

# Three Days and Three Nights

## *Did Christ Die On a Friday and Rise On a Sunday?*

*Most of Christendom traditionally believes that Jesus was crucified on Friday afternoon, “placed in the tomb before sundown Friday night, rested in the tomb on the Sabbath (Saturday) and was resurrected on Sunday morning before dawn. Shockingly, either that tradition is false, or you have no Savior!*

### Three Days and Three Nights

Winston Churchill once said, “People often stumble over the Truth, but most pick themselves up and hurry on as if nothing had happened.” How true!

People are creatures of habit. Once set in a belief or habit—once our belief system is comfortably in place—we do not want to change. In fact, by nature, we tend to fight and argue to defend our previously held beliefs even when confronted with facts to the contrary.

Have you ever wondered why you believe the things you believe and do the things you do? Perhaps you have never stopped to ask yourself that question. Because of the “sheep instinct” in man—the tendency to go along with what everyone around them believes—most people believe many things that are not true. For example, most professing Christians are shocked when someone points out that there is *no* biblical command to celebrate the resurrection of Jesus Christ, but on the contrary, we are solemnly commanded to commemorate His death (1 Corinthians 11:23-26)! Further, because of muddled tradition, most are biblically mistaken about when Jesus really died and when He was resurrected.

### God’s Challenge

God’s inspired Word, the Bible, invites us, “Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD” (Isaiah 1:18). Let us “prove all things” by the Bible, not the contradictory, unsubstantiated, or pagan traditions of men (1 Thessalonians 5:21). It is time to set aside the shackles of tradition and look into your own Bible. Christ said, “And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free” (John 8:32). Free? Free from *what*? Free from error, free from false doctrine, and free from the manacles of manmade tradition. Truth is what *is*, not what we would have it be.

## A Satanic Conspiracy

Your Bible says Satan the devil is deceiving the whole world (Revelation 12:9). This includes the churches of this world. Unfortunately, most people today are biblical illiterates. The Bible, it seems, is the book everyone wants to read but few do—the book nearly everyone has an opinion about based upon what others have said about it. It is high time to blow the dust off your Bible and read it for yourself! Unsuspecting, trusting, innocent people all over the world have been deceived into thinking that pagan customs, superstitions, and counterfeit doctrines come right from their Bibles, and yet nothing could be further from the truth. Your Bible reveals that Satan himself appears as an angel of light (2 Corinthians 11:14), and “Therefore *it is* no great thing if *his ministers* [yes, Satan has ministers!] also be transformed *as* the ministers of righteousness” (verse 15). Christ warned repeatedly, “Take heed that no man deceive you. For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many.” That is, many would come saying truthfully that Jesus is the Christ, yet, by wresting scriptures, adding false doctrines and customs, making false prophecies, and even performing great signs and wonders “in His name,” would deceive many (Matthew 24:4-5, 11, 24).

Satan has provoked scholars, teachers, and “free thinkers” to ridicule and deny *the only sign* Christ gave that He was indeed the Messiah. Jeremiah told of the same thing: “Then the LORD said unto me, The prophets prophesy lies *in my name*: I sent them *not*, neither have I commanded them, neither spake unto them: they prophesy unto you a false vision and divination, and a thing of nought, and the deceit of their heart” (Jeremiah 14:14). “I have not sent these prophets, yet they ran: I have not spoken to them, yet they prophesied” (Jeremiah 23:2 1).

Side-stepping such false prophecies, signs, and wonders, Christ said the *only sign* He would give that He was indeed the Messiah was that He would be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth (Matthew 12:39-40). Read it in your own Bible. Do *you* believe this sign? Yet theologians and would-be scholars claim Christ was in the grave only one full day and two nights, only *half* as long as He said He would be. What most of Christendom fails to realize is that wresting the Scriptures to fit this scenario actually nullifies the *only sign* Jesus gave as *proof* that He was the Messiah. To dismiss this most important sign that Christ gave is actually rejecting what the Scriptures plainly say! Rather than celebrating His resurrection from the dead, we are commanded to *commemorate His death* through the Passover (see Luke 22:19-20; 1 Corinthians 11:23-26, etc.). The fulfillment of this sign was a testimony not only to *that* generation, but also to all future generations that He was indeed the Messiah! With this in mind, can you think of any reason Satan would *not* want to confuse and deny the only sign Christ gave that He was the Messiah? Certainly not! Satan is anti-Christ, the master deceiver, Scripture-wrester, and enemy of mankind. He is in the process of deceiving the whole world (Revelation 12:9). We cannot trust the word of deceived men. There is only *one* dependable and historical record on this, the Bible itself, and any tradition that conflicts with God’s Word must be summarily dismissed.

## Christ, our Passover

First Corinthians 5:7 tells us, “For even Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us.” Jesus came to fulfill the prophecies of the Passover Lamb. Just as the blood applied to the door posts exempted the firstborn from death on the original Passover night, so the blood of Jesus Christ applied to our sins exempts us from the death penalty (Exodus 12:7).

Shortly before Jesus’ crucifixion, the murder-plotting religious leaders, threatened by His popularity and seeking to bring disrepute, demanded that He show them some kind of a “sign”—preferably a supernatural sign—to prove His Messiahship.

The fact that they had already personally witnessed or heard of countless miracles and healings, or signs, meant nothing. The disingenuous scribes and Pharisees, hoping to entrap Jesus, derisively and with false humility, asked, “Master, we would see *a sign* from thee” (Matthew 12:3 8).

Well did the apostle Paul write, “For the Jews require a *sign*, and the Greeks seek after wisdom” (1 Corinthians 1:22).

Of course, Jesus, through His Father, could have performed any number of signs, miracles, or wonders. Had He done so, they would have undoubtedly been dismissed as “magician’s tricks.” Or perhaps they could have called upon one of their own to duplicate some wonders as did Jannes and Jambres who withstood Moses in Pharaoh’s court (Exodus 7:11).

Knowing their deceitful hearts and intents, Jesus gave the religious leaders, instead, a sign that actually depended upon *their* interplay—a sign that could not be manifested until they had first performed *their* devious part in putting Him to death!

## Jesus Gives a Sign!

Jesus said, “An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall *no sign* be given to it, *but* the sign of the prophet Jonah. For *as* Jonah was three days and three nights in the whale’s belly, *so* [in like manner] shall the Son of man be three days *and* three nights in the heart of the earth” (Matthew 12:39-40).

