

"CHRIST OUR PASSOVER"

A HARMONY OF EVENTS AT THE DEATH OF CHRIST WITH THE ANNUAL JEWISH PASSOVER

By Jack W. Langford

(Notes first made in 1984, updated in 1996 and 2007)

This Bible Study will—

- **Enrich Our Appreciation of the Divine Arrangement in Redemption**
- **Demonstrate the Flawless Consistency of the Biblical Record**
 - **Correct Christendom's Traditional Day of Christ's Death**
 - **Strengthen Our New Freedom in Christ**

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FOREWORD

“Did not our hearts burn within us while He talked with us on the road, and while He opened the Scriptures to us?” (Luke 24:32). These were the words of the two disciples who on the road to Emmaus had listened to a stranger who turned out to be none other than the Lord Jesus Christ, Himself (the text says they had been prevented from recognizing Him, verse 16). Truly, their hearts had been stirred as this stranger opened to them the beautiful truths from the Hebrew Scriptures which spoke of the very things that had happened to Jesus Christ in His sufferings, death and glorious resurrection.

Many of us, who have taken refuge from the judgment of God under the bloodstained doorposts of the cross of Jesus Christ, know exactly what these disciples experienced, as we have also read or heard explained the beautiful fulfillments of the Scriptures, especially in their expressive and inspired typologies. I remember vividly one such experience back in 1953 as I had taken a class, in a Bible College I was attending, that involved an exploration of certain types of Christ from the Hebrew Scriptures. The instructor had given a very simple and yet very beautiful explanation of the Passover typology. It was the first time in my young Christian life I had ever heard anything like it. I was deeply stirred by its beauty.

God’s final judgment upon Pharaoh and the Egyptians was announced by Moses beforehand to the Egyptians. However, they would not heed the warnings. God would destroy the firstborn son of all the households of Egypt with the exception of those who applied the blood of a lamb upon the doorposts of their houses. The children of Israel complied with God’s directives. This event would mark a new beginning for the people of Israel and their liberation from horrible bondage. On the 10th day of this first month every household was to select a lamb. It must be an unblemished male of the first year. They were to keep it until the 14th day and slaughter it in the afternoon of that day. The lamb would be roasted with fire, all of it to be eaten that evening with unleavened bread and bitter herbs. The bitter herbs were to be eaten as a remembrance of their bitter bondage in Egypt. Not a bone of that lamb was to be broken. Prior to going into their houses that evening they were to apply the blood to the doorposts and lintels of their houses. Then they were not to venture out until in the morning. God would pass through Egypt that night and strike the firstborn son of every household with death. Where God saw the blood applied to the doorposts of the houses, He would “pass over” and exempt the firstborn of that home, and not allow the “destroyer”(Exo. 12:23) to strike that firstborn with death. This event would be a memorial for all generations to come. That night there was a “great cry” throughout the land of Egypt. All this can be read in Exodus chapters 11, 12 & 13.

In “the fullness of times” Christ came (Gal. 4:4). All four Gospels unite in placing the substitutionary sacrifice of Jesus Christ right square in the middle of Israel’s Passover celebrations of 30 A.D. In addition, special note is taken in the Gospel of John to the effect “Not a bone of Christ was broken” in fulfillment of Exo. 12:46. Like Egypt of old the world today ignores the warnings of eternal judgment. But God has provided a Lamb (the Lord Jesus Christ) Whose blood can be applied to the doorposts of their hearts by faith. Where such is done—God “sees the blood of the Lamb” and exempts that person from eternal condemnation. That person is also wonderfully delivered from the horrible bondage of sin to walk in new life in Christ.

I was deeply stirred by the parallelism and the beautiful fulfillment in Christ. The Passover was revealed through Moses some 1500 years before Christ came to earth and fulfilled it in incredible clarity as the basis of salvation for all mankind. My heart was, indeed, “burning.”

However, the one thing that made this event so memorable to me was the sudden drop from a spiritual “high” to a spiritual “low.” The instructor had concluded by briefly explaining the incongruity between the celebration of Christ’s death on “Good Friday” in the modern Easter tradition and the actual Passover chronology. In Christendom’s traditional explanation of the event, Christ was crucified the day after the annual Passover sacrifice, and then He was raised from the dead a day and a half later on Sunday morning. The instructor explained that theologians have yet to solve that enigma which seems to be insurmountable.

Right then and there, I purposed to find out why this “glitch” between the Biblical record and the modern traditional understanding of that Biblical record. I was not really overly obsessed with the issue because the overwhelming evidence of the truth was clearly stated by the apostle Paul, “*Christ our Passover has been sacrificed for us*” (I Corinthians 5:7). The apostle Paul was inspired to superimpose Christ upon the Passover event. The evidence of the typology was simply too beautiful to be discounted by a question in the actual chronology of the day of Christ’s death, which has been magnified by Easter tradition. However, today’s critics of the Bible have forever pointed to the so-called “contradiction” in apparent glee—and they needed to be answered in a positive way.

Therefore, through the following years, amounting to several decades, as relative subjects came my way I placed them in my file on the subject. In the process of time, with a prayer in my soul for reliance upon the illumination of the Holy Spirit and a much better understanding of the Scriptures, that spiritual “low” on that issue was entirely erased, all thanks to God, through our Lord Jesus Christ. Like those two disciples on the road to Emmaus, my heart, and I hope yours also, will be thrilled all over again as we study this subject.

One further statement I wish to make. The apostle Paul, in talking about Christ as “*Our Passover*,” makes it very clear that the one way believers in Christ can “*keep the Feast*” in its spiritual reality was to “*Clean out the old leaven, that we may be a new lump*” (I Cor. 5:7,8). In the case of Paul’s statement to the Corinthians the “*old leaven*” was in the form of serious sexual immorality. In our modern age, however, the “*old leaven*” is primarily in the form of serious “spiritual immorality.” The religious whoredoms of “Mystery Babylon” (Rev. 17) have spread from the very beginning of the creation of the “Imperial Church” in about 313 A.D. Soon after in 325 A.D. the theologians of that generation legislated a mixture of Christianity and Paganism to create their “Easter” celebrations. Thus, the ritual celebration in Christendom of Christ’s redemption and resurrection has become a pollution of the Biblical record and of spiritual reality. Like the godly kings of Judah, Hezekiah and Josiah, before they could celebrate a *renewed Passover*, they had to clean out the leaven of religious idolatry that had polluted for Israel the glorious realities of the God-given Feast day (see II Chron. Chapters 29-30 & 34-35).

As you will note in this study, I believe that the traditional celebrations centered around the Easter observances are one of the greatest hindrances to understanding the beauty of the subject than any other factor. In this study we will trash certain traditions and focus on the amazing accuracy and beauty of the Scriptures.

Jack W. Langford, April 2 – 3 (Passover), 2007

NEWS FLASH

Just *three days* after I had signed the FORWARD to this new edition of *CHRIST OUR PASSOVER*, we heard the news over the radio that Pope Benedict the 16th indicated in a homily, celebrating the traditional Thursday Mass of the Lord's Supper, that in all probability Christ actually was crucified on Thursday instead of the traditional "Good Friday." I almost fell out of my chair, so to speak. I jumped up and went into the room where the radio was and said to my wife, "Did I hear that right?—Did he say—" "Yes!" my wife said, "you heard it right!" I could hardly believe it and thought the news reporter must have made some kind of a mistake. However, it was confirmed a little later by another similar report wherein the reporter, himself, sort of joked, "Maybe now we should say 'Good Thursday' instead of 'Good Friday.'"

The next week, after Christendom's Easter celebration was over, I called two Roman Catholic organizations to see if they had any explanation for this, but as of yet they knew nothing. Finally, the Pope's actual homily was published by "The Wanderer." This is the oldest and most orthodox of Roman Catholic newspaper publications in the United States. And, sure enough, the present Pope, who is supposed to be a scholarly Pope, had publicly stated that in light of more recent discoveries of the Qumran manuscripts we can understand that the apparent contradiction in the Gospels about the actual day of Christ's death has been resolved. The Pope did not use the words "a Thursday crucifixion instead of a Friday crucifixion" as the announcer had. However, what the Pope said was that Christ in all probability died, according to the Gospel of John, at the actual "hour of the sacrifice of the lambs." "This means," the Pope said, "that He must have died the day before Passover (or Easter)." And he added that this means "He could not have personally celebrated the Paschal Supper." What it also meant was that Christ ate the Passover a "day earlier, without a Passover lamb." The Pope explained that Christ was probably following the Qumran calendar. Of course the literal interpretation of this is what the announcer had given, that Christ must have died a "*day earlier*" on Thursday instead of the traditional Friday. I am sure there will be adjustments forthcoming by Catholic apologists concerning this.

So now I can say, with a smile on my face, that I have no less an authority for what I have concluded and written, than the very head of the largest sect in Christendom, himself. I have included the statements from the Pope's message in the Appendix, No. 10.

This year the Jewish Passover fell on our April 2-3, whereas Christendom's celebrations followed by several days. It was on the 5th of April, as the Pope was celebrating a traditional Thursday Mass in commemoration of "The Lord's Supper" that he made his statements. Of course the Pope made no expression about the potential bewilderment that should follow because of such a disclosure. In the year 325, at the counsel of Nicaea, the so-called "Church Fathers" set the dates for Christ's death and resurrection and all the celebration that should follow. For the last one thousand, six hundred and eighty two years since that time Christendom has primarily been the one agent most responsible for the error and the confusion.

As a result of this disclosure I think you will enjoy this particular study all the more. The conclusion that I made in this study is solidly based on the actual Biblical facts as well as certain historical data that has been available for as long as the events themselves.

Jack W. Langford, May 4th, 2007

“Christ Our Passover”

A HARMONY OF EVENTS AT THE DEATH OF CHRIST WITH THE ANNUAL JEWISH PASSOVER

CHAPTER ONE—PREPARATION

The Passover is properly designated in Jewish literature as "**THE**" holiday of Judaism. It is the first and oldest feast to be observed during the calendar year as ordered by God through Moses. It has also been called "*The Festival of Redemption*" by Jewish writers because it memorializes Israel's redemption out of Egyptian bondage and the redemption of all the firstborn from death. In Christian theology the Passover is understood to be one of the most outstanding typologies illustrating the means whereby God would accomplish spiritual redemption for all mankind through the antitypical Passover Lamb—the Lord Jesus Christ. The bloodstained lintel and doorposts of the homes where the original Passover in Egypt took place point forward to the bloodstained tree through which trusting mortals can enter by faith and be eternally protected from the wrath to come. Such obvious and beautiful parallelism demands the consensus of all who would rightfully judge that the ancient type coincides with the events and benefits surrounding the death of Jesus Christ. One of the fruits of this study is to demonstrate, beyond any shadow of a doubt, that it does so to God's intended perfection.

Harmony of Events

A very interesting and controversial subject, which has stymied many Bible students for centuries, has been the proper harmony of the events of Christ's suffering and death with the Passover and Feast of Unleavened Bread as it took place at the time of Christ. It was obviously God's prearranged plan that Christ's death and resurrection occur at the precise time of the annual Jewish Passover Festival. All four Gospels unite in telling us this. No serious Bible student believes that this timing was accidental. It was obviously purposed for the correlation between the type and the antitype.

Therefore, a correct and unforced chronology of the days and events as they unfolded at the time of Christ's death is highly important. First of all, it will enhance for us the beauty and perfection of the prophetic typology. Then, we are to remember that this great event took place at the very “climax of the ages” (Hebrews 9:26). It is the focal point of all dispensational time in God's dealing with the spiritual redemption of mankind (Galatians 4:4,5). Lastly, it will also expose some of modern Christendom's traditional fallacies which horribly distract from the truth of the revelation. It should be very obvious to any person reading the New Testament that nowhere in all its pages is there the slightest indication that the early Christians ever celebrated this thing called “Easter.” The resurrection of Christ was most certainly meant to be daily “demonstrated” in their new lives, rather than being ritually “celebrated,” thank God! In fact, spiritual brethren recognize the modern ritual celebration as a distraction from the reality.

Disruption of Harmony

The Devil has always designed confusion to cloud the beauty of events as described in the Scriptures. Today in Christendom there is, frankly speaking, the totally uninspired and unauthorized celebration called "Easter." The truths of Christ's death and resurrection are surrounded by a crude mixture of events at the Passover with elaborate pagan rituals of Popish design. The traditional dating of events surrounding the Easter celebrations are another primary source of the confusion.

Early Roman Catholic theologians, in trying to pinpoint certain days to celebrate in their Easter pageantry, took a position regarding this subject that was not only quite hasty but also very inventive. Thus, traditional Christendom inherited what was "apparent" to these early "scholars," namely, that Christ was crucified on the afternoon of the 15th day of Nisan, which was the High Sabbath of the Jewish Feast of Unleavened Bread and the day *after* the Passover. They thought the crucifixion was on a Friday of the Roman calendar days and for some further quirk of logic, traditionalists came to call it "Good Friday." Furthermore, according to this initial supposition, the resurrection of Christ would occur only *one and a half days* later on Sunday morning.

Church history tells us that in very early times (150 A.D.-250 A.D.) many of the "Eastern Churches" of Asia Minor had chosen to "celebrate" the death and resurrection of Christ on the annual Jewish Passover of Nisan 14. The "Western Churches" (Italy), on the other hand, began their "celebrations" on the Sunday after Passover. To be united they decided to formulate a singular date for the celebration and to disassociate it from the Jewish Passover. The Council of Nicea (325 A.D.) made decrees and rules for fixing the date of the whole Easter season. There is no need but to briefly mention here the complicated scenario whereby they date the time for celebrating these events. First they decreed that Easter would be reckoned from the occurrence of the spring equinox (the time in spring when the length of the day and night is equal). They calculated March 21st as that time (actually, it varies in occurrence). Then they stated that the next full moon which occurred after this date was to be regarded as the full moon of Passover month, and the next occurring Sunday would be Christendom's celebration of Easter.

Needless to say, Christendom's "Holy Week" will vary from year to year as much as one month, anywhere from March 22nd to April 25th. Obviously, the Roman celebrations will not fall on the time of the Jewish Passover celebrations. This is also why Easter has come to be called "the moving holiday." (It most certainly was a "move" away from the truth.)

You can easily see why many have challenged the traditional views of these events which have been ordered by the Roman Catholic Church. Sad to say, most of Protestantism has returned to these celebrations after they broke away from them during the Reformation. Even sadder, many Protestant theologians have reinforced the traditional views of the actual day of Christ's death. This only magnifies the confusion. Infidels, Secular Humanists, Liberals and Modernists in Christendom, so-called "Higher Critics," and then Jewish writers as well have all taken their cue from the confusion and have loudly proclaimed that the *Bible contradicts itself* in accounting these events.

