

ANTIOCH CHURCH

WILLARD, N. C. 28478

PROCLAIMING LIFE ONLY THROUGH CHRIST SINCE 1885

A MESSAGE ENTITLED

“THE THIRD DAY”

This is an analysis of scriptures showing the time of the crucifixion of Christ and how “3 days and 3 nights” were completely fulfilled between the crucifixion and the resurrection. This time of “3 days and 3 nights” is so distinctly set out in the scriptures as the absolute time of Christ’s entombment, that it makes it impossible for the crucifixion to have been on Friday as is most commonly taught. “THE THIRD DAY” gives a scriptural chronology that will answer the question: “Was Christ crucified on Friday or Wednesday?”

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THE THIRD DAY

Mt. 12:38-40. Then certain of the scribes and of the 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 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.

JN. 2:18-19. Then answered the Jews and said unto him, What sign shewest thou unto us, seeing that thou doest these things? Jesus answered and said unto them, Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.

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

I Cor. 15:3-4. 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.

1. INTRODUCTION.

When you read the story of Jonah and realize that God's call to him to go preach to the wicked people of Nineveh was a very unusual call in those days, you naturally wonder what all God had in mind. Perhaps Jonah did not have all the information we now have about what God was really doing or maybe he would not have tried to avoid God's commission to him. After all, Nineveh was a Gentile people, which Jonah had been taught not to go unto. And for a prophet of Israel to go to such a very large city with a message that they certainly would not like, was, at best, risky. But Jonah's mission was of far greater importance than just a single message to a people who did not know their right hand from their left. God was setting in history an event unparalleled in those days that it might later be a great sign of an even greater event to come. After all, who had ever before been swallowed by a whale and lived to tell about it. And neither would Jonah, except that God was in it for much greater reasons.

This strange event in the life of a Hebrew prophet sent to Gentile sinners with a message of judgment, takes on mammoth proportions when our Lord uses it as the sign of the crowning work of redemption's plan by his resurrection from the dead. Therefore Jonah's mission was not some incidental mission just to preach to far away sinners. It was, instead, a mission to set a standard regarding the resurrection of Jesus from the dead:

"AFTER THREE DAYS AND THREE NIGHTS'.

Aside from this, it also shows us that God intended that Gentiles should also be a part of this great plan. Jonah, who left the port of Joppa on his mission, was in later years followed by the apostle Peter, who also left from Joppa to go to Cesarea, again to Gentile people, to preach another resurrection: That of Jesus Christ. How marvelous and intricate are the purposes of God in the unfolding of his great plan.

Because of these things, I believe that we can find in the words of the title of this lesson:

"THE THIRD DAY', some very interesting and also some very intricate truths that apply to us and help to prove abundantly that "not one jot or tittle" of God's word fails. With this in mind, let us first explore the Bible to see how many marvelous things and in what circumstances "THE THIRD DAY" has been the bench mark of great events in the lives of God's people.

- a. Gen. 22:4; "The third day" Abraham came to the place of sacrifice of Isaac.
- b. Gen. 42:17-18; Joseph detained his brothers til "the third day".
- c. Ex. 19:11; "The third day" the Lord will come down in the sight of all the people.
- d. Ex. 19:15-16; It came to pass on "the third day"
- e. Ex. 3:18; Moses was to lead Israel "3 days journey" from Egypt.

f. Hos. 6:1-2; Hosea said on "the third day" God would raise them up.
g. Mt. 17:23; 20:19; 27:63-64; Mk. 9:31; 10:34; Lk. 9:22; 13:32; 18:33;
24: 7, 21, 46; Acts 10:40. All of these verses speak of the resurrection of Christ
on "the third day". Can there be any doubt that: AS JONAH WAS IN THE BELLY OF THE
WHALE 3 DAYS AND 3 NIGHTS SO ALSO WAS THE SON OF MAN 3 DAYS AND 3 NIGHTS IN
THE HEART OF THE EARTH?

2. THE OLD TESTAMENT PASSOVER FEAST

In the book of Exodus, chapter 12: 1-20, you find the original story of the Passover feast that was first instituted among the Hebrews at the time of their deliverance from Egypt. This great occasion is very significant in this study of "The Third Day". The reason is that this Passover feast is a specific type of the crucifixion of Christ. See I Cor. 5:7. Also, the gospel description of the crucifixion begins with Christ eating the Passover (last supper) with the disciples. In conjunction with the Passover feast there was also a feast of unleavened bread that lasted for 7 days. In fact, the terms "Passover" and "unleavened bread" became interchangeable. When you spoke of one it usually included the other.

When this Passover was instituted it was specified that it would mark the beginning of the year for Israel. It also was specified that this Passover was to be held on the 14th of the first month of their year, every year thereafter. In Lev. 23: 4-8, both the Passover and the feast of unleavened bread are described along with their dates. The Passover was to be held on the 14th day of the month and the 7-day feast of unleavened was to begin on the 15th day of the month and last 7 days. Further, it was specified that the first of the 7 days was to be a holy convocation (Sabbath) and also the 7th day of unleavened bread was a holy convocation. This raises an interesting thought. Every week, on the 7th day, Israel observed the weekly Sabbath. In this day no work was to be done and it was to be a holy convocation to them. Then, when the time came along each year for the feast of unleavened bread, there were two holy convocations (Sabbaths) during this feast. This means, then, that during the time of the feast, there was more than one Sabbath day to be observed within a 7 day span of time. Naturally each year, the Passover, and therefore the feast of unleavened bread, would fall on different days of the week. From this it can be seen that it is possible and also probable that there could be a Sabbath on, say, a Monday, and then another when the regular weekly Sabbath came on Saturday. (The Jewish weekly Sabbath always fell on the day that corresponds to our Saturday) And the Hebrew week recognized the day that we call Sunday as the first day of their week. This circumstance of more than one Sabbath in a given week will become important to our study when we begin to chronicle the last days of Christ.