Paraphrasing, Christ was saying, in effect, “The only sign that will absolutely prove the truth of My message and Messiahship is one that I will have no control over. When you put Me to death, I will be in the grave exactly three days and three nights. I will not be able to resurrect Myself. If God the Father restores Me to life after exactly three days and three nights, it will be proved beyond doubt that I am the Messiah. This is the only sign I will give you.”

Part of Friday, all day Saturday, and part of Sunday could conceivably give us three DAYS, using the inclusive reasoning that any part of a day can be counted as a “day,” BUT—WHERE DO WE GET THREE NIGHTS? This inclusive reasoning would give us ONLY TWO nights: Friday night and Saturday night! An inquiring mind searching for the truth must admit there *is* a problem with the generally held belief about the times of the crucifixion and resurrection.

### What Was the Sign?

Notice carefully, the sign Jesus gave was not *just* the fact of His death or even of His resurrection—no, not at all—but the LENGTH OF TIME would be in the heart of the earth—the grave—before being resurrected. *That* was the sign! It was, in effect, a *double* sign. Most of orthodox Christianity acknowledges the fact that Jesus was crucified and rose again from the dead, but waffle at the second part of His sign—that of being exactly 72 hours in the grave. Yet the Good Friday—Easter Sunday tradition emphatically denies this all-important detail.

As an aside, it is interesting to note that, although the Old Testament accurately predicted the Messiah’s rejection, abuse, death, and resurrection, *nowhere* does it say anything about the length of TIME He would spend in the grave. This was Christ’s *own* prediction, based upon one of the most ridiculed and least believed stories in the Bible—that of the prophet Jonah. Did Jesus fulfill His very own prediction? Indeed He did!

So *significant* was this promised sign that it was repeated in various ways on at least 18 separate occasions! The Bible repeats things for emphasis. Why would this be so carefully documented if it were not significant? Let’s “bookend” the scriptures that describe the length of time Christ was in the tomb so we can see them all together.

### “Three Days and Three Nights”

**Matthew 12:40:** ... For *as* Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish; *so* shall the Son of man be *three days AND three nights* in the heart of the earth. (Emphasis added throughout.)

**Matthew 16:21:** From that time forth began Jesus to show unto his disciples, how the he must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again *the third day*.

**Matthew 17:23:** And they shall kill him, and *the third day* he shall be raised again.

**Matthew 20:19:** And shall deliver him to the Gentiles to mock, and to scourge, and to crucify him: and *the third day* he shall rise again.

**Matthew 26:61:** And said, This fellow said, I am able to destroy the temple of God, and to build it *IN three days*.

**Matthew 27:63:** Saying, Sir, we remember that this deceiver said, while he was yet alive, *AFTER three days* I will rise again.

**Mark 8:31:** And he began to teach them, that the Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected of the elders, and of the chief priests, and scribes, and killed and *AFTER three days* rise again.

**Mark 9:31:** For he taught his disciples, and said unto them, The Son of man is delivered into the hands of men, and they shall kill him; and after he is killed, he shall rise *the third day*.

**Mark 10:34:** And they shall mock him, and shall scourge him, and shall spit upon him, and shall kill him: and *the third day* he shall rise again.

**Mark 14:58:** We heard him say, I will destroy this temple that is made with hands, and *WITHIN three days* I will build another made without hands.

**Mark 15:29:** And they that passed by railed on him, wagging their heads, and saying, Ah, thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest it *in three days*....

**Luke 13:32:** And he said unto them, Go ye, and tell that fox, Behold, I cast out devils, and I do cures to day and to morrow, and *the third day* I shall be perfected.

**Luke 18:33:** And they shall scourge him, and put him to death: and *the third day* he shall rise again.

**Luke 24:7:** Saying, The Son of man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and *the third day* rise again.

**Luke 24:21:** But we trusted it had been he which should have redeemed Israel: and beside all this, to day is *the third day* since these things were done.

**Luke 24:46:** And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it was fit for Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead *the third day*.

John 2:19: Jesus answered and said unto them, Destroy this temple [His body], and *in three days* I will raise it up.

**Acts 10:40:** Him God raised up *the third day*, and showed him openly.

**1 Corinthians 15:4:** And that he was buried, and the he rose again *the third day* according to the scriptures....

*There you have it!* Let's be honest! There are no contradictions here. The Scripture cannot be broken (John 10:35). When we compile and compare all scriptures, we can reach only one logical conclusion: if Jesus Christ was to be raised from the dead *IN three days*, and *ON the third day*, and *AFTER three days*, he had to have been in the tomb **EXACTLY** three days and **EXACTLY** three nights—72 full hours to the second—not one minute more, not one minute less! If He was resurrected either earlier or later, we have no Savior, because the only sign He gave repeatedly by His own mouth would have failed!

The Scriptures themselves substantiate that Christ was in the grave the full length of time He expected to be. An angel testified *before dawn*—as it began to dawn *toward* the first day of the week (Matthew 28:1), “He is not here: for he is [already] risen, **as He said**. Come, see the place where the Lord lay” (verse 6). The apostle Paul confirmed, “For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins *according to the scriptures*; and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day *according to the scriptures*” (I Corinthians 15:3-4). The evidence is conclusive, that while Jesus Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, on the third day He rose again for our justification according to the Scriptures (Romans 4:25). Christ's crucifixion, death, and burial were *according to the Scriptures*—not contrary to them.

### **The Key to Understanding: How Long is a Biblical Day?**

The key to understanding the chronology of the crucifixion week hinges upon the word “day.” Many are unaware of how the Bible counts a day. Some even argue that it makes no difference if Jesus was mistaken, but by the words of Jesus Himself, this claim must be totally rejected. Everything Jesus said matters. The issues here are much deeper than most realize. It was absolutely essential that *every* prophecy of the Messiah should be fulfilled in His life and death. Had Christ not fulfilled every single type, shadow, and prophecy pointing forward to His atoning death and resurrection, how could He be the true Messiah?

Let us see in your own Bible how *God* counts a day. Notice in Genesis 1:5: “...and the **evening** and the **morning** were the first day. And Genesis 1:8, “...and the **evening** and the **morning** were the second day.” And Genesis 1:13, “...and the **evening** and the **morning** were the third day.” See also verses 19,23, and 31. In every case, **the order is: first the evening, and then the morning**. Even today, in the twenty-first century, the Jewish people today count sunset as the beginning and the end of the day. The Hebrew day begins and ends at **sunset**, not in the middle of the night by a man-made watch or clock.

Could anything be any clearer? God here identifies a “day” as the daylight portion of a 24-hour period, and a “night” as the dark portion of the same 24-hour period.

