction in order to enter the city of the Temple. It states the time lengths for purification from male discharges; however, women (menstruating or recovering from childbirth either bearing a son, or daughter (cf. Lev 12, 15:19–31, 33, Ezek 36:17) are not mentioned (11Q19:45, 6–17 // 11Q20:12, 3–9).²⁰ The question of whether an impure person could enter the city of the Temple, or the Temple itself is adapted from the biblical text, which is concerned with keeping impure people outside of the camp (cf. Num 5:2–4, 31:19, 24).²¹

Philo states that a corpse contaminated person cannot enter the Temple for seven days and that they must observe purifying ceremonies on the third and seventh day.²² Josephus

T Clark, 2004), 71–85; see also Cecilia Wassén, “Purity and Holiness,” in *T&T Clark Companion to the Dead Sea Scrolls*, ed. George J. Brooke and Charlotte Hempel (London: T&T Clark, 2019), 505–12.

¹⁸ Harrington, *Impurity Systems*, 76; Wassén, “Purity and Holiness,” 517–18; Werrett, *Ritual Purity*, 275. Werrett notes that this may have been a common practice in Second Temple Judaism, noting Tobit (Tob 2:1–9); Jacob Milgrom, “First Day Ablutions in Qumran,” in *The Madrid Qumran Congress: Proceedings of the International Congress on the Dead Sea Scrolls, Madrid, 18–21 March, 1991*, ed. J. Trebolle Barrera and L. Vegas Montaner (STDJ 11. Leiden: Brill, 1992), 2.561–70.

¹⁹ Yadin, *The Temple Scroll*, 1.293, 1.321–341; 2.194. Yadin states that 11Q19: 45,17 is based on Num 5:1–2 because the biblical context includes men with skin afflictions, unclean discharges and corpse contact [in that order] cf. 11Q19 45, 7–17, (op.cit). However, the Temple Scroll groups corpse contamination with male only discharges, and skin afflictions in contrast to Num 5:1–2 which includes women (Num 5:2–3). Compare, 11Q19:48, 13–17; 4Q272, 4Q265, 4Q266, 4Q274, see Werrett, *Ritual Purity*, 52–60, 242–48; 278–83. Furthermore, the order of contamination is different in the Temple Scroll: male discharges, corpse contact, skin affliction 11Q19 45, 7–17 [in that order] to that in Num 5:1–2. This biblical text does not include information about the purification process, nor the time-lengths involved for someone in any of the impure states to become clean.

²⁰ Yadin, *Temple Scroll*, 1.291–94; 2. 194–95. See further on comparative purity laws in the Qumran documents and the biblical texts: Harrington, *Purity Texts*, summary: 132–38; Werrett, *Ritual Purity*, on corpse impurity: 272–77.

²¹ See also: Christine E. Hayes, “Purification and Purity,” in *T&T Clark Encyclopedia of Second Temple Judaism*, 2.624–27. Yigael Yadin, *The Temple Scroll: The Hidden Law of the Dead Sea Sect* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1985), 170–85.

²² Philo (*De Specialibus Legibus*) 3:205; For further intertextual and archaeological evidence of the importance of corpse impurity *halakhah*, see Jodi Magness, “Disposing of the Dead: An Illustration of the Intersection of Archaeology and Text,” in ‘Go Out and Study the Land’ (*Judges 18:2*). *Archaeological, Historical and Textual*

observes that menstruants and the corpse impure were not allowed into the city (Jerusalem) for seven days.²³ It is interesting that the adaption of biblical law in Second Temple purity codes, concerning entering a city, the Temple, and the city of the Temple, are reflected in the writings of Philo and Josephus.²⁴

The Qumran documents do not appear to include the biblical law against corpse defilement for priests and High Priests (Lev 21:1–4, Ezek 44: 25, Lev 21:10–11).

Pesah ha-sheni “The Second Passover”

The Second Passover is listed in the Qumran *mišmarot*, the calendars of the priestly courses, officiating in the Temple each week in a six-year cycle.²⁵ It is referred to as the “Second Passover,” *Pesah ha-sheni*, פסח השני, in the rosters of 4Q319 (4QOtot), 4Q320–4Q321 (4QCalendrical Document /Mishmarot A and B).²⁶ This may be the earliest known use of the term, “the Second Passover.” It is listed on the “fifth (day) of the week,” in the second month.²⁷ The first Passover is listed as falling on the third day of the week in the first

Studies in Honor of Hanan Eshel, ed. Aren M. Maeir, Jodi Magness, and Lawrence H. Schiffman (SJSJ 148; Leiden: Brill, 2012), 117–132.

²³ Hannah K. Harrington, *The Purity and Sanctuary of the Body in Second Temple Judaism* (JAJS 33; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2019), 274–75. Josephus, *Ant.* 3.262 (Thackeray, LCL, 1930), 442–45; cf. Josephus, *Jewish War* 5.227 (Thackeray, LCL, 1928), 268–71, and Josephus, *Ag. Ap.* 2.103 (Thackeray, LCL, 1925), 332–35, on Temple purity. Those who are corpse impure are not specifically mentioned but may be included among those men who were not thoroughly clean and, therefore, could not enter the inner court of the Temple (*J.W* 5.227), or who were permitted to enter the Temple when they were clean, or purified (*Ag. Ap.* 2.103). See also, Vered Noam, “Josephus and Early Halakhah: The Exclusion of Impure Persons from Holy Precincts,” in *Go Out and Study the Land*, 133–146.

²⁴ For an overall summary and discussion on the different sectarian, early rabbinic and Pharasaic approaches to various forms of *halakhic* purity, and impurity, see, Kazen, *Scripture, Interpretation or Authority?* 140–176.

²⁵ These consist of two identical, consecutive triennial cycles. The 364-day calendars are sabbath calendars divided into 52 weeks. The sabbaths and festivals that are listed fall on the same dates and day of the week each month in the cycles, see, M. G. Abegg, “The Calendar at Qumran,” vol. 1 of *Judaism in Late Antiquity 5. The Judaism of Qumran: A Systemic Reading of the Dead Sea Scrolls*. Handbook of Oriental Studies Section 1. The Near and Middle East 56 (Leiden: Brill), 145–71; Talmon et al, *Calendrical Texts*, 17–28; Jaubert, *The Date of the Last Supper*. Translated by Isaac Rafferty (Staten Is. New York: Alba House), 27, 69–80, 95–99, 115; Shemaryahun Talmon, “Calendars and Mishmarot,” in *Encyclopedia of the Dead Sea Scrolls*, ed. Lawrence H. Schiffman and James C. VanderKam. 2 vols. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 1.108–12.

²⁶ S. Talmon, J. Ben Dov, and U. Glessmer, eds. *Qumran Cave 4:16. Calendrical Texts* (DJD 21; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2001), 257, [פסח השני]: part-reconstructed, 4Q320 4 iii 4; 4Q320 4 iv 9; 4Q320 4 v 3; 4Q320 4 v 12; 4Q320 4 vi 8; 4Q319 13 1, 4, and extant, 4Q321 4 v 5; 4Q321 4 v 9; see also, Daise, *Feasts*, 121–22; Stéphane Saulnier, *Calendrical Variations in Second Temple Judaism: New Perspectives on the ‘Date of the Last Supper’ Debate* (JSJ 159; Leiden: Brill, 2012), 121–24.

²⁷ Talmon, et al, *Calendrical Texts*: 4Q320 4 iii 4; 4Q320 4 iv 9; part-reconstructed 4Q320 4 v 3; 4Q320 4 v 12; 4Q320 4 vi 8; reconstructed, 4Q319 13 1, 4.

month.²⁸ The first Passover never falls on a Friday. See Table 1 for the 364-day year Qumran Hebrew calendar.

I	IV	VII	X		II	V	VII	XI		III	VI	IX	XII		
1	8	15	22	29		6	13	20	27		4	11	18	25	Wed
2	9	16	23	30		7	14	21	28		5	12	19	26	Thur
3	10	17	24		1	8	15	22	29		6	13	20	27	Fri
4	11	18	25		2	9	16	23	30		7	14	21	28	Sabb
5	12	19	26		3	10	17	24		1	8	15	22	29	Sun
6	13	20	27		4	11	18	25		2	9	16	23	30	Mon
7	14	21	28		5	12	19	26		3	10	17	24	31	Tues

Table 1. The 364-day Qumran calendar, beginning on 1/I (Wednesday). The 30-day months and 31-day months are organized together. The months are presented in Roman numerals. The days of the week are listed in the right column and the days of the month are numerical.

There is no indication in the *mišmarot* texts that the priestly service for the Second Passover was any less important. In later, rabbinical Judaism some writers referred to the Second Passover, as the Passover in Iyyar (the second month in the Jewish calendar), naming it as the Little Passover, פסח קטן,²⁹ or the Lesser Passover, פסחא זעיר.³⁰

The Second Passover is not listed in the Temple Scroll (11Q19 and 11Q20), nor in the calendrical texts, nor in the *mišmarot* texts related to the Temple Scroll. It is absent in 4Q325 (4QCalendrical Document/ Mishmarot D) which contains the additional Temple Scroll festivals such as the feasts of new wine, new oil and wood that are not in the *mišmarot* all of which include the Second Passover, enumerated above. There is also an absence of legislation on the Second Passover in the Temple Scroll's list of festival regulations in 11Q19:11–22 and 11Q20:1–8.³¹ The Second Passover, furthermore, is either not listed, or possibly extant, in the fragment 4Q329a (4QMishmarot H).

Unlike the calendars of the priestly courses, the Temple Scroll does not list the days of the week for the festivals; it lists their days of the month: the 14th day of the month,

²⁸ Incidentally, the placing of the Passover of the first month in the six-year *mišmarot* service cycle in the *editio princeps* is problematic. Talmon tabulated Passover on Wednesday (in Month I), instead of Tuesday, the third day of the week, (in Month I), as stated in the texts themselves, see Talmon, et al. *Calendrical Texts*, 17–28.

²⁹ *M. Ḥal.* 4:11; *Sipre Deut* §134 (on Deut 16:7);

³⁰ *M. Roš. Haš.* 1.3; *Meg. Ta'an.* 5–6; Daise, *Feasts*, 3, 118–19, 132–34, 137.

³¹ For a summary, see, Yadin, *Temple Scroll*, 1.49–54.

Passover (11Q19, 17, 6–7); and the 15th day of the month, the Feast of Unleavened Bread (11Q19:17, 10–11).

Yadin suggested that the missing part of column 18 of the Temple Scroll “contained a short command about the ‘second passover’ (פסח שני) [sic].”³² The column contains instructions for the Waving of the Sheaf (the ‘omer) and for an inclusive count of 50 days and seven full sabbaths until Shavuot [Weeks, or Pentecost] (Counting the ‘Omer), based on the sectarian interpretation of Lev 23:15, discussed below.³³ However, Daise and other scholars contend that Yadin’s proposition is unlikely.³⁴

In most of the *mišmarot*, the seven-day Feast of Mazzoth, חג המצות (Feast of Unleavened Bread) is not included in the service rosters, and nor is it referred to in the texts. The Feast of Unleavened Bread, however, is listed in the Temple Scroll (11Q19:17, 16) and the Temple Scroll-related fragment 4Q326.

