

On
What
Day of the Week
Was
Christ
Crucified?

A Look at How Sacred Occasions Have Been Turned
into Worldly Traditions

Burley W. Moore

**On
What Day
of the
Week
Was
Christ
Crucified?
A Look at How Sacred Occasions Have Been
Turned into Worldly Traditions**

All scripture references are taken from the KJV

Copyright © 2015
Burley W. Moore
All Rights Reserved

FOR INFORMATION CONTACT

**Burley W. Moore
2704 Fairway Drive
Greensboro, NC 27408
burleymoore@att.net
336-292-2408**

Please Visit Our Web Site At
www.covenantofgraceministries.com

Cover Design © by Morris Publishing

Printed in the United State by Morris Publishing ®
3212 East Highway 30
Kearney, NE 68847
1-800-650-7888

Table of Contents

Preface ...	4
Chapter 1: The Various Views ...	7
Chapter 2: My Personal Position ...	11
Chapter 3: The Institution Of The Lord's Supper ...	18
Chapter 4: Typology In General ...	20
Chapter 5: The Passover Lamb A Type Of Christ ...	28
Chapter 6: A Look At The Jewish Calendar ...	36
Chapter 7: A Proper Understanding Of The Passover Festivities ...	40
Chapter 8: The Hours Spent On The Cross ...	53
Chapter 9: Jesus Never Lied ...	64
Chapter 10: The Christian Observance Of The Resurrection ...	67
Chapter 11: Jesus And The Easter Bunny ...	71
Chapter 12: The Santa Claus Myth ...	73
Chapter 13: Halloween And The Devil ...	78
Chapter 14: Cremation And Culture ...	82
Final Thoughts: ...	93

Preface

There are several different views pertaining to which day of the week that Christ was crucified. Good Friday has traditionally been held as the day that His death took place. However, in this book, I want to examine some various views and share with you my reason for holding the position that I take. However, I'll not claim to have all the answers to all the questions. In fact, for various reasons, this matter of trying to prove the exact day of Christ's crucifixion is far more complicated than one can even begin to imagine. In this book, I'm not going to even attempt to address all the arguments nor try and explain all the problems that arise in trying to figure out the day of Christ's death. It's an endless debate that will continue to go on until Jesus comes again.

Problems dealing with the difference between Jewish time and Roman time is a big issue that cannot fully be satisfied in everyone's mind when we compare the four synoptic Gospels. They used different ways of measuring time when they wrote. Matthew, Mark, and Luke all used Jewish time. It appears that John generally used Roman time, especially in the time frame of Christ's death. Also, there are some who believe that by the time of Christ's crucifixion, the Jews were not practicing the observance of Passover as it was originally intended in the Book of Exodus. The truth of the matter is that we only have limited information recorded in the Word of God and there are details that are unanswered. God has given us what He wanted us to know and we must receive it by faith.

First of all, let me say that this subject should never be divisive among Christians. The most important thing that we can agree upon is the fact that Jesus, the Son of God, died in sacrificial atonement for the sins of His people regardless of what day of the week it was. My purpose in raising this question is to show how oftentimes, customs and traditions form our theology rather than the Word of God. However, even at best, I must admit that this is a difficult study because of all the circumstances involved.

There is no way that I'll ever be dogmatic about having the correct answer to this subject nor having all the answers to all the questions in the precious Word of God. But, it's an interesting subject that should get our attention. Again, I want to stress that the most important aspect of this book is the glorious resurrection of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Regardless of the day of His crucifixion, this one thing we know. "Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that he was buried, and that he rose the third day according to the Scriptures (I Cor. 15:3-4).

I'll admit without hesitation that Holy Scripture is the inspired, infallible, and inerrant Word of God. In the Bible we find analogies, parables, metaphors, and figurative speech in which are taught literal truths. In other words, there are some passages that must be taken literally and others are figurative, but although it is figurative, it conveys a literal truth. Prophetic passages in particular are filled with figurative language. However, the passage with which we begin this study has often been considered figurative, but my position is that Jesus is very precise in the language. For this reason, I consider it literally. Besides, as we compare Scripture with Scripture, we'll discover that the Bible is in full agreement and proves to be the best commentary on itself that can be found. If it wasn't for the Scriptures found in the opening chapters of this book, then perhaps, my position would be different.

For instance, at one time I considered a Wednesday crucifixion with a full seventy-two hour period from the crucifixion until the resurrection. However, that would mean that the resurrection would not have occurred on the "third day" as Jesus promised (Lk. 24:46). Anything over seventy-two hours would have become the fourth day and we know that He arose on the first day of the week three days and three nights after His crucifixion.

I've mentioned this simply to say that the Christian life should be an ongoing work of sanctification where there is spiritual growth and maturity. We are to be constantly growing in the grace and knowledge of God's Holy Word. That means, as we progress in our Christian life, there should be times of learning

Truth more clearly and applying that Truth to our daily existence. May God help us to remain teachable and never develop an attitude that we know everything there is to know. I still have so very much to learn. In fact, the longer I live, the more I realize that I know so very little. I'm not asking you to agree with me, but I am asking that if you differ with me, that you do so in love. If this book accomplishes no other purpose, I hope that it will stimulate you to study the Word of God for yourself and depend upon the Holy Spirit to reveal divine truth to your heart.

Because of all the factors involved, the greatest theologians differ on the day that Christ was crucified. There is no way that little ole me can claim to know the "perfect" answer to that question. However, as I've done in my other books, I'd like to share with you my personal study and sometimes my theological struggle in why I've come to the conclusion that I've reached pertaining to this subject.

Chapter 1

THE VARIOUS VIEWS

Before sharing my personal view on this subject, I believe that a good place to begin is by taking a brief look at some of the various views on the chronology of Christ's last week on earth before His crucifixion. There are at least five basic views that I want to mention. They are the Crucifixion on Friday View (Nisan 15 that is the most commonly accepted view), the Crucifixion on Friday View (Nisan 14 with two possible Passovers), the Crucifixion on Friday View (Nisan 14 when the Last Supper was not instituted at the Passover meal), the Crucifixion on Thursday View (Nisan 14), and the Crucifixion on Wednesday View (Nisan 14).

Crucifixion on Friday

Nisan 15

This view is the most commonly accepted view that places Jesus in the tomb for two nights, one full day, and a brief part of two days. Views may differ, but it generally believes that Jesus ate the Passover with His disciples on Friday evening at the beginning of Nisan 15, was crucified on Friday afternoon of Nisan 15, and then placed in the tomb before Nisan 16. He spent all night and all day in the tomb on Saturday, Nisan 16, and arose early on Sunday morning, Nisan 17. This view places the death of Christ on (what they claim to be) the Preparation of Passover (meaning the day before the Feast of Unleavened Bread), Nisan 15, rather than Nisan 14 which is specified in Scripture. Those that hold to this view also claim that the "high day" was a Passover Sabbath which also fell on the ordinary Saturday Sabbath in the year that Christ died. Actually, this view can be very confusing because it generally believes that Nisan 14 was the first day of the feast when the Passover lamb was to be killed. I once again remind you, not only of the discrepancy in dates, but also in the two nights, one full day, and a brief part of two days.

Crucifixion on Friday **Nisan 14 Early Passover**

This view is commonly held by those who believe that Friday was on Nisan 14 at the time the Passover lambs were being slain and that the Last Supper eaten the night before was a Passover. Such a view arises as a result of the difference between Jewish time and Roman time. It is often referred to as a two Passover view because on Jewish time, the Passover would have been eaten the night before His crucifixion, but on Roman time, it would have been eaten the evening following His crucifixion. However, there are several variations found by those who hold this view depending upon different factors and the calendar used.

Some hold to the 364 day solar calendar used by the Qumran community that is found in the apocryphal Book of Jubilees which believes that Jesus ate an early Passover meal on Tuesday and spent three days standing trial. This is also referred to as a two Passover View. The trouble with this view is that from Scripture, it is apparent that the trial of Christ was the night before His crucifixion and was not spread out over a three day period. Some believe that the four trials of Jesus could not have taken place that close together in the same night. However, we must remember that the trials took place within close proximity and the circumstances were most unusual.

This view often places the crucifixion on the day when the lambs were being slain, Nisan 14, and the Unleavened Bread Sabbath falling on the same day as the regular weekly Sabbath when they believe the actual Passover Meal was eaten on Nisan 15. Therefore, the days spent in the grave would be the same as the traditional view previously mentioned.

Crucifixion on Friday **Nisan 14 Last Supper**

This view states that Christ was crucified on Friday, Nisan 14, when the Jews were sacrificing their lambs for the Passover meal. It believes that the last supper eaten by Jesus the night before was an ordinary meal and not the Passover. It places the Unleavened Bread Sabbath on the same day as the weekly Sabbath. Needless to say, this concept follows Roman time and not Jewish time. As of now, I hope that you are beginning to see the difficulty in trying to study this subject. The majority of people never take the special Sabbaths, such as the two during the week of Unleavened Bread, into consideration when looking at the day of Christ's crucifixion. Besides, there is a difference in view as to what could be done on a special Sabbath. This is a matter that I'll address later. However, those that hold to this view believe that the days Jesus spent in the grave would be the same as the previous views.

Crucifixion on Thursday **Nisan 14**

Once again, views will vary on this position, depending upon Jewish time and Roman time. Those who do not hold to Jewish time believe that the Last Supper was either an ordinary meal or an early Passover meal. Ordinarily, the Passover meal would not have been eaten until the evening of the 14th, meaning after 6 PM. The Jewish day began in the evening at 6 PM whereas the Roman day began at 12 AM Midnight. Jesus was crucified on the 14th, after having instituted the Lord's Supper and eaten the Passover Meal with His disciples. This view places Christ's burial shortly after His death at 3 PM on Thursday the 14th. Friday the 15th began the Unleavened Bread Sabbath in the evening at 6 PM followed by the weekly Saturday Sabbath on the 16th. For this reason the women probably could not come back to the grave for two days with both days being a Sabbath.

This means that Christ was in the grave for three days and three nights. Actually, it amounted to a brief period of time between his death on the cross until he was buried and whatever time He arose after the calendar changed to Sunday allowing for the fulfillment of a “third day” resurrection. This is the only view that will give you “three days and three nights in the heart of the earth,” which is referring to Christ being in the grave for three days and three nights. There is no violation of prophecy to count part of a day as a day when numbering days. Such as, when Jesus said that he would rise on the “third day,” meaning that on the “third day” from His crucifixion, He would come out of the grave. There is no reason to count exact hours to fulfill this prophecy; however, there ought to be at least “three days and three nights” that can be accounted for. Once again, this is the only view that allows such accounting.

Crucifixion on Wednesday **Nisan 14**

This view places Christ’s body in the tomb by 6 PM and allows for a full 72 hours before His resurrection. There are unanswered questions with this view as to the preparation for the last supper and the day when the Passover had to be sacrificed. Those who hold this position, believe that Christ instituted the Lord’s Supper at an ordinary meal or else ate an early Passover meal with His disciples at which time He instituted this ordinance. The big problem with this view is that it makes Christ’s prediction of His resurrection being on the “third day” to take place on Saturday. We know that He arose on Sunday and that would have made it the fourth day. Also, the Unleavened Bread Sabbath would have been on Thursday and the ordinary weekly Sabbath on Saturday. With this being the case, why isn’t anything said about the women going to the grave on Friday and why did they wait unto Sunday?

Chapter 2

MY PERSONAL POSITION

From the previous chapter, I'm sure that you have a good idea from what I've already said as to my personal view on this subject. However, let me emphasize that I'm not going to be dogmatic in my position. I might be wrong, but I'm going to share with you how I see it. As you will discover in this study, there are problems with all the views that I've just presented. Some of the best theologians on planet earth will differ on this subject. It's no hair splitting issue, but one that I hope will take us into the Old Testament. Most people that I encounter in the church and even many commentators that I've read, leave out an in-depth look at the Old Testament. Let me remind you that the Old and New Testaments are in perfect agreement. It is all the Word of God!

Neither Scripture nor history records the specific year when the crucifixion of Christ occurred. Knowing the exact year is not all that important. That which is important is the fact that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, was virgin born, lived a sinless life, died for the atonement of our sins, was buried, and arose from the dead. It is the cardinal truths of God's Word upon which we must agree, those doctrines that are essential to salvation and the deity of Jesus Christ. Therefore, why even concern ourselves with the question that bares the title of this book?

My purpose is to get God's people into the Blessed Book and "Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth" (II Tim. 2:15). In those areas where the Bible is clear, we must learn to stand strong. But, in those areas where the Bible is unclear, we must not be so bullheaded or headstrong and demand that our view is the only view. From the previous chapter, it can be concluded that nobody has all the answers to all the questions, especially when it comes to the day of Christ's crucifixion.