Christ confirmed: “Are there not twelve hours in the day” (John 11:9)? Yes, and therefore twelve hours in the night—a total of 24 hours. At one point, Jesus even spoke of the three four-hour watches of the night, extending from sunset to sunrise, making a total of twelve hours (Luke 12:36-38). There is no question that Jesus understood a full twelve hours of daylight and a full twelve hours of night to be one to be one full calendar day. The Hebrews have used this reckoning, this scriptural method of keeping time, for centuries.

Therefore, there is no mistake—allowing the Bible to interpret *itself*—the Bible shows that God counts a “day” as *an evening and a morning*, not midnight-to-midnight as man commonly counts time today.

### Was it Only a Greek Idiom?

Many commentators pretentiously claim that Jesus was dead wrong. To uphold their “Good Friday—Easter Sunday” tradition, religious authorities must *wrest* the Scriptures to make them seem to say something they do not say. They claim that since the New Testament was written in Greek, the three days and three nights was merely a “Greek idiom” —that the three days and three nights can count any *periods* of a day as a *full* day. Many seize upon this phrase, “a Greek idiom,” thinking, “Ah-ha!” —they have found a satisfactory explanation, and dismiss it without further thought—without even knowing what an idiom *is!* The dictionary says an idiom is an expression whose meaning cannot be inferred by the meaning of the words that make it up. Some English idiomatic expressions are, “he kicked the bucket,” “she hung her head,” “it’s as easy as pie,” or, “he’s true blue.” Thus, they claim, Jesus’ prophecy failed, and He was in the heart of the earth *only half as long* as He thought He would be.

One popular commentator, Hank Hanegraaff, writes, “Let’s look at the record. Jesus died on a Friday afternoon and rose from the dead early Sunday morning.” Note that he begins his reasoning from the assumption that the Friday—Sunday tradition is true, and then “squeezes” the time factor to fit his theory. He goes on to say, “The inescapable conclusion is that Jesus was literally dead for only two nights and parts of three days—no more than about 40 hours.... Now, the real problem is that most of us are unfamiliar with ancient, and especially Jewish, idiomatic ways of speaking.”

This “ancient idiom” rationalization may satisfy those who wish to continue believing in their man-made hand-me-down traditions—those who may “stumble over the truth” but wish to hurry on as though nothing had happened—but it does not explain the fact that Christ said, “For AS Jonah was three days *and* three nights in the belly of the great fish; so shall the Son of man be three days *and* three nights in the heart of the earth” (Matthew 12:40). Jesus Christ would not have spoken in Greek to His disciples, who were Galilean hill country folk—who spoke *Aramaic*, a dialect of the Hebrew language that had developed among Jewish captives during the Babylonian captivity. Further, the book of Jonah upon which Jesus relied, was written in *Hebrew*, not Greek, thus invalidating the “Greek idiom” hypothesis completely! Thus, Christ’s prophecy served a *double* purpose:

proving that He was, indeed, the Messiah, as well as validating the historical truth that the prophet Jonah was actually swallowed by a great fish (Jonah 1:17). Is it any wonder, then, that critics and skeptics attack the validity of Jonah and the great fish?

Bullinger's Companion Bible, Appendix 144, page 170, clarifies, "... 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. ... Hence when it says the 'Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights' (Jonah 1:17) it means exactly what it says, and that can be the only meaning of the expression in Matt. 12:40; 16:4."

### **Was Christ Mistaken, a Liar, or a Truth Teller?**

Was Christ telling the truth when He said He would be three days *and* three nights in the heart of the earth? Was this important? Was He kidding? Was He lying? Was He simply "mixed up" and mistaken? Or, being the Son of God incarnate, did He *know precisely* how long He would be in the grave? According to Jewish law, a person was not counted as "officially dead" until after three days! Therefore it was absolutely crucial that Christ should remain in the "heart of the earth" for exactly *three days and three nights*, or He would not have been considered "legally" dead. If someone who was pronounced "dead" revived prior to three full days, he or she was not legally considered to have been dead. Christ said in Revelation 1:18, "I *am* he that liveth, *and was dead*; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death" —meaning He had supreme power over *hades*, the grave, and death. If Christ was wrong about such an important and oft-emphasized matter, how can we believe *anything* He said? His very character, reliability, integrity, and Messiahship was hanging in the balance! He must not be wrong about this sign!

Ironically, traditional Christianity *denies* this, taking away the only sign that Christ gave to validate His Messiahship! They would rather cling to their Good Friday—Easter Sunday legends. The vast majority of mainstream Christianity teaches people from childhood on up that Christ was crucified on a Friday afternoon and was resurrected on Easter Sunday morning. By adulthood, the teaching is so ensconced in people's minds that it is taken for granted and never even questioned. Many will even become angry if this tradition is questioned. "Don't try to figure it out," one pastor told an inquiring member. "It's a mystery. Just accept it on faith." What unsound advice! This is just the opposite of what God's Word says: "*Prove* all things; hold fast that which is good" (1 Thessalonians 5:21).

Further, traditional Christianity has based two of its most cherished holidays on its false reckoning of the events that occurred during that pivotal week. Sunday observance and Easter sunrise services are founded on the false *assumption* that our Savior was crucified on Friday and rose from the dead at dawn on the following Sunday. But, we repeat for emphasis, either this tradition is false, or you have no Savior! So says your own Bible!



## **The Crucifixion Preceded a Sabbath—But Which Sabbath?**

Unbeknownst to most people, there was more than one Sabbath the week of Christ's crucifixion. (See our free booklet, *Sunday Saturday—What Difference Does It Make?*)

The weekly Sabbath is always the seventh day of the week, the day we call Saturday. Those unfamiliar with the Hebrew calendar and God's holy days carelessly assume there can be only one Sabbath day per week. The Scriptures themselves reveal there are two kinds of Sabbaths: the weekly Sabbath and the annual—sometimes called “high” Sabbaths. These annual or *high* Sabbaths can occur on any day of the week (except Pentecost, which always falls on a Sunday). When a holy day falls on a weekly Sabbath, the special observance of the annual holy day takes precedence. Thus there can be *two* Sabbaths during some weeks. Such was the case in the week Jesus was crucified. And just as there can be two Sabbaths in a single week, there can also be two preparation days. It is here that many, not knowing the Scriptures, have become confused.

God instituted *seven annual Sabbaths*, or “high days,” to picture His plan of salvation. All seven are described in chapter 23 of Leviticus.

