

Chapter XXI

The Seven Days of Systems E, F, and G

Our attention shall now turn to the evidence demonstrating the mechanics of the Christian Hasidic construct as represented by Roman assembly System E. This construct eventually resulted in another form, the Syrian hybrid System F, which was an attempt to merge the Quartodeciman System A with System E. To this discussion we shall also attach a description of the more recent innovation, System G.

We shall first examine the evidence for the Roman assembly System E construct. The evidence shall demonstrate the change by the western assemblies to the Hasidic method for the seven days of unleavened bread. To justify this change, System E advocates were also obliged to apply a new interpretation to the Last Supper, explaining why the messiah and his disciples observed the 14th of Abib as the Phasekh supper if the 15th was deemed the proper time under the Torah of Moses.

In the region of Syria, meanwhile, theologians, who had supported Systems A and D and were influenced by the Council of Nicaea to adopt System E, developed a hybrid solution in order to overcome the strong Quartodeciman leanings of that region. They adopted System F. The Syrian hybrid System F kept the 14th as the Phasekh (the Last Supper) but then utilized the Hasidic System B for the seven days of unleavened bread (i.e., from the 15th until the end of the 21st). In this fashion, they were able to observe, along with the West, the Friday and Saturday fast and to celebrate the first day of the week within the seven days of unleavened bread as the Phasekh of the resurrection. In effect, System F actually served as a transitional phase. As time progressed, the East, for the most part, dropped System F and fully adopted System E.

Finally, we shall also add a few comments about System G, a more recent invention that is also built upon the Hasidic construct for the seven days of unleavened bread. Like her sister systems, System G observes the seven days of unleavened bread from the 15th until the end of the 21st of Abib and, like System F, keeps Phasekh on the 14th of Abib.

System E

To counter the Quartodecimans, the western assemblies, under the leadership of Irenaeus, bishop of Gaul, and Victor, bishop of Rome, abandoned System D, which observed the 14th through 20th days of the first moon for the seven days of unleavened bread, and adopted in its place System E, which utilized

the Hasidic construct for these seven days (i.e., counting from the 15th until the end of the 21st day).

The advocates of System E advanced their formula by making the claim that the Pharisees had been correct all along in observing the 15th as the legal Phasekh and as the first day of the seven days of unleavened bread. Indeed, the Jewish Talmud records that “on the *arab* of the Phasekh” Yahushua was hanged, i.e., on the afternoon before the Phasekh supper.¹ Mimicking this view, The Good News According to Peter, a Roman Christian work composed no earlier than about 180 C.E., states that Yahushua was delivered to the people “on the day before the unleavened bread, their feast,”² this despite the plain statements from the New Testament that the messiah both ate his Last Supper and died on the first day of unleavened bread.³

Armed with this Pharisaic view, the advocates of System E denounced any celebration of the 14th as a day of Phasekh. Instead, they advanced the doctrine that, at the messiah’s Last Supper, he never actually kept the legal Phasekh of the written Torah. Rather, they claimed that he merely kept the 14th as a typology for a new Christian Phasekh which took the place of the old Jewish Phasekh.

Though Good Friday (which they calculated as the day of the week when the messiah suffered death) and the following Saturday were also observed in remembrance, these days were treated as a time of fasting. The celebration of the new Christian Phasekh as a feast, on the other hand, was kept only on the first day of the week, the day of the resurrection, called “the Sovereign’s day” (the “Lord’s day” in popular English culture), when that day fell during the seven days of unleavened bread (i.e., from the 15th through the 21st days of the first moon).

The Last Supper: Not the Legal Phasekh?

One of the key elements in the System E scenario is the view that the Last Supper of the messiah was not the dinner of the legal Phasekh, this despite three Synoptic texts explicitly mentioning the preparations for it as the Phasekh⁴ and the reference in Luke, 22:15–18, to “eating the Phasekh (lamb)” at this meal.⁵ They do agree that the Last Supper took place on the 14th of Abib, within the night prior to the afternoon of the Jewish sacrifice of the Phasekh lamb⁶ and in the 24-hour day before the Jewish leaders kept their Phasekh supper.⁷ The System E view is clearly set forth by three important and early supporters of that interpretation: Hippolytus, Peter of Alexandria, and Chrysostom.