These “pluses” and “minuses” in the Qumran calendrical texts may be mirrored in the gospels: in John’s Gospel, the Festival of Unleavened Bread is not mentioned among any of the Jewish festivals, whereas the Festival of Unleavened Bread is mentioned in the Synoptic Gospels, discussed further, below.

The festival of the Waving of the Sheaf (‘omer) on the 26th of the first month is included in the Temple Scroll, 4Q320, and 4Q325, 4Q326. In the Temple Scroll it appears as the Waving of the Sheaf, הניפת העמר (11Q19 18:10–11);³⁵ which is linguistically close to the festival’s name in 4Q320 frg 4, 3, הנהף העמר.

The festival is called the Festival of Barley, מועד השעורים (part-reconstructed)³⁶ in 4Q325 (the text does not include the Second Passover, and lists the Temple Scroll additional festivals), and in the fragment 4Q326 (which lists the Feast of Unleavened Bread and the Temple Scroll additional festivals).

³² Yadin, *The Temple Scroll*, 2.76, 1.99–100.

³³ Yadin, *The Temple Scroll*, 2.76–79, 1.99–103; J. Van Goudoever, *Biblical Calendars*, 2nd rev. ed. (Leiden: Brill, 1961), 15–16.

³⁴ Daise, *Feasts*, 122–132. Daise states that Yadin places the Second Passover prior to the Waving of the Barley Sheaf which contravenes the chronological order of the festivals (as the Waving of the Sheaf is on 26/I and the Second Passover is on 15/II); so Saulnier, *Calendrical Variations*, 121–24, 123 n. 28, also citing P.R. Callaway, “The 364-Day Calendar Traditions at Qumran,” in *Mogilany1989. Papers on the Dead Sea Scrolls Offered in Memory of Jean Carmignac. Part 1: General Research on the Dead Sea Scrolls—Qumran and the New Testament—The Present State of Qumranology*, ed. Z. J. Kapera (Krakow: Enigma, 1993), 28, who stated that it “remains uncertain whether the Temple Scroll” refers to the Second Passover.

³⁵ Yadin, *Temple Scroll*, 2.78–9; 1.99–100 (here, Yadin suggests that text concerning the Second Passover is placed at the beginning of 11Q19.18, before the command on the Waving of the Sheaf, discussed above).

³⁶ 4Q325 1, 3; 4Q326 line 4. Talmon et al, *Calendrical Texts*, 127; 136 (translated as Festival, or Feast of the First Grain).

The sacred assembly, on the seventh day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, עֲצֵרָה, (Lev 23: 6-8; Num 28:25) exists in the Temple Scroll festival calendar (11Q19:17, 15b–16) only, and in none of the *mišmarot* texts.³⁷

Stéphane Saulnier has proposed that the Second Passover may not have been observed by all Jewish groups in Second Temple Judaism, in particular by the group responsible for the compilation of the *Book of Jubilees* (c.150 BCE). He points out that the Second Passover is not mentioned in the statutes for Passover in *Jub.* 49, but that the laws regarding the Passover in *Jub.* 49:1–14 follow the same structure as Num 9:1–9, which introduces the Second Passover.³⁸ He further suggests that a possible reason for the absence of the Second Passover in the *Book of Jubilees* is that it occurs on a Thursday in the 364-day calendar (*Jub.* 6:45–60), whereas according to Jaubert’s hypothesis, the biblical festivals fall on Wednesday, Friday, or Sunday.³⁹

Saulnier proposes that the reason that the Second Passover is omitted in the Temple Scroll is because it was not used for tithing, or that it was not part of the agricultural cycle.⁴⁰ He further observes that *Jub.* 49:7–10, 14, warns that Passover should not be delayed by a month, possibly, he suggests, because that would introduce a biblical disjunction between Passover and Shavuot/ Feast of Weeks. He finds it odd that 4Q329a, does not include the Second Passover.⁴¹ (However, as it is a fragment, a roster for the Second Passover list in 4Q329a may not be extant).

Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread in the Second Temple Judaism

Many scholars have reconstructed the instruction in the Temple Scroll to slaughter the Passover lamb on 14th of the first month in 11Q19 17:6 as בין הערבים “between the evenings,” [my translation] (Exod 12:6, Lev 23:5, Num 28:4) meaning the evening of the 14th/ 15th of

³⁷ Yadin, *Temple Scroll*, 2.74–5; 1.98–99.

³⁸ Saulnier, *Calendrical Variations*, 95–105.

³⁹ Stéphane Saulnier, “*Jub.* 49:1–14 the (Absent) Second Passover: How (and Why) to Do Away an Unwanted Festival,” *Henoch* 31 (2009): 42–48; Jaubert, *The Date of the Last Supper*, 24–28. (However, with respect to the New Testament, Vanderkam has pointed out that in this calendar Passover would always fall on Tuesday-Wednesday in a time system in which the days begins at sunset. In neither the synoptics nor John, is the Passover celebrated on Tuesday, J. C. VanderKam, “Jaubert’s Solution to the Passion Chronology,” in *L’eglise des deux Alliances: Mémoial Annie Jaubert* (1912–1980), edited by Basil Lourié, Andrei Orlov and Madeleine Petit (Piscataway: Gorgias Press, 2008), 181–83.

⁴⁰ On the close relationship between the festival calendars in the Book of Jubilees and the Temple Scroll, see James C. VanderKam, “The Temple Scroll and the Book of Jubilees,” in *Temple Scroll Studies. Papers presented at the International Symposium on the Temple Scroll, Manchester, December 1987* (Sheffield Academic Press, 1989), 211–36.

⁴¹ Saulnier, *Calendrical Variations*, 121–24; 236–38.

the first month in a sunset-to-sunset calendrical scheme. However, the restoration, although possible in the sense of the meaning, is not certain. García Martínez and Tigchelaar reconstruct and translate 11Q19 17:6 as הערבִים בֵּין “at twilight,” as does Qimron in the Hebrew text only. Schiffman, Gross and Rand suggest in a note that the line ends with [“between the two evenings”], but they do not reconstruct it. They also note that the wording in MT Deut 16:4 differs, with the implication that the restoration could be fuller.⁴²

With respect to biblical law, the instruction is to slaughter the lamb on the evening of the 14th day of the first month (14th–15th) in a sunset-to-sunset calendrical scheme, this would be “between the evenings.” The text refers to the slaughter of the lamb “on the evening of the first day,” meaning the first day of the seven-day festival of Unleavened Bread which would begin that night. Yadin notes that the injunction to sacrifice the Passover lamb is worded differently in Deut 16:6, again, with the inference that the reconstruction in the Temple Scroll could be longer whereby the sacrifice of the lamb takes place unequivocally in the evening at sunset on the 14th–15th.⁴³

However, the Temple Scroll also states that the Passover lamb must be sacrificed [between the two evenings(?)] on the 14th of the first month prior to the evening offering 11Q19:17, 7 (extant לפני מנחת הערב) and prepared and eaten on that night 11Q19:17, 8 (part extant) (reconstructed according to Lev 23:5).⁴⁴ This may include an adaptation of the biblical texts which instruct that no trace should left in the morning (Exod 12:10, Num 9:12), a rule that is not separate in the Temple Scroll.

Talmon suggested that the Feast of Unleavened Bread may be implied in the festival of Passover in the *mišmarot* texts that do not mention it separately, but he admitted that this suggestion does not account for its presence as a separate festival in the Temple Scroll, and in 4Q326 frg. 1, 2–3.⁴⁵ In a sunset-to-sunset calendar the Feast of Unleavened Bread would

⁴² García Martínez and Tigchelaar *Dead Sea Scrolls Study Edition*, 2.1238–39; E. Qimron, *The Temple Scroll. A Critical edition with Extensive Reconstructions* (Beer-Sheva: Jerusalem: Ben-Gurion University of the Negev Press, Israel Exploration Society, 1996), 27; L. Schiffman, A. D. Gross and M. C. Rand, “Temple Scroll and Related Documents,” in *The Dead Sea Scrolls: Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek texts with English Translations. Vol 7. Temple Scroll and Related Documents*, eds, J. H. Charlesworth, H. W. Morisada Rietz and L. L. Johns. PTSDSSP. (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2011), 1–173, 266–405 (50 n. 206; 51 n. 162).

⁴³ Yadin, *Temple Scroll*, 1.96.

⁴⁴ 11Q19 17:17. Yadin, *Temple Scroll*, 1.73–74 n. 6.

⁴⁵ Talmon et al, *Calendrical Texts*, 127–28. A text that is erroneously titled 4Q394 1–2 (that is, part of 4QMMT, after it was originally registered correctly as a separate document, 4Q327) also includes the Temple Scroll festivals. The fragments comprise Month 2, day 16 until Month 6, day 28 and so it is not known if it included the Festival of Unleavened Bread in Month 1 since this month is not extant in the fragments.

begin at the same time as the Passover, after sunset of the 14th, which is the 15th. In a sunrise-to-sunrise calendrical scheme it would begin in the morning.

Yadin stated that the Passover offering was “always sacrificed on the same day of the week, namely, Tuesday” in the Temple Scroll (11Q19:17, 6–9).⁴⁶ However, as noted above, the Temple Scroll text does not contain the days of the week, only the numerical days of the month. The passage concerned with separating Passover and the Festival of Unleavened Bread in the Temple Scroll is below:⁴⁷

11Q19:17, 6: “on the four]teenth of the first month [between the evenings?]. . .”

11Q19:17, 7: “. . .] and they shall sacrifice it before the evening meal offering. They will sacr[ifice it]

11Q19:17, 8: from the age of twenty [] years and above they shall prepare it and eat it [] . . .

11Q19:17, 9: in the courtyards of the sanctuary each man shall rise early and go to his tent [

11Q19:17, 10: *vacat*. On the fifteenth day of this month, it shall be a h[oly] assembly

11Q19 17, 11: You shall do no do laborious work on it. It is the Feast of Unleavened Bread *הג מצות* [sic], seven days

The calendrical texts written in a so-called “cryptic” Hebrew script that include the festivals in the Temple Scroll are very fragmentary, so it is not known if those included the Feast of Unleavened Bread.⁴⁸

The month-date and time of Passover is specified in detail in *Jub.* 49:1–2, 14–17. It states that the Passover sacrifice must take place when it gets dark, on the 14th, on what it calls the third part of the day in the period bordering the evening, and the meal must be completed by what it calls the third part of the night, on the 15th of the month, from the time of the setting of the sun (*Jub.* 49:28).

⁴⁶ Yadin, *Temple Scroll*, 1.97.

