

Incredible, *Shocking New Truth!*--

How Long Was Jesus *Really* in the Grave?

Was Jesus Christ crucified on Good Friday and resurrected early Sunday morning, as tradition teaches? Was He crucified on a Wednesday and resurrected exactly 3 days and 3 nights later – toward the end of the weekly Sabbath, as others have claimed? How long was Christ in the grave? What does the Bible mean by “three days and three nights”? New evidence from astronomy sheds much new light on this controversy over the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ! On what day of the week was the Messiah really crucified? And in what year? It’s time we took a NEW look at this pivotal subject, and answered the objections of the critics once and for all!

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One of the major arguments among Christians, today, is over how much time Jesus Christ actually spent in the grave. In the book of Matthew, we read the very words of Jesus Christ concerning His death and resurrection. He declared in plain and unequivocal words:

"Then certain of the scribes and Pharisees answered, saying, Master, we would see a sign from thee. But he answered and said unto them, An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of Jonah: For as Jonah was *THREE DAYS AND THREE NIGHTS* in the whale’s belly; so shall the Son of man be *THREE DAYS AND THREE NIGHTS* in the heart of the earth" (Matthew 12:40).

This seems like plain language, in English. How long is “three days and three nights”?

Three Days and Three Nights

Tradition maintains that Jesus was in the grave three days – or portions thereof – from “Good Friday” until “Easter Sunday,” at sunrise. Scholars and students of the Scriptures point out that “three days” does not necessarily mean *exactly* three days. It can mean portions of three days. The expression is an idiomatic one. We have the same principle in English. If I say I am going fishing in “three days,” and today is Wednesday, then “three days” from today could be understood as either Friday (inclusive counting – Wednesday, Thursday, Friday), or Saturday

(Thursday, Friday, Saturday), depending on whether you began the counting of the days with today (inclusive counting) or tomorrow (exclusive counting).

On the other hand, some scholars maintain that three days and three nights would constitute *72 hours*, since there are 24 hours in a whole day. They claim that since both days and nights are mentioned, the idiom of “three days” including partial days does not apply in this case. Jesus Himself said elsewhere, “Are there not twelve hours in the day? If any man walk in the day, he stumbleth not, because he seeth the light of this world” (John 11:9). Since the Messiah Himself defines a day as equaling twelve hours, then the night would also equal twelve hours, and the two added together would be 24 hours. That is simple arithmetic. Three days and three nights, then, would be $3 \times 12 = 36$ hours of day, and $3 \times 12 = 36$ hours of night, and $36 + 36 = 72$ hours. As Sherlock Holmes would say, “Elementary, my dear Watson!”

However, there is no way in heaven or earth you can squeeze 72 hours between sunset Friday and sunrise Sunday morning! In the gospel of Mark we read, “Now it was the third hour [9:00 am] and they crucified Him . . . Now when the sixth hour [12:00 noon] was come, there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour [3:00 pm]. And at the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice . . . And Jesus cried out with a loud voice, and breathed His last” (Mark 15:25-137, NKJV).

Luke’s gospel tells us that Joseph of Armathea went to Pilate, asked for the body of Jesus, and then took it and “wrapped it in linen, and laid it in a tomb that was hewn out of the rock, where no one had ever lain before. That day was the Preparation and the Sabbath drew near” (Luke 23:50-54). John’s gospel corroborates this account (John 19:38-42).

If Jesus Christ were buried just before sunset on Friday, and arose at sunrise on Sunday, and if these two events coincided with approximately 6:00 PM and 6:00 AM, to keep it simple, then the total length of time Christ would have been buried in the tomb would have been Friday night (12 hours), Saturday day (12 hours), and Saturday night (12 hours) -- or a total of 36 hours -- *just one half of three full days and nights!* Or, to put it another way – if we count a portion of Friday (day), Friday night, Saturday (day), and Saturday night, and Jesus then arose – we have counted for only *two days and two nights!* *NOT three days and three nights!*

Some might argue that Jesus arose at the rising of the sun, so we must include Sunday in our count, even if it is only a few minutes. Well, that would still only include *parts of three days and still only TWO nights!* Yet the gospel of Matthew PLAINLY declares He would be in the “heart of the earth” – that is, the tomb – three days AND three nights! But to suggest that we should include Sunday morning itself also fails to fit the facts, because we read in John’s gospel: “Now on the first day of the week Mary Magdalene went to the tomb early, *while it was still DARK*, and saw that the stone had been taken away from the tomb” (John 20:1). Since it was still dark, and Jesus had already arisen, then this occurred BEFORE SUNRISE! Therefore the problem with the Friday crucifixion-Sunday resurrection still remains! It does not allow enough time to fulfill the stated length of time Messiah would be in the grave!

And, Jesus Himself declared, “The Scripture CANNOT be broken” (John 10:35). He asseverated, “Thy Word is TRUTH” (John 17:17). Paul wrote: “ALL Scripture is given by

inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness” (II Tim.3:16). Therefore the words of Matthew dare not be disregarded! The sum total of the evidence DISPROVES the Friday crucifixion-Sunday resurrection theory!

Some will protest, saying that the day of the crucifixion was called the “Preparation day,” meaning the preparation of the weekly Sabbath, and therefore the crucifixion had to occur on a Friday. Indeed, the day of the crucifixion was a “Preparation day” – the apostle John says of the day Jesus was crucified, “Therefore, because it was the Preparation Day, that the bodies should not remain on the cross on the Sabbath (*for that Sabbath was a high day*), the Jews asked Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away” (John 19:31). The Sabbath in question here was the *annual Sabbath of the Passover – a “high day”* – not the weekly Sabbath day!

Clearly, all the Biblical evidence disproves the Friday crucifixion theory! But does this necessarily mean that the proposed alternate theory – that of a Wednesday crucifixion – is automatically correct? Or could this theory also be proven to be in error?

The Wednesday Crucifixion Theory

Sometimes people think they are in an “either-or” situation, that “either this” must be true, “or that” must be the case – when neither theory will fit all the facts!

What are the basic underlying problems with the Wednesday crucifixion theory?

Problem #1 – Many have attempted to “prove” the crucifixion occurred on a Wednesday, “in the midst of the week,” by pointing to a prophecy found in Daniel 9:27, where we read: “Then he shall confirm a covenant with many for one week, but in the *middle of the week* he shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering.” It is claimed by some Christian apologists that this refers to Christ, and proves He died in the “MIDDLE of the week” – that is, Wednesday.

However, this is a prime case of reading into a text one’s own preconceived opinions. If we simply allow the text to speak for itself, in context, we discover it is talking about a “prince” or world leader who is prophesied to come and to destroy God’s temple – “the city and the sanctuary” (Dan.9:26). This occurred in 70 A.D., when the Romans fought the Jews, conquered them, and destroyed the Temple. The next verse then goes on to say, “Then he [the prince] shall confirm a covenant [treaty] . . . But in the middle of the week he shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering” (v.27). Verse 27 follows verse 26 in time sequence. Therefore, the WAR had to occur first. Yet Jesus was crucified 40 years BEFORE the Jewish-Roman war! This passage therefore could not refer to His death at all and certainly cannot be used as “proof” He died in the middle of the week! Whenever He died, sacrifice and offerings did not stop then – they were performed daily for the next 40 years, until the Romans burned down the Temple in 70 A.D.!

Problem #2 – I have always been struck by the strange account given in the gospel of Luke regarding the two disciples who were traveling to Emmaus that Sunday, the first day of the week, following the resurrection, where Jesus joined up with them, incognito, His identity hidden, as He conversed with them. Notice the account:

“Now behold, two of them were traveling that same day to a village called Emmaus, which was seven miles from Jerusalem. And they talked together of all these things which had happened. So it was, while they conversed and reasoned, that Jesus Himself drew near and went with them. But their eyes were restrained, so that they did not know Him. And He said to them, ‘What kind of conversation is this that you have with one another as you walk and are sad?’ Then the one who was Cleopas answered and said to Him, ‘Are You the only stranger in Jerusalem, and have You not known the things which Happened there in these days?’ And He said to them, ‘What things?’ So they said to Him, ‘The things concerning Jesus of Nazareth, who was a Prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, and how our chief priests and rulers delivered Him to be condemned to death, and crucified Him. But we were hoping that it was He who was going to redeem Israel. Indeed, besides all this, *today is the THIRD DAY since all these things happened*” (Luke 24:13-21).

Notice! It was Sunday, and these two disciples said it was “THE THIRD DAY since all these things happened”! Now if we count from Wednesday, when Jesus was crucified on the stake, we have – Thursday, Friday, Saturday, Sunday – FOUR DAYS it would have been “since these things were done”! The Englishman’s Greek Interlinear has this verse, “But then with all these things *THIRD THIS DAY brings today, SINCE these things came to pass.*” *The Interlinear Bible* has it: “But with all these things *THIRD this day comes today SINCE these things occurred!*” Obviously, something is amiss, here! Sunday is NOT “three days” from Wednesday!

This has always been a perplexing Scripture to advocates of a Wednesday crucifixion. To get around this seemingly obvious contradiction, some have previously claimed that the “things” which had happened included the posting of a guard at the tomb by the Pharisees, which was done a day or two AFTER the crucifixion. We read, “On the next day, which followed the Day of Preparation, the chief priests and Pharisees gathered together to Pilate” (Matthew 27:62). The account continues showing that Pilate gave them permission to post a guard at the tomb to prevent Jesus’ disciples from stealing His body and claiming He arose from the dead.

This rationale provided a flimsy excuse for explaining why the disciples referred to Sunday as “the third day” since “these things” happened! If we include this posting of a guard, on Thursday (the day after the “Preparation,”) then counting exclusively, Sunday does become the “third day” since these things occurred.

But in all reality – is this what the two disciples were discussing that day? If we just go by the evidence of what they themselves said, then they were discussing the CRUCIFIXION ITSELF – that is what energized their conversation – not the posting of the guard by the Pharisees. They were talking about the crucifixion, and the fact that early that very morning certain woman and others went to the tomb and found it empty and saw a vision of angels who said Jesus was alive! (Luke 24:22-24). In the course of such events, who would have given a moment’s thought to the stationing of a guard by the Pharisees at the tomb! It was wholly irrelevant!

Problem #3 – For years I have been mystified by the question implied by the Wednesday

crucifixion-Saturday evening resurrection theory. If Jesus Christ arose Saturday evening, just before sunset, on the weekly Sabbath – then *what was He doing for the next 12 hours or so before the stone was rolled away from the tomb early Sunday morning?* It could be called, “The Case of the Missing Twelve Hours.” Surely no Sherlock Holmes mystery could be more fascinating or inscrutable! What *did* Jesus do for those 12 hours? Nobody has ever come up with a good answer.