¹ B. Sanh., 43a, “And it is tradition: בְּשֻׁרְבַּחֲפֹצָה (On the *arab* of the Phasekh) they hung Yeshua (Yahushua the Nazarene). And the crier went forth before him 40 days, (saying), ‘(Yeshua) goes forth to be stoned, because he has practiced magic and deceived and led astray Israel.’” The terms “*Arab*” and “the Phasekh” are used here in the Pharisaical sense, i.e., to refer to the “afternoon” of the day of the Phasekh sacrifice (Abib 14).

² GN Peter, 3.

³ Matt., 26:17; Mark, 14:12; Luke, 22:7.

⁴ Mark, 14:12–17; Matt., 26:17–20; Luke, 22:7–14.

⁵ JTS, 9, pp. 305–307; EWJ, p. 16–19, p. 16, n. 2, p. 19, n. 2; CSJBO, pp. 119f.

⁶ Mark, 14:12; Luke, 22:7.

⁷ John, 18:28.

Hippolytus

Hippolytus (died 235 C.E.) was a strong advocate of the System E (Roman assembly) interpretation. Due to his beliefs, he found it important in his writings to address the Quartodeciman argument that the “Phasekh should be kept on the 14th day of the first moon, according to the commandment of the Torah, on whatever day (of the week) it should occur.” Hippolytus retorts that these Quartodecimans “only regard what has been written in the Torah, that he will be accursed who does not so keep (the Torah) as it is enjoined.”⁸ He then condemns the Quartodecimans as coming under the written Torah, arguing:

They do not, however, attend to this (fact), that the legal enactment was made for the Jews, who in times to come should kill the real Phasekh. And this (sacrifice) has spread unto the nations, and is discerned by trust, and not now observed in the letter (of the law). They attend to this one commandment, and do not look unto what has been spoken by the apostle: “For I testify to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to keep the whole Torah.” In other respects, however, these consent to all the traditions delivered to the assembly by the apostles.⁹

The first detail noticed, as already demonstrated in the first part of our study, is that the western assemblies had lost touch with the difference between the *dogmasin* of the Mosaic Torah and the earlier statutes followed by Abraham. The fact that the Mosaic *dogmasin*, such as fleshly circumcision, had been set aside has nothing to do with whether or not the festival and sacred days of Yahweh are to be kept.

To this doctrine, the proponents of System E added the legal interpretation of the Phasekh advocated by the Hasidic Jews. Hippolytus, for example, claims that the Quartodecimans have “fallen into error by not perceiving that at the time when the messiah suffered HE DID NOT EAT THE PHASEKH OF THE TORAH.”¹⁰ In another place, he similarly states, “for he who said of old, ‘I will not any more eat the Phasekh,’ probably partook of a supper before the Phasekh. BUT THE PHASEKH HE DID NOT EAT, but he suffered; for it was not the time for him to eat (it).”¹¹

Peter of Alexandria

The case for the Hasidic view and against the Aristocratic view is also made by Peter of Alexandria (300–311 C.E.). Though he accepts Abib 14 as the

⁸ Hippolytus, *Ref. Her.*, 6:11.

⁹ Hippolytus, *Ref. Her.*, 6:11. Hippolytus misses the intent of Saul’s comment. Saul also commands men to keep the Phasekh festival (1 Cor. 5:7f). Circumcision was a *dogmasin* (public decree) and was never a pre-Torah *olam* (age-lasting) statute. As we have already shown in our Part I, the Festival of Phasekh and Unleavened Bread differs from circumcision in that it is an *olam* statute attached to the Covenants of Promise and does not find its origin as a *dogmasin* of the Torah of Moses.

¹⁰ Hippolytus, frag. 1.