⁴⁷ Hebrew transliteration and plate: Yadin, *Temple Scroll*, vol. 3: plate 32 [no page number]. (My translations).

⁴⁸ For a reconstruction of the newly-named scroll, 4Q324d, see “A Newly Reconstructed Calendrical Scroll from Qumran in Cryptic Script,” by Eshbal Ratzon and Jonathan Ben-Dov, *Journal of Biblical Literature* 136 (2017): 905–36.

The Feast of Unleavened Bread is also observed in the *Book of Jubilees*, *Jub.* 49:32.⁴⁹ It begins on the night of 15th after sunset on the 14th and lasts for seven days with the first part of the 15th, at the end of Passover (*Jub.* 49:28–32).

Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread in Second Temple and Synoptic texts

The Feast of Unleavened Bread is mentioned either by name, or descriptively in Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy in conjunction with Passover, or Passover is combined with the festival.⁵⁰ The Feast of Unleavened Bread is not mentioned in the Second Passover legislation for Num 9. Therefore, one may deduce that this seven-day festival with its final day, a solemn assembly, is not deferred for a month with the Second Passover.

The two festivals, Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread, are listed separately in the Temple Scroll festival calendar in 11Q19:17, 11–16, *הג מצות* [sic],⁵¹ and in the related calendrical text 4Q326 line 3, *הג המצות*. The Feast of Unleavened Bread begins on the 15th day of the first month,⁵² and the seventh day of the festival is a solemn assembly (11Q19:17: 15–16).⁵³

In 4Q326 both the day of the week and the day of the month are given, the fourth day of the week, Wednesday, 15/I, for the Feast of Unleavened Bread, and the third day of the week, Tuesday, 14/I, for Passover.

In the Synoptic gospels, not only is the Feast of Unleavened Bread mentioned but great pains are taken to clarify when exactly it starts—at the same time as Passover, or the next morning. In fact, there is conflicting information in the Synoptics, reflecting the lack of consistency in the different biblical texts. Mark 14:1 follows Lev 23: 5–8, Num 28:4b, and 16–17, which is also followed by the Temple Scroll and 4Q326. This places Passover on the 14th at twilight, “between the two evenings,” and the Festival of Unleavened Bread on the 15th. It is stated that the lamb is sacrificed on the first day of Unleavened Bread [15th of the first month] (Mark 14:12–16); furthermore, that the Passover meal took place that evening

⁴⁹ Note different line numbering in James C. VanderKam *Jubilees: The Hermeneia Translation* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2020). *The Book of Jubilees* follows a different 364-day calendar (the 31-day months are months 3, 6, 9, 12), in contrast to the 31-day months of months 1, 4, 7, 10 in the *mišmarot*; for the *Jubilees* calendar, see Van Goudoever, *Biblical Calendars*, 62–63.

⁵⁰ Exod 12:15–19; Exod 13:6–7; Num 28:17; Deut 16:3–4a, 8; *הג המצות* is named in Exod 23:14–15; Exod 34:18, and in Lev 23:5–8.

⁵¹ Yadin, *Temple Scroll*, 1.74–75.

⁵² 11Q19 17:11, 12. Yadin, *Temple Scroll*, 1.74–75.

⁵³ Yadin, *Temple Scroll*, 1.75.

[the 15th of the first month]. Therefore, a sunrise-to-sunrise time scheme is used (Mark 14:17–18, 22).⁵⁴

Similarly, in Luke 22:7, the Paschal lamb is sacrificed on the first day of Unleavened Bread [the 15th] and it is assumed to be included in the Passover meal/Last Supper that evening, (Luke 22:7–14). Jesus dies the following day. By the same token, the “Passover meal”/Last Supper took place in a sunrise-to-sunrise time scheme with the Passover lamb as the sacrifice (Matt 26:17, 19–20).

As mentioned, the Temple Scroll and 4Q326 exclude the Second Passover in their festival lists but include the Feast of Unleavened Bread and additional festivals. This anomaly may throw a question mark on the status of the Feast of Unleavened Bread amongst all Jewish groups: whether Unleavened Bread was combined with “Passover,” resulting in the Feast being omitted in some ancient sources, or whether there was some other dynamic.⁵⁵

It can be seen that the boundaries between Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread are complicated in Luke, Matthew, and Mark, either due to manuscript history, or different traditions. No distinction is made between Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread in Luke 22:1, which appears to state that the two are synonymous. Luke 22:1 follows Exod 12:17–18 and Exod 23:14–15, which incorporates Passover with the Feast of Unleavened Bread.

The description of the two festivals in Mark 14:1 possibly places Passover on the day before the seven-day Festival of Unleavened Bread, in keeping with the Temple Scroll, 4Q326, Exod 12:17 and Lev 23:6, and apparently out of step with Luke 22:1. Mark 14:1 could also be read as situating the two festivals on the same day, while Mark 14:12 would suggest that the two were regarded by early Christian writers as one festival (if the Passover lamb were slaughtered at twilight it would coincide with the first day of Unleavened Bread). The “Day of Preparation” does not exist in the Hebrew Bible. It would appear to be a reference to the daytime of the 14th day of the month.

The complete absence of the Feast of Unleavened Bread from the Fourth Gospel may be simply because Jesus died before the Feast of Unleavened Bread (which begins on the

⁵⁴ Lawrence M. Wills comments that Mark’s count of days from sunrise to sunrise has been taken as evidence that Mark was not Jewish; adding that this is not conclusive, Lawrence M. Wills, “The Gospel According to Mark,” in the *Jewish Annotated New Testament*, 88, note to Mark 14:1–2; Ezra P. Gould, *Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to St. Mark* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1982, 3rd ed.), 260, note to Mark 14:11–16: (“Strictly speaking the feast did not begin until six o’clock of the afternoon, i.e. not until the beginning of the next day, the fifteenth of the month.”)

⁵⁵ Wills states that the two festivals were combined into one festival with the sacrifice of the paschal lamb and eating of unleavened bread during the seven days following, Wills, “Mark,” 88, note to Mark 14:1–2. So, Gould, *St. Mark*, 256, note to Mark 14:1.

evening of the first Passover), and so there is no need to mention it, or the authors combined it with Passover as a single festival, or it supports the case for the Second Passover since, as stated, the feast is not mentioned in Num 9:6–12.

The Feast of Unleavened Bread in the Hebrew Bible

The ordinances on the Festival of Unleavened Bread (הג המצות) in the Hebrew Bible are as follows:

Exod 12:17–19. [The Feast of] Unleavened Bread begins on the evening of the fourteenth day of the month [15th of the month in a sunset-to-sunset reckoning] (Passover) until the evening of the twenty-first day of the month: “seven days.”

Exod 13: 3–7. Seven days plus a festival on the seventh day [not in the Dead Sea Scrolls festival calendars]. The Festival of Unleavened Bread is not mentioned by name.

Exod 23:14–15. “You shall hold a festival three times a year a festival for Me”: the Festival of Unleavened Bread: seven days (Passover is subsumed); v.16: the Festival of the Harvest (Weeks); and the Festival of Ingathering (Tabernacles).

Exod 34:18: The Festival of Unleavened Bread: seven days in the month of Abib.

Lev 23:5–8: “In the first month on the fourteenth day of the month, at twilight, there shall be a Passover offering to the Lord, /and on the fifteenth day of the month the Lord’s Festival of Unleavened Bread /On the first day you shall celebrate a sacred occasion: you shall not work at your occupations. /Seven days you shall make offerings by fire to the Lord. The seventh day shall be a sacred occasion: you shall not work at your occupations.”

Deut 16:1–8: A Passover sacrifice at night in the month of Abib and seven days without any leaven. The Festival of Unleavened Bread is not given a name. v.8: “After eating unleavened bread for six days on the seventh day you shall hold a solemn gathering... you shall do no work.”

Other mentions include: 2 Chron 8:13, 30:13 and 30:21 (the last two references are in the second month); 2 Chron 35:17 (“the Passover and Feast of Unleavened Bread for seven days”); Ezra 6: 19, 22 (“the Passover on the 14th day of the first month and the Feast of Unleavened Bread for seven days”). The eating of unleavened bread for seven days appears in Num 28:17; Deut 16:8, and Ezek 45:21; the festival itself is not named in these law codes.

A different chronology in John

The discrepancies in the chronological events of Jesus's last week in the Synoptic gospels and John have long been the focus of scholarly debates.⁵⁶ In John, the Last Supper took place on the evening before the day of the preparation of the Passover lamb (John 13:1, 2b, 4a), and Jesus died on the day of preparation itself, being symbolized as the Paschal lamb (John 1:29, 36)⁵⁷ (discussed further, below).

In the traditional chronology, in the Fourth Gospel, the Last Supper, which is not a Passover meal as it is in the Synoptics⁵⁸ (John 31:1–38), is understood to take place on Thursday in the evening.⁵⁹ The lamb is prepared on Friday, during the day (John 13:1), although no days of the week are given. Jesus died on the day the lamb was prepared, (John 19:14a, 31, 42) and the Passover meal was held on the evening of the Day of Preparation (John 18:28 b, d, e), which was a sabbath and solemn feast (John 19:31). This sabbath was also solemn assembly (μέγαλις), but the holy day concerned is not specified.

Some scholars argue that Jesus was crucified on the eve of the Festival of Unleavened Bread in the Fourth Gospel, in contrast to Matthew, Mark and Luke in which the crucifixion takes place on the Feast of Unleavened Bread. For Daise, the reason in John 19:31 that the sabbath was a day of great solemnity is that the Friday night sabbath was also the first day of the seven-day Feast of Unleavened Bread.⁶⁰ However, this is an interpretation; it is not what the text says. The interpretation that the solemn assembly was the Feast of Unleavened Bread appears to be Christian exegesis. According to John Marsh, “For John, it was doubly important that the bodies of the crucified men should not be permitted to hang on the cross beyond the end of the day, since the day of crucifixion was a Friday, and the next day was not only a sabbath, but also, this year, the first day of the feast of unleavened bread. The Jews therefore asked Pilate for the men’s legs to be broken, to ensure their death in time for removing their bodies before the sabbath began.”⁶¹

⁵⁶ For example, see, Jaubert, *The Date of the Last Supper*, 95–121. Saulnier, *Calendrical Variations*, 1–15; Van Goudoever, *Biblical Calendars*, 160–61, 224; VanderKam, “Jaubert’s Solution,” 179–94.

⁵⁷ Daise, *Feasts*, 50, 61, 74–75; Brown, *Gospel According to John I–XII, XIII–XXI* (2 vols), 55, 58–63, 953.

⁵⁸ Van Goudoever, *Biblical Calendars*, 223–24; Daise, *Feasts*, 23. Eyal Regev, *The Temple in Early Christianity: Experiencing the Sacred* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2019), 46–47; Saulnier, *Calendrical Variations*, 1–15, 240–244. Saulnier supports Jaubert’s two-calendar theory with the qualification that the 364-day calendar theoretically followed in the Synoptics is linked to the seasons (which would require intercalation at regular, fixed periodic intervals).