In this chapter, I would like to begin by sharing my view "On what day of the week was Christ crucified?" Roman Catholic

tradition says that Friday was the day of the crucifixion. However, I personally believe that there is scriptural evidence, which proves that Christ was crucified on Thursday the 14th of Nisan, buried late that same afternoon before 6 PM, and arose before sunrise on Sunday three days later.

The Pharisees came to Jesus requesting a “sign” and Jesus responded by saying that the ONLY SIGN that He would give them was the “sign” of the prophet Jonah. After all the mighty works that Jesus had done, these Pharisees still wanted a “sign.” Just think about this. The ONLY SIGN that Jesus gave was “three days and three nights.” That ought to tell us something and it ought to get our attention. Let these words sink in!

“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. 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” (Matt. 12:38-41).

Before going any further, I think its best that we pause and look back at the Book of Jonah. “The prophet Jonas” that we read about in the New Testament is referring to no other than Jonah in the Old Testament. The spelling of his name is different in the New Testament, but it’s the same man. Without going into all the detail in the story of Jonah, let me simply say in reference to our subject, that he is well known for being swallowed by a “great fish” (also called a whale in Matt. 12:40) and then coming out of it alive “three days and three nights” later.

Scripture states that, “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)

To discredit the story of Jonah is to discredit Christ Himself Who used it to illustrate His marvelous victory over death and the grave. Just as God “prepared a great fish to swallow up Jonah,” He “prepared” Christ to be the “Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world” (Jh. 1:29). The word “prepared” means to appoint or ordain and it carries the idea of commissioning rather than creating. The “fish” was not created for the task of swallowing Jonah because it was already in existence. Likewise, Christ was pre-existent with the Father, but in coming to earth He was ordained to be the Supreme, Sacrificial, Substitutionary “Lamb slain from the foundation of the world” (Rev. 13:8).

Some like to question if Jonah died in the belly of the fish or not. Arguing that is not all that important. If he died, he didn't die immediately in order for him to witness and record what it was like in the fish's belly. Jonah being a type of Christ was the fact of him being in the “belly of the fish three days and three nights.”

The story of Jonah teaches us the consequences of a believer's disobedience, but it is also a “sign” (Matt. 12:39-41) of Christ being in His grave for “three days and three nights.” Like Jonah who took the place of death on behalf of the seamen, Christ took our place of death on the cross. Like Jonah who was buried in the fish's belly, yet fully conscious and spiritually active, Christ's body was in the borrowed “sepulcher” (Jh.19:41) of “Joseph of Arimathaea” (Jh. 19:38) while at the same time He was victoriously leading the saints out of earth's “captivity” (Eph. 4:8). Like Jonah who spent “three days and three nights” in the fish's belly and was vomited out alive, so did Christ spend “three days and three nights in the heart of the earth” and arose victorious over death” (Matt. 12:39-40).

Every person can identify with Jonah in his disobedience to God's will. Isaiah 53:6 reminds us that “all we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him (Christ) the iniquity of us all.” Only a believer who has been chastened of the Lord can identify with Jonah's misery and God's mercy. Regardless of whether you be

“lost” (Lk. 19:10) or “saved” (Rom. 10:9), we need to learn that disobedience toward God is a downhill course to despair. As in the conversion of a sinner, so it is with the restoration of a saint. We must come to the end of ourselves and realize that we are hopeless without Christ. God sometimes allows difficulties to come our way in order to get our attention and teach us that He is in control of all things. If you’ve never discovered that “salvation is of the Lord” (Jonah 2:9), then that’s the greatest discovery that you’ll ever make as the Holy Spirit reveals that truth to your heart and grants you “faith” (Eph. 2:8) to believe. Because Christ came out of the grave “three days and three nights” after His death on the cross, He can come into the life of a repentant sinner and make him a “new creature” (II Cor. 5:17).

The foundation blocks upon which I build this study are not built upon custom and tradition, but from the lips of Jesus while living upon earth as He spoke concerning His future resurrection. I’ve divided this into four foundation blocks.

FOUNDATION BLOCK #1

Jonah is clearly presented as an Old Testament type of Christ. Beginning in **Jonah 1:17** we read, “Now the Lord had prepared a great fish to swallow up Jonah. And **Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights.**”

FOUNDATION BLOCK #2

Jesus made reference to this Old Testament book of Jonah, in **Matthew 12:39-40**. “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.**”

FOUNDATION BLOCK #3

From **Luke 11:29-32**, we read, “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 queen of the south shall rise up in the judgment with the men of this generation, and condemn them: for she came from the utmost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and behold, a greater than Solomon is here. The men of Nineveh 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.**”

FOUNDATION BLOCK # 4

In the fourth gospel we discover the fourth foundation block for this study when Jesus spoke of His body being the TEMPLE that would be raised. It's recorded in **John 2:18-22**, “Then answered the Jews and said unto him, What sign showest thou unto us, seeing that thou doest these things? Jesus answered and said unto them, **Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.** 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. When therefore he was risen from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this unto them; and they believed the scripture, and the word which Jesus had said.**”

In order for Jesus to fulfill His promise made in the above mentioned passages, He had to stay in the grave for “**three days and three nights.**” If a person is going to literally believe that Jonah was swallowed by a great fish (which I personally firmly believe), then such a literalist must also believe that Jesus spent three days as well as three nights in the “heart of the earth,”

which is referring to His grave. Now, let me remind you that I believe Holy Scripture is filled with metaphors, symbolism, and figurative expression, especially when it comes to prophecy. These passages that I've just shared are prophetic. However, these are words that came from the lips of Jesus.

A sign of a false prophet is for the words that he spoke not to come true. I call your attention to the words of Deuteronomy 18:22, "When a prophet speaketh in the name of the Lord, if the thing follow not, nor come to pass, that is the thing which the Lord hath not spoken, but the prophet hath spoken it presumptuously: thou shalt not be afraid of him." Therefore, I believe that it's critical for this to be literal under the circumstances. One big argument against a literal "three days and three nights" is that any part of a day could be counted as a day. That is certainly true and I concur with that completely; however, there must be a time frame of "three days and three nights" in order to fulfill the prophecy of Jesus. Parts of three days and only two nights just doesn't cut it in my thinking.

Matthew tells us about the time following Christ's crucifixion and resurrection when some Old Testament believers were also raised. Matthew 27:51-53 says, "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."

Please notice, that at the same time of Christ's death the "veil of the temple was rent in twain," but it was not until after His resurrection ("three days and three nights" in the grave), that He brought some Old Testament saints to appear in the downtown streets of Jerusalem. Not only did Christ come out of the grave, but He proved Himself to the Old Testament believers who had long awaited His coming fulfillment of prophecy. I don't believe neither of these episodes that are associated with the death of Christ are symbolic, but literal, just as the "three days and three nights" in the grave.

It doesn't take a great mathematician to figure "three days and three nights." Simple math shows us that Friday until Sunday only amounts to one full day and two nights. Even according to the Jewish custom of counting days, it could have only been three days and two nights (counting only part of a day) which still falls short of being the literal "three days and three nights."

In order to fulfill the type of Jonah, and Christ being raised "in three days," it appears to me that Christ must have been crucified on Thursday rather than Wednesday or Friday. Besides, Jesus was God's Supreme Pascal Lamb, and the "Lamb of God" was to be slain on the day when the lambs were being killed for the Passover meal and eaten the same evening of the 14th. Christ not only was the fulfillment of the type of Jonah in His glorious resurrection, but also of the Passover Lamb in His death on the cross. A big question that concerns some people has to do with Jesus eating the Passover with His disciples. Did He institute the Lord's Supper during His last Passover Meal or was it some ordinary meal?

Chapter 3

THE INSTITUTION OF THE LORD'S SUPPER

From the wording of Scripture, it's apparent that Jesus ate the Passover meal with His disciples. In Matthew 26:17-19, it says, "Now on the first day of unleavened bread the disciples came to Jesus, saying, Where wilt thou that we make ready 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 keep the passover at thy house with my disciples. And the disciples did as Jesus appointed them; and they made ready the passover. Now when even was come he was sitting at meat with the twelve disciples; and as they were eating, he said, Verily I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me."

From these verses, let me remind you that often the Passover was considered to be a part of the Feast of Unleavened Bread. Following the Passover, the Feast of Unleavened Bread began immediately the next day. Therefore, it's generally agreed that when the term "Passover" was used that the Jews were often referring to the entire eight day period that included the Feast of Unleavened Bread. The observance of Passover was the first of those eight days followed by seven days of the Feast of Unleavened Bread.

Concerning whether Jesus ate the Passover Meal with His disciples will depend upon two things. First, did He eat it on Roman time or Jewish time? Secondly, if He ate it on Roman time, then was it permissible for Him to eat an early Passover before their traditional evening meal?

If the Jews were on Roman time, then they ate the Passover Meal on what we call Thursday evening with midnight that night becoming Friday. If they ate it on Jewish time, then they killed and ate the Passover Lamb on Thursday, after 6 PM, with the following day changing to Friday (24 hours later) at 6 PM. Tradition says that the Jews killed the Passover Lamb at 3 PM on the 14th and ate it in the evening. This works out if they were on Roman time, but means that Jesus either ate an early Passover

the day before or simply an ordinary meal on the 13th at which time He instituted the Lord's Supper.

I hope that you can see just how complicated this puzzle can be with all the unanswered questions. Personally, I'm not going to lean on the side of tradition as I weigh in on this issue. However, I want to constantly remind you that the most important issue is the fact that Christ died for the sins of His people, was buried, and arose from the grave in His own power to conquer sin, death, hell, and the grave. We must never lose focus on the REAL ISSUE and upon that we must agree!

According to Scripture, we are told that Jesus instituted the observance of the Lord's Supper during the Passover Meal. Matthew 26:26-29 tells us that, "And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed, and brake it; and he gave to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body. And he took a cup, and gave thanks, and gave to them saying, Drink ye all of it; for this is my blood of the covenant, which is shed for many unto remission of sins. But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom." There is no question in my mind that Jesus ate the actual Passover Meal with His disciples on Jewish time the night before His crucifixion at which time He instituted the Lord's Supper.

Chapter 4

TYOLOGY IN GENERAL

I'll never forget when typology came alive to me. I grew up in church, but had never heard of typology until I went to a Bible College. My Old Testament professor taught me truths to which I had never before been exposed. When I saw Jesus in the Old Testament, it lit the wick of my soul and I fell in love with the Old Testament like never before. I hope that it will do the same for you. For the sake of those who have never been exposed to typology in Scripture, let me say just a few words. I have no intention of going into detail and writing a lengthy discourse on typology; however, I want to address the subject as it relates to our study.

The interesting thing about typology is to see how beautifully the Old Testament Scriptures were fulfilled. God painted a wonderful picture through types and antitypes. Only the One and True Almighty God, Creator of heaven and earth, could write history before it ever occurred. Isaiah 46:9-10 says, "Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me, Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure."

We can go all the way back to the first book of the Bible and see the promise of Christ's coming in Gen. 3:15, "And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel." This passage from Genesis has become known as the **FIRST GOSPEL** or the **BEGINNING GERM** of all prophecy. It reveals the first promise and records the first prophecy pertaining to Christ's coming into the world as the God Man. Therefore, it's a major verse to remember as it introduces the coming of the Savior Who will conquer man's mortal enemy. "Enmity between" the "serpent" (Gen. 3:1) and the "woman" (Eve) speaks of the hostility that would exist between the forces of God

and the forces of Satan. The two seeds, “thy seed” (the serpent’s seed) and “her seed” (the woman’s seed), represents the division of humanity between the lost unregenerate and the saved regenerate. That division quickly manifested itself in the seed of Cain and the seed of Abel. The “seed” of the serpent is also clearly seen in the “many antichrists” (I Jh. 2:18) that will arise and do the bidding of the devil. The woman’s “seed” speaks of Christ, the incarnate Son of the Living God Who would enter the world by means of the virgin birth (Isa. 7:14, Matt. 1:23).

This very first Old Testament prophecy predicts a time when Satan will be crushed in defeat under the foot of the woman’s triumphant “seed.” When it declares that “it shall bruise thy head,” it’s referring of a conflict between the two seeds at which time Christ would suffer a bruised “heel” while Satan will be totally defeated. Which would you rather have, a bruised heel or a crushed skull? I believe you get the picture. Christ’s victory over Satan did not come without a high cost. When Jesus died upon Calvary, there appeared to be in the eyes of the world an apparent victory for the “serpent.” Christ was bruised in death, but He emerged the glorious Victor three days later. Paul, in his closing words found in the Book of Romans reminds us, “And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly” (Rom. 16:20). The absolute fulfillment of this prophecy will be the doom of Satan in the “lake of fire” (Rev. 20:10).