3. CHRIST OUR PASSOVER.

In I Cor. 5:7, we are told that Christ our Passover was sacrificed for us. In each of the gospels, the account of the crucifixion begins a few days before the Passover feast. The last supper that Christ shared with the disciples is distinctly declared to be the Passover. Our Lord became the "lamb without spot or blemish" to be sacrificed for our deliverance from sin. It was absolutely essential that, since Christ filled the type of the Passover sacrifice that his sacrificial offering should occur on the exact same day as the original Passover was to be held: the 14th day of the first month. So, of this we can be sure: that Christ was sacrificed on the 14th day of the month to coincide with the type of this feast. It is also very important to keep in mind that Israel reckoned their day from sunset to sunset. Of these circumstances and facts, I do not believe that there is any doubt or disagreement among Bible students. And they set the stage for some important conclusions later.

4. THE LAST WEEK OF JESUS BEFORE THE CRUCIFIXION

All four of the gospels give very descriptive and almost identical accounts of the last few days before the crucifixion. Some details vary, but they all correlate to give a clear picture of these events. All but John outline about 4 days before the Passover, while John identifies events 6 days previous. Even with this, the events themselves coincide and are covered by each gospel writer. We are going to use the account given by Matthew to trace the last events before the crucifixion, beginning with chapter 20.

20:17, Jesus goes to Jerusalem.

v29, They depart from Jericho on the way to Jerusalem.

Ch. 21:1-16, He sends for the colt to ride into Jerusalem on.

v8-11 He enters Jerusalem to the acclaim of the people.

v12-14 He enters the temple; runs out the money changers; heals.
v17. He leaves Jerusalem and goes to Bethany.
v18. The next day he returns to Jerusalem.
v23. He enters the temple again.
Ch. 22:15. The Pharisees consult how they might trap him.
v23. The same day.
Ch. 24:1 He leaves the temple. He teaches of it's destruction and of the last days of the Hebrew nation along with the calamities with it.
Ch. 25: He continues his teachings.
Ch. 26:1. When he had finished all these sayings.
v2. Two days before the Passover.
v3. The priests consult to find a way to kill him.
v5. But not on the feast day.
v6-13. In Bethany at the house of Judas, Jesus is anointed with ointment to burial.
v14-16. Then Judas covenanted with the priests to betray Christ.
v17-19. On the first day of the feast, they make preparations for to eat the Passover which was always held on the 14th day of the first month of their year. (Following this day would be a holy convocation, Sabbath, beginning the days of unleavened bread)
v20-29. The last supper.
v30-35. The Mt. of Olives where Jesus tells them they will be offended because of him and where Peter and the rest vow their faithfulness to him.
v36-46. His prayer in Gethsemane.
v47-56. Judas betrays him. The disciples flee.
v57-68. Jesus before the high priests council, is condemned and accused.
v69-75. Peter's denial.
Ch. 27:1-2. When the morning was come. He has been up all night, accused, buffeted, condemned, denied.
v3-10. Judas repents to no avail, gives back the money and hangs himself.
v11-18. Jesus before Pilate.
v19-26. Pilate washes his hands of Jesus. Scourges and delivers him to be crucified.
v27-31. Roman soldiers strip him, crown him with thorns, spit on him, mock him.
v32. The cross he could not carry was his own.
v35. And they crucified him. Mk. 15:25, says that he was crucified at the third hour which would be comparable to our 9:00 AM.
v39-44. Bystanders mock and ridicule Christ.
v45. At the 6th hour (12:00 noon) darkness covers the land.
v46-50. At the 9th hour (3:00 PM) Jesus died.
v51. The veil of the temple rent from top to bottom, earthquake.
v52-53. Mysterious opening of graves; the centurion's confession; His mother and many friends beholding afar off.
v57-61. No time for visitation. Joseph of Arimathaea buries Christ in his own tomb. The Passover had begun essentially 24 hours before and now at the end of the Passover day, Christ is laid to rest in the tomb. Since the Passover occurred on the 14th day of the first month, remember that the following day (the 15th of this month Lev. 23:6) was the first day of unleavened bread. This day was a holy day (Sabbath), no matter what day of the week it fell on. Thus, by the law of Moses, the day following the crucifixion of Christ was a Sabbath day when "no servile work could be done."

5. THE NEXT DAY

Mt. 27:62-66. On the very next day (some 12 to 24 hours after his burial at sunset the day before) the chief priests go to Pilate to request that a watch be set at the tomb. Why did they request this? Because they knew that it was believed as Christ had said that he would be raised up after three days. It is evident from this visit to Pilate that they anticipated some span of time yet to transpire before this resurrection would occur. It also appears evident that if they had believed that the "3 days" had been filled on this "next day after the crucifixion" they would not have bothered with the request since it would not have had another night to pass through. The fact that they did ,gives weight to the fact that they perceived this "3 days" to have more days to pass yet. And thus a watch was set.

6. EARLY THE FIRST DAY OF THE WEEK.

Mt. 28:1, As it began to dawn toward the first day of the week (Sunday), at the end of the Sabbath, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came to the sepulcher. Verse 6 of this ch. declares that he is risen. This means that when these two Marys' came to the tomb at dawn (Jn. 20:1 while it was yet dark), on the first day of the week, Christ had already risen from the grave. This literally means that he could have risen anytime from sunset the evening before up to the time that they came to the tomb. Thus, it is shown that immediately following the week-day Sabbath Christ was absent from the tomb. From Lk. 23:54, it is evident that the day following the crucifixion also was a sabbath day. It is from this fact that theologians have concluded that Christ was crucified on Friday. Their calculation is that if the "sabbath drew on" as he was laid in the tomb and if he was raised from the tomb by the time the first day of the week arrived, that it would follow that he was crucified on Friday. But there are major problems with this.

7. "THE THIRD DAY"

As Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the whale, so must the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. The volume of scriptures that repeatedly state that Christ would rise again after three days is too overwhelming and conclusive to even consider any other time frame. And before our thoughts reach the point where we say that it does not matter what day he was crucified on, let us remember the abundance of statements that unequivocally say that Christ would rise again on "THE THIRD DAY". It is a point too well documented to entertain any other thought on the matter. Nevertheless, it is true, believe it or not, that the majority of theologians believe and teach that Christ was not, in fact, in the grave three days and three nights and that he was crucified on Friday. (If it does not matter, then why did Christ leave no doubt that he would be in the grave 3 days and 3 nights; and why do people insist that it was on Friday if they really believe it does not matter? Why not adopt a day that will fit the required 3 days?).