¹¹ Hippolytus, frag. 2.

day of the Phasekh,¹² he does so along the lines of the Pharisees. That is, he considers the Phasekh of the 14th as only including the sacrifice, while the 15th was the feast meal.¹³ Therefore, as is the case with the Pharisees, Peter of Alexandria makes the festival of Phasekh, as found in the Torah of Moses, a celebration lasting eight days.¹⁴

For example, Peter agrees that the 14th was the day upon which the Phasekh was sacrificed and the messiah died.¹⁵ Nevertheless, Peter only accepts the Pharisaic view that, under the written Torah, the high Sabbath was the 15th, the first day of the seven days of unleavened bread, and the correct time of the Phasekh supper. Like Hippolytus, Peter of Alexandria states that the messiah, while in the flesh, “with the people, in the years before his public ministry and during his public ministry, did celebrate the legal and shadowy Phasekh, eating the typical lamb,” for he came not to destroy the Torah, or the prophets, but to fulfill them.¹⁶ Peter of Alexandria then adds:

But after his public ministry, he (Yahushua) DID NOT EAT OF THE LAMB, but himself suffered as the true Lamb in the Phasekh festival, as John, the divine and evangelist, teaches us in the good news written by him.¹⁷

Peter of Alexandria then makes reference to the events of John, 18:28, that, while Yahushua was in the *πραιτώριον* (*praitorion*, hall of judgment), the Jews would not enter, “lest they should be defiled, but that they might eat the Phasekh.” He adds, “On that day, therefore, on which the Jews were about to eat the Phasekh *πρὸς ἐσπέραν* (*pros esperan*; at twilight), our sovereign and saviour Yahushua the messiah was crucified.”¹⁸ The point of this argument is that the messiah ate his Last Supper on the 14th, the day of his execution. Yet, after the Jewish leaders had delivered Yahushua to Pilate, they were still waiting to celebrate their Phasekh meal (i.e., with the arrival of the 15th).

The Quartodecimans actually agreed with this understanding of the events surrounding the Last Supper. The difference between the two positions was the insistence by the advocates of System E that the Jewish leaders (who utilized the Hasidic calculations for the week of Phasekh) were correctly observing the legal Phasekh of the written Torah. The Quartodecimans claimed the Jewish leaders of that time were mistaken. Peter of Alexandria, therefore, finds it fitting to defend the position of the Pharisees against the Quartodecimans. He writes:

For the deity does not say that they (the Jewish leaders) did always err in their heart as regards the precept of the Torah concerning the Phasekh, as you (the

¹² Peter Alex., frag. 5:1.

¹³ Peter Alex., frag. 5:1–7.

¹⁴ Cf., Jos., *Antiq.*, 2:15:1.

¹⁵ Peter Alex., frag. 5:1, 2, 7.

¹⁶ Peter Alex., frag. 5:7.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid.

Quartodecimans) have written, but on account of all their other disobedience, and on account of their evil and unseemly deeds, when, indeed, he perceived them turning to idolatry and to *porneia* (sexual misconduct).¹⁹

Accepting the fact that the Jewish religious leaders had not yet eaten their Phasekh on the 14th, Peter continues:

On that day, therefore, on which the Jews were about to eat the Phasekh πρὸς ἐσπέραν (*pros esperan*; at twilight), our sovereign and saviour Yahushua the messiah was killed on a (torture-)stake, being made the victim to those who were about to partake by trust of the mystery concerning him, according to what is written by the blessed Paul: "For even the messiah our Phasekh is sacrificed for us"; and not as some (the Quartodecimans) who, carried along by ignorance, confidently affirm that after he had eaten the Phasekh, he was betrayed.²⁰

Peter sums up the matter, stating:

At the time, therefore, in which our sovereign suffered for us, according to the flesh, HE DID NOT EAT OF THE LEGAL PHASEKH; but, as I have said, he himself, as the true Lamb, was sacrificed for us in the festival of the typical Phasekh, on the day of the preparation, the 14th of the first lunar month. The typical Phasekh, therefore, then ceased, the true Phasekh being present.²¹

Chrysostom

Chrysostom, patriarch of Constantinople (born 347 C.E., died Sept. 14, 407 C.E.), was appointed bishop of Constantinople in 398 C.E.²² As with the other advocates of System E, he makes the 14th, the day that the messiah ate his Last Supper and suffered death, "the first day of unleavened bread." He then clarifies his view by calling it "the day BEFORE the festival; for they (the Jews) are accustomed always to reckon the day from ἐσπέρας (*esperas*; twilight)."²³ In this way, Chrysostom counts eight days of unleavened bread yet makes the first day of unleavened bread come before the seven-day Festival of Unleavened Bread.

