



IN THE HEART OF THE EARTH

THE SIGN OF JONAH
REVEALS TWO HEARTS

While man rejected and killed his Creator,
the Creator responded with forgiveness.

Ray Foucher

In the Heart of the Earth:

the Sign of Jonah Reveals Two Hearts

by Ray Foucher

**An in-depth, in-context examination
of the timing of Jesus' resurrection**

**“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**

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In the Heart of the Earth: The Sign of Jonah Reveals Two Hearts

Preface

This subject first attracted my attention while studying the statement Jesus made about “the sign of the prophet Jonah.” The more I examined His words, the more it seemed that the common explanation left important questions unanswered.

Jesus declared that the only sign He would give to that generation would be “the sign of the prophet Jonah,” explaining that just as Jonah was three days and three nights in the great fish, so the Son of Man would be three days and three nights “in the heart of the earth.” At first glance, this statement appears to create a difficulty, since the commonly-accepted timeline from Friday afternoon to Sunday morning is too short to fulfill the prophecy.

This book examines that problem carefully and proposes that the phrase “the heart of the earth” does not primarily refer to the tomb, but to the revealing of what was in the hearts of men as they rejected and killed Christ. During those crucial days, the deepest intentions of humanity were exposed, while at the same time the heart of God was revealed in Christ’s response of forgiveness and self-sacrificing love. In this way, the sign of Jonah becomes more than a question of chronology—it becomes a revelation of the true heart of both man and God. While man was killing his Creator, the Creator responded with forgiveness.

The central idea of this study is that the sign of Jonah was not given merely to establish a timeline for the resurrection, but to reveal the contrast between the heart of sinful humanity and the heart of our ever-merciful God of other-centered love.

Introduction

God is love. This is the most important truth about God. Why then have so many become confused? God has been so misrepresented and misunderstood. He is no longer seen or appreciated as the God of love He really is. He can be understood to be a loving Father only as He is perceived as acting in a loving way toward others. God's attitude toward us has been amply demonstrated in the life of His only-begotten Son. Jesus, while He walked among men, displayed a character of absolute, selfless love for others and He claimed:

“... he that hath seen me hath seen the Father ...” (John 14:9)

Essentially, He said, “My character is just like my Father’s” - like father, like son. What would a God of love be like? How would His character be manifest towards others in a way that we could see and understand? Early in our marriage, I gave my wife a plaque with the saying: “Let my love, like sunlight, surround you and yet give you illumined freedom.” This comes close to expressing God’s approach to us. In a loving relationship, love is not forced on another. There must be freedom to walk away from the relationship, or it is something other than love. God does not force anyone into a relationship with Him. He seeks to draw, to attract others to Him. He wants people to accept His ways so that He can bless His children now, and eventually with eternal life and “pleasures for evermore.” (Psalm 16:11)

“If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?” (Matthew 7:11)

“Thou hast given him his heart’s desire, and hast not withholden the request of his lips. Selah.” (Psalm 21:2)

God does not force man to obey His laws. If He did, there would be no lying, stealing, murder, etc. If God arranged circumstances to keep these things from happening, He would necessarily be restricting man’s free will. Obviously, He does not do this. He allows us the freedom to do what we want while, at the same time, seeking to illuminate our understanding that His way is the best for our happiness. He wants to give us “illumined freedom.”

One of the greatest principles God uses in dealing with His people is to give them freedom of choice. Love can never coerce or be coerced. God only accepts love that is freely given to Him. More than that, God is completely devoted to doing the best He can for us.

“Love ... does not seek the things of itself ...” (1 Corinthians 13:4-5, *KJ3 Literal Translation*)

Love seeks the good of others. Man makes it hard for God to bless him because he will not let go of sin. People want to follow their own wills instead of seeking to understand and follow God’s will. How far will God go in allowing man to exercise his free will? Is there any ultimate demonstration of this in scripture? The answers lie in a passage of scripture that, at first glance, seems to have little to do with these questions. It is a portion of scripture that has caused much confusion – Jesus’ answer to the question of the scribes and Pharisees asking Him for a sign.

“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.” (Matthew 12:38-40)

When He responded and said “there shall no sign be given to it, but ...” He implied that, in answer to their request, one sign, and one sign only or one ultimate sign, would be given to them, to that generation, that “wicked and adulterous generation.” There must have been something very significant about that sign.

Jesus mentioned aspects of Jonah’s experience that related to His own experience of being “three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.” Perhaps by closely examining the meaning of “three days and three nights,” and “in the heart of the earth,” and looking at the context of the whole passage, we will be better able to understand the meaning of the sign of Jonah and its relationship to our understanding of the character of God.

There are indications that some important original words in scripture have been translated incorrectly in many versions resulting in misunderstandings on important topics. This study will use the principle of letting the Bible interpret itself. This can be done by letting it define its own terms by examining how significant words are used in their contexts in other passages. That way, an interpretation is not being imposed; rather Biblical clues are uncovered to help discover the intended meaning.

More important than revealing and presenting a better Biblical understanding for some points about resurrection timing, this study portrays God’s character in a more complete way. For many readers, correctly understanding this passage of scripture will amount to the discovery of a secret code that reveals what is in the heart of God toward man. That you may be more impressed with the loveliness of His character, and have a deeper appreciation of how He has dealt with His created beings, and how He seeks to relate to you is the object of this study.

Several appendices are separated from the main text in order to maintain its flow and ease of understanding. They are included to help answer the many questions that naturally come up when such different ideas are presented. Please read them as there is some very interesting material there.

Bible quotations are from the King James Version unless otherwise noted. Anything added in [square brackets] within Biblical quotations are the author’s clarifications. Italicized words, as many editions of the King James Bible present them to indicate supplied words, are retained. Word definitions are quoted from The Online Bible Lexicon (<https://onlinebible.net/>) and are based on The Brown Driver Briggs Lexicon for the Old Testament and Thayer’s Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament.

Chapter 1. Three Days and Three Nights

One of the central difficulties in understanding Jesus' prophecy is His use of the phrase "the heart of the earth." Jesus declared that He would spend "three days and three nights in the heart of the earth," yet the traditional timeline from Friday afternoon to Sunday morning is too short to fulfill that statement.

This chapter examines the meaning of that prophecy by exploring Jewish time reckoning, the biblical usage of key Greek words, and the comparison between Jonah and Christ. The evidence suggests that the prophecy does not refer merely to the time Jesus spent in the tomb, but to the period beginning with His betrayal when He was delivered into the hands and control of men and ending with His death.

In this chapter, we will first consider whether the traditional timeline from Friday afternoon to Sunday morning can reasonably satisfy the statement "three days and three nights." Next, we will examine the biblical meaning of the phrase "the heart of the earth." Finally, we will consider when the period described by Jesus actually began and when it most likely ended.

The Traditional Timeline

"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." (Matthew 12:38-40)

This passage of scripture has caused considerable controversy. Many people recognize a problem with the reference to three days and three nights. This has resulted in such things as the Wednesday crucifixion theory. Others see the crucifixion as happening on Thursday. The arguments against Christianity and the written word coming from the confusion over this passage often go something like the following:

"Christianity depends on the 'death' of Jesus for salvation. Jesus claimed that while 'in the heart of the earth' He would be as Jonah was while 'in the whale's belly.' The contradiction between His words and the fulfillment is obvious. Jonah was alive, Jesus was dead! Jesus had said 'like Jonah' not 'unlike Jonah.' Thus, according to His own test, Jesus was not the true Messiah of the Jews.

Also, the prophesied time was not fulfilled. No matter how hard you try, you cannot get three days and three nights out of a Friday afternoon death and a Sunday morning resurrection. If Jesus' own prophecy doesn't stand, how can anything else in scripture?" (Adapted from various comments on the internet.)

Honest Christians have to admit that this passage in Matthew does not seem as clear as it might. They often present arguments that are not convincing to those who hold critical positions as described above. The argument above against the Biblical record assumes that Jesus meant He would be in the tomb for three days and three nights as Christians commonly understand that time period and that, since He was to be like Jonah, He would also have to be alive. This chapter will carefully examine the phrase "three days and three nights" to Biblically determine the beginning and ending of that period and Jesus' whereabouts and condition during this time. It will solve the arguments raised above and more.

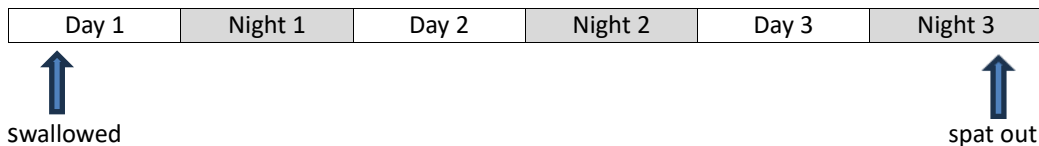
A Friday afternoon crucifixion and a Sunday morning resurrection cannot produce three days and three nights.

Jonah and the Whale

To correctly understand Jesus' experience, it is necessary to first examine Jonah's. How long did Jonah spend in the whale? Scripture says "three days and three nights."

"Now the LORD had prepared a great fish to swallow up Jonah. And Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights." (Jonah 1:17)

How long is that? It might look like this:

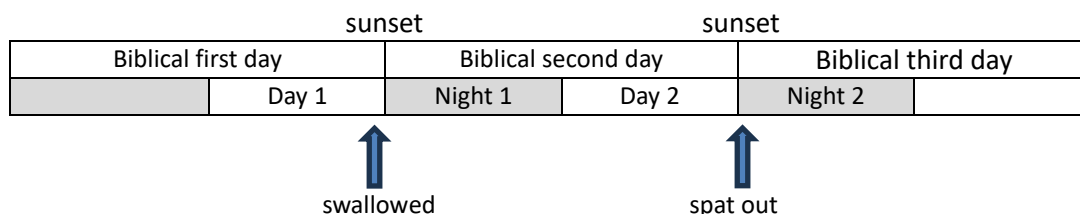


Of course, the days and nights could be switched in their order because it does not say at what hour Jonah was swallowed. However, the verse does number the days first. The more important question is, "does it have to be exactly or something very close to 72 hours?"

Inclusive Reckoning

Many Bible students will bring up the Middle Eastern concept of inclusive reckoning. People of the Middle East and other cultures did, and still do this, with the ages of their children. As soon as they are born, they are considered to be one year old. Western culture would think of them as being in their first year, but they call it one year old. Then, when they pass the New Year, they are referred to as two years old – they are in their second year (relative to the cycle of years). If a child is born one day before the start of the New Year, he is one year old. The next day, when the New Year has begun, he would be referred to as two years old (he is in his second year going by the calendar year). Westerners would say he is still less than one year old, relative to the anniversary of his birth. Inclusive reckoning counts any part of a year as a whole year and does the same with shorter time periods.

Since any part of a day can be counted as a whole day and since evening and morning (See Appendix 1 - *Variations in Use of the Word "Even" as in Evening*), Biblically, constitute one day ("... the evening and the morning were the first day." Genesis 1:5) a three-day time period could be as short as:



Let's count the days:

Day 1 - a short portion of day one from when Jonah was swallowed until sunset.

Day 2 - the next whole evening and morning (labeled as "night 1" and "day 2"), sunset to sunset.

Day 3 - a short portion of the next evening (labeled as "night 2") from sunset until Jonah was spat out.

This would count as three days according to Jewish inclusive reckoning but, in the western system, it is really one complete 24-hour day plus a short time on the preceding day, and another short time on the following day, perhaps 26 hours.

If you lived in many parts of the Middle East, you would be considered to be one year old on the day you were born.

But Jesus Said ...

While this is legitimate when counting a specified number of days, in this case, the time designated by Jesus was a number of days and a number of nights. It was not just a number of days where a portion of a day could count as a whole day. It was three days and three nights. To satisfy the designated time, Jonah must have been in the belly of the whale for three days, or portions thereof, and three nights or portions thereof – something much closer to 72 hours.

In reference to His time in the heart of the earth, Jesus clearly said "three days and three nights." Notice, He said it twice in this one passage:

"... 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)

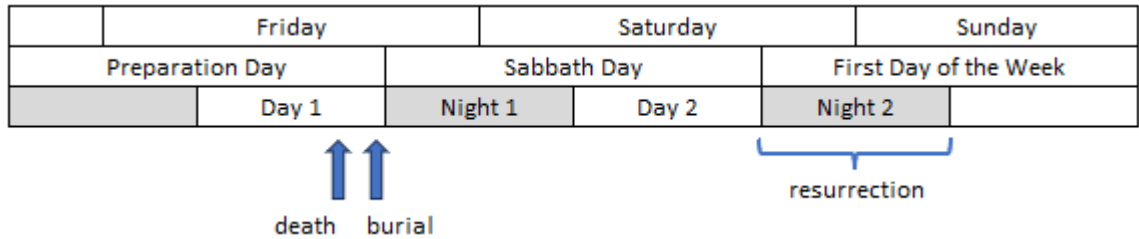
According to the usual understanding of Jesus' time in the tomb, how close do we actually come to the specification of "three days and three nights"? Most Christians believe that Jesus was crucified and died on Friday afternoon, was buried shortly before sundown Friday, rested in the tomb over the Sabbath (Friday sunset to Saturday sunset) and was resurrected early on Sunday morning. Let's check that in scripture:

"This *man* [Joseph of Arimathaea] went unto Pilate, and begged the body of Jesus. And he took it down, and wrapped it in linen, and laid it in a sepulchre that was hewn in stone, wherein never man before was laid. And that day was the preparation, [Friday] and the sabbath [starting at Friday sunset] drew on. And the women also, which came with him from Galilee, followed after, and beheld the sepulchre, and how his body was laid. And they returned, and prepared spices and ointments; and rested the sabbath day [Friday sunset – Saturday sunset] according to the commandment." (Luke 23:52-56)

The next verse speaks of "... the first *day* of the week, very early in the morning ..." (Luke 24:1) but John is more specific indicating that Mary arrived before sunrise:

"The first *day* of the week [Saturday sunset to Sunday sunset] cometh Mary Magdalene early, when it was yet dark, [before sunrise Sunday morning] unto the sepulchre, and seeth the stone taken away from the sepulchre." (John 20:1)

So, how many days and nights was Jesus in the tomb? Let's diagram it according to the usual understanding of the scriptures quoted above:



How long was Jesus in the tomb?

Day one - from His burial late Friday afternoon to sunset – probably less than an hour, but we'll use inclusive reckoning and count it as one day.

Night one - from Friday sunset, the start of Sabbath, to Saturday morning at sunrise - one full night.

Day two - from Saturday sunrise to Saturday sunset, the light part of the Sabbath - one full day.

Night two - from Saturday sunset, until sometime before sunrise Sunday morning - a few minutes to almost 12 hrs.

We know that He rose before sunrise, but, at this point in the study, not how long before. Again, we'll use inclusive reckoning and count it as one full night.

So, we have for the number of days:

About an hour late Friday afternoon = 1 day (using inclusive reckoning)
 All of the light part of Saturday = 1 day
 Total = 2 days

And we have, for the number of nights:

Friday evening sunset to Saturday morning sunrise = 1 night
 Saturday evening sunset to the resurrection
 sometime before sunrise on Sunday morning = 1 night
 Total = 2 nights

How can one get three days and three nights out of this? – It's not possible even by using inclusive reckoning. Many people solve this by counting partial days using inclusive reckoning, thereby arriving at three days. However, that is not what Jesus said. Again, He said:

“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)

“Three days and three nights.” The count of the number of days and nights from the diagram above results in, at most, two days and two nights.

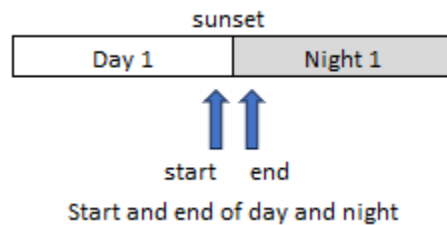
Is “a Day and a Night” Equivalent to “a Day”?

Some people would argue that the time periods “three days and three nights,” “after three days” and “three days” are simply all equivalent, because they are used interchangeably to refer to the same event. Obviously, a time period referred to as “a day and a night” could be the equivalent of “a day,” where “a day” could be less than a full 24-hour day.

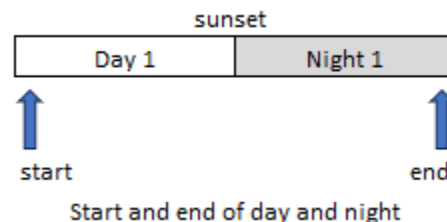
However, “a day” reckoned inclusively may or may not be equivalent to “a day and a night.” If the “day” included only an hour or two during daylight hours, then it is not equivalent to “a day and a night” because there is no night, or portion of a night.

Used inclusively, the more-general term “day” allows for a time span of anywhere from a moment in a day, whether during the dark or light portion, to a full 24 hours from sunset to sunset.

The more-specific term “a day and a night,” also used inclusively, could refer to as short a time as from a moment before sunset to a moment after sunset and including some of the day and some of the night:



Or “a day and a night” could refer to as long a time period as up to almost a full twelve hours before sunset, and up to almost a full twelve hours after sunset:



Either of the above or anything in between, used inclusively, could qualify as “a day and a night.” The point is that a day and a night must include some of each. Three days and three nights must include at least parts of three consecutive days (light portions) and at least parts of three consecutive nights (dark portions). Compare the following verse:

“Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep.” (2 Corinthians 11:25)

For Paul to be able to say that he spent “a night and a day in the deep,” he must have spent at least some portion of a day, and some portion of a night in the deep. A few hours treading water in the middle of the day, even used inclusively, would not match what he said.

From what Jesus actually said, the evidence of Paul’s experience and some logical reasoning we can see that the time period Jesus specified would best be fulfilled by other than the usual Friday afternoon to Sunday morning scenario. We can also see reason for the confusion and skepticism over the common understanding. Here is a clarification of the meaning:

“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 reign 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.” (E.W. Bullinger, The Companion Bible, Appendix 144)

In the Heart of the Earth

Here is an apparent problem: Clearly, Jesus was not in the tomb for three days and three nights. We take it for granted that He, who said He was “the Truth,” always told the truth, therefore His words need to be examined more carefully. Did He say He would be “in the tomb” for three days and three nights? No. So what did He actually say? He said that He would be “in the heart of the earth.” An obvious possibility is that the “tomb” and the “heart of the earth” are not the same; that they are, in fact, different places.

Did Jesus even say He would be in the tomb? No, He said He would be “in the heart of the earth.” But where is that?

Different places! It has always been assumed that “in the heart of the earth” refers to the grave but is that really what it means? Please recognize that to say that “the heart of the earth” represents the grave, is an assumption. Remember that Jesus often spoke in parables in which the meaning was hidden just below the surface or apparent meaning of the words used. Also, Jesus could have simply given the time and the place without adding the reference to Jonah. He didn’t have to link His future experience to Jonah’s previous experience. Why did He do it? There must be something significant about Jonah’s experience that relates to Jesus’ experience.

Jesus and Jonah Compared

Let’s compare Jesus’ experience more closely to that of Jonah. We need to find a clue in the experience of Jonah that will help us understand Jesus’ experience. The thing to do is to look more closely at what the two experiences had in common.

	Time - common	Place - not common
Jonah was	3 days and 3 nights	in the whale’s belly
Jesus was	3 days and 3 nights	in the heart of the earth

They both spent three days and three nights in their respective places or conditions – the time factor was common to both of them. However, one was in the belly of the whale, the other was “in the heart of the earth” – the location was not common. That’s time and location, but how about the premise: “as” one was, “so” shall be the other? The scripture said:

“... as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale’s belly; so shall the Son of man be ...”
(Matthew 12:40)

The wording suggests that something about their condition was similar.

The emphasis was not on as long as Jonah was, so long shall Jesus be. The time was the same, but time was not the emphasis. Also, the emphasis was not where Jonah was, there shall Jesus be. The location was not the most important part. (Indeed, the locations were different.) The emphasis was as Jonah was, so shall Jesus be – the emphasis was on their respective conditions.

Jesus was compared to Jonah not primarily in terms of time or of location, but rather, in terms of condition.

The words “as” and “be” speak of condition or state of being. Is there anything else they might have had in common that fits not the place or the length of time but, rather, their condition? When Jonah was in the whale, he was alive. When Jesus was in the tomb, He was dead – so they didn’t have that in common. It is interesting that we have always understood that Jesus was dead for three days and three nights. We read “as Jonas was ... so shall the Son of man be ...” and compare His experience, His condition, to that of Jonah, yet Jonah was not dead!

It doesn’t work. The verse reads, “as Jonah was ... so shall the son of man be ...” There must have been something similar regarding their respective conditions. What else about Jonah’s condition might have been similar to Jesus’ experience? David’s description of his own experience seems to be related:

“The sorrows of death compassed me, and the floods of ungodly men made me afraid. The sorrows of hell compassed me about: the snares of death prevented me.” (Psalm 18:4-5)

“I am counted with them that go down into the pit: I am as a man *that hath* no strength: ... Thou hast laid me in the lowest pit, in darkness, in the deeps.” (Psalm 88:4,6)

While not speaking of Jesus, these verses relate death, or fear of death, to thoughts of being surrounded, of being in water, of being threatened by ungodly men, of being confined. Here is a verse where Jonah is describing his experience:

“I went down to the bottoms of the mountains; the earth with her bars was about me for ever: yet hast thou brought up my life from corruption, O LORD my God.” (Jonah 2:6)

“Compassed about,” “snares” and “bars” suggest imprisonment, confinement or no escape. What was common in the conditions of Jesus and Jonah was definitely not that they were both dead. Could it be that they somehow were both confined in a place, or by circumstances, but for the same length of time?

	Time - common	Place - not common	Condition - common
Jonah was	3 days and 3 nights	in the whale’s belly	confined
Jesus was	3 days and 3 nights	in the heart of the earth	confined

They were both confined: Jonah in the whale and Jesus, even if only figuratively, “in the heart of the earth.” Remember, we are now just exploring possibilities. Here is a comparison of Jonah’s experience, while in the fish, with that of Jesus:

Jonah's Prayer from the Belly of the Fish (verses in Jonah 2 indicated)	Jesus' Experiences Paralleling those of Jonah (Old Testament verses included are prophetic of Messiah)
"Jonah prayed unto the LORD" clearly, he would have wanted out of the whale (vs 1)	Jesus: "O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me" (Matthew 26:39)
"I cried by reason of mine affliction" (vs 2)	"Jesus cried with a loud voice" (Matthew 27:46,50)
"out of the belly of hell" (vs 2)	"For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell" (Psalm 16:10)
"thou heardest my voice" (vs 2)	"when he cried unto him, he heard" (Psalm 22:24)
"in the midst (heart) of the seas" (vs 3)	"in the heart of the earth" (Matthew 12:40)
"I am cast out of thy sight" (vs 4)	"why hast thou forsaken me?" (Matthew 27:46)
"the waters compassed me about" (v5) (waters are often represented as people)	"the assembly of the wicked have inclosed me" (Psalm 22:16)
"thou brought up my life from corruption" (vs 6)	"neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption" (Acts 2:27)
"my soul fainted within me" (vs 7)	"My soul is exceeding sorrowful" (Matthew 26:38)
"I will sacrifice unto thee" (vs 9)	"given himself for ... a sacrifice" (Ephesians 5:2)
"Salvation is of the LORD" (vs 9)	Yahshua means "Yahweh is salvation"

A few things to note from this comparison. Jesus was afflicted to the point of sweating blood. It is interesting to consider one aspect of Jesus' affliction. Isaiah 63:9 says that "In all their affliction he was afflicted" referring to the Saviour's deep concern for His people. This is also reflected in His lament over Jerusalem: "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem ... how often would I have gathered ..." (Matthew 23:37). He was more concerned for others than for Himself. Note also that Jesus' affliction did not come from God. Isaiah 53:4 says "we did esteem him [or, we thought him to be] stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted." Neither was Jonah afflicted by God; God saved him from drowning.

"Hell" in Jonah 2:2 is the Hebrew word "sheol" meaning the grave. While Jonah was not dead, in his circumstance, he was facing certain death and was delivered from it. Jesus, while He did die, was left in the grave for a very short time.

The word "midst" in Jonah 2:3 is from the Hebrew "lebab" (Strong's H3824) which means "the heart" as in "the mind" or "the thinking." It is rarely (in over 250 cases) used to mean anything like the midst or middle or center of anything and, even then, in an often-figurative or poetic sense. Hebrew has another word – "tavek" (Strong's H8432) that is normally used for the middle or midst of something in a spatial sense. See how "lebab" is used in this verse:

"Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart (lebab), and convert, and be healed." (Isaiah 6:10)

That verse is quoted by John showing the equivalence between "lebab" and "kardia:"

"Therefore they could not believe, because that Esaias said again, He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart; that they should not see with *their* eyes, nor understand with *their* heart (kardia), and be converted, and I should heal them." (John 12:39-40)

This is the same situation as the word "kardia" translated as "heart" in Matthew 12:40 which is also never used in that way. Most versions of Jonah 2:3 use "heart" with only a few using "midst" as in the KJV. "Seas" and "earth" (Greek: "ge" as in Matthew 12:40) are also related. Both can refer to people as in:

"... the voice of a great multitude (of people), and as the voice of many waters..." (Revelation 19:6)

“... all the world (“ge;” really, “the people”) wondered after the beast.” (Revelation 13:3)

Not all of the parallels in the preceding table necessarily directly support the position that Jesus was alive during His time in the heart of the earth prior to His death. However, there plainly is much more evidence that the three days and three nights of Jesus’ time in “the heart of the earth” was a time He experienced. In other words, He was NOT dead without consciousness in the grave!

There is no evidence in Psalm 22 to suggest that the experience of Christ described there includes any time He was dead. The only allusion to death is in verse 15 “thou hast brought me into the dust of death” yet that is very metaphorical language as in Psalm 7:5, 30:9 and 44:25. He has been brought to the brink of death and yet continues speaking after that verse; there is no indication of death happening.

Now, we need to look more carefully at where and in what manner Jesus might have been, in a sense, confined. Where was He during the three days and three nights? We’ve already seen that there is a problem with the idea that He was in the tomb for three days and three nights, because He wasn’t.

So, the question comes down to: where, or what, is the heart of the earth? Most people, of course, cannot consider that it is anything other than the grave. However, we need to “think outside the box.” We need to recognize that there are symbols involved. And, most importantly, we need to let scripture define its own terms. How does the Bible explain what Jesus meant when He said He would be “three days and three nights in the heart of the earth”? Let’s first establish more firmly, from scripture, that He was not talking about being in the grave for that length of time.

Where Was Jesus for the Three Days and Three Nights?

Jesus did say He would be “three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.” However, He did not use the word for “tomb” or “grave” in that case. Of course, He could have and did use it on at least two other occasions:

“Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For ye are as graves which are not seen, and the men that walk over *them* are not aware *of them*.” (Luke 11:44)

“Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear His voice.” (John 5:28)

In both cases, the word “graves” is translated from the Greek word “mnemeion” (Strong’s G3419). The King James Version translates “mnemeion” as “sepulchre” 29 times, as “grave” 8 times, and as “tomb” 5 times.

If Jesus had meant what most people think He meant, the gospels could have just recorded Him as saying, “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 grave,” with the Greek text using the word “mnemeion.”

Why did Jesus say He would be “in the heart of the earth”? The earth doesn’t have a heart!

However, that word was not used. Instead, He used the rather strange phrase “in the heart of the earth.” Let’s examine this phrase carefully. Does it have a meaning beyond its most obvious and what everyone thinks or has assumed it means?

A Word Study of “Heart”

The Greek word translated in this verse as “heart” is “kardia” (G2588), which is the source of the English terms “cardia” or “cardiac.” The King James Version translates it consistently; 159 times as “heart” and once as “broken hearted.” Here are the major meanings provided by the *Online Bible Greek Lexicon*:

1. That organ in the animal body which is the centre of the circulation of the blood, and hence was regarded as the seat of physical life.
2. Denotes the centre of all physical and spiritual life.
3. Of the middle or central or inmost part of anything, even though inanimate.

In modern English, “heart” is also used to mean the center of something, but did Bible writers have that understanding and, more specifically, did they ever use the word “kardia” with that meaning?

An examination, including the context, of all 160 uses of the Greek word “kardia” in the New Testament will show that there are no clear New Testament examples where kardia refers to the geographical center of a physical object.

The only meaning listed among the Greek Lexicon definitions for kardia that might relate to being in the earth is the last one, and it specifies “the middle or central or inmost part.” If the phrase “in the heart of the earth” (Matthew 12:40) is understood to be referring to the heart of the physical earth - it doesn’t work because Jesus, while in the grave, wasn’t anywhere near “the middle, or central, or inmost part” of the earth, which was a few thousand kilometers away. Rather, He was near the surface of the earth, in a cave, probably laid on a slab of stone prepared for that purpose, wrapped in burial clothes and not even directly covered by any earth or dirt.

We understand “in the heart of the earth” to mean in the middle of, or at least somewhere in the earth, for two reasons. One is because that is one way we commonly use the word “heart.” The second reason is because of tradition that has been passed down to us. However, there is no justification for the common understanding that “in the heart of the earth” means in the grave. This illustrates an important principle of interpretation: allow Scripture to define its own terms by examining how those words are used in context. An important rule of Bible interpretation is to, as far as possible, allow the Bible to define its own terms. That is done in this study for “heart” and many other words.

We understand that “heart” can mean the physical middle of something, but when did that meaning come into use in the English language?

There is another Greek word, “mesos,” (G3319) that could have been used to refer to being “in the center of the earth” if that was the intent of the phrase. Its definitions, given by the *Online Bible Greek Lexicon*, are:

- 1) middle
- 2) the midst
- 3) in the midst of, amongst

Here are some examples where the Greek word “mesos” is translated as “midst” in the King James Version:

“But the ship was now in the midst of the sea, tossed with waves: for the wind was contrary.”
(Matthew 14:24)

“Where they crucified him, and two other with him, on either side one, and Jesus in the midst.” (John 19:18)

“Then Paul stood in the midst of Mars’ hill, and said, Ye men of Athens, I perceive that in all things ye are too superstitious.” (Acts 17:22)

This would have been the word to use in a phrase referring to being buried in the midst of some location. For more on the Biblical use of “kardia” see Appendix 2 – *Cases of “Kardia” Translated “Heart” as Understood in this Study*.

A Word Study of “Earth”

We now turn to the second key word in the phrase “in the heart of the earth.” The word “earth” is translated from the Greek word “ge” (G1093) for which the possible meanings given in *The Online Bible Greek Lexicon* are:

“soil; by extension a region, or the solid part or the whole of the terrene globe (including the occupants in each application):-country, earth (-ly), ground, land, world.”

This is reasonable, that the same word could mean either the earth or its occupants. Remember, as the following verses say, that we are made from the dust of the earth:

“In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou *art*, and unto dust shalt thou return.” (Genesis 3:19)

“All flesh shall perish together, and man shall turn again unto dust.” (Job 34:15)

There are other verses that suggest a connection between the earth and its inhabitants:

“Give ear, O ye heavens, and I will speak; and hear, O earth, the words of my mouth.” (Deuteronomy 32:1)

“Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth: for the LORD hath spoken, I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me.” (Isaiah 1:2)

“O earth, earth, earth, hear the word of the LORD.” (Jeremiah 22:29)

These verses are not talking about the literal earth or heavens hearing, but the occupants of them. Here is another verse:

“And I saw one of his heads as it were wounded to death; and his deadly wound was healed: and all the world (“ge,” G1093) wondered after the beast.” (Revelation 13:3)

It is people who are wondering after the beast, not the world as in the planet. Revelation 13:12 is similar. The Greek word “ge” that is here translated “world” – and meaning people - is the same word that is translated “earth” in the phrase “three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.”

An Important Clue

We must assume that Jesus had a good reason for using this uncommon wording - "in the heart of the earth" in Matthew 12:40. Perhaps this is a key to help unlock the meaning of this prophecy.

Critics might argue that "heart of the earth" naturally reads as a location, that Jonah was confined in a physical place and that the interpretation is too symbolic. However, the context in the Matthew 12 debate is about the condition of the Pharisees' hearts, not geography. Remember, Jesus had just said, "out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh." The sign He promised would reveal what was in their hearts toward Him.

Indeed, Chapter Five, shows that in His parables, Jesus frequently used "earth," "ground," etc. symbolically. Could He have been saying, in this case, that for the three days and three nights He would not necessarily be in the earth or ground, but somehow surrounded, confined, or controlled by the inhabitants of the earth? It seems like a reasonable possibility. However, we first need to determine when the three days and three nights start and end.

Jesus said He would be "in the heart of the earth." The words He used, if we look at their Biblical usage, convey the meaning of being in the control of the will (heart, Greek - kardia) of man (earth, Greek - ge). If Jesus had intended to refer to burial in the earth, a more natural expression would have used the Greek word mesos, meaning *middle* or *midst* in a phrase like "midst of the earth," or they could have simply used the word for the grave (Greek mnemeion, G3419) as in:

"The people therefore that was with him when he called Lazarus out of his grave [mnemeion], and raised him from the dead, bare record." (John 12:17)

In summary, there is no Biblical proof for "in the heart of the earth," meaning that Jesus was in the center of the earth (as in the ground). There is only human tradition which is sometimes reflected in lexicons and commentaries. However, it must be remembered that these sources are not inspired and may have been affected by their authors' understandings of scripture. That doesn't mean we shouldn't use them, but that we must also examine and put priority on how the Bible itself uses words. By comparing how original words are used in various contexts we can allow the Bible to "interpret" itself. Obviously, the two important words from the phrase "in the heart of the earth," in their Biblical usage, have different meanings than what most people have understood. The belief that the phrase means that Jesus would be in the tomb is simply not supported by scripture. These are important clues to lead us to a proper understanding of this subject.

The Start of the Three Days and Three Nights

When do the three days and three nights start, and when do they end? Let's see how Jesus Himself counted the time period. I think we'll find that He was mathematically correct. Consider this scripture:

"And while they abode in Galilee, Jesus said unto them, The Son of man shall be betrayed into the hands of men: And they shall kill him, and the third day he shall be raised again ..."
(Matthew 17:22-23)

Before they had even gone to Jerusalem, Jesus told His disciples that He would be betrayed, killed and raised again "the third day." He wasn't referring to being raised on a Tuesday, the third day of the week. He was using "third" in a relative sense. The question is: Relative to what? What event starts the

sequence? Jesus gives a series of events – the betrayal, His death and His resurrection. He said something very similar a few chapters later in Matthew:

“... the Son of man shall be betrayed unto the chief priests and unto the scribes, and they shall condemn him to death. And shall deliver him to the Gentiles to mock and scourge and to crucify *him*; and the third day he shall rise again.” (Matthew 20:18-19)

The difference is that He gave a more complete sequence of events. In this verse, the Son of man shall be:

- | | |
|--------------|--------------|
| 1. betrayed | 2. condemned |
| 3. delivered | 4. mocked |
| 5. scourged | 6. crucified |
| 7. raised | |

Raised, not on the third day of the week, but raised the third day relative to the starting point of the series of events, which is the betrayal. The angels at the grave said to the women:

“He is not here, but is 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 24:6-7)

Again, the series of events does not begin with Jesus’ crucifixion, but with Him being delivered.

Below is a table showing the sequence of events during the three days. The sequence or a portion of it is mentioned in many places with varying combinations of the events included. The first item in the list of events is the initial betrayal by Judas and the rejection and decision to kill Jesus by the Jewish authorities.

			suffer many things			killed	Matthew 16:21
betrayed						killed	<i>Matthew 17:22-23</i>
betrayed	condemned	delivered to Gentiles	mock	scourge		crucify	<i>Matthew 20:18-19</i>
betrayed						to be crucified	<i>Matthew 26:2</i>
rejected			suffer many things			killed	Mark 8:31*
	delivered					killed	<i>Mark 9:31</i>
	delivered, condemned	delivered to Gentiles	mocked	scourge	spit upon	killed	<i>Mark 10:33-34</i>
rejected			suffer many things			slain	<i>Luke 9:22</i>
		delivered to Gentiles	mocked	scourged	spit upon	killed	<i>Luke 18:32-33</i>
	delivered					crucified	<i>Luke 24:7</i>
		delivered to Romans, condemned				crucified	Luke 24:20-21
			Suffer				Luke 24:46
						slew	Acts 10:39-40
						died, buried	1 Corinthians 15:3-4

*Every passage referred to in the table says raised “the third day” except Mark 8:31 which says, in the KJV, “after three days.” (See more on Mark 8:31 in Appendix 3.) References to verses quoting Jesus in italics.

Notice, in the case of Luke 24:46, His death and crucifixion are not even mentioned. It is just that He would suffer which is mentioned in other gospels separate from His being killed. Some of the verses give only parts of the sequence along with the third day but don't even mention His death. But they are not implying that events listed in other verses did not happen. Jesus was delivered in three instances:

1. By God to the will of man:

“Who was delivered (G3860) for our offences, and was raised again for our justification.”
(Romans 4:25)

“He that spared not his own Son, but delivered (G3860) him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?” (Romans 8:32)

2. By Judas to the chief priests:

“*Saying*, Behold, we go up to Jerusalem; and the Son of man shall be delivered (G3860) unto the chief priests, and unto the scribes; and they shall condemn him to death ...” (Mark 10:33)

3. By the Jews to the Romans:

“... they [the chief priests and the scribes] shall deliver (G3860) him to the Gentiles ...” (Mark 10:33)

So, Scripture presents a clear sequence: the rejection - an internal decision in the hearts of the leaders followed by the deliverance - the outward execution of that betrayal.

We usually understand that the betrayal was just following the Last Supper on Thursday evening. However, we need to carefully examine every point of scripture. Note that I am here saying that the Last Supper was on Thursday evening. This is the most common understanding and is assumed at this point in this study. Evidence will come to light as we go through the Biblical details to establish the chronology.