But we don't have to just adopt a day that will fit. We can let the scriptures delineate the day that will fit for us. But let us first measure the "Friday" chronology. The day on which Christ was crucified, using the Hebrew reckoning of the day from sunset to sunset, was at its ending when Christ was buried. It began the evening before with the Passover supper. Gethsemane, betrayal, scourging, and condemning to be crucified carried through the night. At 9:00, he was crucified; at 12:00 noon, darkness covered the sky; at 3:00 PM, Christ died. Between 3:00 PM and sunset (about 6:00 PM) Christ was buried. Remember that they hurried to remove him from the cross and hastily prepared and buried him because "the Sabbath drew on". Lk. 23:54. Thus, if indeed, Christ was crucified on Friday according to popular theology, then it was at the very end of Friday. Literally within the hour of his burial, the Saturday Sabbath would have begun (using the Friday chronology). If you count forward from this point, you have the night time of Saturday and the day time of Saturday for a total of 24 hours. Since the scriptures are very specific that the (empty) tomb was visited before day on the first day of the week (Sunday), then the absolute maximum amount of time that Friday chronology will allow is 36 hours. Further there has been a maximum of one day and two nights. When you consider the possibility that Christ was risen as early as just after sundown on Saturday, you would only have 24 hours in the grave and only one day and one night. I am bound to say at this point that nothing but tradition, philosophy and ancient pagan feast days are the only reason we would cling to a Friday chronology. There just is no way that the demands of scripture that Christ would be in the grave three days and three nights can remotely fit the Friday chronology.

Throughout the Bible the intricacies of the scripture in fulfilling minute details of its types and patterns and outright statements is everywhere unquestioned. To break from that pattern in this very important instance would serve to discredit the scriptures altogether. In addition, there is not one single scripture that even remotely hints that Christ would only be in the grave 24 to 36 hours. Not only that, but the many other instances of the use of "the third day" as opposed to none of a lesser figure simply leaves no room for a Friday chronology.

What, then, is the answer to this question, since it is absolute that the day after the crucifixion was a Sabbath and the day after the resurrection was the first day of the week?

The key to a proper application of chronology to the time of the crucifixion is found in one verse of scripture: Jn. 19:31. The parenthetical statement in this verse (for that Sabbath was an high Sabbath) can have only one interpretation. It was the "Sabbath" of the first day of unleavened bread (which it was) and not the regular week-day Sabbath. The statement could not be applied to any regular week-day Sabbath,

because none of them would have been unique or "high", but instead routine. The first day of unleavened bread was a "special" "high" Sabbath, and it certainly followed the Passover.

Dr. Adam Clarke, with his detailed description of the Hebrew calendar, declares that their calendar was so constructed to avoid the Sabbaths such as those of the unleavened bread to coincide with the regular week-day Sabbaths. If this is true, then that fact becomes another point of emphasis since never would the unleavened bread Sabbath fall at the same day as the weekly Sabbath. Thus, the crucifixion would by this fact, be removed from the day before the week day Sabbath in the chronology of events. I must leave this point with Dr. Clarke's commentary, since I know of no express proof about it.

Another point against a Friday chronology is found in Mt. 27:62. "The next day that followed the day of preparation". This would have been the 15th of the month. But more importantly, the statement establishes a sequence of days. It at least implies that there was more "day-light" time intervening than the Friday theory allows. Then the priests refer to the "third day" thus showing their anticipation of more days to fill this thought. Further, if this "next day" had been the regularly weekly (Saturday) Sabbath, it is very doubtful that the priests with all of their pious religion would have "gone out of their place" on that day.

"THE THIRD DAY" requirement of all scripture will work only if you allow that the "high" Sabbath of Jn. 19:31, was the first day of unleavened bread and not Saturday. With this fact in mind, you only need to go to the undeniable time of a vacant tomb, before day Sunday morning and count back three days and three nights. You might bear in mind that it is possible that Christ had vacated the tomb shortly after sunset the evening before. But in either case, three days and three nights counted back from the time of the first visitation of the empty tomb and you are inevitably brought to a crucifixion day of Wednesday, at the close of that day. Thus we firmly believe that the scriptures will support the chronology of Christ being in the grave for 24 hours on Thursday; 24 hours on Friday; and 24 hours on Saturday, for a total of at least three days and three nights.

In Lk. 24:21, on the road to Emmaus, while two disciples walked and communed with Christ (unknown to them), they declared: and beside all this, today is the third day since these things were done. Before and after the resurrection, the fact is sure, that Christ would rise from the dead on "THE THIRD DAY".

8. EASTER.

The term "Easter" is found only once in the Bible; Acts 12:4. Here it comes from "pascha" and means Passover. Christ never instructed that we commemorate the day of his crucifixion or resurrection. This commemoration should be all year long by our own resurrected life showing the power of the resurrection of Christ. While we may place a lot of emphasis on "Easter" Sunday, in reality the day is no more than any other. The day should in no way take away from the one who was raised from the dead on the third day. It should be noted that there is an odd fact about our day of Easter. It never occurs on the same date of the year. Obviously, Christ was raised on one day and not all over the calendar during the months of March and April. The day we set aside for Easter is not controlled by the resurrection or anything remotely connected to it. It is controlled by the spring equinox; the changing of the seasons, borrowed from ancient mythology. I am not against a day called Easter nor the fact that it is about the second time in a year that some people go to church. The Lord knows they need to go some time. I am only saying that it's floating occurrence is not the result of the resurrection of our Lord. He was raised up after the end of the 17th day of the first month of the Hebrew calendar. This most nearly coincides with sometime late in our April. The anniversary of this event would occur on the same day year after year like your birthday does. I should also mention that "Good Friday" is not a scriptural invention. It, too, is borrowed from past pagan practices. It may be a good time to plant beans (if you can get to it), but it has absolutely nothing to do with the crucifixion, or resurrection nor anything else about the plan of salvation. Speaking of those who observed certain days, Paul said I am afraid of you. Christians get very excited about "holy days" and "holy land" and forget all about a "holy life".