Without the revealed understanding of God's holy days, the world has little, if any, idea what God is working out on this planet. After careful study and observance of God's holy days, we find that within the annual holy day cycle, God unveils His awesome plan of salvation for all mankind!

Here is a summary of these annual festivals and their profound meaning for Christians:

The **Passover** pictures Christ's sacrifice, when He took our sins upon Himself and paid the death penalty for us, in our stead. The **Days of Unleavened Bread** remind us of a Christian's lifelong task of putting sin out of his life (sin is the transgression of God's laws as defined in 1 John 3:4). Leaven is used as a type of sin which puffs up, while eating the unleavened bread is a type of putting Christ *in* us. **Pentecost** memorializes the “birthday” of the New Testament church upon receiving the Holy Spirit, and points forward to the reaping of the firstfruits of God's Family.

The **Feast of Trumpets** denotes the Second Coming of Jesus Christ to the earth and the resurrection of the saints to immortality. The **Day of Atonement** pictures mankind's repentance and the binding of Satan during the coming 1000-year reign of Christ on earth, which is typified by the **Feast of Tabernacles**. Finally, the **Last Great Day** represents the Great White Throne Judgment period when “the rest of the dead” (Revelation 20:5)—those not in the first resurrection, including all those who have never even heard the name of Jesus Christ, the only name under heaven whereby we must be saved (Acts 4:12)—will have their first and only opportunity for salvation. (Be sure to send for our *free* booklet, *God's Seasonal Plan*, for a much deeper understanding of God's holy days, which explains these days in great detail.)

## What is a Preparation Day?

God gave Israel instructions about preparing for the Sabbath ahead of time, before they even reached Mount Sinai (Exodus 16:23). A preparation day is the day *before* a Sabbath, either weekly or annual, in which we are to get ready for, or prepare for, the upcoming Sabbath. All four Gospel writers confirm Jesus was tried, convicted, crucified and buried on a **preparation day**. Since it is common knowledge that the Jews observe their weekly Sabbath on Saturday, many, upon reading this verse, carelessly assume the preparation day mentioned here was a Friday, the day before the weekly Sabbath.

Jesus said to His disciples, ‘You know that after two days is the feast of the Passover, and the Son of man is betrayed to be crucified’ (Matthew 26:2). The apostle Paul later verifies this fact in 1 Corinthians 5:7, ‘For indeed Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us.’ Historians have long understood that some time before the time of Christ, the Jews had begun calling the entire period of the Passover and the following seven-day Feast of Unleavened Bread (Leviticus 23:6-8) by the single name ‘Passover.’ This linguistic ‘shortcut’ has added to the confusion for non-Jews, especially when they read the account of this particular Passover.

John, however, clarifies the matter: ‘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).

Did you catch it? *Read that again!* Notice that that Sabbath was ‘an *high* day’! The designated time of the Passover was on the 14th day of the Hebrew month of Nisan. The *high*, or annual Sabbath—the First Day of Unleavened Bread—was on the very *next* day, the 15th day of Nisan (Leviticus 23:5-6). The Sabbath that followed the Passover was the First Day of Unleavened Bread, an annual ‘high’ day.

Based upon this information alone—that Christ was killed on a preparation day (John 19:14), and not knowing this was an *annual* Sabbath—has led many to assume the crucifixion ‘bust’ have taken place on a Friday, the preparation day before the *weekly* Sabbath. Hence the controversy, because there is *no way* to squeeze three days and three nights into the allotted space between Friday sundown and Sunday morning!

The Passover is not only a festival in its own right; it also functions as the *preparation* day for the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, a ‘high’ day. Clearly, our Savior was crucified on a Passover day, on Nisan 14.

Thus, it was on a *preparation* day—the Passover—that Jesus was executed and buried. Jewish law demanded that a crucified body could not remain on the torture stake on the Sabbath day. Further, the Jews were required to bury a dead body *before* a Sabbath day began! ‘Then assembled together the chief priests, and the scribes, and the elders of the

people, unto the palace of the high priest, who was called Caiaphas, And consulted that they might take Jesus by subtlety, and kill him. But they said, ‘Not on the *feast day* [not on the first Day of Unleavened Bread], lest there be an uproar among the people”” (Matthew 26:3-5). The self-righteous Pharisees, after all, had their reputations to uphold!

Deuteronomy 21:22-23 required that an executed criminal be buried before nightfall. Jewish law demanded all dead bodies to be buried before a Sabbath or a feast day (John 19:3 1). Death by crucifixion was perhaps the most cruel and shameful death that could be devised by man. It was Roman practice inflicted only upon slaves and criminals of the worst kind. Crucifixion was not a Hebrew form of execution, and the body was not to be left on the Sabbath to putrefy or become a prey to ravenous birds. It was to be buried *that day*, because the hot climate would cause a dead body to quickly bloat and decompose, causing a nauseating stench in the air, as well as the exhibition of an exposed corpse bringing ceremonial defilement on the land.

### **Methods of Execution**

There were four methods of execution in use among the ancient Israelites: stoning (Exodus 17:4; Deuteronomy 13:10, etc.), burning (Leviticus 20:14; 21:9), the sword, (Exodus 32:27), and strangulation. The latter, though not named in Scripture, is regarded by the rabbis as the most common, and the proper one to be adopted when no other is expressly enjoined by the Law. Suspension, whether from cross, tree, stake, or gallows, was not used as a mode of taking life, but was sometimes added after as an enhancement of punishment. Pharaoh’s chief baker (Genesis 40:19) was hanged after being put to death by the sword; and similarly, Joshua (Joshua 10:26) appears to have dealt with the five kings who made war against Gibeon. Compare also Numbers 25:4.

It was common practice to break the legs of the crucified sufferers to hasten their death so they would not linger on the stake during the high day. Interestingly, this custom was broken to fulfill the prophecy that “a bone of him shall not be broken” (John 19:36).

The scribes and Pharisees, as is usually the case with hypocrites, had tunnel vision, directing their whole attention to small matters, such as removing a corpse from his crucifixion stake before sundown, and yet passed by the greater misdeed of premeditated murder with no conscience or hesitation! Indeed, in order to keep their strict observance of the Sabbath, they were careful to avoid outward wrongdoing, and yet did not consider how shocking a criminal act it is to take away the life of an innocent man!