⁵⁹ VanderKam, “Jaubert’s Solution,” 182.

⁶⁰ Daise, *Feasts*, 23–24. Some commentators interpret it as the sabbath and first day of Passover, which was “especially holy,” while also referencing Deut 21:23, for example in *The New Oxford Annotated Bible. Augmented Third Edition* (NRSV), ed. Michael D. Coogan, et al (Oxford University Press, 2007), note to John 19:31, 179 [New Testament].

⁶¹ John Marsh, *The Gospel of St John* (London: Penguin, 1968), 620.

The context of the text deserves consideration since the bodies of the executed had to be buried on the same day in Jewish law (Deut 21:22–23); the fact that the next day was a solemn assembly would not affect that rule and timescale.

I would suggest that this statement serves other purposes. As well as giving ambiguous festival calendrical data in John 19:31, it is a possible citation of Num 9:12 (the Second Passover), Exod 12:46, and LXX Exod 12:10 against the breaking of a bone of the Passover lamb (see also below, John 19:36).

Moreover, leaving bodies on the cross overnight raises the question of purity and corpse contamination.⁶² As stated above, Jews must bury anyone outside of the camp who has been killed (Num 31:19); they are unclean for seven days if they touch a bone, or the grave (Num 19:16). The noun for the dead body here is ללל which also refers specifically to a polluted corpse that has been pierced (so also Num 19:18, cf. John 19:34).⁶³ The term is used in the Temple Scroll in its rewording of Num 19:16 in 11Q19:50, 5. The Temple Scroll states that those crucified political crimes must be buried on the same day (11Q19:64, 6–9, 11–12), referencing Deut 21:22–23.⁶⁴

The emphasis that the bodies of the crucified men should be removed so as not to remain on their crosses during sabbath is logical if the coinciding solemn assembly was a Passover, or Second Passover. The Passover is the only sacrifice which can be moved in the calendar for individuals if they had been in contact with a dead body. The stress on the imminence of the unnamed festival on the “sabbath” in John 19:31 draws attention to the timing. Since the demand includes a possible reference to Num 9:12b and possibly Num 9:12a, in the Johannine literary universe, Jews who were in Jerusalem for the Second Passover viewed the captive Jesus as the Passover lamb.⁶⁵ In other words, the symbolism of Jesus as the Paschal lamb reflects a Jewish or early Jewish-Christian literary perspective embedded within the sub-text.

⁶² George Buchanan Gray, *The International Critical Commentary on Numbers* (T&T Clark: Edinburgh, 1908), 243, states that the doctrine that a dead body is a source of pollution is both ancient and widespread “there is nothing particularly Hebrew, or even particularly Semitic about it.”

⁶³ Note, the role of hyssop is a possible cross-reference (from John 19:29 to Num 19:18), as a plant of purification and healing (Ps 51:7).

⁶⁴ Yadin, *Temple Scroll*, 2.288–89, 1.334–36, and the discussion on “hanging alive” *Temple Scroll*, 1.373–83; George J. Brooke, *The Dead Sea Scrolls and the New Testament* (London: SPCK, 2005), 97–100.

⁶⁵ The concept would be, therefore, shared by the Jews and early Christians alike. Cf. John 1:29, 36, Acts 8:32, 1 Cor 5:7, 1 Peter 1:19. In her commentary on 1 Peter 1:19, Claudia Setzer states that the reference recalls the suffering servant of Isa 53:6–7 who is like a lamb, as well as the lamb that is sacrificed at Passover (Exod 12:5). Furthermore, the emphasis on perfection and lack of blemish indicates the context of Temple sacrifice, Claudia Setzer, “The First Letter of Peter,” in *The Jewish Annotated New Testament*, 438.

“The morrow of the Sabbath”

As the solemn assembly that coincided with the sabbath in John 9:31 is not named, there is no textual reason to dismiss the Second Passover from the chronology of Passion Week. The idea among some Christian scholars that Jesus died on the Feast of Unleavened Bread in the Gospel of John is partly linked to the ambiguous wording in the biblical texts for calculating the date of the festival of the Waving of the Sheaf, which was interpreted differently by Jewish groups.⁶⁶

In the Hebrew Bible, the instruction is to count forward 50 days from the Waving of the Sheaf “on the day after the Sabbath” (Lev 23:11: מִמָּחֳרַת הַשַּׁבָּת), to arrive at the (unspecified) date of Shavuot (the Feast of Weeks) which occurs on different dates each year in the luni-solar calendar. Interpretations of “sabbath,” in Lev 23:11, 15, for the Pharisees meant the day after Passover (on any day of the week), hence the 16th of the first month, for the sheaf-waving. The Festival of Weeks thus occurred 50 days later (Lev 23:15, 16) on the sixth day of the third month, Sivan 6 (on no fixed day of the week) in the Jewish luni-solar calendar.⁶⁷ Hence, the “sabbath” in Lev 23:11, 15–17 is understood to refer to Passover (the evening of Nisan 14 and Nisan 15). For the Sadducees, “on the day after the Sabbath” in Lev 23:11 meant the day after the first Sabbath (Sunday) following Passover, taking the meaning of Sabbath literally.

At Qumran, in the 364-day fixed calendar of the *mišmarot* and the Temple Scroll, the Festival of Weeks occurs on the 15th day of the third month by counting seven Sabbaths from the Waving of the Sheaf on the day after the Sabbath (Sunday), following the seven-day Feast of Unleavened Bread on the 22nd of the first month (Wednesday), which is the Sunday on the 26th of the first month.⁶⁸

The seven-day Feast of Unleavened Bread is uncoupled from the Second Passover in Num 9, since the Second Passover is a month ahead of Passover and cannot be used for the counting of the ‘omer—the lamb is eaten with unleavened bread and symbolic bitter herbs

⁶⁶ Van Goudoever, *Biblical Calendars*, 13, 18–19, 176–181. Van Goudoever lists four interpretations of the biblical text. The first “Sabbath means the ‘first day of Unleavened Bread’, that is Nisan 15, so one should count from the day of Nisan 15, that is, the 16th”. (This interpretation is not connected to the Second Passover, see below).

⁶⁷ (In the prevailing rabbinical tradition, the counting of the ‘omer is based ostensibly on the Pharaic interpretation of מִמָּחֳרַת הַשַּׁבָּת [the morrow of the Sabbath] in Lev 23:11, 15–17. The barley sheaf is waved on Nisan 16).

⁶⁸ See Yadin, *Temple Scroll*, 1.117; J. C. VanderKam, *Calendars in the Dead Sea Scrolls: Measuring Time* (London: Routledge 1998), 54–55, 67–69.

(Num 9:11). Therefore, in the Fourth Gospel, if the sabbath on Friday evening and Saturday is the Second Passover, it is not concomitant with the Feast of Unleavened Bread.

Gershon Hepner states that the links between the phrase מִמָּחֳרַת הַשַּׁבָּת (the morrow of the Sabbath) and the text of Num 33:3 suggests that the term הַשַּׁבָּת, the Sabbath, refers to the 14th day of the first month, the date of the Passover offering.⁶⁹ Therefore, the next day is the 15th day of the first month, the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread. By extension this is the day of the Waving of the Sheaf. He supports this observation by citing other scholars who have compared the phrase with that of Jos 5:11–12, מִמָּחֳרַת הַפֶּסַח (the morrow of the Passover) and concludes that the sabbath in the Holiness Code of Lev 23:15–17 refers to Passover.⁷⁰ (He does not discuss the Second Passover because it is outside and ahead of the festival of the Waving of the Sheaf). Hepner further argues that the “elevation offering” echoes the way that the Israelites departed from Egypt with “elevated hands” (Exod 14:8, Num 33:3). (The idea could be extended to include Exod 14:16).⁷¹

Yadin, in his explanation of the date of Shavuot in the festival calendars followed by the Qumran “sect,” compares counting the ‘omer in relation to Passover, (not the Feast of Unleavened Bread), with the system of counting by different Jewish groups, “... it is evident ... that the counting of the ‘omer did not begin *on the morning after the Passover*, (my italics); as ordained by rabbinic law, and not even on the morrow of the first Sabbath after it, as was the practice of the Boethusians, Sadducees, Samaritans and Karaites, but rather on the morning after the first Sabbath after the end of the entire Feast of Unleavened Bread.”⁷²

Jaubert suggested that in the year of the crucifixion of Jesus, the festival of Sheaf-Waving in the official luni-solar calendar coincided with the calendar of the Boethusians and the Samaritans who interpreted Lev 23:15, “the morrow after the Sabbath” literally to mean Sunday.⁷³

Interestingly, Daise suggests that there is a symbolic elevation offering reference (Lev 23:11) at John 2:23–3:21 after the first Passover, and John 20:1–23, whereby the elevation offering would be symbolized by the resurrection.⁷⁴

⁶⁹ Gershon Hepner, “The Morrow of the Sabbath is the First Day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread (Lev 23:15–17),” *ZAW* 118.3 (2006): 389–404 (at 392).

⁷⁰ Hepner, “The Morrow of the Sabbath,” 391–93.

⁷¹ Hepner, “The Morrow of the Sabbath,” 393–5, 399, 403–404.

⁷² Yadin, *Temple Scroll*, 1.117.

⁷³ Annie Jaubert, “The Calendar of Qumran and the Passion Narrative in John,” in James H. Charlesworth, *John and Qumran* (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1972), 64; Van Goudoever, *Biblical Calendars*, 181.

⁷⁴ Daise, *Feasts*, 27–30.

Chronology and revised chronology

In John 11:55, the first mention (of six) of Passover in the third year, is that Passover was “near” (ἐγγύς),⁷⁵ “and many went up from the country to Jerusalem before the Passover to purify themselves.” The notice that pilgrims came up to Jerusalem before Passover is supported by Josephus, though purification is not mentioned.⁷⁶ The clarification by Josephus that pilgrims arrived on the eighth day of the first month confirms that those who were impure for fewer than seven days before Passover, would not be eligible to purify themselves (since Passover is on the 15th of the month).

The biblical law on purifying oneself before Passover only exists for corpse contamination in Num 9; however, as stated above, according to the Temple Scroll any man who was defiled by different kinds of discharges, corpse contamination, or leprosy or other skin afflictions would not be able to enter the city of the Temple, until they were purified (11Q19 45:7–17, parallel 11Q20 12:3–12). This would suggest that the themes of purification in the Fourth Gospel possibly reflected concerns in Second Temple Judaism.

Passion Week in the Fourth Gospel

The sequence of events in our proposal for the timeline of Passion Week in John is as follows: in Month I Jesus secluded himself and his followers after the resurrection of Lazarus. After bringing Lazarus back to life, Jesus and his disciples retreated to “Ephraim”⁷⁷ (John 11:54) “in a region near the wilderness,” for an unspecified amount of time. Ostensibly, Jesus was in hiding. However, it is also possible that there was a ritualistic aspect concerning separation while being unclean.

