

Easter Sunday morning. “Did Jesus Keep the Passover?” looks at the relationship of Jesus’ Last Supper to the Hebrew Passover in the year Jesus Christ was sacrificed. “Simon of Cyrene and the Cross Christ Bore” studies the events between Pilate’s Judgment Hall and Jesus’ crucifixion on Calvary and their significance. “The Four Crucified With Jesus” fits the four Gospel records together and clearly shows that four men, not two, were crucified with Jesus.

All the active participants and the timing are studied in “The Burial of Jesus.” And finally a truly edifying truth is uncovered in Jesus’ words before He died. *Eli, Eli, lmana sabachthani* was His “Cry of Triumph.”

CHAPTER TWELVE

The Day Jesus Christ Died

For people to say that Jesus died on Good Friday and arose on Easter Sunday morning is not only doing great damage to the integrity of God’s Word, but is also causing many people to question the simple logic of Bible believers who propound such teaching. Jesus Christ explicitly declared in Matthew that He would be in the grave three days and three nights.

Matthew 12:40:

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 12:40 in twice specifying three days and three nights distinctly denotes three periods of twenty-four hours each. How can a person calculate three days and three nights from Good Friday 3:00 P.M. until Easter Sunday Morning? The Bible declares

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that Jesus Christ was already risen by Easter Sunday morning which would be the third day; but even so, where is the third night? This teaching does not fit. What are we going to do? We have to go to the Word of God to find the day, the hour and the details involved in Jesus' crucifixion, burial and resurrection in order to have the Word of God rightly divided. When the Word of God fits, there are no contradictions, no errors.

I Corinthians 5:7 says, "... Christ our passover is sacrificed for us." Jesus Christ in fulfilling the law had to carry out exactly the demands thereof. One important part of the law was the observance of the Passover which was first established as Moses and Aaron prepared to lead the children of Israel out of Egypt.

Exodus 12:1-6:

And the Lord spake unto Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, saying,

This month *shall be* unto you the beginning of months: it *shall be* the first month [Abib or Nisan] of the year to you.*

*Exodus 13:4: "This day came ye out in the month Abib." The name of the month Abib was later, after the Babylonian captivity, changed to the month Nisan by the Babylonians. Esther 3:7, which was written after the Babylonians captivity, says, "In the first month, that is, the month of Nisan

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Speak ye unto all the congregation of Israel, saying, In the tenth *day* of this month they shall take to them every, man a lamb, according to the house of *their* fathers, a lamb for an house:

And if the household be too little for the lamb, let him and his neighbour next unto his house take *it* according to the number of the souls; every man according to his eating shall make your count for the lamb.

Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year: ye shall take *it* out from the sheep, or from the goats:

And ye shall keep it up until the fourteenth day of the same month: and the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it in the evening.

The tenth to the fourteenth of the first month (Abib or Nisan) are days to prepare for the high day of Passover. The first day of the Passover was always on the fifteenth of Nisan.

Leviticus 23:5:

In the fourteenth *day* of the first month at even [evening] *is* the Lord's passover.

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The fourteenth day at even began the fifteenth of Nisan as the Jewish day begins at sunset, the even. The fourteenth was the day before the Passover, the Feast of Unleavened Bread, the day of preparation. On the fifteenth of Nisan the Passover Feast officially began.

Leviticus 23:6,7:

And on the fifteenth day of the same month *is* the feast of unleavened bread [which is Passover] unto the Lord: seven days ye must eat unleavened bread.

In the first day ye shall have an holy convocation

The first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, the fifteenth, would always be a holy convocation, a Sabbath day, a high day.

If the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread came on a Tuesday, that Tuesday would be a Sabbath day. If the first day of the Feast came on a weekly Sabbath, on a Saturday, then it still was a high day and it would have pre-eminence over the weekly Sabbath. This pre-eminence is similar to our holidays. For example, if Christmas happens to come on a Tuesday, it is a holiday; but if Christmas comes on a Sunday, the special day of Christmas takes priority over the

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weekly Sunday. This point has bearing upon the death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The greatest point of confusion comes by not differentiating between the Sabbath which was the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread and the weekly Sabbath. The day before the weekly Sabbath was Friday so the teaching has therefore been that Jesus died on Friday. But the day after Jesus' death does not refer to the weekly Sabbath, as explicitly stated in John.

John 19:31:

The Jews therefore, because it was the preparation [the day before the fifteenth of Nisan], 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.

The, fact that Jesus was crucified before a special Sabbath is emphasized in the King James by putting the notation in parentheses: "... (for that sabbath day was an high day,)" Jesus was crucified the day before a special day, the high day, which was the first

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day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, the Passover, and not on the day before the regular weekly Sabbath.

The Gospels document the specific time of day that Jesus Christ died on the fourteenth of Nisan.

Matthew 27:45,46,50:

Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land unto the ninth hour.

And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice

Jesus, when he had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost.

Mark 15:33,34,37:

And when the sixth hour was come, there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour.

And at the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice

And Jesus cried with a loud voice, and gave up the ghost.

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Luke 23:44-46:

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: and having said thus, he gave up the ghost.

After Pilate released Jesus to the Jews, John 19:15-30 records Jesus' being led away to Golgotha, His crucifixion, the title being nailed above Jesus' head, His clothes being parted, the attention given to His mother and His receiving the vinegar. Then verse 30 repeats the account of Jesus' death.