### **Can You Count 1-2-3?**

How can we be so precise and dogmatic about these times? Easy. Can you count 1—2—3? It is so simple most grade school students can do the math. Let’s do the numbers. Even

*IF* we were to count *parts* of days as *full* days, according to the “Greek idiom” theory, the Friday sunset-to-Sunday-sunrise tradition would fall because:

Friday Day-Day One (12 hours)

Friday Night-Night One (12 hours)

Saturday Day-Day TWO (12 hours)

Saturday Night-Night Two (12 hours)

Sunday Day-Day Three (12 hours)

(60 hours total)

Here again, being most liberal, we see at the most, only three days and two nights. Clearly, seventy-two hours—three days and three nights—*cannot* fit into the traditional Friday-sunset-to-Sunday-sun-rise time configuration! On this one count alone, Easter is demonstrated to be a pretentious fraud.

### **Bible Truth—or Man’s Tradition?**

The Bible admonishes us to “Search the Scriptures” (John 5:39) and “prove all things” (1 Thessalonians 5:21). Christ prayed to His heavenly Father, “I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast *hid* these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes” (Luke 10:21).

By contrast, what *proof* do those ostentatious “wise and prudent” have for their Good Friday—Easter Sunday tradition? The plain truth is, *they have no proof at all!* The Easter tradition dates far back into antiquity and is nothing more than flagrant paganism wearing a “Christian” top hat! Check any reliable encyclopedia. Jesus Christ would *never* have permitted His followers to worship Him by using symbols of sex, ribaldry, and fertility, such as rabbits and colored eggs. Certainly, He would never have permitted the practice of a “religious” sunrise service conducted in His name!

Think! What do rabbits, colored eggs, and jelly beans have to do with the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ? Nothing whatsoever! They are remnants of ancient Babylonian fertility rites and sun worship. Is it any wonder God says, “Learn not the way of the heathen” (Jeremiah 10:4). See also Deuteronomy 12:30-31 and Ezekiel 8:13-15. Thus, we see a time-honored tradition must be shattered: the Good Friday—Easter Sunday tradition is nothing more than a Satanic religious deception!

It was hundreds of years after the Apostle John died that the Good Friday—Easter Sunday tradition took root and spread through the church. Prior to A.D. 325, Easter was

variously celebrated on different days of the week, including Friday, Saturday, and Sunday. In A.D. 325, Emperor Constantine convened the Council of Nicaea. This Council issued the Easter Rule stating that Easter shall be celebrated on the first Sunday occurring after the first full moon on or after the vernal equinox. Be sure to request our FREE booklet, *Should Christians Observe Easter?* for the full historical and biblical background on this vital subject.

### **What Time of Day Was Jesus Buried?**

Knowing the time of day Jesus *buried* is the KEY to knowing the time of day He was *resurrected*. Whatever time He was buried, the passage of 72 hours brings us to the exact *same* time of day He was resurrected, three days and three nights later. Once we realize this, we can safely discard the traditional Good Friday—Easter Sunday scenario for what it is—a pagan convention set up for political expediency. It is not possible to fit three 24-hour days between them, especially if we are called to believe He rose from the dead at dawn on Sunday! We state this fact' time and again to emphasize the point.

What time of day was Jesus raised? Does the tradition of a Sunday dawn resurrection have any basis in fact? Relying upon the biblical text rather than upon the traditions of men, we see it has none at all!

Matthew, Mark, and Luke are very precise as to the time Jesus died. John records only the time of the crucifixion, “about the sixth hour” (John 19:14-16). Luke gives the most concise report:

“And it was about the sixth hour, and there was a darkness over all the earth until the ninth hour. And the sun was darkened, and the veil of the temple was rent in the midst. And when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, he said, Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit [Greek, *pneuma*]: and having said thus, he gave up the ghost [He expired]” (Luke 23:44-46).

Jesus remained on the stake three hours before He died “at the ninth hour” (see also Mark 15:34,39; Matthew 27:46,50). Since they were using the Hebrew method of counting the hours of the day from sunrise, we know Jesus was crucified around noon and died about 3 PM.

Mark goes on to record, “And now when the even was come, because it was the *preparation*, that is, the day *before* the Sabbath, Joseph of Arimathaea, an honourable counsellor, which also waited for the kingdom of God, came, and went in boldly unto Pilate, and craved the body of Jesus. And Pilate marvelled if he were already dead: and calling *unto him* the centurion, he asked him whether he had been any while dead. And when he [Pilate] knew it of the centurion, he gave the body to Joseph. And he bought fine linen, and took him down, and wrapped him in the linen, and laid him in a sepulchre

which was hewn out of a rock, and rolled a stone unto the door of the sepulchre (Mark 15:43-46).

Let us notice several important points. Evening was beginning and Joseph had at best less than three hours before sunset, when the Sabbath would begin. Awaiting the confirmation of the centurion, the task of procuring, preparing, and applying the spices for burial *would have* left very little daylight on that Wednesday for Joseph and Nicodemus to finally roll the stone over the entrance to the tomb. All these things *would have* required time-consuming work, which was expressly forbidden on the Sabbath (Exodus 20:8-10). On this point all the accounts again concur; sunset was very near (Matthew 27:57; Mark 15:42; Luke 23:54; John 19:31).

No one disputes that Jesus was laid “in the heart of the earth” just before sunset. It was the Jewish law! Now if Jesus was in the tomb for exactly 72 hours, as we have shown, He was also resurrected at sunset, not at dawn as the Easter Sunday tradition claims!

### **The Preparation Day for the *Annual* Sabbath**

All four Gospel writers confirm Jesus was tried, convicted, crucified, and buried on a preparation day. Taken by itself, this would lead some to conclude the crucifixion must have taken place on a Friday, the preparation day before the weekly Sabbath. However, the Scriptures show there were also “preparation days” for the *annual* holy days as well.

But was the Sabbath in question the weekly Sabbath or an annual, or “high” Sabbath? Let the Bible answer!

We see Jesus was crucified on a *Passover* day, Nisan 14, and the Sabbath -that followed was the first day of Unleavened Bread, an annual Sabbath, or “high” day. The apostle Paul later backs up this claim in 1 Corinthians 5:7: “For indeed Christ, our *Passover*, was sacrificed for us.”

Each year as Easter approaches, churches traditionally announce, “He is risen!” But as is so often done, this saying is taken out of context and read *into* a Sunday morning resurrection. A *text* without a *context* is merely a *pretext*! We need to examine the other three corresponding accounts before we accept the traditional view so readily.

The three synoptic writers (Matthew, Mark, and Luke) record that Joseph and Nicodemus had *witnesses* as they prepared Jesus’ body. “And the women also, who came with him fm Galilee, followed after, and beheld the sepulcher, and how his body was laid” (Luke 23:55).

Going on, we read, “And *when the Sabbath was past*, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome, had bought sweet spices, that they might come and anoint him” (Mark 16:1).