There is however an "apparent contradiction." The three Synoptic Gospels (Matthew, Mark and Luke) plainly state that Christ ate a Passover supper with the disciples before He was betrayed to be crucified. The Gospel of John, in similar plain language, states that after the

crucifixion of Christ a Passover supper was yet to be eaten. Infidels (including religious infidels) don't care about a solution to the apparent problem because they are only interested in ridiculing the Scriptures. On the other hand, conscientious Christians, who have been "regenerated by the unblemished and spotless blood of the Lamb...and through the living and abiding Word of God" (I Peter 1:18,19 & 23), are not at all satisfied with *pagan contamination, traditional suppositions or apparent contradictions*.

A Positive Solution

This is a Bible study which will offer you a positive solution to the contradictory dilemma Christendom itself has created. It is a harmony that is written after many years of patiently allowing the facts to be seen in their natural Biblical setting. The problem is most certainly not with the Bible but in our preconceptions of what we think the Bible ought to be saying. I believe that the reading of this material will cause you to rejoice in the veracity and beauty of the Word of God on this subject. It will likewise prove that the various infidels themselves have actually fallen into a trap that will be to their own embarrassment.

It is a fact that reading through the Gospel accounts of the Passover season and the associated events as they took place in Christ's day could seem at first to be confusing, if not contradictory. Those who have more knowledge about the magnitude of the controversies in this area of Bible study may want to ask—"Mr. Langford, what makes you think you can unravel such a thorny problem which scholars have wrestled with for centuries?" My answer is simple. If the secrets of God's Word are to be unlocked on the basis of intellect, scholastic ability, personal wizardry, or mastery of ancient languages and comprehension of historical materials, then I would be the last one to look to for an answer. However, it has been my experience, as a student of the Word of God, to prayerfully and patiently study the Scriptures depending upon the guidance and illumination of the Holy Spirit Whom Christ plainly has promised to all believers for the very purpose of comprehending spiritual realities (I Corinthians 2:1-16). To claim this benefit is not spiritual arrogance. It is a simple reliance upon Christ's promised provision (John 16:13). If this has truly been my procedure and trust, then in all simplicity, I may have an advantage some others do not have.

I do not believe for one second that I have found some long lost secret. Rather, I believe many Bible students have understood these facts through the ages. It has been my desire, in my own study of the Word of God, to simply obey the Scriptures in "proving all things and holding fast that which is good" (I Thess. 5:21). I am eager to share with you the truths I have found.

Brief Outline of The Passover Subject

For the Biblical details about this Feast, please read the list of Scriptures given in the Appendix (No. 6) at the conclusion of this study.

In reading the Scriptures, one will immediately observe that the Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread are minutely connected, if not slightly overlapping, in the order of their occurrence. The afternoon ("evening," see Appendix No.1) of the 14th of Abib (or Nisan) is called The Lord's Passover (Lev. 23:5) and the 15th day beginning at sunset is the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread. However, the Passover supper is actually eaten on the night beginning the 15th day (Lev. 23:6) and is the first meal of that Feast of Unleavened Bread. The

Feast of Unleavened Bread lasts for seven days. Because of this close connection sometimes the whole Feast also came to be called *Passover* (Ezek. 45:21; Luke 22:1 & Acts 12:3,4).

In brief, The Passover and Feast of Unleavened Bread consist of the following procedures (we are only concerned here with the major daily events)—

1) A spotless lamb was selected (a male of the first year) on the 10th day of the first month (of the sacred year calendar) to be kept until the 14th day (Exo.12:3,6).

2) On the 14th day all leaven is cleansed from the homes. The lamb is to be sacrificed on the afternoon of that day. The lambs are then roasted with fire. Total preparation is made to eat the Passover meal that coming night after sunset (Exo. 12:6). (We shall note later that this day is called "*Preparation Day*.") Initially, in Egypt they sprinkled the blood of the lamb, by means of the hyssop bush, upon the door posts and lintels of their houses. This aspect of the observance was not repeated in Israel's yearly observance of the Feast.

3) The 15th day commences with the setting of the sun (according to the Jewish calendar day reckoning) and the highlight of this night is the eating of the Passover meal along with its prayers and services (Exo. 12:8). The meal consisted of the roasted lamb, unleavened bread, and bitter herbs (Exo. 12:8). (Later the customary wine was added to the meal.)

4) Beginning with this 15th day, unleavened bread is to be eaten for seven days (Exo. 12:15). (We will note later a slight variation of this where they begin eating unleavened bread even on the 14th day.)

5) The 15th day and the 21st day are regarded as special "High Sabbath Days" and no manual labor is allowed, other than preparation of foods for meals (Exo. 12:16 & Lev. 23:7,8).

6) A final but vital aspect of this Feast is the offering of the Sheaf bundle (Heb. *Omer*—a measure) of "Firstfruits" of freshly cut grain on the morning after the first regular 7th day Sabbath that occurs during the Feast (Lev. 23:11). (Later we will note a variation in the particular Sabbath chosen for the performance of this offering in Jewish custom).

7) This bundle of freshly cut grain would be a "Wave Offering" to God and was to stand as a token of the greater spring harvest which would be celebrated on the day after the occurrence of seven successive Sabbath days (meaning 50 days later). No new grain was to be eaten by the people of Israel until this particular "Wave Offering" had been made (Lev. 23:15,16).

8) In this regard the Passover and Feast of Unleavened Bread will serve as the first of the three Feasts (Pentecost and Tabernacles being the other two) wherein all the Jewish males were required to attend the services "before the Lord" in Jerusalem (Exo. 23:14-17).

The Passover events beautifully typify the Lord Jesus Christ in His substitutionary death, burial and resurrection for all mankind. The story of redemption is spelled out by 1) the selection of the Passover Lamb, 2) the observation of the Passover Lamb for several days, 3) by the final sacrifice of the Passover Lamb, and finally 4) by the Wave Offering of the Firstfruits of grain. Christ not only was chosen to be the atonement for the sins of the world, but He also was found to be without blemish, and He actually died as the antitypical Passover Lamb. Finally He was gloriously raised from the dead and ascended up to God for our justification as typified in the routine of the Wave Offering of the Sheaf of Firstfruits on Sunday morning. "Christ our Passover" also delivers the believer from the worst bondage of all—the enslavement of sin. (See the discussion on "Slavery" in Appendix 8, at the end of this study.)

Preliminary Notes

Some important notes are appropriate and must be understood before we begin. A few of these facts are of general incidental matters, whereas others can be crucial to a proper alignment of our understanding of certain statements in the Scriptures. So let us take notice of further background information that is, first of all, available to us from the Bible itself, as well as from secular historical fact.

No 1. It is most important to realize that though the law concerning the celebration of the feasts was to be meticulously followed, yet there was a certain degree of **pliability** that God allowed in their observances as well. This is especially true as it relates to the observance of Passover. Here are examples of what I mean: *a)* an alternate date for the observance of Passover (one month later) was stipulated in case someone was unable to partake of it at the appointed time due to some ritual uncleanness—see Numbers 9:9-12; *b)* on one recorded occasion there was an exception made for those who were not ceremonially clean even on the second month allowed for its observance—see II Chron. 30:2,3 and 15-20; *c)* on this same occasion God further allowed an extended celebration of the whole Feast of Unleavened Bread for an additional seven days—see II Chron. 30:23; and *d)* according to Deut. 16:1-8, once the people of Israel came out of their wilderness journey and into the Land of Promise, they were to sacrifice a ritual Passover lamb only at the Tabernacle or Temple where God placed His Name. The observance of the Feast and the eating of unleavened bread was to continue throughout the whole land by all the households. However, only in Jerusalem could a ritual sacrifice be made. This meant that the families throughout the land and later in the dispersion, who could not attend the services at Jerusalem, would substitute for a sacrificial lamb in their eating of the Passover meal. It is customary for the Jews scattered throughout the world today to have only a shank bone of a lamb at their Passovers in order to comply with this law.

Thus I say again, there was a degree of pliability that God allowed in the historical observances of Passover. These did not contradict any of the truths reflected by the Feast day.

No 2. In this same vein, it will become evident that at the time of Christ there were some other alterations in the observance of the Feast. This was some 500 years after the last recorded observance of Passover in the Hebrew Scriptures. Some modifications should not be surprising. These alterations involved some traditional changes of significance at the time Christ observed the Feast. I say again, these did not contradict any spiritual truth reflected in the Passover event but these are, however, very crucial for us to recognize if we are to arrive at a correct harmony of these events.

For instance, you will note in the Gospel records that the 14th day of Nisan, when the lambs were sacrificed, was now called "***the first day of unleavened bread.***" See—Mark 14:12 & Luke 22:7 (and Matt. 26:17). In the Law, the first day of unleavened bread was the 15th day of Nisan and from that day on through the next six days unleavened bread was to be eaten (Exo. 12:8,15,18-20; Lev. 23:6; Num. 28:17). Thus we can see that at the time of Christ they were in the custom of eating unleavened bread a day early. So to try and bring the day mentioned in the Gospel records under the exact terms of the Law would cause no little confusion in attempting to differentiate or identify the days. Yet we must abide by exactly what the Gospel writers say are the facts of the case since that was, indeed, the custom at that time. No doubt the Jewish people were not merely attempting to make sure that they had no leaven in their celebration on the 15th

by actually starting to eat unleavened bread on the 14th, but they were actually observing the whole celebration an extra day—in *this case a day early*.

No 3. Also at the time of Christ, another alteration was being practiced similar in nature to their eating unleavened bread a day early. That was the practice of eating a Feast meal on the beginning of the 14th day preliminary to the regular Passover meal which would be eaten at the beginning of the 15th day. The significance of this fact becomes highly important to anyone doing research on this subject. If Israel ate a pre-Passover meal on the beginning of the 14th day, the question arises—*is it possible that this was the actual meal Christ partook of with His disciples on the night of His betrayal?* He would have eaten a Passover Feast meal with His disciples before He would actually suffer at the very time the Passover lambs were sacrificed. After this, the regular Passover meal would be eaten.

More Than One Passover Meal

For many years certain Bible teachers have strongly contended that Christ must have eaten a pre-Passover supper, or simply, He ate the Passover a day early. I believe that we will see this as Biblically correct. The Gospel writers clearly reveal that there were two different "Passover" meals in view at the time of Christ. First, the three Synoptic (similar) Gospels tell us that certain of the apostles were sent to prepare a "**Passover**" meal for Christ to eat together with them before He was to die (Matt. 26:17-19; Mark 14:12-16 & Luke 22:8-15). The Gospel of John also tells us that this last supper was actually "**before the Feast of Passover**" (John 13:1). Then with further precision John states that the next morning, after the arrest and preliminary trial of Christ, the priests would not go into the Gentile "judgment hall lest they should be defiled; so that they might **eat the Passover**" (John 18:28). In addition, John adds that the day on which Christ was crucified was "**the preparation for Passover**" (John 19:14). Consequently, if these texts from all four Gospels are to be taken literally, and if they do not contradict each other, then there were two different Passover meals eaten at the time of Christ. There was a preliminary Passover meal eaten on the evening beginning the 14th day of Nisan and the regular Passover meal was eaten on the evening beginning the 15th day of Nisan.

Historically speaking, there is no denying the fact that there was a preliminary Passover meal eaten in the custom of the Jews in Palestine at the time of Christ. This has never been a secret. Alfred Edersheim, in his monumental and very popular work, *The Life And Times Of Jesus The Messiah*, states in the Appendix that at the time of Christ "the **Passover**, in the popular and canonical, though not in the Biblical, sense...**began on the 14th [of] Nisan...on Wednesday Evening**" (Vol. 2, page 479). Edersheim further makes reference to the historian Josephus (a contemporary of early Christianity—Antiq. II, 15.1), who regarded the feast to last **eight days** (instead of 7) **beginning on the 14th**. In addition the *Jerusalem Talmud* (Jer. Pes. 27d) reckoned that the "**Pesach**" (Passover) of that time to actually begin "**on the 14th**." There has also been a very thorough work done more recently to show the Jewish setting for early Christianity. This was produced by The Foundation Compendia Rerum Iudaicarum ad Novum Testamentum, edited by Safrai, Stern, Flusser and Van Unnik, entitled *The Jewish People of the First Century* which states this custom. Concerning the eve (beginning the 14th of Nisan) before Passover they say, "The eve itself was a **sort of feast**, because the paschal sacrifice was offered that afternoon" (Volume 2, page 809).

Actually, this custom of beginning the Feast a day early on the 14th is still carried on to

this very day by the Jews in Israel. Rabbi Riskin, chief rabbi of Efrat and dean of the Ohr Tora Institutions, has recently written in the *Jerusalem Post* (Jan. 15, 1994, under "Blood and Redemption"), "Surprisingly enough, few people realize that here in Israel we also have an extra day [in the celebration of The Passover festival], but it arrives **before** the start of the festival, **the 14th day of Nisan**. Unfortunately, its unique feature is generally overlooked in modern times...The 14th day of Nisan is the one day festival of the Passover sacrifice, the paschal lamb (hag haPesah); the 15th day commences a seven-day festival of matzot and redemption (hag haMatzot)." Rabbi Riskin says that the celebration of the 14th day traces all the way back to the *Babylonian Talmud* (Pesahim 5a) which discusses the observance that should be had on the 14th day—"the day before the seven-day festival begins."

Not only was this earlier Feast meal done in preparation for the actual Passover sacrifice, but so also were the truths that Christ brought to the attention of His disciples at the supper He ate the night of His betrayal. The unique truths that Christ expounded upon would most certainly prepare the apostles for a fuller comprehension of His own suffering as the antitypical Passover Lamb, to die later in the afternoon on the 14th day, exactly at the time of the sacrificing of the Passover lambs. In addition, it has always been noteworthy that there was actually no mention of Christ and the disciples eating a Passover lamb on the night of the last supper. Instead of using an actual Passover lamb to illustrate the symbolism of His death and suffering (which most certainly, it would seem, would have been done had it been there) Christ used two other available ingredients—the bread and the wine. Was part of the reason because the lambs had not yet been sacrificed?? We will allow the Scriptures to speak for themselves as we answer this question in the following pages.

It is also a well-known fact that the Jews of the dispersion, till this very day, actually eat *two* Passover meals in their observance. They eat their *Sedar* (Passover) meals on the beginning of the 15th day and *repeat it* on the beginning of the 16th day as well. This came to be practiced because the Jewish calendar is primarily a lunar calendar and each month begins with the new moon which was to be announced from Jerusalem. Jews scattered throughout the world, who could not know for certain they were eating it at the exact proper time, began to eat the Passover on the second day also to guarantee one of the two days would be technically proper. In our modern age, with quick and accurate communications, this practice simply remains as a relic of a custom developed during the early centuries of the dispersion. Needless to say, at this point it was entirely possible, from both the information of specific Biblical statements and historical secular sources (both of which have generally been ignored), to understand that Christ could have made that earlier Passover meal His last Passover with His disciples before He suffered as "Our Passover" at the very time the actual Passover lambs were being sacrificed.

Additional Notations

No 1. As indicated earlier, the Jewish reckoning of each day is to begin at sunset and not at midnight as in our Roman calendar days. Thus, the days of the week before Christ died will always begin with the evening and usually with the evening meal sometime after sunset.