9. THE CENTER PIECE.

The resurrection of Christ is the center piece of all Christianity. Everything else rises or falls upon the strength and reality of that. The very first gospel message after the beginning of the church on the day of pentecost was about a risen Lord. Paul preached Christ crucified, yea that he is risen from the dead. The

apostles were immediately condemned because they preached "through Jesus the resurrection from the dead". The resurrection is not some after thought to calvary, demonstrating the power of God. It is the specific result of calvary, making it possible that we too might have hope in a resurrection when Christ returns again. Every message and every hope of the entire plan of salvation depends on and proceeds from the resurrection of Christ. It follows then that everything related to this event would conform to the pattern written and declared through the Bible. That is precisely why the Lord taught that as: "Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the whale, so must the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth". That is why Jesus gave this sign: "Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up again". And that is why we teach that Jesus bled and died for us; and that he was buried in the tomb of Joseph; and that he rose again from the dead on "THE THIRD DAY".

ADDENDUM TO "THE THIRD DAY" **CONTAINING COMMENTS, QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.**

The death, burial and resurrection of Christ, as it is celebrated today, includes the "taken-for-granted-assumption" regarding several events, activities and chronologies that were unknown in the early church. One focal point of this is what is known as "Good Friday". We do not believe that any recognition of "Good Friday" was taught by the early church. We take this position because of our steadfast conviction that Christ was not and could not have been crucified on Friday, if we accept the many chronological facts of scripture. Even though there are certainly more proponents of a Friday crucifixion than of any other day, I do not waiver at all in the position that it is neither feasible or possible for the Friday theory to be adequately, mathematically, logically or scripturally sustained. Obviously this raises some questions which I would like to address as well as some other appropriate comments in this addendum to the outline of "THE THIRD DAY".

1. Is there anything in the Bible or the early church that teaches, suggests or embraces anything resembling today's "Good Friday" celebration?

a. Absolutely nothing. Though it has been around in religious circles for many centuries, there is no trace of it in the entire N.T., or early church practice recorded therein.

2. Does it even matter at all what day Christ was crucified on; Friday, Wednesday, Monday or any other day?

a. My first answer to this question is this: No one has the right or privilege to conclude that anything propounded in the scriptures in any degree, does not matter. We may not know the significance of a lot of things, but there are no acceptable grounds by which anyone can decide that any Biblical subject or truth does not matter or is not important. To venture down that path raises the question of the inerrancy of scripture and at what point is anyone then forbidden to say any issue does not matter.

More than this, by many scriptural types, examples, prophecies and commands, the great work of Christ at calvary was cast in mold centuries before the crucifixion. If even one of these could be proven inaccurate or never fulfilled, it would render the Bible unreliable. For example, Zech. 11:12, foretold that the price to be paid for the betrayal of Christ would be thirty pieces of silver. Someone could ask, did it matter what price was paid to Judas for betraying Christ. Obviously, thirty pieces of silver was a paltry amount. But just suppose Judas had asked for and received 10 pieces of silver, the prophecy of Zech., and therefore the Bible would become questionable. The reason Christ was crucified on the day of the Hebrew Passover feast was because the whole purpose of that feast throughout the history of Israel was to fore shadow in advance the offering of Christ as the Passover lamb (I Cor. 5:7).

The answer to this question is, therefore, if the Bible teaches it, it does matter. Noted radio speaker, teacher and pastor, "Chuck" Swindoll, commenting on his convictions that Christ was crucified on Wednesday, had this to say about those who hold to a Friday crucifixion. He allowed that it was their privilege to believe in a Friday crucifixion if they chose to. Then he added in his own inimitable style: "But they are wrong". I agree with that.

3. Since the scriptures clearly distinguish that the day following the crucifixion was a Sabbath day (Mk. 15:42; Lk. 23:54), does that not prove that the crucifixion was on Friday, since the Sabbath was on Saturday?

a. That is exactly the assumption that has led to a Friday crucifixion theory. It's a classic case of not being able to see the trees for the forest, with the forest in this case being the all-pervasive mindset that the Sabbath days occurred *only* on the 7th day of each week, and no other time of the year or calendar. That is, that there were no other days throughout the year except the regular, weekly, 7th day Sabbath (or holy convocation). But that simply is not the truth. Apparently, Friday proponents have never studied the Bible on this question. Therefore, before you read my answer any further you should read the entire 23rd chapter of Leviticus. This chapter outlines the (several) feasts of the Lord (23:2). Throughout this chapter there is a delineation of all the "feasts" Israel was to keep. The Lord describes them as "holy convocations". That is exactly what a Sabbath was: a holy convocation, wherein no servile labor was to be performed. Now make a list of each day (or feast) that this chapter declares as a Sabbath or holy convocation. Lo and behold, you find that these feasts were also holy convocations or Sabbaths just like the 7th day Sabbath. Let's make a point here. Take, for example, verse 24. They were instructed that the 1st day of the 7th month was to be a memorial of blowing of trumpets. It is distinctly called a Sabbath; a holy convocation. Bear in mind, this special feast day was to occur each year on the 1st day of the 7th month. This means that this "Sabbath" day would be on a different day of the week every year, just like Dec. 25th is. Thus, in this instance, it could fall on Monday this year; Tuesday next year, and so on. It was a mathematical impossibility for this "Sabbath" to be on Saturday every year and also be on the first day of the month each year.