Chrysostom also shows that many of the Christian Quintodecimans (15th day observers) had trouble explaining away the evidence that the Last Supper was the legal Phasekh. He was forced to face the following question:

¹⁹ Peter Alex., frag. 5:4.

²⁰ Peter Alex., frag. 5:7.

²¹ Ibid.

²² JE, 4, p. 75.

²³ Chrysostom, *Hom.*, 81:1.

But how, if they (the disciples of Yahushua) were eating the Phasekh, could they eat it contrary to the Torah? For they should not have eaten it, sitting down to their food. What then can be said? That after eating it (on the 14th), they then sat down to the banquet (on the 15th)?²⁴

His response, in agreement with other advocates of System E, was to allow that the Last Supper on the night of the 14th was indeed a Phasekh meal but not the legal one kept by the Jews. Rather, it was the ordainment of a new "sacrament, at the time of Phasekh."²⁵ As Eutychius (late sixth century C.E.) comments, "Therefore, before he suffered he did eat the Phasekh—the mystical Phasekh, of course."²⁶ This new Phasekh, Chrysostom reports, was kept by the messiah and his disciples the day before the new Christian schedule "to deliver to you the new rites, and to give a Phasekh" by which the messiah could make us spiritual.²⁷ According to this view, the new sacrament was not appointed previously to the day of the messiah's Last Supper, but was given at that time because the written Torah was to cease. Chrysostom adds, "And thus the very chief of the festivals (Phasekh) he (Yahushua) brings to an end, removing them to another most awful table."²⁸ Thus began a new table from which we are to eat a new Phasekh with new rituals and meanings.

The advocates of System E proposed that this new Phasekh was kept for the first time on the 14th of the first moon with the messiah's Last Supper. Because the messiah's Last Supper was observed on the 14th, it was also reasoned that it could not be the legal Phasekh of the Torah of Moses, which was observed by the Jewish state on the 15th. The interpretation was then advanced that, since the messiah's Phasekh was held on the 14th, it was a typology for Christians, meant to be expressed in the future only on the joyful celebration of the day of the resurrection (the Sovereign's day), which fell on the first day of the week during the seven days of unleavened bread. It was therefore advanced that the Last Supper actually allowed Christians to keep the Phasekh annually on the first day of the week during any one of the seven days of unleavened bread (i.e., from the 15th through the 21st day of the first moon).

The dispute was bitter and the schism was inevitable. The Quartodecimans agreed with the Roman assembly that the old Phasekh of the Torah, which required each household to sacrifice a lamb, had indeed come to an end with the death of the messiah, the true lamb.²⁹ They also agreed that the unleavened bread and wine consumed at the Phasekh meal revealed a higher meaning as symbols of the messiah. Yet they ardently disagreed with the System E premise that the Phasekh supper kept by the messiah just prior to his death, falling as it did on the 14th of Abib, was not the legal Phasekh.

²⁴ Chrysostom, *Hom.*, 81:3.

²⁵ Chrysostom, *Hom.*, 82:1.

²⁶ Eutychius, 2.

²⁷ Chrysostom, *Hom.*, 82:1.

²⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹ For example, this theme is expressed throughout the work on the Phasekh by Melito of Sardis. Also see Ps.-Hippolytus, 1-3; Pas. Proclam., *Exsult.*, 4.

Neither would they admit to the idea that the messiah observed the Phasekh only this once on the 14th, and that this one-time celebration set an example which gave Christians permission to change the official reckoning for the date of the Phasekh supper and mystery of the cup and bread.

The Seven Days

For System E the seven days of unleavened bread followed the Hasidic practice (System B), extending from the beginning of the 15th until the end of the 21st day of the first moon. Nevertheless, the first moon of the year was still determined by the 14th day of the moon falling either on or after the spring equinox.³⁰

Wilfrid, at the Synod of Whitby (664 C.E.), for example, notes that "it came to pass that the *dominica* (Sovereign's day) Phasekh was kept only between the 15th day of the change of the moon to the 21st and no day else."³¹ The System E argument is also fully expressed in a letter from the abbot Ceolfrid to Naitan, king of the Picts of Scotland, trying to convince the latter to keep the Phasekh established by the Roman Church. He gives three rules for the observance of Phasekh:

There are then three rules given in sacred Scripture by which the time of solemnizing Phasekh is appointed for us, which by no authority at all of many may be changed; of which rules two are established by the deity in the Torah of Moses, and the third was joined in the good news (New Testament) by the means of the sovereign's suffering and resurrection. For the Torah commanded that in the first month of the year, and in the third week of the same month, that is from the 15th day to the 21st, the Phasekh should be kept: it was added by the institution of the apostles out of the good news (New Testament) that in the selfsame third week we should tarry for the Sovereign's day (Sunday) and in it keep the beginning of the time of Phasekh.³²

In reference to the commands of Exodus, 12:1-3, Ceolfrid also takes the Hasidic interpretation:

By the words which it is most plainly seen, that in the observation of the Phasekh the 14th day is mentioned, yet it is not so mentioned that on that very 14th day it is commanded the Phasekh (lamb) should be kept, but that, when at length *vespera* (twilight) of the 14th day approaches, that is, when the 15th moon, which making the beginning of the third

³⁰ E.g., Eusebius, H.E., 7:32:14-17; Ps.-Chrysostom, 7:4, 35; Bede, *Hist.*, 5:21.

³¹ Bede, *Hist.*, 3:25.

³² Bede, *Hist.*, 5:21.

week, comes forth into the face of the heaven (i.e. very late afternoon of the 14th), the lamb is bidden to be killed: and it is plain that it is the selfsame night of the 15th day of the moon in which the Egyptians were smitten and Israel redeemed from the long slavery. "Seven days," he says, "shall you eat unleavened bread." With which words likewise all the third week of the said first month it is decreed should be solemn. But that we should not think the same 7 days to be counted from the 14th to the 20th, he added straightway: "The first day there shall be no leaven in your houses. Whosoever eats leavened bread from the first day to the seventh, that life shall be cut off from Israel," and so forth, till he says: "For in this selfsame day will I bring your army out of the land of Egypt."³³

Abbot Ceolfrid goes on to deny that the 14th was one of the seven days of unleavened bread by identifying the night that Israel was brought out of Egypt with the 15th, being the day after the Phasekh (sacrifice), according to the Hasidic interpretation of Numbers, 33:3.

He (Moses) then calls the first day of unleavened bread the one in which he was to bring their army out of Egypt. But it is manifest that they were not brought out on the 14th day, in the *vespera* whereof the lamb was slain, and which is properly called the Phasekh or *Phase*; but in the 15th day they were brought out of Egypt, as it is evidently written in the book of Numbers.³⁴

Ceolfrid thereby makes the seven days last "from the beginning of the third week, that is, from the 15th day of the first moon to the 21st day of the same month fully complete."³⁵ His argument continues:

Further, the 14th day is noted down separately outside this number under the name of the Phasekh, as that which follows in Exodus does evidently declare; where, after it was said: "For in this selfsame day will I bring your armies out of the land of Egypt"; it was added straightway: "And you shall observe this day in your generations by an ordinance for ever. In the first month, on the 14th day of the month, you shall eat unleavened bread to the 21st day of the month *ad vesperam* (at twilight)."³⁶ Seven days shall there be no

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ The term *ad vesperam* (at twilight) is here a translation of the Hebrew term בֶּעָרָב (be-arab), but is interpreted in the Pharisee fashion as late afternoon.

leaven found in your homes." For who cannot see, that from the 14th to the 21st be not only 7 days but rather 8, if the 14th be itself also reckoned in? But if we will count from the *vespera* of the 14th day until the *ad vesperam* of the 21st—as the verity of sacred Scripture diligently search out does declare—we shall well perceive that the 14th day continues its *vesperam* to the beginning of the Phasekh festival in such a manner that the whole sacred solemnity contains only 7 nights with as many days.³⁷

Authority from Constantine

What had begun in c.196 C.E. as a challenge to the Quartodeciman position by Victor, bishop of Rome, was finally granted full authority throughout the Roman empire at the behest of Emperor Constantine. Constantine convened the Council of Nicaea in 325 C.E. One of the results of this conference was the declaration by Constantine that the Hasidic view for the seven days of unleavened bread, as instituted by Pope Victor, was the correct system under the Torah. Proof of this detail is demonstrated in a letter sent by Pope John IV (consecrated in December of 640 C.E.) to the Scots for the sake of persuading them to amend their System D position. As part of this letter the pope is found "plainly asserting therein that the sovereign's Phasekh ought to be sought for from the 15th of the moon up to the 21st, AS WAS APPROVED IN THE COUNCIL OF NICAEA."³⁸ Wilfrid at the Synod of Whitby similarly states:

Neither does this tradition of the good news (New Testament) and of the apostles break the Torah but rather fulfill it, for in the Torah it is commanded that the Phasekh should be solemnized from *ad vesperam* (at twilight = *be-arab*, interpreted as late afternoon) of the 14th day of the change of the moon of the first month until the 21st day of the same moon *ad vesperam* (at twilight = *be-arab*, interpreted as late afternoon): to the following of which observation all the successors of blessed John in Asia after his death and all the assembly throughout the world were converted. And it was BY THE NICAEAN COUNCIL not newly decreed but confirmed, as the ecclesiastical history witnesses, that this is the true Phasekh. This only is to be celebrated by believing men.³⁹

With the force of the Christian emperor of Rome behind the decision, the western assemblies moved to force all other Christian assemblies to unify under just one common system for celebrating Phasekh.

³⁷ Bede, *Hist.*, 5:21.

³⁸ Bede, *Hist.*, 2:19.

³⁹ Bede, *Hist.*, 3:25.

Hybrid Syrian System F

Another form of Phasekh among the ancient assemblies was System F, which was practiced for a time in Syria. The Syrian Phasekh celebration of the third and fourth century C.E. was the direct heir of the Asiatic tradition of the Quartodecimans.⁴⁰ At the same time, during this period the eastern regions came evermore under the increasing pressure from the western assemblies, especially after the Council of Nicaea (325 C.E.), to convert to System E. This heavy western influence eventually resulted in the adoption of System E throughout the East, but not right away.

Jerome, in a letter to Pope Damasus written in about 377 C.E., mentions the troubles found among the Christian assemblies of the East (Syria) during this period.⁴¹ He speaks of the East (Syria) as being “shattered as it is by the long-standing feuds, subsisting between its peoples.” He continues by observing that this problem “is bit by bit tearing into shreds the seamless vest of the sovereign.”⁴² During this time of upheaval in Syria, and as a transitional phase, some of the Syrian Christians created a hybrid form of the Phasekh celebration that incorporated aspects of both Systems A and E.

On the one hand, the Syrian Christians were strongly allied with the Quartodecimans on the issue of which day should represent Phasekh. The historian A. Hamman writes of this transition period:

Syria, close to the usage of the Jewish-Christian community, continued to celebrate the Pasch, like the Jews, on the fourteenth Nisan, the anniversary of the night when Jesus was delivered on whatever day of the week it might occur.⁴³

The *Didascalia Apostolorum*, composed in the first decades of the third century C.E., reflects the Ante-Nicaean portion of this transitional phase for those of Syria following the Quartodeciman System A premise.

Wherever, then, the 14th of the Phasekh falls, so keep it; for neither the month nor the day squares with the same season every year, but is variable. When therefore that people (the Jews) keep the Phasekh (i.e. the 15th), do you fast; and be careful to perform your vigil within their (days of) unleavened bread. But on the first day of the week make good cheer at all times.⁴⁴

Aphraates (writing c.344 C.E.) demonstrates the continued Quartodeciman proclivity of the Syrians after the Council of Nicaea when he writes:

⁴⁰ EEC, p. 15.

⁴¹ Jerome, *Epist.*, 15, cf., 16.

⁴² Jerome, *Epist.*, 15.

⁴³ TPM, p. 11.

⁴⁴ Didas. Apost., 21, 5:20:10.