No 2. The correlation between the Jewish and Roman days is established at the point of the resurrection of Christ, which was plainly called "the first day of the week," and one works backward from that time. In working backwards we first note that it was the morning of the "first day of the week" (i.e., Sunday) when the tomb was found empty. The day before had to be the

regular Jewish Sabbath (i.e., Saturday). The day before that was the High Sabbath day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread. This was a Friday on the Roman calendar day and the 15th of Nisan on the Jewish calendar day. The beginning of this day on the Jewish calendar was the evening before, which was Thursday of the Roman calendar day. The evening beginning this 15th day was the time when the regular Passover supper would be eaten. When there are Scriptural statements about how many days it was “before Passover,” one simply counts backward from the point of this supper. There is general agreement by chronologers on this arrangement. The real problem that has troubled chronologers is the proper interpretation of the Scriptures as to which *day* it was that Christ ate the last supper, was betrayed, tried and crucified. Those I call Traditionalists believe Christ ate the regular Passover supper on the evening beginning the 15th day, and that He was therefore crucified on the afternoon of that day, which was a Friday. However, as I will be showing in this study, Christ ate the pre-Passover supper beginning the 14th day and was therefore crucified on that day at the exact same time the Passover lambs were being sacrificed.

No 2. The common use of the word "day" in this situation can either simply mean the whole 24 hour time period, or just the daytime hours—such as night and day.

No 3. The expression, "the 14th day at evening" (Exo.12:6) does not mean the evening that begins the 14th day, but rather the evening that closes the 14th day (see Appendix No.1).

No 4. Originally, the first month of the Jewish calendar was called "Abib." See Exo. 12:2 & 13:4. Later, after the captivity, it was called "Nisan." See Esther 3:7 & Neh. 2:1.

No 5. The term "*Passover*" can technically have different shades of meaning.

a.) It is derived from the action of Jehovah who at midnight on the 15th of Nisan went throughout the land of Egypt to destroy the firstborn of each Egyptian household, but "*passed over*" the households of the children of Israel who had applied the blood of the lambs to the doorposts of their houses. Thus, this night is specifically the "*Passover*" evening and the Feast that is taken at the beginning of this night is the "*Passover*" supper.

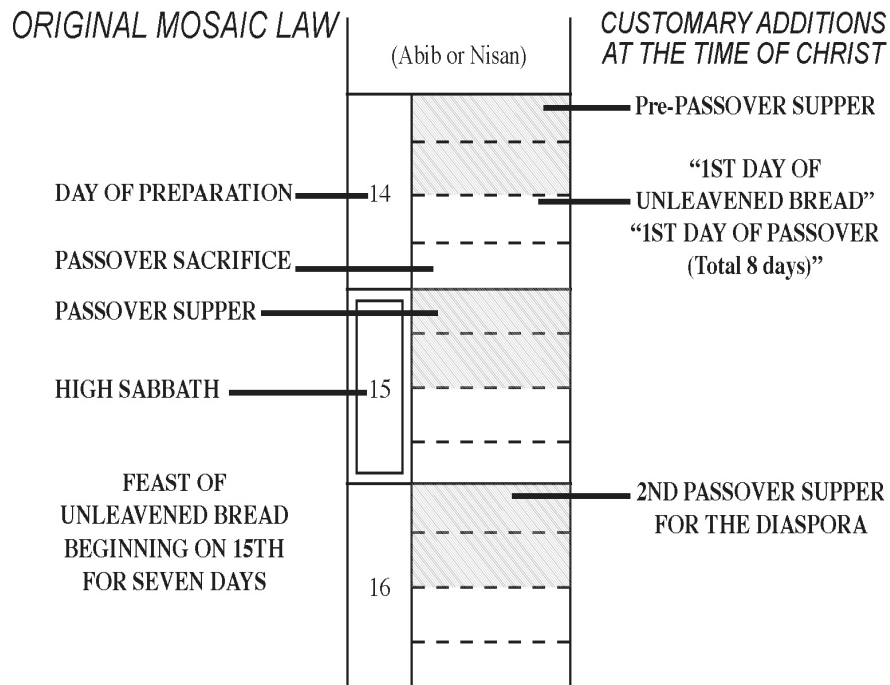
b.) However, since the lamb was sacrificed in the afternoon or "evening" of the 14th day of Nisan and the Passover supper was eaten shortly thereafter (at the beginning of the 15th day), thus the designation of "*Passover*" is normally tied to the close of this 14th day—see Lev. 23:5; Num. 28:16 & Exo. 12:6 (i.e., "*the fourteenth day of the month at evening is the Lord's Passover*" Lev.23:5).

c.) At the time of Christ it also had become the custom in Israel to observe the Passover meal in a preliminary manner a day early with special emphasis upon the Passover sacrifice. In this case, the whole 14th day, beginning with the evening meal at the outset of this day, could also be customarily referred to as "*Passover*."

d.) In addition, as we noted earlier, in Christ's day and until this present time, the term "*Passover*" came to be used as the designation for the whole Festival of Unleavened Bread (see Luke 22:1 & Acts 12:3,4). This was probably done in response to one of the great Kingdom prophecies of Ezekiel (45:21) which states that in the Millennium the "Passover" will be a Feast of seven days eating unleavened bread.

e.) Please note the small chart that I have prepared on the next page—

To help in this study, at this stage, I have prepared a smaller chart so that one can visually see what we are talking about. This chart only covers the 14th, 15th and 16th of Nisan.



With these preliminary words we will begin a slow and careful trek through that final week before Christ died.

CHAPTER TWO—PROGRESSION

Outline of The Final Week Before Christ Died

The writers of the four Gospels give an important countdown of days and events leading up to and immediately following the crucifixion of Christ. We will number these days and take note of the special highlights of each one. Please compare each of these days with those indicated on the chart at the end of this study. This will help to give you a visual calendar grasp of the chronological unfolding of events and a harmony of the Gospel records. This is not an attempt to harmonize all the events that happened during this final week.

The final week before Christ died is the focal point of each of the four Gospels. Much of what they say is leading up to that climactic event of Christ's death. Actually, of the four Gospel records, 30 chapters out of a total of 89 chapters are specifically devoted to this final week. This amounts to one-third of their combined record and shows the supreme importance of this closing week. Therefore, let us once again take the journey through that time with reverence, caution and prayer.

NISAN 9, John 12:1, "Then Jesus, *six days before the Passover*, came to Bethany..."

John will consistently use the term "Passover" in its Mosaic and original way—meaning the Feast meal that occurs at the close of the 14th day and the beginning of the 15th day of Nisan. By counting backward from the Passover (sunset between the 14th and 15th) we arrive at the 9th day of Nisan, which is "*six days before Passover*." (Note the small numerical indications just inside each day on the chart.) You will also note on the chart that this brings us to a Saturday which was the Jewish Sabbath day. One arrives at this conclusion of which Roman calendar day it was by tabulating from the resurrection day (Sunday) backwards. As stated earlier, there is general agreement among chronologers on this procedure.

On this day Christ came to Bethany, which is just outside Jerusalem, to the home of Lazarus. Some have objected to the thought of Christ and His apostles possibly traveling a distance that would violate the law of the Sabbath. Therefore, they have attempted to maneuver this arrival in a way other than its obvious setting. This is totally unnecessary. Even if this had happened, that Christ and His company had traveled a longer distance than the Law would allow on the Sabbath, the objection is easily answered by the fact that Christ's ministry required Him to do on the Sabbath what He would do any other day of the week. This is plainly demonstrated by the account of Matt. 12:1-8 where Christ and His disciples were accused of breaking the Sabbath day. Christ did not argue that He had not broken the technicality of the Sabbath Law. Rather, He explained *that like the priests* laboring guiltlessly in the service of the temple on the Sabbath, and *like King David* being justified in eating the showbread, so it is that Christ's ministry superseded the law of the Sabbath. Consequently we will leave this day exactly as it falls.

NISAN 10, John 12:2, "There they made Him a supper..."

That night Christ ate at the home of Lazarus whom He had raised from the dead at an

earlier date. Remember that the Jewish reckoning of the 24 hour day period begins at sunset. Thus, this and each successive 24 hour day will begin at sunset, usually with an evening meal. On this occasion Mary anointed the Lord's feet with very costly ointment (John 12:1-8). Judas Iscariot made the suggestion that the ointment should have been sold for money which could have been given to the poor. Christ corrected his suggestion and knew what was really in Judas's heart. No doubt Judas took this as a personal insult which his pride deeply resented. Thus he could have become loosened from his superficial allegiance to Christ.

John 12:12, "**On the next day** much people were come to the feast..."

These are the daylight hours of the 10th day of Nisan. The Gospel records tell us that on this day was the spectacular event of what has come to be called "The Triumphal Entry" of Christ into Jerusalem. (See also Mark 11:1-11.) This is our Roman calendar day of Sunday, the first day of the week. In Christendom this great event is celebrated on the Sunday before "Easter" and is popularly called "Palm Sunday." Rather than simply blindly following the traditional celebrations of Christendom, we are going to look at what actually highlighted this day and note its Biblical significance as it relates to the Passover subject.

Selection of The Lamb

On this 10th day of Nisan, according to the original Law of Moses (Exo. 12:3), the Passover Lambs were to be **selected**. Every family head was to choose out a particular unblemished lamb for its Passover meal (or the lamb could be shared by several families). These lambs were to be selected and tagged, as it were, **for death**. The lambs would then be kept until the afternoon of the 14th day. Though it is doubtful that this day was still being observed in this manner in later Jewish history, yet this is why the action of the crowds in proclaiming Jesus of Nazareth as **their choice** is so significant. While in the background the original Law had stipulated the selection of the lambs on this day, so it is in the foreground that vast crowds of people have literally become frenzied with enthusiasm in **selecting** Jesus of Nazareth as their choice. Christ's fame and popularity with the common people had increased through the few years He had ministered and now, at this particular point in time, it reached an overwhelming crescendo.

Of particular significance were the words that the crowds began to shout—"HOSANNA...blessed is He that cometh in the Name of the Lord." (See the variations of this as recorded in each of the Gospel records—Matt. 21:9,15; Mark 11:9,10 & John 12:13). This phraseology is a quote from Psalm 118:25, 26. Hosanna means "**save, we pray**" and the rest, "Blessed is He that cometh in the Name of the Lord," has reference to Jesus. In verse 21 of this Psalm it is stated, "*I will praise You, for You have answered me, and have become my salvation.*" There is little doubt that the crowds were looking to Jesus as the prophesied Messiah Who would save them primarily, at this time, from the Roman oppression. So frenzied and jubilant were the crowds that it made the envious and fearful religious rulers beside themselves with frustration. "Stop it! Stop it!" they were probably saying to the people. Finally they even approached Jesus and appealed to Him to stop what they thought was the blasphemous enthusiasm of the multitudes. Jesus told them that if the people should stop "*the very stones would immediately cry out*" (Luke 19:40).

In frustration those clerics of old looked at each other and said, "You see that you are accomplishing nothing. Look, **the world** has gone after Him" (John 12:19). And true enough,

the world had selected Him! John goes on to tell us of the Greeks who had come to the Feast and requested—"WE WISH TO SEE JESUS!" (verse 21). What a beautiful reminder of how John the Baptist first introduced Christ with the words, "*Behold, the Lamb of God Who takes away the sin of the **world***" (John 1:29, 36). And furthermore, what a sober reminder of the most popular verse in the Bible—"For God so loved **the world** that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life" (John 3:16).

And truly, this is the real significance of this day—that Christ should actually be selected as the antitypical Passover Lamb. Consequently, there is a sudden and drastic change in Christ's demeanor. And no doubt the crowd was startled by it. They now listen to the words of the Man of their choice, but it will not at all be what they expected.

Suddenly, as if having been selected for **death**, Christ responds (John 12:23-33),

*"The hour has come, that the Son of Man should be glorified...
NOW MY SOUL IS TROUBLED, and what shall I say?
[No longer speaking to man He cries out] **Father, save Me
from this hour: but for this purpose came I to this hour.
Father, glorify Your name.**"*

Almighty God, Himself, responded like "thunder" or "the voice of an Angel" some would say (verses 28 & 29).

"I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again."

The crowd stood in stunned amazement as Christ went on to explain the Devil's defeat and also exactly how He would die (verses 31 & 32).

*"And I, If I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me.'
This he said, signifying what **death** He would die."*

Some might think by the unique character of these words that Christ was somehow oblivious to the glorious reality of what was happening. What would make Christ cry out like this on such a splendid occasion? Here is the answer! The fact that in the background the original Law specified this day for the selection of the lambs in the first stage of the Passover observance—whereas, now in the foreground, on center stage, the antitypical Passover Lamb was selected for DEATH. Yes! The Lord Jesus Christ knew in His soul He was tagged for death—because He alone knew what was really happening in God's predetermined plan.

Many preachers have expounded on the sufferings of Christ, usually focusing on the crucifixion event. Others have noted that if one were to mark the actual beginnings of Christ's sufferings they would look before the cross to the garden of Gethsemane where Christ was in awful "agony of soul" (see Luke 22:44). But one should not stop there because such a cry was first uttered **four days earlier on this 10th day of NISAN**. This is the day He was marked for death. This is the day His deep and **awful agony of SOUL** began.

Yes, we also, as we read of these events that took place on this day, are like the crowds of people who actually witnessed them. We are momentarily left in stunned amazement at the seeming contradiction of thought. We are thrust from great rejoicing to sudden, horrible unexplainable gloom. Yet now, from our perspective in time, we look in further amazement at the absolute precision of Divine arrangement between the Type and the Antitype. May God help

us to more wisely praise His Holy Name and stand in awe of Him. The absolute precision of God's time clock should erase from our minds any suggestion of mere accidents or generalities in fulfillment.

Examination of The Lamb

NISAN 11, Mark 11:11b-18, "...And now the eventide was come, He went out unto Bethany with the twelve..."

As the evening came Christ returned to Bethany to stay there that night. This began the 11th day of Nisan. In the morning, on His way back into Jerusalem, Christ paused at a fig tree for an important lesson to the disciples who are with Him. On this occasion Christ placed a curse on the fig tree because it had no fruit. The fig tree was emblematic of the nation of Israel which had every opportunity to bear spiritual fruit in response to the ministry of John the Baptist and Christ, Himself. However, the nation as a whole was not responsive. Once in the Temple He violently cleansed it of the business hawkers and drew further hatred from the religious rulers who were already planning His imminent death if at all possible (see John 11:57). This was Monday on the Roman calendar. Toward evening Christ again left the city to return to a place in Bethany.

Because of this action on Christ's part of cleansing the Temple He will face His first examination before the religious leaders. "Who gave You this authority?" they will ask (Mark 11:27-33). And as you read His answer you can see that their mouths were stopped!

NISAN 12, Mark 11:19 & 20, "And when even was come He went out of the city. And in the morning..."

Having spent the night outside the city, Christ once again returned to the city of Jerusalem. He passed the same fig tree and completed the lesson to the disciples. They took note of how quickly the fig tree had died and even dried out. This is the 12th day of Nisan and Tuesday.

