

***The Closing Period of  
Our Lord's Life on Earth  
Chronologically Considered***

By RAH

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## Introduction

It was over 30 years ago when studying the subject of the feasts of Jehovah that I realized something was wrong with the Friday crucifixion-burial view. I wrote notes on this matter in a notebook, substantially taking the position on various texts as given in this pamphlet, though I have added material and a number of charts for this pamphlet. Now that there is an “internet” there are many articles available on the subject presenting a wide divergence of views. Among these are papers by Jewish Christians who are Sabbath-keepers and who work out a chronology so that the Lord rose from among the dead, allegedly on the Sabbath. Other articles represent conflicts within groupings of churches. Other papers are written independently from those. There are some who espouse a Thursday afternoon crucifixion, as does the paper in the reader’s hands. However, there are numerous things in those papers with which I do not concur. So, when I refer to the *Thursday crucifixion view* in this pamphlet, the reader should understand that I am not speaking in favor of all who advocate a Thursday afternoon crucifixion. I use the expression to refer to what is in this pamphlet

There are some who believe that our Lord was crucified on a Wednesday because they believe that three days and three night means 72 hours. If that is so, it seems difficult to me not to think that it means  $72 \times 60 = 4320$  minutes = 259,200 seconds. This is a concept of time that is not found in Scripture. It is imported into Scripture from our Western way of thinking. We will briefly review this idea in Appendix 1.

Some think that our Lord died on our Thursday afternoon while most believe his death occurred on our Friday afternoon — in both cases at about our 3 PM.

The Friday crucifixion view cannot be sustained unless at least four essential points for the Friday view are true:

- (1) the idea that “between the two evenings” means that there is a first evening at about 3 PM and a second evening which occurs about 6 PM (this is essential to meeting the requirement of Matt. 12:40);
- (2) the day of the crucifixion was the day before the weekly Sabbath, and so the Lord was buried before 6 PM the same day in which He was crucified, because after that the new Jewish day began. That would be the weekly Sabbath day, so He had to be hurried into the tomb before 6 PM;
- (3) the Passover lamb was normally eaten in the night hours of the beginning of the new Jewish day (after 6 PM) and therefore the Passover lamb was killed on the 14<sup>th</sup> day and eaten on the 15<sup>th</sup> day -- i.e., the first day of the feast of Unleavened Bread.
- (4) the Lord ate the Passover lamb,
  - (a) a day early, at the wrong time, eating a lamb that was killed

at the wrong time;

(b) or, it was not a Passover meal that He ate;

(c) or there were two different calendars in use, and thus there were two valid days on which to eat the Passover (both the 14<sup>th</sup> day and the 15<sup>th</sup> day).

I trust I have correctly represented the Friday crucifixion view, held by most, accurately. These seem to me to be pivotal points on which one’s view depends. If these four ideas are true, the Friday crucifixion view can be sustained. If these four ideas are not true, the crucifixion took place on our Thursday, rather than on our Friday. And what that involves is this:

- (1) the Lord ate the Passover at the right time, eating a lamb that was killed at the right time, namely the 14<sup>th</sup> day;
- (2) point (1) agrees with what happened at the first Passover in Ex. 12 -- for the lamb was killed on the 14<sup>th</sup> day, the blood was applied on the 14<sup>th</sup> day, the Destroyer passed over on the 14<sup>th</sup> day (not the 15<sup>th</sup> day), and the Passover lamb was eaten in the night of the 14<sup>th</sup> day -- all the rites of the Passover completed on the 14<sup>th</sup> day..
- (3) the common view of the Jewish practices at the time of the Lord’s death involves some error, or is not represented correctly, though allegedly based on Pharisaic/Rabbinic tradition.

I have taken into account some arguments against the Thursday view as well as arguments in support of the Friday view and suggest that the Thursday view minimizes the difficulties surrounding this subject, and also avoids the four ideas stated above that are part of the Friday view. It maintains that the Lord ate the Passover at the God-appointed time. However, it is likely that no solution will be entirely satisfactory.

Before passing on, let us take note of the following quotations regarding “between the two evenings”:

Twilight may also be the time designated by the Heb. *bēn hā’arbayim*, lit. “between the two evenings” [cf. Ex. 12:6, RSV mg.]; It is mentioned as the time when the lamps were lit and the evening incense burned (Ex. 30:8), when the evening portion of the daily burnt offering was made (Ex. 29:39, 41; Num. 28:4), and when the passover lamb was slain (Ex. 12:6; Num. 9:3, 5, 11). The precise time of day it designated is not known. According to the Karaites and Samaritans it was a time between sunset and total darkness. Although the Mishnah allowed for slaughtering the Passover lamb in the afternoon, this may originally have

occurred after sunset . . . <sup>1</sup>

This version of “between the two evenings” is compatible with the Thursday view (but not the Friday view, which involves two evenings at 3 PM and 6 PM), specifically the three points above.

Concerning the matter of the determination of the phase of the moon, by which the Jews decided what was the first day of the month so that the Passover would be held on the 14<sup>th</sup> of the month, the results of astronomical calculations have been used by Christians over many years. Tables of these calculations may be found in various books, and, of course, modern computers are now applied to these calculations. But this does not help if the Jewish *observation* regarding the phase of the moon for the month in question was in error by a day, due to whatever causes (or if, perchance, an extra month had been intercalated). In addition to this, the astronomical calculations suppose a certain fixity of the earth in orbit, inclination of its axis, and fixity of rotational speed. Variations would likely affect the accuracy of what the calculations are supposed to represent concerning the past. If the work by the deceased Australian astronomer, George Dodwell, concerning a major tilt in the earth’s axis (occurring about the time of Noah’s flood, if we use the Biblical chronological data) stands up, it seems to me that this may affect astronomical calculations. What is involved is that something tilted the earth quite severely and the earth has followed an exponential curve back to the present position of its axis -- a not unexpected curve when a steady state situation like the spinning earth represents, has been suddenly shocked. The spinning earth would seek to right itself again following an exponential path back to a new steady-state. (And this path would have somewhat of a variation back and forth around the ideal curve to account for wobble caused by, say, the impact that violently tilted the earth.) George Dodwell’s curve has been presented in several books and in articles by creationists.

So, I have not involved this article with astronomical calculations. Rather, an effort has been made to see what Scripture provides that bears on the matter of what day of the week our Lord was crucified and what day He was buried.

The day of the week of the crucifixion does not have the same place in Scripture as does the first day of the week, *expressly designated* as the day of the resurrection. This is the only valid day of “observation” marked out in Scripture for Christians. Nevertheless, the day of the week of the crucifixion is not unimportant in view of the death, burial, and resurrection complex of events as God controlled them. Besides that, an on-going discussion can lead to a better

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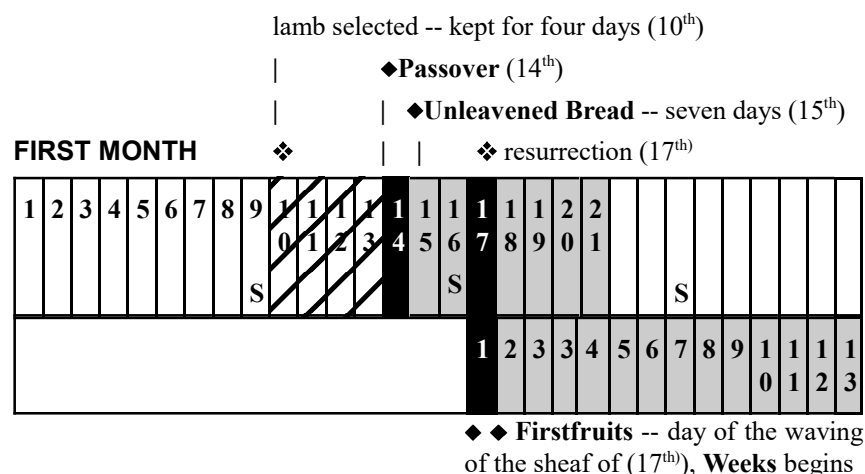
1. Article “Evening” in *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, p. 205 (1982). Some other reference books also say the same. Perhaps there is a trend away from the erroneous Jewish idea about two evenings at 3 PM and 6 PM that has been taking place. The quoted material is in agreement with Deut. 16:6).

understanding of various texts in the Gospels related to these matters. Moreover, the day of the crucifixion is related to the feast of Passover and the feast of Unleavened Bread. This also is of interest to us concerning how these feast were fulfilled to the Jews, as was the waving of the Firstfruits, seen in Christ’s resurrection from among the dead. The Thursday view sees the Lord enter Jerusalem on the 10<sup>th</sup> of the month, presented as king -- but also we may view Him as the lamb to be inspected for four days preparatory to giving Himself for us. That first day (10<sup>th</sup> day) would be the first day of the week (a Sunday). He rose as the sheaf of first-fruits the following first day of the week (a Sunday), and the Spirit descended 50 days later (on a Sunday). Moreover, with a Thursday, the 14<sup>th</sup> day, crucifixion, the Lord rose from the dead on the 17<sup>th</sup> day of the month, the day on which the ark of Noah grounded, and the day on which Israel crossed the Red Sea and arrived on the other side to sea to see the horse and its rider overthrown by the power of Jehovah’s deliverance from the taskmaster.

Numerous charts have been used to present, hopefully, in a more comprehensible way what I understand to be the bearing of many texts.

A published article that holds to the Thursday crucifixion view which seems to me the most clear of errors is Roger Rusk, “The Day Christ Died,” *Christianity Today*, March 29, 1974, 18:13. The writer understands Thursday, April 14, AD 30 to be the date of the crucifixion. There is much that can be said in support of the year AD 30, but I have not based anything in this article on astronomical calculations.

## The Seven Feasts Graphically Illustrated



### SECOND MONTH OF 30 DAYS

Ascension ↑

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
S										S											S								

### THIRD MONTH ◆ Pentecost

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30			

### HIATUS AFTER THE 50<sup>TH</sup> DAY -- ROOM FOR THE NEW TESTIMONY

while most of the natural branches are broken out of the Olive Tree (Rom. 11).

### SEVENTH MONTH

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
S								S						S															

◆ blowing of **Trumpets** (1<sup>st</sup>)

◆ day of **Atonement** (10<sup>th</sup>)

◆ **Booths** -- seven days (15<sup>th</sup>)

### KEY

◆ This indicates one of the seven feasts.

◆ This indicates it was a first day of the week.

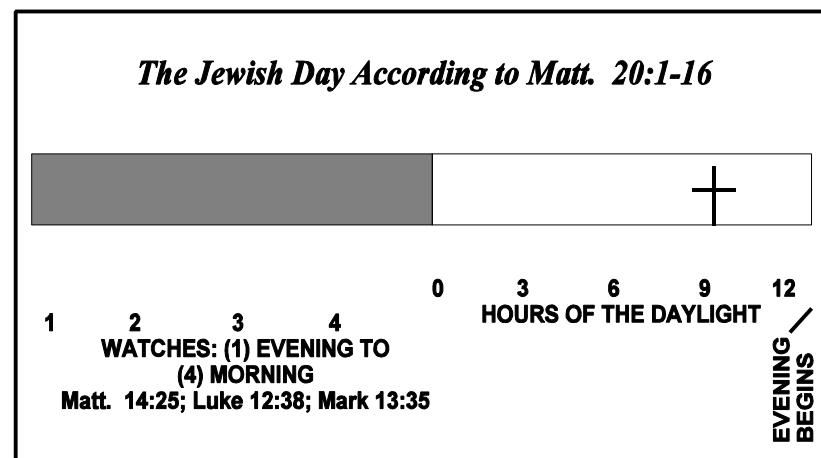
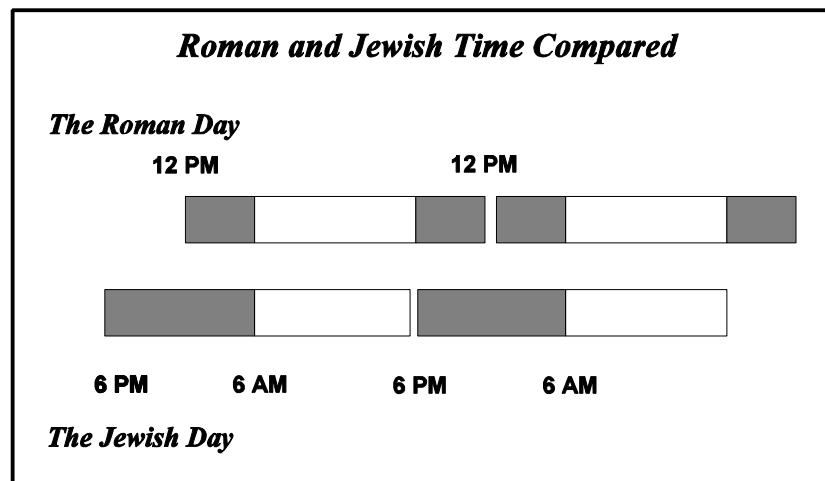
S This indicates a Sabbath day. It is implicit in the Lord's arrangement of the first four feasts that the Sabbath is not prominent. This arrangement has in view the resurrection of Christ on the first day of the week and the descent of the Spirit on the first day of the Week. God had in view the new testimony during the hiatus until the opening of the 7<sup>th</sup> month. The Sabbath days in the seventh month can be determined by counting 30 days to a month and observing the days on which a Sabbath falls during the third to seventh month. I suggest using 30 days for the month because in Dan. 12 the 1335<sup>th</sup> day (when the feast of Tabernacles is fulfilled) is counted from the middle of Daniel's 70<sup>th</sup> week (i.e., from the 1260<sup>th</sup> day). Scripture uses 30 day months for this epoch. The fact that for calendar adjustments Israel used 29 and 30 day months, and even as called for, intercalated an extra month following the 12<sup>th</sup> month, does not appear to have anything to do with God's program regarding the feasts and their fulfilment. Compare the chart shown in connection with the last three feasts.