⁷⁵ Translation: B. F. Westcott and F. J. A. Hort, *The Greek New Testament with Dictionary* (Peabody, MA: Hendricksons, 2007), 738.

⁷⁶ Josephus *Jewish War*. 6.290 (Thackeray, LCL, 1928), 460–61. The text refers to the “eighth of Xanthicus” equating to March-April in the Macedonian calendar. However, it is possible that “Nisan” is meant here, see Thackeray, *Jewish War*, 461, note *b.*; Lutz Doering, “Sabbath and Festivals,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Jewish Daily Life in Roman Palestine*, ed. Catherine Hezser (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 566–586 (575).

⁷⁷ Described as a small city by Josephus, *Jewish War*. Translated by H. St. J. Thackeray. 3 vols. (Loeb Classical Library. Harvard University Press, 1927–28), 4.9.9. Scholars suggest that this was Ephraim of Benjamin in the Book of Joshua (Josh 18:23), Ephron in 2 Chron 13:19, and the modern Palestinian town of Taiyibeh, or Taybeh, less than 10 miles north-east of Jerusalem, C. R. Conder and H. H. Kitchener, *The Survey of Western Palestine*, (London: Palestine Exploration Fund, 1882), 293; Rev. Archibald Henderson, *Palestine: Its Historical Geography* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1906), 161. It is also likely to be a symbolic place outside Judah, away from the Jerusalem authorities.

The expression “the Passover of the Jews was near at hand” prefixes the first Passover (John 1:13), the second Passover (John 6:4) and the third Passover (John 11:55), establishes a pattern of linear literary rhetoric.⁷⁸ The same formula is also used at the eight-day Festival of Succot (Tabernacles) (John 7:2). Here, the pilgrims in the Temple wonder if Jesus will appear. He does so (during the feast, John 7:14), as he has been there in hiding (John 7:10–14). In John 11:56, the same question is asked by the pilgrims in the Temple, but Jesus does not appear. The parallel is significant because if at John 7:10 the festival has begun and Jesus is there in hiding, there is a literary contrast with John 11:56 when, arguably, Passover has also begun, and Jesus is not there because he is, in fact, in hiding elsewhere.

In the new proposed timeline, Jesus and his followers did not go to Jerusalem for Passover, but arrived at Bethany, the house of Lazarus on Saturday night on the 9th day of the second month (Month II) in a sunset-to-sunset calendar, six days before the Second Passover, on Friday night/ Saturday. (The journey would have to have taken place after sundown as Jesus, would not have broken the sabbath). Since the deferred Passover sacrifice is called Passover in Numbers 9, if the Johannine Jesus were to observe Passover a month later, it would still be called Passover. The term, Second Passover, may not have been in use among early Christians in post-Second Temple Judaism.

Since the Second Passover is not connected to the Feast of Unleavened Bread, or the counting of the ‘omer to Shavuot, the Second Passover could be the “solemn assembly,” that coincides with the sabbath.

The traditional chronology, below, gives the consensus theory for the timeline of Passion Week in Month I in the Fourth Gospel (as summarized by VanderKam).⁷⁹ The final meal, which is not a Passover meal as it is in the Synoptics, begins on Thursday night (13/I). The meal ends overnight on Friday (14/I) in a sunrise-to-sunrise calendar. This chronology cannot be sunset-to sunset, for that sequence of dates to work, the meal must begin before sunset on Thursday and last until Friday morning (13–14/ I), which is implausible. The lamb is prepared on Friday, during the day (John 13:1). Jesus died on the day that the lamb was

⁷⁸ Daise argues that ἐγγύς in John 6:4 means “had just passed,” and that in this context, John 6:4 was the Second Passover, the פסח השני and the barley loaves could be eaten after the Waving of the Sheaf, *Feasts*, 113–114.

⁷⁹ VanderKam, “Jaubert’s Solution,” 181–82. Vanderkam’s succinct summary in John’s chronology is, Nisan 13: Thursday, meal begins; Nisan 14: Friday, meal ends, arrest, trials, crucifixion, burial; Nisan 15: Sabbath, Passover (with sabbath and Passover coinciding that year). In contrast, the Synoptic chronology is, Nisan 14: Thursday, preparation, meal begins; Nisan 15: Friday, meal ends, arrest, trials, crucifixion, burial; Nisan 16: Sabbath.

prepared, (John 19:14a, 31, 42) and the Jewish Passover meal was held on Friday night (John 18:28 b, d, e).⁸⁰

In the conventional chronology the six days before Passover when Jesus arrives in Bethany (John 12:1) on Saturday night would probably post-date the pilgrims arriving in Jerusalem (John 11:55) by one day (Friday), hence allowing seven days' purification for corpse-contamination (Num 19:11–22), if necessary. The worshippers who stand in the Temple before Passover itself could be, plausibly, in the Temple on the Sabbath (John 11:56).

The alternative chronology begins on the Day 8, Month I, in accordance with Josephus's statement, as discussed. If the Jews went up to Jerusalem one week early to purify themselves (John 11:55) then there may be a time-gap before standing in the Temple (John 11:56) unless those in the Temple who were speaking were clean, and different to those who were in the city to purify themselves, since those who needed purification would not be able to stand in the Temple if they were unclean. One may also ask why people were standing in the Temple (John 11:56) if it was not the Sabbath, or already Passover.

In the traditional chronology below, it is suggested that there is a one-day gap between John 11:55 (Friday) and John 11:56 (Saturday) and that John 11:56 probably describes events on the Sabbath before the first Passover. The reading could suggest the existence of an unknown non-biblically prescribed ritual in which people from out of town immersed themselves in Jerusalem before Passover. In the alternative chronology, John 11:55 is unchanged (Friday before the first Passover); John 11:56 takes place on the first Passover itself in the Temple, thereby allowing seven days from purification if one has been in contact with a corpse before the festival.

Consensus Passover chronology⁸¹

- Month I.
- 1 week before Passover? Friday?: (John 11:55 ἐγγύς) Arrival of pilgrims in Jerusalem (7/I)
- Saturday? Worshippers in the Temple. (John 11:56) (Sabbath? 8/I?)
- Saturday night. Six days before Passover (John 12:1). Arrival at Lazarus's house (8/I)

⁸⁰ Raymond E. Brown, *The Anchor Bible. The Gospel According to John (XIII-XXI)* (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1971, reprint, New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), 846.

⁸¹ The consensus chronology for Passion Week in John for Month I, uses an exclusive count (that is, from the day after). The seasonal hours are counted from sunrise in a sunrise-to-sunrise chronology.

- Day 1 of 6 before Passover. Sunday. Triumphal entry into Jerusalem (9/I)
- (Day 2) Monday (10/I)
- (Day 3) Tuesday (11/I)
- (Day 4) Wednesday (12/I)
- (Day 5) Thursday. Meal begins (13/I)
- (Day 6) Friday morning. Meal ends. (14/I).
- (Day 6) Friday “Day of Preparation” trial, crucifixion, burial (14/I)
- (Day 7) Passover/ Sabbath (15/I)
- (Day 8) Sunday (16/I) “early... still dark”. Resurrection.

The proposed timeline for Passion Week in Month II, below, involves counting six days from John 12:1 to the Second Passover on Friday evening, in Month II in a sunset-to-sunset calendar.⁸²

Proposed alternative Passover chronology

- Month I.
- 1 week before Passover: (John 11:55); purification in Jerusalem (7–8/I) Friday
- First Passover (John 11:56); worshippers in the Temple (15/I)
-
- Month II
- Saturday night: Bethany, six days before Second Passover (John 12:1); Jesus arrives at the house of Lazarus (sunset 9/II)
- Sunday: Day 1. (9/II) Triumphal entry into Jerusalem (sunset 10/II)
- Monday: Day 2. (10/II) (sunset 11/II)
- Tuesday: Day 3 (11/II) (sunset 12/II)
- Wednesday: Day 4 (12/II) (sunset 13/II)
- Thursday: Day 5 (13/II) (sunset 14/II). Meal begins
- Friday: Day 6. (14/II) Meal ends. Day of Preparation. Jesus dies
- Friday: (sunset 15/II) Second Passover eve/ Sabbath
- Saturday: (15/II) Second Passover/ Sabbath

⁸² The alternative chronology for Passion Week in John counts six days from John 12:1 (in Month II) in an exclusive count, in a sunset-to-sunset timeline.

Sunday: (16/II) Resurrection

Purification in the New Testament

In the New Testament purification for Passover is a constant theme in John's Gospel (as well as elsewhere, discussed below). The theme of Temple purity before Passover may be referenced in John 2:13–16 prior the first Passover, to the driving out of the sellers of sacrificial animals and doves, and the *bureaux de change* stalls inside the Temple precincts. There are parallel scenes in Matthew, Mark, and Luke which are not directly linked to the festival of Passover involving dove-sellers with a different biblical references (Matt 21:12–17; Mark 11:15–16; Luke 19:45).⁸³

Regarding the question of Jesus and corpse impurity: the detailed narrative on the resurrection and post-resurrection of Lazarus in John 11–12 is unknown in the Synoptics (as is the bringing back to life of the son of the widow of Nairn, and the daughter of Jarius in John). As noted, some scholars including Raymond E. Brown have suggested that John 11–12 is a possible later addition, due to marked differences in style and a non-antagonist attitude towards the Jews (compared to, in his view, a more hostile literary stance elsewhere in the gospel).⁸⁴

The parallel stories in the Synoptic gospels to the raising of Lazarus in John 11:1–44 also concern purity issues, and were, arguably, known to the Johannine authors.⁸⁵ These are: in Luke only, the revival of the son of the widow at Nairn, outside in his open coffin (Luke 7:11–17) (cf. Num 19:16; 11Q19:50, 5–6; 11Q20 8–10); and the daughter of the synagogue leader, Jarius, inside his house (Matt 9:25), (Mark 5:41) (Luke 8:51) (cf. Num 19:14,

⁸³ See Michael Labahn, “The Plot to Kill Jesus in Mark and John: Reflections on the Literary Relationship between Two early Christian Theological Biographies of Jesus on the Basis of a Detail in Their Storytelling,” in *John's Transformation of Mark*, ed. Eve-Marie Becker, Helen K. Bond and Catrin H. Williams (London: T&T Clark, 2021), 229–245 (at 236); Labahn states that the report in Mark 11:15 is intended to lead to the plot to kill Jesus. [The link with overturning the traders' table in the Temple precinct which leads culminatively to Jesus's death is also made in Luke 19:45 but not so directly in Matt 21:12]. In the Synoptics, Jesus immediately justifies his actions by comparing the traders to robbers, referencing Jer 7:11. In John 2:16, Jesus orders the sellers of sacrificial birds to stop making the Temple courtyard a marketplace; in John 2:18, Jesus's disciples cite a different text, a paraphrase of Ps 69:9 in their thoughts]. In John the event takes place at the first Passover in the three-fold Passover cycle; in the Synoptics it happens towards the end of his ministry, Adele Reinhartz, “John,” in *The Jewish Annotated New Testament*, ed. Marc Z. Brettler and Amy-Jill Levine (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 161, note to John 2:13–25. Regev, *The Temple in Early Christianity*, 31–34, 202–203, Regev interprets Jesus's action in the light of the Damascus Document, CD-A 4:13–18, whereby unrighteous money defiles the Temple; he suggests that Jesus opposes commercial activity on the site.