The Gospels recorded many things Christ taught on this day. Mark 11:27-12:37 and Matthew 21:17-25:46 and Luke 20 & 21 record for us the long dissertations given in the Temple and the many contentions of the rulers in attempts to trap Christ in His words and thus have grounds for His death. Needless to say, they were unsuccessful. It is as if Christ, as the antitypical Passover Lamb, was subjected to the most careful scrutiny ever given to any man. This is illustrated in Matthew 22:15-22—the question by the Pharisees of whether or not it is lawful to pay taxes to Caesar. After silencing the Pharisees, next the Sadducees ask Him the tricky question about the resurrection, Matt. 22:23-33. After He silenced the Sadducees the lawyer tried his hand, Matt. 22:34-40. After they are all stopped He asks them a question about how King David could call his distant Son (the Messiah) "*Lord*" (Matt. 22:41-46). Of course, they could not answer. There was no way they could "entangle Him in His talk" (Matt. 22:15). And after all was said and done, He was found impeccable and truly *unblemished*. Therefore, the only grounds for Christ's death was as the innocent substitute—the perfect Passover Lamb.

These passages go on to tell us how that at the close of that day, as He was once again leaving the city, He spoke of the climactic events at the end of the age, of His second coming and the great Day of the Lord.

Important Alignment

One final thing that Christ told the apostles at the close of this day will help us to align ourselves and to double-check our position as to precisely where we are in the chronology of these events. This is recorded for us in Matthew 26:1-5 and Mark 14:1,2. Likewise, in these passages there is the statement concerning the aim of the rulers of the people at this point in time.

"After two days is the Passover, and the Son of Man is betrayed to be crucified...Not on the feast, lest there be an uproar among the people."

By looking on the chart one can see that we are right on schedule in our understanding of the unfolding of these events. The 12th day of Nisan has ended and just two days (13th & 14th) are left before the actual Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread beginning on the High Sabbath of Nisan 15. To this very time the 14th of Nisan is still referred to as "the day before Pessah [Passover]" in Jewish reckoning (see *Jerusalem Post*, April 6, 1996 under "True Freedom" by Rabbi Riskin). Thus "two days before" includes the 14th.

The planners of Christ's death are fearful of the multitudes of people rioting were the death of Christ to occur on the High Sabbath Feast Day of Nisan 15. Therefore, if they are going to have Jesus killed, they are pressed to do so now! They must act quickly. It all must be accomplished within **two days**. How can they do it? Who will help them? The 13th is rapidly upon them and then the "preparation day" of the 14th—and that is all! First of all, they are totally ignorant that Almighty God is arranging the schedule and they are only tools of His to reflect, by their own minds and secret counsels, the execution of His plans according to His schedule.

So far there has been no gap in the day-by-day reckoning of events. We have traveled from the 9th day of Nisan up through the 12th day of Nisan as we have moved through the Gospel accounts. Now we are approaching the final day before Christ will be betrayed.

Betrayal of The Lamb

NISAN 13, Mark 14:3-11, "And being in Bethany in the house of Simon the leper, He sat at meat..."

Christ had returned to Bethany for this night and ate supper in the home of Simon the leper. This begins the 13th day of Nisan and the daylight hours will be our Wednesday. (Surprisingly enough, there is general agreement among most chronologers on this schedule.) At this meal a woman poured precious ointment upon the head of Christ. Christ explained that this notable deed was actually done for His burial and would be remembered throughout the ages. Thus He indicated that the time of His death was very near. There were some who criticized what they thought was a waste of the money used for this precious ointment. However, once again Christ reminded them that what she had done was honorable and that she had actually prepared His body for burial. Then Christ said that the thing she had done would be preached to the whole world as a memorial to her (Mark 14:9).

In all probability Judas remembered Christ's rebuke delivered to him a few days before. The very next thing the text says is that Judas found his way to the chief priests to betray Christ (Mark 14:10). Most certainly, for himself Judas will have only the miserable memorial of the eternal reminder of his wicked deed.

Behind the scenes the religious leaders have taken final counsel to put Christ to death. Actually, their intent was no secret. Even the apostles knew for a long time that the leaders were seeking to kill Him. Judas, himself, knew this as well; therefore, he must act quickly if he is to take advantage of the opportunity. Thus it is, that sometime during this day (either in the late evening or morning hours) Judas went into the city of Jerusalem and made contact with those who were seeking to silence this Jesus of Nazareth.

It is noteworthy that, while Judas was contracting for Christ's betrayal, Christ Himself remained outside the city of Jerusalem. The negotiations between Judas and the clergy are self-evident. They were very happy for this opportunity. Yes, it even seems to them like providence is on their side. No doubt, the deadline is explained, "*NOT on the High Sabbath of the Feast lest there be a riot among the observers of the Feast*" (Mark 14:1,2). Christ will have to be relatively alone, not surrounded by crowds. Then He will be taken privately into their custody. They can hastily arrange a judgment counsel for His condemnation and then, "We will take care of the rest," they would say. One can easily sense the tenseness of the oncoming hours.

Judas returned and was alert for a convenient opportunity. If their schedule is to be complied with, and there is absolutely no Scriptural explanation to the effect that it was not, then this would be the last time Jesus enters Jerusalem. Seemingly, like a trap, the device is set and ready to snap shut. Now Christ sent certain disciples ahead into the city of Jerusalem to make preparations for an evening meal within the city. Tonight he will be eating with His disciples in the city of Jerusalem. This would be His last meal with them before His death.

NISAN 14, Luke 22:7, Mark 14:12, Matthew 26:17 & John 13:1,

"Then came the Day of Unleavened Bread, when the Passover [lamb] must be killed...His disciples said to Him, 'Where do You want us to go and prepare, that You may eat the Passover'...Now when evening had come, He was reclining [at the meal] with the twelve disciples...Now before the Feast of Passover Jesus knowing that His hour had come..."

These passages, in consistency with all the foregoing facts and in the continuity of the daily accounting of this last week, must **begin** the 14th day of Nisan. Christ gave the instructions for preparing the evening meal (the customary pre-Passover supper). This last supper was held during which Christ gave many truths to the apostles. Later that night He was betrayed. A late night trial was held by the religious leaders in order to expedite their need to have Christ put to death prior to the High Sabbath. The next morning (the daylight hours of the 14th) He was transferred to Pilate's and Herod's courts. His death was arranged to take place at the same time two criminals were scheduled to die—and one could be sure these criminals were not scheduled to die on the High Sabbath of the 15th. His crucifixion would, of course, bring about His death at the very same time the Passover lambs were being sacrificed in the Temple ritual. This is Thursday on the Roman calendar day. This fact will continually be brought out and proven beyond any shadow of doubt as we continue to move through the Gospel records.

Errors of the Traditionalists

Just here I want to comment on some of the obvious mistakes the early theologians made when they set the dates for the "Easter" customs. A hasty reading of the Gospel accounts, with a predisposition to prove the traditional view, would make misunderstandings inevitable.

First, the traditionalists read the three Synoptic Gospels where it says that Christ "ate the Passover with His disciples." Naturally, if one was to focus only on these statements, the first impression would be the regular Passover meal that occurred on the evening beginning the 15th day of Nisan. However, careful Bible students should never solidify their conclusions until all the facts have been analyzed. One must also focus on the whole context of these events before he forms his conclusion. As I stated earlier, the Gospels indicate that there are **two** different "Passover" meals to be eaten—one that Christ ate with His disciples—and one that the religious rulers were to eat the next day. In addition, there are **many historical references** to show that, indeed, two Passover meals were celebrated in the times of Christ in Palestine. Consequently, at this juncture one must ask which Passover meal is this talking about—the pre-Passover supper—or the actual Mosaic Passover supper??

Secondly, the traditionalists realize that the passages I have quoted above (Lk. 22:7; Mk. 14:12; Matt. 26:17) are talking about the 14th day of Nisan because that is clearly when the Passover lambs were sacrificed. But, because they think that the regular Passover supper is in view, they are forced to view these statements as being made from the perspective of the **CLOSE** of the 14th day rather than from the perspective of the **beginning** of that day. In other words, they are thinking, "then came—**AND PASSED**—the Day of Unleavened Bread, when the Passover must be killed" (Lk. 22:7). They understand these statements as saying that the 14th day is about over and now Christ wants to prepare for the regular Passover meal on the 15th.

Of course, this is totally out of perspective. The 14th day, like all other days before it, will **BEGIN** with the evening meal. Luke's account makes it clear that the 14th day "**CAME**," not that it **PASSED**! What follows in each of the Gospel accounts is simply a full accounting of all that took place on that particular 14th day of Nisan—beginning with the evening meal.

In addition, we shall see that all four Gospel accounts agree that Christ was crucified on "**the preparation day**"—Matt. 27:62; Mark 15:42; Luke 23:54 & John 19:42. We shall see that the "preparation day" was clearly the 14th day of Nisan, in preparation for Passover. If Christ was crucified on "Preparation day" then the "last supper" had to have been the supper that took place on the beginning of the 14th day.

Thus, each of the statements in the Gospel accounts should normally and consistently be viewed from the perspective of the *beginning introduction* to the 14th day instead of from the perspective of the end of that day. With that in mind, there will be perfect harmony with the Gospel of John which many have claimed to be contradictory to the Synoptic Gospels.

Several Glaring Inconsistencies

These mistakes by those I call the "traditionalists" create several tremendous problems. The first of these is that they have admittedly created a totally "blank day" (as it is called by chronologists, from the afternoon of the 13th to the afternoon of the 14th) in the chronological record of these events. By pushing Christ's death over to the 15th they have opened up a one day gap in the record. Whatever takes place from Wednesday afternoon through all of Thursday is simply left out in their reckoning. They have also referred to this as the "blank day" in the final week of Christ's suffering. In light of this week being the primary focal point of the Gospel records, and in light of a revealed continuity about all other days, a "blank" in the record is highly improbable. As we continue through this study we will see that all the days in this important time frame are accounted for.

Secondly, if there is such a blank in the record and Christ was, indeed, crucified on the High Sabbath of the 15th day of Nisan, then there is absolutely NO EXPLANATION given as to why the religious rulers would go against their own judgment to do such a thing. The Gospels are clear! That was the one thing the rulers didn't want to do because it would cause a riot and they all would be in danger of being hurt. And yet, the "traditionalists" have them do such a thing and NOT A WORD is said about it. AMAZING! Maybe the religious rulers today would be foolish enough to do such a thing but, most certainly, the rulers back there would not do it. Undoubtedly, the reason there is no Biblical explanation given as to why they would go against their own better judgment and council is because—in fact, they didn't.

Thirdly, not only would the religious leaders NOT do such a thing, it is even more UNLIKELY that the secular rulers would do such a thing. They did not want a riot anymore than the clerics did. Pilate would not chance such an offense to the Jewish people. Herod was probably as brutal as Pilate. Just a few years later Acts 12:3 & 4 says that Herod kept Peter in prison until after the Passover and would have him killed then. If Herod would wait until after the Passover to have a disciple of Christ killed, it is obvious that Pilate would not have the Messiah, Himself, killed on the regular Passover High Sabbath Day.

Fourthly, this assumption has also forced the religious rulers to call for a trial on Passover evening—the High Sabbath of Nisan 15. Jewish scholars have for centuries called this an impossibility. The Jewish Oxford scholar, Geza Vermes, has recently stated that he “flatly rejects as unthinkable according to Jewish Law” the notion of Jesus being tried by the Sanhedrin on Passover evening. Because of Christendom’s insistence that this did happen on that night Vermes charges that the New Testament account must be “a deplorable caricature” of unreliable history (*The Passion*, by Geza Vermes).

Fifthly, this assumption by the "traditionalists" forces a congestion in the time duration, from the death of Christ until His resurrection, to be that of only two days instead of the revealed "three." This is by far the most problematic and controversial factor they have created.

If we recognize that there is no break in the chronological recording of these events, there will be harmony of the Gospel records. The account will run smoothly, filling every day in this important time frame. It will also avoid the inescapable enigma of Christ being dead for only two days instead of the Scriptural "three." That Christ was raised from the dead on Sunday morning there is no doubt. **That Christ died on Friday afternoon has been contested ever since this blunder was first made.**

Further Testimony that Establishes The Accounting of The 14th Day of Nisan As the Day upon which Christ was Crucified

The Gospel writers give an orderly account of the whole of the 14th day of Nisan. This day began by Christ eating His last "Passover" supper with the disciples. He was betrayed about midnight, tried by the high priests in the late night hours, was judged by Pilate and Herod in the morning, and was crucified to die later in the afternoon hours. Finally, His body was taken down from the tree and buried just before sunset. Many references will further testify to the fact that this was Thursday, the 14th day of Nisan. We will take these references in somewhat of a chronological order.

1.) **JOHN 13:1** As indicated earlier, this passage plainly states that Christ's last supper with His disciples was "**BEFORE** the Feast of Passover." There is really no need to try and explain away the face value of this clear statement as many have tried to do. In fact there is no satisfactory explanation of this passage by the traditionalists. If the last supper Christ ate with His disciples was the Mosaic Passover supper, then there is no other "Passover Supper" in the future—this is it! Therefore, many will say that this statement merely indicates that the moment is just "before" the eating of the Passover meal that night. The problem with this is that verse two of the passage states that the "supper" was already in progress, "**taking place**" (literal translation). Thus, the setting for this passage is not before they ate, but rather later in the progress of the meal as Judas Iscariot contemplates leaving—so the next verse would imply to us. This is why some translations render verse two "and supper being ended" (K.J.V.).

2.) **LUKE 22:7,15** "Then came the day when **the Passover must be killed** [i.e., the 14th day of Nisan had arrived]...I desire to eat this Passover with you **BEFORE I suffer**." John 13:1 said that Christ ate this meal "**BEFORE...PASSEVER**." Now Luke records the words of Christ that this meal also was "**BEFORE I SUFFER**." Since they both are referring to the same identical time period (the 14th day when the Passover lambs were killed), then we conclude that Christ actually died at the time that the Passover lambs were being sacrificed.

In addition, the Gospel of John makes it plain that Christ's sacrifice, wherein none of His bones were broken (even though the Roman soldiers had intended to do so), was in fulfillment of the typology of the Passover sacrifice. John quotes directly from the Passover Law (Exodus 12:46 & Numbers 9:12) to the effect that not a bone of the Passover lamb was to be broken. "*For these things were done, that the Scripture should be fulfilled, 'A bone of Him shall not be broken.'*" (John 19:36). Thus the full meaning of the Passover sacrifice points to the fulfilling Sacrifice of Christ both by its manner and timing.

3.) **I CORINTHIANS 5:7** "CHRIST OUR PASSEVER is sacrificed for us." This passage by the divinely inspired Apostle Paul clearly *superimposes* Christ's sacrifice upon the sacrifice of the Passover lambs. Not only is the beauty of this fact inescapable, but the perfection of the timing must also be inescapable.