The 8<sup>th</sup> day, the day after the seven day feast of Booths, has God's eternal rest in view. There is no feast specified for after the eighth day.

\* \* \* \* \*

The placement of the Passover in the first month reflects my understanding concerning the week in which the Lord ate the last Passover with his disciples.

## 1. The Days and Time Used in Scripture



### COUNTING PART OF A DAY AS A WHOLE DAY

John Lightfoot, a Talmudic scholar in the 1600s, who held the Friday crucifixion view, remarked on the Jewish tradition concerning counting a part of a day as the whole:

“A day and a night (saith the tradition) make an *Onah*, and a part of an *Onah* is as the whole.” Therefore Christ may truly be said to have been in the grave three *Onath*, or τρις νυχθήμερον, *three natural days* (when yet the greatest part of the first day was wanting and the night altogether,<sup>2</sup> and the greatest part by far of the third day also,<sup>3</sup> the consent of the schools and the dialect of the nation agreeing thereunto. For, “the least part of the *Onah* concluded the whole.”<sup>4</sup>

This is in accordance with what we find in Scripture usage.

### THE JEWISH DAY BEGAN AT ABOUT SUNDOWN

The Jewish day began at about sundown; i.e. the Jewish day began with the dark part of their 24 hour day. This follows the order in Gen. 1. In the OT, the dark part was divided into three periods (Lam. 2:19; Judg. 7:19; Ex. 14:24; 1 Sam. 11:1). While under the rule of the Romans, the Gospels show the Jews using a system of four watches in the night (Matt. 14:25; Luke 12:38; Mark 13:35). However, the daylight hours were divided into 12 hours starting about our six AM (Matt. 20:1-16). Matthew, Mark, and Luke use Jewish time. John used Roman time wherein the day starts at midnight, the system we use. At least, if we suppose John uses Roman time (a suggestion made in the 1700s), a group of alleged discrepancies disappear. If, therefore, the key fits the lock, we use it to open the door. So, we conclude that John used Roman time. Thus, when Matthew, Mark, and Luke speak of the sixth hour, that is our 12 noon (since these three gospels use Jewish reckoning). In John, the reference to the sixth hour is our six AM or six PM (using Roman time). The Jews still begin their Sabbath at 6 PM on our Friday and their Sabbath lasts until 6 PM on our Saturday. Our Saturday goes on until 12:00 PM.

### WHEN DID EVENING BEGIN IN SCRIPTURAL RECKONING?

There were several erroneous Rabbinical ideas concerning “evening,” and also concerning the phrase “between the two evenings” which Christian scholars have followed; therefore, we will examine the Scripture evidence to show with certainty that the arrival of “evening” meant something quite clear and definite. We noted that in the OT there were three watches in the night (Lam. 2:19; Judg. 7:19; Ex. 14:24; 1 Sam. 11:1) and that in the time of the events recorded in the gospels there were four (Matt. 14:25; Mark 13:35). However, in both testaments, evening was the first watch, and both testaments show that evening occurred about sunset. For the

2. {This assumes a late Friday afternoon burial.}

3. {This is correct, referring to the greatest part of the first day of the week on which the Lord rose from among the dead.}

4. *A Commentary on the New Testament from the Talmud and Hebraica, Matthew – 1 Corinthians*, Grand Rapids: Baker, vol. 2, p. 210, 1979 reprint [1859] [1658-78 in 6 vols.].

OT, cp. Josh. 8:29; Psa. 104:23; Judg. 14:18; Gen. 1:5, 8, 13, 19, 23, 31.

The parable of Matt. 20:1-16 shows that the daylight was divided into 12 hours. At the end of the 12th hour, the laborers were paid. They were paid when evening had arrived. "But when evening was come, the lord of the vineyard says to his steward, Call the workmen and pay [them] their wages" (Matt. 20:8).

Note well that evening did not begin at our 3 PM in the afternoon, as many scholars assert.<sup>5</sup> Three PM is the ninth hour in the Jewish reckoning. Evening began after the eleventh hour; namely, it followed the twelfth hour, our 6 PM.

The sun must go down for the evening to arrive. "But evening being come, when the sun had gone down . . ." (Mark 1:32). Note that the Lord had been in the synagogue (Mark 1:21) and when He left the synagogue He went to the house of Simon (Peter) and John, where he healed Peter's mother-in-law (Mark 1:29-31). The Sabbath day ended and the crowd came to the house with their sick ones. It was evening, the start of the Jewish day after the Sabbath, and He healed the sick (Mark 1:32-34).

So also is it in Luke 24:29, which shows the day declining but evening had not yet arrived.

Lev. 23:32 says, "On the ninth of the month, from even unto even, shall ye celebrate your sabbath." The "even," or "evening" denotes the arrival of a new day, a new 24 hour period. The Jewish day began at even (not at midnight as with Roman time) and lasted until the following sundown. Cp. Judg. 14:18 again. The OT is clear about this (cp. Lev. 22:6, 7; Deut. 23:10, 11; Judg. 14:12-18; see Josh. 8:28, 29; 10:26, 27; Neh. 13:19).

### WHAT DOES BETWEEN THE TWO EVENINGS MEAN?

**Divergence of Views.** The Passover lamb was to be killed "between the two evenings." The common view, as part of the Friday crucifixion view, takes this to mean an evening that begins about 3 PM in the afternoon and another evening beginning about 6 PM (when the next Jewish day begins). That view follows old Rabbinic tradition -- which may be an error in understanding the phrase "between the two evenings." Also, there were Jews who say it means after midday to 6 PM.

Then, there are those who say it means sunset to sunset. Samaritans (and

5. That idea seems necessary to the Friday view since it was "even" when Joseph asked Pilate that he might have the body of the Lord:

Now when even was come there came a rich man of Arimathea, his name Joseph . . . who . . . begged the body of Jesus. . . wrapped it in a linen cloth, and laid it in his new tomb . . . (Matt. 27:60).

And when it was already evening, since it was the preparation, that is, [the day] before a sabbath, Joseph . . . went in to Pilate and begged the body of Jesus (Mark 15:42, 43).

The common idea is that the body was rushed to burial before 6 PM on the day the Lord was crucified, otherwise if the Lord was buried in the dark hours of the next day, the crucifixion could not have taken place on Friday. Matt. 12:40 could not be fulfilled in such a case.

possibly Sadducees) thought it means sunset to dark. This leads to keeping the Passover in the night hours of the new Jewish day, the 14<sup>th</sup> day -- actually the correct time. It would be startling if such persons were closer to the correct time for killing and eating the Passover than the Rabbinical idea of the two evenings meaning 3 PM and 6 PM!

There are some who think the phrase points to dusk, or twilight.

Such divergence in view is a sample of the wide divergence on the whole question of the day of the Lord's crucifixion and solving the application of such a Scripture as Matt. 12:40, as well as many other Scriptures.

**Use of "Between the Two Evenings" in the OT.** The phrase appears in:

Ex. 12:6; 16:12; 29:39, 41; 30:8;

Lev. 23:5;

Num. 9:3, 5, 11; 28:4, 8.

Two objections that have been made to understanding "between the two evenings" to mean from sunset to sunset, or to point to the beginning of the new Jewish day are Ex. 29:39, 41 and 1 Kings 18:26-29; 36-46. Ex. 29:39, referring to the continual burnt-offering (v. 42) says:

The one lamb thou shalt offer in the morning; and the other lamb thou shalt offer between the two evenings.

The objection says that since Ex. 29:38 shows that two lambs were to be offered on the same day, if "between the two evenings" points to the beginning of the next Jewish day, then the second one was not slain and offered on the same day. So, the second lamb was offered in the afternoon, after 3 PM, the first of the two evenings; and thus the 3 PM and 6 PM two evenings view is usually established.

Well, I understand that argument having weight with those who think that the Passover was killed between 3 PM and 6 PM on the 14<sup>th</sup> day, and then was eaten in the night hours of the 15<sup>th</sup> day. It supports their view of the crucifixion. But bear in mind that this means, consequently, that the Destroyer passed over at midnight on the 15<sup>th</sup> day of the month, not on the Passover day, i.e., the 14<sup>th</sup> of the month. It also means that the Lord ate the Passover at the wrong time. The Friday crucifixion view compels you to accept that.<sup>6</sup> In this paper, both such ideas are rejected. But, no matter what solutions have been proposed, there has not been a complete solution to all the difficulties. You will end up with difficulties in any case.

So, if the Lord ate the Passover at the correct time -- in the early night hours of the 14<sup>th</sup> day -- He ate a lamb slain at the right time, and died the next afternoon when the Jews (following the Rabbinical view), killed the lambs at the wrong time. Yes, this is a jolting conclusion. There are reasons why persons claim the Lord ate it at the wrong time; or, that what he ate was not a Passover meal. They are trying

6. The idea that two calendars were in use at Jerusalem is an effort to have two valid Passovers, each eaten a day apart -- the objective also being to uphold the Friday crucifixion view.

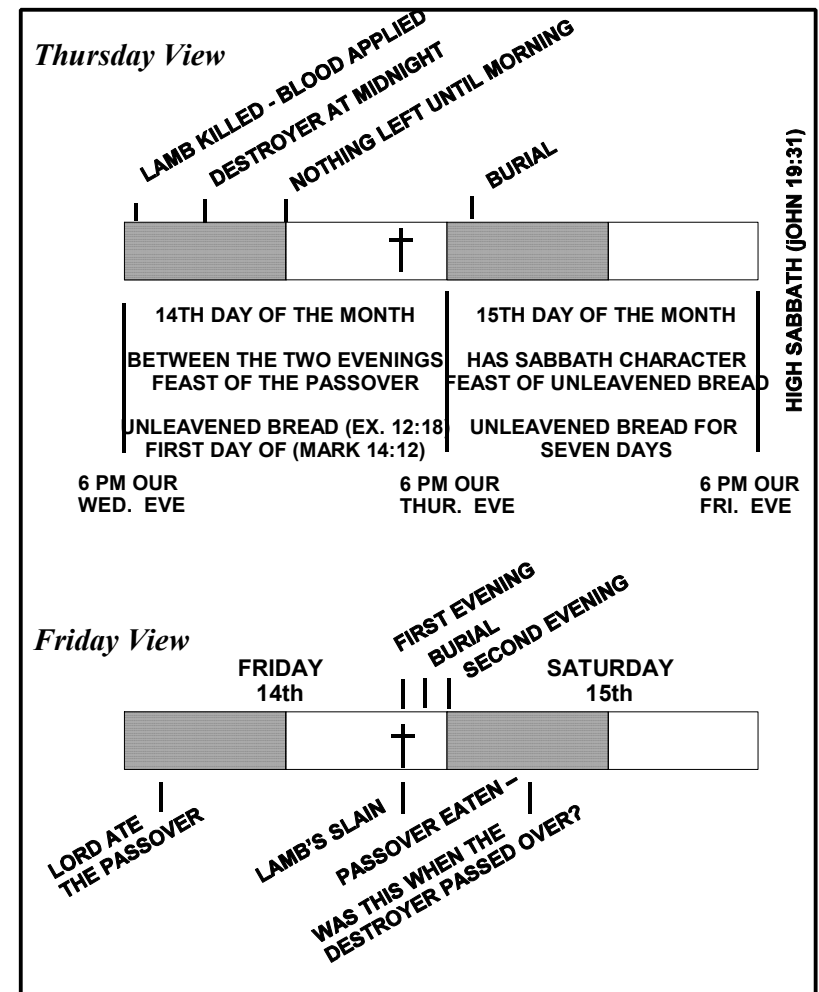
to overcome difficulties. Everyone has difficulties who looks into this matter of the day of the crucifixion.

Let us return to Ex. 29 and the continual burnt offering. I certainly do not know why the morning sacrifice is presented before the evening sacrifice. But so it is presented and wait on God concerning the "why." I take it that the morning and the evening refer to the same 24 hour day, and that the second lamb referred to was offered in the very early night hours. There was one lamb for the daylight hours and one for the night hours. Day and night, night and day, what spoke of Christ rose up to Jehovah.

The other objection is based on 1 Kings 18, putting everything in to a continuous, uninterrupted sequence. The argument is based on the supposed time of the evening oblation, which is then assumed to be early in the afternoon (assumed in accordance with the point to be proved). Actually, if the fire ignited the sacrifice at the time of the evening oblation, the altar was built, the trenches made ready, the wood prepared -- all that was needed -- before the evening oblation. Note that Baal's prophets prophesied until the evening oblation. So Elisha saw to the preparation while they continued prophesying. Then the time having come, Jehovah answered by fire, made all the more spectacular because of the darkening time. Then the prophets of Baal were taken. It is an assumption to say that they were then and there slaughtered at Kishon. Perhaps so, perhaps not until the next day. Moreover, it is likely that it was also the next morning that Elijah spoke to Ahab (1 Kings 18:41). Then he went up Carmel, etc. etc. (1 Kings 18:42ff). The effort is made to squeeze this all in following an afternoon "evening oblation" to fit the notion of what "between the two evenings" means. I do not think that this objection proves the point.

To make it evident to the reader, the following chart shows the Thursday crucifixion view presented in this pamphlet, as well as the Friday crucifixion view. (It is not meant that by the Thursday view that all who hold to a Thursday crucifixion view matters as in this chart. There are variations within most views.) What was done in Ex. 12 is placed on the chart of the Thursday view. The Lord ate the Passover at the God-appointed time.