⁸⁴ Raymond E. Brown, *The Gospel According to John I–XII*, 427–30.

⁸⁵ Eve-Marie Becker, “Beyond History: How John Transcends Mark and Ancient Historiography,” in *John's Transformation of Mark*, 91–100, Becker states that John “intends to allude to those stories by surpassing them.” (esp. 95).

11Q19:49 5–21).⁸⁶ All of these instances would cause Jesus to be defiled, as each of the environmental and physical circumstances required purification according to the biblical laws on corpse defilement (Numbers 19:11–21, Num 5:2), and arguably, the Damascus Document (CD-A 12:15–17).⁸⁷

As discussed below, in relation to Jewish divorce legislation, conversations on *halakhah* between Jewish groups, such as Jewish-Christians, sectarians, and pre-rabbinical groups plausibly existed in the first century CE.⁸⁸ For instance, there is intertextuality between Matthew and the Damascus Document, regarding the *halakhah* for saving an animal that falls into a pit on sabbath.⁸⁹

Kazen argues that the Johannine Jesus was not corpse contaminated in the story of Lazarus because he did not touch him.⁹⁰ While it is true that the Johannine writers specify that Jesus himself did not touch the body of Lazarus (which would incur impurity: Num 19:11, 13, 16; Num 31:19), it is unclear from the text who unwrapped Lazarus from his grave bandages (John 11:44c). Kazen further contends that having been raised from the dead, Lazarus was not, technically, a corpse.⁹¹

The specified advanced state of decay of Lazarus's body (John 11:39c), as well as his age, unlike the comparative texts cited by Kazen (Lk 7:11–17, the son of the widow in Nairn; and Mark 5:21–24, 35–43, the daughter of the synagogue leader, Jarius) leaves the reader in no doubt that Lazarus was a corpse.⁹² Lazarus is, in fact, described as a dead man (τεθνηκώς)

⁸⁶ Each of the narratives of the raising of the synagogue leader's daughter is intersected with the story of Jesus healing a woman who had been bleeding for 12 years, and was, therefore, impure (Lev 15:25) (Matt 9:20–25 intersecting Matt 9:18–19, 23–27; Mark 5:25–34, intersecting Mark 5:22–24, 35–53; and Luke 8:43–48, intersecting Luke 8:41–42, 49–56). However, the contact described in the texts, touching the hem of his garment, would not make Jesus unclean (Lev 15:19), hence, the description of the contact is significant.

⁸⁷ Magness, "Disposing of the Dead," 121, 124–28.

⁸⁸ George J. Brooke, "Jesus, the Dead Sea Scrolls and Scrolls Scholarship," in *The Dead Sea Scrolls and the New Testament*, 23, 25. Brooke suggests that it is unrealistic to believe that interactive discussions between different Jewish groups did not take place. See also, Lawrence H. Schiffman, "Second Temple Jewish Law in Light of the Dead Sea Scrolls: Widening the Paradigm," in *Law Literature and Society in Legal Texts from Qumran: Papers from the Ninth Meeting of the International Organization for Qumran Studies*, Leuven 2016, ed. Jutta Jokiranta and Molly Zahn (STDJ 128; Leiden: Brill, 2016), 1–26 (esp. 19–21).

⁸⁹ In support of the familiarity of the gospel's authors with Second Temple Jewish literature of different groups, compare Jesus's pronouncement that if an animal falls into a pit on the Sabbath, it should be rescued (Matt 12:11–12), in contrast to the opposite statement in the Damascus Document texts that an animal that falls into a well or a pit should not be brought out on the Sabbath (nor should an animal be helped to give birth on the sabbath): see the Hebrew fragments of the Damascus Document (the Bible does not say anything about rescuing or not helping an animal in distress on the Sabbath), 4QDamascus Document^e (4Q270) 6 v 17b–20a [part-restored], 4QDamascus Document^f (4Q271) 5 i 8b–9a; and Damascus Document^a (from the Cairo Genizah) CD-A 11:12b–14a, García Martínez and Tigchelaar, *Dead Sea Scrolls Study Edition*, 614–15, 620–21, 568–69.

⁹⁰ Thomas Kazen, *Jesus and Purity Halakhah: Was Jesus Indifferent to Impurity?* (Coniectana biblica New Testament Series 38; Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell International, 2002), 167–69.

⁹¹ Kazen, *Jesus and Purity Halakhah*, 173.

⁹² Kazen, *Jesus and Purity Halakhah*, 167.

(John 11:44a) and he comes back to life only after his grave clothes and face covering are removed by unnamed people (John 11:42, 11:44c).

If the disciples were involved in removing the grave clothes, then they would have been corpse contaminated if they touched his body during the unwrapping process according to biblical law (Num 19:16). For laws affecting some Second Temple groups guided by the Temple Scroll, they would have required purification if they had touched the cloths covering the body (11Q19 49:5–21a).⁹³

Rabbinical literature discusses issues of contamination from the dust of decomposed corpses.⁹⁴ This includes whether a body is in a perfect state [for example, the son of the widow of Nairn, and the daughter of Jarius], or in a state of decomposition [Lazarus], thereby affecting the degree of the dead body's ability to convey impurity. For the purposes of this article's research question it is not necessary to analyze this literature, merely to note that these purity questions were probably discussed in Jewish legal circles. It is possible that the Johannine writers discussed whether Jesus could become contaminated by Lazarus's airborne, decomposed body particles.

There is also the legal question of Jesus' responsibility for Lazarus's death. Mary and Martha blamed Jesus for their brother's death because of his delay (John 11:21, 32).⁹⁵ If the Fourth Gospel's writers interpreted Num 13:19a (killing a person) to include passive killing (by delayed action that could save a person's life), then the Johannine Jesus would incur corpse defilement. In the Lazarus narrative, Jesus deliberately tarried for two days (John 11:6), and the body was four days old by the time he arrived (John 11:17). I would suggest that the decomposed body motif was introduced in order to raise legitimate, contemporaneous *halakhic* questions.

Furthermore, the issue of corpse contamination prior to Passover is seemingly contained within the literary context of the Lazarus narrative as the event takes place shortly before the festival (John 11:55 and John 11:9⁹⁶). If Passover occurred within seven days of the raising of Lazarus, then the Johannine Jesus would need to purify himself. To delay ablution, or to not do it at all, meant being cut off from the community (Num 19:13, 20). There is no indication that this was a desirable or intended consequence.

⁹³ Werrett, *Ritual Purity*, 275.

⁹⁴ *Nazir* 49b, 51a.

⁹⁵ Becker points out that the motif of delay with a resurrection is evoked in the comparable narrative in Mark 5; she suggests a Christological explanation, discounting the idea that it is a text-type, Becker, "Beyond History," 96–97.

⁹⁶ The reference to 12 hours of daylight here refers to the spring equinox, due to the time of year of Passover, when seasonal day and night lengths are equal (as they are at the autumnal equinox).

As stated, the only biblical legislation concerning purification from corpse impurity prior to Passover is contained in Num 9. There is no such specific legislation anywhere else in the Hebrew Bible, the Qumran documents, or in the *Book of Jubilees*. Neither is the issue incorporated into any narrative in the Hebrew Bible, or in Second Temple literature. Yet, the situation is different in the Fourth Gospel, in addition to the narrative of Lazarus.

Prior to the third Passover the former High Priest Annas and High Priest Caiaphas refuse to enter Pontius Pilate's headquarters (John 18:28), specifically: "to avoid ritual defilement and to be able to eat the Passover." It is posited by several scholars including Raymond Brown and Adele Reinhartz that the defilement referred to in John 18:28 is the avoidance of possible corpse impurity because of the likelihood of dead prisoners on the premises.⁹⁷

The Temple Scroll shares this viewpoint: "And you shall not do as the nations do: everywhere they bury their dead, even within their houses they bury" (11Q19 48:11–12).⁹⁸ For priests and high priests, corpse defilement is forbidden under any circumstances—Passover, or not—in any case (in Lev 21:1–4, 10–11). Arguably, when Caiaphas and Annas decline to enter Pilate's palace, the purity laws are invoked as a literary device, to keep Num 9:6–12 as a running theme.

There are parallel anointing scenes in Matt 26:6–13 and Mark 14:1–9 when Jesus is at the house of Simon the leper at Bethany two days before Passover. Leprosy is also subject to purity rituals (Lev 13:45–59; Lev 14:2–57; Lev 22:3–7) According to Lev 14:35–57 a house can become leprous and require ritual cleansing. It must be closed for seven days thereafter.⁹⁹ Jacob Neusner observes that Jesus would have to wait a whole month before keeping Passover as he would be defiled by being under the same roof as a leper.¹⁰⁰ That is, Jesus would have to wait for the Second Passover because two days before Passover would not be long enough to enact the necessary seven-day purification rituals.¹⁰¹

⁹⁷ Raymond E. Brown, *The Gospel According to John (XIII–XXI)*, 845–46; Adele Reinhartz, "John," in *The Jewish Annotated New Testament*, 191.

⁹⁸ Translation, Yadin, *Temple Scroll*, 2.209.

⁹⁹ See, Hannah K. Harrington, *The Purity and Sanctuary of the Body in Second Temple Judaism* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2019), 203, on people with permanent scale disease in Lev: 45–46 and Qumran texts.

¹⁰⁰ Jacob Neusner, *The Idea of Purity in Ancient Judaism. The Haskell Lectures, 1972–1973. With a Critique and Commentary by Mary Douglas* (Leiden: Brill), 60–61.

¹⁰¹ According to Kazen, *Jesus and Purity Halakhah*, 337–38, Jesus did not give much attention to impurity in the form of contact-contagion. In contrast, Harrington, *Purity and Sanctuary*, 280, argues that Jesus "operated within the lines of committed observance to Judaism." Friedrich Avemarie, "Jesus and Purity," in *The New Testament and Rabbinic Literature* (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 257–63.

Mark's gospel stresses that Jesus celebrated the Passover that occurs at the same time as the beginning of the Festival of Unleavened Bread (Mark 14:1, 12–17, cf. Matthew 26: 2, 17, discussed below). The Passover with the Feast of Unleavened Bread can only be the first Passover since there is no listing of the Feast of Unleavened Bread with the Second Passover in either Num 9, or in the Qumran *mišmarot*.