4.) **JOHN 13:29** This passage indicates that Judas Iscariot, who left the supper in order to betray Christ, could have gone out to "*buy things needed for the feast*." This, of course, would have been a total impossibility were they eating the regular Passover meal on the High Sabbath of Nisan 15. All purchases for that Feast meal had to be done on the preparation day of Nisan 14. This proves the point that they were on the evening beginning Nisan 14.

5.) **JOHN 18:28** In the early morning hours of that day the religious leaders had turned Christ over to the Roman authority. At this time it was stated that the Jewish leaders could not go into the Roman judgment hall but had to stay outside so that they could remain "purified in order to eat the Passover." This purification was required by the Law of Moses (Num. 9:6-10; John 11:55) in order to participate in the Passover meal and its services. Thus, the regular Passover feast had not yet taken place.

6.) **JOHN 18:39** This passage records the fact (noted by the other Gospel writers as well) that Pontius Pilate customarily released a prisoner "*at the Passover*." This use of the term

"Passover," as we have stated earlier, has reference to the afternoon of Nisan 14 when they slaughtered the Passover lambs (Lev. 23:5, Num. 28:16,17 and Exo. 12:6). Thus it was on this day that Pilate, in order to generate friendship with the Jewish people, made such a friendly gesture.

Of course, at this time Pilate left it up to the crowds (who were prompted by the religious leaders) to make the selection of who was to be released and who would be executed, hoping they would release Christ. To his utter amazement, they selected Barabbas to be released and Jesus to be executed. Thus again, Nisan 14 is plainly established. The Jewish people would never stand before Pilate on the High Sabbath of Nisan 15 and argue about who was going to be crucified on that day. It is also plainly established that since the Roman rulers wanted to please the Jewish nation, therefore they would never have someone crucified on the High Sabbath of Nisan 15 in the first place.

Another aspect of this situation should be emphasized here. This is the fact that Pilate had already designated several men to die on this day! It is **obvious** that he would not have designated them to die on the High Sabbath of Nisan 15. Thus, the day must have been the 14th.

7.) **MARK 14:1,2; LUKE 22:1,2; MATTHEW 26:4,5** "NOT on the Feast day [i.e., Nisan 15] lest there be an uproar of the people."

I want to emphasize the strength of this point by repeating it again. It was absolutely not their plan to have Christ killed on the High Sabbath of the Feast day. The reasons are given. They feared the people and they did not want a riot exploding in their faces. In this revelation, the Scriptures are actually telling us the secret fact of why the religious rulers pressed for the immediate death of Christ before the Passover. This is precisely why they were willing to stay up all night for the trial. They were not thinking of the Passover typology but of their own safety. Nevertheless, by such fearful thinking they played a part in effecting God's timing that Christ die at the time of the sacrifice of the Passover lambs. This is similar to the fact of why they did not break the legs of Christ in fulfillment of the Passover typology. It wasn't because the soldiers suddenly remembered the type of the Passover lamb. No! It was simply the fact that Christ gave up His life early, so that they didn't need to break His legs. The fact that there is no revealed explanation as to why they would go ahead and allow Christ to be crucified on the Feast day against their own wishes, and that there was no riot among the people is, in and of itself, proof that Christ was not crucified on the Feast day of Nisan 15, as has been traditionally taught by Christendom.

8.) **MATTHEW 27:62; MARK 15:42; LUKE 23:54; John 19:42** (Please read each verse). All four Gospels are clearly united about the day on which Christ was crucified! "...Because it was the Preparation Day, that is the day before the [High] Sabbath..."

These verses are highly important because they show actual positive **UNITY** of all four Gospel writers. All Four Gospel writers are *perfectly united* in saying that Christ was crucified on "**the Day of Preparation.**" In no sense whatsoever could the 15th day of Nisan ever be called "the Preparation Day." The simple fact that the 15th was the special High Sabbath of the Feast of Unleavened Bread totally excluded it from such a designation. The High Sabbaths had preparation days just as the regular Sabbaths had preparation days. The preparation days always preceded the Sabbath days. If two Sabbaths ever occurred in succession, such as a High Sabbath

followed by a regular Sabbath, then the day before both Sabbaths was "the Preparation Day." It is common knowledge that all the work done in preparation for the High Sabbath of Passover was done on the 14th day of Nisan. This is illustrated for us in the days of King Josiah. They observed one of the greatest Passover celebrations in the history of the Nation of Israel (II Chron. 35:18). The 14th day was specifically designated. Six times the word "**preparation**" was used of this day and one time the words, "make ready" (K.J.V.). See II Chron. 35:1,4,6,10,14,15 & 16. Thus the 14th of Nisan was called "**Preparation Day.**"

The clear statements from all four Gospels are plainly devastating to the traditional "Good Friday" (Nisan 15) crucifixion of Christ. The 14th day of Nisan is plainly identified as "the Preparation Day" of Passover.

9.) JOHN 19:14 Not only does this passage say Christ stood before Pilate on "the Preparation [Day]," but it specifically says this day was "**THE PREPARATION OF PASSOVER.**" In other words this was the 14th day of Nisan, the "Preparation Day for Passover." Words cannot be any plainer. The Scriptures are not at all ambiguous about this subject.

10.) JOHN 19:31 This passage illustrates what all the Gospel writers unite in telling us. They had to hasten the deaths of those being crucified so that they could take down their bodies and bury them before sunset which began the Sabbath. Lest anyone misunderstand what kind of a Sabbath this is, John was inspired to explain, "for that **SABBATH DAY WAS AN HIGH DAY.**" This means that the approaching day was the "High Sabbath" of Nisan 15, the actual first day of "the Feast of Unleavened Bread." Once again, this is very explicit language. There is absolutely no circumventing such clear testimony.

And again, in the beginning of the very same sentence, it is explained that this was "the Preparation" and the High Sabbath soon followed. These would all be very ludicrous statements if, as the traditionalists would have the Scriptures say, "Now they had Christ crucified on the High Sabbath because they didn't want to defile a regular Sabbath day." This would make the regular Sabbaths more holy than the High Sabbaths. Their doctrinal insistence has forced them to foolish confusion. And because most Bible teachers don't persevere in careful study, most of Christianity has been suffering some embarrassment for centuries.

Conclusion as to The Day Christ Died

I will allow these 10 groupings of Scriptures to stand as a perfect standard explaining the exact chronological day Christ died. These Scriptures also bluntly prohibit the traditions of apostate Christendom on this subject. They likewise demonstrate the absolute harmony and perfection of the Gospel records on the subject as to when Christ died.

These facts leave the supposed "super intelligent" humanist, agnostic, liberal, modernist, and all others who have loudly proclaimed "the Bible contradicts itself on this subject" in a very embarrassing position. Not only do the plain historical references testify to the fact that the Passover was observed in Palestine in Jesus's time an extra day beginning on the 14th, but so also do three of the Gospel writers as well. Therefore we have found, after careful and full examination, that the four Gospels stand in perfect harmony, unblemished and unblushing in truthfulness. The critics of the four Gospels have only displayed their ignorance about the correct Biblical teaching on this subject!

CHAPTER THREE—PERFECTION

The Importance of the Slavery Issue

The Passover was first of all the *liberation* of the people of Israel from cruel Egyptian bondage. This was the primary purpose in the Passover event—to free the people of Israel in order that they may serve God in separation from the slavery and idolatry of Egypt. Because of this important aspect of its meaning the Jewish people also referred to the Feast as “*The Holiday of Freedom.*” I saved a statement by a rabbi that illustrates this.

“The world today is searching for peace. Legend tells us that the month of Nisan, in which the festival of Passover occurs, which witnessed the redemption of the Jews from slavery in Egypt, will also witness their ultimate redemption, as well as the redemption of the entire world. And at that time, the world will be in a state of ‘Koolo Shabbat’—a constant Sabbath, with Sabbath peace. We are all aware that Passover is the holiday of freedom, and freedom leads to peace.”
(Rabbi Zevulun Charlop, Jerusalem, Passover 1983)

Indeed, the spiritual significance of Passover is a reflection of that freedom. Egypt is a picture of the world which holds its slaves in the cruel bondage of sin. By means of the antitypical Passover Lamb, all who trust Him are delivered from that bondage, with the prospect of serving God in separation and peace.

The two ingredients of the Feast that gave significance to the subject of Israel’s bondage and slavery were the *bitter herbs* and the *unleavened bread*. The “bitter herbs” (Exo. 12:8) reflected on the fact that their lives were “made bitter with hard bondage” (Exo. 1:14). Moses indicated the “unleavened bread” also signified the fact that the people of Israel had eaten “the Bread of Affliction” for many years in Egypt (Deut. 16:3).

The prophets laid heavy emphasis on this aspect of the liberation of Israel from slavery. Moses said, “But the Lord has taken you and brought you out of *the iron furnace*, out of Egypt, to be His people, an inheritance, as you are this day” (Deut. 4:20). Solomon was reminded of this truth when he prayed to God “For they are Your people and Your inheritance, whom You brought out of Egypt, out of *the iron furnace*” (I Kings 8:51). Isaiah spoke of God having “tested you (Israel) in *the furnace of affliction*” (Isa. 48:10). Jeremiah says “...in the day I brought them (Israel) out of the land of Egypt, from *the iron furnace*, saying ‘Obey My voice...’” (Jer. 11:4). With language like this being used it becomes evident that Israel’s slavery was indeed very cruel with hard labor in the scorching sun of the Egyptian topography. No wonder the judgments of God upon Egypt were severe.

Many have stated, including president Lincoln himself, that the horrible desolation of our own Civil War (which was, no doubt, far more devastating than the judgments on Egypt) in the 1860s was a direct result of the judgment of God on the callous indifference of this country to the anguish of slavery. Indeed, Martin Luther King, Jr. capitalized upon the language of Scripture—“Let My people go”—in order to stir the hearts of this nation towards the “Civil Rights” movement just a few years ago.

Shall we not likewise be reminded that “Christ our Passover” was the basis for the

liberation of the children of God from the horrible bondage of sin and death? Yea, the chief illustration in Paul's epistle to the Romans of the Christian's redemption is that of deliverance from our past life in sin's bondage to the glorious liberty of the children of God. In Romans chapter seven we see the picture of those "sold under sin" (Rom. 7:14), only able to do "what we (inwardly) hate" (v.15), while we are literally unable "to perform what is good" (v.18), "bringing one into captivity to the law of sin" (v. 23), so that we finally cry out "O, wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from this body of death?" (v. 24). The answer comes immediately, "I thank God—through Jesus Christ our Lord!" (v. 25). Therefore "the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made us free from the law of sin and death" (Rom. 8:2). As a result we are no longer "slaves of sin" (Rom. 6:6 & 17). "For we did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but we received the Spirit of adoption by Whom we cry out, 'Abba, Father'" (Rom. 8:15).

Interestingly enough, on the night of Christ's last Passover supper with His disciples, after they had eaten of the customary "bitter herbs" and "unleavened (Matzos) bread," Christ spoke to them and said "No longer do I call you servants (lit., slaves), for a servant (lit., slave) does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I heard from My Father I have made known to you" (John 15:15).

In the Appendix (No. 8) I am going to include a letter I wrote in response to a vicious attack on the Bible over the slavery issue. Infidels often accuse the Bible of teaching and supporting the vicious slave-trade industry. The Biblical facts are revealing. The whole Passover subject stands as a positive response to this attack on the Scriptures.

Returning to the Daily Accounting

NISAN 15, Matthew 27:62-66, "Now the next day [Nisan 15] that followed the Day of Preparation [Nisan 14], the chief priests and the Pharisees came together unto Pilate..."

This is the first day after the crucifixion of Christ, and after the regular Passover Feast had been eaten on the evening beginning this 15th day of Nisan. On the chart this is Friday of the Roman calendar day. The religious rulers had successfully delivered up Christ to Pilate the day before. Then they had piously eaten the regular Passover meal in the evening. Now, however, they have another immediate chore to perform. They are anxious that none of Christ's followers sneak in and steal away His body and make the claim of a resurrection of their Messiah. Therefore, on this day they appeal to Pilate for a Roman guard of soldiers to be dispatched to secure the tomb and prevent any such thing from happening. Again they are successful with their request. No doubt they smugly returned to their duties of this holy day thinking that this exasperating problem was finally over.

This is also the day in which the women, who had observed the place where the body of Christ was taken, made their preparations of spices and ointments (Luke 23:56). Though the High Sabbath Law strictly prohibited any public business or servile labor to be performed, yet regular household duties were allowed (Exo. 12:16 & Lev. 23:7,8). On the regular Sabbath days even household chores were disallowed (Exo. 16:21-26 & Lev. 23:3). Thus, the women prepared these ingredients with the purpose of returning to the sepulcher after they had rested on the regular weekly Sabbath that followed this High Sabbath.

NISAN 16, Luke 23:56; Matthew 28:1 & Mark 16:1, "And rested the Sabbath day according to the commandment...and when the Sabbath was passed..."

As indicated above, one needs to distinguish between the High Sabbaths and the regular Sabbaths that were mandated for Israel. Most chronologers recognize that two Sabbath days followed in succession on this occasion. First, there was the High Sabbath of the Passover itself—Nisan 15 (Friday). Then, there followed the regular weekly Sabbath—Nisan 16 (Saturday). People who are not familiar with the distinctive High Sabbaths that occur on the Jewish holy days often misunderstand some of the references using the term "Sabbath." The High Sabbath is in view in John 19:31, Mark 15:42 and Luke 23:54. On the other hand, the regular weekly Sabbath is in view in Mark 16:1, Matthew 28:1 and Luke 23:56. Of course, the traditionalists presume that nearly every reference is to the weekly Sabbath. Such is not the case.

Three Days and Nights

It is appropriate now to discuss the time duration of Christ's death. There are many passages of Scripture that speak of Christ being raised from the dead "*after three days*," or "*in three days*," or "*on the third day*." Obviously, these must all mean the same thing though phrased differently—Matt. 16:21; 17:23; 20:19; 27:63; Mark 8:31; 9:31; 10:34; Luke 9:22; 13:32,33; 18:33; 24:7, 46; John 2:19; Acts 10:40 and I Cor. 15:4. The normal understanding of all these expressions could only fit within the context of a Thursday crucifixion. The total time elapsing if Christ died on a Friday afternoon would be less than one and three quarter days. If this were the case, then the normal expression would simply be "two days," or that Christ would be raised "the second day" after His death.

In addition to the expressions used above, the Scripture also makes it plain that Christ's resurrection comes within the context of a full "three days and three nights." See Matt. 12:40; 16:4; Luke 11:30 and Jonah 1:17. If these expressions are to be taken literally, then there are three daylight time periods and three nighttime periods involved in the expanse of time that elapses from the death of Christ until His resurrection. Again, these expressions absolutely seal the doom of the idea of a Friday crucifixion death for Jesus Christ. A Friday crucifixion would involve only two daytime periods and two night periods.

The traditionalists usually try to harmonize all the statements with their Friday crucifixion by saying these expressions are simply "Jewish idioms" in reckoning time. They point out that in some instances the reckoning of a "day" could mean only "a part of a day." No one actually denies that this is true, but everyone also knows that the Jewish idiom was not intended to evaporate whole days, either. The proper and normal Jewish idiom, were Christ to have died on a Friday and been raised on Sunday morning, is simply "two days" and not "three days." If Christ died on a Thursday and was raised on Sunday morning, "three days" is the proper Jewish idiom.