By a “woman” sin came into the world, but also by a “woman” the Savior of sin came into the world. By “woman” had come the “curse” of sin, but by a “woman” came He Who would bear our “curse” (Gal. 3:13). By “woman” paradise was lost, but by a “woman” a Man-Child was born to regain paradise for the repentant sinner. Galatians 4:4-8 puts it this way, “But when the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father. Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.”

Following man's sin in the Garden of Eden, God revealed His plan of redemption for depraved man. The birth of Christ was proclaimed to the very first couple and throughout the Old Testament, we have a promise of His coming with many types given along the way. These types began when Adam removed his "fig leaves" (Gen. 3:7) and was clothed with the "coats of skins" (Gen. 3:21) provided by God Himself from which animal blood was shed which taught that "without shedding of blood is no remission" (Heb. 9:22).

One of my reasons for writing this book is to show and arouse interest in both the Old and New Testaments. One will never understand the New Testament as he ought without studying the Old Testament. They both fit together like hand and glove. In the Old Testament, we discover the truth of Jesus Christ being taught through types and shadows.

Without an understanding of typology, a person will miss out on the beautiful doctrines that are portrayed in the Old Testament. Many doctrines that are taught in the New Testament are presented through Old Testament types. The word type does not actually appear in the KJV, but the meaning of what we're talking about is clearly evidenced. Types are divinely purposed illustrations that can be referred to as God's visual aids.

There are several passages of Scripture in the New Testament that directly refers to typology. Let's begin by looking at Romans 5:14, "Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come." Adam acted as the federal head of the human race when he sinned against God and brought the curse of death upon us all. When Christ came, He acted as the representative head that would appease the demands of the Father in paying the penalty of man's sin and making a broken relationship with God possible by His substitutionary death for us on the cross. Therefore, in this respect, Adam was the "figure" or type of Christ that would "come" and do for us what we could not do for ourselves.

Again, I call your attention to First Corinthians 10, verse 6, "Now these things were our examples, to the intent we should

not lust after evil things, as they also lusted.” And verse 11, “Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples; and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come.” The Greek word found in these two verses for “examples” and “ensamples” is better translated into English to be the word TYPE. Verse six is simply referring to those that died in the wilderness due to their unbelief to trust God and were chastened. It’s a picture (“example”) of those in the visible church of today that do not live up to their profession. Verse eleven continues along the same line by reminding us that the Israelites who sinned against God (v. 6-11) are an “ensample” or “examples” (TYPES) of what we have in the modern day church of today.

Colossians 2:17 refers to typology by saying, “Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ.” This verse is referring to how the ceremonial aspects of the Old Testament were “a shadow of things to come,” referring to how such things as the festivals and sacrifices only pointed to Christ. When Jesus came, He was the fulfillment of what the type prefigured. Therefore the type no longer had any value in meaning because Christ was the anti-type (fulfillment).

Bible typology is also explained in Hebrews 8:1-5, “Now of the things which we have spoken this is the sum; We have such 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 the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man. For every high priest is ordained to offer gifts and sacrifices; wherefore it is of necessity that this man have somewhat also to offer. For if he were on earth, he should not be a priest, seeing that there are priests that offer gifts according to the law: Who serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly things, as Moses was admonished of God when he was about to make the tabernacle: for See, saith he, that thou make all things according to the pattern shewed to thee in the mount.” These five verses describe the priesthood of Jesus that is far superior to any human priest.

The Old Testament tabernacle has been called, God’s house of symbols because of the way it was filled with typology. This is a

beautiful study unto itself; therefore, for the sake of time, let me simply say the types in the Old Testament were examples and shadows of that which was to come. In the Tabernacle, the brazen altar was a type of Calvary where Christ died, the laver was a type of the Word of God, the altar of incense was a type of prayer, the table of shewbread was a type of Christ the Bread of Life, the golden candlestick was a type of Christ the Light of the World, and the ark of the covenant covered with the mercy seat was a type of God's throne.

A type is merely an Old Testament "shadow" of the real object that it prefigures in the New Testament. The object that is prefigured is called the antitype and fulfills the Old Testament type. There can be no "shadow" without a real object, but at the same time the "shadow" is not the real object, only an imperfect representation of the real object. Therefore, an Old Testament "shadow" is not the real object, but something that foreshadows and illustrates the real object which appears in the New Testament. For instance, if you turn off the lights and hold your hand between a candle and a wall, then you will cast a "shadow" of your hand against the wall. The "shadow" of your hand is like an Old Testament type as it reveals only an impression of your real hand which we would call the antitype.

Types that we find in the Old Testament can be likened to picture language similar to what we have portrayed in the New Testament ordinance of Baptism and the Lord's Supper. Jesus often used parables as word pictures to illustrate the spiritual truth that He taught. In the Old Testament, God used types as object lessons to prefigure that which would come to pass. A study of typology simply shows us that the New Testament is enfolded in the Old Testament and that the Old Testament is unfolded in the New Testament. It's been said that the New is in the Old contained and the Old is by the New explained. For instance, it's impossible to understand Leviticus without Hebrews, Daniel without Revelation, and the Passover without the crucifixion. The study of typology proves beyond question that the only real author of Holy Scripture is the Holy Spirit (II Pet. 1:21).

Old Testament types can be found in either a person, thing, event, or ceremony. A general type can be found in such things as the “coats of skin” (Gen. 3:21) that typifies salvation, or Noah’s “ark” (Gen. 6), Jacob’s “ladder” (Gen. 28), or the golden “candlestick” (Ex. 25:31) in the Tabernacle which all typifies Christ. A human type prefigures some aspect of Christ, such as the way “Adam” prefigured the headship of Christ, “Abel” prefigured the death of Christ, “Noah” prefigured the work of Christ, “Melchizedek” prefigured the priesthood of Christ, “Moses” prefigured the role of Christ as prophet, and “David” prefigured the role of Christ as King. Many of these types in the Old Testament are very prominent and easily recognized while others lie beneath the surface and are not as evident.

That which is recorded in the Old Testament is not only historically accurate, but theologically and spiritually significant. One of the great strengths of the Old Testament is that much of its teachings are done through typology. A biblical type (illustration) is simply an Old Testament picture of a New Testament truth. I remind you, that we refer to the Old Testament picture as the type and the New Testament fulfillment as the anti-type. Joseph, the son of Jacob, in the Old Testament teaches us many truths about Christ in typology. Many believe that of all the individuals in Scripture that he gives us more pictures (types) of Christ than any other. Without naming them all, I’ll only share a few aspects of Joseph’s life that will also picture the life of Christ.

*Joseph was loved by his father (Gen. 37:3) just as Christ was loved by His Father (Mt. 3:17)

*Joseph’s brethren hated him, and did not believe him (Gen. 37:4-5) just as Christ’s brethren treated Him (Jh. 15:24, 7:5)

*Joseph’s brethren rejected his reign (Gen. 37:8) and conspired against him (Gen. 37:23) just like the Jews did Christ (Lk. 19:14, Matt. 27:1)

*Joseph's enemies sat down and watched him suffer (Gen. 37:25) the same way that the enemies of Christ did Him (Matt. 27:36)

*Joseph was sold for silver (Gen. 37:28) just like Jesus was sold out for silver (Mat. 26:15)

*God used Joseph's suffering to save his family from starvation (Gen. 50:21) just like God used the suffering of Christ to save His people from their sins (Rom. 5:8)

After speaking in regards to typology, I want to conclude this chapter and prepare for the next, by pointing out some comparisons between the Old Testament Passover Lamb and the sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

*When the Passover was first instituted, if the lamb did not die, then the firstborn would (Ex. 12:3, 20) just as it reminds us that the wages of sin is death and Jesus died for us (Rom. 6:23)

*Only a slain lamb could avail (Ex. 12:6) just as only a crucified Christ could save (I Cor. 2:2)

*The lamb had to be without blemish (Ex. 12:5) just as Christ was a lamb without blemish and without spot (I Pet. 1:19)

*The lamb's blood had to be shed (Ex. 12:7) like the blood of Christ on the cross (Jh. 19:34)

*The lamb's blood had to be sprinkled (Ex. 12:22) just as the blood of Christ (Heb. 10:22)

*No bone of the lamb was to be broken (Ex. 12:46) just as a bone in the body of Christ was not to be broken (Jh. 19:36)

*Those who were redeemed by the lamb were to be sanctified to the Lord (Ex. 13:2) just like all who have been washed in the blood of the Lamb are set apart to live like they have been bought with a price (I Cor. 6:19-20)

Last, but not least, I remind you that Jonah was a type of Christ in the fact that he was in the belly of the whale for “three days and three nights.” Likewise, Jesus was in the “heart of the earth” (grave) for “three days and three nights.”

Chapter 5

THE PASSOVER LAMB A TYPE OF CHRIST

After looking at typology in general from the previous chapter, we now take a look at how the Old Testament Passover Lamb was a type of Jesus Christ. Remember, it was John the Baptist that looked at Jesus and said, “Behold, the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world” (Jh. 1:29). In First Corinthians, chapter five, verse seven, we read, “Purge out therefore the old leaven, For even Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us.”

With these New Testament verses in mind, let’s take a brief look at how the Old Testament Passover Lamb was a type of Christ. The beautiful picture is painted in the book of Exodus where the institution of the Passover is inaugurated as a “memorial” to Israel’s deliverance from Egypt and marked her birth as a nation.

“And the LORD spake unto Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, saying, This month shall be unto you the beginning of months: it shall be the first month of the year to you. Speak ye unto all the congregation of Israel, saying, In the tenth day of this month they shall take to them every man a lamb, according to the house of their fathers, a lamb for an house: And if the household be too little for the lamb, let him and his neighbour next unto his house take it according to the number of the souls; every man according to his eating shall make your count for the lamb. Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year: ye shall take it out from the sheep, or from the goats: And ye shall keep it up until the fourteenth day of the same month: and the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it in the evening. And they shall take of the blood, and strike it on the two side posts and on the upper door post of the houses, wherein they shall eat it. And they shall eat the flesh in that night, roast with fire, and unleavened bread; and with bitter herbs they shall eat it. Eat not of it raw, nor sodden at all with water, but roast with fire; his head with his legs, and with the purtenance thereof. 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. And thus shall ye eat it; with your loins girded, your shoes on your feet, and your staff in your hand; and ye shall eat it in haste: it is the LORD'S passover. For I will pass through the land of Egypt this night, and will smite all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment: I am the LORD. And the blood shall be to you for a token upon the houses where ye are: and when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you, when I smite the land of Egypt. And this day shall be unto you for a memorial; and ye shall keep it a feast to the LORD throughout your generations; ye shall keep it a feast by an ordinance for ever" (Ex. 12:1-14).

When I read and study the story of how God instituted the Passover, I cannot help but recall the words of the old song, ***When I See the Blood***. Listen carefully to the words of the songwriter as he points us to Christ.

"Christ our Redeemer, died on the cross, Died for the sinner, paid all His due; All who receive Him need never fear, For He will pass, will pass over you.

Chiefest of sinners Jesus can save, As He has promised so will He do; O sinner, hear Him, trust in His word, Then He will pass, will pass over you.

O what compassion, O boundless love, Jesus hath power, Jesus is true; All who believe are safe from the storm, O He will pass, will pass over you.

When I see the blood, When I see the blood, When I see the blood, I will pass, I will pass over you."

If you have placed faith in Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sin, then you can have assurance that He will pass over you

in judgment. Only the precious shed blood of Calvary's Lamb can wash our filthy vile ugly sin away and make it "as white as snow" (Isa. 1:18) in His sight. Another song writer asked and answered the question, "What can wash away my sin? Nothing, but the blood of Jesus." The psalmist reminds us that when our sin is forgiven that "as far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us" (Ps. 103:12). For those who do not know Christ in the forgiveness of sin, then judgment day is coming just as surely as God's judgment fell upon the firstborn in Egypt and Pharaoh's army in the Red Sea.

As we begin thinking about Exodus, chapter twelve, we need to note that the Jews had two calendars, a religious as well as a civil calendar. Verse two lets us know that the Passover marked the "beginning of months" for their religious year. In observance of this occasion, a pascal "lamb" was to be found in "every ... house" showing that salvation is a personal matter and that "every man" must exhibit faith in the "blood" to be saved. The Passover Feast was a family affair just like our worship today needs to be a family affair as we forsake not the "assembling of ourselves together" (Heb. 10:25). Too many churches are guilty of dividing families rather than uniting them by not having family orientated activities and by unnecessary meetings that take people out of their homes. Even during Sunday services, children and youth are pulled out of cooperate worship and fail to be part of what it means to congregate together. With that being said, I'll get off my soapbox and begin a list of how the "passover ... lamb" became a lovely type of Christ thus giving us one of the best pictures of Christ's redeeming work.