Matthew 26 records the account of Jesus attending a meal at the house of Simon the leper in Bethany:

“Now when Jesus was in Bethany, in the house of Simon the leper,” (Matthew 26:6)

Following the dinner, it says:

“Then one of the twelve, called Judas Iscariot, went unto the chief priests, And said *unto them*, What will ye give me, and I will deliver him unto you? And they covenanted with him for thirty pieces of silver. And from that time he sought opportunity to betray him.” (Matthew 26:14-16)

That can make it sound like, as some might argue, the betrayal only happened in the Garden on Thursday evening based on:

“And supper being ended, the devil having now put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon’s *son*, to betray him;” (John 13:2)

However, Mark reports the same earlier incident and refers to it as a betrayal:

“And Judas Iscariot, one of the twelve, went unto the chief priests, to betray him unto them.”
(Mark 14:10)

In reality, either event (happening on Tuesday or Thursday evenings) can rightly be described as betrayal. We would commonly think of something like Judas’ deal (reported by Mark) with the priests as betrayal even if the physical handover never actually happened then. Certainly, as Jesus magnified the law to include the intents of the heart (Matthew 5:22, 28 etc.) we would count it as a betrayal.

The “now” in John 13:2 seems to point to that event only happening Thursday evening. However, it is explained:

“The devil having now put it into the heart of Judas to betray him — By this version the English reader would be led to apprehend, that it was at this paschal-supper that the devil first tempted Judas to betray Christ: but the original expression may be properly rendered, the devil having already put it into the heart of Judas, &c., for the participle βεβληκοτος is of the perfect tense, and denotes an action done at some time past, and the particle ηδη, rendered now, often signifies already, or before: so that what Christ says here concerning Judas, may refer to what had passed between him and the chief priests, after the reproof given him in the supper at Bethany.” (Benson commentary on John 13:2, <https://biblehub.com>)

When was that dinner at Simon’s house? Just before the meal, Jesus said:

“Ye know that after two days is *the feast of the Passover*, and the Son of man is betrayed to be crucified.” (Matthew 26:2)

Jesus said it was two days until the Passover and Jesus ate the Passover meal Thursday evening, the evening before His crucifixion:

“Now the first *day of the feast of unleavened bread* the disciples came to Jesus, saying unto Him, Where wilt thou that we prepare for thee to eat the passover? And He said, Go into the city to such a man, and say to Him, The Master saith, My time is at hand: I will keep the passover at thy house with my disciples. And the disciples did as Jesus had appointed them; and they made ready the passover. Now when the even was come, he sat down with the twelve.” (Matthew 26:17-20)

Since the Bible clearly says Jesus ate the Passover meal with His disciples on Thursday evening there should be no question which day was Passover.

This shows that the betrayal was initiated two days before the Thursday evening Passover meal and thus on Tuesday evening. Judas then completed the handover of Jesus after the Thursday evening Passover meal (John 13:21-30). The crucifixion occurred the following day. Conclusive evidence that the crucifixion was on a Friday is presented in Appendix 4.

So, Jesus’ celebration of the Passover meal with His disciples (what we would call the Last Supper), was on Thursday evening and the dinner at Simon’s house was on Tuesday evening, two days before. (The Thursday evening timing for Jesus’ observance of the Passover will be covered in more detail in Chapter Four.) The three-day-and-three-night time period therefore started on Tuesday evening.

This reckoning of the time will be seen to be consistent with Jesus being “three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.” Again, here is the order of events: betrayed, condemned, delivered, mocked, scourged, crucified and finally resurrected all within the span of three days and three nights.

According to the Scriptures

There is one verse that refers to the third day without mentioning the betrayal or any other event before Jesus' death:

“And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures:” (1 Corinthians 15:4)

However, Paul was just referring to earlier scriptures (however, excluding the gospels as they were written after 1 Corinthians) that spoke of Jesus' death.

He referred to the third day but qualified his statement with the phrase “according to the scriptures.” We have to determine when the third day was “according to the scriptures.” Since there are no earlier scriptures referring to His resurrection on the third day after death, we have to consider that “according to the scriptures was not modifying “the third day” but “he rose again.”

The Greek construction allows “according to the Scriptures” to modify either the resurrection itself or the timing (“on the third day”), though the parallel with verse 3 slightly favors attaching it to “he was raised.”

“For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures;” (1 Corinthians 15:3)

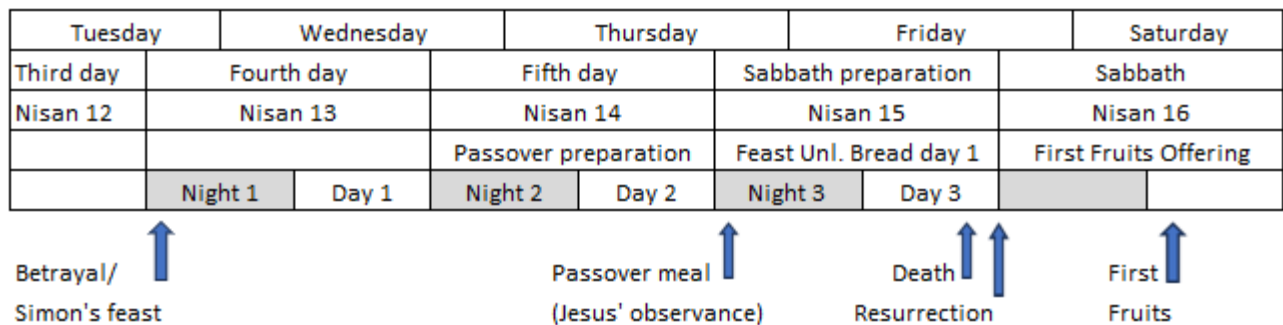
The reason being that the two verses together establish a pattern:

- Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures
- He was buried according to the scriptures
- He rose again according to the scriptures

Paul's statement might just be intended to support that Christ died according to the Old Testament without saying that those earlier scriptures specified the exact timing. If by adding “the “third day” Paul meant the third day after death, it would be in contradiction to all the other evidence presented here.

The End of the Three Days and Three Nights

The series of events and Jesus' time “in the heart of the earth” would have started with the betrayal after the feast at Simon's house on Tuesday evening. Then when would they have ended? Let's use a diagram to help:



The connection of the “Feast of Unleavened Bread” and “First Fruits/Wave Sheaf” to the Passover will be explained later. Let’s now identify the three days and three nights:

Night one was the dark part of Tuesday night and Wednesday morning until sunrise.

Day one was the light part of Wednesday until sunset which would mark the beginning of the day for the preparation for Passover (Nisan 14).

Night two was the dark part of Wednesday night and Thursday morning until sunrise.

Day two was the light part of Thursday during which the lamb was to be killed and prepared for the meal.

Night three was the dark part of Thursday night and Friday morning until sunrise. Jesus ate the Passover meal with His disciples in the early hours of Nisan 15. Then He went to Gethsemane and was arrested.

Day three was the light part of Friday until sunset. The events included the trials, the scourging, crucifixion and death at about 3 pm and burial before sunset, completing the three days and three nights.

During this time, starting Tuesday evening when the priests had made a deal with Judas, they were going forward with their plans to destroy Jesus as heavenly restraint was removed. Jesus was “in the heart of the earth” in the sense that what was in the hearts of men—their intention to destroy Him—was now being openly carried out.

“Destroy this Temple”

Here is a verse that points to something quite different than a death and resurrection three days later.:

“Jesus answered and said unto them, Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up. Then said the Jews, Forty and six years was this temple in building, and wilt thou rear it up in three days? But He spake of the temple of His body.” (John 2:19-21)

Isn’t that referring to a resurrection three days after His death? Jesus even corrected their misunderstanding that He was referring to the temple building. He was clearly speaking about His body. Again, we need to look at word meanings:

The word “destroy” is from the Greek word “luo” (G3089) for which the *Online Bible Greek Lexicon* gives the major definitions as:

- 1) to loose any person (or thing) tied or fastened
- 2) to loose one bound, i.e. to unbind, release from bonds, set free
- 3) to loosen, undo, dissolve, anything bound, tied, or compacted together

Its 43 uses in the King James Version are translated in the following ways (number of uses in parenthesis): loose (27), break (5), unloose (3), destroy (2), dissolve (2), put off (1), melt (1), break up (1), break down (1).

The one other case of “luo” translated as “destroy” in the King James Version is:

“He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil.” (1 John 3:8)

That is “destroy the works of the devil,” not destroy or kill the devil which would be against God’s character to do. The original word “luo” does not mean and is never used in the Bible with the meaning of “to kill.” We have come to understand it to mean “to kill” in these two verses as a result of the way the KJV translators rendered it into English. Also, it is important to note that Jesus said:

“Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father.” (John 10:17-18)

We need to be careful about understanding words to mean what the Bible never intended. Language and word meanings can and do change over time!

Jesus said “Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.” There are four verses where these words of Jesus were quoted, each time by His enemies:

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

“And saying, Thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest *it* in three days, save thyself. If thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross.” (Matthew 27:40)

“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 14:58)

“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,” (Mark 15:29)

In each case, they misunderstood His words, not realizing that “He spake of the temple of His body.”

While God’s word is true, it truly reports some things others said that were not true, or were misquoted or misunderstood.

The interesting thing here is that they did not understand Him to be referring to His death, but to the destruction of the temple, which is not “killed.”

Each of the four verses above refer to destruction using the word “kataluo” (G2647), a variation of the word “luo.” “Kataluo” is translated: destroy (9), throw down (3), lodge (1), guest (1), come to nought (1), overthrow (1), dissolve (1). The *Online Bible Greek Lexicon* gives the major definitions as:

1) to dissolve, disunite

1a) (what has been joined together), to destroy, demolish

1b) metaph. to overthrow i.e. render vain, deprive of success, bring to naught

1c) of travellers, to halt on a journey, to put up, lodge (the figurative expression originating in the circumstance that, to put up for the night, the straps and packs of the beasts of burden are unbound and taken off; or, more correctly from the fact that the traveller's garments, tied up when he is on the journey, are unloosed at its end)

There are more-appropriate words Jesus could have used if He meant what we commonly think the passage means. For example, the Greek word "apollumi," (G622) which is translated as "perish" (33 times), "destroy" (26), "lose" (22), "be lost" (5), "lost" (4) and miscellaneous other words (2). An example of its use is:

"Then the Pharisees went out, and held a council against him, how they might destroy him."
(Matthew 12:14)

The Online Bible Lexicon defines "apollumi" as:

"to destroy fully; destroy, die, lose, mar, perish"

Other uses of "apollumi" by Matthew include:

"And his disciples came to *him*, and awoke him, saying, Lord, save us: we perish." (Matthew 8:25)

"But when the king heard *thereof*, he was wroth: and he sent forth his armies, and destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city." (Matthew 22:7)

"Then said Jesus unto him, Put up again thy sword into his place: for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword." (Matthew 26:52)

Here is a verse from Luke:

"From the blood of Abel unto the blood of Zacharias, which perished between the altar and the temple: verily I say unto you, It shall be required of this generation." (Luke 11:51)

The word "apollumi" would have been a more suitable word for what Jesus said if He was referring to others killing Him. The meaning of Jesus' words in John 2:19 was definitely not that they would kill Him. The next section will look at that. If you look at the meanings given by lexicons and compare other verses that use the word "luo," it may be possible to understand it close to the original intent. It is apparent that it is connected to their rejection of Him and His message.

If that is what it meant, we can see that Jesus would reverse that rejection of Himself in the minds of at least some by the effect of the crucifixion.

Who Raised Jesus from the Dead?

"Jesus answered and said unto them, Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up. ... he spake of the temple of his body." (John 2:19, 21)

"Raise" (Greek "egeiro"; G1453) is in the active voice in that verse indicating that Jesus Himself would do the action - raise up "this temple." It would not be done to Him by someone else which would be in the

passive voice in the Greek. However, Jesus did not raise His body from the dead (He couldn't have - He was dead and the Bible plainly teaches unconsciousness in death). Even aside from that, the Bible very clearly says that His Father raised Him from the dead:

"Whom God hath raised up ("anistemi"), having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it." (Acts 2:24)

"Anistemi" (G450) is also in the active voice - God raised Him from the dead as also shown by this and many other verses. A couple of other examples:

"And killed the Prince of life, whom God hath raised from the dead; whereof we are witnesses." (Acts 3:15)

"That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved." (Romans 10:9)

Jesus Raised as Moses Raised the Serpent

Why are "raise" (John 2:19) and "raised" (Acts 2:24) completely different words? Could it be that Acts 2:24 is referring to Jesus being raised from the dead by His Father (as it obviously is) and John 2:19 is referring to Jesus raising Himself in quite a different sense?

Jesus "raised" Himself (but not from the dead) in that He reversed the rejection, the casting off (the "luo" translated as "destroy" and discussed in the previous section) at least for some people. The Pharisees etc "luoed" (the word anglicized here) Him but the result was that the works of the devil were "luoed" (rejected or "destroyed" as in "... destroy the works of the devil" - 1 John 3:8) in the minds of those who looked to Jesus and accepted Him. They saw His self-sacrificing, non-violent character on the cross in contrast to Satan being revealed as a murderer. It happened for even a dying thief.

It is seen that the word "egeiro" can have the meaning of "to cause to appear" even "before the public."

"Raise"

G1453 ἐγείρω egeiro *eg-i'-ro*

probably akin to the base of G58 (through the idea of collecting one's faculties); v;
AV-rise 36, raise 28, arise 27, raise up 23, rise up 8, rise again 5, raise again 4, misc 10; 141

- 1) to arouse, cause to rise
 - 1a) to arouse from sleep, to awake
 - 1b) to arouse from the sleep of death, to recall the dead to life
 - 1c) to cause to rise from a seat or bed etc.
 - 1d) to raise up, produce, cause to appear
 - 1d1) to cause to appear, bring before the public
 - 1d2) to raise up, stir up, against one
 - 1d3) to raise up i.e. cause to be born
 - 1d4) of buildings, to raise up, construct, erect

This page shows that "egeiro" is often used of sense of being caused to appear:

<https://jesus-resurrection.com/raise-meaning-in-john-2-19/>

He was caused to appear; He was lifted up very publicly. Even the Romans meant to make the execution of "criminals" very public. His death, culminating a self-sacrificial life, demonstrated His character as a

reflection of His Father's character and had and still has the effect of drawing people to Himself.

This (the crucifixion event) was the opportunity for people to make a decision for or against the Messiah. Some at least "luoed" or cast out Satan's lies and were drawn to the Messiah. Was it a demonstration of a God requiring appeasement in blood or a God who is self-sacrificing and always honoring the free will of His creatures? Each observer had to process the events in relation to their understanding of God.

"(Yea, a sword shall pierce through thy own soul also,) that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed." (Luke 2:35)

Here is an interesting verse about Jesus being raised up publicly:

"Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God;" (Romans 3:25)

Notice how the Amplified Bible changes the KJV's "set forth"

"whom God displayed publicly [before the eyes of the world] as a [life-giving] sacrifice of atonement *and* reconciliation (propitiation) by His blood [to be received] through faith. *This was* to demonstrate His righteousness [which demands punishment for sin], because in His forbearance [His deliberate restraint] He passed over the sins previously committed [before Jesus' crucifixion]." (Romans 3:25, Amplified Bible)

"Propitiation" is actually a very poor translation when the Greek original is "hilasterion" which is actually the term for the lid of the ark otherwise referred to as the mercy seat – the place where mercy is offered – mercy as opposed to the need for propitiation. It has led to misunderstanding of the purpose of Jesus' death. However, God's original purpose was to draw attention to the event that people might receive the freely-offered forgiveness.

Thus, God "set forth" His Son in the crucifixion event to display publicly that here is the source of mercy and forgiveness. Notice the meaning of the word for "set forth":

"Set forth"

G4388 **προτίθεται** *protithemai* *prot-ith'-em-ah-ee*

middle voice from G4253 and G5087; v;

AV-purpose 2, set forth 1; 3

- 1) to place before, to set forth
- 1a) to set forth to be looked at, expose to view
- 1b) to expose to public view
- 1b1) of the bodies of the dead
- 1b2) to let lie in state
- 2) to set before one's self, propose to one's self
- 2a) to purpose, determine

Here is the meaning of "declare" which is used again in verse 26:

"Declare"

G1732 **ἔνδειξις** *endeixis* *en'-dike-sis*

from G1731; n f;

AV-to declare + G1519 1, to declare + G4214 1, proof 1, evident token 1; 4

- 1) demonstration, proof
- 1a) manifestation made by act
- 1b) sign, evidence

God allowed the events of the cross to happen; He did not restrict the free-will choices of man. However, it seems God had some part in so arranging the manner and timing of the events that the crucifixion would be a very public event and never fade from view.

“The LORD hath made known his salvation: his righteousness hath he openly shewed in the sight of the heathen.” (Psalm 98:2)

A very important point is to definitely show that Jesus, in John 2:19, was not talking about His resurrection.

Irony in a Fulfilled Prediction

There is significant irony in the Jews act of taunting Jesus to come down from the cross.

“And saying, Thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest *it* in three days, save thyself. If thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross.” (Matthew 27:40)

What Jesus had meant was not “destroy this physical stone temple and I will rebuild it” but something like “reject this temple, my body (the very Messiah you profess to be waiting for) and in three days I will raise it up for all to see.

He was raised/lifted up exactly as He said He would be - three days after they had finally rejected (“luo”; destroyed) Him, plotted His death and made a deal with His betrayer. At that moment, while they were taunting what they saw as a defeated false messiah, He was completing the work that would turn many hearts to God.

He was raised, not from the dead but raised up that sinners may look and live:

“And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life.” (John 3:14-15)

“And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all *men* unto me.” (John 12:32)

“Lifted up,” in those verses, uses the Greek word (“hupsoo” G5312) meaning “to lift up on high, to exalt.” That is the sense in which Jesus would raise up His body.

The Time Period is Not the Most Important Aspect of the Sign

It should be noted that in the two other passages that relate the sign of Jonah, there is not even a mention of the-three-day-and-three-night time period:

“A wicked and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given unto it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas. And he left them, and departed.” (Matthew 16:4)

“And when the people were gathered thick together, he began to say, This is an evil generation: they seek a sign; and there shall no sign be given it, but the sign of Jonas the prophet. For as

Jonas was a sign unto the Ninevites, so shall also the Son of man be to this generation. ... The men of Nineve shall rise up in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: for they repented at the preaching of Jonas; and, behold, a greater than Jonas *is* here.” (Luke 11:29-30, 32)

Since these verses do not even mention the time period, it would seem most unlikely that the key factor was the exact length of time, or even the time at all. Chapter Five gives evidence that, rather than the time period of “the three days and three nights,” it was Jesus’ position of being “in the heart of man” that was the more important part of “the sign of Jonah.”

When Pilate finally gave in to the Jews and turned Jesus over to His enemies it is described as:

“And he released unto them him that for sedition and murder was cast into prison, whom they had desired; but he delivered Jesus to their will.” (Luke 23:25)

He delivered Jesus, not into their physical custody (it was Roman soldiers who carried out the crucifixion) but to “their will,” what was in their heart, was expressed as they and others clamored:

“... Crucify *him*, crucify him.” (Luke 23:21)

“... His blood *be* on us, and on our children.” (Matthew 27:25)

The handover of Jesus, by Pilate, would not have been possible if God had not previously withdrawn (to a degree) His protection and allowed Him to be “in the heart of the earth.” Jesus had earlier been protected from their murderous designs upon Him:

“Then they sought to take him: but no man laid hands on him, because his hour was not yet come.” (John 7:30)

However, when the hour (time) came, that protection was withdrawn and His enemies began to prevail over Him. Jesus subjected Himself to the will of man but, we understand, He did it willingly. Of course, even with our new understanding that being “in the heart of the earth” really means being in the heart (or will or control) of man, we are still dealing with a figurative reference. Jesus wasn’t in the physical heart of a man. It is similar to, for instance, John’s description of Satan’s state during the millennium:

“And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years.” (Revelation 20:1-2)

Satan be bound not by a physical chain but by a figurative chain of circumstance. There will be no one to tempt during the millennium because all of the wicked will be slain at the second coming. He could:

“... deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: ...” (Revelation 20:3)

Then, at the end of the millennium, the resurrection of the wicked figuratively looses Satan, allowing him to once again go forth to tempt. (Revelation 20:7-8)

While we need to recognize that even the Bible uses figures of speech, we also need to use the Bible to help determine their correct meaning.

Going back to Jesus' situation, we now have a sense in which Jesus was within the heart of man. We also have Biblical evidence for the beginning and ending points of the time period of three days and three nights. This solves the three-days-and-three-nights problem but creates another one.

The new problem is that the period of three days and three nights, starting Tuesday evening, would have to end right at the beginning of the Sabbath on Friday evening or a fourth night would be involved. What does this mean? Jesus' confinement "in the heart of the earth" – the control of man – would have to end at the start of the Sabbath or sometime before. In some way, He would no longer be subject to the control of man or their desire to kill Him. Their will was satisfied with their understanding that He was no longer a threat to them.

It could certainly be reasoned that that was accomplished by His death. We use the expression that death is "a sweet release" in the sense that it is a release from the suffering and difficulties of this life. His death then, sometime before sunset on Friday, would end the time period of three days and three nights. This would allow for the resurrection to occur at, or any time after the start of the Sabbath since, as we have seen, being in the heart of the earth is actually not referring to being in the grave anyway.

Summary

The traditional timeline places Jesus' death on Friday afternoon and His resurrection early Sunday morning. Yet this interpretation struggles to account for the clear statement that the Son of Man would be "three days and three nights in the heart of the earth." If the prophecy is to be taken seriously, the events surrounding the resurrection must be examined more carefully.

One important question concerns a phrase that appears repeatedly in the resurrection narratives - "the first day of the week." The meaning of that expression may hold the key to understanding the actual timing of these events.

Having considered the meaning of Jesus' statement about the three days and three nights in the heart of the earth, we will next examine the biblical testimony concerning the timing of the resurrection itself. We will look at clues in the Bible related to original word meanings that help to reveal the real timing of the resurrection which have not been widely considered before.

Chapter 2. The Phrase First Day of the Week

Introduction

One of the major difficulties in establishing the timing of Jesus' Passover observance, death and resurrection comes from the translation of the Greek phrase "mia ton sabbaton" into "first day of the week." And for good reason. The words in that phrase in English have quite a different meaning than in the original Greek. So, it would be very appropriate to ask "Did the Greek really say 'first day of the week?'"

There are six verses in the King James Version, referring to the resurrection, that contain the phrase "first day of the week." Here are the verses:

"In the end of the sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the sepulchre." (Matthew 28:1)

"And very early in the morning the first day of the week, they came unto the sepulchre at the rising of the sun." (Mark 16:2)

"Now when *Jesus* was risen early the first day of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom he had cast seven devils." (Mark 16:9)

"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." (Luke 24:1)

"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." (John 20:1)

"Then the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace *be* unto you." (John 20:19)

There are various timing issues in those verses that will be dealt with individually. Here we are considering the common phrase "the first day of the week." That phrase is translated from the Greek "mia ton sabbaton." Let's carefully examine each word of that translation.

The Word "First"

In five of the verses above, "first" is translated from the Greek "mia" (μία, G3391) the translations and meanings of which are given in The Online Bible Lexicon as:

"First"

G3391 μία *mia mee'-ah*

irregular feminine of G1520; adj;

AV-one 62, first 8, a certain 4, a 3, the other 1, agree + G4160 + G1106 1; 79

1) only one, someone

The usual translation of mia is “one.” The only translations of “mia” as “first” (in the KJV) are in five of the six verses above and three additional verses (two of which also have a connection to the resurrection) considered later.

In the remaining verse, Mark 16:9, “first” is translated from the Greek “protos” (G4413) which is the normal Greek word for first. This calls into question the validity of translating “mia” as “first” when the word for “first” in Greek is “protos” and “mia” is normally translated as “one.” And it also suggests that the other five verses could have used “protos” if that is what was meant.

Imagine translating a French sentence that uses the word “un” (one) and rendering it in English as “first,” even though French already has the word “premier” which actually means first. If the writer had intended to say “first,” why would he use the word for “one” instead of the word that plainly means “first”?

Here are two verses saying “first day” where first is “protos”:

“And when they were come to him, he said unto them, Ye know, from the first (protos, G4413) day that I came into Asia, after what manner I have been with you at all seasons,” (Acts 20:18)

“For your fellowship in the gospel from the first (protos, G4413) day until now;” (Philippians 1:5)

Here are two additional verses saying “first day” using “protos” in the phrase “first day (of the feast) of unleavened bread:”

“Now the first (protos, G4413) *day* of the *feast of* unleavened bread the disciples came to Jesus, saying unto him, Where wilt thou that we prepare for thee to eat the passover?” (Matthew 26:17)

“And the first (protos, G4413) day of unleavened bread, when they killed the passover, his disciples said unto him, Where wilt thou that we go and prepare that thou mayest eat the passover?” (Mark 14:12)

The Greek for Matthew 26:17 does not include the word “day” so it is supplied but legitimately as it is understood and appears in the original for the parallel verse Mark 14:12.

Why would both Matthew and Mark use “protos” to mean “first day of...” in those verses and not in reference to the “first day of the week” if that is what they meant? Perhaps they did not mean “first day of the week.”

It is very interesting to look at Mark 16:2 and 9 as they are both referring to the same day yet they use different words for “first:”

Verse	Greek	Correct Translation
Mark 16:2	mia (G3391) ton sabbaton (G4521)	one of the sabbaths
Mark 16:9	proto (G4413) sabbaton (G4521)	first sabbath

Two verses with different Greek words translated into exactly the same English – “first day of the week” - that seems strange! Here, step-by-step, are the changes made in the translation of those verses from the Greek:

Mark 16:2		Mark 16:9	
μία τῶν σαββάτων	Greek	πρώτη σαββάτου	Greek
mia ton sabbaton (plural)	transliteration	prote sabbaton (singular)	transliteration
one of the sabbaths	meaning in English	first sabbath	meaning in English
first of the sabbaths	changed a word		
first of the sabbath	changed to singular		
first of the week	changed a word	first of the week	changed a word
first day of the week	inserted a word	first day of the week	inserted a word
first <i>day</i> of the week	King James Version	first <i>day</i> of the week	King James Version

That is quite a few changes! Why would the same author in the same chapter write the same thing in two different ways unless he meant two different things?

Both verses are obviously talking about the same day. That, in verse 2, one of a series of Sabbaths is implied, while in verse 9, the first of a series of Sabbaths is indicated need not be a contradiction. Verse 2 could be referring to one of the Sabbaths in a series and also happen to be the first Sabbath of that series. Were the people, in fact, told to count a series of Sabbaths?

“And ye shall count unto you from the morrow after the sabbath, from the day that ye brought the sheaf of the wave offering; seven sabbaths shall be complete:” (Leviticus 23:15)

They were told to count Sabbaths for the period from First Fruits to Pentecost. They were never told to count Sundays.

When referring to the same day, why would translators translate both “the first sabbath” and “one of the sabbaths” into “the first day of the week” unless there was an attempt to make the phrases mean something they did not?

In only a few of the 70 verses using “mia” could it be translated as “first” and make sense. It makes good sense in this one verse:

“A man that is an heretick after the first and second admonition reject;” (Titus 3:10)

However, there are versions that use “one” or “once” rather than “first” even in that verse reflecting the fact that the original word is “mia” and not “protos.”

“Reject a factious man after one and a second admonition,” (Titus 3:10; Berean Literal Bible)

“Warn a divisive person once, and then warn them a second time. After that, have nothing to do with them.” (Titus 3:10, New International Version)

Clearly, “one” is the better translation for “mia.” In a few cases, the translation as “first” would produce nonsense:

“Saying, These last have wrought *but* one (mia, G3391) hour, and thou hast made them equal unto us, which have borne the burden and heat of the day.” (Matthew 20:12)

Translated as “first” would be saying these worked the first hour when, in fact, they worked the last hour.

In this verse, “mia” could not be translated as “first” or it would make no sense:

“Two *women shall be grinding* at the mill; the one (mia, 3391) shall be taken, and the other (mia, 3391) left.” (Matthew 24:41)

The first shall be taken and the first left?

Here is a summary showing that “mia” means and is used as “one” except when in reference to the resurrection. “Protos” is quite consistently translated as “first” showing that is the word to use for that meaning.

Word	Usual Meaning	Resurrection Texts	Non-resurrection Texts
mia (G3391)	One	translated as “first” in all cases	translated as “one” or equivalent with one exception ¹ in 60+ cases
protos (G4413)	First	translated as “first” in 1 case ¹	translated as “first” in majority of 90+ cases; never as “one”

¹Titus 3:10 discussed above.

The Word “Day”

The KJV prints the word “day” when used in the phrase “first day of the week” in italics in each of the six resurrection verses as it is completely missing from the original. The need for it was assumed by the translators.

In Greek, and in many other languages, the genders of a noun and its modifying adjective or definite article must match. An example of this that we are familiar with in English is the borrowed Spanish term “el niño” which we use to refer to a certain climatic pattern that often occurs in the Pacific Ocean. It actually has reference to “the little boy” referring to Jesus who, tradition says, was born about the time of year (Christmas) that this climate pattern is observed off the west coast of Spanish-speaking South America. In this case, the masculine adjective “el” modifies niño. Similarly, the feminine adjective “la” modifies the feminine word “niña” giving us “la niña” meaning “the little girl” (and another weather pattern).

Part of the reason “day” was added is that the adjective “mia” is feminine and should be modifying a feminine noun. However, “sabbaton” is a neutral noun and so it seemed reasonable that “day” (hemera, feminine, G2250) should be added as the word to be modified by “mia.” But when adding “day” to satisfy the gender issue, “day” could have been added after rather than before “the sabbath” which, of course, is a day. That would result in “one of the sabbath days” which also works better because “sabbaton” in the original is in the plural form. In fact, “day” or “days” is supplied by the translators after “sabbaton” (where there is no separate word for day in the original) many times in the New Testament. In Matthew 12 alone, this is done seven times. Here is the first example:

“At that time Jesus went on the sabbath day through the corn; and his disciples were an hungred, and began to pluck the ears of corn, and to eat.” (Matthew 12:1)

In that verse, while the KJV does not print it in italics, “day” is supplied being absent in the original. While it is not, strictly speaking, wrong to supply it as the Sabbath is a day, why supply it differently in only the resurrection verses compared to every other use? The word “day” is also supplied where it is because of another error, discussed below - the mistranslation of “sabbaton” as “week.” “First day of the

sabbath” would not make sense but with “sabbaton” translated as “week” it could be added and make sense even though in error. With the (mis)translation of “sabbaton” (G4521) into “week,” we end up with translations such as:

“And very early in the morning	
the <u>first</u>	(meaning changed)
<u>day</u>	(word added)
of the <u>week</u> ,	(meaning changed)
they came unto the sepulchre at	
the rising of the sun.” (Mark 16:2)	

However, since the word “day” is implied, it doesn’t even have to be included to take care of the gender issue. Some Bible versions do this and retain the original meaning:

“And, very early in the morning on	
one	(original meaning retained)
of the sabbaths,	(original meaning retained, “day” implied)
they are coming to the tomb at	
the rising of the sun.” (Mark 16:2, <i>The Concordant Literal New Testament</i>)	

The Word “Week”

If you compare the original Greek wording in an interlinear version of the Bible, you will find that, in the references to the first day of the week as resurrection morning, the word “week” is actually translated from the Greek word “sabbaton,” which means the seventh-day Sabbath. It does not mean, in today’s common usage, “Sunday” even though it has been translated as “the first day of the week” in a few Bible passages. Sabbaton is the Greek word for Sabbath, the seventh day of the week; Saturday in English and similar words in many other languages. Here are some examples among many:

Arabic: Sabet	Latin: Sabbatum
Armenian: Shabat	Maltese: is-Sibt
Assyrian: Sabuatu	Polish: Sobota
Bohemian: Sobota	Portuguese: Sábado
Bosnian: Subota	Romanian: Sambata
Bulgarian: Sabota	Russian: Subbota
Corsican: Sàbatu	Serbian: Subota
Croatian: Subota	Slovak: Sobota
Czech: Sobota	Slovene: Sobota
French: Samedi	Somali: Sabti
Georgian: Sabati	Spanish: Sabado
Greek: Savvato	Sudanese: Saptu
Hebrew: Shabbat	Tagalog: Sabado
Indonesian: Sabtu	Ukrainian: Subota
Italian: Sabato	Yiddish: Shabes

The Greek word “sabbaton” (G4521) is used in the New Testament 68 times. Fifty-nine times it is translated as “Sabbath” or “Sabbath day” as it is commonly understood. However, in the other nine uses, the very same original word is translated “week” as in the phrase “first day of the week.”

Here is the *Online Bible Greek Lexicon* entry showing the various meanings for sabbaton:

G4521 σάββατον sabbaton sab'-bat-on

of Hebrew origin H7676 שַׁבָּת; n n;

AV-sabbath day 37, sabbath 22, week 9; 68

- 1) the seventh day of each week which was a sacred festival on which the Israelites were required to abstain from all work
 - 1a) the institution of the sabbath, the law for keeping holy every seventh day of the week
 - 1b) a single sabbath, sabbath day
- 2) seven days, a week

Note that “shabbath” (H7676), the origin of the Greek word “sabbaton,” and “shabbathown” (H7677) are never used for “week.”

If one wishes to say “first day” in Greek, there are specific words to do so. The word for “first” in Greek is “protos” (G4413). The word for “day” in Greek is “hemera” (G2250). So, if one wishes to say “first day” in Greek, the words are “protos hemera,” not “mia Sabbaton” which, literally translated, means more like “one Sabbath” or “one of the Sabbaths.”

Jesus Himself declared:

“For the Son of man is Lord even of the sabbath day.” (Matthew 12:8)

The Sabbath is therefore not merely a calendrical term; rather it is the day over which He claims authority.

Common Usage of “Sabbaton”

Let’s see how sabbaton is most commonly and correctly used. In the following and subsequent interlinear examples, the Greek appears first, followed by the English word-for-word translation. Finally, the complete verse in the King James Version is shown. The Greek word we know as “Sabbaton” is underlined. (Interlinear text material, in each case, is from Jay P. Green, *The Interlinear Bible*, 1984):

“... ανασπασει αυτον εν τη ημερα του σαββατου...”

“... he will pull up it on the day of the sabbath ...”

“And answered them, saying, Which of you shall have an ass or an ox fallen into a pit, and will not straightway pull him out on the sabbath day?” (Luke 14:5)

This verse is very clearly referring to the seventh-day Sabbath. No one would argue with that. Here are some further examples of the common usage of sabbaton:

“... τουτου τη ημερα του σαββατου?”

“... this the day of the sabbath?”

“And ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan hath bound, lo, these eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the sabbath day?” (Luke 13:16)

“... ην γαρ μεγαλη η ημερα εκεινου του σαββατου ...”

“... was for great the day of that sabbath ...?”

“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)

All of these texts are clearly referring to the seventh-day Sabbath and, in each, “sabbaton” is correctly translated as “Sabbath.”

Of the six verses referring to the resurrection, in five cases (Matthew 28:1, Mark 16:2, Luke 24:1, John 20:1 and John 20:19) the plural word “sabbaton” is mistranslated into the singular word “week.” It is incorrect to translate a plural word in one language into a singular word in another language. If “sabbath” and “week” were equivalent then the translation should have been as “first day of the weeks.”

Enter “first day of the week” into Google Translate, ask for the Greek translation and you will get:

πρώτη ημέρα της εβδομάδας

The Greek word **εβδομάδας** (hebdomadas, week) does not appear in the Greek New Testament but is frequently used in the Septuagint. There is no reason why the commonly-used words for “first day of the week” could not have been used.

Here is one writer’s evidence that **εβδομάδας** was known in the first century:

“How would the Jewish authors of the N.T. have gone about conveying the idea of a 7-day week in Greek? If you were a Jewish religious writer composing one of the books of the N.T., what Greek word would first Century readers and writers have been familiar with that would have conveyed the idea of a week? The answer to that question is found in the Septuagint (circa 280 B.C.), a Greek translation of the Hebrew Scriptures that was widely available in the time of Yeshua. The Septuagint uses the word *hebdomadas* (*os*) to translate the Hebrew word for week, which is *shavua*.

* Hepta *hebdomadas* is used in the last part of Leviticus 23:15 for the seven weeks you are to number to get to the 50th day, called Pentecost. Until the morrow after the last week (eschatees *hebdomados*) shall you number 50 days.

* Deuteronomy 16:9--Hepta *hebdomadas* exarithmateis (seven weeks shall you number), and you shall keep the feast of weeks (heopteen *hebdomadon*).

* The seventy weeks prophecy of Daniel 9 also uses this word *hebdomadas* a number of times.

There can be little doubt that this Greek word for week would have been chosen by John, Matthew, Mark, Paul and Luke had they sought to convey the idea of the first day of the week. How do we know this? Because the Septuagint (LXX) was used in all the synagogues of Asia Minor, Achaia, and Macedonia, and Greece. We are confident of this fact because of the large number of Hellenistic Jews, Greek proselytes, and God-fearers among the Gentiles who attended synagogue in these places, as is evident in the accounts throughout the book of Acts. We know that the word sabbaton was used in the LXX in the same way as in the N.T. to refer to weekly and annual Sabbaths. It is logical to assume that had they desired to mention “the first day of the week,” they would have used *hebdomados*.” (Todd Derstine, *Is the phrase “first day of the week” properly translated in the New Testament?* at http://www.convince-the-gainsayer.com/First_Day_of_the_Week.pdf)

There is one more verse, not connected to the resurrection, in which “sabbaton” has been translated as “week.”

“I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess.” (Luke 18:12)

Why was it translated this way? One might argue that it’s impossible to fast twice in one day, so the reference must be to two fasts in one week. But that is imposing an interpretation before we have even translated the words! Better to translate the words and then attempt to discern the meaning. Also, who says that a fast must be a full 24 hours or more? Isn’t it possible that a person could fast twice in one day, for instance, by skipping two meals? Surely, our understanding of fasting does not justify changing the wording of the Bible! Here are some translations that are closer to the original word meanings:

“I fast twice *on* the sabbath; I tithe things, as many as I get.” (Luke 18:12, *KJ3 Literal Translation*)

“I fast twice *on* the Sabbath, I give tithes of all that I possess.” (Luke 18:12, *Modern King James Bible*)

We have carefully examined every verse in which the King James Bible translators have rendered “Sabbaton” as “week.” In every case, there is evidence for translating it according to its correct meaning as “Sabbath.” It is better to faithfully translate the words, and then derive our theology, rather than to twist the meanings of words to match our theology. The evidence above shows that the resurrection verses could reasonably have been translated another way - a way that is more consistent with the original word meanings. And there is further evidence that tradition has overcome proper translation.