But of course, if He arose shortly before sunrise, or daybreak, early Sunday morning, just before the women came to the tomb, then it all makes perfect sense. There is no “missing gap” of 12 hours to dispose of! Everything happened in proper order, in perfect time sequence!

A NEW SOLUTION

Clearly, there are serious problems with both the Friday crucifixion theory, as well as the Wednesday crucifixion theory. The Friday theory does not provide enough time for Christ to be dead and in the grave three days and three nights.

The Wednesday theory, on the other hand, has no proof to back it up, and seems to contradict the timetable implied by Sunday having been “the third day” since the crucifixion, and results in a mysterious and unexplainable “twelve hours” between the supposed resurrection Saturday night, and the rolling away of the stone Sunday morning, and the appearance of the women before the tomb.

So -- what is the answer to the enigma? What is the solution to the puzzle, which has mystified and perplexed Bible scholars and students as well, for centuries?

If Jesus was in the grave only 36 hours, only two days and two nights, as the Friday crucifixion theory proposes, then *He failed to fulfill the ONLY SIGN which He said would be given to that generation, proving that He was the Christ -- the Messiah -- the Saviour of the world! That “sign” was that He would be in the grave THREE days and THREE nights!*

A New Look at “Three Days and Three Nights”

Let’s take a closer look at the expression “three days and three nights.” Many have pointed out that this is an idiom and can mean *parts* of three days and nights. In other words, idiomatically speaking, all we really need to fulfill this expression is a sequential, consecutive period of time including at least parts of three days and three nights.

Notice the *Jamieson, Fausset and Brown, Critical Experimental Commentary*:

“For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale’s belly (Jon.1:17), so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. This was the second public pronouncement of His resurrection three days after His death. . . . Jonah’s case was analogous to this, as being a signal judgment of God; reversed in three days; and followed by a glorious mission to the Gentiles. The expression ‘in the heart of the earth’ suggested by the expression of Jonah with respect to the sea (2:3 in LXX), means simply the grave, but this considered as the most emphatic expression of real and total entombment. The period during which He was to lie in

the grave is here expressed in round numbers, *according to the Jewish way of speaking, which was to regard ANY PART OF A DAY, HOWEVER SMALL, INCLUDED WITHIN A PERIOD OF DAYS, AS A FULL DAY.* (See I Sam. 30:12, 13; Esth.4:16; v.1; Matt.27:63, 64, etc.)” (vol.3, page 75).

Notice how this fits in with the book of Esther, in the Old Testament. Esther sent a message to Mordecai saying, “Go, gather all the Jews who are present in Shushan, and fast for me; neither eat nor drink for THREE DAYS, NIGHT OR DAY. My maids and I will fast likewise. And I will go to the king . . .” (Esther 4:16). “Now it happened *on the THIRD DAY* that Esther put on her royal robes and stood in the inner court . . .” (Esther 5:1).

It seems clear that the expression three days and three nights can include partial days or nights. In this case, during the “third day” of the fast, Esther appeared before the king. The fast probably began in the evening, and so included three evenings, two days, and a part of the third day, when she appeared before the king.

In another case, we read of a case where a young man was found in a field and brought to king David. He was famished and very weak. The account says that “he had eaten no bread nor drunk water for three days and three nights” (I Sam.30:11-12). When David questioned him, he told him, “I am a young man from Egypt, servant of an Amalekite; and my master left me behind, because *three days ago* I fell sick” (v.13).

Three days could mean portions of three days, and the same reasoning applies to “three nights.” I see no reason why we must conclude that precisely “three days and three nights,” or an entire 72 hours, is required in this passage.

In other words, Hebrew is much like English in this regard. Three days is a general term and can mean parts of three consecutive days. Even so, three nights can mean parts of three consecutive nights – as “three nights from now.” If a person wants to say a precise length of time, they would say “exactly” three days or nights – or, “precisely.”

Even so, the expression “three days and three nights” can mean parts of three days and parts of three nights, so long as they are in succession.

Bullinger’s Comments Analyzed

However, E. W. Bullinger in *The Companion Bible* asserts:

“The fact that ‘three days’ is used by Hebrew idiom for any part of three days and three nights is not disputed; because it was the common way of reckoning, just as it was when used of years. Three or any number of years was used inclusively of any part of those years, as may be seen in the reckoning of the reigns of any of the kings of Israel and Judah.

“But when the number of ‘nights’ is stated as well as the number of ‘days,’ *then the expression ceases to be an idiom, and becomes a literal statement of fact.*”

But is this necessarily true? Bullinger is entitled to his opinion, but he certainly has not “proved” his case. Merely making a strong assertion proves nothing. As they say in modern

speech, “The proof is in the pudding.” Where’s the proof? He presents none. But he admits that the expression “three days” is a Hebrew idiom which can stand for “any part of three days.” Simply because both three days and three nights are mentioned does not automatically change the expression into an ironclad term meaning “EXACTLY” three days and three nights! In this case, Bullinger oversteps common sense and draws a sweeping conclusion based on his own speculation. Of course, the opposite is true, too – although we are not forced to expand three days and three nights to exactly 72 hours, or three 24-hour days, on the other hand, there is no way we can squeeze three days and nights into the timeframe from Friday, just before sunset, to Sunday, just before sunrise, or even through sunrise!

Bullinger continues:

“Moreover, as the Hebrew day began at sunset the day was reckoned from one sunset to another, the ‘twelve hours in the day’ (John 11:9) being reckoned from sunrise, and the twelve hours of night from sunset. An evening-morning was thus used for a whole day of twenty-four hours, as in the first chapter of Genesis. Hence the expression ‘a night and a day’ in II Corinthians 11:25 denotes a complete day.”

Of course a full “day” – as Yeshua declared – equals 12 hours. That is not in dispute. But what about II Corinthians 11:25? Does that necessarily mean a “complete day” of 24 hours? Let’s notice this verse. Paul writes, “Three times I was beaten with rods; once I was stoned; three times I was shipwrecked; *a night and a day* I have been in the deep.” Are we supposed to believe in this instance Paul meant to say *precisely 24 hours* he was in the water? Of course not! When he says “a night and a day,” he was most likely meaning a night or a part thereof, and the following day or a part thereof. There is no reason to assume he meant exactly 24 hours, not one minute less, when he says this. He just means approximately a night and a day, without being precise. Again, if he wanted to be precise, he could have said “exactly,” or “to the very hour,” or added some similar qualifying expression.

If I said, “I’m going to Aunt Martha’s house, and it’ll take me a night and a day to get there,” would I mean precisely that? Or isn’t that just a manner of speech, meaning “about” a night and a day?

Bullinger concludes:

‘When Esther says (Est.4:16) ‘fast ye for me, and neither eat nor drink three days,’ she defines her meaning as being three complete days, because she adds (being a Jewess) ‘night or day.’ And when it is written that the fast ended on ‘the third day’ (5:1), ‘the third day’ must have succeeded and included the third night. . . .’ (The Companion Bible, appendix 144, page 170).

As we have seen already, Esther’s comments provide more support for the term “three days, night or day,” as meaning about three days and nights – again, this is not intended to be a minute, microscopic, precise measurement – but a general statement. These terms are not “slide rule” religion. The expression “three days and three nights” was never intended to imply that we must interpret it to mean precisely 72 hours, without any deviation there from!

But Jesus said He would be in the grave three days and three nights, *as the prophet Jonah* was in the belly of the great fish. What about the usage in this case?

In the book of Jonah we read: “Now the LORD had prepared a great fish to swallow up Jonah. And Jonah was in the belly of the fish *three days and three nights*” (Jonah 1:17). Bullinger says of this example:

“Hence when it says that ‘Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights’ (Jonah 1:17) *it means exactly what it says, and this can be the only meaning of the expression in Matthew 12:40; 16:4; Luke 11:30 . . .*”

When Jesus said “three days and three nights,” He meant what He said. But He did not say precisely 72 hours! Although E. W. Bullinger apparently believes this is what He meant, the term Yeshua used does not necessarily mean precisely 72 hours – rather, His words could also be fulfilled *so long as portions of three days AND three nights are fulfilled!*

Thus when Jesus Christ said He would be in the grave for three days and three nights, He meant exactly what He said. But what He said isn’t necessarily what some people *think!* So many of us have had this idea that three days and three nights has to mean 72 hours, that it is as if we have been “brainwashed”! It has been “drilled” into us, so that we have a hard time shaking ourselves of this idea. As one man declared, “It is ten times harder to unlearn an error than to simply prove the truth!”

Of course, this truth flies right in the face of the commonly believed Good Friday-Easter Sunday tradition of the churches of this world! The Catholic Church and the Protestant churches all claim that Jesus was crucified Friday evening and resurrected early Sunday morning. *There is NO WAY that this could be true!* There is no way that you can count three days and three nights between Friday sunset and Sunday daybreak! Even if you include part of Friday afternoon, and part of Sunday morning, you would still come up short! Notice:

Friday afternoon	(day)
Friday night	(night)
Saturday daylight	(day)
Saturday night	(night)
Sunday morning	(day)

But consider this fact:

If Jesus failed to fulfill the ONLY SIGN He gave, then 1) He was a *liar*, and as such He surely could not be the Christ, the Son of the living God, and 2) as a “liar,” He could not have been “Immanuel,” or “God in the flesh” and our Saviour because “God cannot lie” (Titus 1:2).

Yet Jesus said, “The Scripture cannot be broken” (John 10:35). He also declared, “Thy word is TRUTH” (John 17:17). The words Jesus spoke in the gospel account of Matthew are Scripture -- and therefore *must be true*. We must put more confidence in Scripture than in the “traditions of men,” such as the “Good Friday-Easter Sunday” tradition! As the apostle Paul wrote, “ALL SCRIPTURE is given by inspiration of God [is “God-breathed”], and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works” (II Tim.3:16-17).

Which will we believe -- God's word? or the traditions of men? Be careful which you select, for Jesus Christ also warned those who profess to follow Him, "Howbeit in VAIN do they WORSHIP ME, teaching for doctrines the commandments of *men*. For *laying aside* the commandments of God, *ye hold the tradition of men* . . . And he said unto them, Full well ye *reject* the commandment of God, that ye may *keep your own tradition*" (Mark 7:7-9). Jesus warned of the danger of "making the word of God of none effect *through your tradition*" (verse 13). As the New International Version puts this passage, "You have a fine way of setting aside the commands of God in order to observe your own traditions!"

Thus far we have seen TWO "traditions of men" – one is the widely believed "Good-Friday-Easter Sunday tradition. It does not add up. We have also seen the Wednesday crucifixion theory -- with a late Sabbath afternoon resurrection. Does it all up any better than the other theory? As we have seen, it, too, has loopholes – weaknesses. So what is the truth?