(v. 2) Just as the institution of the "passover" changed Israel's calendar, the coming of Christ into one's life changes that person into a "new creature" (II Cor. 5:17)

(v.3) Like the "lamb" that was chosen before it was slain, Christ was "foreordained before the foundation of the world" to be our sacrifice for sin (I Pet. 1:20)

(v.3) The “lamb” was tested and watched from the 10th to the 14th day of the month to make sure it was a satisfactory sacrifice, just like Christ Who was “tempted as we are yet without sin” (Heb. 4:15)

(v.5) This “lamb ... without blemish” is a picture of the perfect and sinless Christ Who is declared to be “without blemish and spot” (I Pet. 1:19)

(v.5) Like the “lamb” that was to be taken of full age from “the sheep or from the goats,” Christ was taken from the flock of human society by becoming “flesh” and dwelling “among us” before dying in the prime of life (Jh. 1:14)

(v.6) The “lamb” was to die at a definite time on the “14th day of the month,” just like Christ Who proclaimed before going to the cross that “the hour is come” (Jh. 17:1)

(v.6) Not only did the “whole assembly ... of Israel ... kill” the “lamb,” but they “crucified” the Lord of Glory by “wicked hands” (Acts 2:23)

(v.7) Similar to the way the lamb’s “blood” was applied to “the two side posts and on the upper door post of the houses,” so was the blood of Christ shed on the cross for the “remission” of sins (Heb. 9:22)

(v.13) The applied “blood” of the “lamb” to the “houses” caused the death angel to “pass over” them, just as the applied blood of Christ secures us from God’s judgment and guarantees that “no man is able to pluck” us out of God’s Hand (Jh. 10:28)

The remaining verses in Exodus, chapter twelve, shows us that the eating of the Passover also involved the Feast of Unleavened Bread (Ex. 12:15-20). For seven days during the Passover season, nothing could be eaten with leaven. Leaven is yeast and in Scripture it is a picture (type) of sin that teaches us the

principle of evil. It is a silent worker that corrupts and contaminates and can only be dealt with by “fire” which is speaking of judgment (I Cor. 5:6-8). If any Israelite ate “leaven” during this seven day period of time, then he was cut off from fellowship with his people.

Herein, is another picture that reminds us if believers fall into sin they also fall out of fellowship with God. Many people come to church for every reason imaginable, except to be fed the “unleavened” Word of God. Although, leaven bread may taste better than unleavened to the average person, the Word of God is our unleavened bread that nourishes the spiritual man and gives us the nourishment that we need. The question is, do you have a spiritual appetite for God and His Word? Do you “hunger and thirst after righteousness” (Matt. 5:6)?

Faith in the lamb’s blood delivered Israel from death (Ex. 12:21-28). “Hyssop” represents faith and that is the only way the blood of Christ can be applied to one’s heart. Only a dead lamb could satisfy God’s requirements. Despite how good the life of Jesus was, man is not saved by His example, but by His death. Christ shed His blood for our redemption, but it is ineffective until the individual sinner knows the personal application to his soul through faith in Christ Who died for him, was buried for him, and arose for him. It’s not enough to merely know about Christ, but His blood must be personally realized by “faith” (Rom. 3:25) which is a “gift” (Eph. 2:8) of God’s grace. Killing a lamb was not enough, the blood had to be properly applied. After the blood was shed, it had to be applied to the door by faith, believing and trusting God at His Word.

The only way the Israelites could escape the final plague of Egypt was to obey the Word of God and apply the lamb’s blood to the doorpost (Ex. 12:29-42). The tenth plague claimed the life of all the firstborn throughout the land just as God had warned that it would. Lest we think God is cruel, remember that He Who creates life has the authority to take it. Besides, the contest with Pharaoh didn’t begin so harshly, but only amounted to this as a result of his hardened heart (Ex. 10:20). Finally, Pharaoh gave up

and told Moses and Aaron to get the children of Israel out of Egypt.

As we come to the close of the twelfth chapter of Exodus, further instruction was given concerning the ordinance of the Passover (Exodus 12:43-51). Only those who identified themselves by faith with the people of God could take part in the Passover. Scripture says that “no uncircumcised person” could participate in the feast because they were considered a “stranger.” Herein is a reminder that salvation is by birth (Jh. 3:3-8) into the “household of faith” (Gal. 6:10) and God has no strangers in His family. The Old Testament rite of “circumcision” pointed to our spiritual “circumcision” in Christ (Col. 2:11-12). If you’ve never been spiritually circumcised by the Holy Spirit, then you do not belong to Christ. The closing verse of this chapter gives us a reminder concerning the “passover ... lamb” (Ex. 12:46). The feast could not be eaten out of the house, indicating that the life and blood of Christ cannot be separated. Jesus was fully God and fully Man Who shed His blood upon the cross and in full agreement with the pascal type, not a “bone” of His body was “broken” (Jh. 19:36). The key to understanding the Passover is the “lamb” and John the Baptist made it perfectly clear that Christ was the fulfillment (antitype) of this Old Testament type. (Jh. 1:29,36).

In looking at the sequence of activities surrounding the Passover, let’s look back at the triumphant entry of Jesus into Jerusalem prior to His crucifixion. According to the way I count, He was in Bethany “6 days” (Jh. 12:1-11) before the Passover. The “next day” (Jh. 12:12-15) He rode into Jerusalem on a little “colt” before the Hosanna shouting and garland waving crowd. This puts the day on Saturday, the Jewish Sabbath. Some may object to this selection of day by saying that Jesus would not have done this on the Jewish Sabbath.

Jesus never broke any of the Old Testament Scriptures, but rather came to fulfill them (Matt. 5:17). Many man-made laws, which is called the Oral Law of Man, were added to the Mosaic Law. These oral laws were not biblical and consisted of such things as limiting how many steps one could walk on the

Sabbath. In fact, Jesus opposed such laws and stood against them by saying that, “The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath. Therefore the Son of man is Lord of the sabbath” (Mk. 2:27-28). Jesus angered the Jews when He did such things as plucking “the ears of corn” (Lk. 6:1-10) from the field on the Sabbath, or when he “healed” (Lk. 14:3-4) the sick on the Sabbath or spoke about getting the “ox” (Lk. 14:5) out of the “pit” on the Sabbath. Riding a donkey or eating grain from a field on the Sabbath were man-made laws and not restricted by God (Matt. 12:1-8).

On the tenth day of Nisan the Passover lamb was chosen and observed to make sure it was without flaws and defects (Ex. 12:3-6). Then, on the fourteenth of Nisan the lamb was eaten in the evening and Jesus was crucified the following morning (Jewish time). The next day, Nisan 15th was the special Sabbath of Unleavened Bread, followed by the regular Saturday Sabbath. In the year that Christ was crucified, that Saturday (Nisan 16) happened to also be the same day that the observance of Firstfruits occurred. This means that at the conclusion of this observance, “Christ the firstfruits” (I Cor. 15:20,23) arose from the grave. Sometimes, the observance of firstfruits has been referred to as The Feast of Firstfruits because of how it was included in the weeklong Feast of Unleavened Bread. Firstfruits is also known as the Feast of Omer or the Wave Sheaf Offering (Lev. 23:9-12).

The Israelites were expected to bring an offering from the first part of their crops at harvest time. It was their recognition that the entire harvest belonged to the Lord. Firstfruits was known as the beginning of the harvest at which time a sheaf (omer) of barley or simply the first ripped grain was waved before the Lord. This was a symbolic gesture that dedicated the coming harvest unto Him. Everything about the Passover, including the seven day Feast of Unleavened Bread, and the observance of Firstfruits did not happen by coincidence. It was all a fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy.

Jesus Christ was “the first that should rise from the dead” (Acts 26:23) never to die again. Because He arose, lost sinners

that are born again will also be raised to new life in Christ and someday even bodily will be clothed in immortality (Rom. 6:4, Eph. 2:6, I Cor. 15:35-58). When Jesus returns to earth, He will raise the Christian up in a resurrection like unto His own. The lost will be raised to condemnation, but the redeemed to final glorification. In coming out of the grave, Jesus was our Firstfruits that guarantees a glorious getting up morning for the child of God.

Being the divine Passover Lamb, Jesus was slain on the Day of Passover and then He arose when the observance of firstfruits was completed. Therefore, the wave offering and the resurrection are beautifully linked together. The bodies of the saints that appeared in Jerusalem after Christ's resurrection attests to the fact that Christ is the firstfruits of the harvest to come.

As we speak of Christ being the Supreme Pascal Lamb and dying on the cross the day when all the Passover lambs were being slain, I must also remind you that Jesus was the antitype of Jonah being in the belly of the whale for "three days and three nights." Jesus referred to Himself as the fulfillment of that Old Testament type. Just as Jonah was "three days and three nights" in the great fish, so would Jesus be "three days and three nights" in the heart (grave) of the earth. Christ is a beautiful antitype of both the sacrificial Passover lamb and Jonah in the belly of the whale.

Chapter 6

A LOOK AT THE JEWISH CALENDAR

A look at the Jewish calendar is necessary in order for us to have a clear understanding of our subject. Calendar divisions are based on the movements of the earth and the regular appearances of the sun and moon. A day is the average time required for one rotation of the earth on its axis while a year is simply one revolution of the earth around the sun. This is called a solar year and consists of 365 days. The arrangement of a seven-day week was derived from the Judeo Christian tradition of resting from labor every seventh day.

The ancient Hebrew calendar has remained unchanged since its early history. It was the official calendar of the Jews for their religious observances. The Jewish calendar is lunisolar, which means that it is based on lunar months of twenty-nine and thirty days alternating with an extra month every three years on the basis of a nineteen-year cycle.

The order of the Jewish day began in the EVENING and was based on the story of creation as found in the first chapter of Genesis where the “evening and morning” are named in that sequence. The Jewish day began at SUNSET and was counted from SUNSET TO SUNSET. Contrary to this was the Babylonian day which began at SUNRISE and the Roman day which ran from MIDNIGHT TO MIDNIGHT. Actually, the very ancient Jews determined the end of each day and the beginning of another by the appearance of three stars of the second magnitude.

The Jews did not name the days of the week, but rather numbered them. Their days were subdivided into hours and watches. As early as King Hezekiah who lived from 715 BC to 687 BC, the Jews made use of sundials. When Jesus spoke of “twelve hours in a day” (Jh. 11:9), He was referring to the hours of daylight. The early Hebrews divided the nights into three watches called the “beginning” (Lam. 2:19), the “middle” (Judges 7:19), and the “morning” (Ex. 14:24). These watches ran

from, what we would call, about sunset to 10 PM, from 10 PM to 2 AM and from 2 AM to sunrise.

The Romans on the other hand divided the night into four watches to which Jesus referred in Mark 13:35 as “even ... midnight ... cockcrowing ... morning.” These watches terminated respectively at what we would call 9 PM, midnight, 3 AM, and 6 AM. The end of each watch was recognized by the sounding of a trumpet. Some believe that the trumpet call was known as the “cockcrowing” that signaled the end of the third and beginning of the fourth watch. If this be the case, then the “cockcrowing” was about three AM and it happened to be the time when Peter denied his Lord three times.

Matthew 26:34, 69-75, records when, “Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, That this night, before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice Now Peter sat without in the palace: and a damsel came unto him, saying, Thou also wast with Jesus of Galilee. But he denied before them all, saying, I know not what thou sayest. And when he was gone out into the porch, another maid saw him, and said unto them that were there, This fellow was also with Jesus of Nazareth. And again he denied with an oath, I do not know the man. And after a while came unto him they that stood by, and said to Peter, Surely, thou art one of them; for thy speech betrayeth thee. Then began he to curse and to swear, saying, I know not the man. And immediately the cock crew. And Peter remembered the word of Jesus, which said unto him, Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice. And he went out, and wept bitterly.”

The early Israelites named their months according to seasonal connotations that they borrowed from the Canaanites or Phoenicians. For example, their month NISAN means month of ripening ears, IYYAR means month of flowers, and TISHRI means month of perennial streams. (note the synchronized Jewish calendar at the close of this chapter) The Jewish calendar contained two concurrent years. The SACRED YEAR was instituted by Moses after the Exodus from Egypt, and it began in

the Spring with Nisan. The CIVIL YEAR began in the Fall of the year with the month Tishri. For that reason the Jewish civil calendar is often referred to as Tishri-Years and the Jewish religious calendar referred to as Nisan-Years. Their civil calendar began in September around the Autumn Equinox and their religious calendar began in March around the Spring Equinox. Their New Year's day on the civil calendar is called Rosh Hashanah, meaning "head of the year," and it began the Fall Feasts of Israel.

Beginning in Nisan on the 14th day came the PASSOVER at which time the Jews began their religious calendar with the most special of all their celebrations. It was observed by eating the paschal lamb to remind Israel of their departure from Egyptian bondage. It was also a day of preparation for the following week of festival. The day after the Passover, running from the 15th through the 21st of Nisan, was the FEAST OF UNLEAVENED BREAD. On the 15th, there was a Sabbath of "holy convocation." On the 16th was the FIRSTFRUITS offering, and then on the 21st was another "holy convocation."