For at the dawn of the 14th day he (Yahushua) ate the Phasekh with his disciples ACCORDING TO THE TORAH OF ISRAEL, and on this day of the Parasceve (Preparation), the 14th day, he was judged until the sixth hour and was killed on a (torture-) stake for three hours. . . . Hence the one who has difficulties about these days will understand that at the dawn of the 14th (day) our sovereign celebrated the Phasekh and ate and drank with his disciples, but from the time when the cock crowed (about 3 A.M.) he ate and drank no more, because they took him captive and began to judge him.⁴⁵

Again he writes:

Our saviour ate the Phasekh with his disciples in the sacred night of the 14th, and he performed the sign of the Phasekh (i.e., the Eucharist mystery) in truth for his disciples. . . . And he was taken in the night of the 14th, and his trial lasted until the sixth hour (noon), and at the time of the sixth hour they sentenced him and lifted him up on the (torture-)stake.⁴⁶

Ephraem the Syrian (mid-fourth century C.E.) claims the messiah ate the legal Phasekh. He tells his Jewish adversaries:

In your time our sovereign ate the little Phasekh and became himself the great Phasekh. Phasekh was mingled with Phasekh, festival joined to festival; a temporary Phasekh, and another that abides; type and fulfillment.⁴⁷

In this same vein, the Syrian writer Cyrillonas (end of the fourth century C.E.) equates the night that the messiah prepared and ate the Phasekh in the upper room on the 14th of Abib with the night of the Israelite Phasekh in Egypt:

Moses went down and prepared a Phasekh for the earthly ones in the depths, that is, in Egypt, the grave of the Hebrews. Our sovereign, however, went up to the bright and airy height (of the upper room) and there prepared his Phasekh, in order to lift us up into his kingdom. The lamb was sacrificed in Egypt, and our sovereign in the upper room; the lamb in the depths and the first-born on the height. Our sovereign

⁴⁵ Aphraates, *Dem.*, 12:12.

⁴⁶ Aphraates, *Dem.*, 12:6.

⁴⁷ Ephraem, *Hymns*, 3:2.

led his group and reclined in the dining room. He went up and was the first to recline, and his disciples (reclined) after him. There they lay with him at the table and watched him, how he ate and was changed. The Lamb ate the lamb, the Phasekh consumed the Phasekh.⁴⁸

Meanwhile, some of the Syrian Christians were influenced by the Roman model for the celebration of Sovereign's day (= the day of the resurrection), which was more fully developed in the latter half of the second century C.E. under Pope Victor. While still keeping the Phasekh on the 14th, they began to observe the following Friday and Saturday as a commemoration of the death and burial (time in the grave) of the messiah and the first day of the week as a commemoration of Yahushua's resurrection. That they observed the first day of the week, for example, is already attested to in the *Didascalia Apostolorum*.⁴⁹ Their observance of Friday and Saturday is reflected in their days of fasting during the time of Phasekh. The *Didascalia Apostolorum*, for instance, states:

But on the Friday and on the Sabbath fast wholly, and taste nothing. . . . Especially incumbent on you therefore is the fast of the Friday and of the Sabbath.⁵⁰

Raniero Cantalamessa comments of this period:

The observance of the week of Unleavened Bread, beginning with the Jewish Pascha on the 14th Nisan, on whatever weekday this happened to fall, together with the beginning of the paschal fast, is also prescribed in the *Didascalia* Thus, and with the title "Day of the Pascha of Passion" for the fourteenth, the Syrian Church honored the Quartodeciman tradition. But, by having the solemnity of the Lord's death always on the following Friday and Saturday, it was able to keep the Pascha with the other Churches and still preserve its content as a feast which emphasized the death of Christ more than the resurrection. In this arrangement, the Syrian Church of the early fourth century agreed with the Audians.⁵¹

A major alteration came after the Council of Nicaea (325 C.E.). In order to accommodate Rome, yet in an effort to maintain their original Quartodeciman

⁴⁸ Cyrillogas, 5, l. 101–103.

⁴⁹ Didas. Apost., 21, 5:20:10, 5:20:10. But on the first day of the week make good cheer at all times; he is guilty of sin, whosoever afflicts his self on the first (day) of the week. And hence it is not lawful, apart from the Phasekh, for any one to fast during those three hours of the night between the Sabbath and the first (day) of the week, because that night belongs to the first (day) of the week.

⁵⁰ Didas. Apost., 21, 5:18, 5:19:6.

⁵¹ EEC, p. 187, n. n.

premise of observing the 14th as the day of Phasekh, many of the Syrian Christians adopted the Hasidic System B for the seven days of unleavened bread (though, like Rome, they disregarded the 15th and 21st days of Abib as always being high Sabbaths). Nevertheless, they continued to observe the Phasekh on the 14th day, thereby increasing the celebration of the festival to eight days. In doing so, they developed a Quartodeciman hybrid we call System F.