A little patience is required, but we CAN understand the truth, and get to the real FACTS, if we keep an open mind, and if we are willing to learn NEW truth, and examine ALL the available evidence!

Why "Three Days"?

What, then, is the real meaning of "three days and three nights"? How long was Jesus Christ in the grave? Bullinger tells us:

"In the first mention of His sufferings (Matt.16:21) the Lord mentions the fact that He would be 'raised again the third day.' In John 2:19 He had already mentioned 'three days' as the time after which He would raise up 'the Temple of His body.'

"The expression occurs eleven times with reference to His resurrection (Matt.16:21; 17:23;20:19. Mark 9:31; 10:34. Luke 9:22; 18:33; 24:7, 46. Acts 10:40. I Cor. 15:4).

"We have the expression 'AFTER three days' in Mark 8:31, used of the same event.

"This shows that the expression 'three days and three nights' of Matt.12:40 must include 'three days' and the three preceding 'nights.' While it is true that a 'third day' may be a part of three days, including two nights; yet 'after three days' and 'three nights and three days' cannot possibly be so reckoned" (*The Companion Bible*, appendix 156, page 172).

Bullinger is stressing that fact that the Friday crucifixion-Easter Sunday resurrection cannot be computed to result in 3 days and 3 nights. That is his main point. And I agree completely. But why did Jesus use this particular time frame as *the sign* of His being the Messiah -- the true Saviour? Why "three days" instead of a mere two days, or four or five days?

The number three in the Scriptures denotes finality -- decision. Peter denied Christ three times; Paul prayed three times that his thorn in the flesh might be removed; Jesus asked Peter three times if he loved Him. "Three" means finality.

But there is more. We notice that if a man contracted any type of defilement in the Old Testament times, through touching a dead body, he was to purify himself on the “third day” (Numbers 19:11-12). Also, the flesh of the peace offering was not to be kept past the third day, but was then to be burnt (Lev.7:17-18) as unfit for food.

According to a tradition of the Jews in the Talmud, quoted by John Lightfoot (1602-1675), the mourning for the dead culminated on the third day, because the spirit was not supposed to be fully departed until then.

But even more important, Bullinger tells us:

“The Jews did not accept evidence as to the *identification* of a dead body after three days.

“This period seems, therefore, to have been chosen by the Lord . . . to associate the fact of resurrection with the certainty of death, *so as to preclude all doubt that death had actually taken place, and shut out all suggestion that it might have been a trance, or a mere case of resuscitation.* The fact that Lazarus has been dead ‘four days already’ was urged by Martha as a proof that Lazarus was dead, for ‘by this time he stinketh’ (John 11:17, 39).

“We have to remember that corruption takes place very quickly in the East, so that ‘the third day’ was the proverbial evidence as to the certainty that death had taken place, leaving no hope” (*The Companion Bible*, appendix 148, page 172).

Now, if Christ had only been in the grave little more than two nights and one day (Friday night, Saturday day and night), then that would not have been sufficient time to insure that He had really died! It then could have been claimed that He had merely *appeared* to be dead; that He had merely been in a “trance”-like condition; and therefore, the truth of His resurrection could have been legally **DENIED AS HAVING BEEN PROVED!**

Therefore, it was NECESSARY that He be in the grave for at least THREE days!

The Burial and Resurrection of Christ

Now let us go on with the story. Luke describes the events surrounding Jesus’ burial, in the end of Nisan 14, in the evening, just before sunset, in this manner:

“And, behold, there was a man named Joseph, a counsellor; and he was a good man, and a just; (The same had not consented to the counsel and deed of them;) he was of Arimathaea, a city of the Jews: who also himself waited for the kingdom of God. This man went unto Pilate, and begged the body of Jesus. And he took it down, and wrapped it in linen, and laid it in a sepulchre that was hewn in a stone, wherein never man before was laid. And *that day was the preparation*, and the sabbath drew on” (Luke 23:50-54).

The “Sabbath” that drew on, that evening, was the first high holy day of Passover, as John tells us in his gospel:

“The Jews therefore, because *it was the preparation*, that the bodies should not remain upon the cross *on the sabbath day (for that sabbath day was AN HIGH DAY)*, besought

Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away” (John 19:31).

Matthew adds to the picture with the following details:

“When the even was come, there came a rich man of Arimathaea, named Joseph, who also himself was Jesus’ disciple: He went to Pilate, and begged the body of Jesus. Then Pilate commanded the body to be delivered. And when Joseph had taken the body, he wrapped it in a clean linen cloth, and laid it in his own new tomb, which he had hewn out in the rock: and he rolled a great stone to the door of the sepulchre, and departed” (Matt.27:57-60).

It is clear that Jesus was buried just before sunset, on the preparation day of an annual high Sabbath day. On what day of the week did that annual Holy Day fall? The Wednesday crucifixion theory places it on Thursday, beginning Wednesday evening and lasting to Thursday evening. Therefore, they claim, His resurrection, three days and nights later -- or 72 hours later, according to them -- must have occurred Saturday evening! Counting from Wednesday evening, *one* night and day would bring us to Thursday evening; *two* nights and days would bring us to Friday evening; and *three* nights and days would bring us to SATURDAY (Sabbath) EVENING!

But is this necessarily true? When, then, did Christ arise? On what day did He arise from the dead? Could it have been early Sunday morning, before sunrise, while it was “yet dark”? (John 20:1).

Interestingly, Sunday is sometimes referred to as the “eighth day” of the week. That is, the week consists of seven days, ending with the Sabbath day. The “next” day – Sunday – would be the “eighth” day if we continue counting. Similarly, the Feast of Tabernacles is seven days in the fall of the year (Lev.23:34-36). The next day is the Feast of “Shemini Atzeret” – which simply means, “The eighth day.” Seven plus one is eight. Seven represents a completed week, a completion. The first day represents a “beginning.” The “eighth” day – which is a new “FIRST” day – represents a “NEW beginning.” That is, “renewal,” “resurrection,” a “new commencement.” Thus symbolically, the FIRST day of the week as the Scriptures imply represents the day of Christ’s “new beginning,” “renewal of life,” His resurrection!

This picture would not fit if He were resurrected at the “end” portion of the weekly Sabbath. There would be no symbolism in that. But even as the “Eighth” day of Shemini Atzeret represents a new beginning, so the “eighth day” when Christ was resurrected also represents a “new beginning”!

When Was the Resurrection?

Now let’s examine the time of the resurrection. Notice the following text in the gospel of Matthew:

“In the *END OF THE SABBATH*, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the sepulcher” (Matt.28:1).

This verse has become the focus of much attention recently. It has been seriously

misunderstood and misinterpreted by modern religionists and students of the Greek language. Let us notice it carefully. One religious booklet claims that this verse proves Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came to the tomb of Jesus Saturday night, because -- they claim -- the Greek expression for “end of the Sabbath” means the latter portion of the sabbath, as the day is closing. They claim that the word translated “dawn” here merely means “beginning” of the first day of the week, which would have begun at sunset, Saturday evening, according to Hebrew reckoning.

The word for “end” here, in the expression “end of the sabbath,” is *opse* and can mean “late in the day,” but also, by extension, “after the close of the day,” and “in the end.” Therefore, although this verse could indicate that Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came to visit the tomb of Jesus late in the day of the weekly Sabbath, it can also mean “after the close of the Sabbath.” *Which is it?*

Thayers Greek-English Lexicon defines this word as: “adverb of time, *after a long time, long after, late*; a) esp. *late in the day . . . i.e., at evening. . . the sabbath having passed, after the sabbath, i.e. at the early dawn of the first day of the week . . .*”

Notice! *Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon* shows that this word can be used of the latter part of a day, or of a period of time AFTER a particular day. But when, then, did Mary Magdalene and the other Mary come to Jesus' tomb after the ending of the Sabbath day? Was it immediately after, as it was growing very dark, or was it early the next morning?

The Greek word for “dawn” used in Matthew 28:1 in the King James Version holds the key to understanding this matter. The Greek word for “dawn” in this verse is *epiphosko*. Says *Strong's Concordance*, #2020, “*epiphosko*. to begin to grow light.” Says *Thayer's Lexicon*, “*to grow light, to dawn*.” It is derived from *epiphaino*, which means “to shine upon, i.e. become (literally) visible or (figuratively) known -- appear, give light.” It is used also in Luke 23:54 where we read: “And that day was the preparation, and the sabbath *drew on*.”

It is easy to see how this word could be misunderstood by some people. It could be ambiguous. However, the major definition of this word suggests that the literal, visible DAWNING of a new day, when the eastern sky *begins* to grow light, is the actual time when Mary and the other Mary went to the tomb. They had prepared spices, and were planning to spend some time there, anointing the body of Jesus. All this suggests that early dawn was the correct time -- not the brief time of twilight, between sunset and nightfall.

How clear it should be, then, that the visit to the tomb occurred before sunrise Sunday morning. John's gospel makes it perfectly clear. We read:

‘The first *day* of the week cometh Mary Magdalene *early*, *WHILE IT WAS YET DARK*, unto the sepulchre, and seeth the stone taken away from the Sepulchre’ (John 20:1).

The gospel of Luke gives us a fuller account of the actual events that occurred, in time sequence. Luke writes:

“And this man [Joseph of Arimathaea] went unto Pilate, and begged the body of

Jesus. And he took it down, and wrapped it in linen, and laid it in a sepulchre that was hewn in stone, wherein never before man was laid. And that day [Nisan 14] was the preparation, and the sabbath [the high holy day of Nisan 15] drew on. And the women also, which came with him from Galilee, followed after, and beheld the sepulchre, and how his body was laid. And they returned, AND PREPARED SPICES AND OINTMENTS . . ." (Luke 23:52-56).

The New King James Version has:

"And the women who had come with Him from Galilee followed after, and they observed the tomb and how His body was laid. Then they returned and prepared spices and fragrant oils. And they rested on the Sabbath according to the commandment" (vs.55-56).

This must have taken some time. They may have already had the spices, but still had to prepare them for use. They would most likely have done this in the short time they had between the burial of Christ and the onset of the annual Sabbath, at sunset, Nisan 15, on which "no servile work could be done." This Sabbath was the First Day of Unleavened Bread.

Luke then continues the story, as follows:

"Now on the first day of the week, very early in the morning, they, and certain other women with them, came to the tomb bringing the spices which they had prepared. But they found the stone rolled away from the tomb. Then they went in and did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. And it happened, as they were greatly perplexed about this, that behold, two men stood by them in shining garments. Then, as they were afraid and bowed their faces to the earth, they said to them, 'Why do you seek the living among the dead? He is not here, but is risen!'" (Luke 24:1-6).