Evidence from Singular and Plural Uses

There is evidence from Luke’s writings that he correctly used either the singular or plural words for sabbath according to his intent.

“I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess.” (Luke 18:12)

Whether Luke meant fasting twice in one week or twice on a sabbath day, it would be singular and that is shown in the Greek. The site biblehub.com shows that Luke used the singular form of Sabbath and the preceding article in the Greek for “in the week:”

a

τοῦ (tou)

Article - Genitive Neuter Singular

Strong’s 3588: The, the definite article. Including the feminine he, and the neuter to in all their inflections; the definite article; the.

week

σαββάτου (sabbatou)

Noun - Genitive Neuter Singular

Strong’s 4521: The Sabbath, a week.

(<https://www.biblehub.com/luke/18-12.htm>)

But when he wrote in Luke 24:1 and Acts 20:7, Luke used the plural in the Greek for sabbath and for the article preceding it:

“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.” (Luke 24:1)

And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight.” (Acts 20:7)

Here is what biblehub.com shows for Acts 20:7:

first [day]

μιά (mia)

Adjective - Dative Feminine Singular

Strong's 1520: One. (including the neuter Hen); a primary numeral; one.

of the

τῶν (tōn)

Article - Genitive Neuter Plural

Strong's 3588: The, the definite article. Including the feminine he, and the neuter to in all their inflections; the definite article; the.

week,

σαββάτων (sabbatōn)

Noun - Genitive Neuter Plural

Strong's 4521: The Sabbath, a week.

This is further evidence that it is unjustified to translate the phrase in Luke 24:1 and Acts 20:7 into the singular in English when the Greek original is plural. Luke used both singular and plural in his writing and would have known the difference.

The plural form of “sabbaton,” which occurs many times in the New Testament, is only translated as “week,” where it is part of the phrase “mia ton sabbaton.” That suggests something about bias by the translators.

No Greek Word for “Sabbath”

Since the Greek language had no word for Sabbath, the translation into Greek borrowed the Hebrew word “sabbaton.”

“All scholars, without exception, recognize that *sabbaton* is not native to the Greek language. Because the Greek culture despised the Sabbath, and did not even have a seven-day week prior to the Romans taking over, they had no word Sabbath, or sabbaton. In fact, I have yet to find the word used in the Septuagint (LXX) or writings of the ante-Nicene fathers to refer to *first day of the week*. Nor can it be found in any extra-Biblical literature, such as Plato, Socrates, or a plethora of other ancient Greek writings referring to Sunday. Hence, it was imported from Hebrew by Jewish writers of the New Testament.

But imported words always retain the sound of that word in the original language. Proper names are an example of this. My name is recognizable phonetically no matter what country I travel to. And if I listen to the broadcast news in Moscow, I will recognize many names such as George Bush, Washington, D.C., dollar, America(n), etc. because of this principle of transliteration.

Now if a word is imported because it has no equivalent in that language, its meaning in the new language is invariably going to be *consistent with the* meaning in the original language.” (Todd Derstine, *Is the phrase “first day of the week” properly translated in the New Testament?* p3 at http://www.convince-the-gainsayer.com/First_Day_of_the_Week.pdf)

The Original Greek Meant “Sabbath”

Here is a list of sources stating that the original Greek meant “Sabbath.” it was compiled by Daniel Gregg, <https://www.torahtimes.org/SabbathResurrection/The%20Sabbath%20Resurrection.htm>

- The Concordant Greek Text
- The Concordant Literal New Testament
- Robert Young’s Literal Translation
- Some of John Calvin’s Commentaries
- The Companion Bible
- The Interlinear Bible by J.P. Green, 2nd Edition, Vol. IV
- The Coverdale Quarto Bible, 1537
- Some of Wycliffe’s Translations
- Some of Tyndale’s Translations
- The Rheims version, 1582
- The Bishop’s Bible, 1568
- The Latin Vulgate (“primam sabati”)
- The Old Latin
- All Greek Texts
- The Syriac Peshitta

The Biblia del Oso (The Bear Bible in Spanish) by Casiodoro de Reina 1569 for Matthew 28:1 has:

“La víspera de los Sábados que amanece para el primero de los Sabbados vino Maria Magdalena y la otra maria a ver el fepulchro”

That translates into English as:

“On the eve of Saturdays, as dawn breaks for the first of Saturdays, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came to see the pulpit.”

The Greek word “sabbaton” means the seventh-day Sabbath. There is no justification for its common translation as “first day of the week.”

Mia ton Sabbaton Always Used for After Passover

“According to Lev. 23:15 “seven Sabbaths” were actually counted following the Passover. If *μια των σαββατων* is indicating the first of these seven Sabbaths, then we expect it to be used just after the Passover, and nowhere else. And this is exactly what we find. Yeshua was crucified just before the annual Sabbath; then the resurrection day just happened to be the first sabbath after the Passover, and it is called *μια των σαββατων*. In the other two uses in the NT, the same synchronization with the Passover is observed. Acts 20:6 tells us about the Passover before introducing the key phrase *μια των σαββατων*. In 1 Cor 16:2, it is mentioned that Pentecost is coming not too much after *μια των σαββατων* (cf. 16:8). Hence all of our texts fit the chronology implied in Lev 23:11-16 exactly.” (Daniel Gregg, https://www.torahtimes.org/Sabbaton_Week_Sabbaths.html)

When Did Paul Break Bread?

The phrase “first day of the week” appears in two non-resurrection verses (Acts 20:7 and 1 Corinthians 16:2 –next section) that are often used to support a Sunday resurrection and Sunday observance.

“And upon the first (*mia*, G3391) *day* of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight.” (Acts 20:7)

Greek experts Robert K. Brown and Philip W. Comfort in the *New Greek English Interlinear New Testament* translate this verse as:

“And on one of the Sabbaths having been assembled us to break bread, Paul was lecturing them ...” (Acts 20:7, *New Greek English Interlinear New Testament*)

Paul is relating an incident that occurred soon after Passover during which time the instruction was to count Sabbaths. The following two verses show that unleavened bread was before and Pentecost was following the time Paul was talking about in verse 7:

“And we sailed away from Philippi after the days of unleavened bread, and came unto them to Troas in five days; where we abode seven days.” (Acts 20:6)

“For Paul had determined to sail by Ephesus, because he would not spend the time in Asia: for he hasted, if it were possible for him, to be at Jerusalem the day of Pentecost.” (Acts 20:16)

So “one of the sabbaths” (the correct translation) could easily have been the intended meaning. Here are more-literal translations of Acts 20:7:

“And on one of the Sabbaths having been assembled us to break bread, Paul was lecturing them ...” (Acts 20:7, *New Greek English Interlinear New Testament*)

“And in one of the sabbaths, the disciples having been assembled together to break bread, Paul conversed with them being about to go forth the morrow; and he continued the word until midnight.” (Acts 20:7, *Smith’s Literal Translation*)

1 Corinthians 16:2 - A Sunday Gathering?

This translation using “first day of the week” comes only from tradition:

“Upon the first (mia, G3391) *day* of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as *God* hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come.” (1 Corinthians 16:2)

It uses exactly the same words shown in other uses to refer to the seventh-day Sabbath. It was also in reference to the same period of time between Passover and Pentecost during Paul’s third missionary journey. Here is a more-correct translation:

“On the first of the sabbaths, let each one of you put by himself, storing up whatever he is prospered, that there not be collections when I come.” (1 Corinthians 16:2, *KJ3 Literal Translation*)

Other Evidence and Alternate Translations

We will now look at further evidence from a number of sources showing that there are problems with the translation “first day of the week.”

“In Vol. 35 of Word Bible Commentary (p. 1188), admission is made that “the first day of the week” literally means “one of the Sabbaths” in the Greek. The truth of the matter is that there is no Greek-speaking linguistic scholar or professor who would deny this fact. I myself have consulted numerous professors of Greek at prestigious universities (such as Dickenson College in Carlisle, PA) who have confirmed the literal meaning of this phrase. ...

Therefore, the mass hypnosis that intellectually transforms this phrase into something other than its literal meaning happens on the presumption that it is an idiomatic expression-- “mia/one” being used for “first,” and “sabbaton” being using for “week,” and “day” being thrown in just so they can make sense out of their non-literal invention. However, I have yet to find one commentary or lexicon citing an example of *mia ton sabbaton* being used idiomatically outside the Bible in other Greek writings. Therefore, if it is a figure of speech, prove it. The burden of proof is on the translators. This they cannot do lexicologically. They must resort to arguments based on Church traditions that were not in place until Constantine.

By going with non-literal suppositional words “first” and “week,” they are left with the nonsensical “first week.” Since this makes no sense in the light of contexts that demand a *particular day* of the week, they throw in the word “day” as though they are sure it ought to be there, and hocus pocus, we now have an entirely different phrase referring to an entirely different day of the week. Had those translating out of the Greek not engaged in this imaginative word-play, the myth of a Sunday morning resurrection would never have gained a foothold. **No less is at stake here than the basis in Christianity for replacing the seventh-day Sabbath with Sunday as the day of worship**, because, as scholars too numerous to mention have pointed out, Sunday is nothing other than the weekly celebration of the resurrection.” (Todd Derstine, *Is the phrase “first day of the week” properly translated in the New Testament?* p1-2, at http://www.convince-the-gainsayer.com/First_Day_of_the_Week.pdf, emphasis added)

If “first day of the week” from “mia ton sabbaton” is an idiomatic reference to Sunday it would be expected to appear in other literature but it doesn’t. The lack of examples of “mia ton sabbaton” being translated into “first day of the week” in non-Biblical literature suggests a problem.

“Outside of eight texts in the NT (Matthew 28:1; Mark 16:2, 9; Luke 24:1; John 20:1, 19; Acts 20:7, and 1 Corinthians 16:2), where we find $\mu\iota\alpha\ \tau\omega\nu\ \sigma\alpha\beta\beta\alpha\tau\omega\nu$ translated as first day of the week, there is no example of $\sigma\alpha\beta\beta\alpha\tau\omega\nu$ having the meaning of “week” in any Greek literature before ca. AD 100, and then only in “Church” Greek after that. ... This sense is entirely wanting in Secular Greek, the LXX, Josephus, Philo, or any other Greek literature of Jewish provenance before the destruction of the Second Temple except for these eight texts. That sense is also entirely lacking in classical and Koine Greek except for its alleged use in these eight texts. Furthermore, these eight texts are not just ordinary examples where nothing is at stake. What is at stake here is the original separation of Christianity from its Jewish roots, and the justifications supplied for this schism. Therefore, we may rightly suspect that the alleged sense of “first day of the week” is due to opportunistic revisionism based on sectarian religious and political motivations.” (Daniel, Gregg, <https://www.torahtimes.org/writings/sabbaton-week-sabbaths/article.html>)

Emphasis in the paragraph above is added. In this study, the crucifixion occurred on Nisan 15, the annual Sabbath referred to above.

The Concordant Commentary presents a good analysis:

“The resurrection did not occur on Sunday, or ‘the first day of the week,’ but on the first one of the seven sabbaths which led from Firstfruits to Pentecost. The notable phrase ‘one of the sabbaths’ is always found in the interval between Passover and Pentecost, never at any other time of the year. It may refer to any sabbath of the seven. It is usually used of the resurrection day (Mt. 28:1, Mark. 16:1-2, John. 20:1-19), which would be during the days of unleavened bread, but also of a sabbath after this (Acts. 20:6,7), any time up to Pentecost (1 Corinthians 16:2,8). Scholars are divided as to the reason for the rendering ‘first day of the week.’ It was usual to say that ‘one’ is sometimes used for *first*, and that ‘sabbaths’ sometimes means week, but the latest attempts to justify the accepted rendering is that ‘one of the sabbaths’ is equivalent to ‘the first day *after* the sabbath.’ As the day after the sabbath was commonly called the ‘morrow of the sabbath’ (Leviticus 23:15,LXX), this seems far-fetched. Even if we take ‘one’ to mean first in this case, the sense is not changed for the first of a series of sabbaths, as we read in Mark 16:9. But in no case was sabbaths ever used for ‘week’. That is always represented by hebdomad, or seven. The only exception would be when a number of sabbaths measure the same space of time as so many hebdomads. As the expression ‘first day of the week’ can be so readily expressed in Greek there are grave grounds for refusing to use these words as the equivalent of ‘one of the sabbaths.’” (*Concordant Commentary*, p. 136)

The Scriptures, a Messianic translation, renders John 20:1 as:

“And on the first day of the week Miryam from Magdala came early to the tomb, while it was still dark, and saw that the stone had been removed from the tomb.” (John 20:1, *The Scriptures*)

However, it also includes an explanatory note:

“First Day of the week: The underlying Greek text is ‘mia ton sabbaton’, which when literally translated means ‘one of the sabbath/s’, but is traditionally rendered as ‘first day of the week. The term ‘first day of the week’ is literally translated as ‘prote hemera tis hebdomata’ in Greek, but nowhere appears as such in the N.T.” (*The Scriptures*, p. 1214)

The note then goes on to say that they have chosen to retain the translation “first day of the week” as it is “traditionally rendered.” The influence of tradition on Bible translations has evidently been very strong!

The problems with the translation into “first day of the week” are corrected in various Bible versions:

Matthew 28:1

“Now it is the evening of the sabbaths. At the lighting up [dawn] into one of the sabbaths came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to behold the sepulcher.” (Matthew 28:1, *The Concordant Literal New Testament*)

“And on the eve of the sabbaths, at the dawn, toward the first of the sabbaths, came Mary the Magdalene, and the other Mary, to see the sepulchre,” (Matthew 28:1, *Young’s Literal Translation*)

“But late in the sabbaths, at the dawning into *the* first of *the* sabbaths, Mary the Magdalene and the other Mary came to gaze upon the grave.” (Matthew 28:1, *KJ3 Literal Translation*)

Mark 16:2

“And exceedingly in the morning of day one of the Sabbaths they come unto the tomb, *at the* rising of the sun.” (Mark 16:2, *Apostolic New Testament*)

“And, very early in the morning on one of the sabbaths, they are coming to the tomb at the rising of the sun.” (Mark 16:2, *The Concordant Literal New Testament*)

“And very early in the morning of one of the sabbaths, they came to the tomb, the sun having risen.” (Mark 16:2, *Smith’s Literal Translation*)

“and early in the morning of the first of the sabbaths, they come unto the sepulchre, at the rising of the sun,” (Mark 16:2, *Young’s Literal Translation*)

Mark 16:9

“And he, having risen in the morning of the first of the sabbaths, did appear first to Mary the Magdalene, out of whom he had cast seven demons;” (Mark 16:9, *Young’s Literal Translation*)

Luke 24:1

“Now in the early depths of one of the sabbaths, they, and certain others together with them, came to the tomb, bringing the spices which they make ready.” (Luke 24:1, *The Concordant Literal New Testament*)

“And on the first of the sabbaths, at early dawn, they came to the tomb, bearing the spices they made ready, and certain *others* with them,” (Luke 24:1, *Young’s Literal Translation*)

“And the first of the sabbaths, at early dawn, they came to the tomb, carrying spices which they prepared; and some were with them.” (Luke 24:1, *KJ3 Literal Translation*)

John 20:1

“Now on one of the sabbaths, Miriam Magdalene is coming to the tomb in the morning, there being still darkness ...” (John 20:1, *The Concordant Literal New Testament*)

“And on the first of the sabbaths, Mary the Magdalene doth come early (there being yet darkness) to the tomb, and she seeth the stone having been taken away out of the tomb,” (John 20:1, *Young’s Literal Translation*)

“But on the first of the sabbaths, Mary Magdalene came early in the morning to the tomb, it yet being dark. And she sees the stone having been taken away from the tomb.” (John 20:1, *KJ3 Literal Translation*)

John 20:19

“It being, therefore, evening, on that day, the first of the sabbaths, and the doors having been shut where the disciples were assembled, through fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in the midst, and saith to them, ‘Peace to you;’” (John 20:19, *Young’s Literal Translation*)

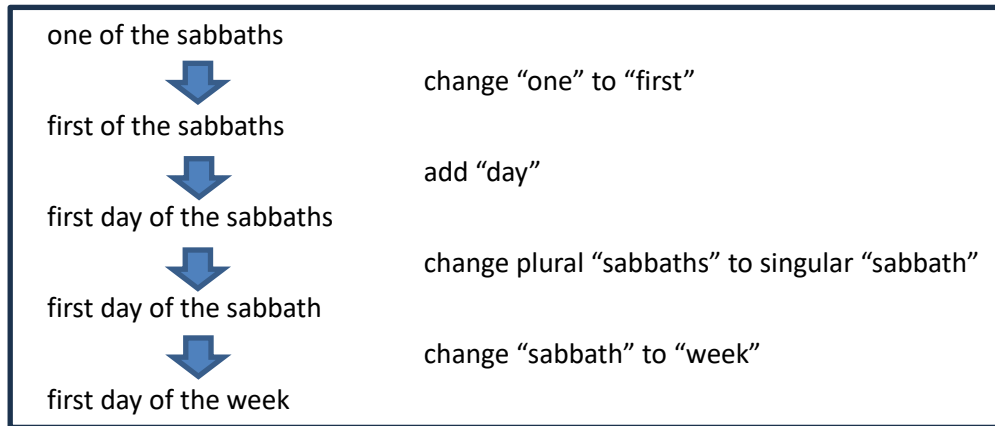
“Then it being evening on that day, the first of the sabbaths, and the doors having been locked where the disciples were assembled, because of fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in the midst, and said unto them, Peace to you.” (John 20:19, *KJ3 Literal Translation*)

“It being, then, the evening of that day, one of the sabbaths, and the doors having been locked where the disciples were gathered together, because of fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in the midst and is saying to them, “Peace to you!” (John 20:19, *The Concordant Literal New Testament*)

“It being then late in that day, in the day one of the Sabbaths, and the doors being locked where were the disciples being gathered together because of the fear of the Jews came and stood in the midst, and says to them, Peace to you.” (John 20:19, *Apostolic New Testament*)

Summary

The change from one word or phrase to another is sometimes illustrated one step at a time. That can be done here to illustrate the change from “one of the sabbaths” to “first day of the week”



Each step may seem small, but together they produce a very different meaning. If the original phrase truly meant “first day of the week,” why would it require so many adjustments to reach that translation? Was the text translated or reinterpreted? Of course, it was done all at once causing the verses to point to Sunday rather than the true Lord’s Day.

“‘One of the sabbaths’ is the true rendering. The usual ‘first day of the week’ is absolutely devoid of scriptural evidence.” (*Concordant Commentary*, p. 172)

When the original wording is considered, the phrase is far more naturally understood as “one of the Sabbaths.” This fits both the normal meaning of the Greek words and the biblical instruction to count a series of Sabbaths between Passover and Pentecost.

If the gospel writers had intended to say “first day of the week,” Greek already had clear and simple words to express that idea. The word for “first” is *protos*, the word for “day” is *hemera*, and the word for “week” is *hebdomas*.

A Greek reader would naturally expect a phrase such as “*protos hemera tes hebdomados* (πρώτη ημέρα της εβδομάδας).” Anyone can test this in Google translate. Yet the New Testament writers did not use that wording. Instead, they used the unusual expression “*mia ton sabbaton*.”

This raises an important question: Why would they avoid the normal way of saying “first day of the week” if that was their intended meaning?

The evidence therefore suggests that the traditional translation reflects later interpretation rather than the most straightforward meaning of the original text and therefore the traditional timeline deserves to be reconsidered.

The finer details of the timing of the resurrection have not yet been presented in this study. As everything needs to fit into the timing of the feasts which had, for centuries, pointed forward to Jesus’ death and resurrection, that will be the next topic examined.

Chapter 3. The Timing of the Spring Feasts

Before reconstructing the final week of Jesus' life (which we will do in chapter 4), it is necessary to understand the timing of the Biblical spring festivals. The events of the crucifixion and resurrection occurred during the Passover season, and the Gospel writers refer repeatedly to these feasts. Understanding how the timing of these festivals was determined will help greatly to interpret the chronology of the crucifixion and resurrection.

The feasts appointed by God in the books of Moses were very important events in the lives of the Israelites. At specified times each spring and fall they were required to assemble at Jerusalem for holy convocations or assemblies before God. While the timing of the start of the spring feasts is beyond the topic of this book, we do want to understand the relationship between the different spring feasts as it needs to fit with the timing of Jesus' death and resurrection. The spring feasts, in many ways, foreshadowed the events of Jesus' first coming. Significant days connected with the spring feasts included:

- The selection of Passover lambs by each family or group on Nisan 10.
- The preparation of the Passover, Nisan 14, the day when the lamb was to be sacrificed.
- The Feast of Unleavened Bread including the seven days from Nisan 15 to Nisan 21.
- The day of the Wave Sheaf offering. The correct timing has been much disputed.
- Pentecost, 50 days inclusive from the day of the Wave Sheaf offering and therefore on the same day of the week the Wave Sheaf was offered.

Let's investigate those significant days for clues about timing. Note that determining the year of the death and resurrection is not addressed in this study.

Selection of the Lambs

The Jews were instructed to do something at Passover season that was meant to give them a better understanding of the character of God. At the time of the Exodus, they were commanded:

“... 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:” (Exodus 12:3)

Each household was to select a lamb and then verse 6 says:

“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.” (Exodus 12:6)

So, from the tenth to the fourteenth day they were to have this lamb “without blemish, a male of the first year,” (verse 5) in their home. They would get to know it almost like a pet and appreciate its gentle character. In Jesus' time, they would have been familiar with the passage:

“He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth.” (Isaiah 53:7)

Can you imagine keeping a little lamb in or close by your house as a pet for this length of time? You could become quite attached to it.

The whole reason for keeping the lamb in their homes for that time was to help them recognize the real Lamb of God whom John the Baptist introduced later:

“... John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.” (John 1:29)

Jesus is described in later scriptures in terms consistent with the lamb and its character:

“But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot:” (1 Peter 1:19)

“For such an high priest became us, *who is* holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens;” (Hebrews 7:26)

Doesn't “harmless” and “undefiled” describe a lamb of the first year?

Passover

Nisan was the first month of the religious year and the fourteenth day was the day on which preparations for Passover (including sacrificing the lambs) were done.

“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 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.” (Exodus 12:3,6)

Nisan, the first month of the religious year, was also called Abib meaning “month of the ears” in reference to the developing ears of grain in the spring.

The marginal note in the *Authorized King James Version* says for evening (verse 6): “between the two evenings.” More-literal translations give it more directly:

“And it hath become a charge to you, until the fourteenth day of this month, and the whole assembly of the company of Israel have slaughtered it between the evenings;” (Exodus 12:6, *Young's Literal Translation*)

Several versions use the phrase “at the going down of the sun.” Of course, the sun begins its descent in the sky at noon and continues going down until sunset. This is the time referred to as “between the evenings.”

“Within the Temple, the day was divided into quarters. The quarter between 12:00 noon and 3:00 pm was called the minor evening oblation, while that between 3:00 pm and 6:00 pm was called the major evening oblation. Therefore, ‘between the evenings’ means between those two periods or 3:00 pm.” (Joseph Good, *Rosh HaShanah and the Messianic Kingdom to Come*, p. 20)

The expression “between the evenings” (Hebrew “*ben ha-arbayim*”) used for the Passover sacrifice is also used as the time for the daily evening sacrifice:

“The one lamb thou shalt offer in the morning; and the other lamb thou shalt offer at even.” (Exodus 29:39)

The Israelites would keep the lamb from the tenth of Nisan to the fourteenth and then, on the afternoon of the fourteenth, as the sun was descending in the sky, they were to kill it. The lamb was to be “roast with fire” (Exodus 12:8) and prepared to be eaten after sunset which marks the start of the next day, Nisan 15 and the beginning of the seven-day Feast of Unleavened Bread. The middle of the between-the-evenings time period would be the middle of the afternoon, about 3 pm which, we understand, was the time of day that Jesus died. Then, after sunset and in the early hours of Nisan 15 they would have the Passover meal that had been prepared on the fourteenth. The following verses help with this understanding:

“And they shall eat the flesh in that night, roast with fire, and unleavened bread; *and* with bitter *herbs* they shall eat it.” (Exodus 12:8)

“In the fourteenth day of the first month at *even* is the LORD’S passover. And on the fifteenth day of the same month is the [first day of the] feast of unleavened bread unto the LORD: seven days ye must eat unleavened bread.” (Leviticus 23:5-6)

“And they departed from Rameses in the first month, on the fifteenth day of the first month; on the morrow after the passover the children of Israel went out with an high hand in the sight of all the Egyptians.” (Numbers 33:3)

Factors in the Timing of Passover Observance

There are two things that we need to understand about the timing of Passover observance that became important in this study. The following passage could be confusing because it talks of preparing for the Passover (Nisan 14) on “the first *day* of the *feast of unleavened bread*” (Nisan 15):

“Now the first day of the feast of unleavened bread the disciples came to Jesus, saying unto him, Where wilt thou that we prepare for thee to eat the passover? And he said, Go into the city to such a man, and say unto him, The Master saith, My time is at hand; I will keep the passover at thy house with my disciples. And the disciples did as Jesus had appointed them; and they made ready the passover. Now when the even was come, he sat down with the twelve.” (Matthew 26:17-20)

The Passover meal was eaten in the evening hours of Nisan 15, technically the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread.

First, it is helpful to understand that, by the time of Jesus, the term “Feast of Unleavened Bread” was sometimes used to refer to the whole period of eight days including the preparation done on the 14th. For instance, the Jewish historian Josephus wrote:

“Whence it is that, in memory of the want we were then in, we keep a feast for eight days, which is called *the feast of unleavened bread*.” (Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews*, Book 2, Chapter 15.)

The eight days would consist of the day of preparation when the lambs were sacrificed followed immediately by the seven days of the Feast of Unleavened Bread. It had come to be considered as one continuous feast and therefore Mark could write:

“And the first day of unleavened bread, when they killed the passover, his disciples said unto him, Where wilt thou that we go and prepare that thou mayest eat the passover?” (Mark 14:12)

The phrase “when they killed the passover” and the context tell us that the day referred to in the passage above was Nisan 14 even though it was referred to as “the first day of unleavened bread.” The disciples clearly understood that Passover was on Thursday with the meal to be observed that evening which would be the early hours of Nisan 15 and the beginning of the Feast of Unleavened Bread.

Second, it helps to clarify the timing of events to understand that Jesus kept the Passover a day before many of the Jews. On Thursday evening, during the meal, Jesus said:

“... With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer:” (Luke 22:15)

There is no doubt that Jesus understood this to be the Passover meal. Jesus ate with them and then went out to the garden, was taken prisoner by the Jews, endured the various trials early in the morning, was crucified about 9 am and died about 3 pm on Friday afternoon. According to John, at this time, at least some of the Jews had not yet partaken of the Passover:

“Then led they Jesus from Caiaphas unto the hall of judgment: and it was early; and they themselves went not into the judgment hall, lest they should be defiled; but that they might eat the passover.” (John 18:28)

There was obviously a one-day difference in timing of Passover observance – “they” had not yet eaten of the Passover meal. Feast days were sometimes observed on different days by different groups due to:

- Difficulty in determining the new moons
- Sectarian differences in belief
- Adjustments for convenience

Our modern society also adjusts days around holidays to make long weekends for convenience or business purposes.

The Pharisees and other conservatives would have counted Thursday as Nisan 14, the preparation of the Passover, while the Sadducees, who dominated the priesthood, and other liberals and the Jewish leaders, would have reckoned it to be on Friday and would have eaten the Passover meal Friday evening. Most of the people would have recognized that Jesus’ death came at the same time as the “official” slaying of the Passover Lamb in the temple. Yet we can be assured that Jesus (Who gave directions for the feasts in the first place) observed the Passover ordinances at the right time and a day earlier than some others.

This explains the difference between John 18:28 and what Matthew, Mark and Luke (referred to as the synoptic gospels) say about the time of Passover. They are giving the timing according to what Jesus and the Pharisees would have observed, and John is giving the time of the Sadducees’ observance.

An important point to make here is that since Jesus and His disciples understood Nisan 14, (the preparation for the Passover) to be on Thursday before sunset and ate the Passover meal on what we

would call Thursday evening, then it follows that the crucifixion happened the next day, Friday, Nisan 15. Many will object because they say that Jesus' death must match the day that for long centuries foreshadowed it. Since both positions have scriptural backing, we must look for a scriptural way to reconcile the two. The problem will finally be solved in Chapter Six. This study will follow the position that Jesus' reckoning of the days was correct. Therefore, in this study, you will see references to Nisan 14 being on Thursday.

References to the Preparation of the Passover

The following passages, one from each of the synoptic gospels, when examined in context, show that preparation for the Passover meal, as observed by Jesus and His disciples, happened the day before the crucifixion:

"Now the first *day* of the *feast of unleavened bread* the disciples came to Jesus, saying unto him, Where wilt thou that we prepare for thee to eat the passover?" (Matthew 26:17)

"And the first day of unleavened bread, when they killed the passover, his disciples said unto him, Where wilt thou that we go and prepare that thou mayest eat the passover? And he sendeth forth two of his disciples, and saith unto them, Go ye into the city, and there shall meet you a man bearing a pitcher of water: follow him. And wheresoever he shall go in, say ye to the goodman of the house, The Master saith, Where is the guestchamber, where I shall eat the passover with my disciples?" (Mark 14:12-14)

"Then came the day of unleavened bread, when the passover must be killed. And he sent Peter and John, saying, Go and prepare us the passover, that we may eat. ... where I shall eat the passover with my disciples? ... and they made ready the passover." (Luke 22:7-8, 11, 13)

It is obvious from the verses above that the preparation referred to was that of Nisan 14, the day for killing (Exodus 12:6) and preparing the sacrifice and making ready the Passover meal. The disciples came to Jesus that day, Nisan 14, to ask about making preparations. He told Peter and John to go into the city, meet and follow a certain man to the location and there make everything ready. Jesus' somewhat obscure directions (He didn't directly tell them a location) to only two of His disciples, may have been given to prevent Judas from knowing the exact location for the meal ahead of time. Perhaps Jesus did that to prevent the Passover meal being interrupted by an attempt to capture Him. The directions to the two disciples are recorded by Mark immediately after the verse which says:

"... And he [Judas] sought how he might conveniently betray him." (Mark 14:11)

The disciples did not make the preparations on Nisan 13. It was already the day "when the passover must be killed" when they first asked about it.

They made the preparations for the meal and then we are told:

"Now when the even was come, he sat down with the twelve." (Matthew 26:20)

After partaking of the Passover meal, Jesus and the apostles went to the Garden of Gethsemane where they were met by Judas and the band of men sent to arrest Jesus. About the next day, the day of the crucifixion, John writes:

“Then led they Jesus from Caiaphas unto the hall of judgment: and it was early; and they themselves went not into the judgment hall, lest they should be defiled; but that they might eat the passover.” (John 18:28)

“And it was the preparation of the passover, and about the sixth hour: and he saith unto the Jews, Behold your King!” (John 19:14)

John refers to the day Jesus died as the “preparation of the Passover” or the day on which the Passover (sacrifice) was done in preparation for the observance of the Passover meal that evening. An important point to realize is that the synoptics reported the preparation of the Passover to be the day before the crucifixion and John reported the Jews to be regarding the preparation of the Passover as the day of the crucifixion. Therefore, there would be the same one-day difference in reckoning of the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread (Nisan 15).

An examination of each of the following four verses (in their contexts), one from each of the four gospel writers including John, will show that the preparation day referred to is, in each case, the day Jesus died:

“Now the next day [after the crucifixion], that followed the day of the preparation [therefore the preparation was the day of the crucifixion], the chief priests and Pharisees came together unto Pilate,” (Matthew 27:62)

“And now when the even was come [but still before sunset], because it was the preparation, that is, the day before the sabbath,” (Mark 15:42)

“And that day [that Jesus was laid in the tomb] was the preparation, and the sabbath drew on.” (Luke 23:54)

“There laid they Jesus therefore because of the Jews’ preparation day; for the sepulchre was nigh at hand.” (John 19:42)

Since there was a one-day difference regarding which day was the start of the feast but they all agree in the above verses, it can only be that those verses refer to the preparation of a seventh-day Sabbath on which they would certainly agree.

In each of these four verses, the word “preparation” is translated from the Greek “paraskeue” (G3904) which is never used in reference to anything other than the day before a seventh-day Sabbath. Notice that Mark is essentially giving a definition for the preparation day – it is the day before the Sabbath.

“Preparation” (paraskeue, G3904) = “the day before the sabbath” (prosabbaton, G4315)

In each of the first three passages (Matthew 26:17, Mark 14:12-14 and Luke 22:7-8, 11, 13) we looked at in this section “prepare” was translated from the Greek word “hetoimazo” (G2090) which means to make ready or to prepare. The Greek word “paraskeue” was not used. Mark also designates the preparation day as “the day before the sabbath” using the Greek word “prosabbaton” (G4315) which is a combination of “pro” (G4253) and “sabbaton” (G4521). As pointed out in the section later in this chapter “The Morrow After Which Sabbath?” “sabbaton” is only used for a seventh-day Sabbath.

Matthew, Mark and Luke are called the “synoptic” (seeing with the same eyes - “syn-optic”) gospels because of their similarities.

The synoptic gospel writers and John are in agreement that the crucifixion day was a day of preparation for a Sabbath to follow. This is positive evidence that the following day was a weekly seventh-day Sabbath and not a ceremonial Sabbath. The synoptic gospels refer to Nisan 14 and 15 as being on different days than John does in chapter 19, yet they refer to the preparation for the seventh-day Sabbath as being the same day. The synoptic gospels refer to the order of days as:

- Thursday - the day “when the passover must be killed,” (therefore Nisan 14) and when the disciples prepared the Passover meal.
- Friday - the day of the crucifixion, Nisan 15, the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, the day on which, in the early evening hours, Jesus ate the Passover with His disciples. It was also the preparation day for a seventh-day Sabbath.
- Sabbath - the day after the crucifixion, Nisan 16, a seventh-day Sabbath.

John, using the timing as understood by the Sadducees, referred to the order of days as:

- Thursday - the day on which the disciples prepared the Passover meal (therefore Nisan 14).
- Friday - the day of the crucifixion, the preparation of the Passover (according to the Sadducees) and a day of preparation for a seventh-day Sabbath.
- Sabbath - the day after the crucifixion which was both a seventh-day Sabbath and the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread according to the Sadducees who thus regarded it as “an high day” (John 19:31).

Whatever differences they might have had in recording the feast days, the gospel writers would be in agreement as to which day was the seventh-day Sabbath. Since they reported differently which day was the preparation of the Passover (Nisan 14) but all agreed that the crucifixion day was a day of preparation for a seventh-day Sabbath, the following day must have been a regular weekly Sabbath. The relation of the days and the verses referring to them can be better understood by referring to the following diagram that compares the reckoning of days by the synoptic gospel writers and by John in his chapter 19:

Reckoning of days by the Pharisees and Jesus; reported in the synoptic gospels		
Passover Preparation	Feast of UB day 1	Sabbath
Matthew 26:17, Mark 14:12-14, and Luke 22:7-13 all refer to preparation day for the Passover meal	Matthew 27:62, Mark 15:42, Luke 23:54,56 and John 19:31 all refer to preparation for a 7th-day Sabbath	Matthew 28:1, Mark 16:1-2, and Luke 24:1 all correctly understood as a 7th-day Sabbath
Day before the Crucifixion Thursday	Day of the Crucifixion Friday	Day after the Crucifixion Sabbath
Reckoning of days by the Sadducees and chief priests; reported in John		
	Passover Preparation	Feast of UB day 1/Sabbath
	“preparation of the passover” - John 19:14	John 20:1 correctly understood as a 7th-day Sabbath

The reason for this difference is explained in the section “Timing of the Crucifixion and Death” in chapter 4. A more-detailed diagram appears in Appendix 4.

The Feast of Unleavened Bread

The seven-day Feast of Unleavened Bread was specified in Leviticus 23:6 to begin on Nisan 15 following the Nisan 14 preparation of the Passover meal eaten on the evening of Nisan 15. As seen above, there were sectarian differences as to which day this fell on, either Thursday or Friday in that year.

“And they shall eat the flesh in that night, roast with fire, and unleavened bread; *and* with bitter *herbs* they shall eat it.” (Exodus 12:8)

This makes sense as the meal was actually eaten in the evening hours of the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread. The first and last days of the feast are described as “holy convocations.”

“And on the fifteenth day of the same month *is* the feast of unleavened bread unto the LORD: seven days ye must eat unleavened bread. In the first day ye shall have an holy convocation: ye shall do no servile work therein. But ye shall offer an offering made by fire unto the LORD seven days: in the seventh day *is* an holy convocation: ye shall do no servile work *therein*.” (Leviticus 23:6-8)

The people were told to “have an holy convocation” and to “do no servile work” on the first and last days of the feast. In this way, they are like seventh-day Sabbaths and people sometimes refer to them as Sabbaths, but the Bible never calls them that. This becomes important in connection with the timing of the following spring feasts so we need to examine them carefully.

The Wave Sheaf Offering

There is one more day that is critical to look at in relation to the timing of the resurrection. That is the day on which the Wave Sheaf was offered as that ceremony was typical of the resurrection of Christ.

The important thing about the Wave Sheaf (a sheaf or bundle of barley stalks) was not that it was cut or cut off (as in death) but that it was harvested (as in resurrection). The ultimate harvest is the end of the world when the ripe fruit (Christians with fully-matured, Christ-like characters) will be resurrected:

“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.” (1 Thessalonians 4:16-17)

Jesus was “harvested” at His resurrection on the Sabbath, likely just after sunset in accordance with the types of the Wave Sheaf, and returned to heaven the next morning with those that were raised with Him as the first fruits, to be “waved” or presented before the Father. This is a further clue that His resurrection may have happened at, or just after sunset. Those that were raised with Him also were “harvested” on the day of the Wave Sheaf by their resurrection:

“And the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept arose, And came out of the graves after his resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many.” (Matthew 27:52-53)

They were obviously not harvested by being killed. Their death had happened previously; for some of them perhaps many years earlier.