John 19:30,31:

When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished: and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost.

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,)

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The day and time of the crucifixion and burial are clearly on the fourteenth of the first month between three and six o'clock in the afternoon. All four Gospels also readily concur on the time of the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Three o'clock was the time of death. To fulfill the Passover rite, Jesus, our sacrificial lamb, had to be buried sometime between 3 P.M. and sunset, for after sunset began the high day and thereon no one could do manual labor.

Leviticus 23:7:

In the first day ye shall have an holy convocation: ye shall do no servile work therein.

Joseph of Arimathea had to work quickly after Jesus' death to get permission from Pilate, to remove Jesus' body and to place it in his newly-hewn tomb.

John 19:41,42:

Now in the place where he was crucified there was a garden; and in the garden a new sepulchre, wherein was never man yet laid.

There laid they Jesus therefore because of the Jews' preparation *day*; for the sepulchre was nigh at hand.

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These four records pinpoint the day of Jesus' crucifixion and burial as being the day before the Passover, the fourteenth of Nisan, and the time of Jesus' death as being the ninth hour, which by our reckoning of time is three o'clock in the afternoon.

Matthew 28:1:

In the end of the sabbath [this is the weekly sabbath], as it began to dawn toward the first *day* of the week [our Sunday], came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the sepulchre.

This is early Sunday morning. In verse 6 of Matthew 28 the report was, "He is not here: for he is risen" This verse does not say that He arose on what is called Easter Sunday morning. It says that by the time the women got to the tomb, the angel reported that Jesus was not there for He had already risen.

Mark 16:1 and 6:

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.

And he [the angel] saith unto them, Be not affrighted: Ye seek Jesus of Nazareth, which was

crucified: he is risen; he is not here: behold the place where they laid him.

Mark does not say that Jesus had just arisen. The declaration of the angel again was, “He is already up.”

Again in Luke. 24:6 the angel declared to those at the sepulchre on Sunday morning, “He is not here, but is risen” Once more, The Word simply declares that He was already up. It does not tell in Matthew, Mark nor Luke exactly when He got up; but it does tell that by the time the women came, which was very early, Christ had already risen. John 20:1 records that when Mary Magdalene arrived at the sepulchre in the dark of the early morning of the “first *day* of the week,” the tomb was empty. Not one of the Gospels — Matthew, Mark, Luke nor John — states that Christ arose on Easter Sunday morning. That is tradition, not The Word.

Matthew 12:40 states that Jesus was not simply to be dead three days and three nights; He was to be buried three days and three nights. A legal standard is involved in the “three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.” In Biblical times no one could be officially pronounced dead until he had been interred for seventy-two hours, three days and three nights. Why did God not raise His Son immediately after

Jesus died, since God obviously had the power? The reason lies in the legality of the event, for Jesus Christ had to fulfill the law; that is, He had to be in the grave three days and three nights and not just part of this time.

Our failure to recognize that the first day of the Passover was a high Sabbath, a holy day, a special convocation, and our failure to understand that the Jewish day began at sunset have caused most of the difficulty regarding the time of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

The Bible says in John 19:31 that Jesus was crucified and buried on the day of preparation, the fourteenth day of Nisan. Matthew 27:46 tells us that Jesus died at 3:00 P.M., which is the ninth hour by Jewish reckoning. Jesus had to be buried before sunset; because sunset started the next day, which was the Passover. To get three complete nights and days beginning with the late afternoon of the fourteenth of Nisan, the seventy-two hour duration would end with the late afternoon of the seventeenth of Nisan. So at whatever time He was buried between 3:00 and sunset on the fourteenth of Nisan was the hour He was raised on the seventeenth of Nisan – seventy-two hours later. Now we must count backward to calculate the days of the week.

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We know that when Mary Magdalene came to the tomb early on Sunday, the first day of the week, the tomb was already empty and Christ had already risen. So Christ had to have risen sometime between 3:00 P.M. and sunset on *Saturday*, the seventeenth of Nisan. That means He would have had to have been buried between 3:00 P.M. and sunset on *Wednesday*, the fourteenth of Nisan, three days and three nights or seventy-two hours previously. Jesus Christ literally fulfilled the law; He carried out the Word of God by being buried on Wednesday afternoon and being raised seventy-two hours later on Saturday afternoon.

Jesus Christ literally fulfilled the law. While the Jews selected their spotless lamb to be used as the Passover sacrifice, Jesus Christ was “selected” and acknowledged as acceptable when He made His triumphal entry into Jerusalem. While the Passover lamb was being sacrificed in the late afternoon during the preparation, Jesus Christ was dying on Golgotha. The blood of the Passover lamb was of non-effect beginning with this occasion as Jesus was the true Passover, the complete Passover.

However, just because Jesus died on a Wednesday, I am not going to advocate that we change to Good Wednesday instead of Good Friday for Galatians 4:9 and 10 says that we are not to be observers of days or times or special hours. But I am going to adhere to

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the accuracy of God’s Word and acknowledge its truth. The pieces of the puzzle fall into place when the days of the months are rightly divided, when the hours of the days are rightly divided, and when the special days are understood. These tie together the whole record of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The Word of God is always so accurate.