Notice! Luke tells us the women visited the tomb "*very early* in the MORNING" (Luke 24:1). This was comparable to the time when Jesus "in the morning, rising up a great while before day, departed into a solitary place, and there prayed" (Mark 1:35). It was still dark outside -- this was before daybreak, or sunrise! This would not have been the closing hours of the weekly Sabbath. Nor would it have been the first few hours of nightfall, Saturday night. This would have been EARLY SUNDAY MORNING, *BEFORE THE RISING OF THE SUN!*

What did Mary Magdalene and the other Mary find when they got to the tomb? As we have seen, this visit occurred before sunrise, while it was *yet dark*. Notice!

"In the end of the sabbath [or, after the close of the sabbath], as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week [that is, before sunrise, while it was yet dark], came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the tomb.

"And, behold, there was a great earthquake: for the angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it. His countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow: and for fear of him the keepers did shake, and became as dead men. And the angel answered and said unto the women, Fear not ye: for I know that ye seek Jesus, which is crucified. *HE IS NOT HERE: FOR HE IS RISEN, AS HE SAID.* Come, see the place where the Lord lay. And go quickly, and tell his disciples that *HE IS RISEN FROM THE DEAD*; and, behold, he goeth before you into Galilee; there shall ye see him: lo, I have told you" (Matt.28:2-7).

Here it is! The Sabbath has past. It is *after* the Sabbath, now. In God's calendar, each day begins at sunset, and is counted "from even to even" (Lev.23:32). It is still dark outside, and Mary Magdalene and the other Mary come to the tomb. And what do they find?

Jesus has ALREADY RISEN FROM THE DEAD! He is not there! Sunrise has not yet occurred, and Jesus is already out of the tomb! The angel informs them, "He IS RISEN" -- past tense -- not "He is rising," but, "He IS [already] RISEN"! *And this is BEFORE SUNRISE!*

"Two Sabbaths"

Interestingly, the *Interlinear Bible* translates this passage, literally from the Greek, this way:

"But AFTER THE SABBATHS, at the dawning into the first of the Sabbaths, came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to view the grave" (v.1).

The Greek word for "Sabbath" in this verse is in the PLURAL – *Sabbaton* – and the *Interlinear Bible* expresses it in the plural. Why? Because there were two back-to-back Sabbaths that week – Friday, the annual Sabbath, and Saturday, the weekly Sabbath!

The fact that annual holy days were also called Sabbaths is very evident from Leviticus 23:32 where God says of the Day of Atonement, "from evening to evening you shall celebrate your Sabbath." Also, speaking of the First Day of the Feast of Tabernacles, and Shemini Atzeret, "The Eighth Day," God calls them "a Sabbath of rest," and "Sabbath-rest" (verse 39). The Feast of Trumpets, another holy day, is also expressly called a "Sabbath" (Lev.23:24).

The fact that both Friday and the weekly Sabbath were BOTH "Sabbaths" then is expressly revealed in Matthew 28:1. (The word "Sabbaton" in Greek is a plural word, but it can also refer to the weekly Sabbath, and to the "week" itself, and is sometimes translated that way.)

The expression "at the dawning into the first of the Sabbaths" could also mean the beginning of the week, or even the "weeks" – plural -- of the Omer count. The "Omer" – the firstfruits offering of the barley harvest – is a period of seven weeks which are counted from Passover to Pentecost. The counting begins with the wave sheaf offering on Nisan 16, which was the weekly Sabbath day that year.

When Was the Resurrection?

Was the resurrection, then, shortly before sunrise, Sunday morning? John's gospel says it was still "dark" when the women came to the tomb. But Mark seems to contradict these facts. The King James Version has it: "And when the sabbath was past [that part is perfectly clear], Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome, had bought sweet spices, that they might come and anoint him. *And very early in the morning, on the first day of the week [so good so far!], they came unto the sepulchre at the RISING OF THE SUN*" (Mark 16:1-2).

Does this account contradict the other accounts? Not at all!

The Scriptures do not contradict themselves. The word translated “*at the rising of the sun*” in this verse is *panatela*, meaning “to cause to rise,” “make rise,” etc. The prefix is *Ana* in the Greek and could be translated “by” or “before.” In other words, the women came to the tomb “by the rising of the sun,” or “before the rising of the sun.” This would fit in with the clear statement in John that they came while it was still dark, before daybreak.

To determine the time of the resurrection, it is very noteworthy that when Christ died on the stake, there was an accompanying earthquake – “the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom, and the earth quaked, and the rocks split” (Matt.27:51). There was another earthquake early Sunday morning, before sunrise, as Matthew continues: “Now after the Sabbath [or “Sabbaths”], as the first day of the week began to dawn [not yet sunrise], Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came to see the tomb. And behold, there was a GREAT EARTHQUAKE; for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone, and sat on it” (Matt.28:1-2, NKJV).

It seems most likely that the resurrection of Christ occurred *at the moment of this great earthquake!* The dead will once again rise when there is a great earthquake, at the second coming of Christ (Rev.11:18-19; 16:17-21; 11:12-13). When Christ arose, a number of saints, also in their graves, also were resurrected, and entered Jerusalem and appeared to many (Matt.27:52-53). An earthquake is often associated with resurrection! Evidently, then, when the earth quaked at the coming of the angel to roll away the stone from the tomb is the very moment of Christ’s resurrection!

The Number “62”

This would mean that Christ was in the “heart of the earth” – dead – from 3 PM Thursday afternoon till about 5 AM Sunday morning. During March-April, sunrise is about 5:15 AM. This would put Christ in the grave for 62 hours. The number 62 is significant. Bullinger states that “62” is 2×31 , which has profound meaning. “31” is the gematria of God’s name, “El,” (aleph-lamed, $1 + 30$), which represents “deity,” or “God.” It is associated directly therefore with Almighty God as a number signifying Him. But what is 2×31 ? Think about it. When Christ arose from the grave, this was a divine corroboration that He, too, is “God” – the *second member* of the Divine Godhead! Thus the 62 hours He was in the grave (31×2) when ended at His resurrection is the stamp approval and divine signature that He too is “God,” just as He claimed, and Thomas attested (John 8:57; 20:28; 1:1-4; John 5:18; Rev.1:8).

What Year Was the Crucifixion?

To really get to the bottom of this matter, we need to ascertain what year Christ was crucified. A prophecy in Daniel 9:24-27 tells us the Messiah would appear after 69 “weeks” of years following a decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem. This decree was made by king Artaxerxes (see Ezra 7) in 457 B.C. 69 prophetic weeks equals 483 days, and a day for a year equals 483 years (compare Num.14:34; Ezek.6:4-6). 483 years from 457 BC brings us to 27 A.D. Yeshua was born in 4 B.C., before the death of Herod (Matt.2). In 27 A.D. He would have been “about thirty years” of age, and Luke corroborates that He began His ministry at that age

(Luke 3:23). Jesus' ministry began in 27 A.D., about the time of the Passover.

Therefore, to know what year He died, it would help if we could determine the length of His ministry. How long did He preach, before He was killed?

Jesus' ministry began from the very moment of His baptism, by John the Baptist, when the Holy Spirit came upon Him in a special way. We read in Luke, chapter 3:

“Now when all the people were baptized, it came to pass, that Jesus also being baptized, and praying, the heaven was opened, *and the Holy Spirit descended in a bodily shape like a dove upon him*, and a voice came from heaven, which said, Thou art my beloved Son; in thee I am well pleased. And Jesus himself began to be about thirty years of age . . .” (Luke 3:21-23).

Jesus, of course, was literally begotten of the Holy Spirit at His conception (Matt.20-21; Luke 1:35). As He grew up as a boy, He “waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom: and the grace of God was upon him” (Luke 2:40). What then is meant by the Holy Spirit coming upon Him at His baptism? This can only refer to the Holy Spirit anointing Him to begin His ministry, and to begin preaching the gospel, the purpose for which He was sent!

Since Christ was baptized shortly before Passover, about 30 years of age, in 27 A.D., this would suggest strongly that He was born about February, in 4 B.C. Write for our free article, “When Was Christ Born?” It shows Jesus was most likely born in February, not at Christmas time, and not in the fall season.

He would have been “about thirty years of age” in spring of A.D. 27. Thus He was baptized before Passover in A.D. 27, and “anointed” for His ministry at that time. At this point, Jesus went up to the wilderness, and fasted forty days, and was tempted of the devil (Luke 4:1-13, Matt.4:1-11). This was special preparation for His ministry. After this, he departed into Galilee, and dwelt in Capernaum (Matt.4:12-13), and began to preach the gospel.

“From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand” (Matt.4:17).

This was after John was put into prison (Mark 1:14-15). Luke tells us further:

“And Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit into Galilee: and there went out a fame of him through all the region round about. And he taught in their synagogues, being glorified of all” (Luke 4:14).

The First Passover of Jesus' Ministry

Jesus had already begun healing the sick miraculously, and casting out demons. He established a reputation with His preaching and miracles throughout the region of Galilee. At the Passover, that year, 27 A.D., He went up to Jerusalem. John records:

“And the Jews' *passover* was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem” (John 2:13).

At Jerusalem, Jesus found the temple of God polluted by those who sold doves and oxen

and sheep for sacrifices, and a host of moneychangers. Angered, He made a scourge of small cords, and drove out all the animals and their sellers, and overthrew the tables of the moneychangers (John 2:14-17). *This first Passover* would have been in the spring of 27 A.D., shortly after His ministry got started.

At this Passover, Jesus was asked, “What sign shewest thou unto us, seeing that thou doest these things?” (John 2:18). Jesus answered: “Destroy this temple, and in *three days* I will raise it up” (v.19). What did Jesus mean? First, we know He was literally in the grave for three days. However, using a “day” for a “year” principle, He also implied that *three years* from that time, or three Passovers hence, He would be killed, and resurrected. In other words, this statement is further proof that Jesus' ministry lasted *three years!*

Notice what follows: “Then said the Jews, *Forty and six years* was this temple in building, and wilt thou rear it up in three days? But he spake of the temple of his body” (John 2:20-21).

The Temple of Herod

When did Herod begin construction on the Temple? This statement was made at Passover 27 A.D. If we subtract the 46 years the Temple was in building, $46-27 = 19$ B.C.; but since there is no year zero, we must add “1” year, bringing us to 20 B.C. Did Herod begin his massive reconstruction project on the Temple in 20 B.C.? Does this fit in with history?

Says *The NIV Harmony of the Gospels*, “According to secular history, Herod initiated the work sometime in 20 B.C. or 19 B.C. This statement was addressed to Jesus at the *first passover* after he begins his public ministry. The 'forty six years' therefore furnishes *another means for identifying the year when his ministry began*” (p.317). The authors continue, “Hence the first passover of Jesus' ministry must have been in the *spring of A.D. 27*” (*ibid.*). Schurer in *A History of the Jewish People in the Time of Christ* adds, “The rebuilding was begun in the eighteenth year of Herod, corresponding to B.C. 20-19 . . .” (vol.1, p.438).