There is another translation issue that needs to be addressed to properly understand the timing of the wave-sheaf offering. That involves the meaning of the phrase “after the sabbath” and “after the seventh sabbath” in these verses:

“And he shall wave the sheaf before the LORD, to be accepted, for you: on the morrow after the sabbath the priest shall wave it:” (Leviticus 23:11)

“And ye shall count unto you from the morrow after the sabbath, from the day that ye brought the sheaf of the wave offering; seven sabbaths shall be complete.” (Leviticus 23:15)

“Even unto the morrow after the seventh sabbath shall ye number fifty days; and ye shall offer a new meat offering unto the LORD.” (Leviticus 23:16)

The Morrow After Which Sabbath?

The meaning of “the morrow after” is critical to correctly understand the timing of the resurrection. The first question is: “what Sabbath is being referred to in Leviticus 23:11, 15 and 16?” Many people maintain that “the sabbath” is referring to the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread (Nisan 15) which, they say, is a Sabbath. By that reckoning, the Wave Sheaf and Pentecost can fall on any day of the week. So, we need to determine if the word “sabbath” as used in these verses could be referring to the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, or whether it only means the seventh-day Sabbath.

The two Hebrew words commonly translated as “Sabbath” in the Old Testament are “Shabbath” (H7676) and “Shabbathon” (H7677, meaning “rest”). “Shabbath” is always used to refer to a seventh-day Sabbath, or, in a few cases, the seventh year, or the Day of Atonement, occurring in the seventh month. Feast days other than the Day of Atonement are never referred to using this word. There are two verses where, in the King James Bible, the word “sabbath” occurs three times in connection with a feast day:

“Speak unto the children of Israel, saying, In the seventh month, in the first *day* of the month, shall ye have a sabbath, a memorial of blowing of trumpets, an holy convocation.” (Leviticus 23:24)

“Also in the fifteenth day of the seventh month, when ye have gathered in the fruit of the land, ye shall keep a feast unto the LORD seven days: on the first day *shall be* a sabbath, and on the eighth day *shall be* a sabbath.” (Leviticus 23:39)

However, if you check in a concordance, you will see that the original word used in these verses is “Shabbathon.” Every other time this word is used in the original, the King James Version translates it as “rest.” The two words are often used together as in:

“Six days may work be done; but in the seventh *is* the sabbath (Shabbath) of rest (Shabbathon), holy to the LORD ...” (Exodus 31:15)

Obviously, they do not mean the same thing and are not interchangeable. Thus, in Leviticus 23:11, 15 and 16 “sabbath” which is translated from “shabbath” (H7676) is clearly referring to the seventh-day Sabbath, and not the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread. We will find yet more evidence later. This makes determination of the day of the Wave Sheaf easier. Correctly understanding the original words translated as “sabbath,” shows that the timing of the Wave Sheaf is determined in relation to the seventh-day Sabbath.

Leviticus 23:11, 15 and 16 would then seem to indicate that the Wave Sheaf and Pentecost must always be on Sundays (“after the sabbath”) in every year. That conflicts with the idea that Jesus was resurrected and presented as the Wave Sheaf offering on a seventh-day Sabbath. How can this be resolved?

As we have already done with several words and phrases in this study, we need to carefully examine the original words. The first clue is found by examining Strong’s Concordance which indicates that, in each of these verses, “morrow” is translated from the Hebrew word “mochorath” (H4283) and “the sabbath” is translated from “shabbath” (H7676) but there is no single word in the original Hebrew for those verses which could be translated into the word “after.” So how did the word “after” come to be there?

“After the Sabbath”

The original Hebrew word for “after” is never included in the Hebrew for the phrase “after the sabbath” in the King James Version except in this verse:

“And it came to pass, that when the gates of Jerusalem began to be dark before the sabbath, I commanded that the gates should be shut, and charged that they should not be opened till after (“achar”) the sabbath (“shabbath,” H7676): and *some* of my servants set I at the gates, *that* there should no burden be brought in on the sabbath day.” (Nehemiah 13:19)

“After the sabbath,” in this use, is clearly indicating a time following the close of the sabbath at sunset when the next calendar day begins. Thus, the word “achar” was used. The Hebrew word “achar” (H310) is translated as “after” in 454 of its total 709 uses. It was used in Nehemiah to indicate a time beyond the Sabbath.

“Achar” appears in 188 verses in the first five books which Moses wrote. If Moses, in Leviticus 23:11,15 and 16 quoted earlier, had meant after the end of the Sabbath, surely, he would have used the word for “after” which he had used many other times. An example would be:

“And the LORD spake unto Moses after (“achar”) the death of the two sons of Aaron, when they offered before the LORD, and died;” (Leviticus 16:1)

So, in the phrase “after the sabbath” in Leviticus 23, “after” is not built into and does not come from the word “shabbath.” Could it be connected with the word “morrow?” The meaning of the word “mochorath” (H4283) and uses of “morrow after” will turn out to be critical in coming to a correct understanding of the timing of Jesus’ resurrection and will also affect the timing of Pentecost. We will look at several examples that will show how the Bible itself uses and therefore defines the word. We need to use the Bible definition for terms not those of man.

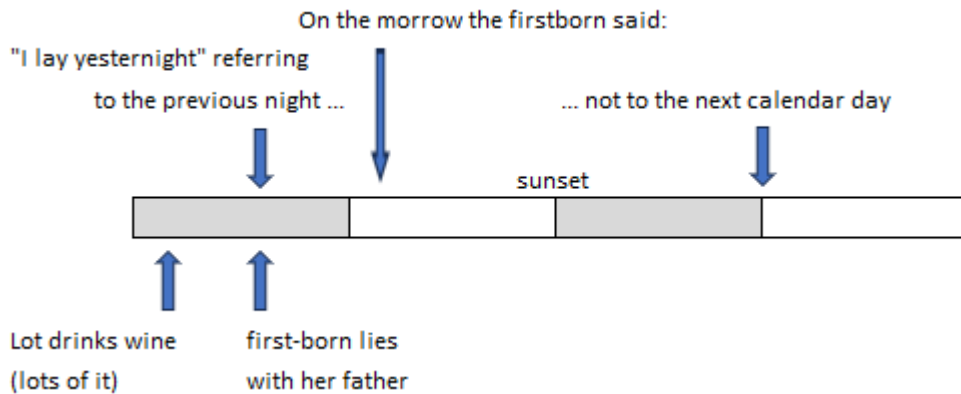
“On the Morrow” in Genesis

“The morrow after” sounds something like we would say the next morning after an event the day before. Let’s look at how the Bible uses the original word translated morrow (“mochorath” H4283) to understand its meaning. The first use of the Hebrew word “mochorath” (H4283) is in the story of Lot and his daughters:

“And the firstborn said unto the younger, Our father *is* old, and *there is* not a man in the earth to come in unto us after the manner of all the earth: Come, let us make our father drink wine, and

we will lie with him, that we may preserve seed of our father. And they made their father drink wine that night: and the firstborn went in, and lay with her father; and he perceived not when she lay down, nor when she arose. And it came to pass on the morrow, that the firstborn said unto the younger, Behold, I lay yesternight with my father: let us make him drink wine this night also; and go thou in, *and* lie with him, that we may preserve seed of our father.” (Genesis 19:31-34)

Obviously, “on the morrow” follows the night the firstborn lay with her father. If that was, say, a Tuesday night/Wednesday morning, “on the morrow” would be Wednesday morning, not a day later; not the morning of the next calendar day - Thursday.



It is obvious, from the context, that the morrow (“mochorath”) was the following morning after the previous reference point (“when she lay down” and “when she arose”) not the next calendar day. This establishes the meaning of “mochorath.” However, there are more examples.

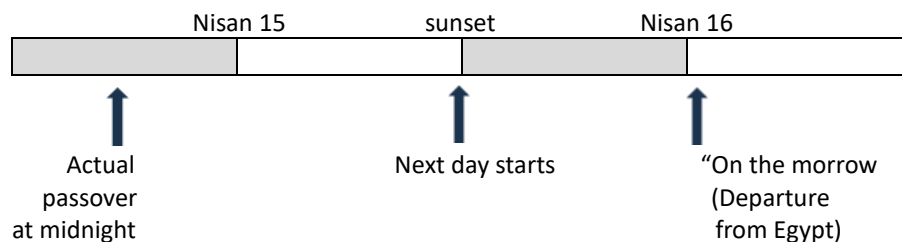
The Passover at the Exodus

Consider the event of the Passover in Egypt:

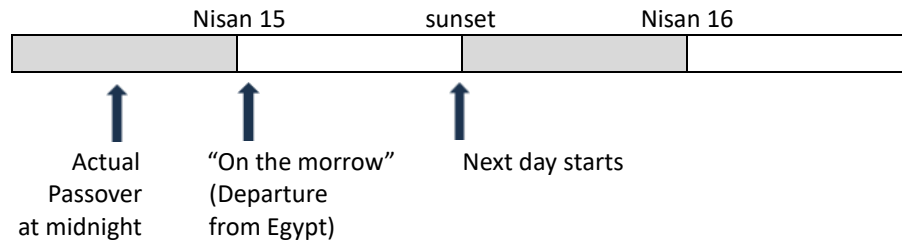
“And they departed from Rameses in the first month, on the fifteenth day of the first month; on the morrow after the passover the children of Israel went out with an high hand in the sight of all the Egyptians.” (Numbers 33:3)

Passover (the actual passing over the houses) was on Nisan 15 at midnight. (Nisan 14 is often, mistakenly, referred to as Passover. The Passover occurred at midnight on Nisan 15. Nisan 14 should properly be referred to as the preparation of the Passover. See a detailed study - <https://characterofgod.org/resources#passover>)

If “morrow” meant the next calendar day after the Passover, they would have departed “on the morrow” of Nisan 16 like this:



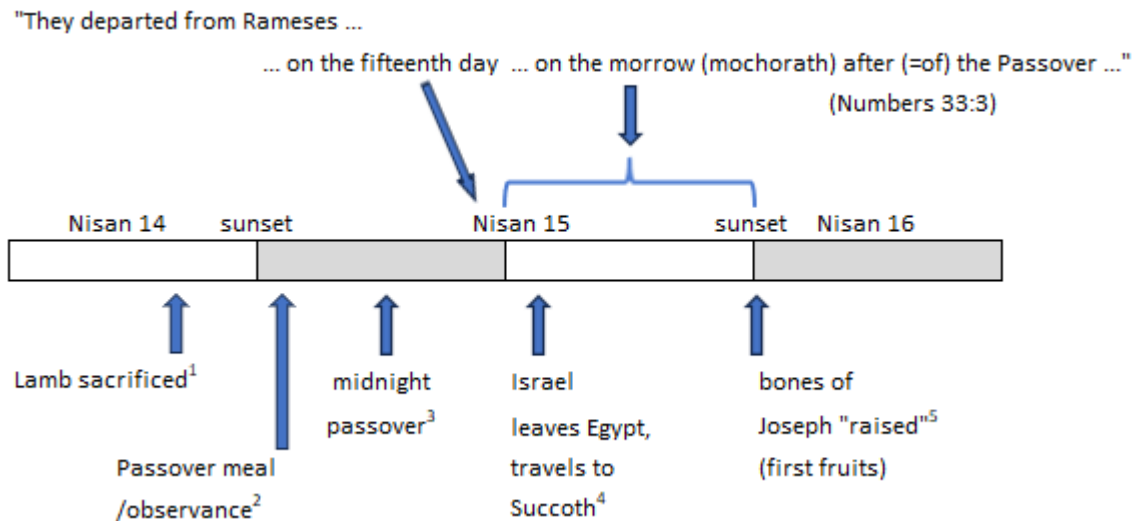
That does not make sense. The morrow of the Passover does not mean the day after as in the next calendar day. What would be the purpose of eating the meal with shoes on feet and staff in hand (Exodus 12:11) if they were not leaving for another approximately 30 hours? “Morrow” (mochorath, H4283) can only mean the next morning, or the next awake period like this:



This indicates that “morrow” refers to the following morning or the next awake period, not the next calendar day.

The common Hebrew word for “after” (achar) does not appear in the Hebrew for Numbers 33:3. It would be more correct to have translated it as: “the morrow of the Passover” as it was the morrow or morning of the same calendar day in which the passing over of the houses occurred at midnight.

Here is a more detailed diagram of how the word “mochorath” (morrow) would fit into the events of the Passover from Egypt:



¹Exodus 12:6; ²Exodus 12:8; ³Exodus 12:12, 29; ⁴Exodus 12:37; ⁵Genesis 50:25, Exodus 13:19.
See the section **The Passover as Israel Left Egypt** for more about the bones of Joseph.

The semicolon separating the two parts of Numbers 33:3 indicates a correspondence between them. Clearly, they departed both “on the fifteenth day” and “on the morrow after the Passover” both times being given in the same verse to describe their departure. Therefore:

the daylight hours of “the fifteenth day” = “the morrow after the Passover event”

It can only be that “the morrow of the Passover” is equivalent to the daylight hours following the Passover observance and still on the same (sunset-to-sunset) calendar day (Nisan 15), not the next calendar day (the 16th).

This then is a more correct, literal translation using “of” rather than “after:”

“And they journey from Rameses in the first month, on the fifteenth day of the first month, on the morrow of the passover have the sons of Israel gone out with a high hand, before the eyes of all the Egyptians — “ (Numbers 33:3, Young’s Literal Translation)

The timing of Israel leaving Egypt shows that “mochorath” cannot possibly mean the next calendar day.

“And Moses said unto the people, Remember this day, in which ye came out from Egypt, out of the house of bondage; for by strength of hand the LORD brought you out from this *place*: there shall no leavened bread be eaten.” (Exodus 13:3)

They were given the ordinance of the Passover meal to help them remember being rescued from bondage.

“And the LORD said unto Moses and Aaron, This *is* the ordinance of the passover: There shall no stranger eat thereof.” (Exodus 12:43)

Verses 44-50 give details of who may eat of the Passover meal which was observed the evening of the 15th. Then it says:

“And it came to pass the selfsame day, *that* the LORD did bring the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt by their armies.” (Exodus 12:51)

“The selfsame day” as what? It would have to be the selfsame day as the just-described observance of the Passover, specifically the eating thereof. On that day, Israel was brought “out of the land of Egypt.” Connect that with “they departed from Rameses in the first month, on the fifteenth day of the first month; on the morrow after the passover” (Numbers 33:3) and it is more obvious that “the morrow after the passover” is not the next calendar day (Nisan 16) but the morning (daylight hours) of the same day (Nisan 15). This helps with the meaning of “morrow” from the Hebrew word “mochorath.”

It is the daylight period following or next after the event of the Passover (the passing over the houses) which happened at midnight on Nisan 15.

Remember, Nisan 14 is not the day of the Passover but the day of the preparation of the Passover as in Matthew 26:17, Mark 14:12 and Luke 22:8. Note that John placed the preparation of the Passover (John 19:14) a day later as he was referring to the Sadducees later observance (as explained earlier).

The “morrow after the passover” follows the Passover which actually happened at midnight on the fifteenth of that month when the Lord “passed over the houses of the children of Israel” (Exodus 12:27). Since evening and morning constitute a full day (Genesis 1), they departed on the same calendar day (still the 15th). It was both the morrow after the Passover and the morning of the calendar day in which the Passover occurred or “Passover morning” or “the morrow of the Passover.” In this case, we can be 100% sure the morrow after the Passover was the 15th because Numbers 33:3 explicitly gives that date.

So “mochorath” is rightly understood to refer to the daytime (daylight, period) that follows the present reference point in time. The time reference, in this case, is the event of the Passover at midnight.

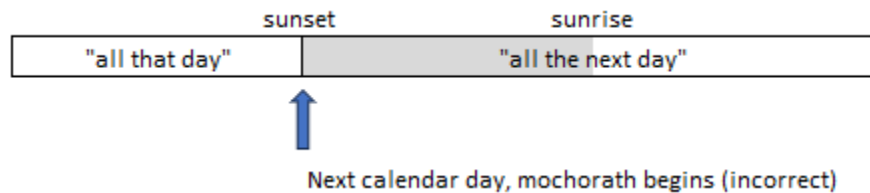
The Quail in the Exodus

“And the people stood up all that day, and all *that* night, and all the next (H4283) day, and they gathered the quails: he that gathered least gathered ten homers and they spread *them* all abroad for themselves round about the camp.” (Numbers 11:32)

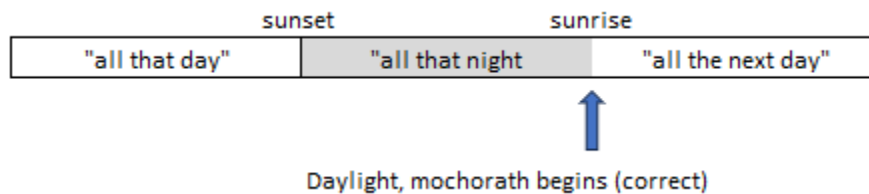
Here is one author’s take on this verse:

“In analyzing the 33 uses of the word mochorath in scripture, it appears that it essentially means the next normal period of wakefulness. Numbers 11:32 says: ‘And the people stayed up all that day, all that night, and all the next day [mochorath], and gathered the quail’... Clearly, ‘all the next day’ follows the night, which would have been completely unnecessary if mochorath began with sunset as some have claimed.” (Sanford Beattie, Resolving the Passover Controversy)

Also, saying “all that night” would have been unnecessary if “mochorath” began at sunset (marking the start of a new calendar day and including the night) which would look like this:



If “mochorath” meant the next calendar day it could have said simply “all that day and all the next day” and that would be understood to include the night that begins the next day. Rather, mochorath, referring to “the next normal period of wakefulness,” follows the night and therefore would look like this:



“The Morrow After” in Joshua

“And the children of Israel encamped in Gilgal, and kept the passover on the fourteenth day of the month at even [“at even” beginning the early hours of Nisan 15] in the plains of Jericho. And they did eat of the old corn of the land on the morrow after the passover, unleavened cakes, and parched *corn* in the selfsame day.” (Joshua 5:10-11)

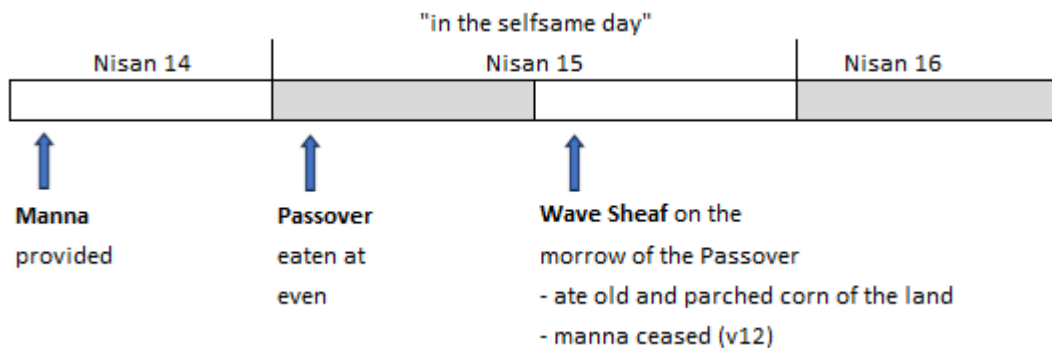
Joshua 5:10 mentions an event, the Passover observance, that began after sunset closed the 14th and thus in the evening hours of the 15th. The reference point here is the Passover observance, the meal they ate in remembrance of when they left Egypt. Verse 11 says “on the morrow after the Passover” with that phrase in the original Hebrew being exactly the same as in Numbers 33:3. Therefore, this was a reference to the daytime of the 15th day of the first month and referred to the morning that followed the Passover observance, not the next calendar day.

“They did eat of the old corn ... in the selfsame day” The selfsame day as what? It had to be “they did eat of the old corn in the selfsame day that they kept the passover” which was possible since the daylight hours of that day were in the same calendar day as their eating of the Passover the previous evening.

Now consider verse 12:

“And the manna ceased on the morrow (“mochorath”) after they had eaten of the old corn of the land; neither had the children of Israel manna any more; but they did eat of the fruit of the land of Canaan that year.” (Joshua 5:12)

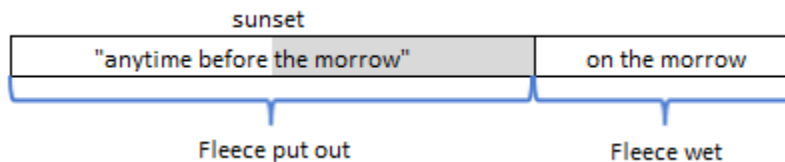
If they were able to eat the old corn of the land and parched corn on the 15th, there was no need for manna to fall that morning. And so, the manna ceased on the morrow of Nisan 15. None fell or was needed because they could eat the produce of the land.



“The Morrow After” in Judges

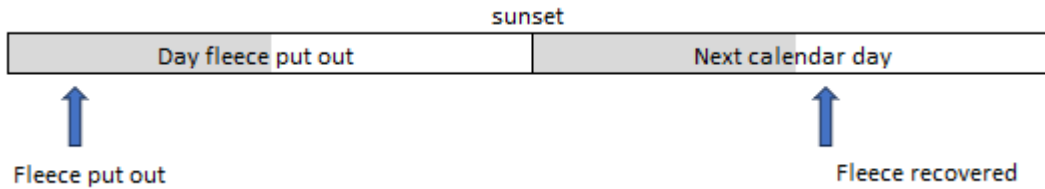
Here is another example - from the story of Gideon:

“Behold, I will put a fleece of wool in the floor; *and* if the dew be on the fleece only, and *it be* dry upon all the earth *beside*, then shall I know that thou wilt save Israel by mine hand, as thou hast said. And it was so: for he rose up early on the morrow, and thrust the fleece together, and wringed the dew out of the fleece, a bowl full of water.” (Judges 6:37-38)



Again, it is obvious, from the context, that it was the next morning but not necessarily the next calendar day. The reference point is when Gideon put the fleece on the floor. “The morrow” (“mochorath”) means the next or following morning from the reference event of putting out the fleece.

If “on the morrow” meant the next calendar day and the fleece had been put out after sunset on the first day, it would look like this:



That would risk all the water in a wet fleece evaporating in the heat of the sun before the next day. It only makes sense that “on the morrow” means the following morning, not the following calendar day.

Morrow - the Next Period of Wakefulness

The examples above show that “mochorath” refers to the next awake period from the reference point. Here is a summary of the evidence:

Passage	Beginning Reference Point	Actual Wording	Time Referred To
Genesis 19:31-34	the night Lot drank wine	on the morrow	the morning after (but the same day)
Numbers 33:3	the Passover (actual passing over the houses) in Egypt	morrow after the passover	morning of Nisan 15
Numbers 11:32	the quail in Exodus	all the next day	morning after the arrival of the quail
Numbers 17:7-8	Moses laid up the rods in the tabernacle	on the morrow	morning after Moses laid up the rods
Joshua 5:10-11	the Passover meal eaten Nisan 15	morrow after the Passover	morning of Nisan 15
Judges 6:37-38	Gideon puts out the fleece	on the morrow	morning after putting the fleece out
Leviticus 23:10-11	“Bring a sheaf ... unto the priest”	morrow after the sabbath	morning of the sabbath
Leviticus 23:15	“the day that ye brought the sheaf”	morrow after the sabbath	morning of the sabbath

A New Testament Example

The New Testament, while written in Greek, is similar:

“And when even was now come, his disciples went down unto the sea, And entered into a ship, and went over the sea toward Capernaum. And it was now dark, and Jesus was not come to them. ... The day following, when the people which stood on the other side of the sea saw that there was none other boat there, save that one whereinto his disciples were entered, and that Jesus went not with his disciples into the boat, but *that* his disciples were gone away alone;”
(John 6:16-17,22)

“The day following” was the following morning but also the same calendar day as when Jesus came to them in the boat (when “it was now dark”). It was not the next calendar day.

Wave Sheaf in the Morning

With the background from the examples above, let's look at the verses in question from Leviticus 23:

“Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When ye be come into the land which I give unto you, and shall reap the harvest thereof, then ye shall bring a sheaf of the firstfruits of your harvest unto the priest: And he shall wave the sheaf before the LORD, to be accepted for you: on the morrow (“mochorath,” H4283) after the sabbath the priest shall wave it.” (Leviticus 23:10-11)

The beginning reference point in time here is when they brought the sheaf to the priest. The next period of wakefulness, the following morning is when the sheaf was waved. As the word “mochorath” indicates the daylight time following the reference point, there is no need to add the word “after” and, thus, it is not present in the original Hebrew. However, the word “mochorath” is understood to refer to the next or following period of wakefulness following, in this case, the bringing of the sheaf. Therefore, it is the morrow after the giving of the sheaf to the priest which is the morrow (or morning) of the Sabbath.

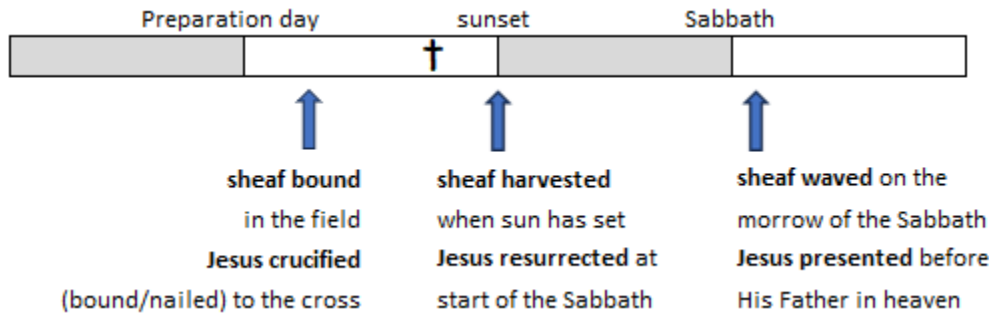
They would tie the sheaf the day before (on the preparation day) in preparation for its harvest at the right time. Then, with great ceremony, it would be cut or harvested immediately as the sun set. The procedure for the Wave Sheaf is described thus:

“The Mishnah, written a few centuries after the time of the first century church, describes how a messenger would go out and bind the standing stalks of grain into sheaves so that it would be easy to cut. The priest, followed by his entourage, would come to the field, sickle in hand, and ask, ‘Is the sun set?’ to which the people would answer, ‘Yes!!’ ‘Shall I reap?’ ‘Reap!!’ The priest then cut off a standing stalk of grain, then took it to be prepared for the offering the next morning.” (Jack M. Lane, *The Wave Sheaf Offering -- The Forgotten Holy Day?*)

Of course, it would have been more than a single stalk; more correctly, a sheaf. Here is another description:

“The wave sheaf had been chosen in advance, as Christ was. It was tied in a bundle, symbolizing His captivity. It was cut loose from the ground just at sunset – just the time at which Christ rose from the dead after three days and three nights in the tomb. The cutting of the grain symbolized Christ's actual resurrection.” (Lawson C. Briggs, “*The Wavesheaf Ritual – Proof of Christ and the Bible,*” in June 1975 Good News)

The reference, in that quote, to Christ rising “after three days and three nights in the tomb” is not in agreement with the scenario referred to in this study but the quotation is helpful to understand the Wave Sheaf procedure. The morning after it was cut, it was presented in the temple. The author did not make the connection to the fact that it was selected and tied into a bundle just hours before. Here is the Wave Sheaf procedure diagrammed in comparison with Christ's crucifixion and resurrection:

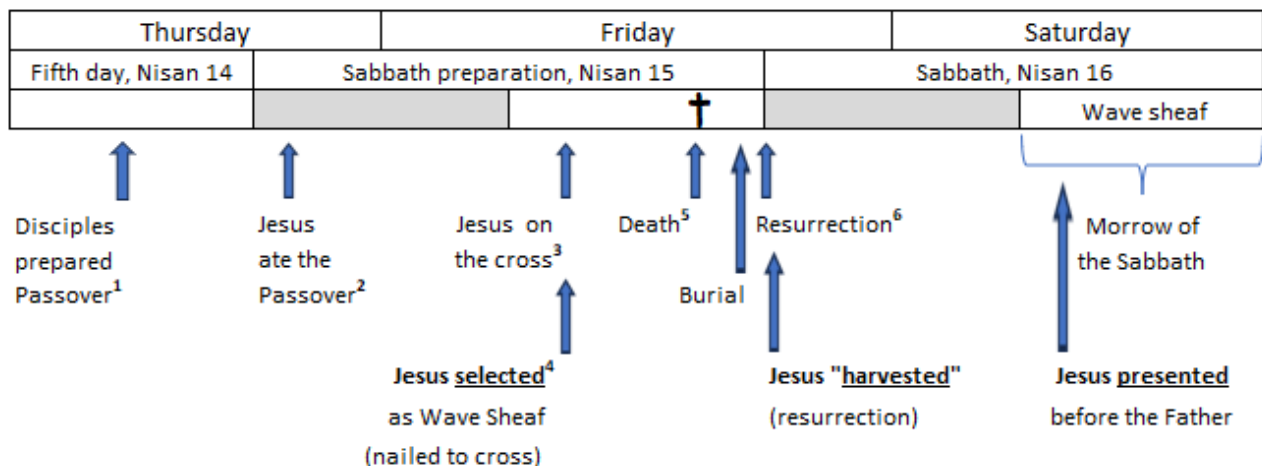


Jesus' Resurrection and the Wave Sheaf

Here we are concerned mainly with the relationship of the resurrection to the Wave Sheaf offering. As Jesus was the firstfruits, He fulfilled the type of the first fruits offering and the timing would have matched.

“But now is Christ risen from the dead, *and* become the firstfruits of them that slept.” (1 Corinthians 15:20)

Here is that relationship in more detail:



¹Matthew 26:17 (Note: the phrase “Feast of Unleavened Bread” was often used to include the day of preparation), Mark 14:12, Luke 22:7-13 (Connect Luke 22:7 with Exodus 12:6); ²Matthew 26:18, Mark 14:14, Luke 22:15; ³Mark 15:25; ⁴Selected (as distinct from Barabbas); ⁵Matthew 27:46,50; ⁶Resurrection timing is discussed in detail later in this study.

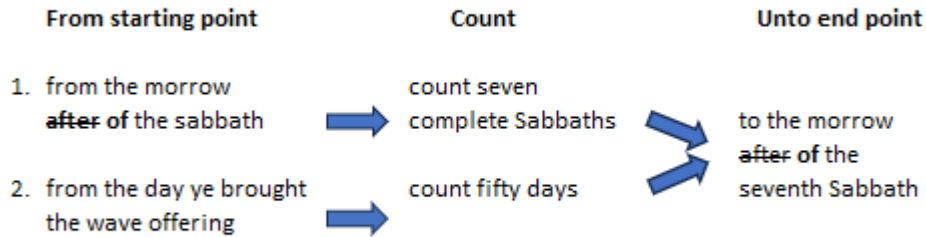
The meaning of “mochorath” as shown from several Biblical events and the type of the Wave Sheaf point conclusively to a Sabbath resurrection, yet there is still more evidence.

Pentecost, Wave Sheaf, Resurrection all on the Same Day

When the timing of Pentecost is carefully examined, it also points to the Wave Sheaf (the presentation of Jesus to His Father following the resurrection) and the resurrection itself being on a seventh-day Sabbath.

That is from the fact that the count to Pentecost ends on a seventh-day Sabbath. Leviticus 23:15-16, diagrammed below, gives two ways to number the days from the Wave Sheaf to Pentecost:

Leviticus 23:15-16 Specifies Two Ways to Count



The starting point is specified in two ways - they must be referring to the same time.
The count is specified in two ways - they must both come to the same end point.

Therefore, the morrow of (as it should be translated) the seventh Sabbath is the same as day fifty which is Pentecost. So, there were two methods:

1. "count ... seven sabbaths" (which would span seven weeks)" (verse 15)
2. "number fifty days" (verse 16)

But there seems to be a problem:

$$7 \text{ weeks} \times 7 \text{ days/week} = 49 \text{ days; however, } 49 \text{ days} \neq 50 \text{ days}$$

The solution, which proves that there were seven full, Sunday-to-Sabbath weeks, comes from an additional instruction for counting given elsewhere.

Method 1. Number Fifty Days

First, consider the instruction given to number 50 days. This count started from the morrow of (not after) the Sabbath. They counted inclusively so that day 1 and day 50 would both be on seventh-day Sabbaths.

Count from the Morrow of the Sabbath to Pentecost = 50 days						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Sabbath
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31	32	33	34	35	36
37	38	39	40	41	42	43
44	45	46	47	48	49	50/Pentecost

That is very straightforward – simply count the days. However, scripture specifies another way to count (a second witness, if you want) which helps to verify the first method.

Method 2. Number Seven Weeks

Here is the additional instruction:

“Seven weeks shalt thou number unto thee: begin to number the seven weeks from *such time as thou beginnest to put the sickle to the corn.* And thou shalt keep the feast of weeks ...”
(Deuteronomy 16:9-10)

In this method, they counted weeks rather than days. The word translated “weeks” is “shabuwa” (H7620). It is related to the word for Sabbath but is used to designate weeks. The count started from the day they began the barley harvest - “put the sickle to the corn” - which scripture associates with harvest. That, of course, would not be on Sabbath but the next day, the start of a new work week.

The only other use of the original word for “sickle” (chermesh, H2770) is:

“When thou comest into the standing corn of thy neighbour, then thou mayest pluck the ears with thine hand; but thou shalt not move a sickle unto thy neighbour’s standing corn.”
(Deuteronomy 23:25)

So, a small amount of a neighbour’s grain could be plucked for immediate use to satisfy hunger, but to “move a sickle” - the equivalent of doing the work of harvesting - was prohibited. This is illustrated by this incident:

“At that time Jesus went on the sabbath day through the corn; and his disciples were an hungred, and began to pluck the ears of corn, and to eat.” (Matthew 12:1)

To “put the sickle to the corn” is thus associated with the work of harvesting. This would not commence until the day after the Wave Sheaf was offered (on the seventh-day Sabbath). That day, was also the first day of a new work week, the first day of the first of seven complete weeks of harvest. So, the count would start on a Sunday. You logically start counting “complete” weeks at the start of a week. Sunday, the second day of the count to 50 days, using method one to Sabbath the 8th day of the count would make up the first complete week. The last day of harvest in the seventh week (which is not a Sabbath) is then followed by day 50 which is Pentecost.

Count from the Start of the Harvest to Pentecost = 7 weeks							
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Sabbath Wave Sheaf	
← harvest starts	week 1 of harvest					→	
←	week 2 of harvest					→	
←	week 3 of harvest					→	
←	week 4 of harvest					→	
←	week 5 of harvest					→	
←	week 6 of harvest					→	
←	week 7 of harvest					→	Pentecost

The two methods of counting started at different points but ended on the same day. If they were to start on the Wave Sheaf Day counting seven periods of seven days (disregarding which day of the week the seven days starts on) then the seven weeks would end a day before the count to 50 days. It was the feast of 7 weeks of harvest, not the feast of 49 days of harvest. It is only reasonable that they should be complete weeks. So, the count is both by 50 days and by 7 complete weeks with a different starting point so that they both end on the day of Pentecost.

A Correct Understanding

The arbitrary addition of the word “after” in Leviticus 23:11, 15 and 16 obviously changes the meaning as it is not in the original, and is not consistent with the meaning of “mochorath.”

A more correct translation than “on the morrow after the sabbath” would be “the morrow of the sabbath.” In the case of Leviticus 23:16, it would be “the morrow of the seventh sabbath.” Here are some more literal translations:

“He will wave the sheaf before Yahweh for acceptance on your behalf. From the morrow of the first sabbath the priest shall wave it. (Leviticus 23:11, Concordant Literal Old Testament)

“then he shall wave the Omer before YAHWEH for your acceptance; on the morrow of the Sabbath the priest shall wave it.” (Leviticus 23:11, Hebrew Roots Bible)

“then he shall wave the sheaf before Jehovah for your acceptance; on the morrow of the sabbath the priest shall wave it.” (Leviticus 23:11, *KJ3 Literal Translation*)

“and he shall wave the sheaf before Yahweh, that ye may be accepted,—on the morrow of the sabbath, shall the priest wave it.” (Leviticus 23:11, Rotherham's Emphasized Bible)

“And he lifted up the handful before Jehovah for your acceptance: on the morrow of the Sabbath the priest shall lift it up.” (Leviticus 23:11, Smith's Literal Translation)

“then he hath waved the sheaf before Jehovah for your acceptance; on the morrow of the sabbath doth the priest wave it.” (Leviticus 23:11, *Young's Literal Translation*)

Below are verses 15 and 16 from Young's translation. All the other Bible mentioned above follow the same pattern.

“And ye have numbered to you from the morrow of the sabbath, from the day of your bringing in the sheaf of the wave-offering: they are seven perfect sabbaths; unto the morrow of the seventh sabbath ye do number fifty days, and ye have brought near a new present to Jehovah;” (Leviticus 23:15-16, *Young's Literal Translation*)

With this understanding, we can see that the First Fruits were offered (waved) on the morrow of the seventh-day Sabbath not on the morrow after the Sabbath. This is consistent with our understanding of Jesus' resurrection. He was presented as the Wave Sheaf offering on Sabbath morning, after His resurrection earlier on Sabbath evening – what we would call Friday evening. This is also consistent with the procedure for the Wave Sheaf.

An important note here is that, as Jesus is our example in all things, we can use the timing of the events in His life to check what is reported to have happened elsewhere in scripture. Not that the word of God is wrong but, as we have seen, there are a few translation issues that have had a serious effect on our understanding.

Why not Fixed Dates for Wave Sheaf and Pentecost?

According to the Wikipedia article on Shavuot (Pentecost) “It is a Jewish holiday that occurs on the sixth day of the Hebrew month of Sivan.” It must be then that many people believe it to be on a fixed date of the Hebrew calendar. According to this study, that is not the case. However, it could be interesting to ask why Pentecost couldn’t be on fixed dates as every other feast is? There are two reasons.