The Thursday view presented in this paper views the Jews as having eaten the Passover at the same time as did the Lord and His disciples. It is possible the Jews slew the lambs between 3 PM and 6 PM on Wednesday afternoon, the 13<sup>th</sup> day of the month, and then ate it in the night hours of the 14<sup>th</sup> day.





## 2. The Days on Which the Lord Entered Jerusalem and Was Inspected

### THE 10TH TO THE 14TH NISAN

The Lord came to Bethany, which is near Jerusalem, six days before the Passover (John 12:1). If the Lord died on Friday, then six days before would have been the previous Sabbath on which the Lord was on a journey. I doubt that He traveled on the Sabbath. If Thursday, 14th Nisan, was the day of His death, He came to Bethany the previous Friday (8th Nisan), rested on the Sabbath (9th Nisan), and rode into Jerusalem, as King, on the first day of the week (10th Nisan), our Sunday.

On this day (10<sup>th</sup> Nisan) Messiah the Prince (Dan. 9:25) entered Jerusalem as noted in Zech. 9:9. The gospels show that there were four days involved from then (including that day of His presentation to Israel) until His crucifixion. This, then, was the 10th through 13th Nisan during which the Pharisees, Sadducees, and Herodians sought to find a blemish in Him. The conclusion may be stated in the language of the officers, “Never spake man like this man.”

Table 1 shows the sequence of these days.

**TABLE 1**

Supper at Bethany	Nisan 10, evening?	John 12; Mark 14 Matt. 26
Entered Jerusalem	Nisan 10	Mark 11:1-10 John 12:12
Went to Bethany	afternoon of Nisan 10	Mark 11:11
Came back to Jerusalem	daylight of Nisan 11	Mark 11:12
Cursed the fig tree and cleansed temple	daylight of Nisan 11	Mark 11:12-15
Went out of the city	night of Nisan 12	Mark 11:19
Returned to Jerusalem	daylight of Nisan 12	Mark 11:27 Matt. 23:37-39 Luke 13:31
Went out of the city	not noted	
Returned to Jerusalem	not noted	
	daylight of Nisan 13	Matt. 26:1-5, 14-16 Mark 14:1-2, 10-11
Stayed in Jerusalem	evening of Nisan 14	Passover meal

The Lord’s presentation to the Jews on the 10<sup>th</sup> of the month answers to the selection of the lamb on that day (Ex. 12:3).

Mark 14:1 says, “Now the passover and the [feast of] unleavened bread was after two days.” How are we to understand this? There is a synchronism between Matt. and Luke that will help us. Mark 14:1 follows the Olivet discourse and so does Matt 26:2, “ye know that after two days the Passover takes place, and the Son of man is delivered up to be crucified.” Matt. 23:37-39 gives us our Lord’s words regarding His desire to gather Jerusalem as does Luke 13:31-35. Luke 13:32 says, “Behold, I cast out demons and accomplish this today and tomorrow, and the third [day] I am perfected.” Matt. 23:37-39 and Luke 13:31-35 were spoken on Nisan 12. “Today” is Nisan 12 and “tomorrow” is Nisan 13. The day of perfection is Nisan 14.<sup>7</sup> In Mark 14:1, “after two days” would be inclusive reckoning and refer to that day and the next day (the 14<sup>th</sup> day).

### THE SUPPER OF MATT. 26:6-13, MARK 14:3-9, AND JOHN 12:1, 2

The time-setting of the supper given in Matt. 26:6-13 is stated in v. 2:

Ye know that after two days the passover takes place (Matt. 26:2).

The supper in Mark 14 is likewise so placed:

Now the passover and the [feast of] unleavened bread was after two days (Mark 14:1).

Taking “after two days in the inclusive Jewish way of reckoning, this would place the Passover in the next 24 hour Jewish day. The Lord spoke this on the 13<sup>th</sup> day. The next 24 hour Jewish day would be the 14<sup>th</sup> day.

The supper in John 12:2-8 is placed before the entry into Jerusalem as King (John 12:12ff). Indeed, it is connected with his having arrived at Bethany:

Jesus therefore, six days before the passover, came to Bethany, where was the dead [man] Lazarus, whom Jesus raised from among [the] dead. There therefore they made him a supper . . . (John 12:1, 2).

If we believe that the Lord Jesus did not travel from Galilee, where He had been, to Bethany on the Sabbath, then it was the day before the Sabbath that he arrived in Bethany, had this supper on the Sabbath, and entered Jerusalem “on the morrow” (John 12:12) after the Sabbath, namely, on the first day of the new week, the 10<sup>th</sup> of the month.

So we see that there is a difficulty to be solved. It appears that all three accounts refer to the same supper. Then we must explain why Matthew and Mark

7. What perfection! He was obedient unto death, and that of the cross (Phil. 2:5-8).

appear to place the supper on the 13<sup>th</sup> day and John places it on the 9<sup>th</sup> day of the month. Otherwise we might say that there were actually two suppers these days apart. The idea of two suppers is not a generally accepted view by those who have respect for the inspiration of Scripture, though it is not in the least contrary to the inspiration of Scripture to think that there were two suppers. While differences between Matthew/Mark compared to John are there, it does not seem that there would be two such suppers.

In Matthew/Mark, the supper is placed out of chronological order. It is helpful to think of Matt. 26:6-13 and Mark 14:3-9 as parenthetical. In both gospels, if such a parenthesis was skipped over when reading the passage, we see that the account is quite similar, noting the desire of the chief priests and scribes to kill the Lord, and Judas' perfidious conduct. The parenthetical section is then seen to stand in moral contrast to these evil intentions. That seems to be the reason for the insertion of the account of the supper at Bethany into Matt. 26 and Mark 14 at that point in those gospels.

It may be that the supper at Bethany was held on the evening of the 10<sup>th</sup> day, i.e., the evening part of the day on which He was presented as King.

In John, Lazarus sat at the table, evidence that the Son of God is the resurrection and the life (John 11); and in v. 10 we see it purposed to get rid of this proof of the Son's power (cf. John 15:24). Martha served (characteristic) but without complaining (cp. Luke 10:40, 41). And Mary was at His feet (characteristically). We might see in this, communion (Lazarus), service (Martha), and worship (Mary).

In Mark we have a statement of the perfect Servant regarding the service of the woman towards Himself:

What *she* could she has done (Mark 14:8).

Every Scripture is perfect in its place! And, would to God that the blessed Lord Jesus could say that of each of us.

Matthew, as Mark, records that the ointment was poured out on His head. That is appropriate for a King, as well as the perfect Servant Who will yet rule over all -- and this just before His death, His rejection as King and God's Servant.

Mary of Bethany anointed those blessed feet at which she sat to learn from Him -- now pouring out her heart's adoration. This was the One who stooped to wash the feet of His disciples during the night of the next day (John 13) and would yet stoop into the depths and throes of the three hours of darkness when He bore our sins in His own body on the tree (1 Pet. 2:24).

In Matthew, the disciples complain about the waste of the ointment, while Mark speaks of what some said. In John, Judas makes a complaint and his character is noted (John 12:6). He was a grievous hypocrite, and a devil from the beginning (John 6:70), who left right after the Passover meal (before the

introduction of the Lord's supper), in the *night* (John 13:30), to do his awful, dark, traitorous deed.

No doubt, as is characteristic in the gospels, the incidents find their place according to the Spirit's presentation of Christ, and of the themes, in the respective gospels.

### 3. The Day on Which the Lord Ate the Passover

#### SUMMARY OF CHRONOLOGICAL EVENTS

On what day was the lamb selected?

10th of the month: Ex. 12:3.

What was Passover day?

14th of the month: Lev. 23:5; Num. 9:3; 28:16; Ezra 6:19.

On what day was the lamb killed?

Killed on the 14th of the month: Ex. 12:6; Num. 9:3, 4; 2 Chron. 30:15; 35:1.

On what day was the lamb eaten?

14th of the month, Passover day, at night (the first part of the Jewish 24 hour day): Ex. 12:8, 18, 42; Josh. 5:10; Num. 9:3, 4.

#### THE PASSOVER WAS NOT PART OF THE 15<sup>TH</sup> DAY OF THE MONTH

The 15<sup>th</sup> day began the feast of Unleavened Bread that occupied seven days. It started on the day after the Passover. It was the day on which the children of Israel began their journey and Scripture shows that that day (the 15<sup>th</sup>) was the morrow after (meaning, the day after) the 14<sup>th</sup>:

They journeyed from Rameses in the first month, on the fifteenth day of the first month. On the morrow after the passover the children of Israel went out with a high hand in the sight of the Egyptians (Num. 33:3).

The lamb was not eaten in the night hours of the 15<sup>th</sup> day. That really is a merging of the two feasts. Yet, that merging eventually took place among the Jews, as we shall see. But as given of God, these two feasts each had their appointed days: the Passover on the 14<sup>th</sup> and the feast of Unleavened Bread on the morrow, the day after the Passover.

Ezek. 45:21 shows us the word Passover used of the feast of Unleavened Bread. Indeed, the whole complex of the day of Passover and the days of Unleavened Bread was a Passover season, so to speak. Still, the Passover itself did not span two days, as if the lamb was killed on the 14<sup>th</sup> and eaten in the night of the 15<sup>th</sup>.

#### WHAT WAS THE FIRST DAY OF UNLEAVENED BREAD?

##### Unleavened Bread Was to be Eaten with the Passover.

It is necessary to keep in mind that the Passover was to be eaten with unleavened bread (Ex. 12:8) but the feast of Unleavened Bread also involved eating unleavened bread (Lev. 23:4-6; Num. 28:16, 17). So, the first day of eating unleavened bread was the 14<sup>th</sup> day. Therefore, really, they ate unleavened bread on eight days, but only seven days comprised the *feast of Unleavened Bread*.

##### The First Day of Unleavened Bread Was the Day the Passover Was Killed.

Now on the first [day] of [the feast of] <sup>8</sup> unleavened bread, the disciples came to Jesus, saying, Where wilt thou that we prepare to eat the passover? (Matt. 26:17).

And the first day of unleavened bread, when they slew the passover, his disciples say to him . . . (Mark 14:12).

And the day of unleavened bread came, in which the passover was to be killed . . . (Luke 22:7).

It appears that the day on which the Passover was killed came to be called the first day of unleavened bread.

The Passover was killed on the 14th of the month (Ex. 12:6; Num. 9:3, 4; 2 Chron. 30:15; 35:1) and the feast of Unleavened Bread, which lasted seven days, began on the 15th (Lev. 23:5, 6; Num. 28:17). Also, unleavened bread was eaten on the 14th with the Passover (Ex. 12:18; Num. 9:11, 12). It would seem that this is the reason, as far as one can judge from Scripture, that in the Gospels the Passover day (the 14th) could be referred to as the first day of unleavened bread.

Matt. 26:3-5 and Mark 14:2 show that they determined not to kill the Lord “in the feast.” Possibly, this may refer to the whole season; i.e., the Passover day (the 14<sup>th</sup> Nisan) and the feast of Unleavened Bread (15<sup>th</sup> - 21<sup>st</sup> Nisan). (John 13:29 refers to the feast of Unleavened Bread.) But, it may actually refer only to the feast of Unleavened Bread which began on the 15<sup>th</sup> day.

Luke 22:1 shows that the feast of Unleavened Bread was called the Passover. John 13:1 uses the word Passover in the same way. The Lord ate the Passover lamb the day “*before* the feast of the Passover” (John 13:1), this meaning the feast of Unleavened Bread, so closely following the Passover itself; i.e., He ate the Passover lamb on the 14th, the day of the Passover. John 13:1 refers to the 14<sup>th</sup>.

**The Lord Ate the Passover on The First Day of Unleavened Bread.** The expression “the first day of unleavened bread” does not mean the same thing as ‘the first day of the feast of Unleavened Bread.’ Unleavened bread was eaten on the day that the Passover lamb was eaten, hence that was the first day of eating unleavened bread (the 14<sup>th</sup>). It was the day before the beginning of the feast of Unleavened Bread (the 15<sup>th</sup>).

#### THE FEAST OF UNLEAVENED BREAD WAS CALLED THE PASSOVER

It appears that because of the close connection between the feasts of Passover and of Unleavened Bread, a practice arose of calling Unleavened Bread the “Passover.” It was the Passover *season*. This practice may have arisen from the wording of Deut. 16:3:

8. The feast of Unleavened Bread is the 15<sup>th</sup>. Drop the bracketed words and the three texts say the same thing. The reference is to the first day when unleavened bread was eaten. It was eaten with the Passover lamb on the 14<sup>th</sup> day.

Thou shalt eat no leavened bread along with it; seven days shalt thou eat unleavened bread with it.

Ezek. 45:21 refers to Unleavened Bread as the Passover. In the NT we find this practice also.

Now the feast of unleavened bread, which is called the passover, drew nigh . . . (Luke 22:1).

And when he was in Jerusalem, at the passover, at the feast . . . (John 2:23).

Compare John 6:4. The feast of Unleavened Bread is meant in John 13:29. See also Acts 12:3,4, where “Easter” should read “Passover.”

### AT WHAT TIME ON THE 14TH DAY WAS THE PASSOVER LAMB KILLED? AND WHEN WAS IT EATEN?

**Various Opinions.** An expression, “between the two evenings” occurs in Ex. 12:6; 16:12; 29:39; 29:41; 30:8; Lev. 23:5; Num. 9:3, 5, 11; 28:4, 8. Following are several theories as to the meaning of the phrase and the reader will observe that these explanations are related to our understanding of the sequence of events in the gospels.