The *Unger's Bible Dictionary* concurs, saying, “. . . though Herod began the rebuilding B.C. 20, as a whole it was literally true that the temple was ‘built in forty and six years,’ when the Jews so asserted to Jesus (John 2:20). But the end was not yet, for the work was really continued until A.D. 64, just six years before the final destruction of the temple by the Roman soldiers of Titus” (“Herod,” p.471).

Counting 46 years, then, from 20 B.C., brings us to 26 A.D. by simple subtraction. But, since there was no year zero, we again must add a year -- bringing us to A.D. 27 -- the very year Jesus Christ began His ministry, and celebrated the first Passover of His ministry!

The Second, Third and Fourth Passovers of Jesus' Ministry

The *second Passover* of Jesus' ministry is possibly mentioned at the end of the second chapter of John's gospel. By this Passover Feast, Jesus had already developed a well-established reputation as a doer of miracles and wondrous deeds. The brief account is as follows:

“Now when he was in Jerusalem *at the passover*, in the feast day, many believed in his name, when they saw the miracles which he did. But Jesus did not commit himself unto them, because he knew all men, and needed not that any should testify of man: for he knew what was in man” (John 2:23-25).

Some might think this was merely the same as the first Passover, mentioned previously in this same chapter. If that is the case, then the most likely place the second Passover is referred to is John, chapter 5, where we read: “After this there was a feast of the Jews; and Jesus went up to Jerusalem” (John 5:1). Jesus would only go up to a Feast in Jerusalem if it were one of the three pilgrimage festivals – Passover, Pentecost, or Tabernacles. This could well have been His second Passover!

The *third Passover* of Jesus’ ministry is mentioned several chapters later in the gospel account of John. This would be the Passover of 29 A.D. John declares:

“And the *passover*, a feast of the Jews, was nigh” (John 6:4).

The final and *fourth Passover* was the Passover of 30 A.D., at which Jesus was crucified. This is the Passover which culminated Christ’s ministry, showing that His ministry lasted a period of three years. We read of the events of this Passover, beginning in chapter 11 of the book of John:

“And the Jews’ *passover* was nigh at hand: and many went out of the country up to Jerusalem before the passover, to purify themselves” (John 11:55).

“Then Jesus six days before *passover* came to Bethany . . .” (John 12:1).

“Now before the feast of the passover, when Jesus knew that his hour was come that he should depart out of this world unto the Father, having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end” (John 13:1).

Jesus’ ministry began about Passover time, in 27 A.D., and ended, then, at Passover, 30 A.D. This evidence proves that Jesus’ ministry was THREE YEARS IN LENGTH! Interestingly, “three” is God’s number of “decision,” “witness,” the number of “finality.”

The Mysterious Events of 30 A.D.

It is significant that there were exactly *forty years* from the death of Christ in A.D. 30 till the conquest and overthrow of Jerusalem by the Romans under Titus and Vespasian in 70 A.D.! “Forty” is God’s perfect number denoting trials and trouble and tribulation. Jesus was tried and tested of the devil while fasting 40 days (Matt.4:1-2; Luke 4:1-2). Israel wandered in the wilderness for *forty years* (Num.14:34). And there were 40 years from the death of Christ till the fall of Jerusalem, which He Himself prophesied (Matt.23:36-38; Luke 23:28-31).

Therefore, when all the evidence is pieced together carefully, we come up with the following picture. Notice!

Born -- 4 B.C.

Ministry -- began A.D. 27, when 30 years old

Ministry lasted 3 years
 Crucified -- 30 A.D.
 Destruction of Temple -- A.D. 70, 40 years later

The year 30 A.D. was truly a significant year. It was the year the Son of God died, paying the price for our sins! Is there evidence, outside of the Bible, that indeed A.D. 30 was the year the Christ, the Son of the Most High God, literally DIED and was PUT TO DEATH by wicked, conspiring men?

The astounding answer is, yes indeed -- there is shocking, incredible evidence that 30 A.D. was a year of astounding infamy and miraculous occurrences! According to Jewish history, preserved in the Talmud, there were *four miraculous signs* which all occurred in 30 A.D. These signs did not occur in 31 A.D., or in 33 A.D., or 29 A.D. or any other year. These signs also point to something very unusual occurring in A.D. 30 which earned the wrath and anger of God upon the Jewish nation of that time.

In the gospel accounts dealing with the crucifixion of Jesus Christ, we find that some weird, bizarre, and strange events occurred, connected with the event of the crucifixion.

In the book of Matthew we read: “Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land unto the ninth hour. . . . Jesus, when he had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the spirit. And, behold, *the veil of the temple was torn in two from the top to the bottom*; and the *earth did quake*, and the rocks were split; and the graves were opened, and many bodies of the saints that slept were raised, and came out of the graves after his resurrection, and into the holy city, and appeared unto many. Now, when the centurion, and they that were with him watching Jesus, saw the earthquake, and those things that were done, they feared greatly, saying, Truly this was the Son of God” (Matthew 27:45-54).

Alfred Edersheim describes the events which occurred when Christ died on the cross. Writes Edersheim in *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*,

“And now a shudder ran through Nature, as its Sun had set. We dare not do more than follow the rapid outlines of the Evangelistic narrative. As the first token, it records the rending of the Temple-Veil in two from the top downward to the bottom; as the second, the quaking of the earth, the rending of the rocks and the opening of the graves. . . *while the rending of the Veil is recorded first, as being the most significant token to Israel, it may have been connected with the earthquake, although this alone might scarcely account for the tearing of so heavy a Veil from the top to the bottom.* Even the latter circumstance has its significance. That some great catastrophe, betokening the impending destruction of the Temple, had occurred in the Sanctuary about this very time, is confirmed by not less than *four mutually independent testimonies: those of Tacitus, of Josephus, of the Talmud, and of earliest Christian tradition.* The most important of these are, of course, the Talmud and Josephus. The latter speaks of the mysterious extinction of the middle and chief light in the Golden Candlestick, forty years before the destruction of the Temple; and both he and the Talmud refer to a supernatural opening by themselves of the great Temple-gates that had been previously

closed, which was regarded as a portent of the coming destruction of the Temple” (p.610).

The Temple was destroyed by Titus in 70 A.D. Forty years before that date would be 30 A.D. -- the year of the crucifixion!

In early writings of the church fathers, Jerome in a letter to Hedibia relates that the huge lintel of the Temple was broken and splintered and fell. He connects this with the rending of the Veil. Says Edersheim, “it would seem an obvious inference to connect again this breaking of the lintel with an earthquake” (p.610, *op. cit.*). The lintel was an enormous stone, being at least 30 feet long and weighing some 30 tons!

The Temple Veils were 60 feet long, 30 feet wide, and the thickness of the palm of a man's hand, wrought in 72 squares. They were so heavy that we are told 300 priests were needed to manipulate each one.

The Veil being rent from top to bottom was such a terrible portent because it indicated that God's Own Hand had torn it in two, His Presence thus deserting and leaving that Holy Place.

Sanhedrin Judged and Banished

This same year, 30 A.D., the Sanhedrin had to abandon the Chamber of Hewn Stones, near the Holy Place in the Temple, which was its official seat. This was about 40 yards southeast of the entrance to the Holy Place. In 30 A.D. the Sanhedrin had to move to another location, called “The Trading Place,” farther to the east and a much less significant spot. To be forced to move from a beautiful, gorgeous, awesome location in the Temple to a spot much less beautiful, esteemed, and reverential, must have seemed a terrible “put down.” Says the Talmud:

“Forty years before the destruction of the Temple, the Sanhedrin was BANISHED (from the Chamber of Hewn Stone) and sat in the trading-station (on the Temple Mount)” (Shabbat 15a).

Forty years before the destruction of the Temple in 70 A.D. is 30 A.D. -- the very year of the crucifixion of the Messiah! Why was the Sanhedrin moved in the very year Jesus was crucified? Could it have been forced to do so because of damage caused by the earthquake associated with the crucifixion of Jesus? Was it direct punishment for their complicity in handing Jesus over to the Romans and condemning Him to death? Was this evidence of God's official displeasure with their actions?

Prior to the War with Rome, Josephus tells us, the Sanhedrin had to move once again. This time they moved to an area outside the Temple complex, to an ordinary part of Jerusalem -- actually a place west of the Temple near a building called the Xystus (see Josephus' *Wars of the Jews*, V,4, 2). What a demotion and humbling!

The smug, self-righteous members of the Sanhedrin of that time would not have made such a humiliating move -- voluntarily! It had to be forced upon them by circumstance. There is no record of the Roman government compelling such a move -- they stayed out of Jewish

religious life. Nor would Herod the king have been responsible -- to offend the entire Sanhedrin would have been a disastrous political mistake. Only a “natural cause” or “Supernatural” cause which men could not remedy would cause such a humiliating and abhorrent move on the part of the Sanhedrin members.

Was the Sanhedrin rebuked by God in 30 A.D., and forced to relocate to a much lesser station and position than that which they had previously held at the Temple itself? Was this due to the unprecedented kangaroo trial and blasphemous judgment they had perpetrated upon Yeshua the Son of God?

Writes Rabbi Leibel Reznick of this traumatic event, in *The Holy Temple Revisited*:

“Although this was the largest structure on top of the entire Temple Mount, the purpose and function of the Basilica is not recorded anywhere. The TALMUD tells us that when the Sanhedrin (Supreme Court) CEASED TO JUDGE CAPITAL OFFENSES, they MOVED from the Supreme Court chambers to the ‘shopping mall’ (Rosh HaShana 31a). This *shopping mall* was located on the Temple Mount (Rashi) . . . Perhaps this shopping mall was located within the Royal Basilica. Because this area was built on Herod's extension, *it did not have the sanctity of the Temple itself*, and commerce would have been permitted” (Jason Aronson, Inc., Northvale, New Jersey, 1993, p.69).

The year the Sanhedrin was moved, 30 A.D., the year Christ was crucified, was also the year they CEASED to judge capital offenses! To humble them, they were reduced to meeting at a “shopping mall” where regular commerce and business of trade was conducted. Their authority was no more important, now, than mere buying and selling merchandise. Surely this constituted a withering and scathing rebuke from God Himself who was displeased with their treatment of His own Son!

Writes Craig Blomberg of this event:

“. . . the claim that the Romans retained the sole right of capital punishment (John 18:31) has often been termed a Johanine error, especially in view of the counter-example in the stoning of Stephen (Acts 7:58). But this right is strikingly confirmed by a passage in the *Talmud*, which says that capital punishment had been taken from the Jews **FORTY YEARS** before the destruction of the temple in A.D. 70 (Sanh.1:1, 7:2). Stephen's stoning reads more like mob action which defied technical legalities” (*The Historical Reliability of the Gospels*, by Craig Blomberg, Inter-Varsity Press, 1987, p.179).