Consider, if Joseph *barely* had time to bury Jesus' body before sundown, how much *more* time would the women have needed to go into town, buy spices, go home and prepare them, and then go back to the tomb to anoint Him—all before sundown?

The harmonized accounts show that when Joseph took Jesus down from the stake, the women followed him to see where he would place the body. They then returned to their homes and observed the *high* holy day Sabbath, the first day of Unleavened Bread. The day *after* the high, or annual, holy day, they went to a shop, which would have been closed on the Sabbath, and bought spices and oil, took them home again and prepared them for use on Christ's body and "they rested the Sabbath *according to the commandment*" (Luke 23:56).

The chief priests' and Pharisees' own fears and determination to set a watch for *three days* over the tomb proves that Christ did NOT say He would be *only two nights and one day* in the tomb, but *three days and three nights!* When those who had Him put to death reminded the Roman authorities of this statement, His tomb was not only sealed, but several Roman soldiers were required to remain there!

"Now the next day, *that followed the day of the preparation*, the chief priests and Pharisees came together unto Pilate, Saying, Sir, we remember that that deceiver said, while he was yet alive, *After three days* I will rise again. Command therefore that the sepulchre be made sure until the third day, lest his disciples come by night, and steal him away, and say unto the people, He is risen from the dead: so the last error shall be worse than the first. Pilate said unto them, Ye have a watch: go your way, make it as sure as ye can" (Matthew 27:62-65).

### **When Was Christ Resurrected?**

The Scriptures show that just before He died, Jesus cried out for His heavenly Father about the ninth hour, which is around 3:00 in the afternoon.

"And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, *Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?* That is to say, My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Some of them that stood there, when they heard that, said, This man calls for Elijah. And immediately one of them ran, and took a sponge, and filled it with vinegar, and put it on a reed, and gave him to drink. The rest said, Let be, let us see whether Elijah will come to save him. Jesus, when he had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost [He expired]" (Matthew 27:46-50; See also Mark 15:34-37; Luke 23:44-46).

Knowing that Christ was exactly 72 hours in the grave, all one has to do to find the *exact* time of Christ's resurrection is to find the exact time of His burial.

## What Really Happened That Sunday Morning

Let us notice Luke's account of the resurrection. "Now upon the first day of the week, VERY EARLY IN THE MORNING, they came unto the sepulchre, bringing the spices which they had prepared, and certain others with them. And THEY FOUND THE STONE ROLLED AWAY from the sepulchre. And they entered in, AND FOUND *NOT* THE BODY OF THE LORD JESUS. And it came to pass, as they were much perplexed thereabout, behold, two men [angels] stood by them in shining garments: And as they were afraid, and bowed down their faces to the earth, they said unto them, Why seek ye the living among the dead? HE IS *NOT* HERE, BUT IS [already] RISEN: remember how he spake unto you when he was yet in Galilee, Saying, The Son of man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and *the third day* rise again" (Luke 24:1-7). There was no Sunday resurrection—He was resurrected Saturday evening at sundown!

Now let us turn to the apostle John's account. "The first day of the week cometh Mary Magdalene early, when IT WAS YET DARK, unto the sepulchre, AND SEETH THE STONE TAKEN AWAY from the sepulchre. Then she runneth, and cometh to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple, whom Jesus loved, and saith unto them, They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulchre, and we know not where they have laid him. Peter therefore went forth, and that other disciple, and came to the sepulchre. So they ran both together: and the other disciple did outrun Peter, and came first to the sepulchre. And he stooping down, *and looking in*, saw the linen clothes lying; yet went he not in. Then cometh Simon Peter following him, and went into the sepulchre, and seeth the linen clothes lie, And the napkin, that was about his head, not lying with the linen clothes, but wrapped together in a place by itself. Then went in also that other disciple, which came first to the sepulchre, and he saw, and believed. For as yet they knew not the scripture, that he must rise again from the dead" (John 20:1-9).

Notice! There was no "sunrise resurrection" here! The Scriptures tell us it was *very* early in the morning while it was *yet dark—before* sunrise. The stone was *already* moved away and the tomb was *empty*. "He is not here. But is [already] risen." Of course! We have seen that Christ was buried on a late afternoon, some time just prior to sunset on a "preparation" day. He remained dead in the tomb for exactly 72 hours. Counting backwards, we see that Jesus Christ *must* have been placed in the tomb on a WEDNESDAY AFTERNOON!

Counting forward, we see the **first night** of His burial was Wednesday sunset to Thursday sunrise. The **first day** of His burial was Thursday sunrise to Thursday sunset. The **second night** of His burial was Thursday sunset to Friday's sunrise. The **second day** of His burial was Friday sunrise to Friday sunset. The **third night** of His burial was Friday sunset to Saturday sunrise. And the **third day** of His burial was Saturday sunrise to Saturday sunset. When the women arrived at the tomb, Christ had already been resurrected over twelve hours earlier at the end of the Sabbath! If, indeed, people want to observe the time of Christ's resurrection, they should be keeping it on Saturday, the Sabbath!



## How Many Sabbaths That Passover Week?

The only way to reconcile these accounts is to recognize there were *two* Sabbaths within this 72-hour period!

These women bought and prepared spices “when the Sabbath had past” and then “rested on the Sabbath”! They rested twice: once on “a high day” and once on the weekly Sabbath two days later.

This can only mean Jesus was crucified and buried on a *WEDNESDAY*! The high day—first Day of Unleavened Bread—fell on Thursday. The shops were closed on that day. The women prepared spices on Friday, and our Savior was resurrected on the Sabbath as the day ended! The events cannot be worked out any other way with the plain evidence provided in the Holy Scriptures!

Matthew 28:1 provides additional proof of two Sabbaths occurring that week. However, the Bible’s translators, confused by the Greek wording of this verse, have consistently mistranslated it. Matthew writes, “Now after the Sabbath, as the first day of the week began to dawn...” The wording of the original text, though, reads, “after the *Snhbaths*” (plural). The Ferrah Fenton translation has this correct.

*The Holy Bible In Its Original Order* translates this verse, “Now late on the Sabbath, as the first day of the weeks was drawing near...,” showing that the day which followed the weekly Sabbath was the first day of the seven-week count to Pentecost, thus identifying this day as the wave sheaf day (Leviticus 23:10-11,15,16). The ascension of Jesus Christ on that day fulfilled the offering of the wave sheaf for all time.

Thus Jesus did *exactly* as He said. He was three full nights (Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday) and three full days (Thursday, Friday, and Saturday) in the grave.