Different opinions have prevailed among the Jews from a very early date as to the precise time intended. *Aben Ezra* agrees with the Caraites and Samaritans in taking the first evening to be the time when the sun sinks below the horizon, and the second the time of total darkness; in which case, “between the two evenings” would be from 6 o’clock to 7:20. *Kimchi* and *Rashi*, on the other hand, regard the moment of sunset as the boundary between the two evenings, and *Hitzig* has lately adopted their opinion. According to the rabbinical idea, the time when the sun began to descend, viz. from 3 to 5 o’clock, was the first evening, and sunset the second; so that “between the two evenings” was from 3 to 6 o’clock. Modern expositors have very properly decided in favor of the view held by *Aben Ezra* and the custom adopted by the Caraites and Samaritans, from which the explanation given by *Kimchi* and *Rashi* does not materially differ. It is true that this argument has been adduced in favor of the rabbinical practice, viz. that “only by supposing the afternoon to have been included, can we understand why the day of Passover is always called the 14th (Lev. 23:5; Num. 9:3, etc.)”; and also, that “if the slaughtering took place after sunset, it fell on the 15th Nisan, and not the 14th.” But both arguments are based upon an untenable assumption. For it is obvious from Lev. 23:32, where the fast prescribed for the day of atonement, which fell upon the 10th of the 7th month, is ordered to commence on the evening of the 9th day, “from even to even,” that although the Israelites reckoned the day of 24 hours from the evening sunset to sunset, in numbering the days they followed the natural day, and numbered each day according to the period between sunrise and sunset. Nevertheless there is no formal disagreement between the law and the rabbinical custom. The expression in Deut. 16:6, “at (towards) sunset,” is sufficient to show that the boundary line between the two evenings is not to be fixed precisely at the moment of sunset, but only somewhere about that time. The daily evening sacrifice and the incense offering were also to be presented “between the two evenings” (ch. 29:39,41, 30:8; Num. 28:4). Now as this was not

to take place exactly at the same time, but to precede it, they could not both occur at the time of sunset, but the former must have been offered before that. Moreover, in later times, when the paschal lamb was slain and offered at the sanctuary, it must have been slain and offered before sunset, if only to give sufficient time to prepare the paschal meal, which was to be over before midnight. It was from these circumstances that the rabbinical custom grew up in the course of time, and the lax use of the word evening, in Hebrew as well as in every other language, left space enough for this. For just as we do not confine the term morning to the time before sunset, but apply it generally to the early hours of the day, so the term evening is not restricted to the period after sunset. If the sacrifice prescribed for the morning could be offered after sunrise, the one appointed for the evening might in the same manner be offered before sunset.<sup>9</sup>

Reread the quotation from the *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia* in the Introduction for a proper view of the phrase “between the two evenings.”

**What a 3 PM Evening Plus a 6 PM evening Leads To.** It is generally admitted that the lamb was killed on the 14th. It is often claimed that they were killed at 3 PM and that one of two evenings began at 3 PM; and this, it is alleged, is the time of the going down of the sun! If this is true, then since the new Jewish day began at sundown, the lambs were sacrificed at the end of the 14th day, rather than at its beginning. It results in the lambs being eaten on the 15th day.

Moreover, the destroyer went through the land at midnight of the 14th day (Ex. 12).<sup>10</sup> That is why the 14th day is the Passover. The Destroyer did not pass over on the 15th, though that idea has been imported into Ex. 12 based on the error about the two evenings (which it must be in order to maintain consistency). Keep in mind that the Jewish 14th day of the month began with the dark time after about 6 PM. The lamb was killed before midnight of the 14th day in order to put the blood on the two side posts and upper lintel. So, in fact, the lambs were killed at the beginning of the Jewish 14th day (the early night) and not near the end of the 14th day (in daylight hours). The false idea about the two evenings that many hold actually makes the destroyer go through the land on the midnight of the 15th. Observe it carefully: the notion of an evening at about 3 PM and another at about 6 PM forces the idea that the angel passed over on the 15th day of the month at midnight. That is not a passing over on the 14th day. And, this idea about the two evenings is necessary to the Friday crucifixion view.

**The Friday View Violates Num. 9:3.** All the rites of the Passover were to be held on the 14th day:

. . . on the fourteenth day in this month between the two evenings, ye shall hold it at its set time; according to all the rites of it, and according to all the ordinances

9. Keil and Delitzsch, *Old Testament Commentaries*, Grand Rapids: Associated Publishers, n.d., pp. 387,388.

10. Ex. 12 has been explained in *The Set Feasts of Jehovah*, available from Present Truth Publishers.

thereof shall ye hold it (Num. 9:3).

The Friday view has the Passover killed on the 14<sup>th</sup> day and eaten on the 15<sup>th</sup> day and thus all the rites are not carried out on the 14<sup>th</sup> day. But the Lord followed the order concerning carrying out all the rites on the 14<sup>th</sup> day.

If one was disqualified, or away, and could not keep it, there was another opportunity in the second month:

In the second month, on the fourteenth day of the month, between the two evenings, shall they hold it; with unleavened bread and bitter herbs shall they eat it. They shall leave none of until the morning (Num. 9:11).

Was that really near the end of the 14<sup>th</sup> day that they killed the Passover, and then ate it in the night hours of the next Jewish day (i.e., the 15<sup>th</sup> day)? If you think so, then you must believe that the destroyer passed over at midnight the next day, the 15<sup>th</sup> day. If you understand that the destroyer passed over at midnight on the 14<sup>th</sup> day, you will see that the lamb was killed and its blood applied before midnight on the 14<sup>th</sup> day. It was in the night hours of the 14<sup>th</sup> day that the lamb was eaten -- none of it to be left for the morning (the daylight hours of the 14<sup>th</sup> day).

So, it seems that we should understand the expression “between the two evenings” in an idiomatic sense for the evening that begins the Jewish day, if it does not mean from sunset to sunset.

### OUR LORD ATE THE PASSOVER AT THE CORRECT TIME

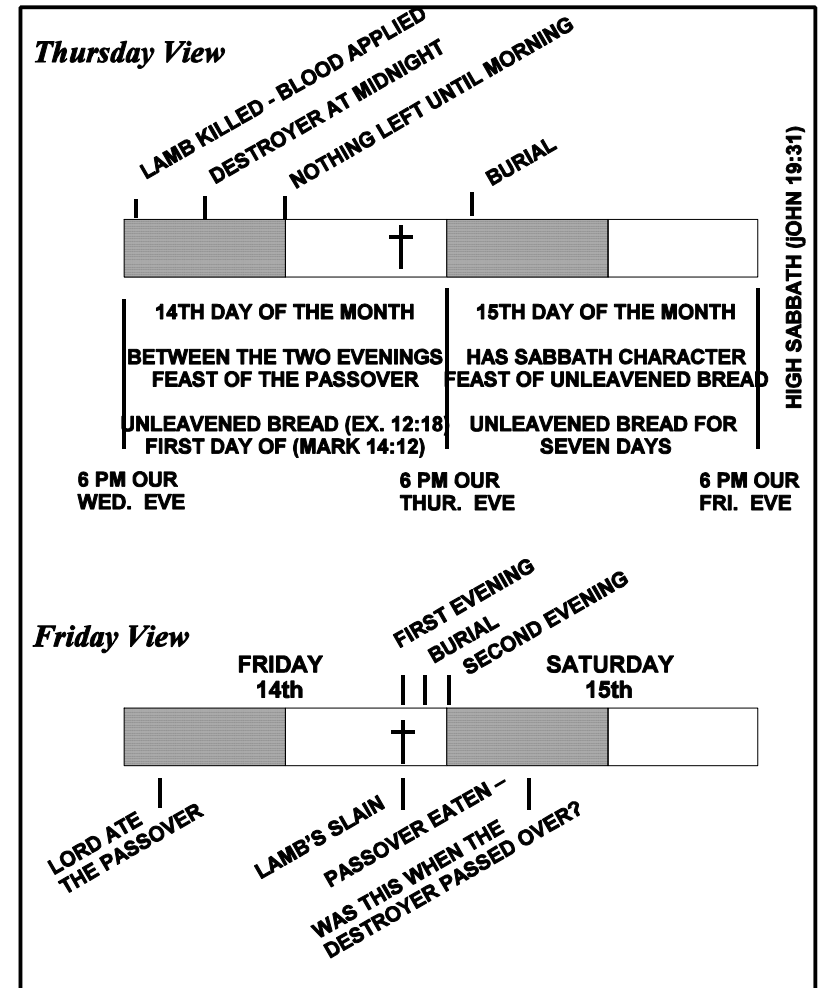
First of all, the Lord ate the Passover, not some substitute meal:

And he said, go into the city unto such a one, and say to him, The Teacher says, My time is near, I will keep the passover in thy house (Matt. 26:18; see also Mark 14:14; Luke 22:15).

The Lord ate the Passover, and clearly He ate the Passover in the night hours on the 14<sup>th</sup> day. <sup>11</sup> But implicit in the Friday idea is the idea that our Lord ate the Passover a day early. This is contradicted by two things:

11. Between the Passover meal and the introduction of the Lord's supper, Judas went out and the Scripture says “and it was night” (John 13:30). Besides the actual fact of it being night, that seems an apt description of the state of his soul.

1. The disciples came to our Lord and asked where they should prepare. They were not aware that they were 24 hours wrong concerning the Scriptural order of when to eat the Passover (Matt. 26:17; Mark 14:12). <sup>12</sup> This is



12. The first day of unleavened bread had arrived when the disciples asked the Lord where they should prepare (Mark 14:12). They followed the man with the pitcher of water (type of the Spirit and the Word) and were led to the place of the upper room that was furnished. They completed what they  
(continued...)

remarkable in view of the claim that the Jews ate the Passover a day later. If that eating of the Passover by the Jews a day late occurred at that time, the disciples most surely knew that it did. Moreover, can it be doubted that they had eaten several other Passovers with the Lord -- at the God-appointed time?? The Lord would have followed the Scripture order on each occasion. When they came to ask where the Lord wanted to hold it, they came at the correct time to ask him. How so, if they knew the Passover was supposed to be eaten on the 15<sup>th</sup> day and that the Jews were going to do so?

What the disciples' question points to is that the Jews ate the Passover in the evening hours of the 14<sup>th</sup>, just as did the Lord and His disciples. **There is no need to hunt for a use of two different calenders being used in Jerusalem to try and reconcile a difference which does not really exist in the Gospels.**

2. It is clear from Scripture that our Lord ate the Passover in the night hours of the 14<sup>th</sup> day. Our Lord ate the Passover "*when the hour was come*" (Luke 22:14). This appears in Luke only and its moral force should be apprehended. The right hour was the God-appointed hour and thus on the *evening* of the 14<sup>th</sup>; i.e., in the night hours.

This matter is, of course, connected with the directions concerning the Passover observance in the OT. The Israelites had to eat the Passover at night (Ex. 12:8, 42). What night was it? Was it in the same 24 hour period in which the lamb was killed? The question to be considered is this: Was the lamb killed and eaten on the same day, i.e., the 14<sup>th</sup>; or was it killed on the afternoon of the 14<sup>th</sup> (and eaten on the 15<sup>th</sup>) according to the idea about the two evenings of 3 PM and 6 PM? *Certainly the lamb that the Lord ate was not killed on the 14<sup>th</sup> day and eaten on the 15<sup>th</sup> day.* It was eaten on the 14<sup>th</sup> day according to all the rites of the Passover (Num. 9:3, 4), as Israel was commanded to do. The question bears directly on determining the day of the week on which our Lord died, as we shall see.

1. The view that it was eaten on the 15<sup>th</sup> renders meaningless the name Passover. It was at midnight of the 14<sup>th</sup> that the destroyer passed over.<sup>13</sup> The blood of the lamb was on the doorposts and upper lintel before midnight. The

12. (...continued)

had to do. Mark 14:17 ("when evening was come") does not mean that they had done these things before evening had come. The first day of unleavened bread, i.e., the first day when unleavened bread was to be eaten (in connection with the Passover meal), i.e., the 14<sup>th</sup> of the month, had already arrived when they made ready. Mark 14:17 affirms that it was evening when the Lord came with the twelve. Clearly, this is the evening of the 14<sup>th</sup> day -- clearly, after 6 PM. It is an affirmation that the Lord ate the Passover at the correct time and that the preparation was at the correct time. Additionally, it was night when Judas went out (John 13:30).

13. I am aware that expositors have imported the erroneous Jewish tradition back into Ex. 12. See the *Expositor's Bible Commentary* on "Exodus," *in loco*, for an example.

logical result of the erroneous idea means, then, that the passing over took place at midnight of the 15<sup>th</sup> and yet the 14<sup>th</sup> is called the Passover (Lev. 23:5; Num. 9:3; 28:16,17; Ezra 6:19).

2. In effect, the view that it was eaten on the 15<sup>th</sup> means that some of the rites of the Passover were held on the 15<sup>th</sup>. This directly contradicts Num. 9:3, 4, which says:

Let the children of Israel also hold the passover at its set time; on the fourteenth day in this month, between the two evenings, ye shall hold it at its set time; according to all the rites of it, and according to all the ordinances thereof shall ye hold it.

Num. 9:11,12 shows the same requirement held for a Passover kept in the second month.