In two days, Jesus could have observed the purity laws for having been in contact with something touched by Simon. He would remain unclean until sunset, or he purified himself with water (Lev 22:6–7). He did not wait for the seven-day period involved in ritually cleansing Simon's house (Lev 14:36–39). The very specific timescale given in the text, arguably, appears to be an interpretation by early Christian writers about which Levitical purity laws should be observed for visiting the house of a leper before taking part in a sacred ritual, the Passover meal (Matthew: 26:17, 20, 26–27; Mark 14:12–16).

Accidental corpse impurity

The case of the Parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25–37) appears to criticize blind obedience to the avoidance of corpse impurity by those whom it affects the most: priests, and Levites, even temporarily. In other words, it is critical of inflexible, religious behaviour. The parable highlights the correct behaviour of the Samaritan who prioritized “mercy” (Luke 10:36–37), in contrast to the concerns with purity regulations of the priest and the Levite.

Priests are specifically commanded to avoid corpse impurity in order to offer sacrifices at the Temple since those who are so defiled cannot enter the Temple (Lev 21:1–6, 11–13). Levites cannot take part in the Temple rituals for the period that they are deemed to be unclean. The Levite can undergo purification (Lev 22:2–4, 6–7).¹⁰² Ordinary people are unclean for seven days Num 19:11–22 (see also the note on the Temple Scroll at Qumran, above).

Amy-Jill Levine rejects the view that this parable is referencing purity issues because, she states, the priest and the Levite were going down from Jerusalem (Luke 10:31), as was the injured man. If they were going towards the Temple to officiate, purity would have been an issue for both of them (particularly for the priest).

¹⁰² On the corpse-impure generally in relation to Jerusalem and outside the temple city, see, Kazen, *Scripture, Interpretation, or Authority?* 145–48.

Levine also argues that the parable shocks by making the third person a Samaritan, an enemy of the Jews, who showed mercy to them in 2 Chron 8–15. She reframes the parable as a lesson to Jews to view the story as challenging stereotypes.¹⁰³ However, the story is more complex. It is true that the priest and the Levite were on the road from Jerusalem to Jericho, not to Jerusalem, nonetheless the Samaritan proved himself to be a true neighbour to the injured Jew by helping him. This does not detract from the plausible underlying purity concerns of the priest and the Levite, which motivated them to walk past.

The priest and the Levite were, arguably, avoiding possible defilement through contact with a man who had been left “half-dead” (NSRV) (ἡμιθανής) (Luke 10:30). This resulted in their behaviour contravening the commandment to love one’s neighbour as oneself (Lev 19:18); allegorized in Luke 10:27, which the parable was illustrating (Mark 12:31; Matt 19:19).¹⁰⁴

The term “half-dead”¹⁰⁵ is a *hapax legomenon* that supports the sub-text that the priest and the Levite were avoiding possible corpse contamination, instead of saving their neighbour’s life. The pro-purity argument should not be interpreted as an anti-Jewish polemic. It is a criticism of blind obedience, which can occur in any group. It happens that these narratives are set within a Jewish milieu because Jesus was Jewish: this was his social world. The point of the parable is not only that kindness to a fellow human, the good neighbour, should take priority over abstract biblical legislation, but that the laws on corpse-defilement should be assessed in their real-world contexts.¹⁰⁶

As Jesus was critical of some proto-rabbinical exegesis of the Hebrew Bible, it is possible that the story is on the side of the Samaritans, who have remained independent of the interpretations in rabbinical Judaism. In the resurrection of Lazarus, the figure of Jesus may have been making the case that becoming contaminated by a corpse to save a life is more

¹⁰³ Amy-Jill Levine, “The Gospel According to Luke,” in *The Jewish Annotated New Testament*, 23–24.

¹⁰⁴ Amy-Jill Levine, *The Misunderstood Jew: The Church and the Scandal of the Jewish Jesus* (New York: HarperOne, 2009), 145–46, disagrees with the “popular academic argument” that “Jesus offers a ‘challenge to the purity system of the first-century Jewish social world’ and advocates the politics of compassion in a social world dominated by the politics of purity” (citing Marcus J. Borg, *Meeting Jesus Again For The First Time* [San Francisco: SanFranciscoHarperCollins, 1994], 13). She argues that the alleged moral juxtaposition is false and that the opposite of compassion is not purity but lack of compassion, as shown by the two individuals, rather than purity regulations overall.

¹⁰⁵ Kazen translates the term as “seemingly dead,” Kazen, *Jesus and Purity Halakhah*, 191–92. This would explain the purity concerns of the priest and Levite, but not the injured man’s condition from the Samaritan’s point of view.

¹⁰⁶ This lesson is consistent with the argument in Matt 12:11–12, contra the Qumran Damascus Document texts that an animal who falls into a pit on the Sabbath should be rescued: the person’s livelihood (as well as the animal’s suffering) should take priority over the commandment to rest on the Sabbath, see note above for details.

important than becoming temporarily, or permanently impure (such as a priest, who cannot be purified): life on earth takes priority above all else.¹⁰⁷

Intertextuality with the Hebrew Bible

There is an interesting echo of the Second Passover in the Hebrew Bible which has resonances with the gospels in the narrative of the first Passover celebrated during the reign of King Hezekiah. The celebration of Passover was postponed until the second month because the Temple was being purified during the first month (2 Chron 29:17–19) since not enough priests were sanctified, and the people were not assembled in Jerusalem (2 Chron 30:2–3).¹⁰⁸

Hezekiah's Passover takes place with the Festival of Unleavened Bread (2 Chron 30:1–2, 13, 15, 22); most of the congregation were not purified for Passover in the second month (2 Chron 30:13–18). Although these are contra-indications for a Second Passover, according to rabbinical commentary Hezekiah interceded for a Second Passover (2 Chron 30:18).¹⁰⁹

In the Fourth Gospel's first festival cycle (John 2:13–16), as described above, at Passover Jesus clears the Temple forecourt of traders selling sacrificial animals and doves for offerings, and the money changers. In 2 Chron 29:3–11, King Hezekiah tells the Levites to take the polluting things (הַנְּדָה) out of the holy place (v. 5).

In the parallel scenes in the Synoptics, Jesus's actions in the Temple are not so directly linked to the festival of Passover (Matt 21:12–17; Mark 11:15–16; Luke 19:45) and the focus is on clearing the Temple of the same named sellers and buyers.¹¹⁰ Aside from the structural similarity in John's Gospel and 2 Chron 29–30 regarding the cleansing of the Temple immediately before Passover, there is a nominal interconnection between the genealogies of John the Baptist and Hezekiah.

King Hezekiah's mother was named Abijah (meaning father of God) daughter of Zechariah (2 Chron 29:1). John the Baptist was descended patrilineally from the priestly

¹⁰⁷ Similarly, in his discussion of Mark 7:1–23, Klawans states that one may assume that the figure of Jesus prioritized the maintenance of moral purity over ritual purity, Jonathan Klawans, *Impurity and Sin in Ancient Judaism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020), 143–50, 156.

¹⁰⁸ See also, Saulnier, *Calendrical Variations*, 82–86.

¹⁰⁹ The Tannaitic debate supports the idea that Hezekiah made the congregation observe a Second Passover, see Daise, *Feasts*, 134–36.

¹¹⁰ For a discussion on whether there was systemic priestly abuse at the Jerusalem Temple, or other explanations for this incident, see Jonathan Klawans, *Purity, Sacrifice and the Temple: Symbolism, Supersessionism in the Study of Ancient Judaism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 222–46.

family of Abijah and his father, Zechariah, was a priest, (Luke 1:5). John the Baptist's birth was pre-announced by an angelic visitation experienced by his father while performing his duty of offering incense in the Temple (Luke 1:8–24). The Gospel offers some administrative biblical exposition (Luke 1:8–9). These resonances show that early Christian writers may have been interested in the priestly courses.

Jesus and religious law

As has been argued by several scholars, in John's Gospel, Jesus did not oppose all biblical laws by any means, but he had his own approach.¹¹¹ He did not regard laws as sacrosanct or immutable and he opposed behaviour where blind obedience took precedence over compassion. He part-accepted some conventional oral pre-rabbinical (Pharasaic) or Sadducean legal arguments, and later Mishnaic discourses, and he was dismissive of some proto-Mishnaic arguments. Furthermore, he created his own interpretations. All of this is perfectly in keeping with the rabbinical method. He used a didactic form of argument, which is consistent with the format of Jewish legal discussions in the Mishnah.

As an example, his voice echoes the formation of Jewish oral law, with some interesting differences. Jesus offers an abbreviated revisionist summary of Deut 24:1–4 which rules that if a man divorces his wife, he cannot remarry her if she has had a second husband in the interim and is again divorced, or widowed, because she has been defiled by marrying a second man. The remarriage to the first husband would be abhorrent to God. In Luke 16:18 the author places an unstated emphasis on Gen 2:24 (which is explicitly stated in Matt 19:9, and Mark 10:6–9 citing Gen 1:27) by focusing on the definition of an adulterous man, not the wife.

Jesus rephrases Deut 24:1–4 by explaining that a divorced husband commits adultery by divorcing his wife and marrying another woman, and that a man commits adultery by marrying a divorced woman (because she is forever married to her first husband). Jesus makes no distinction between the reason a man may divorce his wife in Deut 24:1, if he finds something “obnoxious” (ערוה), a meaning much debated in rabbinical law, and having intercourse with her after she has had another husband in Deut 24:4, which is abhorrent to God (תועבה).¹¹² In Jesus's interpretation in Luke, Mark and Matt 19:9, Gen 1:27 and Gen 2:24

¹¹¹ Regev, *The Temple in Early Christianity*, 198–200. Brown, *Gospel According to John I–XII*, LIX–LXIV.

¹¹² Michael L. Satlow, *Jewish Marriage in Antiquity* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), 235–37.

are the lenses through which his exegesis of Deut 24:1–4 must be understood. Marriage forever becomes more complicated by divorce, and the husband has committed adultery in the circumstances described. His response to the question by the Pharisees in Mark 10:2, 10:3–12 is unequivocally in the negative; it is in line with the Temple Scroll (11Q19:57, 17–18. “And he shall not take upon her (his wife) another wife, for/ she alone shall be with him all the days of her life.”¹¹³

In Matt 5:31–32 Jesus supports the basic later rabbinical tenet of Deut 24:1 that divorce can only be instigated by the husband, which is not opposed in the Mishnah. He agrees with the interpretation of a later written argument *Gittin* 9:10 (by the school of Shammai) that interpreted the “obnoxious” grounds for a man divorcing his wife in Deut 24:1, as meaning female adulterous or sexually unacceptable behaviour.