When it comes to the astronomical calculations concerning the day of Christ's crucifixion, there are various equations and variations that can enter into play. However, it is not beyond the realm of possibility that any of the views that I've presented in this book could be correct. The question that I ask for your consideration is dealing with the words of Jesus regarding the foundation blocks that I present in this book. On What Day of the Week was Christ Crucified? Regardless of your conclusions, we can agree that He was the Supreme Sacrificial Lamb of God Who atoned for the sins of His people and appeased the wrath of God against us.

THE JEWISH CALENDAR

<u>SACRED</u>	<u>CIVIL</u>	<u>MONTH</u>	<u>SEASON</u>
1	7	Nisan	Mar.-Apr. The beginning of Barley Harvest
2	8	Iyyar	Apr.-May Barley Harvest
3	9	Sivan	May-June Wheat Harvest
4	10	Tammuz	June-July
5	11	Av	July-Aug. The ripening of Grapes, figs, & olives
6	12	Elul	Aug.-Sept. Vintage Begins
7	1	Tishri	Sept.-Oct. Plowing & Early Rains
8	2	Heshvan	Oct.-Nov. Sowing of Wheat & Barley
9	3	Kislev	Nov.-Dec.
10	4	Tevet	Dec.-Jan. Rainy Winter Months
11	5	Shevat	Jan.-Feb. New Year for Trees
12	6	Adar	Feb.-Mar. Blooming of Almonds
13	Adar Sheni	INTERCALARY MONTH	

Chapter 7

A PROPER UNDERSTANDING OF THE PASSOVER FESTIVITIES

With a proper understanding of the Passover festivities, we can better learn the day of Christ's crucifixion. The Passover meal was incorporated into the Feast of Unleavened Bread thus making the two celebrations a total of eight days in length. Scriptural reference to this is found in Exodus 12:16-20, and also in Leviticus 23:1-14. From the book of Exodus, we read, "and in the first day there shall be a holy convocation, and in the seventh day there shall be a holy convocation to you; no manner of work shall be done in them, save that which every man must eat, that only may be done of you. And ye shall observe the feast of unleavened bread; for in this selfsame day have I brought your armies out of the land of Egypt: therefore shall ye observe this day in your generations by an ordinance for ever. In the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month at even, ye shall eat unleavened bread, until the one and twentieth day of the month at even. Seven days shall there be no leaven found in your houses: for whosoever eateth that which is leavened even that soul shall be cut off from the congregation of Israel, whether he be a stranger, or born in the land. Ye shall eat nothing leavened; in all your habitations shall ye eat unleavened bread."

From Leviticus, the third book of the Pentateuch, the Bible says, "Concerning the feasts of the Lord, which ye shall proclaim to be holy convocations, even these are my feasts. Six days shall work be done: but the seventh day is the sabbath of rest, a holy convocation; ye shall do no work therein: it is the sabbath of the Lord in all your dwellings. These are the feasts of the Lord, even holy convocations, which ye shall proclaim in their seasons. 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 feast of unleavened bread unto the Lord: seven days ye must eat unleavened bread. In the first day ye shall have a 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 a holy convocation: ye shall do no servile work therein. And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, 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 first fruits of your harvest unto the priest: 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. And ye shall offer that day when ye wave the sheaf a lamb without blemish of the first year for a burnt offering unto the Lord.”

The Passover meal was always on the “fourteenth day” of Nisan; although, the particular day would vary depending on the position of the new moon. Keep in mind that according to scripture, this meal was eaten in the evening of the “fourteenth.” Also, remember that the Jewish computation of time ran from SUNSET TO SUNSET. For the Jew, their new day began in the “evening” rather than in the “morning.” As I point out in this book, it is my belief that Jesus ate the actual Passover meal and not some preliminary meal at which time He instituted the Lord’s Supper.

The feast of unleavened bread began the next day after the Passover and lasted for one week. Because of the way the two celebrations were connected, the term PASSOVER was often used to include the full eight days of festivities. That is why the “first day” is mentioned in connection with eating the Passover in Mark 14:12, “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?” This “first day” was in association with the eight days when the paschal lamb was slain on the “fourteenth day” followed by a special Sabbath on the “fifteenth.” This “first day” in Mark 14:12, was not the first day of unleavened bread, but the “first day” of the eight day festival, with the “first day” being the actual Passover.

Of the seven great religious festivals of Israel, only three were actual feasts. Those three are the FEAST OF UNLEAVENED

BREAD, PENTECOST, and TABERNACLES. These festivals did not mark great men, but great events that the nation of Israel had experienced with God in the past.

Jesus stated in Matthew 26:2, that He would be “crucified ... after two days.” That is, from the time He was speaking, it would be the PASSOVER. The KJV calls it “the feast of the passover,” but in the manuscripts, only “passover” is mentioned. Christ ate the passover meal with His disciples in the “evening” (Thursday, Jewish time on the 14th of Nisan, which was equivalent to our Wednesday PM) then was arrested, and tried during that same night. Luke 22:15 reads, “he said unto them, With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer.” It’s very clear that this “passover” was eaten in the “evening” when Jewish time began a new day. Mark 14:16-17 records that “they made ready the passover. And in the evening he cometh with the twelve.” The following morning (Thursday the 14th of Nisan) Christ was crucified.

Since this was the day of the Passover, it was PRIME TIME for the SUPREME PASCAL LAMB to give His life. Paul writes in I Corinthians 5:7, “Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us.” As the PASSOVER LAMB, Christ was crucified on the day when Jewish families were observing the Passover. It was on the Day of Passover when the Jews cried out for to crucify the “LAMB OF GOD” (Jh. 1:29). The Bible says in John 19:6 that “when the chief priests therefore and officers saw him, they cried out, saying, crucify him, crucify him.” As usual, the Pascal lamb was to be eaten with bitter herbs that not only reminded Israel of their suffering while in Egypt, but it TYPICALLY spoke of the Lamb’s bitter treatment and suffering upon the cross.

Originally, the Jewish authorities had decided not to put Jesus to death during the “feast.” Mark 14:1-2 says, “After two days was *the feast of* (*the feast of* are inserted words and do not appear in the Greek manuscripts) 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. But they

said, not on the feast day, lest there be an uproar of the people.” If they were referring to the actual day of Passover, then they changed their minds and did so anyway or else they were referring to the Feast of Unleavened Bread which began and ended with a “holy convocation” and lasted for a total of seven days. This “holy convocation” (or special Sabbath) is referred to in John 19:31 as a “high day.”

There was a custom to release a criminal at the time of the Passover. John 18:39 tells us “But ye have a custom, that I should release unto you one at the passover.” The trial of Jesus was held on the night when the Jews were scheduled to eat the Passover. John 18:28 says, “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.”

The “preparation” mentioned in John 19:14 refers to the day preceding and in this case it most likely speaks of the day preceding the Feast of Unleavened Bread thus making this “preparation” the day of Passover. Keep in mind that the Day of Passover was at this time in the history of the Jews, incorporated along with the Feast of Unleavened Bread, thus making the Passover festival a total of eight days in duration. Scripture says, “it was the preparation of the passover, and about the sixth hour.” Remember that the word “passover” in the time of Christ was used in three different senses. There was the PASCHAL LAMB that commemorated the departure from Egypt. There was the PASCHAL SUPPER that was eaten on the night of the 14th. And, there was the PASCHAL FESTIVAL that incorporated the Passover along with the Feast of Unleavened Bread.

The reason many confuse the day of Christ’s crucifixion is because they confuse the “high day” Sabbath of John 19:31, which fell on the 15th of Nisan, with the weekly seventh day Sabbath. The “high day” is not a reference to the seventh day Sabbath, but to the special Sabbath that began the Feast of Unleavened Bread. Leviticus 23:3, 6-8, reads, “Six days shall work be done: but the seventh day is the sabbath of rest, a holy convocation; ye shall do no work therein: it is the sabbath of the

Lord in all your dwellings ... 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 a 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 a holy convocation: ye shall do no servile work therein ... 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.”

The Old Testament Sabbath was a day of “holy convocation” for the Jews, or simply a strict day of rest. It not only applied to the seventh day, but even in “earring and harvest.” Exodus 34:21 says, “Six days thou shalt work, but on the seventh day thou shalt rest: in earring time and in harvest thou shalt rest.” The first day of Unleavened Bread, which was the 15th day of Nisan, immediately followed the day of Passover. The word Sabbath was not just the name given to the seventh day, but it was a sacred designation. The Sabbath was a memorial sign of the covenant between God and Israel.

Exodus 20:8-11 reads, “Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labor, and do all thy work: but the seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter thy manservant, nor they maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor stranger that is within thy gates: for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it.” Exodus 31:13 states, “Speak thou also unto the children of Israel, saying, Verily my sabbaths ye shall keep: for it is a sign between me and you throughout your generations; that ye may know that I am the Lord that doth sanctify you.”

A “holy convocation” as named in Leviticus, chapter 23, verses three and seven, was NOT just a seventh day sabbath, but also a special day of rest for the Old Testament Israelites. The word “convocation” literally means assembly or gathering. It was not until after 586 BC with the institution of the synagogue is when the Israelites began meeting together on the Sabbath even though

the day of rest had been observed since the beginning. Early Christian Jews made a habit of assembling on the first day of the week to commemorate the resurrection of Christ. For this reason, the seventh day of rest in the Old Testament became the first day of rest in the New Testament.

We see this very clearly in Acts 20:7, “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.” Also, it’s recorded in First Corinthians 16:2 that “Upon the first 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.” By assembling on the first day of the week, the New Testament Church makes Sunday a weekly memorial of Christ’s resurrection whereby we are given a constant reminder of Christ’s victory over sin, death, hell, and the grave.

It’s important to notice at this point that in connection with the Feast of Unleavened Bread, the offering of “firstfruits” was made on the day after the 15th of Nisan. This offering was an expression of gratitude for the Spring harvest. But, most of all the “firstfruits” offering was an Old Testament TYPE that prefigured the resurrection of Jesus Christ. While the Jews were observing their “firstfruits,” Christ our “firstfruits” was preparing to come out of the grave. We’re told in First Corinthians 15:20,23, “But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept ... But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ as his coming.”

The Week Prior

A Jewish Day was from Sunset to Sunset in the “evening” (PM)

6 th Wed _{am}	7 th Thur _{am}	8 th Fri _{am}	9 th Sat _{am}
		“6 days” before the Passover, Jesus came to Bethany Jh. 12:1-11	“the next day” Jh. 12:12 is the day when palm branches were waved as Jesus entered Jerusalem on a colt Jh. 12:12-13
Thur _{pm} 7 th	Fri _{pm} 8 th	Sat _{pm} 9 th	Sun _{pm} 10 th

We must remember that John recorded events on Roman Time, but during the life-time of Christ, He lived on Jewish Time

.....to Christ's Crucifixion

A Jewish Day was from Sunset to Sunset in the "evening" (PM)

10 th Sun _{am}	11 th Mon _{am}	12 th Tue _{am}	13 th Wed _{am}
<p>The Passover lamb was selected in order to observe it for possible flaws</p> <p>Ex. 12:3-6</p>		<p>Jesus said that "after two days is the feast of the passover, and the Son of man is betrayed to be crucified" Matt. 26:1-5</p> <p>"after" is the Greek word meta probably referring to within the next two days</p>	
			<p>Passover began with the killing & eating of the lamb in the evening Ex. 12:6-14, 18-20, Lev. 23:5</p> <p>The Passover was Eaten by Christ & His disciples Ex.12: 11-17, Lev. 23:55</p>

Mon_{pm} 11th Tue_{pm} 12th Wed_{pm} 13th Thur_{pm} 14th

***Note: The Passover was considered part of the Feast of Unleavened Bread & referred to as such (Mk. 14:12-16, Matt. 26:17-19, Lk. 22:7-13) "first day of unleavened bread" was actually the day of Passover at which time they "sacrificed the passover" lamb**

An Example of

The Passover Observance and.....