With a Thursday crucifixion, the afternoon when Christ died would qualify for one day-time period because it was a sufficient part of that day. Friday supplies the second day period and Saturday supplies the third. Likewise, Thursday night supplies the first night, Friday the second and Saturday the third. Thus the only time of crucifixion that satisfies all the requirements of the clear Scriptural statements is the death of Christ on Thursday afternoon. Even the traditionalists

admit that a Thursday crucifixion would more naturally fit the requirements of Biblical language.

NISAN 17, Matt. 28:1; Mark 16:1; John 20:1; Luke 24:1 & 21, "And early in the morning upon the first day of the week...and this is the **third day** since these things were done."

One final Scripture for our consideration, which adds confirmation to the foregoing facts, is found in Luke 24:13-27. Two of the disciples are walking on this Sunday away from Jerusalem, towards a little town named Emmaus. Their heads are throbbing in confusion and bewilderment at all that had recently happened. They had heard the reports that the tomb was found empty and that certain women had seen the resurrected Christ. This all sounded like idle tales to them. As they are walking along talking together none other than the resurrected Jesus, Himself, joins their company, but they were kept from recognizing Him. This stranger to them then asks, "Why are you so sad, and what is this you are talking about?"

They are provoked by this "stranger in Jerusalem" who seemingly did not know anything about the recent events. Consequently they explain what had recently happened to this "prophet—Jesus of Nazareth." They finally told how He had been condemned to death and was crucified. And then they add—

*"and besides all this, **TODAY IS THE THIRD DAY** since these things were done."*

A more emphatic statement could not have been made. The translation is correct. If this Sunday was the **Third** day since the crucifixion, then going backwards we can observe that Saturday was the **Second** day since the crucifixion and Friday was the **First** day since the crucifixion. That makes Thursday the crucifixion day!

The Offering of the Omer

We have seen that Christ fulfilled the Passover typology to absolute perfection in two major aspects chronologically—that of the Selection of the Lamb, and that of the Sacrifice of the Lamb. Now there is a third aspect to this typology. Interestingly enough, probably some of the very priests who had condemned Christ were busy early this Sunday morning also. They were busy at the Temple in the ritual performance of another highlight in the Feast of Unleavened Bread. This had to do with the waving up in the air the handful of freshly cut Firstfruits of grain as a very special Offering to God, symbolizing the dedication of the whole Firstfruit harvest to God. The waving of the Sheaf of grain served as a *guarantee* or token of the greater harvest to come 50 days later. In addition, of course, we know that this special Offering also symbolizes RESURRECTION—the very RESURRECTION of Jesus Christ from the dead. So, in the Temple the priests are performing a ritual that demonstrates the resurrection of Christ, yet they will turn around in a few moments and offer a bribe to deny the fact of Christ's resurrection (Matt. 28:11-15).

This particular ritual could only be performed by the Children of Israel once they had arrived in the Land of Promise. This was called "the Offering of the Omer" or "the Offering of the Firstfruit Wavesheaf" of grain. This was a handful of early grain or a bundle of sheaves of grain which was to be waved up in the air. In their wilderness journey there were no grain fields

to be found in the desert. When they came into their land they inherited many grain fields and became farmers of the land. This Offering added an agricultural flavor to the whole Passover event, and made it the first of what came to be called "The Three Agricultural Feasts" of Israel: one, Passover; two, Pentecost or Feast of Weeks; and three, Tabernacles or Ingathering. The Offering of the Omer (handful or sheaf) after Passover served as a token of the greater spring harvest to come. That Spring Harvest Feast was to be celebrated seven weeks or 50 days after the Offering of the Omer. Hence, it was called the Feast of Weeks, or later—Pentecost (50th). The Fall Harvest Festival was the third Feast.

Of special interest to us right now is this first grain offering, the Offering of the Omer—the Wavesheaf of Firstfruits. The law concerning it was given to the people of Israel in Leviticus 23:9-14. The immediate context for these instructions is the Feast of Unleavened Bread, Lev. 23:4-8. Therefore, it was understood that this law had to do with a new thing that would be practiced during the Feast of Unleavened Bread once the Children of Israel came into the promised land. The instructions read (Lev. 23: 10,11)—

"...you shall bring a sheaf [omer or handful] of the FIRSTFRUITS of your harvest unto the priest. He shall WAVE THE SHEAF BEFORE THE LORD, to be accepted on your behalf: on the MORROW AFTER THE SABBATH the priest shall wave it."

Heated Controversy

The interpretation of the timing of this offering was the subject of heated controversy in early rabbinic times. Before Christ was born, the Sadducees prevailed in controlling the priesthood and the Temple services. This continued right up until about 20 years before the destruction of the Temple in 70 A.D. by the Romans. Thus, the Sadducees controlled the Temple services for some twenty years after the death of Christ and the founding of the Christian Church (see Acts 4:1; 5:17). Politically, the Sadducees were in good standing with the Romans, but during the last 20 years of the Temple the Pharisees came to be in control and many things changed, including the day on which the "Omer" was offered.

Now the Sadducees were well-known for their very liberal beliefs and rejection of certain fundamental truths, such as a literal resurrection of the dead, the existence of angels, spirits, etc. However, they were also conservative or literalists in some aspects of interpreting the Law. The Pharisees, on the other hand, were the highly orthodox group that went even beyond the written Law to observing their "Oral Law" (traditions) as equal authority. Their oral laws sometimes contradicted the written Law. This became the major difference between the two groups, and the major difference in the observance of the "Offering of the Omer." This difference had to do with the time in which it was to be offered.

The day on which the Pharisees would observe the offering eventually prevailed in practice after they gained control. It still does until this time in the Jewish world. The Pharisees were actually looking to assign some historical event in Israel's early history to the celebration of the Feast of Pentecost. Unlike Passover and Tabernacles, which were attached to the Passover lambs in Israel's deliverance from Egypt, and to their dwelling in booths (tabernacles) for forty years, Pentecost was only named by the number of days from the Offering of the Omer—seven "Weeks" (Hebrew, Shavuot), or Pentecost (50th). Therefore since the giving of the Law occurred some 50 days after Israel's exodus, they assigned Pentecost to the commemoration of the giving of the Law. The Pharisees took the word "Sabbath" in Lev. 23:11 to mean the special High

Sabbath of Nisan 15 and thus the Offering of the Omer would always be done on the following morning of the 16th of Nisan. (See *The Jerusalem Post, International Edition*, Rabbi Reskin, "What's in a name?" June 1, 2006, and "Something doesn't add up," May 21, 1999, and the June 6, 2003 article.)

Please remember, the Offering of the Omer marked the beginning of "the counting of days" (Lev. 23:15,16) until Pentecost. Now Moses went up on mount Sinai approximately 50+ days after Israel left Egypt on the 15th of Abib. Therefore, certain historians believe that the Pharisees took this position in order to correlate the Feast of Pentecost with the giving of the Law from Mount Sinai approximately fifty days after the first Passover in Egypt. In so doing, they converted Pentecost into a Feast that would commemorate the giving of the Law, which in its Biblical setting is not specifically indicated.

However, as I stated before, at the time of Christ's death the Sadducees were still very strongly in control of the Temple services and the priesthood. They rejected the oral law of the Pharisees, including this attempt to change the nature of Pentecost and the time of the Offering of the Omer. They were known to take the passage in Leviticus literally and thus, since the word "Sabbath" was not designated as the "High Sabbath," it meant it was simply the regular Sabbath that would fall during the Feast of Unleavened Bread. Therefore, the Omer would always be offered on a **Sunday morning** after the regular Sabbath that occurred during the feast. This first of all meant that the Sunday morning they were making this particular Wave Offering before the Lord in the Temple services, the disciples were hearing the news of Christ's resurrection from the dead. And shortly thereafter the Roman soldiers were offered bribes to change their story (see Matt. 28:11-15). (This, likewise, would mean that Pentecost would always fall on a Sunday as well.)

In this regard, I would have to agree with the position of the Sadducees as do certain scholars today. The historical references for most of this I have taken from: *The Pentateuch & Haftorahs*, edited by J.H. Hertz under "the Omer," pages 520, 521; *The Encyclopedia Judaica*, under "Sadducees" and "Shavuot" (Weeks or Pentecost); *Guide to the Jewish Holy Days* by Hayyim Schauss, pages 87,88; *Davis Dictionary of the Bible*, "Weeks, feast of," page 809, and other articles such as I listed above from *the Jerusalem Post, International Edition*.

Spiritual Significance of the Wavesheaf of Firstfruits

In the Greek Scriptures the inspired Apostle Paul makes it very plain that Christ's Sunday morning resurrection was in fulfillment of the "Firstfruits" offering (See I Cor. 15:20, 23; Rom. 8:11, 23). Thus again, we can rest assured that at the time of Christ, the Offering of the Omer took place on Sunday morning.

As to the interpretation of the meaning of the offering, I would also take a literal approach and allow the Scriptures to speak for themselves. In this ritual offering there are several major ingredients for us to look at.

First- The initial planting of the kernels of grain serves as a picture of death. Christ said as recorded in John 12:24, "*Truly, truly, I say unto you, except a kernel of wheat fall into the ground and DIE, it abides alone: but if it die, it brings forth much fruit.*" Christ said this in regards to His death. The Apostle Paul will repeat this same truth.

Second- The springing up of the new stalks of grain speaks of resurrection from the dead. *"If it die, it brings forth much fruit,"* Christ said. The Apostle Paul said in I Cor. 15 (the great resurrection chapter in the Bible) verses 35-38, *"But someone will say, How are the dead raised up? and with what body do they come? Fooish one, what you sow is not made alive unless it dies. And what you sow, you do not sow that body that shall be, but mere grain—perhaps wheat or some other grain. But God gives it a body as He pleases, and to each seed its own body."* How beautiful and strong this argument is! Whenever one looks out on the abundant fields of grain, he should remember that all this sparkling new life came out of what appeared to be death—cold, hard kernels planted into the ground.

Third- In the ritual offering, a sampling of this first harvest in its early form is called *"the Firstfruits"* (Lev. 23:10). Again, Christ's words indicated that in His resurrection He would *"bring forth much fruit"* (John 12:24). And again, the divinely inspired apostle leaves no doubt in one's mind as to the meaning. *"Christ is risen from the dead, and become the FIRSTFRUITS of them that slept"* (I Cor. 15:20). Paul repeats it again for emphasis—*"Christ the FIRSTFRUITS"* (verse 23).

Fourth- As we have seen so far, this typology is clearly identified as a picture of Christ in resurrection. However, Christ was not just raised from the dead. He also *ascended* into the Heavens to His Heavenly Father. Thus, what happens as the major action of this particular offering is the *manner* in which it is offered. This handful of grain isn't burnt on the altar, nor is any of it spilt out beside the altar. It is not dropped on the ground or set down in pots or pans. Nor is it merely held out with the hands. No! None of these things! It is beautifully and wonderfully *waved up in the air* as if it could just *ascend* off into heaven itself. This waving of the grain up in the air is said to be done *"before the LORD"* (Lev. 23:11). In other words, it goes up to God. This offering actually belongs to the Lord, and therefore only the priests as God's representatives were to take it for themselves after it was waved up to God. The waving up in the air is clearly the picture of **ascension**. Sometime after Christ arose from the dead, the Scriptures say *"He ascended to the Father"* (John 20:17; Acts 2:32-35; Eph. 4:8,9; Psalm 68:18).

Fifth- This handful of grain stood as a token or *guarantee* of the greater harvest celebrated fifty days later. So vital was this connection that they, therefore, counted the weeks and days (Lev. 23:15, 16) until the Pentecostal spring Harvest Feast. Some Jewish commentators even call Shavuot (Weeks or Pentecost) "the eighth day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread" because of its vital connection to the offering of the Omer. The most popular name given to the Feast of Pentecost is "Feast of Weeks of Firstfruits." (See Exo. 23:16; 34:22; Lev. 23:17 & Num. 28:26.) The Offering of the Omer was the *token* "Firstfruits" of the spring "Harvest Feast of Firstfruits."

The Vital Connection

There is, therefore, a **most vital** connection between this handful of green or early grain and the greater spring harvest to come. The first is a sampling of the other in **both resurrection and ascension**. Therefore, the Pentecostal ritual, which is also waved up in the air in a similar manner, is actually prophetic of the same events of resurrection and ascension as well. This fact is missed by most Bible teachers simply because the Church was born on Pentecost day and therefore they think that Pentecost was somehow only prophetic of the birth and nature of the

Church. Such is only partially true (see my Bible study, *The Pentecostal Rapture of the Church*).