This same principal applies to all the other feasts, including the feast of Passover followed by the feast of unleavened bread. Look at Lev. 23:4-8, which describes the Passover and the feast of unleavened bread. Note that the Passover was designated for the 14th day of the first month. Then, on the 15th day of the first month began the feast of unleavened bread. This feast lasted 7 days. The scriptures carefully designate the first day of this feast and the 7th day of the feast as "holy convocations" or Sabbaths. Therefore, the 15th and the 21st days of the first month were always "Sabbaths". Note again, the impossibility of the 15th and 21st, falling on Saturday each year. Furthermore, consider this regarding all of these holy convocations or Sabbath days. In the case of unleavened bread week, there were 3 Sabbath days in one 7 day span. In the case of the feasts of tabernacles, trumpets and atonement, all of which occurred in the 7th month, there were 4 additional Sabbath days (besides the 7th day weekly Sabbath). Many preachers will tell you that the only Sabbath day was the 7th day Sabbath which always fell on Saturday. Apparently they have never studied or accepted the obvious statements in Lev. 23.

Thus, there was the regular, routine, 7th day Sabbath, that is described as a holy convocation (Lev. 23:3) and always occurred on Saturday. There was just as surely, "special" Sabbath days, holy convocations, that fell on specified days of the week. So the question now becomes, was the Sabbath following the day of crucifixion the regular, weekly Sabbath, or was it one of these special Sabbaths which occurred on specified "dates" rather than a certain routine day of the week? The answer should be obvious. Christ was crucified on the Passover day which always occurred on the 14th. Then, as per Lev. 23:6, the very next day, the 15th, was the first day of the unleavened bread feast, a holy convocation or Sabbath day. Regardless as to what day of the week you think Christ was crucified on, that day, by divine command was the 14th of the first month. Further, the day following was a Sabbath day, the 15th. The question is this: Did the 15th following the crucifixion fall on Saturday (as it must if the crucifixion was on Friday), or was it a "special" Sabbath day? The answer is in Jn. 19:31, that says: "...For that Sabbath was an *high* day". Without any doubt it was the 15th, and therefore a "Sabbath". This verse describes it as an *high* Sabbath. Since when would the weekly Sabbath be referred to as an "high" Sabbath. Never! This verse is there for one purpose only and that is to remind us that the day following the crucifixion was indeed a Sabbath, an *high* Sabbath. Otherwise the expression "high" Sabbath is without any meaning.

I have read behind preachers who say that the first day of unleavened bread was nowhere called a

Sabbath. This position self-destructs by even those who hold to a Friday crucifixion. The day following the crucifixion was, by divine chronology as well as divine command, the 15th. Jn. 19:31, calls this day a Sabbath as does Lev. 23:7 (a holy convocation and Sabbath are the same). No matter what day of the week it occurred on, it is still called a Sabbath.

4. Exactly how do you go about measuring the day and time of crucifixion and the subsequent resurrection?

a. First, the Bible provides so much intricate detail relating to this great event, that it not only provides an answer to this question but also disproves the notion that the date, day and timing are not important. If it isn't, the Holy Spirit sure went to great lengths to provide an awful lot of unnecessary trivia. We think it is important.

To find this answer, begin with the Passover feast, which we have come to call the last supper. The fact is, this "last supper" occurred on the date of the ancient Passover feast of which I doubt there is any disagreement. Lev. 23:5, states that the Passover was on the 14th day of the first month, at even. So, regardless as to what day of the week it was, it was specified to be on the 14th. You only have to review the gospel accounts (see Mt. 26, etc.) to chronicle the parallel of the last supper Jesus ate with his disciples along with his ensuing capture, trial and crucifixion, with the ancient feast of Passover. If you read all of the accounts carefully, you will notice that the terms "Passover" and "unleavened bread" are used interchangeably. This is because they were joined in their occurrence and types. Then you follow (through the gospel records) the events through the night, into the next day. The scriptures will delineate for you: (1) the crucifixion at the 3rd hour of that day (9:00); darkness at the 6th hour (12:00), and death at the 9th hour (3:00). The Jewish day was reckoned from even to even; not midnight to midnight as ours is today. (Some who are unlearned with the scriptures even attempt to discredit this). But by following the events of the last supper up to and including his crucifixion and subsequent death, you come very near to the end of the Passover day, the 14th. (Mk. 15:34). Following this, Joseph asked for his body; hastily prepared him for burial, and placed him in his own tomb. They hurried because the "Sabbath" drew on. (Lk. 23:54). For that Sabbath ---- was an high day, Jn. 19:31.

At this point, Friday proponents just keep talking because they know that there is a significance to the statement "*for that Sabbath was an high day*". They would have us believe that the Sabbath referred to here is the regular weekly Sabbath which comes always on Saturday. If you simply pass over this reference to an high day and pretend that there is no significance to the statement, then you will endorse their Friday theology. But it will not work if you stick with all of the scriptures.

Following the scriptural account of the crucifixion, we have watched as Christ became our Passover sacrifice (I Cor. 5:7). We have noted the scriptures that emphatically place the Passover on the 14th day of the first month (Lev. 23:5). Then, in Lev. 23:6-7, the 15th was specified as the first day of unleavened bread, a holy convocation, that is, an high Sabbath. Christ was crucified on the 14th; of that there can be no doubt. The day was ending as they buried him. It is an over simplification to re-state that the 15th followed. It should not take a "rocket scientist" to figure out that the 15th has to fall on different days of the week each year. Thus, whether or not a Friday theology can see it, the 15th, (special Sabbath), wherein no servile work was to be done, occurs all over the week, in different years. This was the day (Sabbath) that "drew on", as they hurried to bury Christ (so as not to be found "working" on the Sabbath. Why is this day an "high" day? It was because it was not the regular weekly Sabbath. Second, because it was one of only 3 times throughout the entire year that the Jews were commanded to travel to Jerusalem for festivities.

For the sake of study, allow me to propose that this 15th, unleavened bread, high Sabbath day, fell (in the year of crucifixion) on Thursday. This would mean that in such year, you would have a special holy convocation on Thursday and then the routine, weekly holy convocation on Saturday. Now read Mt. 28:1, which says, "In the end of the Sabbath ---- (which Sabbath, Thursday or Saturday?) ---- as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week" (Sunday). Therefore (using my proposed example of Thursday following the crucifixion) you would have Christ in the tomb from the end of the day Wednesday or at the very beginning of Thursday; Friday and Saturday. By all

accounts, the tomb was visited very early the first day of the week and Christ was risen and not there.