Friday ←-----

A Jewish Day was from Sunset to Sunset in the “evening” (PM)

13th 14th 15th 16th 17th 18th
 Wed am Thur am Fri am Sat am Sun am Mon am

	<p>Christ Crucified</p> <p>Hung on the cross about 9 AM</p> <p>Darkness covers the earth at noon</p> <p>Jesus died about 3PM and buried before 6 PM</p>	<p>This special Sabbath is referred to as a “Holy Convocation”</p> <p>Ex. 12:15-17 Lev. 23:3, Lev. 23:6-8</p>	<p>Regular Weekly 7th Day <u>Sabbath</u></p> <p>In that year, the observance of First-fruits fell on the weekly Sabbath</p> <p>Lev.23:9-14</p>	<p>Christ Arose</p> <p>Raised the “third day” as He promised</p> <p>Lk. 24:46 I Cor. 15:4</p>	
<p>Jesus ate the Pascal Meal, washed the disciples feet and instituted the observance of The Lord’s Supper</p> <p>Jesus is betrayed by Judas, arrested, & tried</p>	<p>This special Sabbath was the “Feast of Unleavened Bread” that began on the 15th at 6 PM</p> <p>It is called a “high day” in Jh. 19:31</p>	<p>7th day Sabbath</p> <p>Ex. 20:9-11</p>		<p>Roman Time would have been Sunday the “first day of the week” when Christ appeared to His disciples as recorded in the Gospel of John</p> <p>Jh. 20:20-25</p>	

Thur pm 14th Fri pm 15th Sat pm 16th Sun pm 17th Mon pm 18th Tue pm 19th

←-----→

Friday PM

Early Sunday AM

Christ Buried for “three days and three nights”

Matt. 12:39-40

.....the Different “Sabbaths”

....The Seven Day Feast of Unleavened Bread

-----→Friday

A Jewish Day was from Sunset to Sunset in the “evening” (PM)

19th 20th 21st 22nd 23rd
 Tue am Wed am Thur am Fri am Sat am

		Last Day of the “ Feast of Unleavened Bread ” “ Holy Convocation ” Lev. 23:8 Ex. 12:18		
	Last Day of the “ Feast of Unleavened Bread ” (Another Special <u>Sabbath</u>)			

Wed pm Thur pm Fri pm Sat pm Sun pm
 20th 21st 22nd 23rd 24th

Note: At the time of Christ’s death, there were three different Sabbaths within a one week period, two special and one regular

Roman Day

A Roman Day was from Midnight to Midnight in the “morning” (AM)

	6 th Wed	7 th Thur	8 th Fri	9 th Sat	10 th Sun	11 th Mon	12 th Tue
Midnight							
AM							
1							
2							
3							
4							Jesus said that
5							“after
6							two days
7							is the
8							feast of
9							the
10							passover,
11							and the
Noon							Son of
PM							man is
1							betrayed
2							to be
3							crucified”
4							
5							
6							
7							
8							
9							
10							
11							
Midnight							

***It’s interesting to note that it probably wasn’t very many days after Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead that the Jews wanted to kill him**

Roman Day

A Roman Day was from Midnight to Midnight in the “morning” (AM)

	13 th Wed	14 th Thur	15 th Fri	16 th Sat	17 th Sun	18 th Mon	19 th Tue
Midnight		Jesus is betrayed by Judas, arrested, & tried	This special Sabbath was the “ Feast of Unleavened Bread ” that began on the 15 th		Christ Arose		
AM							
1							
2				7 th Day Sabbath	Raised the		
3				Ex.20: 9-10	“ third day ” as		
4					He promised		
5							
6							
7							
8		Christ Crucified	It is called a “ high day ” in Jh. 19:31		Lk. 24:46		
9					I Cor. 15:4		
10		Hung on the cross about 9 AM					
11			This special Sabbath is referred to as a “ Holy Convocation ”	In that year, the observance of	Roman Time would have been		
Noon		Darkness covers the earth at noon		First-fruits	have been		
PM				also fell on the regular weekly Sabbath	Sunday evening, the		
1					“ first day of the week ”		
2		Jesus died about 3PM and buried late in the afternoon	Ex. 12:15-17 Lev. 23:3, Lev. 23:6-8		when Christ appeared to His disciples		
3							
4							
5							
6	Jesus ate with			Lev.23: 9-14			
7	His disciples						
8	The Lord’s Supper						
9							
10					Jh. 20:20-25		
11							
Midnight							
*see Note							

*If Jesus was following Roman time, then it would have put Him eating the Passover Meal on the 13th, but that wasn’t the case because He was following Jewish Time. It’s probable during the writing of John’s Gospel that the Jews observed Passover on Roman time, keeping it on the evening of Nisan 14th.

Roman Day

A Roman Day was from Midnight to Midnight in the “morning” (AM)

	20 th Wed	21 st Thur	22 nd Fri	23 rd Sat	24 th Sun	25 th Mon	26 th Tue
Midnight							
AM							
1							Jesus
2							Appeared
3							To
4		Last Day					His
5		of the					Disciples
6		“Feast of					Again
7		Unleavened					“after 8
8		Bread”					days”
9							When
10		“Holy					Thomas
11		Convocation”					Was
Noon							Present
PM		Lev. 23:8					Jh.
1		Ex. 12:18					20:26-31
2							Some
3							believe it
4							could
5							have
6							been on
7							Sunday
8							the 24 th
9							but that
10							would
11							not have
Midnight							been at

50 Days after the Feast of First Fruits came Pentecost
 “Seven Sabbaths” (Lev. 23:15-21, Acts 2)

Chapter 8

THE HOURS SPENT ON THE CROSS

After learning that Christ must have died on a Thursday, we look at how many hours He suffered before death came. The Jewish way of counting hours was to divide the night and day into twelve divisions with each beginning at sunrise and sunset. The hours would vary in length depending on the time of year. Just after the Vernal Equinox, the “third hour” would be nine o’clock AM, the “sixth hour” would be noon, and the “ninth hour” would be three o’clock PM. Vernal means SPRING and Equinox refers to when the sun crosses the equator which happens to be twice a year thus making day and night everywhere of the same length. This falls about March 21st and September 23rd of each year.

We must remember that Jesus went without sleep for over twenty four hours and was tried all during the night after His arrest in the garden. The religious Jewish leaders are the ones that instigated the arrest and death of the Lord Jesus. His trial consisted of two major divisions with each of those divisions consisting of three phases each.

Division Number One

The first division was when Jesus was tried by the Jews

Phase 1

Phase one began with the examination of Jesus by Annas, an ex-high priest, who remained very influential among the Jewish community.

Phase 2

Phase two followed when Annas sent Jesus to Caiaphas, the current high priest.

Phase 3

Phase three tells us that, “as soon as it was day” (Lk. 22:66) the Sanhedrin formally condemned Him to death for violating Jewish custom and accusing Him of blasphemy. This is when they turned Him over to the Roman authorities.

Division Number Two

The second division was when Jesus was tried by the Romans

Phase 1

The first phase of this second division, is when Jesus was first sent to Pilate for a legal trial and found innocent of the charges.

Phase 2

The second phase of this second division is when Jesus was sent to King Herod, found innocent, and returned to Pilate.

Phase 3

The third phase of this second division was when Christ stood before Pilate the second time who let the Jewish mob determine His fate.

For various reasons, there are some who don't believe all these trials could have happened so close together in such a few hours. They believe He was held captive for several days after His arrest and then went through the various trials. If that be the case, there are problems that cannot be reconciled from Scripture, such as His partaking of the Passover and the institution of the Lord's Supper during the Pascal meal.

I personally believe that Jesus went through the different trials all in a matter of several hours. The distance between the trials was near, thus making it possible. Some argue that the Sanhedrin would not have convened nor handled this matter at such a time. Others say that Herod would not have been awakened that early. However, that was a day like no other has ever been or ever will

be. It was the night when the Son of God was arrested, placed on trial early the next morning, and sentenced to death (Lk. 22:66). Nothing that occurred during this time was normal. There was a blood thirsty religious mob that wanted Jesus crucified and also political leaders that tried to satisfy them. The trial of Jesus was the most famous trial in human history.

John 19:14 states that it was “about the sixth hour” when Pilate sentenced Jesus to be crucified. Mark 15:25 says that Christ was placed on the cross the “third hour” (9 AM) and then we are told in verse 33 that darkness covered the earth at the “sixth hour” (NOON). In verses 34-37 of the same chapter it states, that Christ died at the “ninth hour” (3 PM). With John using Roman time, then it would have been about 6 AM when Pilate sentenced Jesus to death. With Mark using Jewish time, the “third hour” of the day would have been 9 AM, the “sixth hour” would have been noon, and the “ninth hour” 3 PM. This timing puts the Gospel account in perfect agreement.

At this point, it's only natural to raise a question about Jesus being sentenced at the “sixth hour.” How can the “sixth hour” as recorded in John's Gospel be reconciled with the time frame given in the Gospel of Mark? The answer lies in an understanding of the Jewish and Roman computation of time. Mark used the Jewish computation, which was from SUNSET TO SUNSET, whereas John used the Roman computation, which was from MIDNIGHT TO MIDNIGHT. Therefore, the “sixth hour” of John 19:14 would actually be six o'clock in the morning (6 AM). This fits perfectly into the time sequence of Jesus' trial, the carrying of His cross outside the city, and His crucifixion at 9 AM on Golgotha. These trials were very speedy!

Mark wrote his Gospel prior to the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD whereas John was the last of the synoptic writers having written sometime around 90 AD. Since John wrote after the destruction of Jerusalem, most likely the Jewish method of computation was abolished. It appears that most if not all of the passages in the Gospel of John where time is mentioned appears to be using Roman computation. For example, the “tenth hour” in John 1:39 was 10 AM, the “sixth hour” in John 4:6 was 6 PM

(the sixth hour counts from both noon and midnight with no variation between AM and PM), and there is the “seventh hour” in John 4:52 which is probably 7 PM.

Positive proof of John’s use of Roman computation is seen in John 20:19 where it says, “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.” Notice that it says, “the same day at evening being the first day of the week.” It was the EVENING of the same day that Mary had seen the resurrected Christ. The synoptic accounts bear this out for this was when Christ appeared to His disciples with Thomas being absent. For the Jews, “evening” began another day. However, John states that it was the “evening” of the “first day” which clearly shows that it was not Jewish, but Roman computation of time that he was using. John 20:1 tells us that on “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.”

From all indication, Jesus hung on the cross about six hours. It could have taken days for a person to die by crucifixion, but we must remember that Jesus bore the entire weight of a sinful world upon himself and suffered like no person has ever suffered. We are told in John 19:30-34, that “When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished: and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost. The Jews therefore, because it was the preparation, that the bodies should not remain upon the cross on the Sabbath day, (for that Sabbath day was an high day,) besought Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away. 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.”

To speed up the deaths of the three men on Calvary’s mount, a bone was broken in the two thieves, but “when they came to Jesus” they “saw that he was dead already.” Verse thirty six of

that same chapter tells us that, “For these things were done, that the scripture should be fulfilled. A bone of him shall not be broken.”

Yes, the Old Testament Scripture as recorded in Psalms 34:20, “He keepeth all his bones: not one of them is broken” was fulfilled. However, the death that Jesus Christ died was like no other in human history. God wrapped Himself in human flesh, came down to earth to take our sin upon His sinless self in order to pay the price that Holy God required in atonement for our sin. No sinful man could meet God’s standard; therefore, God came Himself in the flesh to do for us what we could never do for ourselves.

If you have never trusted Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior, it is my prayer that God will tug at your heart strings, convict you of sin, righteousness, and the judgement. May God reveal to you the reason why He came to take your sin upon Himself and pay the price of your redemption on the cross. God hates sin so much that He required payment and knowing that we could never do it ourselves, He came to pay the penalty of sin in our stead. This is where we see Christ as our Substitute. We deserve death on the cross and eternal torment in Hell, but Christ came to take our sin upon His sinless self (II Cor. 5:21) and suffer for us in our place. If God grants you faith to believe this glorious truth, then trust Christ today, repent, and discover the joy of sins forgiven.

Our minds cannot even begin to imagine the awful suffering and agony that Christ endured prior to going to the cross, much less on the cross. He suffered my eternal Hell for me and for all God’s elect. If you have a genuine want to in your heart to confess your sin, repent, and place faith in Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior, then it’s because God has given you that desire. Being the wicked depraved sinners that we are, we would never hunger for Christ unless He gives us that desire. His approximate six hours of suffering on the cross was equivalent to spending eternity in Hell for all whom He has purchased with His shed blood. His time spent upon the cross was perhaps shorter in length than normal, but more severe than that of any man.

Motion pictures have tried to depict the crucifixion scene, but there is no way that the horribleness of Christ's death can be described. It is believed that He was stripped naked and beaten beyond recognition before being hung on the cross. The Old Testament prophet, Isaiah, presented the coming Messiah as the Suffering Servant. From the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah, the prophet foretold the pain and torment that Christ would endure.

“Who hath believed our report? And to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed? For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground; he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him. 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. Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. 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. He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation? For he was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was he stricken. And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death; because he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth. Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand. He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities. Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death:

and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.”