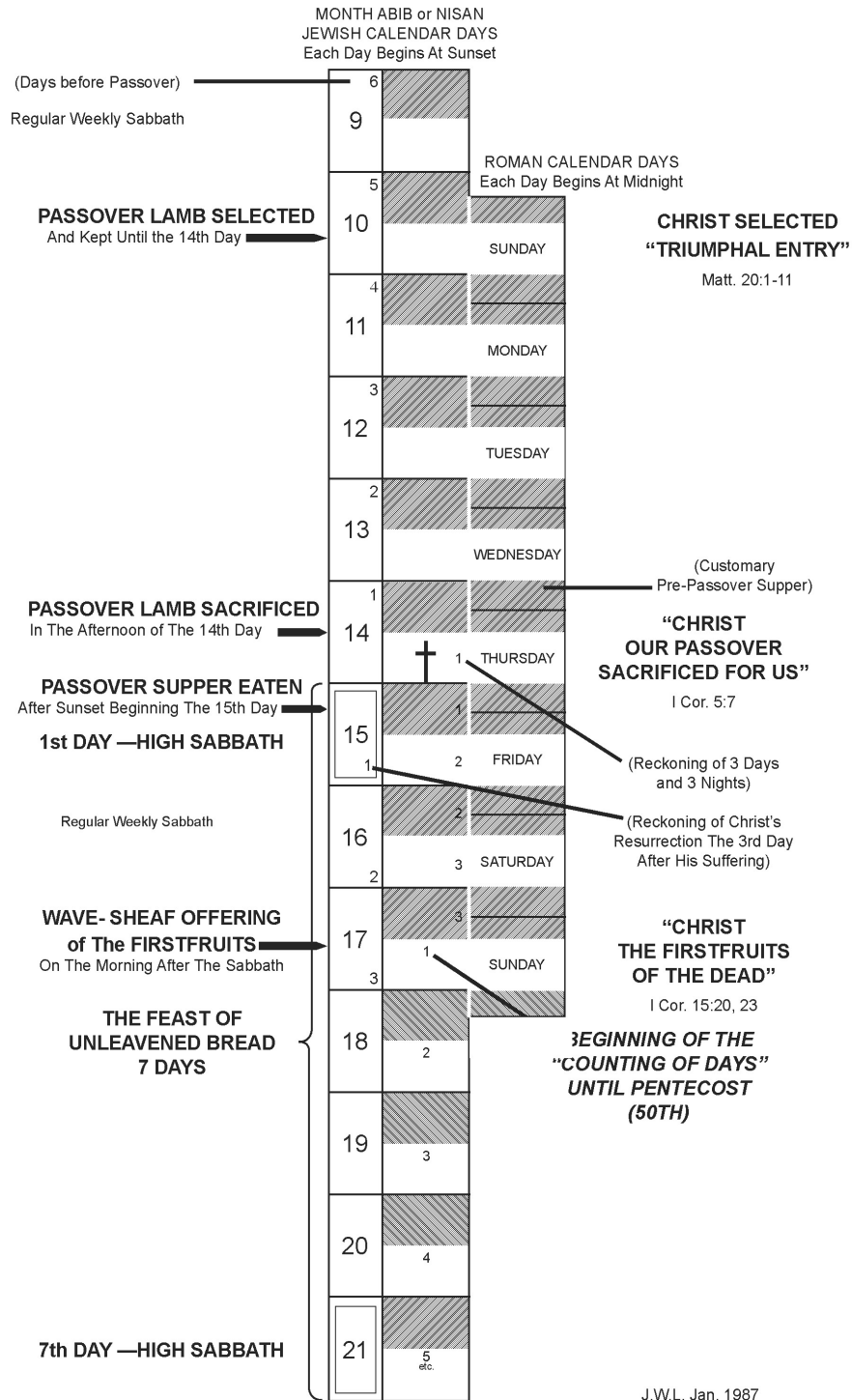
The fact is, the Church of Jesus Christ was born on a day that was prophetic in typology of the Church's Resurrection and Ascension—i.e., **the Rapture**. Again, the Apostle Paul makes this very plain when he says, "*Christ the firstfruits, then **they that are Christ's** at His coming.*" (I Cor. 15:23). In other words, what happened to Christ as the "Firstfruits" in resurrection and ascension is a picture of what will happen to all those that belong to Christ at His coming for them—their collective resurrection and ascension. Please remember that in the Pentecostal offering the full ripe grain has now been ground into "fine flour," kneaded together in one large batch "with leaven," divided into "two loaves," and "baked" for "firstfruits to Jehovah" as a "wave offering" (Lev. 23:16-20). This is called "a New Meal Offering." It is not the purpose of this study to expand upon this beautiful picture. Needless to say, it is breathtaking in mystery and beauty as the meaning is now unfolded in the epistles of Paul. (See also Romans 8:11 & 23).

So it is, that while some of the chief priests and elders were shocked by the soldiers' account of the events at the tomb, and therefore were urgently offering large amounts of money to the soldiers to change their story for the sake of the general public (Matt. 28:11-15), yet they had to turn right around and participate in the services of this special "Offering of the Omer." Customarily it was the first thing in the morning of this first day of the week that they solemnly enacted all its rituals in the midst of great pageantry of praise and prayer. Perhaps this is what led to the conversion of a large number of priests as stated later in Acts 6:7. No doubt, they would be remembering the divinely inspired symbol befitting the reality.

Thus, we conclude our journey. We have seen that Christ fulfilled the Passover typology to absolute perfection in its three major chronological aspects: the Selection of the Lamb, the Sacrifice of the Lamb and the Offering of the Omer. We have also seen that the four Gospel accounts are splendidly accurate, whereas the skeptics, who have loudly proclaimed contradictions in the record of Christ's death and resurrection timetable, suffer the embarrassment that is fitting to their prejudicial clamor.

THE END

CHRIST'S DEATH AT THE PASSOVER As It Took Place In A.D. 30 -- A CHRONOLOGY



J.W.L. Jan. 1987

APPENDIX

No 1. The Use of the word "Evening."

It could be confusing for beginning students of this subject to understand the meaning of "evening of the 14th day" (Exo. 12:6 & Lev. 23:5). In the original Mosaic reckoning, the total 24 hour day period begins with the evening. "The evening and the morning were day one" (Gen. 1:5, etc.). However, sometimes Moses would also call the close of a day its "evening." Therefore, the question has been asked, is it the beginning "evening" of this day that is in view, or the closing "evening" that is in view? (A few religious groups argue seriously over this point.)

Here are illustrations of the word "evening" being used for the close of a day, especially where important days and rituals are in view. In Leviticus 23:27 we are told that "the tenth day of this seventh month is a Day of Atonement...a Holy Convocation [or High Sabbath]." Then in verse 32 we are given the exact perimeters of that Day of Atonement (the 10th) in the following manner: "In the ninth day of the month AT EVENING, from evening [of 9th] to evening [of 10th], shall you celebrate your Sabbath [the Day of Atonement]." Since this Holy Day is the 10th day, we recognize that the expression "the ninth day of the month at evening" must mean the "evening" that closes the ninth day and not the evening that would begin the ninth day. Otherwise, the Day of Atonement would be on the 9th and not on the 10th. Likewise, it must mean the "evening" that closes the 10th day.

Another example is in Numbers 28 (see also Exo. 29:38-41). In this chapter, verses 1-8, we have the institution of the Daily Sacrifice which was to be offered at a specific time each day. However, since the "Daily Sacrifice" was twofold (that is, two sacrifices were to be offered each day), we are given the time of day as to when these two sacrifices were to be made. Every day during the daylight hours there would be two sacrifices offered. The first one in the "morning" hours and the second one in the "evening" hours of that same day. "Evening" in this case obviously means the close of the day. Jewish history concerning the Temple services is in agreement with this. The Daily Sacrifices were offered twice daily, first in the morning (usually by 9:00 A.M.), and then in the late afternoon hours (usually no later than 5:00 P.M.).

Concerning the actual order of events at the first Passover in Egypt, we can place together the following sequence, which further proves that the Passover was sacrificed in the afternoon closing the 14th day:

- 1) Before the Passover actually occurred, the people of Israel had already spoiled the Egyptians. In Exo. 11:2 God told Israel to ask of the Egyptians of their silver and gold. The next verse (3) tells us that Israel received "favor in the sight of the Egyptians." That means the Egyptians gave of their substance to Israel. This is confirmed for us in Exo. 12:35, 36. The people of Israel had already "borrowed of the Egyptians...and they spoiled the Egyptians."
- 2) Then the people of Israel were to actually eat the Passover dinner that night "with belts on their waists, sandals on their feet, and staffs in their hands, and in haste...for in this same day I will have brought your armies out of the land of Egypt" (Exo. 12:11, 17). In other words, the people of Israel were to eat this supper being fully ready to travel the first thing in the morning because "that day" they would be leaving Egypt. This, of course, was the 15th day.

3) Because the children of Israel had to leave Egypt "in haste" they did not have time to leaven their dough and allow it to rise. Therefore, the tradition of eating unleavened bread came about.

4) That night, when all the households of the Egyptians were struck with the death of the firstborn son of their family, there arose a great cry in Egypt. Pharaoh rose up that night and called Moses and told him to take the Israelites out of Egypt immediately. Likewise, during the remaining hours of that night, the Egyptians were urgent upon the Israelites to leave lest the whole nation of Egypt perish (Exo. 12:29-33).

5) "On the fifteenth day of the first month, on the morrow [daylight hours] after the Passover, the children of Israel went out [of Egypt] with boldness in the sight of all the Egyptians...for the Egyptians were burying all their firstborn" (Num. 33:3,4).

Since the people of Israel left Egypt on the morning of the 15th day, after having eaten the Passover supper that night, it is evident that the original expression—"In the first month, on the 14th day of the month AT EVENING"—means the evening which closes the 14th day (Exo. 12:6, 8, 18) and not the evening that began that day.

No 2. A Wednesday Crucifixion?

Some Bible teachers have sincerely tried to arrive at an absolutely full three 24 hour time periods passing before the resurrection of Christ. Of necessity they would have Christ crucified on a Wednesday afternoon. There are several insurmountable difficulties prohibiting this conclusion. Since Christ died in the afternoon, and these teachers feel the need of an absolute full three days and three nights passing before His resurrection, then Christ would of necessity have been raised in the afternoon of the third day. This day could not have been Sunday afternoon because the text plainly says He was already raised by early morning of that day. Therefore, they move the time of crucifixion back to Wednesday afternoon and say that Christ was actually raised from the dead about sunset on Saturday and He simply did not appear to anyone until Sunday morning.

This is the first problem with that scenario. It makes Christ appear to no one for at least 12 hours after His resurrection. Such a conjecture does not fit the tenor of the Biblical account of the resurrection. To have Christ raised on Saturday evening does not sound as odd as it really is. They usually measure the total time of Christ's death from His *burial in the tomb* on the close of the day He died. Therefore, they would say He arose "three days" later on Saturday evening. The Biblical facts are that the time period of the three days and three nights is not to be measured from His burial in the tomb, but from His death in the afternoon and immediate descent into Sheol for three days and nights (Acts 2:31; Eph. 4:9; Matt. 12:39,40). Remember that Jonah was another prophetic type of Christ. In this case, Jonah was in "sheol" or hell (Jonah 2:2), not a tomb. Thus, if their logic is to be followed completely, and they were to use the actual Biblical stipulations, then Christ must have risen from the dead on Saturday afternoon (about three in the afternoon). To have Christ raised from the dead some 15 or 16 hours before He appeared to anyone is even more out of line with the Biblical account.

In addition, with a Wednesday crucifixion it is a plain fact that Friday would be a regular workday in which the women (having prepared the burial ingredients in their homes on the High

Sabbath of Thursday, or on Friday morning) could normally have come to the tomb in time to finish the procedure of Christ's burial. This, obviously, did not happen and in light of all the foregoing material a Wednesday crucifixion simply does not harmonize.

No 3. What is the Actual Historical Date of Christ's Death?

Most chronologers, both religious and secular, now agree that it was during the Passover of 30 A.D. Why is this? Our present calendar method of dating from the birth of Christ did not begin until the sixth century when the Pope adjudged that the calculations of one Dionysius Exiguus be accepted as the standard for Christendom and the world. More careful historical studies have proven that these calculations are in error. His alignment with certain events of Roman history, such as the death of Herod the Great, has proven to be four years in error.

As we know from the Bible, Christ was born while Herod the Great was living (see Matt. 2:20-22). The Jewish Historian Josephus precisely identifies the year of Herod's death as there occurred a lunar eclipse just before his last illness (Josephus, *Antiquities of The Jews*, XVII.6.4). In giving this clue, Josephus also gave the modern scientist something to work with in order to positively confirm this date. Thus, this eclipse has now been astronomically identified as indeed occurring on the date of March 12, 4 B.C. just a few weeks before the death of Herod.

Sometime before Herod died he attempted to destroy all the babies of Bethlehem two years old and under. This age limit was not because he thought the child was two years old, but was to guarantee the death of the infant Who would later claim to be King. Other Biblical facts would indicate that Christ was probably born in September/October of 5 B.C. (calculations from the month Zacharias served in the Temple—Luke 1:5; I Chron. 24:10 & Neh. 12:17). Consequently, Christ began His public ministry at 30 years of age in late A.D. 26. There are other facts of the Biblical record which are cross-related to secular historical dates that seem to be in agreement with this. His ministry lasted for about three and a half years until early 30 A.D. And thus, He was crucified at the time of the Jewish Passover, on the 14th day of Nisan, in the spring of 30 A.D. (April 6th, to be exact by the reckoning of some according to today's calendar.)

Within the last 30 years there have been computer calculations of the new and full moons of past antiquity. Several of these have noted that in 30 A.D. the Jewish Passover (which is governed by the lunar calendar) involved two Sabbaths falling in succession, the 15th (Friday) and 16th (Saturday) of Nisan. Thus, the Passover of that year came on a Thursday evening—Nisan 14/15 (April 6th.) as most generally understood by chronologers today. See especially the notations by Roger Rusk (emeritus professor of physics at the University of Tennessee), "The Day He Died," *Christianity Today*, March 29, 1974.

No 4. Historical Support for a Thursday, Nisan 14th, Crucifixion.

Historical support for the Nisan 14th crucifixion of Christ comes from at least three sources:

a.) A very early Jewish source was the "Tractate Sanhedrin" in the *Babylonian Talmud* which recorded with generally understood reference to the Founder of Christianity: "On the Eve of Passover Yeshu [Jesus] was hanged." (Sanhedrin 43a GBT VII, pg.181; SBT pg.281).

b.) The very early Apocryphal *Gospel According to Peter* also states this same conclusion, that Jesus was delivered to the people "on the day before the Unleavened Bread, their Feast" (Verse 3).

c.) The "Quartadecimarian Controversy," culmination at the Council of Nisea 325 A.D. Some further explanation of this should be made.

As was stated at the beginning of this study, many of the "Eastern (Asia Minor) Churches" from very early times had been celebrating a sort of "Christian Passover" on Nisan 14. They called it "Pasch." I need to explain that at first this had to do with the suffering and crucifixion of Christ. Later they seemed to add to it His resurrection as well. This is where the word "Quartadecimarian" comes from. It simply means the "14th." This tells us that they believed Christ was crucified on the 14th at the time of the sacrifice of the Passover lambs. And therefore, they contended that this day was to be kept in remembrance by them from the very times of the apostles themselves. The largest faction, the "Western Church (centered in Rome)," was called "Quintodecimans," which simply meant the 15th (of the Month Nisan). They wanted to celebrate either or both the crucifixion and resurrection on the 15th. Quite a dispute followed. Most believed that only a Sunday should be set aside to celebrate the resurrection. The Council of Nicea finally settled the argument by simply decreeing the observance of a Sunday resurrection of Christ, calling it "Easter" as was already somewhat customary, and setting the date as we explained before. The main purpose in doing this was to divorce their celebrations from the Jewish Passover.

(See *The History of the Christian Church from Christ to Constantine*, by Eusebius, approx. 330 A.D., Dorset Publishing, 1965, pgs. 222-234; "Pessah and Easter: the Christian Perspective" by Malcolm F. Lowe, *Jerusalem Post*, April 13, 1991; *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 1954, "Easter;" *The Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, Baker, "Easter;" and *The New Catholic Encyclopedia*, on Easter; etc.)

No 5. Relationship of the Offering of the Wavesheaf (Omer) of Firstfruits to the Feast of Pentecost 50 days later.

Once when I gave a two-part public message on this subject of the day on which Christ died (Los Angeles, March 10th, 1991), I included with it several charts on overhead transparencies. I thought it would be helpful to include the one that illustrates this relationship between the two Feasts.

In conclusion, as a result of Christ being "our Passover" Who was sacrificed, buried and gloriously resurrected on our behalf, the Church of Jesus Christ was born 50 days later. The actions that took place on this Feast Day of Pentecost spoke of our guaranteed hope of also being resurrected with Him. Thus the Church of Jesus Christ was actually born on a **prophetic** feast day—prophetic of resurrection and ascension (i.e., the Rapture). We can therefore say, **"When the antitypical Day of Pentecost is fully come, we will all be of one accord, in one place."**

On the chart, the 1st day is marked with an asterisk (*) to indicate this as the Sunday upon which our Savior arose from the dead. And this is the day upon which the "Wavesheaf" of the "Firstfruits" of grain was offered. 50 days later (also marked with an asterisk) was Pentecost Sunday when the two loaves of bread were offered by being waved in the air as well.