Again, for the sake of discussion, let's assume Christ *was* crucified on Friday, as is most commonly believed. Let's do this to see what the outcome would be. Keep in mind that our central question is: How long was Jesus in the grave? The first fact to consider is that Jesus was not in the grave at all on the actual day of crucifixion, other than a possible very few minutes. He died at 3:00; followed by the soldiers finishing / confirming death; followed by Pilate sending to verify that he was indeed dead; followed by preparing him for burial and placing him in the tomb and rolling the stone to close it. You be the judge. If you begin shortly after 3:00, how long before you actually finish burying him, with the restriction to finish burial before the "holy convocation" of unleavened bread that was to begin at sunset (roughly 6:00). You can only conclude that they barely made it, and such is the sense of urgency you glean from the record.

This means therefore, that if the next day was the weekly Sabbath and not the Sabbath of unleavened bread, and if his tomb was empty at about day break on the first day of the week, the maximum time he was actually in the grave could have been no more than 24 to 36 hours. (And some theologians actually argue that this insignificant portion of time in the grave is sufficient; nay, also accurate. In addition they attempt to justify a time no more than one half of 3 full days and nights by suggesting examples where, under other circumstances, the expressions in the Bible about some "third day" occurrence, *could* be interpreted to be less and then transpose that upon the most important fact of Christianity). Tradition is a powerful force to overcome. When you consider the sequence that actually occurred you are forced to conclude (according to Friday theology) that Christ was in the grave only during the night portion of Saturday; the day time portion of Saturday and possibly some undetermined portion of the night time of Sunday. At the absolute maximum: 1 day and 2 nights; at the least, 1 day and 1 night. Friday theology accepts this "half - fulfilled" chronology and considers it as an adequate answer to the entire preponderance of all scripture that bears such an emphatic testimony to the marvelous and powerful resurrection of Jesus Christ after being in the grave for 3 days and 3 nights. It escapes reason, logic and the glory of God why we would not rejoice that there is such an intricately woven, beautiful answer to a question that has only been made mysterious by dark-age tradition.

Friday theology offers a chronology that says Christ was in the grave Friday and Friday night; Saturday and Saturday night; and then Sunday night. But they can't have it both ways. If Christ was crucified on Friday, then the full measure of that entire day was over when he was placed in the tomb, thus eliminating Friday entirely from the calculation of time, leaving only the full day of Saturday and some unknown and undetermined portion of Sunday night. Someone is bound to respond that this is being "nit - picky". And I agree. That is what happens when error is introduced into theology. Thanks be unto God, the reality of scripture will bear up under the most exacting of scrutiny. God did not clearly set the time as 3 days and 3 nights and then not have the ability to make it fit.

Jonah 1:17 and Mt. 12:38-40, very distinctly delineates 3 days and 3 nights. To teach, as some do, that this is fulfilled by a piece - meal remnant of 3 days and nights just is not God's way of doing things. In my opinion, the Friday theology renders the Bible an inaccurate book and therefore not credible.

5. All of this raises the question as to exactly when did Christ vacate the tomb? The truth is, no one knows. In each of the gospel accounts of the resurrection, the tomb was visited "early the first day of the week", "while it was yet dark" and he was (already) risen. No one saw him rise. It is possible that he arose shortly before the tomb was visited. It is also possible that he arose after sundown the evening before or anytime during that night. The best possible information to guide the answer to this question is the parameter of how long he was to be in the grave. I believe this was to be 3 days and 3 nights, not remnants or pieces of days and nights. Therefore this suggests a resurrection some time shortly following sun down Saturday. Since no one really knows the exact hour of his resurrection, you can only surmise when it might have been, within the time from Sun down

Saturday to sunrise Sunday. What you can positively assert is that he was to be in the tomb for 3 days and nights which would have ended at the end of Saturday.

6. Some have raised the question as to whether or not Christ was in the grave exactly 72 hours. Any time short of that I would consider spurious. God would not short change his own predictions. After all he was in control. If he did anything other than 72 hours, it would have been more; not less. The fact is, he certainly could have risen after sundown Saturday and have satisfied the 3 days and 3 nights required, using the late Wednesday burial. To the Friday theology I would ask: Exactly what scripture do you use to declare that Christ vacated the tomb just minutes or even an hour before it was visited. I would like to know.

Further, in order to make light of a Wednesday crucifixion, some have tried to insinuate that a Wednesday crucifixion would calculate to be 5 days and 5 nights. To those who would make such an insinuation I can only say that you have a real problem counting time, given the information that is available; or you simply have not tried to pursue the truth; or you are playing games. If you believe in a Wednesday crucifixion, you are forced to acknowledge that Wednesday was over when he was laid in the tomb. If you believe in a Friday crucifixion, you are forced to admit that Friday was over when he was laid in the tomb. Neither day can be counted in the time that he was in the grave. Insinuating that there are 5 days involved may be someone's idea, but I consider it totally erroneous. Five days makes no more sense than one and one - half days.

7. Next, let us address the question raised by some as to whether or not the scriptures do in fact require a full 3 days and 3 nights, or can verses expressing "the third day" just as well be interpreted to apply to a shorter period of time instead? In answer to this, let me offer a list of several scripture references that relate to the "third day" expression: Mt. 17:23; 20:19; 27:63-64. Mk. 9:31; 10:34. Lk. 9:22; 13:32; 18:33; 24:7, 21, 46. Acts. 10:40. Then add to these: Mt. 12:38-40 and Jonah 1:17. Since all of these verses except the last 2 in Mt. 12 and Jon. 1:17, use the expression "third day" and not 3 days and 3 nights, some argue that this provides a latitude of the time frame and does not specifically require a full 3 days and nights. It is further argued that there are many references in the scripture where a similar "third day" expression is used and the context of those verses does not necessarily require a full 3 days and 3 nights. Of course the express purpose of these assertions is to accommodate the shorter time frame of 24 to 36 hours of Friday theology.