1. The first relates to the duration of the 7-week and 50-day counts. This was all laid out to Moses around 1500 BC. With the length of the year changing in the 8th century BC in the time of King Hezekiah from 360 days to 365 ¼ days and a corresponding change in the number of days in at least some months, the number of days between fixed dates spanning parts of 3 months would have changed. For documentation of that change in the length of the year, go to:

<https://godswordunlocked.com/immanuel-velikovsky/>

2. Setting the Wave Sheaf and thus Pentecost to a fixed day of the week could have a purpose in God’s plan. While this is not proof in any way, it would seem very strange that the count would be arranged in such a way as to make the first day of the week (Sunday) the day when God especially pours out His Spirit on His people. We know that Sunday, more than any other day, is in competition with the Sabbath for significance. By fixing the start of the count to a seventh-day Sabbath it could be assured that Pentecost, 50 days inclusive later, would also be on a seventh-day Sabbath even if the number of days changed in some months.

Pentecost

Pentecost was the day Israel gave thanks for the spring wheat harvest. The name is derived from the Greek word “pentekoste” meaning “fiftieth.” It was also called the Feast of Weeks, implying not just 50 days but a number of weeks:

“And thou shalt observe the feast of weeks, of the firstfruits of wheat harvest ...” (Exodus 34:22)

The Jews counted seven complete weeks and, including the Sabbath they started from, 50 complete days from First Fruits to Pentecost.

As discussed in the earlier section “Two Ways to Count,” there were two methods given on how to count to Pentecost with each ending, of course, on the day of Pentecost.

The following verse gives additional evidence of the process of counting a number of weeks:

“And it came to pass on the second sabbath after the first, that he went through the corn fields; and his disciples plucked the ears of corn, and did eat, rubbing *them* in *their* hands.” (Luke 6:1)

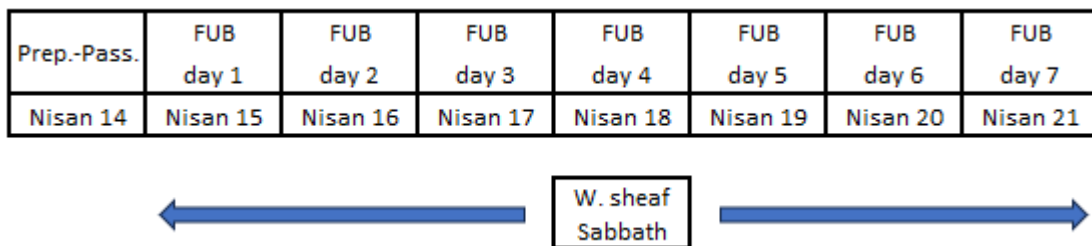
Johnston Cheney explains “the second sabbath after the first?”:

“Seven sabbaths were to be counted from the Feast of First-fruits or Passover. Consequently, these came to be known as ‘First Sabbath,’ ‘Second Sabbath’ etc., down to the seventh. And according to Julian Morgenstern, former President of Hebrew University, this practice continued in Galilee till the time of Christ or the Common Era. It is still observed by some groups in Palestine today. Thus, there was an annual date known as ‘First Sabbath,’ just after Passover.” (Johnston Cheney, *The Life of Christ in Stereo: The Four Gospels Speak in Harmony*, p. 230)

Again, this is logical considering that they were told to count Sabbaths.

The first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, Nisan 15, unquestionably follows the preparation of the Passover, Nisan 14. Just as certainly, Pentecost is linked to the Wave Sheaf being the 50th day from (and including) the day the sheaf was waved. Thus, whatever day of the week the Wave Sheaf was offered, Pentecost would be on the same day of the week. We have established above, that the sheaf was always waved on the seventh-day Sabbath falling within the Feast of Unleavened Bread.

The Wave Sheaf Day, which is also the first of the 50 days leading up to Pentecost, could shift back and forth from year to year and land on any of the seven days of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, whichever one was the seventh-day Sabbath.



Counting fifty days inclusive from the Wave Sheaf brings us to the Feast of Pentecost, which would be on another seventh-day Sabbath. Now everything in the timing fits according to scripture. There are fifty days inclusive from the Wave Sheaf to Pentecost on a seventh-day Sabbath and there are seven complete weeks with the last week ending on Pentecost, again on a seventh-day Sabbath.

Let’s consider what would happen to the determination of the timing of Pentecost if Feast Days were considered to be Sabbaths. The seventh day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread would have to be counted and Pentecost itself would be included even if not on a seventh-day Sabbath. There could easily be nine Sabbaths in the 50-day period. See Appendix 5 - *Possible Counts of Days from Feast of First Fruits to Pentecost*.

There is another problem with the common theory of the Feasts of First Fruits and Pentecost being on fixed days of the month, rather than fixed days of the week. Pentecost is described as being:

“Even unto the morrow after the seventh sabbath shall ye number fifty days; and ye shall offer a new meat offering unto the LORD.” (Leviticus 23:16)

If Pentecost, 50 days inclusive from the Wave Sheaf, ends up being midweek what Sabbath is it following? There is none specified. The 49th day of the count is not designated as a Sabbath. With the word “after” removed it all makes sense.

We now have considerable evidence for a correct understanding of the order and timing of the major events. (Refer again to the diagram in the section “The End of the Three Days and Three Nights” in Chapter One.) The “three days and three nights” was a literal time period. It began on Tuesday evening,

with the betrayal by Judas to the chief priests. The day for slaying the lambs in preparation for the Passover observance was on Thursday, Nisan 14; the Passover meal was eaten by Jesus and His disciples on Thursday evening followed by the handover, and then Jesus' trials, crucifixion and death on Friday afternoon, Nisan 15. He was buried just before and rose at or shortly after sunset. He ascended (briefly) to heaven at the time of the Wave Sheaf offering on Sabbath morning. Fifty days later, also on a seventh-day Sabbath, was Pentecost. These details about the spring festivals will provide essential clues for reconstructing the events of the final week.

In the next chapter, we will go back to a few days before the crucifixion and follow in detail the order of events through to the resurrection. The details given in the gospels should all fit together without contradiction and in a logical and scripturally-consistent manner.

Chapter 4. The Chronology of Jesus' Last Week

So far in this study, we have established:

- The three days and three nights were, in fact, at least portions of three days and three nights.
- That three-day-and-three-night time period was before Jesus' death not after it.
- Jesus was alive during that time as Jonah was while in the fish but also, in a sense, confined as was Jonah.
- The Bible never uses the Greek word "kardia" to mean the middle or center of anything. Nor does it ever use "kardia" to refer to the physical organ.
- The Greek word "ge" can mean the people of the earth as well as the earth itself.
- Jesus often used "kardia" and "ge" with the meanings described herein in His parables; even within the same chapter in which He said "in the heart of the earth."
- "Heart of the earth" refers to the mind or will of man, not the middle of the Earth.
- The three days and three nights began with the betrayal initiated by Judas on Tuesday evening. That time period included the trials, mocking and scourging.
- The phrase "first day of the week" should be translated as "one of the sabbaths."
- There are indications that words were changed to alter the meaning and promote the shift from a Sabbath resurrection, Wave Sheaf and Pentecost to Sunday.
- "After" the sabbath or the next calendar day, the first day of the week is properly expressed in Hebrew as "achar" (H310) "shabbath" (H7676) as in Nehemiah 13:19.
- The "after the Sabbath" of Leviticus 23:11,15,16 is correctly translated "on the morrow of the Sabbath" (sabbath morning) by more-literal Bible versions.
- The "morrow after the passover" was the same evening-to-evening calendar day that Israel left Egypt, not the next calendar day.
- The type (physical deliverance from literal slavery) and the antitype (deliverance from slavery to sin by the death of Jesus) both occurred on the day of the Passover (Nisan 15).
- The preparation by Jesus' disciples for their observance of the Passover was on Thursday, Nisan 14 as specified in Exodus 12:6.
- Jesus and His disciples observed the Passover by eating the meal on the evening of Thursday, Nisan 15 (the time specified in scripture), one day earlier than the Sadducees.
- At that Passover meal, Jesus gave Himself to His disciples and us as symbolized by His sharing the bread and wine.
- Jesus' death on Friday, Nisan 15 was not God's plan A and was the work of man; Jesus' work having been completed the previous day (John 17:4).
- Jesus' resurrection at or just after sunset Friday evening and presentation to His Father the next morning matched the pattern of the Wave Sheaf ceremony.
- The Wave Sheaf offering was to take place on the morrow of the Sabbath not the next calendar day.
- The correct time for Pentecost is on the seventh-day Sabbath that both ends the seventh week since the Wave Sheaf offering and is the 50th day inclusive since that ceremony.

In this chapter, we will closely examine the order of events to see if a resurrection at the start of the Sabbath can be supported. Any verses seeming to contradict that will be examined to see if they can be resolved. Bear in mind that the above facts have already been established in previous chapters.

Jesus Travels to Jerusalem

We begin the order of events with Jesus traveling to Jerusalem:

“Then Jesus six days before the passover came to Bethany, where Lazarus was which had been dead, whom he raised from the dead. ... On the next day [Sunday] much people that were come to the feast, when they heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem, Took branches of palm trees, and went forth to meet him, and cried, Hosanna: Blessed *is* the King of Israel that cometh in the name of the Lord.” (John 12:1, 12-13)

“Six days before the Passover” (the ceremony to commemorate the actual Passover in Egypt on Nisan 15, the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread) would be the previous Sabbath, Nisan 9. “On the next day” would be referring to Sunday, Nisan 10. That Sunday, commonly referred to as Palm Sunday, was the day Jesus made His entry into Jerusalem from Bethany.

	Sabbath	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Sabbath
	Nisan 9 Arrival in Bethany	Nisan 10 Triumphal Entry	Nisan 11	Nisan 12	Nisan 13	Nisan 14 Preparation of Passover	Nisan 15 FUB day 1	Nisan 16 Wave Sheaf offering
	6d < Pass.	5d < Pass.	4d < Pass.	3d < Pass.	2d < Pass.	1d < Pass.	Passover	

FUB = Feast of Unleavened Bread;

P = Passover meal (Jesus' observance);

D = Death; R = Resurrection

P ↑ D ↑↑ R

Nisan 10 happened to be on a Sunday that year but it would fall on a Sunday only one year in seven. There is nothing here to support Sunday sacredness; certainly, scripture does not make it a holy day. Scripture only specifies that the selection of the lambs be on Nisan 10, which could be on any day of the week. The record of events from this point to the crucifixion will also support that the lamb selection, and Jesus' entry into Jerusalem, were on a Sunday. Remember, as discussed in Chapter One, by Jesus' reckoning, Nisan 14 was on Thursday so the crucifixion was then on Friday, Nisan 15. This seeming discrepancy (to the common belief that He died on Nisan 14) will be discussed in Chapter Six.

The actual lamb used in the official Passover ceremony was selected in Bethany and taken by the priests in a procession to Jerusalem, through the Sheep Gate and into the temple. Crowds of people (“a very great multitude,” Matthew 21:8) gathered to watch this official ceremony and the people in the procession would chant Psalm 118. See, for example, verse 26:

“Blessed *be* he that cometh in the name of the LORD ...” (Psalm 118:26)

As this official ceremony was in process:

“... Jesus, when he had found a young ass, sat thereon; as it is written, Fear not, daughter of Sion: behold, thy King cometh, sitting on an ass's colt.” (John 12:14-15)

Jesus, essentially, joined “the parade” from Bethany to Jerusalem and quickly became the major attraction.

Jesus joined the procession as the Passover lamb was taken from Bethany to Jerusalem, through the Sheep Gate and into the temple. He was coming to Jerusalem as the True Lamb of God to which all the sacrificial lambs over the centuries had pointed, and following the route they took. The timing was perfect. It was a fulfillment of prophecy, and many people would have later understood it as one more piece of evidence pointing to Jesus as the Messiah. Certainly, His disciples did:

“These things understood not his disciples at the first; but when Jesus was glorified, then remembered they that these things were written of him, and *that* they had done these things unto him.” (John 12:16)

They would have recalled the prophecy:

“Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee: he *is* just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass.” (Zechariah 9:9)

After arriving in Jerusalem, Jesus visited the temple:

“And Jesus entered into Jerusalem, and into the temple: and when he had looked round about upon all things, and now the eventide was come, he went out unto Bethany with the twelve.” (Mark 11:11)

From Sunday (Nisan 10) to Thursday (Nisan 14), Jesus, the true Passover Lamb, spent His days in Jerusalem and especially in the temple being examined by the leaders and the people to give them opportunity to judge if He qualified as the “sacrificial lamb.” They of course, were not thinking of that but many certainly were examining Him carefully to find any fault. He was questioned (examined) by:

- the chief priests, scribes and elders (Mark 11:27)
- the Pharisees and Herodians (Mark 12:13)
- the Sadducees (Mark 12:18)
- one of the scribes (Mark 12:28)
- certain Greeks (John 12:20)

Finally, no one dared ask Him any more questions (Mark 12:34). They could find no fault in the Lamb and He continued teaching in the temple (Mark 12:35) where the common people heard Him gladly (Mark 12:37). Later, when He was examined by Pilate, the governor of Jerusalem, Pilate declared his opinion of Jesus:

“Then said Pilate to the chief priests and *to* the people, I find no fault in this man.” (Luke 23:4)

**Never was a sacrificial “lamb” inspected more carefully;
never was a sacrificial lamb found that was more perfect.**

The Feast at Simon’s House

The next event mentioned is the dinner at Simon’s house, from which Judas left to betray Jesus to those with murder in their hearts. Their decision was made that He had to die. This point coincides with the start of the three days and three nights and is very important in determining the chronology. See Chapter One.

John 12:2-11 describes the timing of Jesus' attendance at the feast at Simon's house in Bethany differently than in the other gospels. Matthew and Mark describe it as being two days before Passover:

"Ye know that after two days is *the feast of the passover*, and the Son of man is betrayed to be crucified." (Matthew 26:2)

"After two days was *the feast of the passover*, and of unleavened bread: and the chief priests and the scribes sought how they might take him by craft, and put *him* to death." (Mark 14:1)

If it was two days to both Passover and Unleavened Bread this must be a reference to the same day - more evidence that the terms were used in common. So, it is referring the beginning of the whole eight-day period including both Nisan 14 (the day of the Passover preparation) and Nisan 15-21 (the seven-day Feast of Unleavened Bread). The way Mark especially is giving the timing, it would be said:

on Thursday the 14th - "today is Passover"
 on Wednesday the 13th - "after one day is the feast"
 on Tuesday the 12th - "after two days is the feast"

John is describing the same feast as Matthew and Mark; however, he starts his narrative by saying, "Then Jesus six days before the passover came to Bethany ..." (John 12:1). John inserts the story of the supper (verses 2-11) parenthetically at this point. He makes the connection by the word "there" at the start of verse 2. He is describing what happened "there" – there in Bethany; he is not describing events in order. John does the same thing in other places in his writings, for example, in Revelation 20, where He is talking about the first and second resurrections of the dead:

"... and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. (But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished.) This *is* the first resurrection. Blessed and holy *is* he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years." (Revelation 20:4-6, parentheses added)

I added the parentheses in the passage above but it obviously is a parenthetical statement. His topic is the first resurrection which happens at the start of the thousand years. He adds the sentence about the rest of the dead, who are raised in the second resurrection at the end of the thousand years, to explain when they are raised, then returns to his topic of the first resurrection.

In connection with his description of that Passover John includes:

"But the chief priests consulted that they might put Lazarus also to death;" (John 12:10)

They must, by this point, "also" have determined to put Jesus to death and therefore must have completely rejected Him. Both Matthew and Mark have the same timing, both mention the plotting to kill Christ then both describe Simon's feast and Judas going to the chief priests to betray Him.

It seems that Mary Magdalene washing Jesus' feet may have been an important point:

"For in that she hath poured this ointment on my body, she did *it* for my burial." (Matthew 26:12)

See more about that in Appendix 6.

The Last Supper

Preparations for this Passover meal were made on Thursday as discussed in Chapter Three. One passage that could be confusing is:

“Now before the feast of the passover, when Jesus knew that his hour was come that he should depart out of this world unto the Father, having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end. And supper being ended, the devil having now put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon’s son, to betray him;” (John 13:1-2)

Jesus, of course, would eat the Passover meal at the right time, not the day before the feast, as some have claimed. It is quite possible that John 13:1 should be the last verse of John 12. Then John 13:2 would introduce a new scene - the Last Supper. But not the end of the supper as several commentaries point out.

“And supper being ended. --The reading here is uncertain, but neither reading justifies our translation. It should probably be, “And it now becoming supper time.” As a matter of fact, the supper was not ended (John 13:12; John 13:26); but they had already reclined, and were, as we say, ready for supper.” (Ellicott’s Commentary for English Readers)

“Supper being ended - This translation expresses too much. The original means while they were at supper; and that this is the meaning is clear from the fact that we find them still eating after this.” (Notes on the Bible by Albert Barnes, 1834)

Note that there is a problem with the phrase “supper being ended.” There is no reason to translate “ginomai” (G1096) as “being ended.” In 677 other uses it is never translated that way. It is most commonly rendered as “be” (255 times), “come to pass” (82 times), “be made” (69 times) and several others. After washing their feet, verse 12 says Jesus sat down again and then there is much more in the next few chapters to happen before the supper is really ended. Besides that, is the obvious fact that the feet would be washed before the meal.

There is much debate in academic circles as to whether the Last Supper was an observance of a Passover meal or not. Of course, the debate is due to the fact that Jesus’ death followed the meal whereas the Passover lamb in Exodus died before the meal.

That there should be debate at all is surprising as there are so many verses indicating that it was a Passover observance. His disciples were described as preparing the Passover (Matthew 26:17, Mark 14:12, Luke 22:7-13), and multiple verses say Jesus ate the Passover meal (Matthew 26:18, Mark 14:14, Luke 22:15). The outstanding issue then is the timing. But there are good reasons to understand Jesus’ Passover observance to have been on Nisan 13 despite that being a day early.

Timing of the Crucifixion and Death

Mark records the time of the crucifixion:

“And it was the third hour, and they crucified him.” (Mark 15:25)

However, John seems to be recording an earlier event, Jesus’ appearance before Pilate, as happening later:

“And it was the preparation of the passover, and about the sixth hour: and he [Pilate] saith unto the Jews, Behold your King!” (John 19:14)

This apparent discrepancy is resolved by understanding that the Romans counted the hours differently than the Jews. John, in this instance, is reporting the hour according to Roman time which he may have done because the event actually happened on Roman territory, in Pilate’s court. In the Roman system, each day was divided into 24 hours reckoned to begin, as with our modern time system, at midnight. Thus, John says that Jesus was before Pilate at the sixth hour, or as we would say, about 6am. Plus, John was written later than the other gospels and primarily to a Gentile audience.

Jewish and Roman Time Reckoning for Trials and Crucifixion

" <u>morning</u> was come...to Pilate" (Matt 27:1-2)	" <u>third hour</u> ...crucified" (Mark 15:25)	"darkness sixth <u>hour to ninth hour</u> " (Matt 27:45-46; Mark 15:33; Luke 23:44)	" <u>ninth hour</u> loud voice" (Matt 27:46)										
Jewish			darkness										
Mt, Mk, Lk:	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12 th hour
John:	6am	7	8	9	10	11	12	1pm	2	3	4	5	6pm
Roman													
	sunrise			morning			noon			evening			sunset
				sacrifice						sacrifice			

**Bible historian Joseph Good says that the Passover
Lamb was bound to the altar in the temple at about 9 am.**

Mark writes that Jesus was crucified at the third hour, according to the Jewish system which is counting hours from sunrise. By that system, the third hour, three hours after sunrise, would be 9 am. The synoptic gospel writers also said that there was darkness from the sixth hour until the ninth hour (Matthew 27:45, Mark 15:33, and Luke 23:44) and that Jesus died at the ninth hour (Matthew 27:46, Mark 15:34):

“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 hast thou forsaken me? Some of them that stood there, when they heard *that*, said, This *man* calleth for Elias. And straightway 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 Elias will come to save him. Jesus, when he had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost.” (Matthew 27:46-50)

At the time of His death there were some dramatic events:

“And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent; And the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept arose,” (Matthew 27:51-52)

See Appendix 7 – *The Graves of the Saints Were Opened* for how that event fits into the timing.

**Were people able to look into open tombs with human
remains in them, from Friday evening until Sunday morning?**

Jesus was on the cross for six hours, from 9 am when the sacrifice was normally bound to the altar, until 3 pm, the time of the evening sacrifice. It was perhaps another hour before His body was removed for a total of seven hours on the cross.

Events from Jesus' Death to Resurrection

Let's now trace the order of events from Jesus' death to His resurrection and try to determine just how short a time He might have actually been in the grave, and when He likely rose.

1. The Jews Went to Pilate

The Jews were concerned about the requirement in Deuteronomy:

“And if a man have committed a sin worthy of death, and he be to be put to death, and thou hang him on a tree: His body shall not remain all night upon the tree, but thou shalt in any wise bury him that day; (for he that is hanged *is* accursed of God;) that thy land be not defiled, which the LORD thy God giveth thee *for* an inheritance.” (Deuteronomy 21:22-23)

Because of this, immediately after Jesus' death (John 19:30), the Jews went to Pilate to request that the bodies be removed:

“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)

Once Pilate gave this order someone had to return to Calvary with the order for the soldiers to carry out.

2. The Thieves' Legs Broken, Jesus' Side Pierced

“Then came the soldiers, and brake the legs of the first, and of the other which was crucified with him. But when they came to Jesus, and saw that he was dead already, they brake not his legs: But one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came there out blood and water.” (John 19:32-34)

Breaking the legs was done to hasten death. In Jesus' case, This was not necessary. It was also a fulfillment of Exodus 12:46.

The centurion, having acknowledged that “Truly this was the son of God” (Matthew 27:54), would likely not have allowed the breaking of Jesus' legs out of his new respect for Him.

3. Joseph Went to Pilate

Then it says that “after this” - after all these events:

“And after this Joseph of Arimathaea, being a disciple of Jesus, but secretly for fear of the Jews, besought Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus: and Pilate gave *him* leave. He came therefore, and took the body of Jesus.” (John 19:38)

4. Pilate Called the Centurion

Mark adds that after Joseph made his request, Pilate called for the centurion to check if Jesus was really dead:

“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 knew *it* of the centurion, he gave the body to Joseph.” (Mark 15:43-45)

5. Jesus Removed from the Cross and Buried

“And there came also Nicodemus, which at the first came to Jesus by night, and brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about an hundred pound *weight*. Then took they [Joseph and Nicodemus] the body of Jesus, and wound it in linen clothes with the spices, as the manner of the Jews is to bury. 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.” (John 19:39-42)

Notice that the embalming was done - the spices (one hundred pounds) were used and it was completed “as the manner of the Jews is to bury.” This is an important point.

It was a good thing Joseph’s tomb was available and nearby because the Sabbath was soon to start.

6. The Tomb Closed

“And he [Joseph] 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 15:46)

Jesus had died, been removed from the cross and buried. Then Luke adds:

“And that day was the preparation [Friday], and the sabbath drew on [it was almost sunset].” (Luke 23:54)

7. The Women Bought Spices

When did the women buy the spices? There are only two verses that mention the spices in connection with the women:

“And they returned, and prepared spices and ointments; and rested the sabbath day according to the commandment.” (Luke 23:56)

“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)

Luke only says that they prepared the spices without saying when they were purchased – it could have been anytime previously. Mark says “had bought” using the Greek verb “agorazo” (G59) which is in the Greek aorist tense and “is considered without regard for past, present, or future time.” (*On-line Bible*

Lexicon). Mark 16:1 could conceivably be saying that, at the point they came to anoint Him, they had with them the spices that they “had bought,” having purchased them some time previously. Here is another passage that uses exactly the same wording (in the Greek) and tense as in Mark 16:1:

“And they all with one *consent* began to make excuse. The first said unto him, I have bought a piece of ground, and I must needs go and see it: I pray thee have me excused. And another said, I have bought (“agorazo”) five yoke of oxen, and I go to prove them: I pray thee have me excused.” (Luke 14:18-19)

In this case, the people are saying that they had previously made their purchases. Mark saying that the women “had bought” the spices could just be saying that the purchase had been made in the past in anticipation of their need.

“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 15:46)

“Bought” there is in the same tense. It would seem unlikely that Joseph headed off to the market at that point to buy the linen.

Those who promote a Wednesday-crucifixion do it largely on the basis of the purchase of the spices by the women. However, the verses do not say when the spices and ointments were purchased; it could have been a few days before.

The “was past” of Mark 16:1 is difficult as it only appears three times in the Greek. The Greek word is “diaginomai” (G1230) from a combination of the preposition “dia” (G1223) with a very wide range of meanings and “ginomai” (G1096) translated as “be,” “come to pass,” and having meanings including “to become, i.e. to come into existence” as discussed in the section “The Last Supper.” Here is another example of its use:

“When the even was come (G1096), they brought unto him many that were possessed with devils: and he cast out the spirits with *his* word, and healed all that were sick:” (Matthew 8:16)

So, the meaning in Mark 16:1 could be that since the Sabbath was about to start, they prepared the spices and, early the next morning, came to the sepulchre. That understanding corresponds more closely to Luke 23:56 where the order appears as first the preparation of the spices and then the resting on the Sabbath.

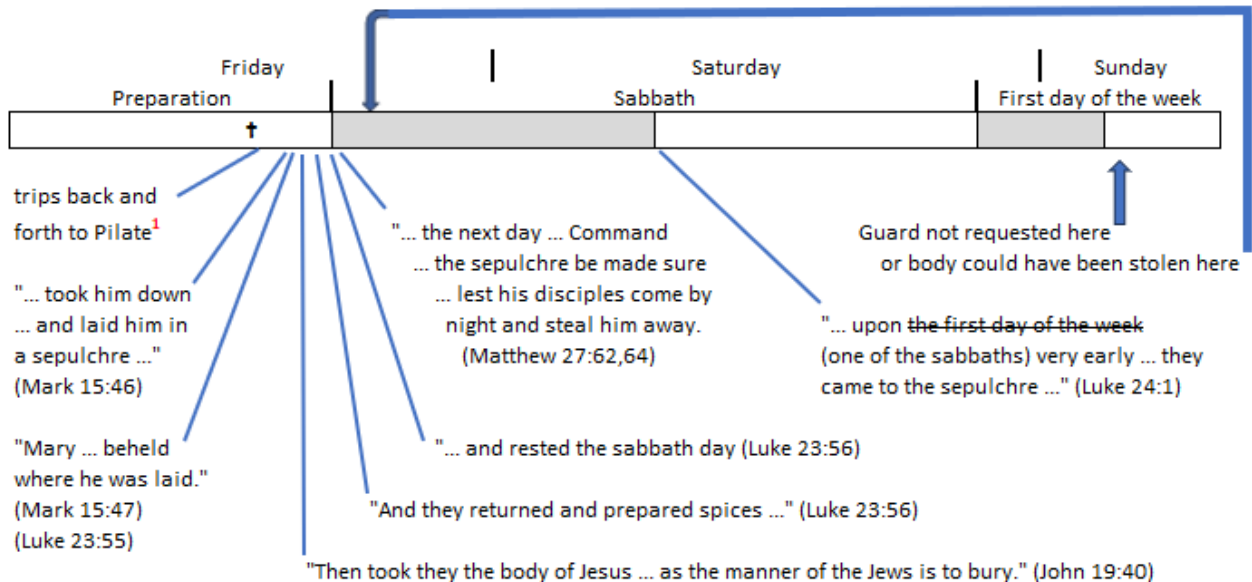
Here is a verse that mentions “the fast,” a reference to one of the annual holy days and it is saying that day is in the past.

“Now when much time was spent, and when sailing was now dangerous, because the fast was now already past <G3928>, Paul admonished *them*,” (Acts 27:9)

In that verse, “past” is from a different Greek word suggesting that the “past” of Mark 16:1 is from a Greek word that could have a quite different meaning.

The spices were for a simple anointing, not for a complete embalming which Joseph and Nicodemus had already done.

This diagram shows the timing of the women preparing spices and the setting of the guard at the tomb.



" when the Sabbath was past (= coming soon)² — "... that day was the preparation and the sabbath drew on." (Luke 23:54)
 Mary ... had bought³ sweet spices ..." (Mark 16:1) — "... I have bought a piece of ground ..." (Luke 14:18)

¹See the section "Events from Jesus' Death to Resurrection"

²"past" from G1230 = G1223+G1096 - ginomai - to come into existence

³"had bought" and "have bought" both from "agorazo" past tense.

How Long Did All These Events Take?

Look at all the events that happened here between Jesus' death and burial. In sequence, we have:

- The Jews went to Pilate*
- The order to break the legs was returned to Calvary*
- The thieves' legs were broken
- Joseph went to Pilate*
- Pilate sent for the centurion*
- The centurion reported to Pilate*
- Joseph returned to the cross for Jesus' body*
- Jesus' body was:
 - removed from the cross
 - wrapped in the linen cloth
 - carried to the tomb
 - prepared with the linen and spices
- The tomb was closed

This would have all taken some time. Each item in the list with an asterisk involves a trip between Calvary and Pilate's hall. There were several one-way trips. That distance, as shown on readily-available maps of ancient Jerusalem, was perhaps only $\frac{1}{4}$ of a mile, but it had to be close, and they had to find Pilate each time and spend a few minutes there. The point is that a number of events had to happen

between Jesus' death at 3 pm and His burial before the start of the Sabbath – a period of about four hours. How much time elapsed between the completion of His burial and the start of the Sabbath? It couldn't have been long; perhaps it was only minutes.

The Sabbath Starts, the Resurrection

With the first night of Jesus' time "in the heart of the earth" starting on the Tuesday evening with His betrayal by Judas to the priests, the third day would end at sunset on Friday evening. It could be that His death shortly before this marked the end of this time since, as we use the expression "death is a sweet release," He would be free from their control at that point. Thus, using inclusive reckoning, He was "in the heart of the earth" (within the control or at least the target of wicked men and their murderous designs) for three days and three nights. His resurrection could have taken place any time after that without effect on the three-day-and- three-night period.

We saw from the symbolism of the Wave Sheaf (Chapter Three) that the Wave Sheaf was cut just after sunset at the start of the Sabbath and then was prepared to be waved the next morning. This, of course, is what happened in Jesus' case as He was the fulfillment of the Wave Sheaf. Just at, or immediately following sunset, He was resurrected (harvested) with His presentation as the Wave Sheaf before the Father the next morning.

So now we have the three days and three nights ending quite close to the start of the Sabbath. We know from the timing of the women going to the tomb that He had already risen before dawn Sabbath morning. The longest He could have been in the tomb then would be very close to twelve hours and the shortest would be measured in minutes.

Another factor suggesting the resurrection was at the start of the Sabbath comes from this verse:

"Therefore the Son of man is Lord also of the sabbath." (Mark 2:28)

It does not constitute proof, but does it make sense that the Lord of the Sabbath would sleep through His day?

The resurrection was at or very shortly after sunset Friday evening at the beginning of the seventh-day Sabbath fulfilling the type of the Wave Sheaf.

The Guard Requested

Most people understand that the guard was requested on the Sabbath several hours after the burial. Would the Pharisees have watched the burial procedure? Of course they did! They knew where the tomb was ("nigh at hand" John 19:42). Likely, some went to Pilate and others stayed behind watching the disciples to make sure they didn't steal the body. That seemed to be their biggest concern:

"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." (Matthew 27:62-63)

When did “the next day” begin? – Friday at sunset. The request was:

“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.” (Matthew 27:64)

Do you really think that the Pharisees, having gone this far, would have waited through one night to request a guard, even if it was the Sabbath?

Some people suggest that the guard was requested Sabbath afternoon. This would fit with “the next day” but so would Friday evening, and requesting it after the first night had already passed is not logical. If the guard was not posted until Sabbath morning, the disciples could have removed the body during Friday night-early Saturday morning. If the guard had been posted Sabbath morning, and the body was later found to be missing the soldiers could have said that it was stolen during the first night before they were on watch and before the stone was sealed (Matthew 27:66), and thus avoid the charge of being asleep on their watch. (See the previous diagram.)

“Pilate said unto them, Ye have a watch: go your way, make *it* as sure as ye can. So they went, and made the sepulchre sure, sealing the stone, and setting a watch.” (Matthew 27:65-66)

The stone would have been sealed after the Sabbath started because the priests requested the guard after sunset. (See the discussion below in the section “When Did the Women Come to the Tomb?” Remember, they had a full moon to do all this by. Sealing anything by the Romans was an official, symbolic procedure. Breaking the seal without authorization would have been punishable, probably by death. Sealing the stone was kind of symbolic that Jesus was totally under their control; He would never bother them again. Ironically, it is quite possible that, by the time the guard was posted and the seal attached, they sealed an empty tomb. Remember, Jesus did not need to enter through an open door:

“And after eight days again his disciples were within, and Thomas with them: *then* came Jesus, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, Peace *be* unto you.” (John 20:26)

Notice that the Sadducees were not mentioned as being part of the delegation requesting the guard which is logical since they did not believe in the resurrection. Any claim by the disciples that Jesus had risen would have held no weight with them and they were likely not concerned about it:

“Then come unto him the Sadducees, which say there is no resurrection ...” (Mark 12:18)

Why Did the Women Come to the Tomb?

Some people present the argument that the women were coming to embalm Jesus with the spices and therefore it could not have been on the Sabbath, because that would have been a violation of the law. The error in this reasoning is that the women did not come to embalm Him:

“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)

The women were coming to anoint (aleipho) Him, not to embalm Him. There is a big difference. He had already been embalmed in the customary way with a hundred pounds of spices; this being an amount fit for royalty. They were not coming to do that again. Read again John 19:39-40:

“And there came also Nicodemus, which at the first came to Jesus by night, and brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about an hundred pound *weight*. Then took they the body of Jesus, and wound it in linen clothes with the spices, as the manner of the Jews is to bury.” (John 19:39-40)

Compare Mark 16:1 to Mary’s earlier act of anointing Jesus (using the same Greek word) that He referred to as anointing for His burial:

“My head with oil thou didst not anoint: but this woman hath anointed my feet with ointment.” (Luke 7:46)

There is considerable difference between pouring a little oil to anoint, and the procedure of wrapping a body in strips of cloth with a hundred pounds of preservative material. So, the women’s contribution to the memorial of His death was more like placing of flowers on a grave site, hardly a Sabbath violation.

When Did the Women Come to the Tomb?

Matthew 28:1

“In the end of the sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first *day* of the week, came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the sepulchre.” (Matthew 28:1)

Do you see a logical problem with this verse as it reads in English directly from the King James Version? The word “as” indicates that two events are happening at the same time. The problem is that the way it is translated; the “as” indicates that the end of the Sabbath is happening at the same time the first day of the week is dawning.

How can the Sabbath be ending (at sunset Saturday) as dawn (sunrise) is happening on the first day of the week? The end of the Sabbath and the dawn of the first day of the week are 12 hours apart! Another interesting point about this verse is that the words rendered “sabbath” and “week” are both translated from the same Greek word in the same form. Something strange there!

The phrase “in the end of the sabbath” uses the Greek word “opse” (G3796) which some versions translate as “after” rather than “end.” For example:

“Now after the Sabbath, near dawn of the first day of the week, Mary of Magdala and the other Mary went to take a look at the tomb.” (Matthew 28:1, *Amplified Bible*)

However, “after” is a poor translation. Thayer studied the use of “after” for the translation of “opse” in Matthew 28:1 and concluded “... an examination of the instances just cited (and others) will show that they fail to sustain the rendering after ...” (*Thayer’s Greek Lexicon of the New Testament*, p. 471)

The original word “opse” (G3796) is used just two other times in the New Testament:

“And when even was come, he went out of the city.” (Mark 11:19)

“Watch ye therefore: for ye know not when the master of the house cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at the cockcrowing, or in the morning:” (Mark 13:35)

In these verses, it is translated as “even.” With the idea of evening and morning making up a day, the evening in Matthew 28:1 is the dark part of the Sabbath.

“In Mark 13:35, however, *opse* (‘evening’) clearly designates the first watch of the night, from about sunset till about 9 p.m.” (Samuele Bacchiocchi, 2001, *The Time of the Crucifixion and the Resurrection*, p32)

The adjective form of “opse” is “opsios” (G3798) which is always translated as “even,” “evening” or “eventide” and, in some cases, is used to specify a time just after sunset:

“When the even was come, they brought unto him many that were possessed with devils: and he cast out the spirits with *his* word, and healed all that were sick:” (Matthew 8:16)

The use of “opse” in Matthew 28:1 is likely telling us when the tomb was secured - early Sabbath evening (Friday shortly after sunset) and rightly belongs with Matthew 27:66 so that it would read:

“So they went, and made the sepulchre sure, sealing the stone, and setting a watch in the evening of the sabbath.” (Matthew 27:66 – 28:1a, modified)

This would make sense in light of the timing of the posting of the guards discussed earlier. The next verse, omitting “in the end of the sabbath” would then introduce a change of subject and read:

“As it began to dawn toward the first *day* of the week, came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the sepulchre.” (Matthew 28:1b, modified)

We must remember that the assignment of chapter and verse divisions was not inspired or in the original text. Chapter divisions were added by Stephen Langton around 1227 AD and verse divisions even later.

Continuing in the narrative:

“And, behold, there was a great earthquake: for the angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it. His countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow: And for fear of him the keepers did shake, and became as dead *men*.” (Matthew 28:2-4)

It seems that the earthquake happened before the women arrived at the tomb. The guards were afraid, not from seeing the resurrected Jesus, but because of the appearance of the angel: “for fear of him.” (Matthew 28:4). The women likely did not even know that a guard had been stationed as they left Friday before the Sabbath started. They wouldn’t have even attempted their mission had they realized there was a Roman guard at the tomb.

The angel rolled back the stone so the women could get in, not so that Jesus could get out.