3. Ezra 6:19-21 seems to say the same thing.
4. The idea that the going down of the sun means 3 PM is not supported by Scripture. The going down of the sun is when the lambs were killed (Deut. 16:6) and it was the time that the pillar of fire came (Num. 9:15), hardly 3 PM. Three PM to 6 PM is hardly "night." The cloud was there by day, and the pillar of fire by night (Ex. 13:21, 22; Num. 14:14).
5. The disciples' preparation, and our Lord's eating the Passover "when the hour was come" (Matt. 26:17; Mark 14:12; Luke 22:14), all on the 14<sup>th</sup>, conforms to Num. 9:3, 4 that all the rites and ordinances were held on the 14<sup>th</sup>.
6. Passages in the OT such as Zech. 14:7; Deut. 23:11; Josh. 10:27; Judg. 19:9; Prov. 7:9; Jer. 6:4 would not lead to the Friday idea, see also Num. 9:15.
7. "And when evening was come" (Matt. 26:20; Mark 14:17) is not meant to imply that the killing of the Lamb took place before evening. It is said that way to let us know that all was in accord with the OT. It was eaten by our Lord "When the hour was come" (Luke 22:14), whatever others may have done.
8. Reverting again to the matter of "between the two evenings," there is no indication in the Gospels of two different evenings as 3 PM and 6 PM. Persons were brought to the Lord for healing in the evening (Matt. 8:16). Luke 4:40 tells us that when the sun went down, the sick were brought to Him; and Mark 1:32 nicely brings the two things together. Matt. 20:8 shows us that evening followed the 12<sup>th</sup> hour of the day (6 PM).

Evening marked the twilight, the time for discerning the coming weather. It followed the 12<sup>th</sup> hour and was the time when one was paid (Matt. 20:8), cp. Psa. 104:23. In any event, "between the two evenings" does not mean just any time within a 24 hour period. It signifies the arrival of the new Jewish day. It refers to

evening (Deut. 16:6). Some have taken it to mean from sunset to sunset but pointing to the evening of the new Jewish day; and some take it to mean from twilight to complete darkness. Such views do not conflict with completing all the rites on the 14<sup>th</sup> day.

#### WHEN WAS THE LAMB KILLED THAT THE LORD ATE?

Since the Lord ate the Passover in the dark hours of the 14<sup>th</sup> day, when was the lamb killed that He ate? This point has a number of implications. Since He ate the lamb at the correct time, we expect it was killed at the correct time. Moreover, if the two evenings idea (3 PM and 6 PM) is true, and the Lord's Passover lamb was killed between those hours, then His lamb was killed on the 13<sup>th</sup> day. And if it was a lamb killed in the early hours of the night of the 14<sup>th</sup> day, then the rabbinical two evenings idea (3 PM and 6 PM) is the wrong time.

And that raises another matter. Who killed the lambs for those who did not follow the alleged Jewish practice of the time? Were there priests who did it? At the God-appointed time, someone killed the lamb the Lord ate at the valid time.

#### BUT DID NOT THE LORD DIE WHEN THE LAMBS WERE BEING KILLED?

Is that question supposed to prove that the Lord ate the Passover at an incorrect time, a time not appointed by Jehovah? If the lamb that the Lord ate was eaten at the God-appointed time (and it was) then the Lord did not die at the time God-appointed for the killing of the lambs.

No doubt this thought troubles some and seems to have led to thinking that two different calendars were used, a day apart. I am not aware of proof that the officials at the temple would have accepted the sacrifice of lambs at the two different times, are you? It is an attempt to "have it both ways." So, in an attempt to reconcile some time-differences in the gospels, some have proposed that two calendars were in use during the first century -- *which is true, but the issue is what took place in Jerusalem, not elsewhere*. As an example, Harold Hoehner (who holds the Friday view and the validity of the rabbinical two evenings view of 3 PM and 6 PM) may be quoted:

It is thought that the Galileans used a different method of reckoning the Passover than the Judeans. The Galileans and Pharisees used the sunrise to sunrise reckoning whereas the Judeans and Sadducees used the sunset to sunset reckoning.<sup>14</sup> Thus, according to the synoptics, the Last Supper was a Passover meal. Since the day is to be reckoned from sunrise, the Galileans, and with them Jesus and His disciples, had the Paschal lamb slaughtered in the late afternoon of Thursday, Nisan 14, and later that evening they ate the Passover with the

14. Julian Morgenstern, "The Calendar of the Book of Jubilees, its Origin and its Character," *Vetus Testamentum*, V (1955), 64-65 n. 2; Finegan, pp. 452-53; G. R. Driver, "Two Problems in the New Testament," *The Journal of Theological Studies*, XVI (October, 1965), 327.

unleavened bread.<sup>15</sup> On the other hand, the Judean Jews who reckoned from sunset to sunset would slay the lamb on Friday afternoon which marked the end of Nisan 14 and ate the Passover lamb with the unleavened bread that night which had become Nisan 15. Thus, Jesus had consumed the Passover meal when His enemies, who had not as yet had the Passover, arrested Him. This gives good sense to John 18:28 that the Jews did not want to enter the Praetorium so as not to be defiled since later that day they would slay the victims for those who reckoned from sunset to sunset. After Jesus' trial, He was crucified when the Paschal lambs were slain in the temple precincts. This fits well with the Gospel of John. It can be charted as shown on page 261.

This solution would mean that there were two days of slaughter. This would solve the problem of having to slaughter all of the lambs for all of those participants at the Passover season.

There are two problems with this theory. First is the problem of having two consecutive days of slaughtering Paschal lambs. Would the Sadducees allow this since they were in control of the temple? It is possible they had to. It is known that with the popular support the Pharisees had, the Sadducees would submit to their wishes at times.<sup>16</sup> Finkle states that "the Pharisees determined the dates of the great festivals."<sup>17</sup> Here may be a case in point where neither parties compromised and so two days of Passover slaughter. The second problem with the theory is that there is no explicit statement to support the theory. Although one cannot be overly dogmatic, it does fit well with the data at hand. It is simple and makes good sense.<sup>18</sup>

He did not state which one was the valid Passover. At any rate, the fact is that the Synoptics use evening to evening reckoning (i.e., sunset to sunset), not sunrise to sunrise -- and this idea makes our Lord use sunrise to sunrise. Moreover, this explanation seems to let stand the idea that there were two valid Passovers, whereas there was only one God-sanctioned Passover. Moreover, his view of John 18:28, 29 is erroneous, as we shall see below.

I am not saying that the Jews did not have the practice of killing the lambs beginning at 3 PM in the afternoon -- but that it was before the evening of the 14<sup>th</sup> day of the month, not just before the start of the 15<sup>th</sup> day. There is no proof that the Lord and the Jews ate it on different evenings. The erroneous idea results from an erroneous harmonization of the relevant texts.

15. In the New Testament the first day of Unleavened Bread is Nisan 14 and not Nisan 15 (Matt. 26:17; Mark 14:12; Luke 22:7) which according to Beckwith (*The Evangelical Quarterly*, XLIII, 222 n. 4) is a later custom seen in the Mishnah for they prepared for the Feast of Unleavened Bread by removing all the leaven from one's house on Nisan 14 (Mishnah: Pesachim i. 1-5; iii. 6; v. 4. Cf. also Segal, pp. 244-45).

16. Jos. Ant. xviii. 1. 4 (17); Babylonian Talmud: Yoma 19b.

17. Asher Finkel, *The Pharisees and the Teacher of Nazareth* (Leiden, 1964), p. 74.

18. "Chronological Aspects of the Life of Christ, Part IV: The Day of Christ's Crucifixion," *Bibliotheca Sacra*, July 1974, pp. 259, 260.

## YOU CANNOT HAVE IT BOTH WAYS

You cannot have it that the Lord ate the Passover at the God-appointed time and that the killing of the lambs the next afternoon was the God-appointed time for killing the lambs followed by the God-appointed time to eat the lambs in the dark hours (the evening) of the 15<sup>th</sup> day. It is a clear contradiction to think such a thing. That makes the Lord and His disciples eat the Passover on a different day than the Jews ate it, and ate it on the wrong day!

There seems to be a desire to have it be that the Lord died just when the lambs were being slain. This forces the idea that the Lord ate it early -- indeed on the wrong day if the Jews ate it on the evening of the 15<sup>th</sup>, which is the common, Friday view. On the other hand, if the Lord and the Jews ate the Passover on the evening of the 14<sup>th</sup>, it remains true that the Lord died on the 14<sup>th</sup> day, thus within the Passover 24 hour day. However, the Lord's death was not coincident in exact time with the killing of the lambs. To assert that it is, is to have to say that the Lord ate the Passover at the wrong time.

## WHAT ABOUT THE THREE HOURS OF DARKNESS?

It is also remarkable that what has been generally left out of the discussion is the darkness that was over the land from the 6<sup>th</sup> to the 9<sup>th</sup> hour (3 PM) when the Lord was bearing our sins in His body, on the tree. It is alleged that that was the 3 PM when the slaying of the lambs commenced. Were the priests busy getting things organized for the slaying at 3 PM when they were in darkness from noon until 3 PM? The Son of God was shut in the darkness with the holy, holy, holy God, dealing in awful judgment concerning our sins, while the priests in that awful, special, divinely wrought darkness, were getting organized for the slaying of lambs?

## WAS ONLY THE SLAUGHTER OF THE LAMBS (AND NOT THE EATING) THE PASSOVER?

In order to support the idea that the lambs were slain on the afternoon of the 14<sup>th</sup> day, and were eaten in the dark hours (evening hours) of the 15<sup>th</sup> day, it has been said that it was the killing of the lambs that was the Passover -- thus having the Passover occur on the 14<sup>th</sup> day and thus not having the eating of the lamb on the 15<sup>th</sup> be the Passover. That makes the matter of the Destroyer passing over Egypt at midnight on the 15<sup>th</sup> day even more strange!

## WHAT ABOUT JOHN 18:28, 29?

On the basis of this passage, many have supposed that the Jews ate the Passover at another time than the evening of the 14<sup>th</sup> Nisan. The reasoning is that if the Lord ate the Passover lamb that evening, and since John 18:28, 29 was said after the Lord ate the Passover lamb, then they did not eat the Passover lamb when the Lord did. So, many believe that these Jews ate the Passover lamb at the regular time but the Lord ate it a day early. In preparing this pamphlet I consulted the

writings of the 17<sup>th</sup> century Christian, Talmudic scholar, John Lightfoot, and was pleased to find that he held that the Jews ate the Passover at the same time as the Lord ate it.

. . . so that there needs little argument to assure us that the Jews ate the lamb at the same time wherein Christ did. Only let me add this: suppose they had entered Pilate's house, and had defiled themselves . . . If so, then they might wash themselves in the evening, and be clean to eat the Paschal lamb, if it had been to have been eaten on that {coming} evening: but they had eaten it the evening before.<sup>19</sup>

He pointed out that the reference to Passover in this passage is to offerings during the feast of Unleavened Bread, which begins on the day after the Passover (the 14<sup>th</sup> day):

Τὸ πάσχα, the *Passover*, therefore here doth not signify the Paschal lamb, but the Paschal *Chagigah*<sup>20</sup> . . .

The proper time of bringing the *Chagigah* was the fifteenth day of the month . . .

It was the fifteenth day of the month when the fathers of the council refused to enter into the praetorium, lest they should be defiled; for they would eat the Passover, that is, the *Chagigah*.<sup>21</sup>

Still, he held to a Friday crucifixion, though this removes John 18:28, 29 as supporting the idea that they still had to eat the Passover lamb. A. Edersheim observed:

The evidence that the expression in John 18:28, 'They went not into the judgment-hall . . . that they might eat the Passover,' refers *not* to the Paschal lamb, but to the Chagignah,<sup>22</sup> is exceeding strong, in fact such as to have even convinced an eminent but impartial Jewish writer (Saalschutz, *Mos Recht* p. 414). It does seem strange that it should be either unknown to, or ignored by, 'Christian' writers.<sup>23</sup>

19. *Op. cit.*, vol. 3, p. 420; see his discussion in vol. 2, pp 449-454. On p. 53 he wrote:

And then tell me seriously whether it be credible, that the priests in the Temple, against the set decree of the Sanhedrim that year (as the opinion we contradict imports), would kill Christ's one, only, single lamb; when by that decree it ought not be killed before tomorrow?

20. {See Num. 28:18, 19.}

21. *Ibid.*, pp. 422, 423.

22. Willing offerings. See Num 28:19-24 where "herds" indicates these sacrifices.

23. A. Edersheim, *The Temple, Its Ministry and Service*, (London: Pickering and Inglis, 1960), p. 255. On p. 389 he says that the Lord did not hold "a sort of anticipatory Pascal Supper in advance of all other Jews . . .," thus agreeing with John Lightfoot on this point, though holding a Friday crucifixion as John Lightfoot did.

They ate it at the same time. And this eliminates invoking the notion that the Lord ate the Passover at the house of an Essene who would have it a day earlier than the Jews. This Essene notion

(continued...)



Properly speaking, the feast of Unleavened Bread began on the 15th Nisan (Lev 23:6; Num 28:17) but it appears that it became a practice to refer to the whole feast as the Passover (such as one might say, *Passover season*). Luke 22:1 confirms the above quotation. See also John 2:23 & 6:4. This also explains John 13:1, because the Lord ate the Passover on the 14th; if the feast, i.e., the seven days beginning from the 15th was called the feast of the Passover, then the events of John 13 took place on the day before the feast of the Passover (i.e., the day before the feast of Unleavened Bread, which began on the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month). Remember also that six o'clock means 6 AM in the morning -- our time. John's gospel uses Roman time (our time).