The first part of the answer to this is in the form of a question. Of all the verses related to the resurrection and that refer to the "third day", exactly which one of them could not properly be applied to 3 full days and 3 full nights? Is there a single piece of evidence that would forbid the application of these expressions to the full period of time? If there is not (and I am sure there is not) then the argument is over. So my question to anyone trying to subvert the calculation by an ambiguous use of these expressions is simply this: Which one of the verses would be violated by allowing their application to the full time period?

Then when you couple this with the indisputable expressions of Mt. 12:38-40 and Jonah 1:17, that specifically states 3 days and 3 nights, you have no alternative but to apply the verses that some seem to think are open ended in their application, so that they conform to the direct, explicit statements of Mt. 12 and Jon. 1. Some argue that there are more verses that simply state "the third day" than there are that give a specific description of 3 days and 3 nights and therefore, the greater number of verses should take priority in interpretation. That's interesting. I would like to ask those who concur with that, exactly what period of time does the expression "the third day", alone, refer to. You cannot answer that question without the information given by those verses which do expressly identify the specific time. The verse that does that is Mt. 12:40. Otherwise you have no reconciliation of scriptures and Mt. 12:40, would be erroneous.

Finally, did it ever occur to Friday proponents that the expression "the third day", means just that? Jesus said: Destroy this temple and in 3 days I will raise it up. Who will say that this means 1 hour Monday; all day Tuesday; and 2 hours Wednesday, and call it 3 days, especially in the total context of Biblical precision. In summary, to interpret the passages referring to 3 days or 3rd day as

they relate to the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus as anything short of 3 full days and nights is a misrepresentation of sacred truth.

8. Another question raised by Friday proponents is this: Didn't the Wednesday crucifixion idea just start some 200 years ago and hasn't it followed "fringe" groups that are way out of main stream understanding of the subject? I like to face this type of question head on and for just the type it is: a condescending attitude that only can defend itself, not by scripture analysis, but by casting aspersions on any opposite view when scriptures don't offer them support. I acknowledge that there are more people who believe in a Friday crucifixion than there are that believe in a Wednesday crucifixion. But a condescending attitude deserves no respect because it thinks orthodoxy and numbers are proof of truth. There was a time in the Bible when 400 prophets were on one side of an issue and one prophet on the other side of that issue. Guess who was right? It was the one prophet standing alone because God was with him. Simply put, whatever side God and his Biblical record is on is the right side, no matter what the numbers may say. But I also believe in equalizing the playing field when some try to belittle an issue by pointing out how few may hold it or what fringe group may endorse it also. In that case, the Friday theology is taught by the Roman Catholic Church. Does that make other proponents of Friday theology as followers of the Pope. I don't think so. The Mormons believe in a Friday crucifixion, does that mean other Friday proponents are Mormon supporters? I don't think so. The now demised Armstrong organization is reported to have believed in a Wednesday crucifixion. Does that mean that "Chuck" Swindoll who teaches a Wednesday crucifixion is some how part of the Armstrong errors"? Hardly! Then what about Bible commentators, dictionaries, Library of Congress records along with the volumes written on the subject that uphold, in one form or another, a Friday crucifixion? Isn't that very weighty evidence? The answer is, only if they conform to the Library of God, the Bible. Otherwise you simply discount their testimony. If the Bible teaching, fairly analyzed, supports a Wednesday crucifixion (and I believe it does) it simply doesn't matter what anyone else says. Other commentaries are good only insofar as they support the Bible.

9. Is it scripturally accurate to call a portion of a day a full day, as some have done in order to explain away the need for more time than a Friday crucifixion will provide for? By borrowing from examples or events in the Bible which have no relevance to the resurrection, which examples may or may not apply to only portions of a day in their respective use and setting, and then trying to transpose their presumed limits upon the time Christ was in the grave in order to justify a Friday theology, is a tactic that will not work. You still have to deal with absolute statements requiring 3 days and 3 nights. To follow this kind of reasoning could also lead to a conclusion that the 6 days of creation were only portions of days; or 365 days of a year were only portions of years; and likewise for 7 days of a week. This reasoning, flawed as it is, could be used to imply that Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday only amounts to 24 hours instead of 72. But it is not necessary to go to such desperate lengths when you simply come to realize that God was not trying to crimp or cram some unworkable time frame into his great plan about the resurrection. You don't have to take Jonah 1:17, and construe it to mean only about a 24 to 36 hour period and thereby put God in the untenable position of having said something he didn't mean.

What if I tried to teach that the expression the "third day" only refers to day light time and not any portion of night time? It would be as reasonable as using that expression to try to compress the time in the grave to a maximum of 36 hours, which, by the way would have only one day(light) time if you use the Friday theology. If you did, therefore, use the "third day" as referring to day light time (and not the night time portion) then you would have a Monday or Tuesday resurrection. This begs the observation: "Only a Wednesday crucifixion, with burial at or near the beginning of Thursday, will fit the scriptural, chronological, and eternal destiny and precision mold. It just won't fit the mold of hoary, dark-age tradition.

10. Now let us take another look at some of the feast days and their chronological sequence. This will help to clarify and solidify basic time frame matters, especially those occurring during the time of Christ's crucifixion. This in turn will help arrive at the timing of the crucifixion and the time spent in the tomb. For this purpose, let's look again at Passover, unleavened bread, first fruits and the

feast of weeks. It would help to review again the 23rd ch. of Lev.; Det. 16:9-10; and the 4 gospel accounts of the death, burial and resurrection. As you review these scriptures, take note of the fact that exact dates are given for Passover (14th) and unleavened bread (15th). However, for first fruits and feast of weeks no exact date is given, just an exact day (of the week). Both of them were designated to occur on “the morrow after the Sabbath”. You should also note there is no specific timing given for the first fruit offering except: (1) “When you put the cycle in the harvest; (2) the morrow after the Sabbath. Bear in mind that the first fruit offering was a type of the resurrection (1Cor.15:23) which certainly puts its timing right within the week of great activities including the death, burial and resurrection of Christ. It is therefore obvious that the first fruit offering would occur somewhere within this time, even though the first of the barley harvest itself might slightly vary from year to year.