Isaiah 53: 1-12

This text from Isaiah is often considered to be the mountain peak of Old Testament prophecy. Scripture makes it perfectly clear that the person to whom Isaiah is referring is no other than the Lord Jesus Christ. We're told from the eighth chapter of Acts that an Ethiopian eunuch was reading this passage from the Book of Isaiah when Philip explained to him that it was speaking of "Jesus" (Acts 8:26-35). We don't have to wait until we get to the New Testament to learn of the sinless substitute for sinful man. Seven Hundred years before Christ was born in Bethlehem, God foretold of His life, rejection, suffering, sacrifice, and resurrection. As our Substitute, our sins were imputed upon Jesus so that God's divine righteousness might be imputed to believers.

The very nation into which Christ was born rejected Him as their Messiah. They failed to see Jesus as the One Who would forgive their sins. They were looking for one who would deliver them from political oppression. Only God can open the eyes of the spiritually blind and unless he does, then people will die lost and without hope. Apart from personal faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, there is no salvation for anyone of any race. In order to be saved, we must believe as Isaiah declared, that Christ died for "our transgressions," meaning our sin and spiritual rebellion against God.

This ungodly world considered the sufferings of Christ a well-deserved punishment for blasphemy. Before being sentenced, Christ was "scourged ... stripped ... spit upon" and "smote" (Matt. 26:67, 27:26-31). The sinless Son of God was condemned unjustly by mortal man to die as a felon. With no word of complaint nor whisper of protest, Jesus turned Himself over into the hands of wicked men. Like a humble innocent little lamb, Christ fulfilled the perfect type of the Passover Lamb. He was crucified, buried in the borrowed grave of Joseph of Arimathea, and rose from the dead on the third day. Because He Lives, He will someday come again to judge, rule, and reign forevermore.

Brief Events and Estimated Time Frame.....
Jewish Time.....
Thursday.....

6 PM - 9 PM “even”	9 PM - 12 AM “midnight”
Jesus ate the Passover Meal with His disciples	Jesus and the disciples go to the Garden of Gethsemane
Jesus washed His disciples feet	Jesus spends time in prayer and teaches us the supreme example of prayer in praying “not my will, but thine be done”
Jesus revealed that a traitor was in their midst and Judas departs	He awakes the sleeping disciples in the garden of prayer
Jesus foretells of Peter’s denial	Judas leads “a multitude with swords and staves, from the chief priests and the scribes and the elders” (Mk. 14:43-44) and betrays Jesus with a “kiss”
Jesus instituted the Lord’s Supper	Peter “smote the servant of the high priest and struck off his ear” (Matt. 26:51, Jh. 18:10)
Jesus gave His farewell discourse to His disciples	Jesus is arrested

.....**in the Final 24 Hours of Christ's Life**
**From Sunset to Sunset**
**Nisan 14**

12 AM - 3 PM	3 AM - 6 AM
<p data-bbox="500 604 711 640">"cockcrowing"</p> <p data-bbox="418 682 799 970">Jesus was examined by "Annas" an ex-high priest that remained influential and continued to hold his title: however, he sent Jesus over to the current high priest by the name of "Caiaphas" (Jh. 18:12-14,19-23)</p> <p data-bbox="418 1012 799 1117">People bore false witness against Jesus at the trial held by "Caiaphas"</p> <p data-bbox="418 1159 799 1264">Jesus was mocked, spit upon, beaten, and ridiculed by the religious Jews</p> <p data-bbox="418 1306 799 1411">Peter denies the Lord and then the "cock crew" (Jh. 18:27)</p>	<p data-bbox="922 604 1068 640">"morning"</p> <p data-bbox="824 682 1205 1516">"as soon as it was day" with no specific time given "the elders of the people and the chief priests and the scribes came together, and led him into their council, saying, Art thou the Christ? Tell us. And he said unto them, If I tell you, ye will not believe: And if I also ask you, ye will not answer me, nor let me go. Hereafter shall the Son of man sit on the right hand of the power of God. Then said they all, Art thou then the Son of God? And he said unto them, Ye say that I am. And they said, What need we any further witness? For we ourselves have heard of his own mouth" (Lk. 22:66-71)</p>

Brief Events and Estimated Time Frame.....
Jewish Time.....
Thursday.....

6 AM - 9 AM	9 AM - 12 Noon
<p>Judas hangs himself</p> <p>Early in the morning Jesus was brought from Caiaphas to Pilate and was questioned by him</p> <p>Pilate sent Jesus to Herod Antipas the Tetrarch with accusation from the chief priest and scribes</p> <p>Herod along with his soldiers set him at nought, and mocked him, and arraying him in gorgeous apparel sent him back to Pilate (Lk. 23:11-12)</p> <p>Pilate puts Jesus before the Jewish mob and gives them a choice between Christ or Barabbas</p> <p>The mob cries out to crucify Jesus and the soldiers beat Him unmercifully</p>	<p>Jesus crucified between two thieves</p> <p>The Roman soldiers gambled for Christ's robe</p> <p>The inscription was put on the cross of Jesus, THE KING OF THE JEWS</p> <p>The first three sayings from the cross:</p> <p>1-“Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do” (an appeal by Christ to those guilty of his death)</p> <p>2-“Verily I say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with me in paradise” (spoken to the repentant thief that hung beside Jesus on the cross)</p> <p>3-“Woman, behold thy son! Behold thy mother” (spoken to John to care for Mary)</p>

.....in the Final 24 Hours of Christ's Life
From Sunset to Sunset
Nisan 14

12 Noon - 3 PM	3 PM - 6 PM
<p>Darkness fell upon the earth for 3 hours</p> <p>The last four of the seven sayings from the cross spoken by Jesus:</p> <p>4-“My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?”</p> <p>5-“I Thirst”</p> <p>6-“It is finished”</p> <p>7-“Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit”</p> <p>Jesus was given a sponge full of vinegar put on a reed to drink</p> <p>Jesus bowed His head and gave up his spirit</p>	<p>Death of Christ on the cross</p> <p>The veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom and the earth did quake</p> <p>Pilate marveled that Jesus had died so quickly and that no bone of his body required to be broken</p> <p>It was Joseph of Arimathaea who requested the body of Jesus to give it a proper burial</p> <p>He wrapped it in a clean linen cloth and laid Him in a tomb hewn out of a rock</p> <p>Nicodemus also brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes to prepare His body for burial which took place late in the afternoon before Sunset (6 PM)</p>

Friday Sunset began Nisan 15 with the beginning of the “high day” Sabbath on the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread

Chapter 9

JESUS NEVER LIED

In order to fulfill His promise, I believe that it was necessary for Jesus to remain in the tomb for “three days and three nights.” In my way of thinking, it’s not all that difficult to learn the day of the week of His crucifixion. Reconciling Jewish time and Roman time can be a bit more difficult. But, this one thing I know, Jesus declared Himself to be “the truth” (Jh. 14:6) and He never spoke anything but “the truth.” We know that He arose on Sunday and all we have to do is back up “three days and three nights.” When we do that and also look at the Feast of Unleavened Bread, it explains the “high day” and as to why the women most likely did not come to His tomb until Sunday. That which complicates matters is trying to put together the puzzle of Jewish time and Roman time.

The reason the majority claim Good Friday as the day of Christ’s crucifixion is because they say the Jews counted any part of a day as a whole day and that Christ was to arise on the “third day” as stated in Matthew 16:21. It reads, “From that time forth began Jesus to shew unto his disciples, how that he must suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day.”

Even at its best there is no way to reconcile “three days and three nights” out of three days and two nights. Christ’s resurrection on the “third day” can be understood in light of John 2:20-22 where it says, “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. When therefore he was risen from the dead, his disciples remembered.”

In Mark 8:31, we read, “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.” The simple fact is that He would only be in the tomb for “three days” and then arise. I believe that Christ’s burial took place on late Thursday afternoon, Nisan 14th (Jewish Time) just

before the special Sabbath that is called the “high day” which is the day that began the seven day Feast of Unleavened Bread.

We’re told in Luke 20:50-56, “And, behold, there was a man named Joseph, a counselor; and he was a good man, and a just: (The same had not consented to the counsel and deed of them;) he was of Arimathaea, a city of the Jews: who also himself waited for the kingdom of God. This man went unto Pilate, and begged the body of Jesus. And he took it down, and wrapped it in linen, and laid it in a sepulchre that was hewn in stone, wherein never man before was laid. And that day was the preparation, and the sabbath 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 according to the commandment.”

The word “preparation” in this passage refers to the day before the Feast of Unleavened Bread. In this case it was the day of Passover which was the day preceding the week-long observance of Unleavened Bread. As we have already studied, the Feast of Unleavened Bread lasted for seven days, beginning and ending with a special sabbath.

It’s interesting to note from Matthew 27 that Jesus’ tomb was not sealed until the day following His crucifixion. We read from verses 62-66, “Now the next day, that followed the day of the preparation, the chief priests and Pharisees came together unto Pilate, Saying, Sir, we remember that that deceiver said, while he was yet alive, After three days I will rise again. Command therefore, that the sepulchre be made sure until the third day, lest his disciples come by night and steal him away, and say unto the people, He is risen from the dead: so the last error shall be worse than the first. Pilate said unto them, Ye have a watch: go your way, make it as sure as ye can. So they went, and made the sepulchre sure, sealing the stone, and setting a watch.”

Christ’s resurrection can be placed sometime after sunset on Saturday 6 PM (Jewish time) when the day changed to Sunday (Jewish time); although, it wasn’t discovered by Mary until “dawn” on Sunday. From the wording of Scripture, I believe He

arose early in the morning on Sunday. We're told in 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." We can only assume that the women did not go to the grave the two days before because they were both Sabbath days. Well, perhaps they did and could not get in. Scripture only says they found it empty on the "first day of the week." God alone knows how many times they had gone to the sepulchre only to find it guarded by the soldiers and unable to get in. All I can say is that it was due to the sovereign providence of God that they went to the tomb at "dawn" on Sunday morning. A graveyard is certainly not a very likely place to find a woman before the break of day. But, it was the mighty working of God's providence that drew these women to witness the empty tomb and then publish the good news of His glorious resurrection.

Of all people, Jesus chose Mary Magdalene to be one of the "first" people to whom He appeared following His resurrection. Mark 16:19 records, "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." Don't let anyone ever tell you that Jesus can't make the vilest sinner clean. Paul called himself the "chief" of sinners in First Timothy 1:25, "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief."

Don't ever think that you are too great a sinner for God to save, because He specializes in making new creatures out of sinful men. Second Corinthians 7:14, says, "Therefore, if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; all things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." Jesus described it to Nicodemus in the third chapter of John as being "born again" (John 3:1-13). Because Christ came out of the tomb on the "third day," He can come into our hearts and lives, birth us into the family of God, indwell us with the Holy Spirit, and give us eternal life beyond the grave. We must come to Him by faith, fling ourselves upon His mercy, and rejoice in His grace.

Chapter 10

THE CHRISTIAN OBSERVANCE OF THE RESURRECTION

The Christian observance of Christ's resurrection is on a solar lunar cycle that comes on the first full moon on or after the VERNAL EQUINOX. According to our modern day calendar, the resurrection is celebrated on a Sunday between March 22nd and April 25th. For the early Christians, the resurrection was remembered to have occurred at the same time as the Jewish Passover. In the King James Version, the Passover is referred to as EASTER in Acts 12:4 where it reads, "intending after Easter to bring him forth to the people." This is a poor translation of Scripture and as far as translation goes, it is not correct. Instead of EASTER it should be translated from the Greek word PASCHA to be PASSOVER. The Hebrew rendering of the word Passover is PSSACH or PECACH that comes from the root word PACACH meaning to pass over. Therefore, it needs to be understood that the word EASTER is NOT proper biblical terminology and its usage comes from a pagan background.

There are many pre-Christian traditions associated with the Easter season. The origin of the name, EASTER, comes from the name of a pagan spring festival which was dedicated to an Anglo-Saxon goddess by the name of EASTRE. She was considered by the heathens to be a goddess of Spring and fertility. In other words, she was their SEX GODDESS! Her festival was held in a month that corresponded to April and was celebrated on the same day as the VERNAL EQUINOX. Traditions associated with her festival are still seen today in such things as the Easter rabbit and colored Easter eggs, which were symbols of fertility.

The selling of all this Easter paraphernalia is big business in our modern society. And, let's face it, the commercial world is interested in making money off of their Easter products and not in celebrating the resurrection of Jesus Christ. In my opinion, the Christian home, should not be placing an emphasis on the Easter

bunny. We have something far more significant to talk about. Why waste time promoting some pagan practice when we have a living Lord to exalt before our children and a spiritually needy world?

At this point, it's noteworthy to examine from the pages of the Old Testament, what God said to His chosen people. According to the first commandment of the Decalogue, Israel was forbidden to have any other gods before the Lord. The goddess, Ashtoroth, is especially singled out and named in several passages of the Old Testament Scriptures. Ashtaroth is the plural form of Ashtoreth. Ashtoreth was the name given to the fertility goddess of the heathen Canaanites. Eastre was the Anglo-Saxon's fertility goddess while Ashtereth was the Canaanites fertility goddess. Judges 2:11-23 records how Israel forsook the Lord to follow after other gods. In verse 13, "Baal and Ashtaroth" are named together because Baal was the male counterpart to Ashtaroth. Both were worshipped in lewdness. Later, we see that before Israel could be spared from the Philistines, they had to turn from Ashtoreth back to Jehovah.