## 4. *The Day on Which the Lord Died*

### WHEN WAS THE LORD TAKEN?

That very night of the 14th, when Judas delivered Him up, the scene in the garden of Gethsemane took place when our blessed Lord Jesus, Who is over all, God blessed forever (Rom. 9:5), the Holy One Who knew no sin (2 Cor. 5:21), looked upon that awful cup of being made sin and bearing our sins. The cock had not yet crowed thrice (Matt. 26:30-46) and they came to take Him with lanterns and torches (John 18:4). It was the *night* of the 14th when He Who had power over all flesh (John 17:2) allowed His creatures to take Him. It was their hour and the power of darkness (Luke 22:53).

The third watch of the night was cock crowing (Mark 13:35), 12 midnight to 3 AM. It is said that the cock crowed during this time. This was the time during which Peter's denial took place (Mark 14:66-72).

### WHEN WAS OUR LORD CRUCIFIED, AND WHEN DID HE DIE?

The resolution of a number of difficulties is obtained when we realize that John's gospel uses Roman time, which is what we use today. In John 19:14, we see our Lord before Pilate, about the sixth hour. This is 6 AM Roman time, i.e., our time.

In Mark 15:25, we find that the Lord was crucified, i.e., nailed to the cross, in the third hour. Matt., Mark, and Luke use Jewish time. We already considered that the Jewish daylight was divided into 12 hours. The third hour was therefore 9 AM in Roman time. The Lord was on the cross from the third hour (9 AM) until the ninth hour (3 PM). Darkness was over the whole land from the sixth hour (12 noon) until the ninth hour (3 PM) at which time the Lord dismissed His spirit. It was still the 14th, the same 14th in which the Lord ate the Passover. He ate it in the evening of the 14th according to the law of Moses and He died on the 14<sup>th</sup> in the afternoon.

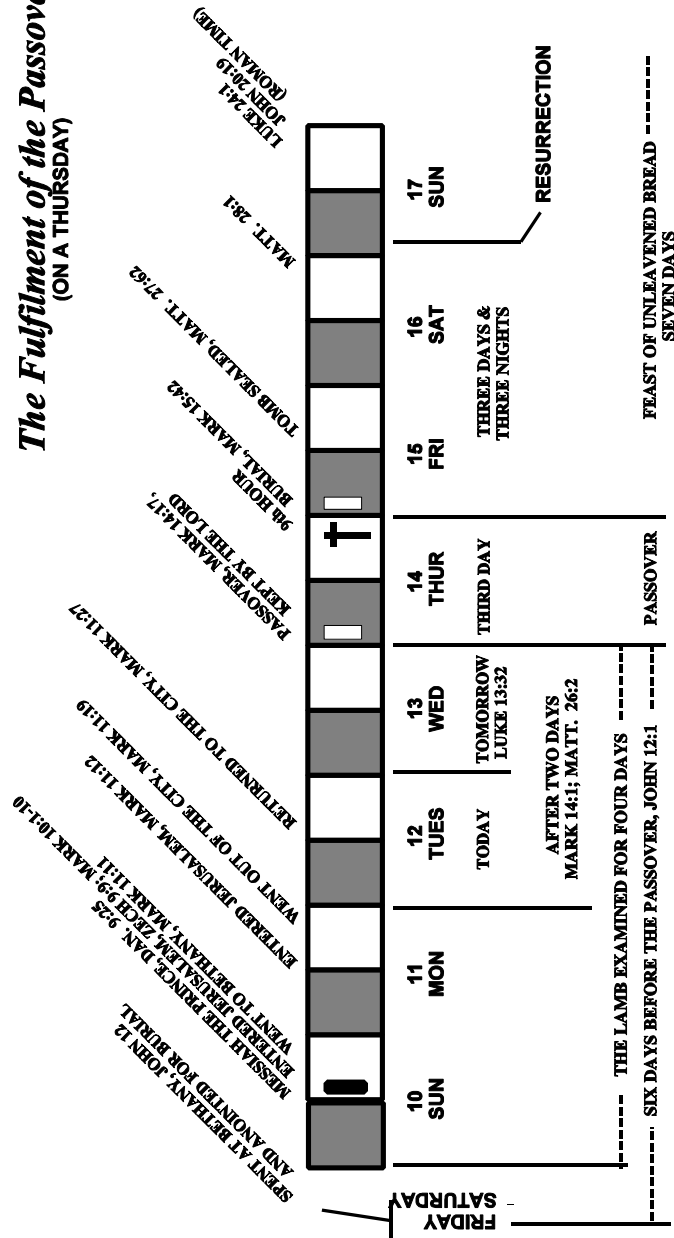
Those three hours of darkness speak to us the judgment of God for our sins (1 Pet. 2:24). Yea, He who knew no sin (what is *within* us; "sin in the flesh" (Rom. 8:3)) was made sin for us (2 Cor. 5:21) during those three, dark hours when He cried, "My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me." The holy, holy, holy One was pouring out His judgment upon Him in those three, awful hours, those three hours of atoning sufferings. Then He died atoningly and then His precious, atoning blood, having as its value the value of the atoning sufferings and atoning death, was shed.

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(...continued)

has also been used to explain why a *man* was carrying a pitcher of water. It is alleged he was an Essene. In any event, this notion should be rejected.

## The Fulfilment of the Passover (ON A THURSDAY)



This chart shows Jewish time, used in Matt. - Luke., the new day beginning about our 6 PM, and beginning with evening. Part of a 24 hour period was counted as a whole day. John., however, uses Roman time, therefore in John 20:19 "evening" is designated "the first day of the week," the time used by us.

RAH

## 5. The Day on Which the Lord Was Buried

### AT WHAT TIME WAS OUR LORD BURIED, AND ON WHAT DAY?

It is commonly held that our Lord died on our Friday afternoon and was buried on our Friday afternoon. With this goes the idea that "evening" means 3 PM to 6 PM. For clarity, I have diagramed this idea above and also with it have shown a diagram showing our Lord's death on Thursday and burial on Friday. Note that the diagram shows Jewish days beginning at about sundown.

Now, if evening began the new day, and we have seen that it did, then the Friday death and burial idea is wrong, because Scripture expressly states that our Lord was buried "when it was already evening":

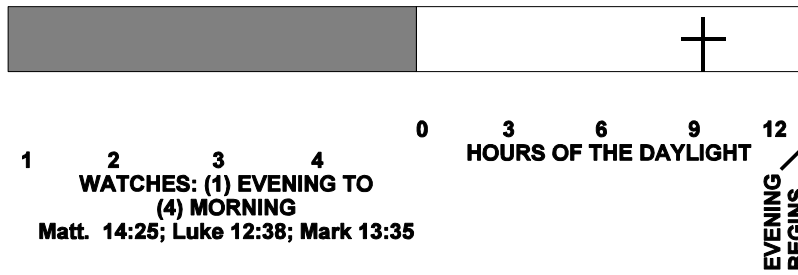
Now when even was come there came a rich man of Arimathea, his name Joseph . . . who . . . begged the body of Jesus...wrapped it in a linen cloth, and laid it in his new tomb . . . (Matt. 27:60).

And when it was already evening, since it was the preparation, that is, [the day] before a sabbath, Joseph . . . went in to Pilate and begged the body of Jesus (Mark 15:42, 43).

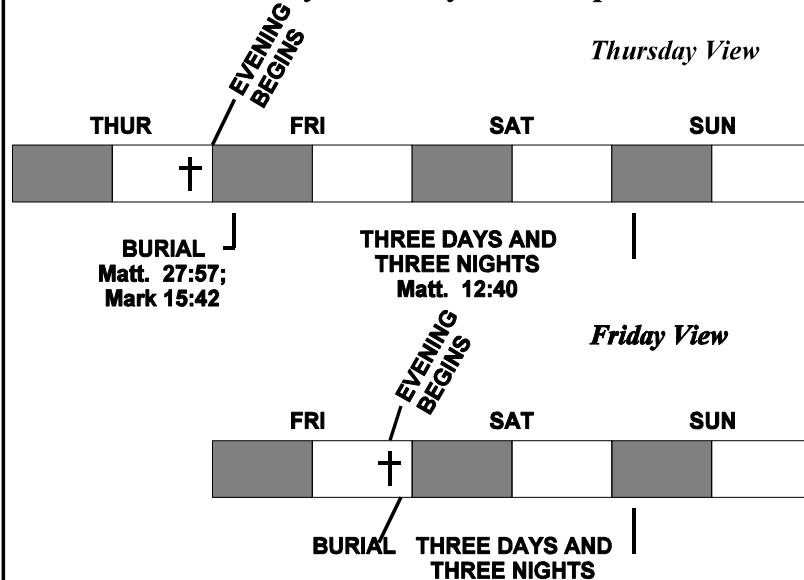
Evening had already arrived, and thus the new day had already arrived:

1. Then Joseph went to see Pilate.
2. Then Pilate summoned the centurion.
3. Then Joseph went to the cross and removed our Lord's body from the cross.
4. Then Joseph took the body to his own tomb.

### The Jewish Day According to Matt. 20:1-16

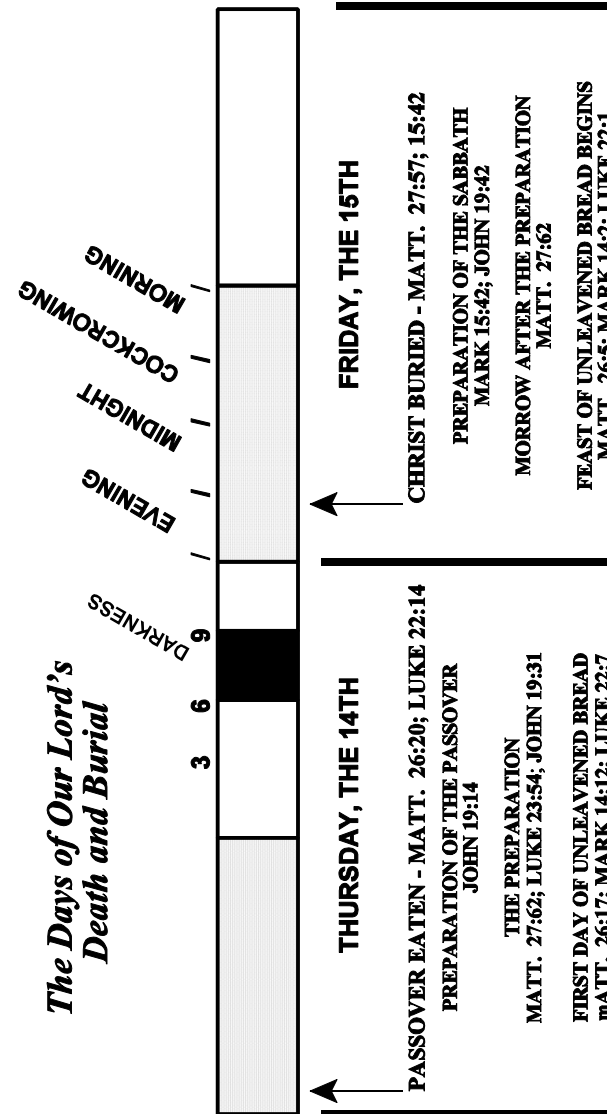


### The Thursday and Friday View Compared



Matt. 12:40 requires 3 days and 3 nights "in the heart of the earth."  
The Friday view forces a burial before the true evening began.  
Joseph asked for the body after "even was come" (Matt. 27:57).

### The Days of Our Lord's Death and Burial



The Jewish day begins at sundown, the evening - about our 6 PM. The night was divided into four watches (Mark 13:35), each three hours long. The daylight was divided into 12 hours, followed by evening at about 6 PM, i.e., the 12th hour (Matt. 20:1-8). Our Lord was crucified about the third hour, which is our 9 AM. The abandonment by God, and Christ being made sin, took place during the darkness from the sixth hour (noon) to the ninth hour, our 3 PM, when He gave up His life voluntarily (John 10:18). RAH

All of this took some time. But, no matter; it was *already* evening when he went to Pilate and thus we know with certainty that our Lord was buried in the evening.<sup>24</sup> This fact, plus the three days and three nights, requires that our Lord died on our Thursday afternoon. The Jews didn't want the body to remain on the cross on the Sabbath (John 19:31), yet *they* made no effort to get the bodies buried before evening. Why so, if the evening in question brought on the weekly Sabbath? It shows that our Lord did not die on Friday. They wanted the death hastened so that they wouldn't be alive for several days on the cross (a normal thing), which would have resulted in them being alive on the cross on the weekly Sabbath. Concerning the Jewish practice regarding burial on a feast day (which was the case concerning the day on which the Lord was buried -- Friday evening, the 15<sup>th</sup> day of the month, the first day of the feast of Unleavened bread), J. Norval Geldenhuys noted:

The action of Joseph of Arimathaea in attending to the burial of Jesus was not forbidden by rabbinical law. The following excerpt from a rabbinical pronouncement of about the time of Christ is quoted from Strack-Billerbeck: "Everything necessary for a dead person may be carried out (on a Feast day).<sup>25</sup> On such a day, therefore, a corpse could be attended to, though it was not permitted to dig a grave.<sup>26</sup> And -- the Gospels expressly state that Jesus was placed in a sepulchre that had already been hewn out!"<sup>27</sup>

24. W. Graham Scroggie, in *A Guide to the Gospels*, London: Pickering and Inglis, p. 572 (1948) gives a long list of things that had to be done from the point of the request of the Jews to Pilate that the bodies might not remain on the crosses on the Sabbath to the time of the actual burial. His point is that it could not be accomplished in the time before 6 PM. Though a few things he notes may not actually have been done sequentially, still it presents a daunting task to accomplish all before 6 PM. To all that, I would add that the time at which the soldiers came to break the legs is not known. All that we know is that they came after the Lord had died. Another point should be raised that I do not see in the literature on this subject. There was darkness between 12 noon and 3 PM. Do you think anything was going on during that time? Do you think that it was before 3 PM that the Jews began the process of preparing for the Passover, i.e., during the supernatural darkness? That supernatural darkness would surely delay the beginning of these things. Moreover, the position taken in this paper is that the Jews had eaten the Passover lamb when the Lord ate it.