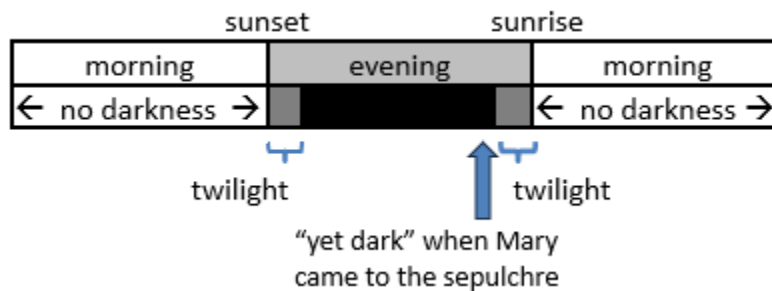
John 20:1

John starts his account a little earlier than Matthew:

“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.” (John 20:1)

Mary came to the tomb “when it was yet dark,” so this is earlier than Matthew’s “... as it began to dawn ...” (Matthew 28:1). It seems that Mary may have come on her own at first, perhaps planning to meet the others there.

An important point to emphasize here is that the time described as “yet dark” can only be between sunset and the following sunrise. This excludes the possibility of Mary first coming to the tomb in the afternoon. There is no time during what the Bible calls the “morning” part of the day, between sunrise and sunset when it could be called “yet dark.”



If Mary came to the empty tomb on the day of the resurrection while it was “yet dark,” then, in order for the resurrection to have happened on the same day, it must have occurred before sunrise. This reasoning applies whichever day the resurrection was on.

The day is from sunset to sunset. Jesus did not arise during daylight hours (between sunrise and sunset). Near sunrise is actually about half way through a 24-hour day (by Bible reckoning); it is not early in the day. A resurrection at the start of the Sabbath certainly qualifies as being “early the first day of the week” as Mark 16:9 states it with “first day of the week” properly understood.

The other women may have waited for more light but it seems that Mary couldn’t wait. She probably couldn’t sleep. It says she “seeth the stone taken away from the sepulchre” so there was a little light, obviously enough for her to make her way there. As it was Passover season, there would have been light from a full moon. It does not say she went into the tomb, and probably she could not have seen anything anyway. It says that:

“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.” (John 20:2)

Note that she came to “Simon Peter, and to the other disciple, whom Jesus loved.” Perhaps while she was away to find Peter and John, the other women came. Where were Peter and John? There is a significant clue earlier in John’s gospel:

“Then saith he to the disciple, Behold thy mother! And from that hour that disciple took her unto his own *home*.” (John 19:27)

If John took Mary into his home “from that hour” on Friday afternoon, that is where he would have been Sabbath morning. Obviously, Peter, whose home town was in Galilee, was also living or staying with John.

“Then the disciples (Peter and John) went away again unto their own home.” (John 20:10)

The other disciples are not mentioned. Evidently, they were elsewhere. A verse that might seem to contradict this is:

“And when they were come in, they went up into an upper room, where abode both Peter, and James, and John, and Andrew, Philip, and Thomas, Bartholomew, and Matthew, James *the son of Alphaeus*, and Simon Zelotes, and Judas *the brother of James*.” (Acts 1:13)

This verse includes Peter and James with those who “abode” in the upper room, however, many versions translate the Greek word “meno” (G3306) as “where they were staying.” One even translates it as “... where they were waiting...” (*KJ3 Literal Translation*). When you think of it, it is not logical that they would assemble “... for fear of the Jews ...” (John 20:19) in one of their homes to which they could be tracked. It was only two days before when they had been directed to the upper room (assuming this is the same room used for their Passover observance), which they did not seem to previously know about.

We already noted that John did not “live” in the upper room but in his own home. So, the other disciples were then staying in the upper room at a separate location from Peter, John and Mary, Jesus’ mother. From John’s home, only Peter and John (because they were the only disciples there) are mentioned as running to the tomb, and Mary Magdalene would have followed them back.

By the time Peter and John arrived, there was enough light to see inside the tomb. Entering in they saw the linen clothes and, John writes, speaking of himself, “... he saw, and believed.” (John 20:8).

What did he believe? Some have understood the meaning to be that John, once he saw inside the tomb, believed what Mary had told him - that someone had removed the body. However, the statement “... he saw and believed...” was a few verses later and in connection with something he saw rather than heard. At this time, they did not believe because of scripture:

“For as yet they knew not the scripture, that he must rise again from the dead.” (John 20:9)

To that point, they did not even understand that Jesus would rise again, although He had told them on more than one occasion that He would. John heard Mary say that Jesus had been taken away (John 20:2), but we are not told at that point that he believed anything. He would have seen that the stone had been rolled away, he had stooped down from outside the tomb and saw how the linen clothes were lying (John 20:5), but again it is not recorded that he believed. When he finally followed Peter in and had a closer look, what Peter had seen (John 20:6-7) and he then believed. Read Appendix 8 – *He Saw and Believed* and you’ll learn something very interesting about the very unusual and unique thing he saw that made him believe. It does not say whether Peter believed or not but, remember, this is John’s account and he is relating his own belief based on what he saw. All the descriptions about the disciples believing or not concern the question of His resurrection, not the question of whether His body had been stolen.

Then John writes:

“Then the disciples went away again unto their own home.” (John 20:10)

They went to “their own home” suggesting more strongly that Peter and John shared this abode. They would have returned there, at least initially, quite likely to bring the news to Jesus’ mother. From there they quite possibly went to join the rest of the disciples. It seems that after Mary followed Peter and

John back to the tomb and they had left, she lingered there and this is when Jesus honored her with His first post-resurrection appearance:

“Now when *Jesus* was risen early the first *day* of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene ...” (Mark 16:9)

When she recognized Him, He said to her:

“... Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father ...” (John 20:17)

This indicated that He had not yet ascended to heaven early on Sabbath morning. It seems that Jesus then did ascend quickly to heaven, and return, and subsequently appeared to the other women on their way to the upper room, where He did allow them to touch Him:

“And as they went to tell his disciples, behold, Jesus met them, saying, All hail. And they came and held him by the feet, and worshipped him.” (Matthew 28:9)

The complete order of events of the different post-resurrection appearances is not easily determined, and will not be dealt with here. We have looked enough at the order of events to show that the resurrection was definitely before sunrise Sabbath morning (and was likely Friday evening at or just after sunset).

As the manna in the wilderness was not found on Sabbath mornings, the True Manna was not found still “lying on the ground” on Sabbath morning.

The Walk to Emmaus

After describing the women finding the tomb empty on resurrection morning, Luke mentions the two disciples walking to Emmaus “that same day”:

“And, behold, two of them went that same day to a village called Emmaus, which was from Jerusalem *about* threescore furlongs.” (Luke 24:13)

In answering Jesus’ inquiry of what had come to pass in Jerusalem, they said:

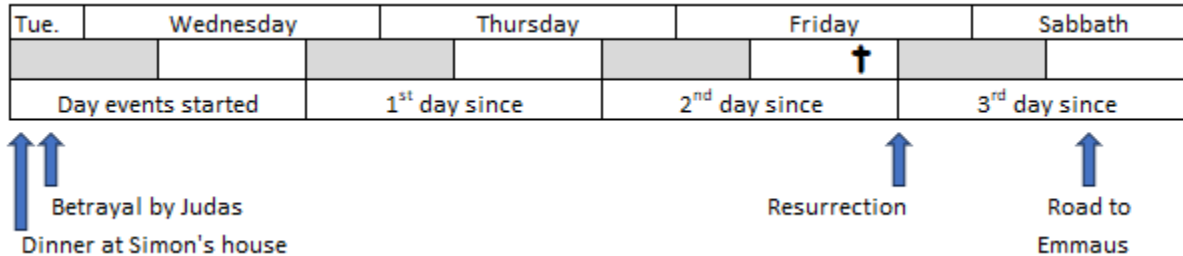
“But we trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel: and beside all this, to day is the third day since these things were done.” (Luke 24:21)

Earlier in this study (see “The Last Supper”), it was shown that “were done” (Greek “ginomai”) can have the meaning of “to come to pass.”

That verse does not work with a Friday crucifixion - Sunday resurrection model. In that scenario, Saturday would be the first day since these things (the crucifixion etc) were done, and Sunday would be the second day - not the third day.

However, with a Tuesday-evening beginning to the series of events and a Sabbath resurrection:

- the next day - Wednesday sunset to Thursday sunset - would be the first day since these things began (starting with the betrayal) to be done,
- Thursday sunset to Friday sunset would be the second day since these things were done and
- Friday sunset to Sabbath sunset would be the third day since these things were done and the day on which the statement in Luke 24:21 was made.



An objection is sometimes raised: “Would those two men have walked to Emmaus (further from Jerusalem than Olivet) on the Sabbath when it is understood to be more than a Sabbath day’s journey?”

“Then returned they unto Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is from Jerusalem a sabbath day’s journey.” (Acts 1:12)

The two men said to Jesus:

“And certain of them which were with us went to the sepulchre, and found *it* even so as the women had said: but him they saw not.” (Luke 24:24)

So, it is apparent that they left for Emmaus after learning the tomb was empty and therefore could have been fearing the charge of stealing the body but before hearing confirmation that He had been resurrected.

It could be reasoned that most people would flee if they thought their lives were under threat in Jerusalem. Why would we think otherwise? Take note that Peter denied Jesus because he felt threatened. Why do we think those people could only do the right thing? Perhaps we should look at ourselves. Also, that restriction on Sabbath travel (among many others) was made by the Jews. The Bible says nothing about God establishing such a limit on travel distance.

Thine Holy One Will Not See Corruption

Peter, speaking of David’s prophecy of Christ (“... neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.” Psalm 16:10), said:

“He [David] seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption.” (Acts 2:31)

This verse is saying that Jesus’ body would not see corruption or experience decay. However, it is well known that, after death, a body will quickly start to decompose. The modern embalming process is done so that a body can be presentable at a funeral a few days after death.

It was important that no taint of decay come upon the Holy One of God Who showed us everything that was good about His Father.

If Jesus was in the grave from His burial late Friday afternoon until a Sunday-morning resurrection, His body would surely have begun to decay. Some might reason that God miraculously prevented His body from decaying in order to fulfill the prophecy. However, with His resurrection happening before anyone could have seen Him or smelled decay in the tomb before He rose, the lack of the odor of corruption would not have been a sign anyway. God gives predictions for specific and significant reasons – not just to have fulfilled predictions especially not one that no one would even witness. Is it possible that it was given because God’s intent was to raise Jesus to life before there was time for decay to start?

This was in contrast to the resurrection of Lazarus who did see corruption:

“Jesus said, Take ye away the stone. Martha, the sister of him that was dead, saith unto him, Lord, by this time he stinketh: for he hath been *dead* four days.” (John 11:39)

Christ did not see corruption. Lazarus’ resurrection was described as:

“... he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with graveclothes: and his face was bound about with a napkin ...” (John 11:44)

The graveclothes are associated with corruption and mortality. Our Lord was raised from the dead in incorruption and immortality. His first and subsequent post-resurrection appearances were not in graveclothes.

So again, the question is: with a Friday afternoon burial and a Sunday morning resurrection how was the decay of Jesus’ body prevented?

The Passover Lamb Not Left Until Morning

Here is another thought related to the timing: when the Passover lamb was sacrificed and prepared for the Passover meal, it was to be eaten that evening and any part left over was to be burned so that nothing remained of it in the morning:

“And ye shall let nothing of it remain until the morning; and that which remaineth of it until the morning ye shall burn with fire.” (Exodus 12:10)

The idea was that the sacrifice was complete with nothing left of it by morning. This suggests a problem with the idea that the slain body of Jesus, the true Passover Lamb, was remaining (in its slain condition) the morning after the crucifixion.

Sacrificial lambs were not to be left until the morning, and this was done in order to prevent any corruption.

When Abraham was directed to sacrifice his only son Isaac, foreshadowing Jesus’ death, he was told not just to slay him but to:

“... offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of.” (Genesis 22:2)

The common understanding is that Abraham was to slay his son and offer him as a “burnt offering” thus fulfilling the requirements for a sacrifice. The point here is that there was to be nothing left of a sacrifice by morning; nothing that could see corruption. Of course, corruption is also synonymous with sin.

In the case of the Passover Lamb, whatever could not be consumed was to be burned indicating a complete sacrifice. There is a problem here with the traditional understanding of Jesus’ fulfillment of the specifications for the Passover sacrifice, because in that view He was still remaining in the morning; His body had not been completely consumed. John describes the breaking of the legs of the thieves and how Jesus’ legs were not broken, and then says:

“For these things were done, that the scripture should be fulfilled, A bone of him shall not be broken.” (John 19:36)

The scripture quoted by John and being fulfilled regarding Jesus was:

“They shall leave none of it unto the morning, nor break any bone of it: according to all the ordinances of the passover they shall keep it.” (Numbers 9:12)

We focus on the fulfillment of none of Jesus’ bones being broken. However, this scripture also includes the specification that: “They shall leave none of it unto the morning.” Shouldn’t this part of the prophecy have been equally fulfilled? How was it fulfilled? No part of the carcass of sacrificed Passover lambs was to remain. Similarly, nothing would be left of Jesus’ body in a sacrificed state the next morning. To be remaining in a tomb the next morning after being sacrificed (never mind somewhere close to three days later), would not fulfill the requirements. Rather, in fact, he was in a renewed and glorified body with no corruption or decay. There must be another way in which none of this ultimate sacrifice could be left until morning to decay.

Resting in the Tomb on Sabbath

The idea that Jesus rested in the tomb over Sabbath sounds good to Sabbath-keepers because, they say, He rested at that time, setting an example for us. However, there is no need for this to establish Sabbath sacredness as that was established during creation week in Eden. But here are some points to consider:

- The first Sabbath, observed in Eden, involved no death.
- The Sabbath is not meant to be a period of inactivity.
- The Sabbath is primarily designed for fellowship with our Creator.
- Death is not the same as resting. It does nothing to rejuvenate the body.
- Sabbath sacredness is firmly established without Jesus resting in the tomb on it.
- Jesus resting in the tomb does not set an example for us.

Jesus referred to Himself and His Father working on the Sabbath for the good of others:

“But Jesus answered them, My Father worketh hitherto, and I work.” (John 5:17)

Resting in death is no example for us of how to rest while we are alive. It does not say anywhere in scripture that Jesus rested in the tomb over the Sabbath. There is absolutely no similarity between being dead and proper Sabbath observance.

Death is not resting in the sense of not working for a day and using the time for being close to God or family. We put a big emphasis on the Sabbath being a time for relationships and it is – God puts the same emphasis on it. Yet a dead person cannot relate to anyone.

There are no Biblical references saying that Jesus rested in the tomb over the Sabbath, and there is no scriptural basis for it.

A Sabbath Reunion

The solution to the question of Jesus not seeing corruption and not being still a slain victim the morning after He was sacrificed is simply that He was raised before that. He may even have been raised at the very start of the Sabbath. There is no reason for delaying the resurrection as long as is commonly believed.

The Creator spent the Sabbath of creation week visiting with the first Adam, who had just been given life, in the Garden of Eden. On the resurrection Sabbath, the Father was reunited with the second Adam who had just been raised to life from His tomb in another garden. No, the Father was not left to spend a mournful Sabbath in the absence of His Son. They had fellowship together again as Jesus had every Sabbath before His death. And then, later that morning, Jesus was formally presented in person to the Father with those raised at His resurrection, as the first fruits, and at the right time.

That scene is described in Revelation chapter 5 when there was found none worthy to open the book and then, suddenly, there “stood a lamb as it had been slain” Who was proclaimed worthy because He had been slain. (Revelation 5:5-9)

Another thought is that Jesus was resurrected at the beginning of the Seventh-day Sabbath, which symbolically looks forward to the millennial “Sabbath Rest.” Jesus’ return at His Second Coming and the resurrection of the saved at that moment will begin the 1,000 year-millennial rest, just as He was resurrected at the beginning of the seventh-day Sabbath rest.

The Impact on Claims for Sunday Sacredness

A number of people have recognized some of the many problems with the usual scenario of the timing of Jesus’ resurrection and a multitude of solutions have been proposed. Fewer have recognized the far-reaching implications of a Sabbath resurrection. Here is one statement that does:

“If this is true that He rose on a Sabbath, then there goes your Easter Sunday resurrection. There goes everything the so-called “Fathers of the Church” lived and died for. There goes Constantine’s Council of Nicaea, there goes the primacy of the Roman see, and the coerced unity of the Roman Catholic Church. And if Christ rose on a Sabbath, then the same reasons that were used to supplant the 7th Day Sabbath, i.e. the weekly celebration of the resurrection on Sunday, must now be used to glorify the weekly Sabbath, of which Christ said He was Lord.” (Todd Derstine, *Is the phrase “first day of the week” properly translated in the New Testament?* (http://www.convince-the-gainsayer.com/First_Day_of_the_Week.pdf))

Here is one author's understanding of the change that took place:

"In order to change the Sabbath to Sunday there had to be a way in which the change could take place and yet at the same time seem consistent with all the Scriptures. For this, a deep and sophisticated scheme was planned, but it is way beyond the scope of this small study to expose every detail of the nearly 6,000 years of the subtle workings of Satan. So I will only demonstrate those that are of immediate concern.

Now, in order to move our Savior's resurrection in the Old Testament from Sabbath to Sunday, the wave sheaf offering had to be moved from Sabbath to Sunday, as it would not look good for the type or shadow of the resurrection to be on the Sabbath and then attempt to say that the antitype or substance took place on Sunday, so the translators changed the meaning of a few words and added a few words." (Curtis McDonald, 2003. The Biblical Truth about the Wednesday Passover Crucifixion, The Sabbath Morning Resurrection and EASTER, The Abomination of Desolation)

Even a change in understanding of a few words would accomplish this. Especially, the word "mochorath" used in Leviticus 16 resulting in the idea that the resurrection was the morning after, not the morning of the Sabbath. Once that error was entrenched, it is not hard to imagine the King James Version translators, for example, attempting to translate resurrection verses with Sunday in mind.

Anyone who has read much written on the resurrection topic can see the tremendous variability of scenarios proposed. This is increased by the fact that both Hebrew and Greek words have many possible meanings. Much of the confusion stems from the misunderstanding of the term "mochorath."

One other point to make regarding Sabbath-Sunday:

"And after eight days again his disciples were within, and Thomas with them: *then* came Jesus, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, Peace *be* unto you." (John 20:26)

With the resurrection-day appearances being on a Sabbath, the "after eight days," by inclusive reckoning, was again on a seventh-day Sabbath. This was consistent with Jesus' (who changes not) custom and with Paul's manner during his ministry:

"And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up: and, as his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and stood up for to read." (Luke 4:16)

"And Paul, as his manner was, went in unto them, and three sabbath days reasoned with them out of the scriptures," (Acts 17:2)

Only God can make a day holy and it doesn't make sense that He would later make it unholy.

A number of factors have been examined which, taken together, show that the resurrection could not have happened on Sunday as in the traditional belief. Now we will look more into the significance of Jesus being in "the heart of the earth" as it is meant to be understood. It was a sign of much greater import than simply revealing how long Jesus was in the tomb.

Chapter 5. The Thoughts of Many Hearts Revealed

Is it possible that what God really desired to come from this was that we should be better able to see what is in our own hearts and to understand the heart of God towards us?

The Sign They Wanted

Earlier in Matthew 12, before Jesus was asked for a sign and replied speaking about the sign of Jonah, Jesus said something interesting to the Pharisees:

“Either make the tree good, and his fruit good; or else make the tree corrupt, and his fruit corrupt: for the tree is known by his fruit. O generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things.” (Matthew 12:33-35)

Jesus makes reference to the heart, (from the Greek “kardia” used in the phrase “in the heart of the earth”) saying that the words a man speaks reflect what is in his heart. The words we speak will have a great influence on our destiny:

“But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned. Then certain of the scribes and of the Pharisees answered, saying, Master, we would see a sign from thee.” (Matthew 12:36-38)

There is the request – “we would see a sign from thee.” What sort of sign did they want? What would have pleased them? The verses just preceding their request were about character. Perhaps what they wanted was a sign that corresponded to their perception of God’s character.

Also, the scribes and Pharisees wanted Jesus to perform a miracle at their request and thereby, in a sense, put Him under their control. It was, in part, a question of authority. Note that they did not state their request for a sign in the form of a question. It was not “Jesus, we still have doubts, would you please show us a sign to strengthen our faith?” Rather, it was more like “if you want to be accepted by us and receive our support then we would see a sign from thee, we require undeniable evidence.” It was more a demand than a question; a demand based on their concept of their authority over Him, their standing with the people and with God.

It is interesting that Jesus is never recorded as asking anyone for anything. He asked them questions to make them think but, for instance, He didn’t ask the woman at the well “Would you please give me some water?” It was “Give me to drink” (John 4:7). In later referring back to what He had said to her:

“Jesus answered and said unto her, If thou knewest ... who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink ...” (John 4:10)

He said “saith to thee,” not “asketh of thee.” Another example is:

“... Zacchaeus, make haste, and come down; for to day I must abide at thy house.” (Luke 19:5)
Jesus never used divine power of His own, He relied on His Father to do the works but He never

relinquished His authority as the Son of God. When Satan tempted Jesus in the wilderness to turn the stones into bread (Matthew 4:3) it was a temptation because He did have the authority, and the power was available to Him to do it.

The request “we would see a sign from thee” was, in fact, about character. They wanted a “vengeance-is-mine” type of sign. It had to do with their perception of God’s character. They wanted a sign to show God’s control over man, and one that would also maintain their position of power. And so, they asked for a sign. In fact, they had already seen signs – lots of them, undeniable signs. Later, they said of Him:

“... What do we? for this man doeth many miracles.” (John 11:47)

So, they were not looking for just another example of healing the downtrodden of society, the ones they considered cursed and forsaken of God. In their eyes, those people were unworthy of God’s attention, much less His favor. Such a healing was not the sort of sign they wanted. They would have preferred, perhaps, a miracle that would help to reverse the dominance of the Romans over them.

The Sign Jesus Offered

Jesus answered the request for a sign by saying:

“... 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.” (Matthew 12:39-40)

Jesus obviously understood their request to be more than just for a common miracle. Both of the words “miracle” and “sign” in the two passages quoted above are from the same Greek word “semeion” (G4592). While He had performed many miracles, many of which had been witnessed by them, He specified that there would be one sign only. Notice that He said, “... No sign but ...” That doesn’t mean “no sign.” It means no sign except one, and one only. They demanded a sign, and He said He would give them a sign, but He specified the sign that would be given. The question is: a sign of what? What was Jesus’ intent about the sort of sign He would give? It is often understood to be a sign that He was the promised Messiah, but this cannot be. Let’s consider more carefully.

Concerning the question at hand, Jesus said there would be only one sign. It must therefore be a sign of something for which no other sign had yet been given. When John the Baptist was in prison, he sent two of his disciples to Jesus with the question:

“... Art thou he that should come? or look we for another?” (Luke 7:19)

The expression “he that should come” was a reference to the Messiah. Here are two examples of its use, one by John the Baptist:

“I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and *with* fire.” (Matthew 3:11)

“And the multitudes that went before, and that followed, cried, saying, Hosanna to the Son of David: Blessed *is* he that cometh in the name of the Lord; Hosanna in the highest.” (Matthew 21:9)

Jesus kept John's two disciples waiting while He went about His work of healing and comforting every case that came to Him. Then He said to them:

"... Go your way, and tell John what things ye have seen and heard; how that the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, to the poor the gospel is preached." (Luke 7:22)

Jesus knew that John would understand that the miracles He worked were signs that He was indeed "he that should come." Jesus had earlier applied Old Testament prophecies of the Messiah to Himself as He read in the synagogue:

"... The Spirit of the Lord *is* upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, To preach the acceptable year of the Lord." (Luke 4:18-19)

The activities listed pointed to the true role and character of the Messiah. And Jesus gave many such signs, often very publicly, showing that He was the Messiah.

There were major signs given in prophecy before He even started His miracles. The timing of His ministry was given by Daniel:

"Know therefore and understand, *that* from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince *shall be* seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks ..." (Daniel 9:25)

There was the sign of His miraculous birth:

"Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel." (Isaiah 7:14)

There were many other signs that Jesus was the Messiah.

"And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name." (John 20:30-31)

If Jesus had said that only one sign would be given as evidence then He would have been denying that His other miracles and the fulfilled prophecies were such evidence which, of course, they were. So, He must have been speaking of giving one sign and one sign only, not as proof that He was the Messiah, but as evidence of something else. The question is: a sign of what? More detail on the meaning and deep significance of the sign will be given in Chapter Six.

Another point that could be made is that the length of time He was in the grave before His resurrection - supposedly three days and three nights - could not have been the sign as no one actually saw Him rise from the grave. He didn't even appear in the days soon after His resurrection to anyone other than His disciples. His resurrection was certainly not a visible sign to those requesting it and to whom He said one sign would be given.

The Heart of Man

Let's look more closely at what it means to be "in the heart." It is what is in the heart that is important. Here are a few verses related to the importance of the heart:

"But the LORD said unto Samuel, Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him: for *the LORD seeth* not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart." (1 Samuel 16:7)

"Then hear thou from heaven thy dwelling place, and forgive, and render unto every man according unto all his ways, whose heart thou knowest; (for thou only knowest the hearts of the children of men:)" (2 Chronicles 6:30)

"Son of man, say unto the prince of Tyrus, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Because thine heart is lifted up, and thou hast said, I *am* a God, I sit *in* the seat of God, in the midst of the seas; yet thou *art* a man, and not God, though thou set thine heart as the heart of God:" (Ezekiel 28:2)

"The heart *is* deceitful above all *things*, and desperately wicked: who can know it?" (Jeremiah 17:9)

The sign to be given them would be a sign about character. It would reveal both what was in the heart of man towards God, and what was in the heart of God towards man.

And the difference between what was in their hearts was clearly shown by contrast. Talk about a contrast! Ultimately, it reached the point where man was torturing his Creator; the very One responsible for his existence. At the same time, the Creator responding with "Father forgive them" (Luke 23:34), had very different emotions in His heart.

While man was killing his Creator, the Creator was responding with forgiveness. Their hearts couldn't have been more different!

God works to reveal what is in the heart of man. This is not for His knowledge or benefit for:

"... he [Jesus] knew all *men*, And needed not that any should testify of man: for he knew what was in man." (John 2:24-25)

Rather, we need to know what is in our own hearts that we may see our true condition and, hopefully, turn to God and truly give Him our hearts. Here are further verses showing that God works to reveal the condition of our hearts:

"I the LORD search the heart, I try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways, *and* according to the fruit of his doings." (Jeremiah 17:10)

"Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed *it* unto them." (Romans 1:19)

"Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts; and then shall every man have praise of God." (1 Corinthians 4:5)

“For the word of God *is* quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and *is* a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.” (Hebrews 4:12)

Listen to a person’s words, especially in a difficult or stressful situation, and you will learn something about what is in their heart.

Jesus used the word “heart” in parables He spoke immediately after His mention of the sign of Jonah in Matthew 12:39-40. From there to the end of Matthew 15 he spoke a number of parables which included use of the term “heart” with the meaning of “the mind.”

“That the Thoughts of Many Hearts May be Revealed”

According to the prophecy uttered by Simeon at the presentation of Jesus as a baby in the temple, Jesus Himself was appointed as a sign and the reason was given:

“And Simeon blessed them, and said unto Mary his mother, Behold, this *child* is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel; and for a sign which shall be spoken against; ... that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed.” (Luke 2:34-35)

The *Online Bible Greek Lexicon* gives one meaning of the word “set” (Greek “keimai,” G2749) as:

“to be (by God’s intent) set, i.e. destined, appointed”

Another example of the use of “keimai” is:

“That no man should be moved by these afflictions: for yourselves know that we are appointed thereunto.” (1 Thessalonians 3:3)

In a sense, Jesus Himself, was set for a sign with the result that many would either fall or rise again. Let’s explore what this means. The *Online Bible Greek Lexicon* definition for the word translated “fall” (“ptosis,” G4431) is: “a falling, downfall.” There are only two uses of “ptosis” in the New Testament, the other being:

“And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it.” (Matthew 7:27)

The *Online Bible Greek Lexicon* definitions for the word translated “rising again” (“anastasis,” G386) are: “a raising up, rising (e.g. from a seat)” and “a rising from the dead.” The original word clearly means resurrection in every other one of its 41 uses. This use (in Luke 2:34) less clearly means a resurrection but, using the exclusive contextual meaning in other scriptural uses, it would be reasonable to take that as the meaning here also.

In a very real sense, He – Jesus - was the sign. Not that a person looking at Him would say “surely this is the Son of God,” but His words and actions revealed His identity. The decisions each person made in regard to Him would determine whether they would fall (be eternally lost), or rise again (to eternal life).

The choices you make in your heart in regard to Christ will determine whether you fall (are lost), or rise (to eternal life).

The prophecy of Simeon also said that He was appointed “for a sign,” and even that He would be “a sign which shall be spoken against.” It is interesting that the Greek word for “sign” used there is the same Greek word used to report what the Pharisees said: “... we would see a sign from thee” (Matthew 12:38). The whole question was over the character of God. Jesus in His life, revealed the true character of God. He, in His words and actions, was a sign sent from heaven.

In addition, through the words and actions of those around Him, the thoughts of many other hearts were revealed; not to God who already reads and knows the heart but to man himself. As each man made his decision in regard to Christ, they determined whether they would fall (be eternally lost) or rise (be resurrected to eternal life). Our decisions, our attitude towards the loving character of God have everything to do with our eternal destiny. We decide largely on the basis of our assessment of the words Jesus spoke as did Peter:

“Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life.” (John 6:68)

And so, Simeon’s prophecy was fulfilled for many at the crucifixion and it is still being fulfilled in hearts today. In fact, we could make a direct connection between the sign Jesus gave in Matthew 12 and the sign Simeon referred to. Many will fall (be lost) and many others will rise (to eternal life) based on what they do in their hearts about Jesus and His portrayal of God’s character.

The Sign of Jonah in the Context of Matthew 12

Earlier in this chapter, we discussed the sign of Jonah in terms of a sign or evidence that Jesus was the Messiah because that is how it is commonly understood. We saw that, in fact, there were many signs that He was the Messiah so that could not have been what it was intended to be a sign of. Here, we are going more deeply into the context of Matthew chapter 12 to see more clearly the nature of the sign that Jesus was giving them. (Jesus’ words in bold red; my comments in brackets throughout this section.)

“But when the Pharisees heard *it*, they said, This fellow doth not cast out devils, but by Beelzebub the prince of the devils. And Jesus knew their thoughts, and said unto them, [He was commenting on their thoughts] **Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and every city or house divided against itself shall not stand: And if Satan cast out Satan, he is divided against himself; how shall then his kingdom stand? And if I by Beelzebub cast out devils, by whom do your children cast *them* out? therefore they shall be your judges. But if I cast out devils by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God is come unto you. Or else how can one enter into a strong man’s house, and spoil his goods, except he first bind the strong man? and then he will spoil his house. He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad. Wherefore** [or “therefore” - connects what was just said with what He is about to say] **I say unto you, All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men: but the blasphemy *against* the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men. And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the *world to come.*” (Matthew 12:24-32)**

Of course, the Pharisees did “speak a word (in fact, many words) against the Son of man.” For example, they said “this *fellow* doth not cast out devils, but by Beelzebub the prince of the devils.”

There are verses that show the source of their blasphemous thoughts:

“For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies:” (Matthew 15:19)

“For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders,” (Mark 7:21)

Here is Matthew 12:31-32 from the Remedy New Testament:

“So let me tell you plainly: Every sin—every deviation from God’s design—can be healed, except the rejection of the Spirit, for the Spirit administers the Remedy which renews the heart in love. Anyone who speaks against the Son can still be healed, but speaking against the Holy Spirit cannot be healed, either now or in the future, for it is the Spirit that works in the heart to administer the Remedy, and the Spirit works only in a willing heart.” (Matthew 12:31-32, The Remedy New Testament)

This suggests that the work of the Spirit is especially on the heart, the source of what is expressed in the words and the life.

“Either make the tree good, and his fruit good; or else make the tree corrupt, and his fruit corrupt: for the tree is known by *his* fruit. O generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. [for example, their words against the Son of man] **A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things.” (Matthew 12:33-35)**

Notice the parallel in the verses above:

v33 Tree → fruit
v34 heart → the mouth speaketh (words)

“But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned. Then certain of the scribes and of the Pharisees answered, saying, Master, we would see a sign from thee.” (Matthew 12:36-38)

“Answered” is from the Greek word “apokrinomai.”

G611 ἀποκρίνομαι apokrinomai ap-ok-ree'-nom-ahee

from G575 and krino; v;

AV-answer 250; 250

- 1) to give an answer to a question proposed, to answer
- 2) to begin to speak, but always where something has preceded (either said or done) to which the remarks refer

Notice, from the definition, that the “answer” was not just to change the subject. It was a direct response to what Jesus had just said. They asked for evidence that what He had said was true. He replied that their words showed what was in their hearts. He was trying to show them that they had a deeper problem. They said, basically, “prove it” - prove that what we said, that our accusation against you (of your identity, v24) comes from some evil intent on our part; we are speaking the truth.

“But he answered [apokrinomai] 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:**” (Matthew 12:39)

“Generation” was not necessarily a reference to all the people alive at that time. Note from the definition for “generation” below: “metaph. a group of men very like each other in endowments, pursuits, character.”

G1074 γενεά genea ghen-eh-ah'

from (a presumed derivative of) G1085; n f;
AV-generation 37, time 2, age 2, nation 1; 42

- 1) fathered, birth, nativity
- 2) that which has been begotten, men of the same stock, a family
- 2a) the several ranks of natural descent, the successive members of a genealogy
- 2b) metaph. a group of men very like each other in endowments, pursuits, character
- 2b1) esp. in a bad sense, a perverse nation
- 3) the whole multitude of men living at the same time

Paul uses the word in the same sense in Acts 2:40:

“And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation (G1074).” (Acts 2:40)

Here is another passage which connects “generation” with a group of people. It was the Pharisees and the Sadducees who were seeking after a sign:

“The Pharisees also with the Sadducees came, and tempting desired him that he would shew them a sign from heaven. He answered and said unto them, When it is evening, ye say, *It will be fair weather: for the sky is red.* And in the morning, *It will be foul weather to day: for the sky is red and lowring.* O ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky; but can ye not *discern* the signs of the times? A wicked and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given unto it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas. And he left them, and departed.” (Matthew 16:1-4)

Again, the word “answered” in Matthew 12:39 shows the close connection between what Jesus said and their request for a sign. They had asked for evidence that what He had said concerning them, (especially verses 34-37) was true. His answer would be addressing that request and this is what He answered:

“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)

The question was really concerning what was in their hearts. I believe Jesus was essentially referring to what was going to happen - that He would allow Himself to be within their hearts in the sense that they would be freely allowed to do to Him what it was in their hearts to do. And well He knew what that was; He had already told them:

“Ye are of *your* father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it.” (John 8:44)

“The men of Nineveh shall rise in judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: because they repented at the preaching of Jonas; and, behold, a greater than Jonas is here. The queen of the south shall rise up in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: for she came from the uttermost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and, behold, a greater than Solomon *is here*.” (Matthew 12:41-42)

Jesus was saying that the men of Nineveh and the queen of the south, by their acceptance of the evidence they saw, would condemn those He was speaking to (“this generation”) who were rejecting One with a message “greater than (that of) Jonas” and “greater (wiser) than Solomon.”

Ultimately, what would happen while Jesus was in the “heart of the earth” for the period referred to as “three days and three nights” (Matthew 12:40) would manifest what was in their hearts towards Him.

The words “this generation” (v 41,42) applied to the Pharisees and Sadducees at that time who had murder in their hearts but it could also apply to the generation now present in the world. Remember, from the definition given earlier, it is not so much “generation” as in time but in character and therefore could apply to many who are reading the words in the gospel account today. We all need to see what is in our hearts towards the Son of God, expel the unclean thoughts that are there and replace them with the truth of His righteous character so that our last state may be better than the first:

“When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest, and findeth none. Then he saith, I will return into my house from whence I came out; and when he is come, he findeth *it* empty, swept, and garnished. Then goeth he, and taketh with himself seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter in and dwell there: and the last *state* of that man is worse than the first. Even so shall it be also unto this wicked generation.” (Matthew 12:43-45)

The conversation could be summarized like this: Jesus described their condition in hopes that they would recognize the evil that was in their hearts towards Him and repent of it. They challenged His assessment of the condition of their hearts saying, basically, “prove it; give evidence that what you say is true.” His answer was directly related and pointed forward to what would be the ultimate evidence - a series of events related to the experience of Jonah that would happen in the days leading to His death. See the study “Out of the Abundance of the Heart” for examples of words spoken by individuals present at the crucifixion revealing the abundance of their hearts (<https://Jesus-resurrection.com/the-abundance-of-the-heart/>).

Chapter 6. The Heart of the Matter

There is still more to be learned from Jesus' words about the heart of the earth especially in regard to understanding the character of God. However, before we get to the heart of the matter, there is another issue regarding the timing that many would consider to be critical to this study.

Did Jesus Die on the Wrong Day?

If you have carefully followed the timing presented in this book, you will realize that it identifies the crucifixion day as Nisan 15. Many people will have a hard time with that and insist that the crucifixion must have been on Nisan 14 to fulfill the types. However, this question could be turned around for those who believe that the day Jesus died could only be Nisan 14. The question would then be: if Friday was Nisan 14, why did Jesus direct His disciples to prepare for the Passover meal and eat it with them a day earlier than specified in Exodus 12:6?

The fact is that Jesus could not observe both the Passover at the prescribed time and be sacrificed as the antitypical Passover Lamb the same day (actually a few hours before the time of the meal). We could debate which was more important for Him: to die as the Passover Lamb at the specified time "between the two evenings" on the afternoon of Passover Day, Nisan 14 or to partake of the Passover meal at the right time in the early evening of Nisan 15. Clearly, He could not do both. However, we do not need to debate because, when scripture is carefully examined, it is clear what happened as far as the timing.

Jesus could not die as the Sacrificial Lamb and also, a few hours later, institute the Lord's Supper at a Passover meal.