It was the *very year of the crucifixion* that the Jews were denied the right to perform capital punishment by the Romans. It was this *very year* when the Sanhedrin was forcibly removed from the Temple Mount!

Talmudic Evidence of Christ and A.D. 30

In the centuries following the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem, the Jewish people began writing two versions of Jewish thought, religious history and commentary. One was

written in Palestine and became known as the Jerusalem Talmud. The other was written in Babylon and was known as the Babylonian Talmud.

We read in the Jerusalem Talmud:

“Forty years before the destruction of the Temple [i.e., 30 A.D.] the western light went out, the crimson thread remained crimson, and the lot for the Lord always came up in the left hand. They would close the gates of the Temple by night and get up in the morning and find them wide open” (Jacob Neusner, *The Yerushalmi*, p.156-157).

A similar passage in the Babylonian Talmud states:

“Our rabbis taught: During the *last forty years* before the destruction of the Temple the lot [‘For the Lord’] did not come up in the right hand; nor did the crimson-coloured strap become white; nor did the western most light shine; and the doors of the Hekel [Temple] would open by themselves” (Soncino version, *Yoma* 39b).

What is this talking about? Since both Talmuds recount the same information, this indicates the knowledge of these events was accepted by the widespread Jewish community.

The Miracle of the “Lot”

The first of these miracles, the “lot” which was cast on the Day of Atonement to determine which of two goats would be “for the Lord” and which goat would be the “Azazel” or “scapegoat,” has fascinating significance. During the two hundred years before 30 A.D., when the High Priest picked one of the stones, the random selection was governed by the laws of chance, and each year he would select a black stone as often as a white stone. But for forty years in a row, beginning in 30 A.D., the High Priest picked the *black stone!* The “odds” against this happening are astronomical (2 to the 40th power). In other words, the chances of this occurring are 1 in 1,099,511,627,776 -- or over *one trillion* to one! Your chances would be much better at winning the “Lottery”!

The lot for Azazel -- the black stone -- contrary to all the laws of chance, came up 40 times in a row from 30 to 70 A.D.! The first year it turned up black was in 30 A.D., and thus it continued for 39 more years, through 69 A.D. – 40 years in a row, till 70 A.D., when the Romans burned the Temple on the 9th of Av, the fifth month of the year. There was no celebration of Yom Kippur that year, on Tishri 10, as the Temple was already destroyed.

This phenomenon of the black stone being selected 40 years in a row – a number signifying trial, test, adversity -- was considered a dire event. This foreboded supernatural evil for the entire Jewish community. The Azazel goat represented Satan the devil, the cause of all sin and evil (Ezek.28; John 8:44)! To have that goat’s stone or lot being selected forty years in a row was indeed a very serious omen of judgment! (See my articles, “Who is Azazel?” and “New Insight on the Day of Atonement”, for deeper insight and understanding of the mysterious rituals celebrated on Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement.)

The Miracle of the Red Strip

The second miracle was of the crimson strip or cloth tied to the Azazel goat, which up until 30 A.D. had always turned white, remaining crimson. This undoubtedly caused much stir and consternation among the Jews. From that day forward, it showed the sins of the people which had been confessed over the Azazel goat, represented by the red color of blood, were *still crimson* -- that is, they had not been pardoned and “made white.” As God told Israel through Isaiah the prophet, “Come, let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as *scarlet [crimson]*, they shall be *white as snow*; though they be *red like crimson*, they shall be as [white] wool” (Isaiah 1:18).

Beginning in 30 A.D., the red strip placed on the Azazel goat, symbolizing the sins of the people, did not turn white, for *forty years, till the destruction of the Temple itself!* The clear indication is that the whole community was guilty of some great sin in 30 A.D., for which they were *not pardoned*, and their collective guilt remained for every year till 70 A.D. when they were sent into exile, never to return until this present “end of the age.”

Concerning the crimson strip, for the previous two hundred years, since the time of Simon the Righteous, this ceremony, though not mentioned in the Scriptures, was associated with the day of Atonement. During the 40 years he was High Priest, a crimson thread which he had associated with his person always turned white when he entered the Holy of Holies. The people noticed this. Also, it was noticed that “the lot of the LORD” -- the white lot -- came up for 40 straight years during his priesthood. The Jews began to believe that these signs showed God's pleasure or ill favour. They noticed that the “lot” picked by the priests after Simon would sometimes be black, and sometimes white, and that the crimson thread would sometimes turn white, and sometimes not. The Jews came to believe that if the crimson thread turned white, that God approved of the Day of Atonement rituals and that Israel could be assured that God forgave their sins. But after 30 A.D., the crimson thread *never turned white again -- for 40 years it always came up BLACK* -- till the destruction of the Temple and the cessation of all Temple rituals!

What did the Jewish nation do in 30 A.D. to merit such guilt? On Passover, 30 A.D., Jesus Christ was crucified on the 14th of Nisan, the day of the Passover sacrifice. A completely innocent man -- the Messiah -- the Son of God -- the Saviour and Redeemer of the world -- was put to an ignominious death by the priests, Sadducees, and Pharisees -- though no fault was found in Him! All these plagues and punishments began in A.D. 30. The whole story ties together perfectly!

The Miracle of the Temple Doors

The next miracle, which the Jewish authorities acknowledged, was that the Temple doors swung open every night of their own accord for forty years, beginning in 30 A.D. The leading Jewish authority of that time, Yohanan ben Zakkai, declared that this was a sign of impending doom, that the Temple itself would be destroyed. Says the Jerusalem Talmud:

“Said Rabban Yohanan ben Zakkai to the Temple, ‘O Temple, why do you frighten us? We know that you will end up destroyed. For it has been said,

“Open your doors, O Lebanon, that the fire may devour your cedars” (Zechariah 11:1) (Sota 6:3).”

Yohanan ben Zakkai was the leader of the Jewish community during the time following the destruction of the Temple in 70 A.D., when the Jewish government was transferred to Jamnia, some thirty miles west of Jerusalem.

The Miracle of the Temple Menorah

The fourth miracle was that the most important lamp of the seven candle-stick Menorah in the Temple went out, and would not shine. *Every night for 40 years -- or over 12,500 nights in a row -- the main lamp of the Temple lamp stand went out of its own accord -- no matter what attempts and precautions the priests took to safeguard against this event!*

Again, the odds against this happening are astronomical. Something supernatural was going on. By removing the light of the Menorah, God showed the Jewish leaders that He had removed His Presence in a special way after the crucifixion of His only begotten Son, Yeshua the Messiah!

It should be clear to any reasonable mind that there is no *natural* way to explain all these four signs connected with the year 30 A.D. God Almighty intervened, to show the Jewish nation His utmost displeasure with their actions and particularly with what they had done to His Son at Passover during that very year!

If Christ had been crucified in 31 A.D., as some churches believe, or 33 A.D., as others surmise, then these events in 30 A.D. would have no significance – they would be “mere coincidence.” But is that reasonable? These “signs” are strong verification and evidence that something “enormous” happened in 30 A.D. which was very displeasing to God. What else could it be, when all the data is compiled, than the sacrifice and crucifixion of Yeshua the Messiah!!

Astronomy and the Jewish Calendar

All the evidence points to Christ’s crucifixion as being in A.D. 30. All the Biblical evidence, and secular evidence from history, pinpoint the beginning of His ministry, the length of His ministry, the day of the week of His death, and the year of His death. But the nagging question remains: On what day of the week was He crucified? Can we discover the truth about this matter?

Interestingly, in this day of computers, moon shots, and fly-bys of the moons of Jupiter, Saturn, and landing spacecraft on the planet Mars, mankind has seen scientific and astronomical knowledge explode exponentially. As the prophet Daniel was told of the last days, or end times, “knowledge shall be increased” (Dan.12:4).

The whole question can be settled, once and for all, by the knowledge of astronomy and the Jewish calendar. Rabbis admit that in the time of the second Temple, the Jewish calendar was regulated by the moon. That is, each month began when a “new moon” crescent was sighted

by appropriate observers, and then certified by the Sanhedrin (the Supreme Court). Writes Arthur Spier in his book *The Comprehensive Jewish Calendar*:

“In the early times of our history the solution was found by the following practical procedure: *The beginnings of months were determined by direct observation of the new moon.* Then those beginnings of the months (Rosh Hodesh) were sanctified and announced by the Sanhedrin, the Supreme Court in Jerusalem, after witnesses had testified that they had seen the new crescent and after their testimony had been thoroughly examined, confirmed by calculation, and duly accepted” (p.1).

Astronomical tables and calculations today can give us the time and occurrence of every “new moon” as it would have been seen from Jerusalem (or other major cities) backwards in time for centuries and millennia.

Witness #1

The Swift Guide to the Galaxy, a software program for computers, under “Lunar Calendar,” provides such a program. For the first month of Nisan or Abib, 30 A.D., it gives a calendar showing all the moon’s phases, as seen from Jerusalem, for every day of the month.

In A.D. 30, for the month of March, the molad or conjunction of the New Moon occurred on Wednesday, March 22. The crescent New Moon was seen in the evening of Thursday, March 23, making Abib 1 Friday, March 24. Therefore, in A.D. 30, the 15th day of Abib – the First Day of Unleavened Bread – was *Friday, April 7th!*

This means that in 30 A.D. the day of the Passover sacrifice, Abib 14, was NOT ON WEDNESDAY, BUT RATHER ON THURSDAY, April 6th!! In other words, the date of the crucifixion was THURSDAY, APRIL 6TH, 30 A.D.!

Witness #2

Corroborating this witness, Dr. Monzur Ahmed, author of the “mooncalc” software program, was contacted by Nick Wood in England. Dr. Ahmed sent him the dates and times of all the lunar conjunctions for the years 29, 30, and 31 A.D. These figures agreed with his own software “COSMI Guide to the Galaxy,” which show the positions of all the heavenly bodies, including the Sun and Moon, for any given day or hour, all the way back to way before 1 BC. As he says in an e-mail, “I am sure that the Solar System has been stable since the Exodus and Joshua’s ‘Long Day’, so there is no need to really dispute these figures.”