25. *Kommentar zum Neuen Testament* 2:833.

26. *Ibid.*, 4:53.

27. *Commentary on the Gospel of Luke*, London: Marshall, Morgan & Scott, p. 669 (1961) [1950]. This commentary has an interesting excursus, "The day and Date of the Crucifixion" (pp. 649-670). There is also a survey of this matter in Leon Morris, *Commentary on the Gospel of John*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, pp. 774-786, (1971), The Last Supper and the Passover. From these surveys, the reader will see what a large range of opinions there are on the chronology of these subjects. But the matter to be resisted is a Thursday crucifixion as we see from this comment by J. Norval Geldenhuys:

In order to prove how little the champions (in the second and third centuries A.D.) of the so-called Johannine dating of the crucifixion (e.g. Hippolytus and Apollinarius) really understood the data of the gospels, we need mention only the fact that they again and  
(continued...)

There are several "preparations" mentioned in the gospels and this is one of the factors that has made the matter difficult.<sup>28</sup> The preparation of the Sabbath in Mark 15:42 refers to Friday, the day of preparation for the weekly Sabbath. The day on which the Lord died, Thursday, 14<sup>th</sup> Nisan, is called by John (19:14) the preparation of the Passover (referring to the feast of Unleavened Bread in that way. The preparation of the Passover does not refer to preparing the lamb. They had already eaten it. It was really the preparation for the feast of Unleavened Bread:

Now the feast of unleavened bread, which [is] called the passover, drew nigh . . .  
." (Luke 22:1).<sup>29</sup>

Thursday, 14<sup>th</sup> Nisan, called by John (19:14) the preparation of the Passover, is called "the preparation" in Matt. 27:62. In Matt. 27:62, the morrow after the preparation is Friday.

Now on the morrow, which is after the preparation, the chief priests and the Pharisees came together to Pilate . . .

The Lord died at the 9<sup>th</sup> hour of the 14<sup>th</sup> day (Thursday). At sundown, around the 12<sup>th</sup> hour, the new Jewish day began (Friday). On Friday, these leaders, no doubt having apprized themselves of where the Lord was buried, came to Pilate and requested that "the sepulchre be sealed until the third day" (Matt. 27:64).

Concerning the difficulties with all of this that may arise in the reader's mind, he may find some of them answered in the section below called *A Few Difficulties Considered*, where a chart on the two preparations is found.

### HOW LONG WAS THE LORD IN THE GRAVE?

. . . thus shall the Son of Man be in the heart of the earth three days and three nights (Matt. 12:40).

The question is, does this mean 72 hours precisely? The way to settle the matter is by comparing Scripture with Scripture in order to ascertain the Scripture usage of such an expression, and not consult a Western stop-watch.

These Scriptures tell us that He would raise his body "in three days": Mark 14:58; John 2:14.

27. (...continued)

again alleged that the first three Gospels teach that Jesus was undoubtedly crucified already on the 14<sup>th</sup> Nisan (cf. the appropriate passages in *Ante-Nicene Christian Library*). Only an extremely superficial reading of the Gospel could have caused them to adopt such a point of view. It was their main object and desire to represent Jesus as the true Paschal Lamb, and therefore they chose the 14<sup>th</sup> Nisan (*op. cit.*, p. 663n).

That last sentence is quite interesting.

28. Many scholars insist that the word "preparation" only refers to Friday.

29. This is referred to in John 13:29 regarding the supposition of some that Judas had left to buy something "for the feast."

These Scriptures state that our Lord would rise the third day: Matt. 16:21; 17:23; 20:19; Luke 9:22; 18:33; 24:7, 46.

These Scriptures state that he did rise on the third day: Luke 24:46; Acts 10:40; 1 Cor. 15:4.

We can see from this that a precise 72 hours (259,200 seconds) is not meant and that these phrases mean *on the third day*. Friday is the first day, Saturday is the second and Sunday is the third. The phrase “three days and three nights” is based on a reference to any part or all of a 24 hour period as a “day and night.”

We now come to another expression, namely “after three days” found in Mark 8:31; 9:31; 10:34; and also in Matt 27:63. Each of these scriptures in Mark refers to His being killed and after three days He would rise again. We may understand this according to 2 Chron. 10:5, 12:

And he said to them, Come again to me after three days . . . And Jeroboam and all the people came to Rehoboam the third day, as the king had appointed . . .

Here is an example where “after three days” meant “the third day.” Now read Matt. 27:63, 64.

I can well understand Christians taking the Scriptures that speak of His being killed and rising in three days to refer to the time from His crucifixion to His resurrection. Taking these numerous texts that way leads to the Friday view of the crucifixion. It also leads to something else. Taking those texts in that way does not set aside the requirement of Matt. 12:40: *three days and three nights in the heart of the earth* -- referring to the time from the burial to the resurrection. So what this text causes the Friday crucifixion view to do is claim that the evening began at about our 3 PM and it forces a burial between our 3 PM and 6 PM -- just before the new Jewish day began. The claim is that there were two evenings, one beginning at 3 PM and another at 6 PM.<sup>30</sup>

On the morning of the first day of the week the Lord was no longer in the tomb. The Lord was in the tomb from the evening (the start) of the Jewish Friday and on into the dark part of the Jewish first day of the week.

There are several scripture passages which show us that “three days and three

30. W. Hendriksen wrote:

According to the ancient Hebrew way of speaking there were “two evenings” (cf. Exod. 12:6 in the original). The first “evening” . . . began at 3 P.M., the second at 6 P.M. . . . we cannot imagine that [Joseph] would have approached Pilate on Friday, 6 P. M., asking for the body of Jesus when the sabbath was beginning (*The Gospel of Matthew*, Grand rapids: Baker, p. 979, 1985 printing).

Clearly, what is driving this matter is the necessity to have the burial completed before the Saturday Sabbath. But the crucifixion, taking place on our Thursday afternoon eliminates this necessity because the burial took place after 6 PM on our Thursday, at which time the Jewish 15<sup>th</sup> day began.

nights” is an idiom and that the phrase finds its fulfilment on the third day. See 1 Sam. 13:12,13; Esther 4:16; 5:1, 4; Gen. 42:17, 18.

TABLE 2

On the third day = after three days

Matt 16:21                      Mark 8:31 & Luke 9:22

Matt 17:23                      Mark 9:31

Matt. 20:19; Luke 18:33      Mark 10:34

Perhaps most would say that the reckoning is from the time of Christ’s death. This supports the Friday crucifixion view because of the inclusive reckoning: Friday (part of; perhaps even only a ½ hour), Saturday, and Sunday (part of). From the Thursday crucifixion viewpoint, it may be said that the burial is implicit in these texts. See Matt 27:63, 64 -- the reckoning here is from His burial on the beginning of the Jewish Friday evening. Also, 1 Cor. 15:4 says:

and that he was buried; and that he was raised the third day, according to the scriptures.

It seems to me that it is best to considered all these Scriptures as having in view the burial.

TABLE 3: LUKE 24:21

“It is now, today, the third day since these things took place.”

DAY SINCE	THURSDAY VIEW	FRIDAY VIEW
first day since	Friday (the day after)	Friday (the day itself)
second day since	Saturday	Saturday
third day since	Sunday	Sunday

So, in the Friday view, the day of the crucifixion is itself considered the first day *since*; whereas in the Thursday view in this pamphlet, Thursday is the day of the crucifixion and Friday is the first day since. It does not seem appropriate to say one hour after the crucifixion that it is already the first day since. However, if the first day is to be counted as the first day since, count from the day of the burial which was in the dark hours of the new Jewish Friday, the dark hours of the 15<sup>th</sup> day.

## *A Few Difficulties Considered*

### **LUKE 23:50-56**

If any scripture appears to be the main objection to what has been said, it would be Luke 23:50-56. However, I do not believe it contradicts what has been said. Speaking generally, Matthew connects things in dispensational or governmental order and sequences, Mark in chronological order, and Luke in moral order. Note that if Luke 23:45, 46 were taken as absolutely chronological, the result would be that the veil was rent before the Lord died. This is not so. There may be some things in chronological order in a passage that also has other things out of chronological order, for the purpose of procuring a moral connection of certain matters, to bring out a line of truth. This is a characteristic of Luke's gospel (the inspiration of the Spirit of Truth caused this to be so).

The remnant and its faithful character is also especially brought out in Luke, especially in chs. 1-3. This feature is also pronounced in Luke 23:51, where it is remarked that Joseph was "a good man and a just" and notices that he did not consent to the judgment against Christ. This is a fine example of Luke's "method" (Luke 1:3). The obedience of the women to the ordinance of the weekly Sabbath is also noted only in this gospel (Luke 23:56). The point in Luke 23:50-56 is not chronological precision, but the moral attitude of the remnant.

I do not take Luke 23:54 to be in exact chronological order. We saw that evening had already arrived when Joseph went to Pilate (Matt 27:57; Mark 15:42) and therefore Sabbath twilight was not coming on when our Lord was buried.

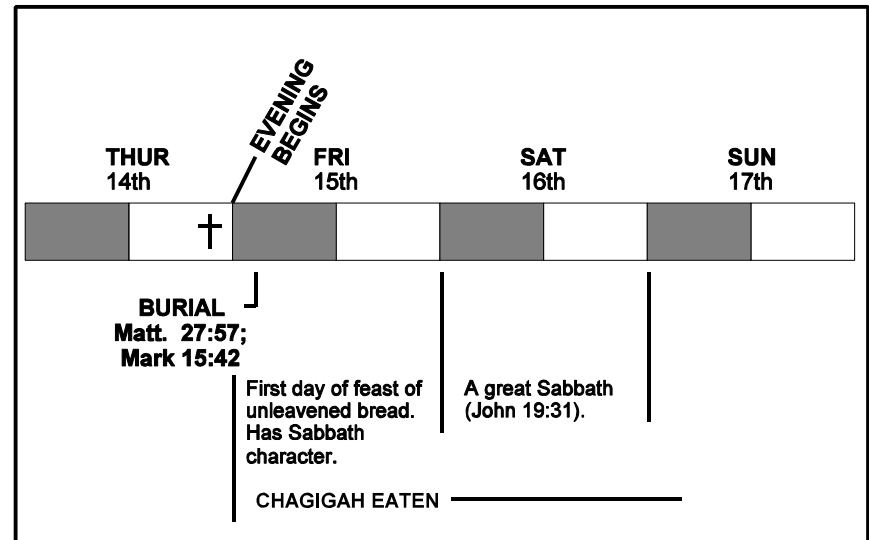
The preparation and the evening twilight coming on refer to the 14th, the day our Lord died. The preparation in Luke 23:54 refers to the preparation of the Passover. What about the Sabbath, then? There are two Sabbaths involved. Friday, the 15th had Sabbath character, and the 16th was the weekly Sabbath, a great day (John 19:31) because it occurred during the feast of Unleavened Bread.

One of the feasts is specifically designated as a Sabbath -- the day of Atonement (Lev. 16:31; 23:32). As work is forbidden on this day (Lev 16:29; 23:28; Num 28:7) so is it forbidden on the first day of the feast of Unleavened Bread (Ex. 12:16; Lev 23:6, 7; Num 28:17, 18), Pentecost (Lev 23:21), the first day of Tabernacles (Num 29:12); and the eighth day (Num 29:35). These all have a Sabbath character, therefore.

It seems to me that two Sabbaths are distinguished in Luke 23:54-56. One has the article "the" and the other does not. In v. 54 we read, "and [the] sabbath twilight was coming on." The article "the" is missing here. The day referred to had Sabbath character (but was not *the* Sabbath (Saturday)). This refers to Friday the 15th, the first day of the feast of Unleavened Bread. In v. 56, we read that the women "remained quiet on the sabbath." The article "the" is here. This refers to the weekly Sabbath which fell on the 16<sup>th</sup>, i.e., Saturday.

It is said that to believe that the Friday in question was a Sabbath is without evidence and an invention to fit the Thursday view. The reader will have to judge. The objection really denies that the 15th Nisan had a Sabbath character, and at the same time maintains that evening began at 3 PM, that our Lord ate the Passover at the wrong time, eating a lamb killed at the wrong time, and that the Passover was killed on the 14th and eaten on the 15<sup>th</sup>!

And now we want to know why v. 54 is interjected here, if it means as described above. It is because there is a moral truth in it. It referred to the preparation of the Passover. Christ, the lamb was slain on this day and this dashed all hope (cp. Luke 24:21, 41). This left them with the Sabbath instead of a new day, a twilight too; for there was a measure of light in Judaism, though now eclipsed by Christianity. The dispensational Gospel, Matthew, gives the hint of "the next day" referring to the day after the weekly Sabbath, i.e., the first day of the week when our Lord rose victoriously from the dead (Matt. 28:1). The event of Matt 28:1 took place at the division of time between the weekly, Saturday Sabbath and the beginning of the first day of the week (Jewish reckoning).



### **JOHN 13:1**

The feast of the Passover refers to the feast following the Passover, i.e., the feast of Unleavened Bread. The supper eaten by the Lord in John 13 is the Passover supper and the feast follows that day as John 13:29 shows.