As we have seen in Chapter Three, Jesus regarded Thursday as Passover Nisan 14, the day when the preparation was to be made for the Passover meal:

"Then came the day of unleavened bread, when the passover must be killed. And he sent Peter and John, saying, Go and prepare us the passover, that we may eat. (Luke 22:7-8)

He could see that He was being rejected and went ahead with arrangements to share the Passover meal with His close friends. Then "... when the even was come ..." (Matthew 26:20) they partook of the meal. This was in the early evening hours of Nisan 15, the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread. At that meal, He introduced Himself as the fulfillment of key Passover symbols: "... this is my body..." (1 Corinthians 11:24); "... this is my blood ..." (Mark 14:24) and He asked His followers to "... this do in remembrance of me." (1 Corinthians 11:24)

Later that evening, He was taken prisoner. He was further tested in a series of trials and, even though He was without fault, He was condemned and crucified. Although Jesus' death on Nisan 15 would seem to be a day late, it was the day which, because of sectarian differences between liberals and conservatives, most of the population of Israel expected the Passover lamb to be slain and more people would then recognize Him as the true Passover Lamb.

An interesting note here is that the earthly sanctuary was but a representation of the sanctuary in heaven where Jesus is spoken of as:

“... an high priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens; A minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man.” (Hebrews 8:1-2)

Everything in the earthly sanctuary was symbolic of its greater counterpart in the heavenly sanctuary:

“For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us:” (Hebrews 9:24)

Surely, the heavenly sanctuary is on a much greater scale than its earthly representation!

Here is a question: where was the equivalent of the earthly altar of sacrifice in the heavenly sanctuary? That altar of sacrifice was where, for centuries, sacrifices were offered, all pointing forward to the true Lamb of God. The answer is that, since the sacrifice of the heavenly system was Jesus, the altar of the heavenly sanctuary was actually the cross of Calvary on earth. To fulfill the types of His sacrifice, Jesus should have died on the altar of sacrifice in the temple - the same site where Abraham “offered” his son Isaac.

Why Would God Allow This?

Why would God allow the crucifixion to occur on a date different than that prefigured in the ceremonial service? Consistent with the main point of this study, God did not force the will of man to follow His plan (more on this shortly). Jesus should have died on Nisan 14 according to the type – the typical sacrifice of passover lambs on Nisan 14. But God allowed man’s will to be carried out in the sacrifice of Jesus. The method of sacrifice also was according to the will of man, using a form of execution invented by the Romans. Don’t think for a moment that God came up with that! The crucifixion showed what was in the heart of man. The Bible describes man’s heart:

“The heart *is* deceitful above all *things*, and desperately wicked: who can know it?” (Jeremiah 17:9)

“For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders,” (Mark 7:21)

Man’s heart was and is, so desperately wicked that it could go so far as to murder his Creator. The same circumstances revealed what was in the heart of God:

“For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the LORD, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end.” (Jeremiah 29:11)

From the people’s perspective, Jesus also died for the wrong reason. He died to remove the guilt of the people’s sins yet they were claiming the responsibility for His death (“... His blood *be* on us ...” Matthew 27:25) because they thought He had sinned.

God has long had a plan for how things should happen:

“... the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.” (Revelation 13:8)

While God had a plan A, He did not force His agenda on man. Rather, He allowed man to exercise his free will and do what was in his heart toward His Son for this period of time. The result, in summary, was that Jesus was sacrificed:

- On the wrong day - it should have been on Nisan 14, a day earlier
- In the wrong place - it should have been at the altar of sacrifice in the temple, instead it was at Calvary (from Latin) or Golgotha (Aramaic) outside of the city walls
- In the wrong way - it should have been by the method used for Passover lambs
- For the wrong reason - it should have been in acknowledgment of our (not God's) need for a substitute and acceptance that "... God will provide himself a lamb ..." (Genesis 22:8)

Man did not accept God's plan A and, instead, shamefully sacrificed God's Son on the wrong day, in the wrong place, in the wrong way and for the wrong reasons. How far God is willing to go to allow man to exercise his free will! And yet the result is still the same as in Plan A - His blood is still on us and our children - not for guilt but for our forgiveness if we will accept it. God's eternal purposes never fail.

The Character of God Further Revealed

The circumstances people went through at the time of the crucifixion brought out, through the words they spoke, what was in each of their hearts. We can learn more about characters when we observe people in a crisis. That is when people tend to let their guards down and reveal what they are really like. The matter (the circumstances) shows what is in the heart (really, the mind) of the person (the earth). However, what about Jesus Himself? How did He react in difficult circumstances? What did He say? What can we learn about His character, about what was in His heart during His time of ultimate testing?

We know that God is love. We certainly are not, although our hearts can be changed in that direction by beholding love in others and especially by beholding the love of God (2 Corinthians 3:18). Scripture tells us that God is different from us; His character is far greater than ours:

"For my thoughts *are* not your thoughts, neither *are* your ways my ways, saith the LORD. For *as* the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts." (Isaiah 55:8-9)

"And the LORD passed by before him, and proclaimed, The LORD, The LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, Keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear *the guilty*; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, unto the third and to the fourth *generation*." (Exodus 34:6-7)

"The LORD *is* merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy. He will not always chide: neither will he keep *his anger* for ever. He hath not dealt with us after our sins; nor rewarded us according to our iniquities. For as the heaven is high above the earth, *so* great is his mercy toward them that fear him. As far as the east is from the west, *so* far hath he removed our transgressions from us. Like as a father pitieth *his* children, *so* the LORD pitieth them that fear him." (Psalm 103:8-13)

Jesus' Words While on the Cross

It is the challenges we face in life that reveal character, they show what is in the heart. Now let's ask this: "did Jesus undergo difficult circumstances?" Jesus showed His character and the character of the Father all through His life. In the gospels we read of many challenges He faced. He had enemies after Him constantly. His followers had many opportunities to get to know Him, to see how He treated people and how He conducted Himself in various situations. But what was He like under the most difficult circumstances? Let's focus on what Jesus said while He was on the cross. What were Jesus' words while He endured the greatest of His trials and what did those words reveal about His character?

The word "crucible" - a trying circumstance - is related to the word crucifixion, as is the word excruciating – referring to great pain. Jesus experienced both.

Remember, Jesus said:

"... out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh." (Matthew 12:34)

We have looked at verses that reinforce that idea. But, since Jesus Himself said these words and implied that our words are a test of what is in our heart, let's apply them to the words He spoke. Surely, what He said could tell us something about His character and the character of the One He claimed to represent.

Actually, we can only go by His words at that time. His ability to act, to do good deeds was limited – He was nailed to a cross. So, let's examine what He said. He is only recorded as having spoken seven times. Let's go through each of them in the order spoken:

1. To Those Hurting Him

"Then said Jesus, **Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do ...**" (Luke 23:34)

Why did Jesus ask His Father to forgive? Jesus must have had forgiveness in His own heart or why would He ask that? If Jesus had vengeance, or His own interests in His heart He would have asked something as suggested by this verse:

"Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels?" (Matthew 26:53)

Or, the common way of thinking might imagine that He should have said something more like: "Father, please strike them all dead." But He didn't ask that. Rather, He asked for pardon for His persecutors.

Since He claimed to be representing His Father, we could ask: Was He asking the Father to also find forgiveness within His heart? Most people don't realize that the word forgiveness, in the New Testament, is translated from some very different original words. "Charizomai" is a word that describes what is happening in the heart of the individual doing the forgiving. "Aphiemi" describes what is happening in the heart of the one who is being forgiven.

He could be saying, in a more-amplified rendition, something like this:

“Father, find a way to help these people who don’t know what they are doing and don’t realize that you have forgiven them. Help them to realize that you have already forgiven [charizomai] them from your heart and to accept that, and feel forgiven [aphiemi] in their own hearts.” (Luke 23:34, amplified by author.)

When He asked His Father to forgive His tormentors, He was not trying to get the Father to feel like forgiving them. The Father already had forgiveness in His heart. Rather, He was asking His Father to help the soldiers to feel like they were forgiven, to realize that God was not going to stop loving them in spite of what they were doing. *The New American Standard Bible* and some others suggest that, in fact, Jesus repeated this saying over and over:

“But Jesus was saying, ‘Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing’ And they cast lots, dividing up His garments among themselves.” (Luke 23:34, New American Standard Bible)

Jesus did not say “Father forgive them” to try to convince His Father to forgive but to try to get the message through to the soldiers. Since the words He used had the meaning of the forgivee receiving forgiveness, the soldiers may have understood Jesus to be asking His Father to help them receive forgiveness; to feel forgiven.

If the Father had reason to be upset with anyone it would have been with those who were so badly mistreating His Son. Rather, in His great heart of love, He had only forgiveness (charizomai) for all that were involved.

See <https://characterofgod.org/resources> for the booklet *Biblical Forgiveness* which describes the difference between forgiveness granted (“charizomai”) and forgiveness received (“aphiemi”).

2. To the Repentant Thief

“And Jesus said unto him, **Verily I say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with me in paradise.**” (Luke 23:43)

These words were spoken to a man who to all appearances had no hope and no future. He would be expected to be in a state of total despair and without any hope. He was going to be dead soon so why would anyone be concerned about his future? But then there was Jesus who looked to be in the same predicament. Why should He care about a dying thief and what could He have done anyway? In fact, Jesus was suffering more abuse; being especially reviled and condemned by the Jewish leadership.

The position of the central cross indicated its occupant was the worst offender. Jesus was considered the chief of sinners.

Here is a use of “today” that is similar to that in the verse we are looking at:

“Turn you to the strong hold, ye prisoners of hope: even to day do I declare *that* I will render double unto thee;” (Zechariah 9:12)

Zechariah is recording God as declaring to the returned exiles that “even to day” in spite of their circumstances, He is telling them that if they will turn to Him He will deliver them, and even return unto them double. In Luke, Jesus is saying to the dying thief that “even today,” in spite of the present circumstances, while being executed as a criminal, he could have the hope of paradise.

Note also that Jesus did not go to paradise that day. The comma after “thee” in Luke 23:43 is not inspired (the Bible originally had no punctuation); it could just as easily have been translated as “... I say unto thee today, thou shalt be with me ...” It was the next day, after His resurrection, when He said to Mary:

“...Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father...” (John 20:17)

The point that should be emphasized here, in connection with what we are looking at, is that Jesus, in the midst of His own intense suffering, selflessly took the time to assure a dying thief that he could have eternal life, that he was forgiven.

The repentant thief suffered the consequences of his crimes against human law, but he did not suffer punishment from God for breaking divine law.

3. To His Mother and the Beloved Disciple

“When Jesus therefore saw his mother, and the disciple standing by, whom he loved, he saith unto his mother, **Woman, behold thy son!** Then saith he to the disciple, **Behold thy mother!** And from that hour that disciple took her unto his own *home*.” (John 19:26-27)

Here is evidence that John did not live with the other apostles, and a clue as to where Mary Magdalene went to give the first report of the resurrection.

Of course, we understand this as Jesus asking John to care for His mother. The first three things Jesus said were for the benefit of others. The first was addressed to His Father, but for the benefit of those mistreating Him. The second was for the thief who was otherwise without hope. In the third, He was providing for the care of His mother. Throughout His intense suffering He thought more of others than of Himself:

“Love ... does not seek the *things* of itself ...” (1 Corinthians 13:4-5, *KJ3 Literal Translation*)

If love does not seek its own good, it must seek the good of others. The one word we most associate with a description of God is “love.” Then, if God is love, He does not seek His own, but rather the good of others. When God created other beings, He must have known that He would love them more than Himself. This gives us a clue as to what is, and has always been, in His heart. More about the heart of God later.

4. To His Father

“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 hast thou forsaken me?**” (Matthew 27:46)

“My God, My God.” This is the only time Jesus addressed His Father in such a way. Every other time He addressed Him as “Father.” Why the difference? And the bigger question about this verse is: why would His Father forsake Him?

Why would He address His Father differently? The answer is that He wasn’t addressing His Father. He wasn’t even really asking a question. He was quoting from the well-known Psalm 22 which begins:

“My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? ...” (Psalm 22:1)

We need to look carefully at Psalm 22. It is a messianic Psalm that has much to do with the crucifixion. Apparently, in Judaism, quoting the beginning of a psalm was regarded as a reference to the entire psalm. The people of Jesus’ day and certainly the leaders knew scripture (even if they didn’t properly understand it). They would have heard those words, and perhaps would have started thinking of the rest of Psalm 22 as they stood there watching Jesus on the cross. Here is a relevant verse from it:

“But I *am* a worm, and no man; a reproach of men, and despised of the people.” (Psalm 22:6)

He was despised by the people. That is also mentioned in Isaiah Chapter 53, another passage very much associated with the cross:

“He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were *our* faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not.” (Isaiah 53:3)

“...why hast thou forsaken me?” - the only saying of Jesus on the cross recorded by Matthew or Mark. The others are recorded, three each, by Luke and John.

In Matthew 27, just a few verses before Jesus started quoting from Psalm 22, Matthew describes the people doing what that Psalm says they would do:

“And they that passed by reviled him, wagging their heads.” (Matthew 27:39)

“He trusted in God; let him deliver him now, if he will have him: for he said, I am the Son of God.” (Matthew 27:43)

Imagine the effect. The people were taunting and reviling Him when, suddenly, He quoted from Psalm 22. As they thought of that Psalm, some might have made a connection when they came to verses seven and eight, and realized that they had just said the words it predicted they would say.

“All they that see me laugh me to scorn: they shoot out the lip, they shake the head, *saying*, He trusted on the LORD *that* he would deliver him: let him deliver him, seeing he delighted in him.” (Psalm 22:7-8)

Some of them must have really wondered. In their minds, they may have continued through the Psalm:

“My strength is dried up like a potsherd; and my tongue cleaveth to my jaws; and thou hast brought me into the dust of death.” (Psalm 22:15)

Again, they may have made a connection. Jesus had had nothing to eat or drink and would have lost considerable fluid from loss of blood. Then they would come to the next verse:

“... they pierced my hands and my feet.” (Psalm 22:16)

That was pretty obvious. They may also have remembered a statement from Zechariah:

“And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced ...” (Zechariah 12:10)

In two more verses they would come to:

“They part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture.” (Psalm 22:18)

The soldiers had done exactly that, probably right at the foot of the cross where they were on duty and in the sight of all. Anyone at the scene who went through Psalm 22 in their minds would have likely made some of these connections. Some may have voiced it audibly:

“Look, the soldiers just divided His garments - it says that in the Psalms too!”

These detailed fulfillments of prophecy may have helped many of the witnesses later decide to follow Him.

“I will declare thy name unto my brethren: in the midst of the congregation will I praise thee.” (Psalm 22:22)

He is saying here that He would declare His (the Father’s) name, or character. One aspect of God’s character is His great love; a love that makes it impossible for Him to abandon the objects of His love. It is not like God to abandon His people. Look at these verses:

“And, behold, I *am* with thee, and will keep thee in all *places* whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land; for I will not leave thee ...” (Genesis 28:15)

“Be strong and of a good courage, fear not, nor be afraid of them: for the LORD thy God, *he it is* that doth go with thee; he will not fail thee, nor forsake thee.” (Deuteronomy 31:6)

“For the LORD will not forsake his people for his great name’s sake: because it hath pleased the LORD to make you his people.” (1 Samuel 12:22)

“And David said to Solomon his son, Be strong and of good courage, and do *it*: fear not, nor be dismayed: for the LORD God, *even my God, will be* with thee; he will not fail thee, nor forsake thee ...” (1 Chronicles 28:20)

Jesus knew these verses. He was going through the awful pain of the cross. He had every physical reason to feel forsaken by His Father. But Jesus knew the character of His Father. And He, of course, shared that character. He would have known and understood the thoughts of God as later expressed by Paul:

“... I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.” (Hebrews 13:5)

It is so much easier to bear pain when we know someone cares about us. We all want someone to sympathize with us.

While He knew these promises, He had to struggle against temptation. Thinking of this Psalm would have helped Him, especially when He came to verse 24:

“For he hath not despised nor abhorred the affliction of the afflicted; neither hath he [the Father] hid his face from him [the Son]; but when he cried unto him, he heard.” (Psalm 22:24)

Jesus’ faith was sustained by what the word of God says about the character of the Father. He probably felt very forsaken; certainly, from His perspective, He had reasons to. He was being tempted to the utmost and, by all appearances, was forsaken yet that didn’t affect His estimate of the Father’s character.

The fourth saying of Jesus that we have just looked at was addressed to His Father but it was also for the benefit of the people standing around. In fact, it is written that He “cried with a loud voice.” He spoke in a loud voice so many of the people would hear it. It may have caused some to think of Psalm 22 and see the remarkable ways in which prophecy was being fulfilled.

5. To Fulfill Scripture

“After this, Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the scripture might be fulfilled, saith, **I thirst.**” (John 19:28)

We have seen, in the first four sayings of Jesus on the cross, that they were more for the benefit of others than for Himself. This saying looks, at first, more like Jesus’ concern for Himself; almost a complaint.

However, let’s look at some important words – important because they help us understand why He said, “I thirst.” Those words are right in the verse: “that the scripture might be fulfilled.” What scripture? Again, He was quoting from the Psalms:

“They gave me also gall for my meat; and in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink.” (Psalm 69:21)

“Meat” (in Hebrew meaning “bread of consolation”) referred to food offered in sympathy; its use here emphasized their hypocrisy.

Was He thirsty? Absolutely: “... my tongue cleaveth to my jaws.” (Psalm 22:15) But He said “I thirst” not to fulfill His own needs, but “that the scripture might be fulfilled.” The next verse in John says:

“Now there was set a vessel full of vinegar: and they filled a sponge with vinegar, and put *it* upon hyssop, and put *it* to his mouth.” (John 19:29)

Once again, what He said was to help those around the cross to understand what was really going on. True to His character, He was thinking more of others than of Himself.

6. It is Finished

“When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, **It is finished:** and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost.” (John 19:30)

Why did Jesus say, “it is finished”? Most people would say because it was the end of His life. However, these words are misunderstood for much the same reason as the words “my God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” which, remember, were quoted from Psalm 22. It is interesting to consider where the phrase “it is finished” might be quoted from. Actually, it is also from Psalm 22, the last verse:

“They shall come, and shall declare his righteousness unto a people that shall be born, that he hath done *this*.” (Psalm 22:31)

The word “done” is from the Hebrew word “asah” (H6213). This is the same Hebrew word translated “made” in the creation account:

“Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made.” (Genesis 2:1-2)

It can have the meaning of something that is complete, a finished work and, of course, the verse above is saying that creation was then finished. So, the “He hath done this” of Psalm 22, is equivalent to Jesus’ words “It is finished.”

In Psalm 22 and, as Jesus applied “asah,” it was used in the sense of the completion of the work of redemption.

7. Into Thy Hands

“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.” (Luke 23:46)

These words were quoted from Psalm 31:

“Into thine hand I commit my spirit: thou hast redeemed me, O LORD God of truth.” (Psalm 31:5)

In spite of what looked like a hopeless situation, Jesus used the trusting phrase “into thy hands” as He committed Himself to His Father.

Even today, the words “hand” or “hands” are used symbolically to represent control, responsibility or care. For instance, one large insurance company uses the slogan “you’re in good hands,” meaning that their customers could rest assured in their services. Some medical doctors, after having done all they can for their patient, have been known to say, “the rest is in God’s hands.” And we might say “it’s out of my hands” meaning that a particular situation is beyond our control and there is nothing more we can do about it. Similar wording was used by King David as he cast himself upon the mercy of God:

“...let me fall now into the hand of the LORD; for very great *are* his mercies: but let me not fall into the hand of man.” (1 Chronicles 21:13)

Jesus totally trusted Himself into His Father’s care even as He faced what some consider the prospect of the second death. Oh, that we could trust Him more!

God’s hands are merciful. He provides for all our needs. We can see from Jesus’ seventh saying that He had total and complete trust in His heavenly Father. Peter wrote:

“Who, when he [Jesus] was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously:”
(1 Peter 2:23)

Last Words

Frequently, the last words of someone who is dying include a message, or testimony to those who are present. Sometimes it is an expression of love toward family and friends, a request to take care of someone who is being left behind, or a message of instruction. Jesus gave all of these types of messages.

His words included all of that, but there was no word of complaint or revenge. Everything He did and said was intended for the good of others. Even while going through intense physical suffering and the greatest emotional struggle anyone has ever undergone, He put others before Himself.

We have mentioned the effect of our words on others. Jesus said of His crucifixion:

“And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all *men* unto me.” (John 12:32)

He was lifted up; both physically on the cross, and in the sense that His words and actions were put on display, both for those who were present at the scene and for those who afterwards are able to read the account of what He said and did. What caused the drawing? Was it something about being crucified? No; the crucifixion part, on its own, was repulsive.

For us, it is the knowledge in our minds and appreciation in our hearts of His willingness to go through what He did for us – that is what draws us. But it is more than the fact that He suffered willingly; it is also how He reacted during that suffering. It was what was in His heart; His attitude to those around Him that mattered. And again, remember, Jesus Himself said:

“O generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things.” (Matthew 12:34-35)

Jesus took the place of Barabbas whose name was simply son (bar) of the father (abba). We are each the son of a father. Jesus took the place of each of us.

Did Jesus’ words while on the cross show what was in His heart? I believe they did. The complete list:

1. “... **Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do ...**” (Luke 23:34) - forgiveness. Jesus wanted them to feel, to know they were forgiven (Greek - apheimi). Remember, the Father had already forgiven them (Greek - charizomai).
2. “... **Verily I say unto thee To day shalt thou be with me in paradise.**” (Luke 23:43) - compassion. Jesus greatest concern was for the salvation of others.
3. “... **Woman, behold thy son! ... Behold thy mother! ...**” (John 19:26-27) - care for others. Jesus cares about our wellbeing in every aspect.
4. “... **My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?**” (Matthew 27:46) - teaching from scripture. This saying and the next two are quoted from or, at least, alluded to in Psalm 22 (see verses 1, 15 and 31). Jesus always drew attention to the scriptures.
5. “... **I thirst.**” (John 19:28)
6. “... **It is finished ...**” (John 19:30)
7. “... **Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit ...**” (Luke 23:46) - commitment, trust. Jesus recognized the loving character of His Father (and our God); a God and Father with the same character Jesus showed throughout His life.

The words of Jesus while on the cross revealed His character. They were consistent with the aim of His life which was to point people to the loving character of His Father. Our own words and how we say them reveal our character. And while we might try to be careful of our words, we cannot, on our own, change our characters. Fortunately, that is something that can happen as we look to Jesus lifted up on the cross, and dwell on the words He said. As we think about them, we can see what was in Jesus’ heart for each of us.

The Father Suffered Too

We are not told much about the emotions in the heart of the Father during these events but we can gain an insight from the connection Jesus made between Himself and His Father:

“Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou *then*, Shew us the Father?” (John 14:9)

Jesus, called by Paul “the image of the invisible God” (Colossians 1:15), is saying that they have the same character. From this we can deduce that the Father’s thoughts towards the people involved in the events of the crucifixion would be the same as those of Jesus. His thoughts would not have been of revenge but more in accord with:

“For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the LORD, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end.” (Jeremiah 29:11)

We are not given much direct insight into the Father’s heart at the time of the crucifixion, but we are given a picture through an experience in the life of Abraham. God said to him:

“And he said, Take now thy son, thine only *son* Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of.” (Genesis 22:2)

Abraham’s understanding that he was to sacrifice his son began a time of intense struggle and mental suffering. In the case of Jesus’ Father’s experience, the Father was suffering from the sense of the separation that was coming between Himself and His beloved Son. And this while knowing how His Son would be treated as He was yielded to the control of man for man to do what was in his heart towards his Creator. In both cases, there would have been great pain in the hearts of the fathers, and for about the same length of time. In the story of Abraham and Isaac, we tend to focus the most on what Abraham would have been feeling, yet we do not consider very much what Jesus’ Father was going through. Let’s consider a little more the comparison between the two father-son pairs.

Important to note for the purposes of this study is the fact that after Abraham offered his son, he did not have to wait three days to receive him back - the three days came before “the sacrifice.” And he did, as far as Abraham was concerned, offer him:

“By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac: and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten *son*,” (Hebrews 11:17)

He had made the decision to obey God’s voice to the point “...that he took the knife to slay his son.” (Genesis 22:10). Abraham was:

“Accounting that God *was* able to raise *him* [Isaac] up, even from the dead; from whence [the dead] also he received him in a figure.” (Hebrews 11:19)

So, he did, figuratively, receive him from the dead but it wasn’t three days later. (See Appendix 9 - *Abraham and Isaac and Three Days*.)

Thankfully, for this father and son, that sacrifice did not happen, the fire was not kindled; the illustration of what the heavenly Father would have to go through in giving up His Son was sufficient. This experience would have given Abraham a deep and very personal insight into what would be in the heart of God centuries later, and would have helped him to understand and really appreciate much more the meaning of:

“... God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering ...” (Genesis 22:8)

Here is another thought regarding the length of time Jesus was actually dead. It is often said that this feeling of separation from His Father was so heart-wrenching for Jesus that it broke His heart and caused Him to cry out:

“... My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” (Matthew 27:46)

But then, how was it for His Father who had to veil Himself from His only-begotten Son Who had taken on the sins of the world – our sins - on behalf of humanity? The separation would have been breaking the heart of the Father also. The Father would have greatly desired to be reunited with His Son. Once the demonstration of God’s love and respect for the free will of man had been completed, why wait? Why delay the resurrection any longer than necessary?

Just as Abraham rejoiced to receive his son back, figuratively, from the dead, the Father would have greatly rejoiced at the resurrection of Jesus. The experience of Abraham and Isaac was an example (a figure) of the trial and the emotional experience that the heavenly Father and His Son would later be subject to. It makes sense that the timing would be similar as well. The story of Abraham and Isaac is one more piece of evidence that the three-day-and-three-night time period in question was before the sacrifice, not after.

Can you imagine any worse emotional struggle than to take or voluntarily give up the life of your own son? Our God of infinite love went through that!

The heart of God has been revealed through His response to what was in the heart of man, in the events surrounding the crucifixion. Understanding this can help us to better recognize and appreciate His love. And God continues to work with each of us in such a way as to show us what is in our own hearts.

A person can choose to follow God and obey His laws because he understands that they are for his best good. A person can choose to proclaim God and to commend His ways to others because he sees improvements and feels better about his own life after becoming a Christian. One can even choose to follow God because of a fear of being lost. However, a person can only choose to follow God as a response of real love from the heart, if he truly understands the love of God towards him. And this can only really be grasped through an appreciation of God’s character and the depth of His love:

“We love him, because he first loved us.” (1 John 4:19)

Even as we best get to know what a person is really like by observing them in difficult circumstances, the character of God was most clearly revealed in the words and actions of Jesus during His hours on the cross:

“But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.” (Romans 5:8)

We say that God giving His only begotten Son to die on the cross shows His great love for us. True, but it would perhaps be more accurate to say that God giving His only begotten Son to die (omitting mention of the cross as the verse above does) shows His great love for us. The cross part - the means of execution that was used - rather than proving God's love, primarily demonstrates the hatred in the heart of man. That God allowed it, despite the great suffering it caused Jesus' Father to do that, does show how willing He is to allow man to have and exercise his free will - which does show His great love for us.

So how does all this relate to the sign of Jonah, and being three days and three nights in the heart of the earth? As mentioned earlier, when Jesus was asked for a sign, He did not deny the request. Rather, He said that a sign would be given, but only one sign, and He specified that the sign was to be the sign of the prophet Jonah. What was that sign? He was not referring back to the incident of Jonah and the whale, and asking them to believe in that. He was talking about a sign that would be given in the future which would be connected with His death and resurrection. What He did was to make a comparison between Jonah's experience and His own. Was it the three days and three nights; was that the important part? We have already seen in Chapter One that the time period is not even mentioned in some references to the sign of the prophet Jonah. Was it that He would be raised from the dead? Others were raised from the dead and, in the case of Jesus' friend Lazarus, it was even on the fourth day after death. And, of course, Jonah was not raised from the dead. If a sign is to signify or provide evidence for a greater truth, it must relate to that truth in some way. This study establishes that Jesus was within the heart or will of man for a length of time but how does that relate to anything? What greater truth could it be telling us? We need to do some further digging to get to the heart of the meaning of this very important passage of scripture.

The Heart of the Matter – Revealing the Heart of God and Man

Now we get to the heart of the matter - how this all connects to the sign of the prophet Jonah, and the three days and three nights that Jesus spent "in the heart of the earth." Being a God Who is love (1 John 4:8), God created beings upon whom He could bestow that love and who could freely return love to Him. To truly be free to love God they had to also be free to choose not to love Him. They had to be free to choose their own way. Obviously, they are not free to do this if they are either incapable (as in pre-programmed robots) or have no opportunity. God went so far as to give Adam and Eve a choice regarding the tree of knowledge of good and evil with all of its potential for sin and its effects to come upon the Earth. This is good evidence for how far God is willing to go to allow man to have and exercise free will. As Adam and Eve were, by God's design, free moral agents, He could not restrict their wills to keep them from transgression and yet leave them free. Once they sinned, they had removed themselves, to a great degree, from His protection and were vulnerable to the destroyer's work.

It is interesting that the "tree of the knowledge of good and evil" could exist in a creation that God Himself proclaimed "very good."

This reasoning is all about the character of God. The discussion between Jesus and His listeners in Matthew 12 had much to do with the issue of God's character and it was the big issue in Jesus' life. Throughout His years of ministry on earth, Jesus' words and actions were constantly revealing the character of His Father. Consistent with the will and actions of His Father, He never forced the will of anyone under any circumstances:

"Then answered Jesus and said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do: for what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise." (John 5:19)

God gave man free will and He will never interfere with it. The ultimate illustration of this; the sign to that wicked and adulterous generation and ours, is that the Father allowed His only-begotten Son to be within the control of man (figuratively, “in the heart of the earth,”) for a period of time for His created beings to do with Him as they willed. The Father would not interfere with the free-will actions of man even while they mocked, tortured and killed His Son.

This understanding of the sign of Jonah is effectively a revelation to us of what is in the heart of God – nothing but love for us, a desire for our best good and a commitment to always honor our free-will choices. “Secret,” not because it has not always been there, in God’s word, but because we have not understood it. It has simply taken some careful investigation of word meanings to uncover the true meaning.

There are a few Biblical examples we could refer to of individuals who were subject to a will other than their own. Jonah himself, for the time he was imprisoned in the whale, was subject to another’s will, in his case, through the vehicle of the whale which took Him where He did not want to go. Jesus, for the same length of time, was exposed to a will other than His own – that of His enemies.

Referring to John the Baptist, Jesus (while likening him to Elijah - v13) said:

“but I say to you that Elijah already came, and they did not recognize him, but did to him whatever they wished. So also the Son of Man is going to suffer at their hands.” (Matthew 17:12, NASB)

He was saying that they (the scribes referred to in verse 10 and other Jewish leaders) did to John the Baptist whatever they wanted. God did not interfere in any way to restrict their actions. Rather, it implies they were free to have their way. The Son of Man did not suffer at the hands of His enemies in the same way as John the Baptist in terms of the way He suffered physically. John the Baptist was beheaded, Jesus was crucified. The “so also” was not referring to what they did; not to death in the same way. Rather, it was referring to the fact that to both Jesus and John the Baptist they did “whatever they wished.” In both cases, God was allowing man to exercise his free will to show what was in his heart.

Jesus’ reference to how Peter would die, commonly understood to be a reference to crucifixion, includes the thought of being carried against his will:

“Verily, verily, I say unto thee, When thou wast young, thou girdedst thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldest: but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry *thee* whither thou wouldest not.” (John 21:18)

In the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus said:

“... Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done.” (Luke 22:42)

We can reason that it was His Father’s will for Jesus to give His life for the lost race, as this was necessary for us to be able to receive forgiveness. However, it is hardly reasonable to suppose that the Father’s will included that His Son should have to suffer the agonies of crucifixion. But we can see how it could be within the Father’s will, as a unique sign to man, that they be allowed to treat His Son according to their own will. It was within the Father’s will to allow man to be a free moral agent and make his own choices.

In God’s system, we can do whatever we want, we just can’t choose the consequences – they are always connected to the behaviour.

This understanding exalts the character of God and helps us to see Him in a new and brighter light. We could say that God's ultimate objective is to make as many beings as possible, as happy as possible, for as long as possible. This can only be achieved by giving the intelligent beings He created complete freedom of choice as love cannot be won by coercion or control. God's approach to us has always been somewhat like that plaque mentioned in the introduction, that I gave to my wife years ago with the saying "Let my love, like sunlight, surround you and yet give you illumined freedom." God wants to give us the desires of our hearts; to allow us to exercise our free wills. While man has, in many ways, rejected God, He still allows us to exercise our free wills. To force our will is really to remove free will. This He will never do but, rather, He seeks to bring us to the light of truth to clearly see His true character, to have our own thoughts towards Him revealed to us (Luke 2:34-35) and to see that His law is only for our good and happiness. Jesus, being in the Heart of the Earth, allowed the manifestation of what was in human hearts. It was and is the ultimate mirror to show us the thoughts and intents of our hearts as well as to provide a glimpse of what is in God's heart towards us.

Both David and Paul expressed this understanding of God's law:

"I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law *is* within my heart." (Psalm 40:8)

"For I delight in the law of God after the inward man:" (Romans 7:22)

In a very real sense, the sign referred to in Matthew 12, allowing Jesus to be "three days and three nights in the heart of the earth," was a demonstration of God's character and manner of dealing with man. He did this because He wants willing - not robotic - allegiance to Himself and He wants us to do that in the full illumination and understanding of His character of love. A correct understanding of that love and God's character is what can change the heart of man so that it can begin to reflect what God is truly like. Through all His responses to the actions of His created beings, and especially during that three-day-and-three-night period when His Son was "in the heart of the earth" it has been shown that, truly, God is love.

Appendices

Appendix 1. Variations in Use of the Word “Even” as in Evening

(Referred to from page 11 of the text)

There can be some confusion over the use of the term “even.”

“When the even was come, there came a rich man of Arimathaea, named Joseph, who also himself was Jesus’ disciple: He went to Pilate, and begged the body of Jesus. Then Pilate commanded the body to be delivered.” (Matthew 27:57-58)

“When the even was come” can make it sound to us like this happened after sunset, and therefore early on the seventh-day Sabbath, Friday evening. But the word “even” was also used in ways other than in reference to what we would call evening, the time after sunset.

“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.” (Exodus 12:6)

Passover lambs were killed in the middle of the afternoon on Nisan 14, prepared and then eaten with unleavened bread after sunset, which is on the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread.

“ ... there thou shalt sacrifice the passover at even, at the going down of the sun ...”
(Deuteronomy 16:6)

The sun would be visibly going down in the sky any time after noon. The “in the evening” of Exodus 12:6 literally reads, in the original (as the King James Version marginal note says), “between the two evenings.” The word “in” used in the phrase “in the evening” is from the Hebrew word “beyn” (H996) which is more commonly and better translated as “between” (Genesis 9:16) or “betwixt” (Genesis 26:28). In fact, of 32 occurrences, Exodus 12:6 is the only time it is translated as “in.” The two evenings are:

1. When the sun begins to visibly descend in the sky (shortly after noon).
2. At sunset when the sun disappears below the horizon which occurs at about 7 pm in Israel.

Gesenius describes “between the evenings” as the time between noon and sunset (*Gesenius Hebrew and Chaldee Lexicon to the Old Testament Scriptures*).

This verse also helps with the meaning of even:

“And now when the even was come, because it was the preparation, that is, the day before the sabbath,” (Mark 15:42)

It says “the even was come,” yet the narrative shows that there was much that was yet done before the Sabbath started. This helps to establish that “even” can refer to the period from mid-afternoon till sunset. Mark often clarified time references to help his Gentile readers who were generally unfamiliar with Jewish terms and customs.

Appendix 2. Cases of “Kardia” Translated “Heart” as Understood in this Study

(Referred to from page 20 of the text)

To help with the correct understanding of the word “heart,” as an example of letting the Bible define its own terms, the following verses are listed. They (and many others) use “heart” from the original Greek word “kardia” (G2588) in a way that is consistent with this study:

“O generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things.” (Matthew 12:34-35)

“When any one heareth the word of the kingdom, and understandeth *it* not, then cometh the wicked *one*, and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart. This is he which received seed by the way side.” (Matthew 13:19)

“But those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart; and they defile the man. For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies.” (Matthew 15:18-19)

“For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders,” (Mark 7:21)

“But that on the good ground are they, which in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep *it*, and bring forth fruit with patience.” (Luke 8:15)

“And thus are the secrets of his heart made manifest; and so falling down on *his* face he will worship God, and report that God is in you of a truth.” (1 Corinthians 14:25)

These examples all use “kardia” in the sense of the mind, the thinking part of man. We commonly use it that way also but have added other meanings. A good exercise would be to use a concordance to find, and then carefully read every verse that includes a translation from the Greek word “kardia” (G2588). Ask yourself if any of them have the meaning of the middle of anything. The context should be considered. If there is only one verse where it is commonly understood to mean that and every other verse has a different meaning, isn't it logical to question the suggested meaning in the one verse, and see if it can be understood with the meaning in all the other verses? This is letting the Bible define its own words.

Appendix 3. Mark 8:31

(Referred to from page 22 of the text)

“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 be killed, and after three days rise again.” (Mark 8:31)

Note that this verse is relating the same conversation as Matthew 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.” (Matthew 16:21)

Evidence that it is the same conversation is shown by the verses following from each of Matthew and Mark:

“Then Peter took him, and began to rebuke him ...” (Matthew 16:22)

“... And Peter took him, and began to rebuke him.” (Mark 8:32)

It cannot be both “the third day” (Matthew) and “after three days” (Mark) or it would be into the fourth day. Also, since the case in Mark is the only one that says “after three days” with all the others saying “on the third day,” it is suspect. The “after” in “after three days” (Mark 8:31) is from the Greek word “meta” most commonly translated as “with.”