In summary, since Christ was buried on a late afternoon just prior to sunset on a “preparation” day, and since He plainly staked the claim of His very Messiahship on the precise length of *TIME* He *would be in the tomb*—exactly 72 hours—then *counting backward or forward*, we see that Jesus Christ **MUST** have been placed in the tomb on a **WEDNESDAY AFTERNOON** at sunset and resurrected on a Saturday afternoon at sunset!

*Counting backward:*

Saturday sundown to Friday sundown

24 hours

Friday sundown to Thursday sundown

24 hours

Thursday sundown to Wednesday sundown

24 hours

72 hours total

*Counting forward:*

Wednesday sundown to Thursday sundown

24 hours

Thursday sundown to Friday sundown

24 hours

Friday sundown to Saturday sundown

24 hours

72 hours total

### **Imagined “Problem” Texts**

The disciples once asked Christ, ‘Why speakest thou unto them in parables?’ He answered and said to them, “Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to *them* it is not given” (Matthew 13:10-11).

Isaiah 28:10 explains, “For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little.” One of the most important rules of biblical interpretation is to allow the Bible to interpret itself. The Bible seldom gives all Bible truth on a subject in one single verse, but it is scattered throughout the Bible as illustrated above. One cannot single out a mistranslated verse, or one taken out of context in order to contradict another verse. Jesus said, “The scripture cannot be broken” (John 10:35)!

For example, many will close their eyes to multitudinous scriptures listed in this booklet and seize upon a single verse such as Mark 16:9. This verse in the King James Version reads, “Now when Jesus was risen the first day of the week, He appeared first to Mary Magdalene.” The comma after the phrase “first day of the week” gives the impression that Jesus was raised on the first day of the week, i.e., Sunday. It should read “Now when Jesus appeared first to Mary Magdalene....” In other words, this verse says that **after Jesus had been raised, He appeared early on Sunday to Mary.** There was no punctuation in the originals. A misplaced comma added by men gives an entirely different perspective!

Another account some seize upon is found in Luke 24:13-35. The narrative of two disciples who met the Lord on the road to Emmaus later that same Sunday help us to confirm this (Luke 24:13-35). Two of the disciples, traveling to Emmaus, were conversing with the resurrected Christ, though they did not know it was He (verses 13-16). They were recounting what had happened in Jerusalem to Jesus by the chief priests and rulers of Judea (verses 18-20).

This conversation occurred on Sunday, the same day Peter, John, and the women had gone to the tomb only to find it empty. At first the disciples were not aware that it was really Jesus they were talking to. Their eyes were temporarily holden, hidden, or blinded (Luke 24:16). Assuming they were talking to a very recent visitor to the area, they told Him why they were so distraught. In the course of the discussion they indicated that “today is the third day since these things were done” (verse 21). “Since: is roughly equivalent to “after.” It being Sunday, the previous day (Saturday) would have been the second day since it happened, and Friday would have been the first day since it happened, making Thursday the day since “these things” happened.

“These things,” referred to in verses 14, 18, 19, and 21, did not end with delivering Him to Pilate for crucifixion! Notice Matthew 27:62-66:

“Now *the next day*, that *followed the day of the preparation* [the day Christ was murdered], the chief priests and Pharisees came together unto Pilate, Saying, ‘Sir, we remember that that deceiver said, while he was yet alive, After three days I will rise again. Command therefore that the sepulchre be made sure until the third day, lest his disciples come by night, and steal him away, and say unto the people, “He is risen from the dead”: so the last error shall be worse than the first.’ Pilate said unto them, ‘Ye have a watch: go you way, make it as sure as ye can.’ So they went, and made the sepulchre sure, sealing the stone, and setting a watch.”

The day *after* “the day of preparation” was Thursday, the first day of Unleavened Bread. These Jewish leaders went to Pilate on the holy day to “guarantee” Christ’s body would not “disappear!” With the Roman guards in place and the tomb sealed, they were confident that was the end of the matter.

Thus, when the two disciples on the road to Emmaus say that Sunday “is the third day since these things happened,” they are referring to the last despicable actions of the Pharisees and chief priests—the setting of the guards in place and the tomb sealed, which took place on Thursday, not Wednesday. Notice, too, that their words rule out a Friday crucifixion as well, since Sunday is only the second day from Friday.

A further key to counting this time correctly is found in a proper translation of Matthew 28:1. A footnote to this text in the Ferrar Fenton translation says, “The Greek original is in the *plural*; Sabbaths!” He correctly renders this verse: “After the Sabbaths [plural—more than one], towards the dawn of the day following the Sabbaths [plural], Mary, the Magdalene, and the other Mary, came to examine the tomb.”

Jesus Christ commanded His disciples and His followers—us, today—to observe the symbols of His DEATH, *not* His resurrection, each year at the Christian Passover (1 Corinthians 11:23-30). He told His disciples, “HAPPY are ye if ye *do* these things.”

### **In Conclusion**

In answer to the subtitle of this booklet, *Did Christ Die On a Friday and Rise On a Sunday?* we must reply with an emphatic, absolute NO! The alleged “mystery” of the three days and three nights is really no mystery at all. The authors of the Gospels, honest men with a wonderful story to tell, gave us a straightforward account of the life, death, and resurrection of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. *They gave us all the pieces of the puzzle we need* to construct a clear, precise picture of those events. When placed in the correct order, the pieces tightly interlock like a jigsaw puzzle. Everything fits together tightly and perfectly when the puzzle is solved.

And in a way, the chronology we have reconstructed throughout this booklet is only one detail of a much larger puzzle we call “the truth.” It goes on to illustrate, not only the historical facts of the death and resurrection of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, but also the way of life that God has given us to live. The details of the death and resurrection of Christ, when properly understood, serve to undergird the truths of the Sabbath and holy days, and these in turn reveal God’s plan for man. Be sure to request our booklet, *God’s Seasonal Plan*.

Of course, beyond the details of His death and resurrection is the amazing fact that our Savior voluntarily gave Himself to be crucified to pay the penalty for our sins. “The wages of sin is *death*” (Romans 6:23), not eternal life in another location. Either we will pay for our *own* sins, or we can accept the sacrifice of Jesus Christ as payment for our sins in our stead. His perfect life and sacrificial death paid for our imperfect and self-centered lives. As the author of Hebrews writes, “So Christ was *once* offered to bear the

sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation” (Hebrews 9:28).