Witness #3

There is a website devoted to the Phases of the Moon, called *Obliquity*. You can go on their website and obtain the New Moon conjunction data – time and date for the New Moons for the year 30 A.D., especially March (which New Moon would correspond with the Hebrew month Nisan or Abib). Just go to <http://www.obliquity.com/cgi-bin/lunar.cgi?Year=30&Month=3>. You will find that the conjunction of the Nisan New Moon was on March 22, at 17:29 GMT. This would have been 19:29 Jerusalem time (the Jerusalem time zone is two hours before GMT). 19:29 would have been 7:29 PM, Wednesday evening. Since Hebrew days begin at sunset, this

would have been the beginning of the next day by Hebrew reckoning. Thus the first sighting of the new crescent would have most likely been Thursday evening, around sunset, about 22 ½ hours later. Thus would mean that Friday, March 24th (beginning Thursday evening) would have been the first day of the New Moon/Month of Nisan/Abib. This means the 14th day of the month – the day the Passover was killed – would have been Thursday, April 6th, and Friday, April 7th was the annual holy day (First Day of Unleavened Bread).

Witness #4

Roger Rusk, Professor of Physics at the University of Tennessee, has also provided astronomical evidence that in A.D. 30 the New Moon crescent for the month of Nisan would make Nisan 14 occur on a Thursday. So reported *Christianity Today*, a well-known Christian magazine (March 24, 1974).

Witness #5

Jack Finegan in *Handbook of Biblical Chronology* says absolute astronomical evidence proves the crucifixion date could not have been on a Wednesday for the years A.D. 29 to A.D. 33. He points out April 25 could NOT have been a possible date in 31 A.D. because it would involve an extra lunar month, and the barley would have been ready to begin harvesting much sooner, by March 27th. (If the previous winter had been long and cold, the necessary barley sheaves could have also been obtained from the region of Jericho. Passover (Nisan 14) on March 27 would not have fallen on a Wednesday, not on a Tuesday.

Witness #6

A major article appeared in the journal *Bibliotheca Sacra*, vol.27, back in 1870, entitled “The Crucifixion on Thursday – Not Friday,” by J. K. Aldrich (p.401-429). Then Professor Wescott of Great Britain maintained Thursday was the proper day, in *An Introduction to the Study of the Gospels* (Cambridge, 1881).

Witness #7

To check these things out for myself, I recently purchased a book entitled *Astronomical Tables of the Sun, Moon and Planets* by astronomer Jean Meeus (second edition, published by Willmann-Bell, Inc., PO Box 35025, Richmond, Virginia 23235). Part four deals with the “Phases of the Moon.” This remarkable work provides tables by which readers can compute the phases of the moon, including the New Moons (molads) with an accuracy within 10 minutes or less, for any year from 1500 B.C. to 2999 A.D. (The calculations of course may not work for years prior to the Exodus or Noah’s Flood, if the earth’s orbit or the moon’s orbit were changed during those periods of upheaval). However, the tables work just fine for the year 30 A.D., when the Messiah was crucified!

Using these tables, and doing a little math, it turns out that this witness concurs completely with the previous witnesses! My calculations, using the tables in this book, show that the conjunction of the New Moon for March, 30 A.D., was on the 22nd day of the month

(Wednesday), at 17:32 GMT– that is, 5:32 PM, Wednesday evening! This would have been about 7:32 Jerusalem time. Since the conjunction occurred Wednesday evening, the New Moon crescent for the month just beginning – Abib – could not possibly have been seen before *Thursday* evening. You cannot see the crescent the same evening the conjunction occurs! Normally it is visible about one day or 24 hours later – which fits the picture perfectly.

This information means that Abib 1 was a Friday that week, and Abib 14 – the day of the crucifixion – had to be on a Thursday, not a Wednesday! There is no disputing these facts – and the Jews plainly state that in those days the months were determined by the sighting of the New Moon crescent by confirmed, authorized witnesses who were posted to watch for it.

Our conclusion, then, has to be that the Wednesday crucifixion theory is wrong, disproved by this indisputable astronomical evidence! The Friday crucifixion theory also fails to conform to all the Biblical evidence. But the Thursday crucifixion fits perfectly with both Biblical evidence and astronomical evidence!

Notice the following calendar for 30 A.D.:

March 19, Sunday	March 20, Monday	March 21, Tuesday	March 22, Wednesday MOLAD	March 23, Thursday, Crescent	March 24, Friday, Abib 1	March 25, Sabbath, Abib 2
March 26, Sunday, Abib 3	March 27, Monday, Abib 4	March 28, Tuesday, Abib 5	March 29, Wednesday Abib 6	March 30, Thursday, Abib 7	March 31, Friday, Abib 8	April 1, Sabbath, Abib 9
April 2, Sunday, Abib 10 <i>Jesus' entry Jerusalem</i>	April 3, Monday, Abib 11 <i>Jesus in Temple</i>	April 4, Tuesday, Abib 12 <i>Lord's Supper</i>	April 5, Wednesday Abib 13 <i>Jesus' trial by Pilate</i>	April 6, Thursday, Abib 14 <i>Passover, Crucifixion</i>	April 7, Friday, Abib 15 <i>Holy Day 1st Day UB</i>	April 8, Sabbath, Abib 16 <i>Counting of Omer begins</i>

What about 31 A.D.?

What about 31 A.D.? How does the New Moon calculated by astronomical moon tables work out for 31 A.D., the year some churches claim the crucifixion occurred? The Jews tell us the new year begins with the month beginning nearest the spring equinox, as a general rule. The spring equinox occurs March 21-22. In 31 A.D. the New Moon molad occurred on March 11, Sunday night, 22nd hr. 34 minutes, GMT – that is, at 10:34 PM. The time in Jerusalem would have been March 12, 34 minutes past midnight (Jerusalem time is 2 hours earlier). This would put the sighting of the crescent new moon two days later, in the evening of Tuesday. So the first day of Abib would have been Wednesday, March 14. This would put Abib 14, when the Passover was slaughtered, on a TUESDAY, not a Wednesday, as some believe. The High Holy Day would have been on a Wednesday that week. Thus the suggested date for the Passover and death of Christ, in 31 A.D., simply will not work out with the Biblical timetable. If the Messiah was killed on Tuesday, March 27, the resurrection three days later would have been on a Thursday night or a Friday -- certainly not possible at all.

Josephus, the Jewish historian of the first century, tells us that Passover had to occur in the sign of Aries, the Lamb, which begins March 21-22 and ends April 21-22. Says Josephus, “In the month of Xanthicus, which is by us called Nisan, and is the beginning of our year, on the fourteenth day of the lunar month, *when the sun is in Aries*, (for in this month it was that we were delivered from bondage under the Egyptians), the law ordained that we should every year slay that sacrifice . . . which was called the Passover” (*Antiquities*, bk.3, chapter 10, part 5). A later date for the month of Abib in 31 A.D. would put the Passover outside the sign of Aries – this also is an untenable idea. Aries is the sign of the “Lamb.” Josephus points out that Passover always occurred in the sign of Aries, not later.

Why bring up this fact? Simply this: God gave two major keys to ascertaining the beginning of each year. First, God created the sun, moon, and stars, and declared: “Let them be for signs and seasons, and for days and years” (Gen.1:14). The spring equinox, the nearest annual heavenly sign to Passover, is one of the keys to beginning the sacred year. The other key is the barley harvest near the Temple in Jerusalem. The barley had to be “abib,” or nearly ripe, by the beginning of the first month of the year, named “Abib,” for the state of the barley. This was necessary so that an “omer” of barley could be harvested by Passover in order to perform the waving of the omer ritual on Abib 16, the day after the first annual holy day of Unleavened Bread.

Says Arthur Spier in *The Comprehensive Hebrew Calendar*:

“A special committee of the Sanhedrin, with its president as chairman, had the mandate to regulate and balance the solar with the lunar years. This so-called Calendar Council (*Sol Haibbur*) calculated the beginnings of the seasons (*Tekufoth*) on the basis of astronomical figures which had been handed down as a tradition of old. Whenever, after two or three years, the annual excess of 11 days had accumulated to approximately 30 days, a thirteenth month Adar II was inserted before Nisan in order to assure that Nisan and Passover would occur in Spring and not retrogress toward winter. However, the astronomical calculation was not the only basis to intercalate a thirteenth month. The delay of the actual arrival of spring was another decisive factor. The Talmudic sources report that the Council intercalated a year *when the barley in the fields had not yet ripened*, when the fruit of the trees had not grown properly, when the winter rains had not stopped, when the roads for Passover pilgrims had not dried up, and when the young pigeons had not become fledged” (p.1).

These procedures keep the Passover, when the lambs were sacrificed, as a type of the “Lamb of God,” in the proper season. The zodiac sign of “Aries” is the sign of the “LAMB” of God, showing when He would give His life for the sins of the world!

This means 31 A.D., would not have been the year of the crucifixion. That year, Passover would have been on a Tuesday. If we assumed an intercalary year that year, then that would have pushed “Passover” into the sign of Taurus, not Aries!

Of course, a 31 A.D. Passover would make no sense anyway, because it would not coincide with all the miraculous events which occurred in 30 A.D. Nothing of consequence occurred in 31 A.D., concerning the Temple doors opening, the judgment on the Sanhedrin, the

rituals of the Day of Atonement, or the Menorah central light going out.

These miracles all began in 30 A.D.! Also, it is precisely 40 years from 30 A.D. to 70 A.D. when the Temple was destroyed, and “40” is a symbol of divine trial, test and judgment – but “39” years (from 31-70 A.D.) has no meaning whatsoever.

A Summary of the FACTS

Now notice how this date of the crucifixion being on a Thursday, instead of a Wednesday or Friday, in 30 A.D., fits in with all of our cumulative evidence:

FACT #1:

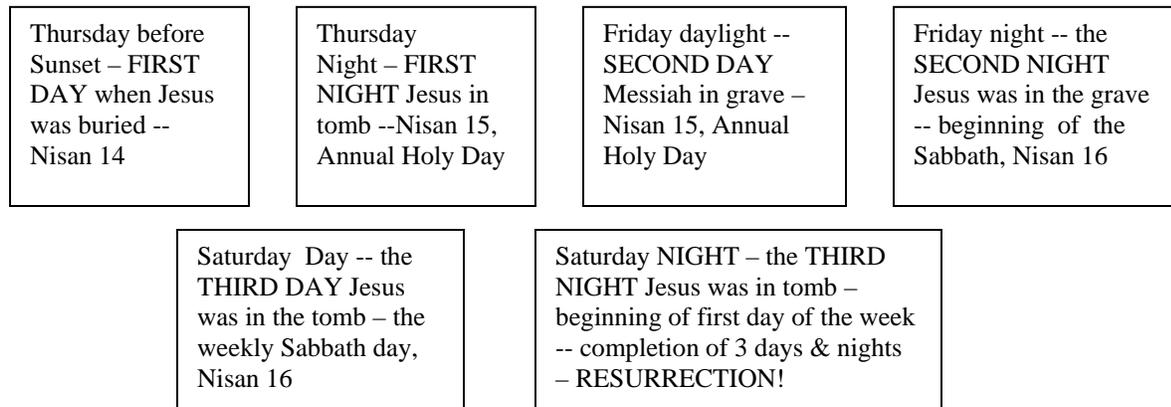
If we count “3 days” from Thursday, when Yeshua was crucified, we come to Sunday, April 9th – exactly the length of time since the crucifixion implied by the two disciples on the way to Emmaus, as they spoke to Christ (Luke 24:21). That Sunday would have been FOUR days from a Wednesday crucifixion date!