Not all Bible versions say “after three days” for Mark 8:31:

“And he began to teach them, that the Son of man was about to suffer much, and be rejected by the Elders and by the chief priests and by the Scribes, and be killed, and rise on the third day.” (Mark 8:31, The Peshitta)

“And he began to teach them that he, the Son of man, would suffer greatly and be rejected by the elders and by the chief priests and by the scribes, and be killed. And on the third day arise.” (Mark 8:31, Aramaic English New Testament, Andrew Gabriel Roth)

“And he began to teach them: “The Son of Man is going to suffer many things and to be rejected by the Elders and by the Chief Priests and by the Scribes and he shall be killed, and in three days he shall rise.” (Mark 8:31, Aramaic Bible in Plain English)

“Then Jesus began to tell them that the Son of Man must suffer many terrible things and be rejected by the elders, the leading priests, and the teachers of religious law. He would be killed, but three days later he would rise from the dead.” (Mark 8:31, New Living Translation)

“Then Jesus began to teach his disciples: “The Son of Man must suffer much and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests, and the teachers of the Law. He will be put to death, but three days later he will rise to life.” (Mark 8:31, Good News Translation)

“Jesus began telling his disciples what would happen to him. He said, “The nation’s leaders, the chief priests, and the teachers of the Law of Moses will make the Son of Man suffer terribly. He will be rejected and killed, but three days later he will rise to life.” (Mark 8:31, Contemporary English Version)

Here is a version that actually says “after two days.”

“And now for the first time He told them, “The Son of Man must endure much suffering, and be rejected by the Elders and the High Priests and the Scribes, and be put to death, and after two days rise to life.” (Mark 8:31, Weymouth New Testament)

With that variety of translations, there cannot be strong evidence of a real discrepancy between Mark 8:31 and the other verses.

Appendix 4. Passover Preparation and Sabbath Preparation Compared

(Referred to from pages 24, and 56 of the text)

This chart shows verses referring to preparation for both the Passover/Unleavened Bread and the seventh-day Sabbath and shows, in each case, where they fit in relation to Nisan 14-16. Clearly, Sabbath preparation was one day after the preparation of the Passover and therefore it can only be that the crucifixion was on a Friday.

Nisan 14	Nisan 15, Sabbath preparation	Nisan 16, Sabbath
		†
↑	↑ ↑	↑ ↑

Preparation for Passover	Preparation for Sabbath	
“Now the first <i>day</i> of the <i>feast of unleavened bread*</i> the disciples came to Jesus, saying unto him, Where wilt thou that we <u>prepare</u> (G2090, hetoimazo) for thee to eat the passover?” (Matthew 26:17)	“And now when the even* was come, because it was the <u>preparation</u> (G3904, paraskeue , which is only used before a 7th-day Sabbath), that is, the day before the sabbath,” (Mark 15:42)	“Now the next day* (Sabbath), that followed the day of the <u>preparation</u> , (paraskeue , Friday) the chief priests and Pharisees came together unto Pilate, ...” (Matthew 27:62, 64)
“And the first day of unleavened bread*, when they killed the passover (=Nisan 14, Exo 12:6), his disciples said unto him, Where wilt thou that we go and <u>prepare</u> (hetoimazo) that thou mayest eat the passover?” (Mark 14:12)	“And that day was the <u>preparation</u> (paraskeue), and the sabbath drew on.” (Luke 23:54) “That day” was the day of the crucifixion. The sabbath had not yet started.	
“Then came the day of unleavened bread*, when the passover must be killed (=Nisan 14, Exo 12:6). And he sent Peter and John, saying, Go and <u>prepare</u> (hetoimazo) us the passover, that we may eat.” (Luke 22:7-8)	“There laid they Jesus therefore because of the Jews’ <u>preparation day</u> (paraskeue); for the sepulchre was nigh at hand.” (John 19:42) The burial was done close by “because” it was the preparation day and almost the Sabbath.	
	“The Jews therefore, because it was the <u>preparation</u> (paraskeue), that the bodies should not remain upon the cross on the sabbath day ...” (John 19:31)	
*Note: At that time, the terms Passover and Unleavened Bread were used interchangeably – see Luke 22:1	*Note: “Even” is used in a variety of ways (See Appendix 1); the exact time being referenced must be established from the context. In Mark 15:42, it is obviously before sunset.	*Note: The “next day” starts at sunset. The chief priests would not have left the tomb unguarded overnight as that would have given opportunity to steal the body.

This is one more very strong evidence for a Friday crucifixion.

Appendix 5. Possible Counts of the Days from Wave Sheaf to Pentecost

(Referred to from page 72 of the text)

The following tables show examples of correct and incorrect determinations for counting the days and weeks to Pentecost. In both cases, the Preparation of the Passover (Nisan 14) and the First day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread (Nisan 15) are arbitrarily chosen to be the second and third days of the week, a Monday and Tuesday. They could fall on any day of the week in a particular year.

In the incorrect case (table on left), the count starts from the day of the Wave Sheaf (WS) offering which is said to be always on Nisan 16. It starts, in this example, on a Wednesday (fourth day of the week), includes the seventh day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread (FUB-7) and Pentecost as Sabbaths, and ends up with Pentecost on a Wednesday. There is a total of nine Sabbaths and there is a part week included at either end of the fifty-day period.

In the correct case (table on right), the count starts on the day of the Wave Sheaf which is always on a seventh-day Sabbath, and ends with Pentecost on a seventh-day Sabbath. There are seven seventh-day Sabbaths, seven full (Sunday to Sabbath) weeks and 50 days.

Incorrect. Feasts days counted as Sabbaths. Wave Sheaf offering on day after "Sabbath."			
Count of 50 days	Day of week	Feast days	Count of 7 Weeks
	Mon.	Pass. Prep.	
	Tue.	FUB day 1	
1	Wed.	Wave Sheaf	Start count
2	Thu.		
3	Fri.		
4	Sab.		1
5	Sun.		
6	Mon.		
7	Tue.	FUB-7	2
8	Wed.		
9	Thu.		
10	Fri.		
11	Sab.		3
12	Sun.		
/	/		
17	Fri.		
18	Sab.		4
19	Sun.		
/	/		
24	Fri.		
25	Sab.		5
26	Sun.		
/	/		
31	Fri.		
32	Sab.		6
33	Sun.		
/	/		
38	Fri.		
39	Sab.		7
40	Sun.		
/	/		
45	Fri.		
46	Sab.		8
47	Sun.		
/	/		
50	Wed.	Pentecost	9

Correct. Feasts days not counted as Sabbaths. Wave Sheaf offering on seventh-day Sabbath.			
Count of 50 Days	Day of week	Feast days	Count of 7 Weeks
	Mon.	Pass. Prep.	
	Tue.	FUB day 1	
	Wed.		
	Thu.		
	Fri.		
1	Sab.	Wave Sheaf	Start count
2	Sun.		
3	Mon.		
4	Tue.	FUB-7	
5	Wed.		
6	Thu.		
7	Fri.		
8	Sab.		1
9	Sun.		
/	/		
14	Fri.		
15	Sab.		2
16	Sun.		
/	/		
21	Fri.		
22	Sab.		3
23	Sun.		
/	/		
28	Fri.		
29	Sab.		4
30	Sun.		
/	/		
35	Fri.		
36	Sab.		5
37	Sun.		
/	/		
42	Fri.		
43	Sab.		6
44	Sun.		
/	/		
49	Fri.		
50	Sab.	Pentecost	7

Appendix 6. Jesus' Anointing

(Referred to from page 77 of the text)

Jesus was born to be the Messiah; indeed, He was “the Lamb (chosen, designated or appointed to be) slain from the foundation of the world” (Revelation 13:8). When He was about to enter His work as the Messiah (the word literally means “anointed”) at the age of 30, He was anointed at His baptism by John the Baptist to preach, heal and deliver. That work, for which He was anointed, is described:

“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised,” (Luke 4:18)

“How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him.” (Acts 10:38)

There is no mention in those passages about being anointed for His death or burial; it was for His work of preaching, healing, delivering and doing good in many different ways. It was a work of showing what God is really like; a work of representing His Father’s character.

He was anointed again shortly before His death and burial. This time God used Mary Magdalene to anoint Him and the anointing is specifically connected with His burial:

“She hath done what she could: she is come aforehand to anoint my body to the burying.” (Mark 14:8)

At the beginning of His public ministry, John the Baptist — of whom Jesus said, “there is not a greater prophet than John” (Luke 7:28) — anointed Him for His prophetic mission. Now, near the close of that ministry, Mary Magdalene — a woman once known as a great sinner — anointed Him for burial. The greatest of the prophets anointed Him for His work of preaching; the forgiven sinner anointed Him for His work as sin-bearer.

The Hebrew word for official anointings is “mashach” from which “mashiach” meaning “an anointed one” or “Messiah” is derived.

Remarkably, Mary appears to have understood what the others did not. While the disciples struggled to grasp His repeated references to His coming death, she acted in faith, anointed Him in advance for burial and purchased the spices before they were needed.

Her act of devotion sharply exposed the heart of Judas. His objection sounded charitable, but John revealed the real motive:

“Then saith one of his disciples, Judas Iscariot, Simon’s son, which should betray him, Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence, and given to the poor? This he said, not that he cared for the poor; but because he was a thief, and had the bag, and bare what was put therein. Then said Jesus, Let her alone: against the day of my burying hath she kept this. For the poor always ye have with you; but me ye have not always.” (John 12:4-8)

Matthew records what followed immediately:

“Then one of the twelve, called Judas Iscariot, went unto the chief priests, And said *unto them*, What will ye give me, and I will deliver him unto you? And they covenanted with him for thirty pieces of silver.” (Matthew 26:14-15)

It appears that this moment — Mary’s extravagant devotion, Judas’ exposure, and Christ’s gentle rebuke — marked the turning point. Her act of love coincided with the plotting of the chief priests:

“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 subtilty, and kill *him*. But they said, Not on the feast *day*, lest there be an uproar among the people. Now when Jesus was in Bethany, in the house of Simon the leper, There came unto him a woman having an alabaster box of very precious ointment, and poured it on his head, as he sat *at meat*. ... Then one of the twelve, called Judas Iscariot, went unto the chief priests, And said *unto them*, What will ye give me, and I will deliver him unto you? And they covenanted with him for thirty pieces of silver.” (Matthew 26:3-7, 14-15)

Just as Jesus was anointed at the beginning of His three-and-a-half-year ministry for His work of preaching, healing, and delivering, so He was anointed again at the beginning of this final phase — a ministry that would culminate in His burial three days and three nights later. In both cases, the anointing marked the commencement of a divinely-appointed work. Once again, the three days and three nights are seen to precede His death and burial, not follow them.

Appendix 7. “The Graves of the Saints Were Opened”

(Referred to from page 79 of the text)

Let’s consider the timing of the opening of the graves of the saints resurrected with Jesus and when they were resurrected:

“Jesus, when he had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost. And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent; And the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept arose, And came out of the graves after his resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many.”
(Matthew 27:50-53)

I have always wondered about these verses. It sounds like that at about the same time Jesus died:

- the veil was torn,
- there was an earthquake,
- the rocks rent and
- the graves were opened.

And then it says:

- “and many bodies of the saints which slept arose”
- “and [the bodies] came out of the graves after His resurrection.”

The question is: when did the bodies of the saints arise? It was either with the events that happened at His death or with their coming out of the graves which happened “after His resurrection.” It seems that “came out of the graves” is the same event as “bodies of the saints arose.” They wouldn’t arise before Him – He was the first of the First Fruits:

“But now is Christ risen from the dead, *and* become the firstfruits of them that slept. (1 Corinthians 15:20)

With the understanding presented in this study, the graves were opened at the time of Jesus’ death, and the saints came out of their graves sometime after His resurrection possibly very shortly after sunset. So, the graves were physically opened by the earthquake and remained open for perhaps only about four hours before the saints rose shortly after Jesus’ resurrection. This makes sense because it is Jesus, the life giver, who wakes the dead:

“Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his [the son of man, v27] voice,” (John 5:28)

This might also explain what Jesus was doing between His resurrection and when Mary saw Him by the tomb early in the morning. He raised the saints and then may have spent some time instructing them in what to say as they appeared to others in the city. These appearances would have ended by the time Jesus went to heaven to present Himself and these saints to the Father at the Waving of the Sheaf on Sabbath morning. That waving in heaven is what the typical ceremony on earth pointed to.

It was the seventh-day Sabbath, the Lord’s Day, when He ascended and took the resurrected ones with Him to present to the Father:

“Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men.” (Ephesians 4:8)

What gift did He give? He gave the gift of eternal life:

“For the wages of sin *is* death; but the gift of God *is* eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.” (Romans 6:23)

He was giving eternal life to those who previously didn’t have it; to people who had been dead in their graves. The graves were opened in the vicinity of the city of Jerusalem because they “went into the holy city” (Matthew 27:53). It is possible that some of the people who were raised were believers who had only recently died; people who had family and friends living who were asking questions about the events surrounding Jesus’ death. The raised ones may have visited their relatives, explained recent events and declared that Jesus was risen from the dead, which they could do because they had just seen Him. Their testimony would be convincing because they had just been raised from the dead themselves, and were appearing to people who had recently buried them. Also, they must have been raised early enough on Sabbath to have time to appear during the night hours and give their testimony to others, before ascending to heaven with Jesus as part of the Wave Sheaf.

Other than Moses who was raised from the dead, those raised with Christ were the first to be resurrected and taken to the ultimate Promised Land.

Isaiah suggests a resurrection of others in connection with Jesus’ resurrection:

“Thy dead *men* shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust: for thy dew *is as* the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead.” (Isaiah 26:19)

Isaiah Chapter 26 starts with a reference to “the land of Judah” and “a strong city” (v1) referring to Jerusalem. “Thy dead *men*” could be referring to inhabitants of Jerusalem and Judah.

Appendix 8. “He Saw and Believed”

(Referred to from page 89 of the text)

Earlier, we saw the likelihood that Jesus arose at the start of the Sabbath, and I suggested it may even have been when the Roman guard sealed the tomb signifying that He was in their power; that He would never bother anyone again. The Bible never says that the guards saw the resurrected Jesus, only that they were afraid of the angel that rolled away the stone (Matthew 28:2-4).

However, there is still a question, because the women came to the tomb first thing in the morning when an earthquake occurred and an angel opened the tomb in the presence of the soldiers (Matthew 28:2-4). The question is: if Jesus was raised several hours before that, how did He get out of the still-closed tomb through solid rock? The answer from scripture will explain how Jesus got out, why the women were “much perplexed” at not finding His body (Luke 24:4) and what John saw that made him believe.

Burial Customs

In the time of Jesus, burial procedures were well established by traditional religious custom. The Bible says that the common burial method was followed:

“And there came also Nicodemus, which at the first came to Jesus by night, and brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about an hundred pound weight. Then took they [Joseph and Nicodemus] the body of Jesus, and wound it in linen clothes with the spices, as the manner of the Jews is to bury.” (John 19:39-40)

This “manner of the Jews” involved extensive wrapping of the body with strips of cloth and a considerable amount of an aromatic mixture of myrrh and aloes between the layers. Specifically, John 19:40 says that they “wound it in linen clothes with the spices.” Myrrh is the scented gum from a tree which is at first oily, but later hardens as it is exposed to air.

“In preparing a body for burial according to Jewish custom, it was usually washed and straightened, and then bandaged tightly from the armpits to the ankles in strips of linen about a foot wide. Aromatic spices, often of a gummy consistency, were placed between the wrappings or folds. They served partially as a preservative and partially as a cement to glue the cloth wrappings into a solid covering.” (Merrill C. Tenney, *The Reality of the Resurrection*)

Both Jesus and Lazarus, when buried, would have looked much like mummies are portrayed, wrapped in long strips of cloth.

The story of the raising of Lazarus from the dead helps us:

“And when he thus had spoken, he cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth. And he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with graveclothes: and his face was bound about with a napkin. Jesus saith unto them, Loose him, and let him go.” (John 11:43-44)

A few things to observe from this description of Lazarus: he was bound hand and foot. That doesn’t mean his hands and feet were tied together; it means he was bound or wrapped in the traditional grave clothes similar to the description above, but right down to his hands and feet. So, his arms would have been wrapped also. His legs would have been wrapped separately from each other, or there was no way he would have come forth from the grave on his own. His face was covered by a separate napkin. As he

lay in the tomb you wouldn't have seen any part of his body, only its shape covered with all these cloth windings - much like an Egyptian mummy. And the dried myrrh and aloes would have hardened the strips of cloth into a rigid cast.

In some parts of the Middle East, this burial custom is still observed today. In this custom, the head was not wrapped like the rest of the body. A separate "face cloth" or "napkin" was placed over the face. John, describing Jesus' burial mentions this:

"And the napkin, that was about his head, not lying with the linen clothes, but wrapped together in a place by itself." (John 20:7)

The Shroud of Turin

We are going to come back to the linen clothes but first let's consider the Shroud of Turin. The Shroud of Turin is a single piece of cloth 14 feet long by 3½ feet wide portraying the image of a man who was said to have been wrapped inside it:

"Tradition claims that it wrapped Jesus' body in the tomb after His crucifixion. Photographic reversal of the lights and shadows of the stains on the shroud ... reveals a life-size front and back figure of a man who was crucified, scourged, lanced, and bloodily crowned." (*World Book Encyclopedia*, Vol. 17, p. 362.)

The idea, of course, is that when Jesus came to life, there was something like a blinding flash of light which left His image (as a negative) on the cloth. I am not trying here to establish the much-disputed authenticity of the Shroud of Turin but, to some degree, it fits the events. Let's take a look. When Jesus was dead, Joseph of Arimathea, who was a Pharisee, went to Pilate and requested and received Jesus' body, which was taken down and wrapped in a linen cloth which he had bought:

"He went to Pilate, and begged the body of Jesus. Then Pilate commanded the body to be delivered. And when Joseph had taken the body, he wrapped it in a clean linen cloth," (Matthew 27:58-59)

Out of respect, Joseph brought a clean linen cloth to use much like a body bag, to wrap Jesus' naked body and transport it to the tomb.

Mark 15:46 adds that it was "fine" linen. In John, it tells of someone else that came to help:

"And there came also Nicodemus, which at the first came to Jesus by night, and brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about an hundred pound *weight*. Then took they [Joseph and Nicodemus] the body of Jesus, and wound it in linen clothes with the spices, as the manner of the Jews is to bury." (John 19:39-40)

Joseph and Nicodemus would have carried the body to Joseph's tomb, with it wrapped in the sheet like a body bag. They possibly placed it on a stone slab in the tomb, opened the sheet, wound the body in strips of linen with the spices according to the burial custom and covered it again with the sheet.

Joseph had bought the fine linen cloth. Nicodemus had the spices and he would most likely have had the cloth strips also; everything needed for a burial. In those days, there were no funeral homes. You took care of burying your own loved ones. So, likely there was both the linen sheet and the linen winding cloths to go with the spices. Joseph already had the tomb in preparation for his own burial. Both Joseph

("a rich man of Arimathaea," Matthew 27:57) and Nicodemus ("a ruler of the Jews," John 3:1) were wealthy men in Jerusalem, and, if necessary, could have had servants to help.

If you were to have gone into the tomb in that short time between Jesus' burial and resurrection you would have seen a sheet covering the shape of a body, like a person lying in bed, with the sheet pulled up right over the head. Lifting the sheet, you would have seen what looked like an Egyptian mummy all wound up and with the face covered with a separate napkin so that none of the body was visible.

What Did Peter and John See?

The Bible says that John, when he went into the tomb, "saw and believed" (John 20:8). It seems that at the moment he saw, he believed something that he did not believe before that point. Previously, he did not believe or understand, or even hope that Jesus would be resurrected:

"For as yet they knew not the scripture, that he must rise again from the dead." (John 20:9)

He had been told by Mary:

"... They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulchre, and we know not where they have laid him." (John 20:2)

During Jesus' ministry they had been told what was coming:

"Then he took *unto him* the twelve, and said unto them, Behold, we go up to Jerusalem, and all things that are written by the prophets concerning the Son of man shall be accomplished. ... they shall scourge *him*, and put him to death: and the third day he shall rise again. And they understood none of these things: and this saying was hid from them, neither knew they the things which were spoken. (Luke 18:31,33-34)

In spite of all the reasons for unbelief, something he saw made him believe in the resurrection. And he must have seen something a lot more significant than a pile of grave clothes; it wasn't simply that the body was missing. If he saw just an empty tomb the body could have been stolen. He might then have been accused of stealing the body and his life could be in danger, which would have produced a different reaction.

What did he see? Something very significant, but we need a few other important details first.

"Then the same day at evening, being the first *day* of the week, [remember "first day of the week" is from the Hebrew, meaning more like one of the Sabbaths] when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace *be* unto you." (John 20:19)

"And after eight days again his disciples were within, and Thomas with them: then came Jesus, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, Peace *be* unto you." (John 20:26)

Jesus passed through the solid rock of the unopened tomb as easily as He did through closed doors to appear to His disciples.

Notice the doors were shut. Jesus must have passed through the walls. When the women arrived at the tomb they saw "that the stone was rolled away" (Mark 16:4). It was moved for them to get in; it did not

have to be moved for Jesus to get out. So, what did John and Peter see? Here is what it said they saw:

“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.” (John 20:6-7)

It says they saw “the linen clothes,” not that they saw an empty tomb, not that they saw His body missing. For some reason, there was an emphasis on the linen clothes. There must have been something very significant about that linen. Why was the handkerchief that had been over His face moved to a separate place away from the other grave clothes and why is it even mentioned? They entered the tomb to find Jesus’ body missing and, in the process of describing what they saw, John talks not about His missing body but about the grave cloths – there had to be something very remarkable about those grave clothes.

What John saw convinced him that there was no way the body could have been stolen. It does not say whether Peter believed or not. What did John see that made him believe? I believe He would have seen, essentially, an empty cast. The pieces of cloth mixed with myrrh and aloes would have dried and formed a somewhat rigid and perhaps not very flexible covering. And also, perhaps, he saw the image on the linen sheet that many now claim to be the Shroud of Turin. Again, I am not taking a side in the Shroud Controversy. It is just interesting to see how it could fit in.

Think about it. Think about the possibilities: If John had just seen an empty tomb – no body, no grave clothes - he would have thought the body was stolen. If he had seen the grave clothes scattered about or folded up, he would still have thought the body was stolen. The grave clothes are mentioned in a way that indicates there was something significant about their appearance that was enough to convince him that Jesus had risen. It would have been impossible to remove the body without either also taking the cloth windings with it or without first unwinding them from the body.

What if the napkin about the face was still in place? He would have thought the body was still there. Just like the rock was moved so the women could get into the tomb, the napkin that covered Jesus’ face was moved so that Peter and John could see that the cast was empty. Had it not been moved they would have not even known that He was gone, because the rigid linen cast would have still retained the form of His body. They likely would have been too respectful to move the cloths, and touching a dead body would have made them ritually unclean.

Let’s examine a little more closely the verses mentioning the clothes to look for clues as to what Peter and John saw. Luke describes what Peter saw and his reaction:

“Then arose Peter, and ran unto the sepulchre; and stooping down, he beheld the linen clothes (othonion, G3608) laid (keimai, G2749) by themselves (monos, G3441), and departed, wondering (thaumazo, G2296) in himself at that which was come to pass.” (Luke 24:12)

Some versions more accurately translate “othonion” to show that it referred, in this context, to the strips of linen used to wrap the body:

“But Peter got up and ran to the tomb; stooping and looking in, he saw the linen wrappings only; and he went away to his home, marveling at what had happened.” (Luke 24:12, *New American Standard Bible*)

“But Peter got up and ran to the tomb. He bent down and saw only the strips of linen cloth; then he went home, wondering what had happened.” (Luke 24:12, *The Net Bible*)

According to a footnote for the word “othonion” in *The Net Bible*:

“In the New Testament this term is used only for strips of cloth used to wrap a body for burial.”
(*The Net Bible*, footnote #31 for Luke 24:12)

An examination of the five verses that use the word “othonion” confirm this. It is translated as “linen clothes” in reference to what Jesus was wrapped in in each of Luke 24:12, John 19:40 and John 20:5-7. The verses that talk of Jesus being wrapped in “swaddling clothes” use a different original word.

The linen clothes were “laid” by themselves. The Greek verifies this. The English word “laid” was translated from the Greek word “keimai” (G2749), which can mean: “to lie, to be laid; to recline, to be lying, to have been laid down.” The word shows a person or a thing to be in a lying position as in:

“And this *shall be* a sign to you; ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying, (keimai, G2749), in the manger.” (Luke 2:12)

The similarity between the swaddling clothes, strips of cloth used to wrap a new born, and the burial clothes is interesting.

The wording suggests that the linen clothes were still in the position they were when Jesus lay in them.

Did “by themselves” (monos, G3441) mean the clothes were alone, that there were no other clothes around, or did it mean that there was something lacking that should have been, or previously was with them? The Greek word “monos” is translated, in the King James Version, as: “only” twenty-four times, “alone” twenty-one times, and “by (one’s) self” two times. The *Online Bible Greek Lexicon* gives the definition as: “alone (without a companion), forsaken, destitute of help, alone, only, merely.” When the clothes were described as being “by themselves” it was not saying that there were no other clothes around. The idea is that they were there without the body that they formerly were wrapped around – something was missing. This was such a strange sight indeed that Peter left “wondering in himself.”

“Peter’s *wondering* was not a lack of faith, but struggling in an attempt to understand what could have happened.” (*The Net Bible*, footnote #33 for Luke 24:12)

Peter was wondering (thaumazo, G2296) at the appearance of the winding cloth that Jesus body had been wrapped in. The Greek word “thaumazo is most often translated, in its 47 occurrences in the New Testament, as “marvel” (29 times) and “wonder” (14 times). It is much more than just thinking about something. If the disciples had believed the body to have been stolen, their reaction would have been much more one of fear (that they might be accused of it), than of wonder.

**The popular Christian song “He’s Alive” has a line of lyrics that says:
“But the winding sheet they wrapped Him in was just an empty shell.”**

Appendix 9. Abraham and Isaac and Three Days

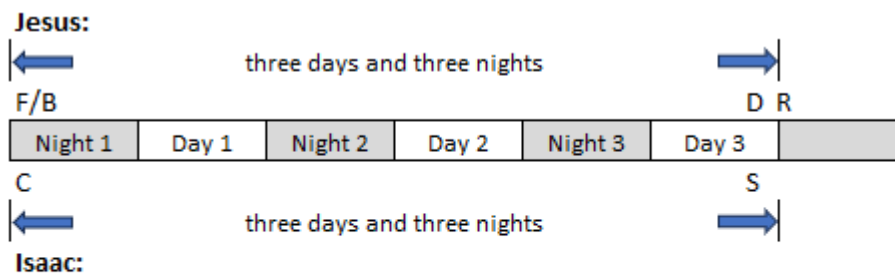
(Referred to from page 117 of the text)

We sometimes make a comparison between the three days and three nights that Jesus spent “in the heart of the earth” and the third day mentioned in connection with Abraham’s near sacrifice of his son Isaac:

“And he said, Take now thy son, thine only *son* Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of. And Abraham rose up early in the morning, and saddled his ass, and took two of his young men with him, and Isaac his son, and clave the wood for the burnt offering, and rose up, and went unto the place of which God had told him. Then on the third day Abraham lifted up his eyes, and saw the place afar off.” (Genesis 22:2-4)

We need to determine “the third day” from when? It cannot be from the near sacrifice of Isaac. The three days were before they arrived at Mt. Moriah. They must be counted from a previous event; logically from when the command was given to Abraham.

We can carefully examine the verses and line up the events in Genesis 22 parallel to the events during the three days and three nights in Jesus’ situation:



The Father and His Son Jesus: F = Feast at Simon's house; B = initial betrayal by Judas;

D = death; R = resurrection

Abraham and his son Isaac: C = command to offer his son; S = "sacrifice" of Isaac

We are not told the timing exactly but it seems reasonable to assume that Abraham was told what to do in the evening, made some preparations and left on his journey early the next morning; perhaps before his wife was awake and could question the purpose of his trip.

The evening and next morning when Abraham and Isaac left for Moriah would be the first of the three days. They travelled together “with two of his young men” (Genesis 22:3) and “then on the third day Abraham ... saw” (Genesis 22:4) so it was during the light part of the third day. They journeyed that day until they reached Mt. Moriah. They prepared for the sacrifice and, after Abraham’s hand was stayed, it was still light enough for Abraham to see the ram, take and sacrifice it instead of his son.

You may have heard the suggestion that the three days here supports that Jesus was three days in the tomb. But that does not fit with the story at all - in Abraham’s case the three days were before the almost-sacrifice, not after! What are we thinking? Abraham’s story actually supports the theory presented here. The diagram above shows that the betrayal by Judas was parallel to the command to Abraham to sacrifice Isaac. This would coincide with the point where Jesus’ Father delivered (removed His protection from) His Son allowing the Jewish leaders to accomplish their murderous designs.

Appendix 10. Original Words Investigated

Words for which the original Greek or Hebrew was investigated, often by examining other Biblical uses, allowing the Bible to define its own terms.

Page reference	Most correct word(s) in use	Word in original	Strong's number	Major translations as reported in Strong's with the number of uses
Hebrew words:				
59	after	achar	H310	after(454), follow(78), afterward(s)(46)
122	between	beyn	H996	between(6), betwixt(5), in(1)
69	sickle	chermesh	H2770	sickle (2)
17	heart	lebab	H3824	heart (231), mind (4), understanding (3)
58	morrow	mochorath	H4283	morrow(29), next day(2), next(1)
114	done	asah	H6213	do(1333), make(653), done(336)
69	weeks	shabuwa	H7620	week (19), seven (1)
58	Sabbath	shabbath	H7676	Sabbath(107), another(1)
58	Sabbath	shabbathon	H7677	rest(8), Sabbath(3)
Greek words:				
40	week	hebdomad	-	Not used in King James Version
81	had bought	agorazo	G59	buy, had or have bought etc(28)
100	rising again	anastasis	G386	resurrection(39), rising again(1)
29	raised up	anistemi	G450	arise (38), rise (19), rise up (16)
103	answered	apokrinomai	G611	answer (250)
28	destroy	apollumi	G622	perish(33), destroy(26), lose(22)
104	generation	genea	G1074	generation (37), time (2), age (2)
20	earth	ge	G1093	earth(188), land(42), ground(18)
78	be	ginomai	G1096	be (255), come to pass (82), be made (69)
82	was past	diaginomai	G1230	be past (1), after (1), be spent (1)
28	arouse, raise	egeiro	G1453	rise (36), raise (28), arise (27), raise up (23)
30	declare	endeixis	G1732	to declare (2), proof (1), evident token (1)
55	preparation	hetoimazo	G2090	prepare(29), make ready(10), provide(1)
37	day	hemera	G2250	day(355), daily(15)
137	wondering	thaumazo	G2296	marvel(29), wonder/-ed/-ing(14)
19	heart	kardia	G2588	heart(159), broken hearted(1)
27	destroy	kataluo	G2647	destroy(9), throw down(3), lodge(1)
100	set, laid	keimai	G2749	lie(9), be laid(6), be set(6) be appointed(1)
26	loose	luo	G3089	loose(27), break(5), unloose(3), destroy(2)
89	abide	meno	G3306	abide(61), remain(16), dwell(15)
19	midst	mesos	G3319	midst(41), among(6)
34	one	mia	G3391	one(62), first(8), a certain(4)
18	grave	mnemeion	G3419	sepulchre(29), grave(8), tomb(5)
136	by themselves	monos	G3441	only(24) alone(21), by themselves(2)
136	linen clothes	othonion	G3608	linen clothes(5)
55	preparation	paraskeue	G3904	preparation(6)
86	even	opse	G3796	in the end(1), even(1), at even(1)
87	even	opsios	G3798	even (8), evening (4), eventide (1)
55	day before the Sabbath	prosabbaton	G4315	the day before the Sabbath(1)
30	set forth	protithemai	G4388	purpose (2), set forth (1)
35	first	protos	G4413	first(84), chief(9), first day(2).
100	fall	ptosis	G4431	fall(2)
39	Sabbath	sabbaton	G4521	Sabbath day(37), Sabbath(22), week(9)
97	sign, miracle	semeion	G4592	sign(50), miracle(23), wonder(3), token(1)
31	to lift up, exalt	hupsoo	G5312	exalt (14), lift up (6)

Appendix 11. Old Bibles Show Jesus' Resurrection on a Sabbath

Here is a quotation from a source that provides a great deal of evidence from many old Bibles in a variety of languages that the resurrection was understood to have been on a seventh-day Sabbath and not Sunday.

“It is a historical fact that there are many old Catholic and Protestant Bibles around the world that describe the resurrection of Jesus ‘on a Sabbath morning’ or ‘on a Saturday morning’. In total, many millions of Bibles around the world have been written and printed with this statement. Many of them are available free of charge as facsimiles or online texts (see Historical Bibles). It is obvious that the old German Catholic Bibles were particularly good and clear. The scribes knew exactly what the Latin Vulgate and the Greek text did and did not say. Thus they do not speak of Sunday or the week, but of the Sabbath or Saturday. So while ‘Resurrection Sunday’ was preached orally in church services, the Resurrection Sabbath was found in many church Bibles in many countries. And this for over 1,800 years. The first printed book in the world (Gutenberg 1452), the first Bible printed worldwide in a national language (Mentelin 1466), the first printed Bibles in many countries and even the first Bible produced in the whole of America (Saur 1743) proclaim nothing other than the coming of the women to the tomb ‘on a Sabbath’ in the morning or ‘on a Saturday’ from the very beginning. No new doctrine is being spread here, not a sectarian doctrine, but rather ancient basic Christian knowledge that can be easily verified. Every Christian must know that God has expressed Himself extremely clearly in His Word (Bible) and has clearly named the resurrection day of Jesus with His name ‘Sabbath’ and not once or twice, but even 7 times, in the number of perfection.”

[\(https://bible-menorah.jimdofree.com/english/resurrection-on-sabbath/7-old-bibles/\)](https://bible-menorah.jimdofree.com/english/resurrection-on-sabbath/7-old-bibles/)

The original includes links to sources showing facsimiles of many early Bibles.

Is it not abundantly clear that there have been changes and cover-ups over the centuries to make it appear that the resurrection was on a Sunday? The resurrection of Jesus, the Lord of the Sabbath, according to the Word of God, was on a seventh-day Sabbath.

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Updates and Contact

Any new information (supplemental pages, updates etc) related to this study will be posted at <https://Jesus-resurrection.com>

The author of this book may be contacted via the contact information page at the above website.

The **YouTube channel** where any videos associated with this study will be added is: <https://www.youtube.com/@JesusSabbathResurrection>

Recommended Reading on the Character of God

Because the conclusion of this study is related so much to the character of God, some resources are included here to provide further information.

The website <https://characterofgod.org> has much good information on the character of God. See the "Resources" page for access to the books mentioned here and more.

Acts of Our Gentle God by Jay Schulberg

The glorious dawning of a new day on the character of God. Acts of Our Gentle God presents compelling evidence from the Bible to exonerate God of the charges that he is uncaring, judgmental, controlling, unfair, bad-tempered, or violent. The book demonstrates that the entire Bible, correctly understood, is in harmony with the definitive statement "God is love." (1 John 4:8) This book is a very good introduction to the concept of a non-violent God.

Agape by Adrian Ebens

Jesus said, "If you have seen me, you have seen the Father." How could this be possible? Could it be true that God is truly merciful, gracious and kind as revealed in the life of Jesus? Can this dilemma really be resolved while remaining faithful to the words of Scripture? This book is a key to unlocking this enigma. It deals with some challenging concepts such as:

- Why Command Stoning Sinners?
- The Law as a Mirror
- The Everlasting Covenant and the Ministration of Death

Biblical Forgiveness: Are There Two Types? by Ray Foucher

This study shows, by looking at the original words, that forgiveness is a two-part transaction. God forgives every sin; the question is whether or not we receive that forgiveness. There are actually different Greek words for forgiveness granted and forgiveness received. One is always unconditional (God is ever-merciful) while the other is always conditional (we chose or not to accept the freely-offered forgiveness).

Did God Kill Jesus Instead of Killing Us? By Kevin Mullins

Did Jesus really come to satisfy God's justice and wrath to save us from being killed by our heavenly Father? Have we been duped by Satan and others to frame the murder of Jesus on God in order to suppress our own wrath and enmity (hostility) towards God, free ourselves from our own guilty conscience, and to satisfy our own sense of justice?

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In the Heart of the Earth

the Sign of Jonah Reveals Two Hearts

**Has a secret code been hidden
“in the heart of the earth” for centuries -
a code that unlocks what is
“in the heart of God” towards you?**

Here is perhaps the ultimate code. Dark forces have worked for centuries and are still trying to keep these secrets hidden. This book uses the Bible itself to decipher some key phrases and discover their deepest meaning. Uncovered are gems of truth that you may not read of anywhere else. You will learn some amazing answers to questions regarding Jesus' resurrection:

Three Days and Three Nights - When did Jesus Himself say this period would start? Was it literally three days and three nights as He said? When did it end? Biblical clues point to a much different answer than tradition suggests.

In the Heart of the Earth - Just where was this located? The answer, from the Bible itself, is surprising and not what most have understood. The phrase will take on a much greater and personal significance for you.

He Saw and Believed - What did John see in the tomb to convince him Jesus had been raised when shortly before he understood grave robbers had been there first? Something unique about the grave clothes convinced him of the resurrection.

His Resurrection on the Lord's Day - Did the event of Jesus' Resurrection occur on His day - the seventh-day Sabbath (Matthew 12:8)? What are the implications for Sunday sacredness?

The Heart of the Matter - How far will God go in allowing us to have the desire of our hearts? Does He always allow us to have our free will? Ponder the most important questions about how the significance of “in the heart of the earth” applies to you personally.

Taking the Word of God as the final authority and using it as its own interpreter, the author explains that there is much more involved in the timing of the resurrection and a correct understanding of Matthew Chapter 12 than has been previously understood.

And, importantly, the conclusion points to the resurrection having occurred on the seventh-day sabbath, the day of which Jesus was and is the Lord - the true Lord's Day.