**JOHN 19:14**

The Friday view understands this to be the Friday preparation for the weekly Sabbath. And, Deut. 21:23 is invoked, it being assumed that that direction was acted on and the bodies all taken down before sunset on Friday. But evening had already arrived when Joseph asked Pilate to grant him our Lord's body and therefore sunset had already occurred before Joseph went in to Pilate:

And when it was already evening, since it was [the] preparation, that is, [the day] before a sabbath, Joseph of Arimathaea . . . emboldened himself and went in to Pilate and begged the body of Jesus (Mark 15:42).

Rejecting the idea that Scripture sanctions the 3 PM - 6 PM two evenings idea, we see that the Lord was not buried before sunset. The new day had already arrived. The new day was the beginning of the Jewish Friday. It being Friday when Joseph asked for the body, the preparation in Mark 15:42 refers to Friday, the weekly preparation for the weekly Sabbath.

John 19:14, however, refers to the 14th Nisan, the day upon which the Lord died. "Preparation of the Passover," I suggest, means the preparation for the feast of Unleavened Bread which came to be designated the feast of Passover (see Luke 22:1). John 18:28 uses Passover in this sense, referring to the *chagigah*, offerings during the feast of Unleavened Bread (Num. 28:18, 19). The Jews had already eaten the Passover lamb during the previous evening hours.

Perhaps the Jews did not want the land made unclean (Deut. 21:23) -- but it was in reality their own unclean deed that defiled the land. However, the Lord's body was not even removed from the cross before the sun set (Mark 15:42) and the land was defiled by what they did to the Lord of glory.

**JOHN 19:31**

The Jews therefore, that the bodies might not remain on the cross on the sabbath, for it was [the] preparation, for the day of that sabbath was a great [day], demanded of Pilate that their legs might be broken and they taken away.

The preparation here is the 14<sup>th</sup> day, the preparation of the feast of Unleavened Bread. The weekly Sabbath was a high day because it occurred during the feast of Unleavened Bread. The feast of Unleavened Bread commenced on the 15th (Lev 23:6; Num 28:17) and ran for seven days. As noted, the 15th fell on a Friday in this year.

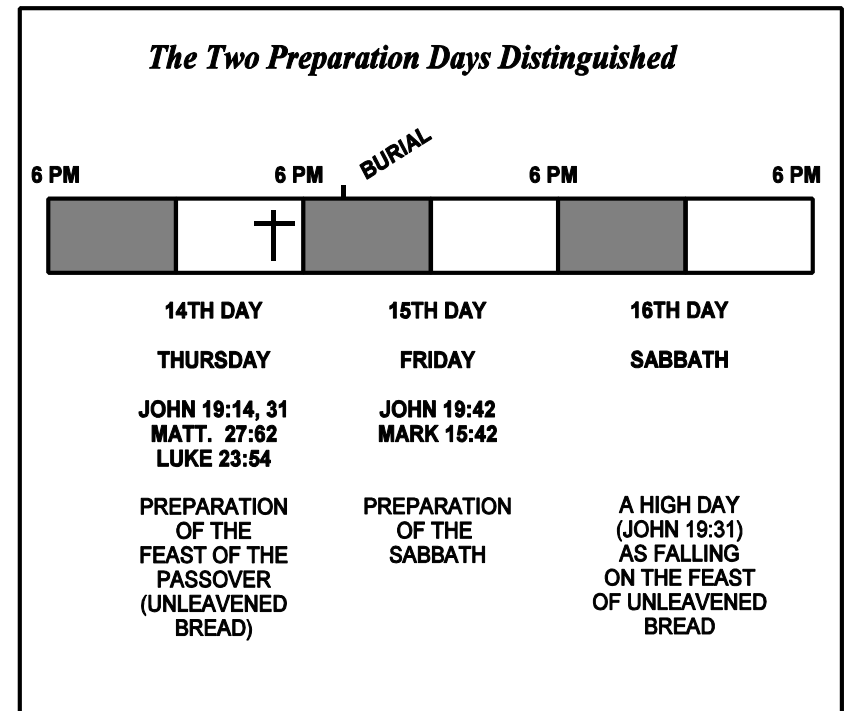
Crucified persons often lingered several days and the Jewish rulers were anxious to get rid of these bodies as soon as possible. Joseph of Arimathaea came on the evening of Friday, the 15th, and secured the body before the Romans took it, who would have taken it down the next day, in the daylight hours of Friday the 15th.

The Jews could not always carry out Deut. 21:22, 23 under the Roman rule, as is shown by the case of Joseph having to secure special permission from Pilate

to take the Lord's body away.

**JOHN 19:42**

This preparation likely refers to the preparation of the weekly Sabbath. At any rate, this is a gracious consideration on the part of Joseph to avoid offense, as well as prohibiting any others from taking our Lord's body.



## 6. *The Day on Which the Lord Rose from Among the Dead*

### HE ROSE ON THE THIRD DAY

... he was buried; and that he was raised on the third day, according to the scriptures (1 Cor. 15:4).

### THE VISIT OF THE WOMEN TO THE TOMB

Now late on the sabbath, as it was the dusk of the next day after sabbath, came Mary of Magdala and the other Mary to look at the sepulchre (Matt. 28:1).<sup>31</sup>

This is near the close of the daylight hours of the weekly Sabbath, say a little after 6 PM, the beginning of the new Jewish day (i.e., the first day of the week). It would appear that they did not have much time before complete darkness came and they merely looked at the sepulcher. It shows their devotedness. Moreover, the stone was not yet rolled away from the opening of the sepulcher.

It is important to see a time-break between vv. 1 and 2. The events following v. 1 took place the next morning when the women returned again with the spices this time (Luke 24:1).

Their devotion is further proved by the fact that Mary of Magdala proceeded while it was still dark (John 20:1), and apparently arrived when the sun rose (Mark 16:2). During the night the earthquake took place, the stone was rolled away, and hence the lie that was concocted by priests and elders in the morning to explain away the resurrection of the Lord.

### JESUS STOOD IN THE MIDST

When therefore it was evening on that day, which is the first [day] of the week, ... Jesus came and stood in the midst (John 20:19).

We have already noted that John uses Roman time and so this refers to the evening time of the 24 hour day that we use. A further point to note is that Luke (24:36) does not mention this time.<sup>32</sup> I believe that this is inspired restraint. Luke

31. Alfred Marshall's *Interlinear Greek-English New Testament* says:

But late of [the] sabbaths, at the drawing on toward one of [the] sabbaths, came Mary . .

.. ,

explaining that this " = the first day of the week." There are writers who say that two Sabbaths are indicated in this verse. Those who say that this is not merely a Hebraism (others say it is) say that it points to the fact that Friday was the 15<sup>th</sup> day of the month, the first day of the feast of Unleavened Bread *having a Sabbath character*. Thus there were two consecutive days that were Sabbaths. In any event, the 15<sup>th</sup> day did have Sabbath character.

32. Note that the woman at the well came at six in the morning, our time (John 14:6). Our Lord  
(continued...)

mentions the fact that when the Lord talked with the disciples it was toward evening and the day was declining. Luke uses Jewish time. It was, however, not yet the end of the Jewish first day of the week. But it is so that when the Lord appeared in the midst it happened on what would be a Jewish Monday. Now, Luke does not mention the arrival of evening and this is an inspired omission, as it were. The old order was past. The Lord Jesus would manifest Himself in the midst of His saints. Jewish reckoning would then be put aside and so we have the order of time in connection with *this event* given by John who uses Roman time, the time used by what is called "Christendom." Thus Christians may regard the first day of the week as John notices it here. It has divine sanction.

### THE SEVENTEENTH DAY OF THE MONTH

It is interesting to notice that the day that our Lord Jesus rose from the dead was Nisan 17. Before the Jewish year was changed in connection with the Passover (Ex. 12), the day when the ark grounded was the seventeenth day of the seventh month (Gen.8:4).

Also we have seen that Israel's march began on the fifteenth day of the month (Ex. 12:37; Num. 33:3). Moses said to Pharaoh that Israel should go three days march into the wilderness (Ex. 3:18; 5:3; 8:27). That would bring them to the seventeenth day -- over the Red Sea.

### PROOFS OF THE RESURRECTION

A paper by this title appeared in serial form in *The Bible Treasury* 20:358 and New Series 1:8, 62, 72.

(...continued)

had been traveling during the cool of the night and arrived there in the morning.



## 7. The Day on Which the Lord Ascended

Acts 1:3 tells us that the Lord was seen by the disciples during 40 days.<sup>33</sup> The count begins on the day of His resurrection, He being seen by the disciples on that day. From the chart at the front of this paper it may easily be seen that the Lord ascended on a Thursday, the same day of the week on which He gave His life for us.

Ten days later the Holy Spirit came in a special capacity -- to indwell the believer and form the church. Acts 2:32, 33 show that the Lord ascended and the Father gave to Him the Holy Spirit there in the glory, and then Christ poured out the Spirit upon those waiting below. It was necessary for Christ to be in heaven, to become head of the body formed by the coming of the Spirit and baptizing those waiting ones into one body (1 Cor. 11:13).

He had received the Spirit, descending as a dove upon Him, in accordance with the perfection of His Person. In glory Christ received the Spirit the second time, but then for uniting the waiting ones to Himself, He thus being the head in heaven and they the members of the body of Christ here in this world.

33. Concerning such numbers, the reader may obtain *The Numerals of Scripture*, by E. C. Pressland, available from Present Truth Publishers.

## Appendix 1: A Brief Note on the Wednesday Theory

The Wednesday theory is the result of the idea that the Lord was buried for 72 hours (thus 259, 200 seconds precisely).

How many hours are there in three days and three nights? The same Hebrew words *yowm* and *laylah*, translated “day” and “night” respectively, were used in the book of Jonah (1:17) and which the Lord Jesus quoted, as were used in the report of the creation (Gen. 1:5). So by going back to the latter report we find that a day and a night constitutes a solar day . . . A solar day is a period of twenty-four hours, so that three days and three nights, or three solar days, constitutes a period of seventy-two hours.<sup>34</sup>

If this reasoning is true, it follows that:

1. Job’s friends rose up from the ground exactly 168 hours after they sat down (Job 2:3).
2. Moses left Sinai exactly 1960 hours after he went on the mountain (Deut. 9:9).
3. Elijah ate a piece of food exactly 1960 hours after he had eaten the previous piece (1 Kings 19:8). See also Matt. 4:2.
4. The flood rains ceased exactly 1960 hours after they began (Gen. 7:12, but compare with Gen. 7:17).
5. Paul got out of the water exactly 24 hours after he went into it (2 Cor. 11:25).

It is, of course, possible that these five points are so. The Wednesday theorist *must* believe it and much more of the same. I don’t. We shall now see that the three days and nights in question are not 72 hours.

It may be promptly settled at once, on the testimony of express scriptures, that Wednesday was not the day of the crucifixion.

1. Luke 24:21 shows that Sunday was the third day since the crucifixion. Therefore, Friday was the first day since the crucifixion and Thursday was the day of its occurrence.
2. 1 Cor. 15:4 says that “he was raised the third day.” This is not at the direct cleavage between Saturday and Sunday. *Scripture* says it was the *third day*. Therefore, he was buried on Friday, as has been shown in these pages.

He was raised the third day, not some moment between the third day and the fourth day. So the third day was never fully completed and Scripture contradicts the full 72 hour notion built

34. R. G. Sappenfield, “Did Christ Die on Wednesday, Thursday, or Friday?” p. 5.

on a misunderstanding of Matt. 12:40 which must be understood according to Jewish ideas, not Western stop-watches.

3. Mark shows four days from the entry as King to the Passover. The notion that must be held therefore by Wednesday advocates is that all that shouting, cutting trees, marching, etc. took place on the Sabbath -- all, too, without a note of censure on the part of the priests and scribes.

There is a (false) view that says that the Passover was the killing of the lamb and this took place on the 14th Nisan between 3 PM and 6 PM; and that the lamb was then eaten during the night of the 15th Nisan (which started around 6 PM). Thus the Lord died at 3 PM in fulfillment of the type, and thus the Lord never did eat the Passover.<sup>35</sup> Thus

In the evening Jesus with the disciples came into the city presumably to the place prepared and they ate a supper. *None of the accounts state that the supper they ate was the feast of the Passover!* It is by inference only, based solely upon what had transpired previously that such conclusion can be drawn.<sup>36</sup>

Having the above theory he must bend plain Scriptures to make them fit. I will only give one example of his method. See how he handles Luke 22:15, 16.

But it will be found to read equally well that He was informing them He was not going to be able to eat it with them on the morrow.<sup>37</sup>

He amplifies this into a two and one-half page disquisition.

No scripture can stand before such an onslaught. It is a shame that such stones are given to God's children instead of fish. I am surprised that the publishers printed such a thing. It is a veiled attack on the integrity of our Lord, whether unintentional or not. The Lord's own words were:

The teacher says, My time is near, I will keep the passover in thy house with my disciples (Matt. 26:18).

Was that His intention or not? According to this writer's theory, it was not. Everyone that trembles at God's Word will reject these defiant speculations. Furthermore, when the Lord told them about the guest-chamber in response to their query "Where wilt thou that we go and prepare, that thou mayest eat the Passover?" He said, "There make ready." So what did they do? "And they made ready the Passover" (Mark 14:16). If we refuse to let the key of knowledge be taken away, we recognize the plain meaning that they had the Passover meal ready. But R. Allen will have it that they did not eat it.

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35. We have already seen that this timing is a mere tradition not according to the word of God.

36. Roy M. Allen, *Three Days in the Grave*, p. 81.

37. *Ibid.*, p. 90.