The question from the Pharisees in Matt 19:3, “Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for any cause?” prefigures the other rabbinical discussions in *Gittin* 9:10, from the school of Hillel. They interpret “obnoxious” to mean any trivial cause such as over-salting or burning a husband’s dinner. Rabbi Akiva (c.50–135 CE), interprets part of Deut 24:1 (“if she finds no favour in his eyes”) to mean if the husband finds another woman more attractive.¹¹⁴

The Matthean Jesus rejects the question from the Pharisees out of hand without discussion, referring again to Gen 2:23–24, and Gen 1:27 (in apparent contradiction to Matt 5:32). If such discussions were taking place when Jesus was approached with this question in Matt 19:3, his response shows a level of engagement with other rabbis on points of Jewish law.¹¹⁵ This being the case, Jesus could honor ritual corpse impurity before Passover, revising Jewish law in his own interpretative way.

My argument is not that Jesus rejected ritual corpse impurity laws but that he took purity regulations on corpse defilement very seriously. If Jesus regarded himself and/ or his followers as ritually impure after the raising of Lazarus it would also be beholden upon him to separate himself and his disciples from other Jews for seven days if Passover fell within a week after the resurrection of Lazarus. They would not be able to take part in the first Passover.

¹¹³ Yadin, *Temple Scroll*, 1.355, 2.258; Brooke, “The Temple Scroll and the New Testament,” in *The Dead Sea Scrolls and the New Testament*, 100–101.

¹¹⁴ See also, Satlow, *Jewish Marriage in Antiquity*, 356 n. 45.

¹¹⁵ Further discussion in Aaron M. Gale, “The Gospel According to Matthew,” in *The Jewish Annotated New Testament*, 34–35, note to Matt 19:1–12. Gale states that the opinion of Jesus resonates with the House of Shammai, which permitted separation for serious transgressions only [on the part of women].

John 19:36

The citation in John 19:36, the biblical edict that no bone of the Passover lamb should be broken is not in the Synoptics. This command appears in the rule on the Second Passover in Num 9:12b, and on the first Passover in LXX Exod 12:10, Exod 12:46c (and Ps 34:20 [21]).¹¹⁶

The text in Exod 12:46c is part-extant in the Qumran biblical scrolls: 4QDeutⁱ 10:1; Num 9:12a is not extant in the Qumran scrolls. Moreover, as suggested above, there may also be a sub-textual reference in John 19:31 to LXX Exod 12:10a, MT Exod 12:10, and Num 9:12b, on the prohibition of leaving the remains of the Paschal lamb until the morning.

The rule against the breaking of the bone of the Passover lamb in Exodus 26:46 and Num 9:12, is absent from the Temple Scroll's festival calendar legislation. Furthermore, the prohibition on breaking a bone of the Passover lamb, and the burning of the remainder of the sacrifice before the morning is not included in the Temple Scroll's Passover passage (11Q19 17, 6–9).¹¹⁷

In contrast, *Jub.* 49:1–14 repeats the biblical edict that no bone of the Passover lamb should be broken (*Jub.* 49:13, 14) and it extends an explanation.¹¹⁸ The *Book of Jubilees* also reiterates that the Passover lamb should not remain until the morning by specifying time units: the lamb must be slaughtered in the third part of the night, which is before sunset (*Jub.* 49: 2, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 28) and what is left over from the third part of the night must be burned with fire (*Jub.* 49:18) (paraphrasing Exod 12:10c). The timescale in the Temple Scroll

¹¹⁶ The biblical cross references are noted in different contexts in James H. Charlesworth, *Jesus as Mirrored in John: The Genius in the New Testament* (London: T&T Clark, 2019), 443–444; Daise, *Feasts in John*, 75, n. 22, with reference to the comparison of Jesus with the Passover sacrifice, citing the overall thesis of Gail A. Yee, *Jewish Feasts and the Gospel of John* (Zacchaeus Studies: New Testament. Wilmington, Delaware: Michael Glazier); Brown suggests that the promise in Ps 34:20 (21) not to allow any bone to be broken may be to enable resurrection, depending on how late this idea in Jewish thought is, Brown, *Gospel According to John XIII–XXI*, 953. He translates the text without a possessive article, “Not a bone is to be broken,” in keeping with LXX, Codex Vaticanus, Exod 12:10 (“A bone of it shall not be broken”), which he states is closest to the Johannine Passion narrative; cf. Exod 12:46 (“You shall not break a bone of it”), and Num 9:12 (“They shall not break a bone of it”) (Brown’s translation), Brown, *Gospel According to John XIII–XXI*, 937–38.

¹¹⁷ Yadin, *Temple Scroll*, 1.96–98.

¹¹⁸ *Jub.* 49:13bc: “They are to roast it on a fire. There will be no breaking of any bone in it because no bone of the Israelites will be broken.” *Jub.* 49:14b: “No bone of it is to be broken because it is a festal day and a day which has been commanded.” Translation, James C. VanderKam, *The Book of Jubilees* (CSCO 511; Leuven: Peeters, 1989), 315–20. Cf. Num 9:12: “and they shall not leave any of it over until morning. They shall not break a bone of it. They shall offer it in strict accord with the law of the Passover sacrifice.” Exod 12:46: “It shall be eaten in one house: you shall not take any of the flesh outside the house, nor shall you break a bone of it.” Translation, The Jewish Publication Society (JPS). See also: James C. VanderKam, *Jubilees 20-50* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2018), 1179–1182.

for slaughtering the sacrifice before the evening offering (11Q19 17, 7b), and the law that it must be eaten at night (11Q19 17, 8b), agrees with the biblical texts, and Jubilees 49.

Lectionary Theory

Guinding's theory that the structure of the Fourth Gospel was related to the Torah and haftarah readings of the ancient Jewish lectionary cycle is not universally accepted.¹¹⁹ Here, we will discuss the basic lectionary idea, rather than the details.

According to her calculation she posited that John 11 was linked to the first year of the ancient triennial cycle, placing the Lazarus narrative as the reading for the 7 Shevat (the 11th month). She argued that the Raising of Lazarus was a midrash on the Sabbath reading of Genesis 48, the death of Jacob, and its haftarah, 2 Kgs 13, on the death of David.¹²⁰

In my view, the readings on the deaths of Jacob and David do not seem to be connected to the Raising of Lazarus. However, if one adapts Guinding's lectionary theory and aligns the third Passover in John with the third Passover in the third year of the ancient Jewish triennial cycle the match is more interesting. In the second week of the first month of the third year of ancient triennial cycle, which is the week of the third Passover in the cycle, the seder (Torah reading) begins at Numbers 8:1. In the third week of the first month in the third year of the cycle, which overlaps with the Festival of Unleavened Bread, the Torah reading begins Numbers 9:22. The Torah reading of Numbers 8:22 to 9:21 is not included in the sederim.¹²¹ It is not unusual for the triennial cycle to skip passages. It is possible that sometimes these could be used as special festival readings.¹²² I would suggest, therefore, that the Lazarus narrative, prior the third Passover in John, is a midrash on that section of Num 9, and that it was read on the third Passover of the lectionary cycle (in mid-Nisan in the third year).¹²³

¹¹⁹ Guinding, *The Fourth Gospel and Jewish Worship*, 1–23. For a critique of Guinding's hypothesis and further bibliography, see John Tudno Williams, "The Fourth Gospel and Jewish Worship: Guinding's Theory Revisited," in *The Reception of the Hebrew Bible in the Septuagint and the New Testament: Essays in Memory of Aileen Guinding*, ed. David J. A. Clines and J. Cheryl Exum (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2013), 126–145. I thank George Brooke for this reference; Daise, *Feasts*, 81–87.

¹²⁰ Guinding, *Fourth Gospel*, 143–53.

¹²¹ Joseph Jacobs (ed.) "Triennial Cycle," in *The Jewish Encyclopedia*, (New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1906), 12.1388. See Guinding's reconstruction of a triennial cycle beginning in Nisan, Guinding, *Fourth Gospel*, 233.

¹²² For example, Lev 16, is not part of the triennial cycle; it is read in the synagogue on Yom Kippur, Jacob Mann-Isaiah Sonne, *The Bible as Read and Preached in the Old Synagogue*, 2 vols. (New York: Ktav Publishing, 1940, reprint 1971 [vol 1]; Cincinnati, Ohio: Hebrew Union College, 1966 [vol 2]), 2.88. Jacobs (ed), *Jewish Encyclopedia*, 12.1388.

¹²³ Cf. Guinding, *Fourth Gospel*, 233.

In sum, it is likely that Jesus did take purity regulations seriously, creating an additional emphasis on the conditions that should be observed in Num 9:9–11. As Claude Cohen-Matlofsky has shown, the belief in resurrection was not uncommon among some Jewish groups in the first century CE, therefore, a narrative on the raising of a dead person before Passover could well have been understood in the context of the time.¹²⁴

It is generally acknowledged that the author or redactors of John were interested in the Jewish festivals. Here, it is likely that he, or they, were informing Jewish Christians about Jewish festivals other than those in the Synoptic gospels. Following the destruction of the Temple, the calendars of the priestly courses would have fallen into disuse; however, the collective memory of the festivals at which the priestly families officiated is likely to have remained.

Conclusion

This analysis builds on research on the possible application of early Jewish calendars in relation to the chronology of the last meal of Jesus and his disciples in the Gospel of John. I have proposed that there is an alternative chronology whereby the Passover in the narrative of Passion Week in the Fourth Gospel was the Second Passover. The Second Passover is listed in the calendars of the priestly courses from Qumran; however, this material was not available to earlier scholars who worked on the calendars in early Judaism and the gospels.

The timescale and content may indicate that Jesus and his followers were unclean at the time of the Passover following the resurrection of Lazarus and that Jesus chose to return to the house of Lazarus in Bethany six days before the Second Passover. I pointed out that a parallel story involving Jesus visiting the house of Simon the Leper at Bethany had important similarities, and that the subject of corpse impurity and impurity is a running theme in the gospels. The resurrection of Lazarus is a culmination of these purity narratives and provides an internal logic to demonstrate that the authors of the Fourth Gospel felt that it was important to remember and preserve the Second Passover. They used it in a literary *tour de force*, creating a narrative about raising the dead, rather than producing a story about defilement from touching a dead body shortly before Passover.

The argument also points out that John 19:36, contains a summary citation from LXX Exod 12:10, Exod 12:46, Num 9:12, and *Jub.* 49:13, 14, 18. As Num 9:6–12 is the regulation

¹²⁴ Claude Cohen-Matlofsky, “Resurrection, from the Hebrew Bible to the Rock-Cut Tombs: An Inscribed Concept,” *Qumran Chronicle* 23 (2015): 425–51.

on the Second Passover in the Torah, the possibility that this reference is being cited cannot be ruled out.

Finally, the hypothesis is plausibly supported in lectionary theory in which Num 9 falls in mid-Nisan in the third year of the ancient Palestinian triennial cycle, at the time of Passover. Despite its position in the lectionary calendar, this sole chapter on the Second Passover is not part of the triennial liturgical cycle. This could suggest that it was used as festival reading at Passover, as is the case with Lev 16, which is read in the synagogue at Yom Kippur and is absent from the triennial lectionary cycle. In any case, this section of the Bible occurs at the time of Passover in the cycle's third year.