The newer arrangement (System F) appears for the first time in the works of Aphraates (writing in c.344 C.E.). In his work, the 14th is still lauded as the day of the Phasekh and the sovereign's suffering.⁵² Yet now, to this celebration is attached the Hasidic construct for the seven days of unleavened bread. He writes:

After the Phasekh, Israel eats unleavened bread for seven days, to the 21st of the month; we too observe the unleavened bread—as a festival of our saviour.⁵³

Aphraates further argues that we should observe the whole week “in his (the messiah's) suffering and in his Unleavened Bread, because AFTER the Phasekh come the seven days of unleavened bread, to the 21st (day).”⁵⁴

With the acceptance of System F, the Syrians eventually accepted the Roman Catholic construct (System E) in its entirety. Indeed, by the end of the eighth century C.E., the whole Christian world, including the East, was established in that camp.

Modern Hybrid System G

Finally, a few present-day Christian groups have formulated a Phasekh construct that is similar to the old Syrian hybrid System F.⁵⁵ This practice we have labeled System G. It is not a system known to have been argued by any of the early Jewish or Christian assemblies but, because of its similarity to System F, the claim by its advocates that it was the correct and earliest practice, and due to its popularity in some groups, we shall not fail to mention it as a possibility.

As with the old Syrian system, the Passover supper is observed on the night of the 14th. The 14th is itself considered a memorial day. Meanwhile, as with the neo-Aristocratic System C and the Christian System F, the advocates of this view imitate the Hasidic method for counting the seven days of unleavened bread, i.e., from the 15th until the end of the 21st of Abib. In most variations of this system, the 14th is a day to eat unleavened bread. Nevertheless, the 14th is neither kept as a high Sabbath nor is counted as one of the seven days of unleavened bread. Rather, the honor of a high Sabbath is given only to the 15th and the 21st of Abib. The 15th is also kept as a supper and is called the Feast of Unleavened Bread.

⁵² Aphraates, *Dem.*, 12:6–8, 12–13.

⁵³ Aphraates, *Dem.*, 12:8.

⁵⁴ Aphraates, *Dem.*, 12:12.

⁵⁵ Some notable Christian groups to use this Syrian-like format are the older branch of the Worldwide Church of God, the Assemblies of Yahweh, and Yahweh's Restoration Ministry.

Conclusion

When System D failed to have a major impact on the conservative Quartodeciman groups, tactics in the West were changed and System E was adopted, being roughly the present practice of the Roman Catholics and Protestants. This innovation followed the Hasidic construct for observing the seven days of unleavened bread, i.e., from the beginning of the 15th until the end of the 21st day of the first moon. Emphasis is placed on the day of the messiah's resurrection, being the first day of the week falling within the seven days of unleavened bread.

The advocates of System E do not allow that the 14th of the first moon is the day of the legal Phasekh supper mentioned in the Torah of Moses. Instead, the evidence that the messiah and his disciples kept the Phasekh sacrifice and supper on the night of the 14th, therefore before Yahushua's death, is interpreted as a pre-Phasekh enacted parable. The Last Supper, accordingly, was merely a foretype of the Christian Phasekh that was to be kept on the first day of the week that fell from the 15th to 21st days of the first moon, being the celebration of the messiah's resurrection.

System F, meanwhile, was a Syrian development that sought to breach the differences between System E and the opposition forces from System A. Nevertheless, it actually served as a transitional phase in Syria and other parts of the East, leading them from Systems A and D to System E. Once the East had come to the understanding that the seven-day period for unleavened bread actually extended from the 15th until the end of the 21st, it opened the door to the full acceptance of the Hasidic premises for the System E construct. When this transition period was over, the East had adopted System E.

The present-day incarnation, so-to-speak, of System F is System G. Like its antecedent, System G observes the 14th as Phasekh and keeps the 15th until the end of the 21st as the seven days of unleavened bread. It differs in that it does not observe the first day of the week following the 14th as the Phasekh of the resurrection, though it does count that day as the first of the 50-day count to Pentecost. Rather, System G keeps the 15th as the Feast of Unleavened Bread and observes both the 15th and the 21st as high Sabbaths.