Note the Chart below
Which visually demonstrates the Relationship
Between the Wave Offering of Firstfruits and the Feast of Pentecost

Sunday, * Christ Risen, "Offering of the Omer," The "Counting of Days" begins.

Sun.	Mon.	Tues.	Wed.	Thur.	Fri.	Sat.	(Sabbaths)
*1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	1.
8.	9.	10.	11.	12.	13.	14.	2.
15.	16.	17.	18.	19.	20.	21.	3.
22.	23.	24.	25.	26.	27.	28.	4.
29.	30.	31.	32.	33.	34.	35.	5.
36.	37.	38.	39.	40.	41.	42.	6.
43.	44.	45.	46.	47.	48.	49.	7.

*50.

7 Sabbaths= 7 Weeks or 49 Days

Sunday, *50 a High Sabbath, "Pentecost" (50th), "Feast of Weeks" or "Feast of Firstfruits."

No. 6. PRINCIPLE PASSAGES from the Hebrew Scriptures— On The Subject of The Passover

- 1- Exo. 11 & 12:1-51—the institution of the first Passover in detail.
- 2- Exo. 13:1-16—to be taught for all future generations.
- 3- Exo. 23:14-17; 34:18,23—all males to appear before the Lord 3 times a year,
beginning at Passover.
- 4- Lev. 23:1-44—High Sabbaths distinguished from regular Sabbaths.
7 High Sabbaths a year. Institution of the Wave Sheaf
Offering of grain.
- 5- Num. 9:1-14—no bones of the Passover lamb to be broken. Law for unclean
persons to observe Feast a month later. Order for discipline.
- 6- Num. 28:16-25—various offerings for the seven days of the Feast.
- 7- Num. 33:1-3—Israel leaves Egypt on morning of 15th after Passover meal
the night before.

- 8- Deut. 16:1-8—Lamb is sacrificed in the afternoon (of 14th).
No meat left after the meal. The lamb is to be sacrificed only
where God places His Name once Israel arrives in the Land.
- 9- Joshua 5:10,11—Joshua's Passover.
- 10- II Chron.30:1-27—Hezekiah's Passover.
- 11- II Chron.35:1-19—Josiah's Passover.
- 12- Ezra 6:19-22—Ezra's Passover.

No. 7. PRINCIPLE EXAMPLES of the THREE DAYS—

- 1- Gen. 22:4, 5—Isaac (see also Heb. 11:19).
- 2- Gen. 42:16-18—Joseph.
- 3- Exo. 3:18—Israel.
- 4- Exo. 15:22-25—bitter waters.
- 5- Exo. 19:10,11—Israel sanctified.
- 6- Num. 19:11,12—purification.
- 7- I Sam. 30:11-13—captive revived.
- 8- I Kings 12:5,12—Rehoboam.
- 9- Jonah 1:17—Jonah.
- 10- Esther 4:15-5:1—Esther.
- 11- Hosea 6:1-3—Israel restored.
- 12- Luke 13:32,33—Christ's work.

No. 8. Slavery—Israel's Deliverance From Bondage in Egypt—And The Law Regarding Slavery

Slander Against the Biblical Position on Slavery

Another area where the infidel tries to attack the Bible is in the area of slavery. I read such an attack in the very popular "Free Inquiry" magazine back in 1987. A supposedly knowledgeable professor gave a typical tirade against the Biblical account. I thought I would like to include in this Appendix my letter of response to that article. Though the editor of "Free Inquiry" thanked me for my letter, the author of the article, Professor Morton Smith, made no response. Apparently he was not interested in truth, but was only repeating things he had heard. There are similar attacks made by infidels on this subject. I hope the following material will cause you to better appreciate the truth of the Bible on a very popular world custom regarding the issue of slavery.

April 23rd, 1987
2854 Milam
Fort Worth, Texas 76112

Paul Kurtz
Editor, Free Inquiry
3159 Bailey Ave.
Buffalo, N.Y. 14215
Dear Mr. Kurtz,

The recent article by Morton Smith which represents the Bible's position on slavery lacked honest objectivity, showed a biased attitude and was a very unbalanced presentation. Allow me to illustrate what I mean—

1) The very first thing represented was that the Bible "prescribes it (slavery) for a whole third of mankind." Mr. Smith cites the curse placed upon one of Noah's sons (Ham) as proof. The real facts are: a) Noah's three sons fathered 17 sons between them—one of whom was named Canaan. The prophetic curse was placed upon Canaan. At best, this would represent 1/17 of the human race; b) The Canaanites, however, were a very small number of people who later inhabited the "Land of Canaan." Geographically, Canaan is about the size of the state of New Jersey; c) It is common knowledge among Bible students that the curse was fulfilled when the "Children of Israel" conquered the Canaanites and put them to servitude. As you can see, this is an infinitesimally small fraction of the human race.

The publication of this exaggeration by Morton Smith only serves to qualify you as good "Humanistic-Pentecostals!" You have had some excellent articles exposing the stupid exaggerations of modern "Faith Healers." Then, you turn around and do the very same thing, yourselves, in a futile effort to discredit the Bible.

2) Many scholars and historians have long recognized that the Law of Moses, as it regards slavery, was revolutionary in its time. Israel had, in fact, been a slave people. They had come out of a bondage in what they properly called "The Iron Furnace" of Egypt—see Deut. 4:20. All their legislation, therefore, was aimed for the protection and well-being of slaves, and they were reminded of their bondage as these laws were delivered—Deut. 15:15. In addition, fully 1/3rd (and this is no exaggeration) of the tribes of Israel were produced by the servant and/or slave wives of Jacob. The unusual high regard for slaves will immediately become obvious to the reader of the Hebrew laws. After the Ten Commandments, the very FIRST laws of social order were for the protection of slaves!

3) Any Israelite who became involved in stealing and selling human beings was subject to the DEATH PENALTY. Exo. 21:16 says, "He that stealeth a man, and selleth him, or if he be found in his hand, he shall surely be put to death."

4) Any Israelite who beat a slave so as to cause his death would be subject to the DEATH PENALTY as if he had murdered a free man. Exo. 21:20 says, (Morton Smith failed to translate this properly), "And if any man smite his servant (slave), or his maid (slave) with a rod, and he die under his hand; HE SHALL SURELY BE AVENGED!" Under the Mosaic judicial system retribution by an "Avenger" always meant DEATH.

5) If a slave was even accidentally killed by an ox or other animal, the master or owner of the animal would be fined 30 shekels of silver and the animal was put to death—Exo. 21:32.

- 6) If a master so much as knocked out a tooth of a slave—that slave was automatically set free—Exo. 21:26,27.
- 7) If a master loved a female slave and had sexual relations with her, he was fully obligated to perform the duties of marriage as if he had married a free woman. This was binding upon him even if he decided he did not love her. He was prohibited from selling her, and if he failed to fully support her as lawfully married, then she was automatically set free—Exo. 21:7-11 and Deut. 21:10-14.
- 8) Any Hebrew person who was forced into voluntary slavery was to be treated as a “hired servant” (Lev. 25:40), was automatically set free after six years of service (Exo. 21:2), and was given a bountiful payment at the time of his release (Deut. 15:12-15).
- 9) The Law of Moses fully protected all runaway slaves—Deut. 23:15,16. Any slave who was to flee into the land of Israel had the right to choose any place where he wanted to live, and he was fully guaranteed to never suffer any kind of oppression. Israel literally became a haven for runaway slaves.
- 10) Furthermore, all existing slaves in the land of Israel, regardless of whether they were Hebrews or foreign born, were automatic inheritors of all the covenant blessings promised by Jehovah for the nation—see Gen. 17:1-14 and 17:22-27. In addition, they worshipped side by side with their masters—see Genesis 14:14 as an example.

In conclusion, it is obvious from laws like these (most of which were left out of Mr. Morton Smith’s article) that the idea of slavery was altogether different in Israel than any other nation. This is one of the reasons the translators of the Hebrew Scriptures found it difficult to render the word slavery in an intelligible way for other societies. It has well been said, “a bond slave in Israel was better off than a hired servant in other countries.”

Those who have tried to make the Bible countenance the form of slavery that was practiced in the United States of America before the Civil War (and that is 3500 years after the Law of Moses was written) have long been effectively answered. Were they to implement the Law of Moses on the subject of slavery into the American legal system in the early 1800s, it would have spelled the DOOM of the slave trade industry and there never would have been the bloody Civil War to blur the memory of this modern nation.

Messianic prophecies of both the Hebrew and Greek Scriptures speak of a new social order in the age to come. Under the rule of Messiah there will be a full liberation of all mankind who enter that time of bliss. In the interim, a rabbi named Paul, who converted to Christ, appealed to all Christian slaves to submit to their masters and do good service as unto Christ. He also warned Christian masters that one day they will face their Master—so handle their slaves accordingly. Likewise, he repeatedly showed the equality of Masters and Slaves in the sight of God—I Cor. 7:21,22; Gal. 3:28; Col. 3:11. The peace and rest that this spiritual logic brought was incalculable. The expressions “SERVANT” and “MASTER” as found in the Greek Scriptures became such noble words that they were chosen to become the legal terminology used in all jurisprudence in “Employer-Employee” relationships in the English speaking world.

Sincerely Yours—a servant of Christ,
Jack W. Langford

No. 9 Slavery, Letter of Liberation

To this subject can be added *The Epistle of Paul The Apostle to Philemon*. Here is the shortest of Paul's fourteen letters. And yet this letter is a power-packed liberation message to a Christian owner of a slave. The Apostle Paul, under divine inspiration, uses spiritual diplomacy in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ to gain not merely the freedom, but also the equality of this slave.

One of the sad facts of American history is that when our Civil war was over, though the black man was technically set "free," he had no equality and was so badly treated that many of the ex-slaves thought their condition was better under slavery. The government could free the slaves but it could not change the hearts of its citizens. In Paul's letter of liberation he not only presents the truth of freedom but most importantly he presents the truths that melt the heart.

Onesimus was a runaway slave who somehow met Paul who was himself in chains in Rome. Now The Roman empire engaged in the slave industry more than any other nation or empire in world history. Some historians calculate that half the people in the capital of the Roman empire were slaves. However, under the gentle evangelism of Paul, Onesimus was saved and became a Christian very close to Paul's heart. Now Paul is sending him back to his owner.

Under Roman law Onesimus could have been put to death.

Under the "Law of the Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus" Onesimus got life, liberty and equality. Notice the sequence of this man's liberation.

First Paul acknowledges that at one time Onesimus was considered an unprofitable slave (verse 11). That was before his conversion.

But now in Christ, Onesimus is dear to Paul's "own heart."

Not only that, Onesimus is serving Paul, as if it were Philemon himself (verse 13).

Paul appeals for Philemon to "voluntarily" consider Onesimus free (verse 14).

Paul also appeals to Philemon to receive Onesimus as it were "forever" (verse 15), no longer as a slave but as a beloved brother (verse 16).

Paul further appeals to Philemon to consider Onesimus as he would his own person and even as he would consider Paul himself (verse 17).

All that Onesimus might owe was to be placed on Paul's account; he would repay it (verse 18, just as Jesus Christ has done for every sinner).

Now to the infidel, I would challenge, "You find a more liberating document than this letter! And I give you permission to search all the literature, in all the history, of all mankind, on the face of all this earth!"

The subject of the Passover is the subject of liberation of a nation in slavery. All the Hebrew Scriptures can be looked upon from this perspective. The subject of the anti-typical Passover, in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ, is again the subject of liberation from the awful gloom of universal slavery. This is the very heart of what we call the New Testament. In this regard the Bible is a very liberating book. The prophetic aspect of both the Hebrew Scriptures and the Greek Scriptures looks forward to that great Jubilee of final redemption from both the physical and spiritual aspect of the bondage of sin.

No 10. Pope Benedict XVI, Recent Declaration

As I stated at the end of my *FOREWORD* to this study, the Pope's very recent declaration that Christ probably ate the Passover Supper "a day early" and then died at the actual time of the sacrifice of the Passover lambs is quite astonishing, especially in the light of the long past history of Christendom's dedicated celebration of the popular "Good Friday" crucifixion event. If Christ ate the Passover a day earlier without a Passover Lamb then He also died a day earlier at the exact time those Passover lambs were being sacrificed. That means Christ did not die on so-called "Good Friday," but rather on Thursday. We can ask the question, "Has it really taken 1682 years to correct the error of the so-called 'Fathers' at the council of Nicaea in the year 325 A.D.?" As I stated in the study, I am glad that I know of those certain Bible teachers, including myself, who came to this conclusion long ago on the basis of what the Bible itself had to say under careful scrutiny. Nevertheless, I will herein give the major excerpt from the Pope's address exactly as it was published in *The Wanderer*.

"VATICAN CITY (*ZENIT*) – Here is the homily Benedict XVI delivered Thursday, April 5 for the Mass of the Lord's Supper, celebrated in the Basilica of St. John Lateran."

"...In the narrations of the evangelists, there is an apparent contradiction between the *Gospel of John*, on one hand, and what, on the other hand, Matthew, Mark, and Luke tell us. According to John, Jesus died on the cross precisely at the moment in which, in the Temple, the Passover lambs were being sacrificed. His death and the sacrifice of the lambs coincided.

"This means that He died on the eve of Passover, and that, therefore, He could not have personally celebrated the paschal supper; at least this is what it would seem.

"On the contrary, according to the three synoptic evangelists, the Last Supper of Jesus was a paschal supper, in its traditional form. He introduced the tradition of the gift of His Body and Blood. This contradiction, until a few years ago, seemed impossible to resolve...

"The discovery of the manuscripts of Qumran has led us to a convincing possible solution that, while not accepted by all, is highly probable. We can now say that what John referred to is historically correct. Jesus truly spilled His Blood on the eve of Passover at the hour of the sacrifice of the lambs.

"However, He celebrated Passover with His disciples probably according to the calendar of Qumran, that is to say, at least one day earlier—He celebrated without a lamb, like the Qumran community who did not recognize the Temple of Herod and was waiting for a new temple..."

(Benedict XVI Went on to say twice more that Jesus

celebrated the Passover “without a lamb,” other than His own Body and Blood as the “Lamb of God.”)
The Wanderer, Vol. 140, No. 16, April 19, 2007, “Pope’s Holy Thursday Homily... ‘Jesus Is The New And True Lamb’”

I appreciate the Pope expressing his conviction about this important event. And I certainly agree with his conclusion. However, I doubt very much that the Qumran calendar has anything whatsoever to do with the issue. The facts are, as I have presented in this study, it was customary of the Jewish people at the time of Christ, and until this very day in Israel, to eat a Feast meal on the evening beginning the 14th day of Nisan, which meal commemorates the sacrifice of those lambs in the afternoon of that day. In addition, and primarily, the overwhelming abundance of Scriptural evidences force us to this conclusion.

— THE END —