It is for this second appearance that all creation eagerly waits (Romans 8:19). Just as Christ rose from the dead, so will His faithful disciples—“the saints”—when He returns. Of this promise Paul writes:

“For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord” (1Thessalonians 4:14-17).

May God hasten that day!

**When was Jesus crucified? When was He resurrected?** Jesus said the *only* sign of His Messiahship was the amount of *time* He spent in the grave—three days *and* three nights—”An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign,” Jesus said, “and there shall *no sign* be given to it, *but* the sign of the prophet Jonas: For *as* Jonas 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 12:39-40).

Jesus Christ was crucified on Wednesday, April 25, 31 A.D. —in the middle of the week (Daniel 9:27). He died on the stake shortly after 3 PM that afternoon and was buried before sundown Wednesday evening. Now count three days and three nights—72 full hours. He arose Saturday, the weekly Sabbath, in the late afternoon, shortly before sunset at the same time of day He was buried.

Following the rules of grammar for the Greek language, “three days and three nights” cannot be interpreted to be just a portion of a day, but can only be three full days and three full nights. “In three days,” (John 2:19), “within three days,” (Mark 14:58), and “after three days,” (Matthew 27:63, Mark 8:31), requires exactly three days and three nights, precisely 72 hours, not one day and two nights as the Good Friday-Easter Sunday tradition would demand.

For further details, see *Bullinger’s Companion Bible*, Appendix 156.

## **Appendix 144 From The Companion Bible**

### **The “Three Days” and “Three Nights” of Matthew 12:40**

The fact that "three days" is used by Hebrew idiom for any part of three days and three nights is not disputed; because that 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.

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 the 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 2 Corinthians 11:25 denotes a complete day (Greek *nuchthemeron*).

When Esther says (Esther 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.

In like manner the sacred record states that the young man (in 1 Samuel 30:12) "had eaten no bread, nor drunk any water, three days and three nights". Hence, when the young man explains the reason, he says, "because three days ago I fell sick". He means therefore three complete days and nights, because, being an *Egyptian* (verses 11, 13) he naturally reckoned his day as beginning at sunrise according to the Egyptian manner (see *Encycl. Brit.*, 11th (Cambridge) ed., vol xi, page 77). His "three days ago" refers to the beginning of his sickness, and includes the whole period, giving the reason for his having gone without food during the whole period stated.

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 that this can be the only meaning of the expression in Matthew 12:40; 16:4. Luke 11:30, is shown in Appendix 156.

In the expression, "the heart of the earth" (Matthew 12:40), the meaning is the same as "the heart of the sea", "heart" being put by the Figure of Speech, *Metonymy* (of the Subject), Appendix 6, for "the midst", and is frequently so translated. See Psalm 46:2. Jeremiah 51:1. Ezekiel 27:4, 25, 26, 27; 28:2. It is used of ships when sailing "in the heart of the seas", that is to say, in, or on the sea. See Ezekiel 27:25, 26; 28:8; also of people dwelling in the heart of the seas, that is to say, on islands (Ezekiel 28:2). Jonah uses the Hebrew *beten* (= womb) in the same way (2:2).

## Appendix 156 From The Companion Bible

### “Six Days Before the Passover”

**(John 12:1)**

Notice what Dr. Bullinger says in his Appendix concerning the events surrounding the crucifixion:

"That sabbath" and the "high day" of John 19:31, was the "holy convocation", the first day of the feast, which quite overshadowed the ordinary weekly sabbath... This great sabbath, having been mistaken from the earliest times for the weekly sabbath, has led to all the confusion...

III. We have therefore the following facts furnished for our sure guidance:

1. The "high day" of John 19:31 was the first day of the feast.
2. The "first day of the feast" was on the 15th day of Nisan.
3. The 15th day of Nisan, commenced at sunset on what we should call the 14th.
4. "Six days before the passover" (John 12:1) takes us back to the 9th day of Nisan.
5. "After two days is the passover" (Matthew 26:2. Mark 14:1) takes us to the 13th day of Nisan.
6. "The first day of the week", the day of the resurrection (Matthew 28:1, etc.), was from our Saturday sunset to our Sunday sunset. This fixes the days of the week, just as the above fix the days of the month, for:
7. Reckoning back from this, "three days and three nights" (Matthew 12:40), we arrive at the day of the burial, which must have been before sunset, on the 14th of Nisan; that is to say, before our Wednesday sunset. See John 19:31.

Therefore Wednesday, Nisan 14th [commencing on the Tuesday at sunset], was "the preparation day", on which the crucifixion took place: for all four Gospels definite& say that this was the day on which the Lord was buried [before our Wednesday sunset], because it was the preparation [day] that the bodies should not remain on the cross [Greek: staztro, meaning an upright pale] on the Sabbath day, "for that Sabbath day was a high day", and, therefore, not the ordinary seventh day, or weekly Sabbath..

**Appendix 166 From The Companion Bible**

**The Sequence of Events**

## Following the Lord's Resurrection

The order of these events in the Four Gospels is partly independent and partly supplementary, taking up the narrative at different points of time. They may be set out as follows:

### Appendix 165 From The Companion Bible

#### The Hours of the Lord's Last Day

The Diagram below shows the 24 hours of the "Preparation Day", that is to say, the day before the Passover (John 19:14, etc). The Four Gospels agree in stating that the Lord was *laid in the Sepulchre on the Preparation Day*, which was Nisan 14th, immediately before "the High Sabbath", Nisan 15th (Matthew 27:62. Mark 15:42. Luke 23:54. John 19:31, 42). Therefore He must have been crucified on Wednesday, 14th of Nisan (see Appendix 144, Appendix 156, Appendix 166).

As shown above, the 14th of Nisan, which was the "Preparation Day", began at sunset on our Tuesday (Gentile reckoning). "The sixth hour" of John 19:14 is the sixth hour of the night, and therefore corresponds to *midnight*, at which according to Gentile reckoning, Wednesday began.

The Roman numerals on the dial-plate show the 24 hours of the complete Gentile day. And on either side of the dial are shown the Hebrew "hours" corresponding to the Gentile hours a.m. and p.m.

The twenty-four hours were divided into the twelve hours of the *night* (reckoned from sunset), "twelve hours in the *day*" (reckoned from sunrise. See John 11:9). Hence "the sixth hour" of John 19:14 was our midnight; "the third hour" of Mark 15:25 was our 9 a.m.; "the sixth hour" of Matthew 27:45; Mark 15:33; Luke 23:44; was our *noon*; and "the ninth hour" of Matthew 27:45, 46; Mark 15:33, 34; Luke 23:44; was our 3 p.m.

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