FACT #2:

If we count “3 days and 3 nights” from Thursday evening, when Yeshua was buried by Joseph of Arimathea, we come out as follows:

Thursday daylight portion	--	one partial day
Thursday night	--	one night
Friday daylight portion	--	one day
Friday night	--	one night
Sabbath	--	one day
Sabbath night	--	one almost whole night

Results: *3 days and 3 nights*



This result fits in perfectly with Jesus’ statement in Matthew’s gospel that He would be “three days and three nights” in the heart of the earth (the grave).

Clearly, the expression “three days and three nights” does not have to mean a full 72 hours. There is no evidence to back up such a claim. Rather, just as the Hebrew idiom “three days” can mean parts of three days (all in a row, of course), even so logic impels us to the conclusion that “three days and three nights” can also include parts of three days and three nights (consecutive, of course) – that is, one partial day, two full days, two full nights, and one partial night – thus adding up to “three days and three nights.” As illustrated above, we begin with a partial day, have full days and nights in-between, and conclude with a partial night!

Why do some people get ‘hung up’ on 72 hours? Probably because this was asserted so vehemently by Herbert W. Armstrong of the original Worldwide Church of God, in his old booklet in which he attempted to prove that “The Resurrection Was Not on Sunday!” However, this NEW EVIDENCE disproves his assumptions and dogmatic assertions, once and for all!

FACT #3:

This new calendar information, based on astronomical calculations of the New Moon conjunction and the crescent sighting of the New Moon, for Abib, 30 A.D., demonstrates that the crucifixion must have occurred on a Thursday, which would have been Nisan 14 that year. Three days and nights later shows that the time of the resurrection was early Sunday morning, before sunrise – not just before sunset, on the weekly Sabbath. This means *there are no missing 12 hours to be accounted for between the resurrection and the coming of the women to the tomb!*

FACT #4:

A Thursday crucifixion also fits in perfectly with the concept of the “eighth day” – Sunday being the time of “renewal,” “revival,” “a new beginning,” and “resurrection.”

FACT #5:

A Thursday crucifixion also fits perfectly for the year A.D. 30 – the year Biblical evidence proves was the year of the crucifixion. The date prophesied in Daniel for the beginning of Christ’s ministry was 27 A.D., that His ministry lasted “three years,” and the fact that His birth was in 4 B.C., and He was “about 30” when His ministry began, plus the fact that the building of the Temple was “46 years” in building in 27 A.D., the year His ministry began – all of these things add up to the conclusion that Yeshua died on the stake, in 30 A.D.

FACT #6:

A Thursday crucifixion in 30 A.D. also fits the fact that 30 A.D. was the year four amazing miracles occurred, connected with the Temple – the Temple door swinging open of its own accord, the lots cast on the Day of Atonement beginning to turn up with the black lot every year for 40 years, the red ribbon placed on the Azazel goat never turning white for 40 years, beginning in 30 A.D., the main light of the Menorah refusing to stay lit. This was also the year the Sanhedrin could no longer enforce the death penalty, with the Sanhedrin being driven out of the prestigious Temple location it had hitherto enjoyed.

FACT #7:

Christ being crucified on Thursday, Abib 14, also ties in perfectly with all the events which occurred during Jesus' last week – from His entrance into Jerusalem on Abib 10, which would have been on a Sunday (one week before the resurrection), to the events surrounding His final trial, and crucifixion

Jesus' Last Week

How does this new scenario affect Jesus' "Last Week"? The pattern for Jesus' last week emerges as follows:

Friday, Abib 8 – six days before Passover -- Jesus has supper with Lazarus and his family (John 12:1-11).

Sabbath, Abib 9 – five days before Passover – Jesus briefly enters Jerusalem, on back of colt only, a type of His First Coming (Mark 11:1-11). The hour was late (v.11), and He returned to Bethany.

Sunday, Abib 10 – Jesus enters Jerusalem again, on the back of a donkey *and* a colt (Matthew 21:1-5). The whole city is moved at His coming. He enters the Temple and drives out the money-changers (Matt.21:13), and healed the lame and the blind (verse 14). This entry was a type of His Second Coming, in power! He returns to Bethany and lodges there (v.17).

Monday, Abib 11 – This morning He curses the fig tree which withers away immediately (Matthew 21:18-20), teaching the disciples a lesson in faith and productivity. He teaches at the Temple, answers arguments of the religious leaders, and castigates the Pharisees for misleading the people (Matthew, chapters 21-23). He departs from the Temple, and teaches His disciples about His Second Coming at the Mount of Olives (Matt.24:1-3, etc.). He returns to Bethany, to the house of Simon the leper, where a woman pours costly fragrant oil over His head (Matt.26:6-13). This was the evening (beginning) of Abib 12. Jesus says, "After two days is the Passover" (v.2). The "two days" would be Tuesday and Wednesday – *then Passover comes – Thursday!*

Tuesday, Abib 12 – Jesus sends His disciples to "prepare" for the upcoming Passover festivities (Matt.26:17-19). They go into the city, and make the needed preparations (v.19). That evening He has a final supper with them (vs.20-29). Afterwards, they go out to the Mount of Olives (v.30). He goes to a garden named Gethsemane, and there prays (vs.36-44). About midnight, Judas Iscariot comes with a cohort of soldiers, who arrest Jesus, and take Him into custody (Matt.26:45-56). He is first led away to the house of Annas, a high-ranking priest and former high priest (John 18:13). He is then taken to the home of Caiaphas, the current high priest (John 18:24) where He is further interrogated (Matt.26:57-67).

Wednesday, Abib 13 – At daybreak, or "early morning" He is tried before the entire Sanhedrin (Mark 15:1; Luke 22:66; Matt.27:1). After the entire Sanhedrin met, and condemned Him to death, they led Him away to Pontius Pilate (Matt.27:2; Mark 15:1; Luke 23:1-5). Pilate,

after hearing their accusation, discovered He was from Galilee, so he sent Him to king Herod for that was his jurisdiction (Luke 23:5-7). This was still morning. The Sanhedrin met first, probably from soon after daybreak till about 8 o'clock or so; Pilate met with the Jews and held court, ascertaining the facts of the case, probably about 8-9 AM, and then sent Him over to Herod. Herod had heard many things about Jesus and has wanted to see Him, but was disappointed when He performed no miracles for him (Luke 23:8-11). After his interrogation, he sent Jesus back to Pilate. These activities must have taken some time, from about 10-11 AM. Jesus was taken back before Pilate to resume His hearing and court case (Luke 23:12-24). What time was this? John tells us it was "about the SIXTH hour" (John 19:14). In Jewish reckoning, which John always uses, the SIXTH hour would have been TWELVE O'CLOCK, that is, HIGH NOON! Pilate sentenced Jesus to death, had Him beaten, scourged, and put in prison, where He spent the remainder of the day and night.

Thursday, Abib 14 – Early in the morning, Yeshua was taken out of prison, escorted to the Mount of Olives, and there crucified at 9:00 AM – "the third hour" (Mark 15:25). He languished on the cross for six hours, and expired at 3:00 PM in the afternoon – "the ninth hour" (Mark 15:33-34). Joseph of Arimathea obtained permission from Pilate to bury the body of Jesus, which he did before sunset, in his own new tomb (Mark 15:43-46; Matt.27:57-61). Thus Jesus was buried before sunset, before the onset of the high holy day, the First Day of Unleavened Bread.

Everything fits together perfectly, like the pieces of a masterful jigsaw puzzle!

All Things Considered

When we put all these facts together, all the pieces of the puzzle fit perfectly. What a thrilling new discovery! When E. W. Bullinger wrote his commentary, the science of astronomy was not so far advanced that the precise date of the crucifixion could be established. Based on the evidence at hand, scholars and Bible students either concluded Jesus was crucified on a Wednesday, or on a Friday. For many years the debate has raged, with no agreement in sight.

Now we have indisputable, incontestable EVIDENCE FROM ASTRONOMY, enabling us to calculate backwards in time to determine the precise time of the lunar monthly conjunction – the "molad" of the New Moon – which enables us to determine when the first visible crescent of the New Moon would have been visible from Jerusalem. Thus we can calculate the very day when the month of Nisan/Abib began, in 30 A.D., the year of the crucifixion, and the evidence shows it began on a FRIDAY! This puts the 14th of Nisan/Abib exactly 14 days or two weeks later, on a THURSDAY!

There is no forcing the issues, NO resorting to strained arguments, no STRETCHING FACTS or manipulating data. The evidence is easily proven, incontrovertible, plain and simple. What are we going to do with this new knowledge?

Will we rejoice over it, and accept it with cheerful alacrity and joyful delight? Or will we grump, groan, and moan, and refuse to face the unassailable facts before our very faces?

As Sherlock Holmes would say, when all the evidence is finally in – “Elementary, my dear Watson!” It is all so plain and simple, even a small child could understand it!

What do these wonderful new revelations mean for us?

No doubt many people will “balk” at this new truth. Some will refuse to consider the fact that they have been misled and deceived – and have been *wrong* – all these years. It is very difficult for people, convinced of an error, to admit that error, even when it is proven and demonstrated. The human heart is “deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked” (Jer.17:9). The carnal, natural mind of man is resentful and hostile toward the things of God (Rom.8:7). No doubt some of the end-time churches of God, and their ministers, will deny this new revelation – they will hold their hands over their eyes, or ears, and run away in horror. This will cause a “ruckus” – and stir up a firestorm – of denial, criticism, and personal attacks.

This new truth will pose a real “TEST” for many of God’s people. Even as the discovery that Christmas is pagan, Easter is pagan, God commands we observe Sabbath, not Sunday, even as Passover should be eaten in the evening after Nisan 14, that Pentecost should be observed on Sivan 6 or 50 days after Passover – so this new truth will cause consternation, anger, and hostility on the part of some ministers and some people.

Are we ready for the firestorm? Are we ready to remain solid, firm, and bold to proclaim God’s Truth? Will we stand tall, uncowed, and unafraid of criticism and the barbs and torments of those who simply do not or will not understand?

God says: “He who is often rebuked and hardens his neck, will suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy” (Prov.29:1, NKJV). God also thunders: “Whoever loves instruction loves knowledge, but he who hates correction is stupid” (Prov.12:1).

May God help us all to rejoice in His truth, and to embrace it with joy!