Most commentators have put the first fruit offering on the 16th, following the first day of unleavened bread. (Some put it on the 15th and at least one has said that it occurs on the 14th when the Passover was observed). Each of these specific dates are mathematically and scripturally impossible. Let’s see why. Lev. 23:15-16, delineates the exact timing for the feast of weeks. It was to be exactly 50 days from the time of the first fruit offering. It was to be calculated by counting 7 Sabbaths from the first fruit offering, and then unto “the morrow after the 7th Sabbath shall ye number 50 days”. This feast of weeks was to be observed, not on a specific date each year, but on a specific day, “the morrow after the 7th Sabbath”. Since there is absolutely no other special feast day surrounding this feast of weeks, the Sabbath that is mentioned here can only be the regular weekly Sabbath. Beginning, then, at this day and counting back for 50 days, you are brought to another “morrow after the Sabbath” (Lev. 23:11), the designated time for the first fruit offering. The only possible mathematical calculation you can use here is the morrow after the weekly Sabbath. NOTE: How very intricate are the scriptures. The “morrow after the Sabbath” of Lev. 23:11, corresponds exactly with “At the end of the Sabbath as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, Mt. 28:1. Then when you count 50 days forward from that precise point you come to Acts 2:1: “Now when the day of Pentecost was fully come”(The day of Pentecost means 50th day), you are brought to another “morrow after the Sabbath”, Lev. 23:15-16.

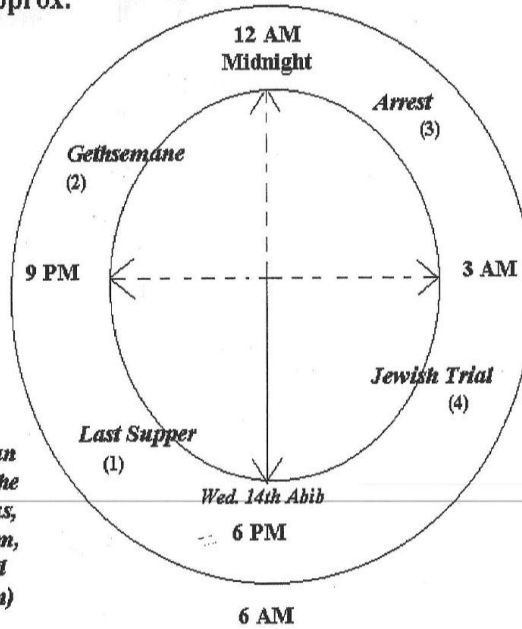
Friday theology argues that the first day of unleavened bread (15th) was not a “Sabbath day”. Then it stipulates that the first fruit offering occurred on the 16th. The scriptures plainly state that the first fruit offering was on the “morrow after the Sabbath. It can’t be both ways: either it is a Sabbath or it isn’t. Again, the scriptures provide the answer in Lev. 23, where the first and last days of unleavened bread are holy convocations. Jesus was crucified on the 14th (Passover). He was buried as the 15th began. He spent the 15th, 16th, and 17th in the grave and arose some time during the first half of the 18th (Sunday). If Christ was crucified on Friday, then he was not in the grave until Saturday. This means he was in the grave 1 day and 1 night, with the possibility of an insignificant portion of the next night. Who are we going to believe? God who said it would be 3 days and nights or tradition which would have us believe God only meant half or less of this time.

Therefore our conclusion remains and is more strongly confirmed, that, “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. The power of the resurrection is more thoroughly verified by the intricate fulfillment of types, events and the declaration of the Lord himself. Amen!

First 12 hours of Jewish day, beginning at approx. 6 pm sunset.

The Passover
Ex. 12:1-14, Lev. 23:5
Held on the 14th day
of the first month of the
Hebrew year.

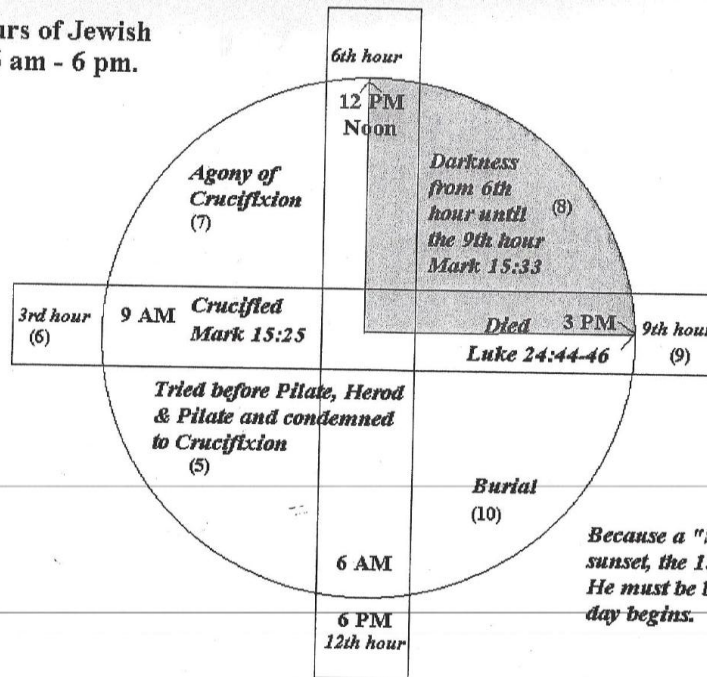
The Passover feast began
at the "beginning" of the
14th day of Abib. . . thus,
at sunset, @ approx 6pm,
the Passover started and
lasted until sunset (6pm)
the next afternoon.



LEGEND (Approx)

- (1) Last Supper 6pm
- (2) Gethsemane 9 pm - 12 am (midnight)
- (3) Arrest 10 pm - 1 am
- (4) Jewish Trial 12 - 6 am

Last 12 hours of Jewish day, from 6 am - 6 pm.



LEGEND (Approx)

- (5) Herod & Pilate & Herod 6 - 8 am
- (6) Crucified 9 am
- (7) On the cross 9 am - 12 pm (noon)
- (8) Darkness & other phenomonem 12 noon - 3 pm
- (9) Death 3 pm
- (10) Burial 4 - 6 pm

Because a "Sabbath" began at sunset, the 15th day of Abib. . . He must be buried before that day begins.