First Samuel 7:3-4 says, "And Samuel spake unto all the house of Israel, saying, If ye do return unto the Lord with all your hearts, then put away the strange gods and Ashtaroth from among you, and prepare your hearts unto the Lord, and serve him only: and he will deliver you out of the hand of the Philistines. Then the children of Israel did put away Baalim and Ashtaroth, and served the Lord only." First Samuel 12:10 records how "they cried unto the Lord, and said, We have sinned, because we have forsaken the Lord, and have served Baalim and Ashtaroth: but now deliver us out of the hand of our enemies, and we will serve thee."

When King Saul died, his "armour" was put "in the house of Ashtaroth" (I Samuel 31:10) by the Philistines. Also, I call your attention to how Solomon's wives turned his heart from the Lord. They caused him to worship Ashtaroth and other idols according to First Kings 11:4-5. It says, "For it came to pass, when Solomon was old, that his wives turned away his heart after other gods: and his heart was not perfect with the Lord his God, as was

the heart of David his father. For Solomon went after Ashtoroth the goddess of the Zidonians, and after Milcom the abomination of the Ammonites.”

These heathen gods remained in Israel until Josiah demolished them as recorded in Second Kings 23:13-14. Scripture reads, “And the high places that were before Jerusalem, which were on the right hand of the mount of corruption, which Solomon the king of Israel had builden for Ashtoroth the abomination of the Zidonians, and for Chemesh the abomination of the Mobites, and for Milcom the abomination of the children of Ammon, did the king defile. And he brake in pieces the images, and cut down the groves, and filled their places with the bones of men.”

God WARNED Israel that they were to have nothing to do with other gods. Holy Scripture points out very clearly that “Ashtaroth” was a great cause of Israel’s downfall. God’s warning has not changed. It remains the same today for Christians to refrain from giving recognition to any heathen god or goddess in any form or fashion. We are to shy away from anything that would give indication of a divided devotion in our lives. If Jesus Christ is our Lord, then those things that we do ought to bring glory to Him. He does not want our divided attention when it comes to our worship, allegiance, or loyalty.

In some countries of the world you can still find figurines and statutes of little man-made gods that heathens worship. Most of the time, it’s not that obvious in America, but that doesn’t mean idolatry does not exist. In fact, it’s more common in the average household than one can imagine. Anything that claims first place in one’s life is their god and if the One True and Living God is not in that position, then the result is idolatry. It can be the Easter Bunny, sports, cars, houses, lands, bank accounts, another person, or any number of things. Using money as an example, Jesus said that “No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon” (Matt. 6:24).

First Samuel 15:23 reminds us, “For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry.” Then

again we are warned in First Corinthians 10:14 to “flee from idolatry.” God commands us in Col. 3:5-6 to, “Mortify (*put to death*) therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry: For which things’ sake the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience.”

The Ten Commandments make it perfectly clear when God says, “Thou shalt have no other gods before me. Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them; for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me” (Ex. 20:3-5).

My question is simply, why bring the Easter Bunny and colored eggs into the picture whatsoever? What does the Easter Bunny and Easter eggs have to do with Jesus Christ? The answer is obvious, nothing! Therefore, why should a Christian include this in the observance of Christ’s resurrection? Resurrection Day far exceeds anything that the world could ever offer. We ought to be teaching our children about that which will make an eternal difference in their lives. They ought to learn from our example about how we place our spiritual values and where our utmost devotion lies.

Chapter 11

JESUS AND THE EASTER BUNNY

From the previous chapter, I raise the question, “what does the Easter Bunny have to do with the celebration of Christ’s resurrection?” The clear answer is, “absolutely nothing.” It simply gives pagan people something on which to spend their money and focus their attention in the Spring of the year. Unfortunately, many Christians have incorporated the Easter Bunny in their church activities as they emphasize Easter eggs and such related objects in children’s activities. Why should we allow the devil to rob us of our time and attention at one of the most sacred and meaningful times of the year?

For a long time the Christian church in the East continued to observe the resurrection of Christ on the date of the Jewish Passover even though the churches in the West celebrated it on Sunday. Technically, the celebration of Christ’s resurrection could very well fall on different days of the week from year to year. It was the Gentile Christians who moved the celebration to the first day of the week so that it would occur the same day of the week each year. This made it fall on different dates, but always on a Sunday.

It was Constantine the First who had the council of Nicaea in 325 AD to rule that Easter should be celebrated on the first Sunday after the full moon following the VERNAL EQUINOX. If the full moon should occur on a Sunday that coincided with the Jewish Passover, then Easter should be commemorated on the Sunday following in order for Easter and the Passover NOT to fall on the same date. Let me remind you that it was under Constantine in church history that the church sold out to the favors of the State, lost her testimony, and became notoriously impure. This period of church history dates from about 312 AD to 606 AD.

From this study we can see in some instances how the Christian Church has become victim of mere traditionalism. This is not to say that ALL tradition is bad. But, it does show that we

need to stop and examine WHY WE DO WHAT WE DO! Many pre-Christian traditions have been adopted by well-meaning Christians of today. As I pointed out in the previous chapter, the name Easter comes from an Anglo-Saxon goddess of Spring and fertility. She was celebrated by using the Easter rabbit as a symbol of fertility and colored Easter eggs were given away that represented the sunlight of Spring. In ancient Egypt, the hare was a symbol of fertility. The Easter Bunny is simply the modern day replacement. Everyone knows that rabbits are very fruitful. Female rabbits can give birth to several litters a year. Pagan fertility beliefs would place credit upon the creature with divine power instead of the Creator. For this reason, I'm not even comfortable using the term, Easter. As a Christian, I would much rather refer to it as RESURRECTION SUNDAY or the season of the RESURRECTION.

Our focus as Christians needs to be on the resurrected Savior and not on some sex goddess or pagan symbol. The world is full of illicit sex. In fact, we're living in a society where many if not most people do not value their morals. If there has ever been a time when we need to teach our children the value of godliness, holiness, and biblical morality, it is today.

What the church needs is a genuine return to the teachings of God's Word whereby we make it our final authority not only in FAITH, but also in PRACTICE. Colossians 2:8 admonishes us to "Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ." It is with this verse of Holy Scripture, that I expanded the title of my book from, "On What Day of the Week was Christ Crucified?" to the subtitle, "A Look at How Sacred Occasions Have Been Turned into Worldly Traditions."

Chapter 12

THE SANTA CLAUS MYTH

It's not my intent to deliberately make anyone angry, but I do believe that "the truth shall make you free" (Jh. 8:32). Personally, I feel that we must daily examine our hearts and keep them from becoming what John Calvin called, "an idol factory." If we're not careful, we can adopt the customs of the world without ever realizing it. Learning the history of Santa Claus is not all that difficult. With the world of internet at our finger tips, all one has to do is google Santa Claus and you'll get more information "than you can shake a stick at." For that reason, I'll try to keep my remarks rather short, but try to say enough to get my point across.

There was a man known as Nicholas of Myra who was born around 270 AD in present day Turkey. He was orphaned when he was young, but was called to be a pastor at the age of thirty in the city of Bethlehem. Under the reign of Diocletian, he was imprisoned and suffered greatly, but remained faithful to Christ. As was the custom with the bishops of his day, he wore bright red attire. He was especially fond of children and enjoyed giving them gifts in secret. In 325 AD, he was on the committee of Nicea to canonize the Bible and write the Nicean Creed. He died in 350 AD.

You will find many legends about Santa Claus that spread throughout Europe and in different countries around the world. The American legend is believed to have originated from the Dutch legend of Sinter Klass in the 17th century. It was in 1773 that Washington Irving gave Americans their most detailed information from the Dutch version of Saint Nicholas. It was in 1822 when Clement Moore wrote the poem for his children, "Twas the Night Before Christmas," about eight tiny reindeer pulling a sleigh.

Later, during the Civil War, artist Thomas Nast drew pictures of a fat, rosy-checked Santa dressed in red and wearing a long white beard with a sack of toys. He is the one that added such

details as Santa's workshop at the North Pole and Santa's list of good and bad children. Originally, Santa Claus was an elf-size figure, but was depicted as human-size in 1931 for Coca-Cola advertisements. Rudolph was invented in 1939 by an advertising writer for Montgomery Ward. All of this evolved into the myth of Santa Claus that has taken precedent over the true meaning of Christmas. Today, the image of Santa Claus is used to celebrate the "Christmas" season all around the world. It has become a tool of the devil in distracting away from the real meaning of Christmas among Christians. Now, in America, we find ourselves living in a land where wishing people a "Merry Christmas" or putting up a manger scene are coming under attack and is not politically correct. It's acceptable to say "Happy Holidays," but close to illegal to say the word, "Christmas."

I remind you that you cannot spell Christmas with Christ! The origin of the word Christmas comes from the Old English words, Cristes moesse, meaning the mass or festival of Christ. Roman Catholics consider the word, mass, as a sacrament; whereas, Protestants use the term, mass, as a gathering. Some think that the abbreviation, Xmass, is sacrilegious while others find it acceptable simply because the letter X (chi) is the first letter in the Greek word for Christ. The majority of people do not know Greek and are not aware of this; therefore, they mean well by saying that Christ should not be left out of Christmas. I'm in full agreement with that statement and for that reason, nothing or no one else should compete for His attention when it comes time to celebrate the incarnation.

We all can agree upon the fact that Jesus was not born in the month of December. The 25th of December in the Roman Empire was a pagan holiday that dated back long before the birth of Christ. Christians refused to be a part of such a pagan observance and while everybody else was celebrating something pagan, they started celebrating the incarnation of Jesus Christ. To them, it was turned into a joyous occasion and a time of worship as they directed their attention toward the One true and living God Who came to earth in a body of flesh to redeem them from the penalty of their sin. I believe that it pleases God for His people to

remember the birthday of Christ every year as well as other special spiritual occasions. Decorations at Christmas time can mean one thing to the pagan community, but it can mean something entirely different to Christians. It, along with the celebration of Christ's resurrection are two of the most precious times of the year for the New Testament Church.

I grew up in a home where my parents played Santa Claus and I was taught to believe in such a creature as being real. As a child, when I saw this dressed up figure in public during the Christmas season, it literally scared the wits out of me. I remember my imagination runny wild and even thought that I saw him spying on me. Needless to say, with age, all of that took care of itself once I came to my senses.

I'll never forget early into my ministry, in fact, it was in my first pastorate, that I had an older preacher friend to say something to me that really got my attention. In talking about Santa Claus, he just asked me about the attributes that were given to this big man in a red suit. When I started naming them, it hit me like a ton of bricks. They were the same attributes that we equate with Almighty God. He's presented to our children as a supernatural person who sees you when you're sleeping and knows when you're awake. In other words, he's omnipotent, omniscient, and omnipresent. Only God the Creator of heaven and earth deserves those attributes.

Now, don't get me wrong. I once was a child as to which I just alluded. I loved to play cowboys and "play-like" I was riding my horse, Trigger. Fairy tales have their place in the literary world, but we must differentiate between fairy tales and the real world. There is nothing wrong with imagination and there is a place for fiction in our literature. However, we need to teach our children the difference between truth and fiction, make-believe and reality. Children must learn that they cannot get run over by a transfer truck and then get up and walk away like nothing happened. The story of Santa Claus needs to be dealt with in the same manner in which we would deal with Snow White, Snoopy, Mickey Mouse, Donald Duck, Goofy, Superman, and on and on we can go.

I remember when our youngest son liked Spiderman. We had to tell him that he could not climb the wall like Spiderman. It was only a make-believe character. In fact, I've often referred to living amongst a cartoon generation. We're living in a world where people act like they have taken the cartoons of which they grew up and are often acting them out in daily living. The Road Runner may be a cute cartoon, but it's dangerous to try and impersonate him on the highway.

First of all, parents who tell their children that Santa Claus is for real are lying to them. There was a man in my first pastorate that told me about asking our daughter what Santa Claus was going to bring her. She informed him that we did not play Santa Claus at our house. I think it caught him off guard at first, but then he admitted to me that if parents lie to their children about Santa Claus, then why should the child believe the parent when they are encouraged to believe in Jesus Christ? Come to think about it, that is a good question. We ought to be teaching, training, and demonstrating to our children to always tell the truth and never to lie (Jh. 8:44). If that be the case, then why should a Christian parent ever tell his child that Santa Claus is real. The man after which we get the legend of Santa Claus doesn't exist today and he never did bear the attributes of God.

Some people, even professing Christians, say that they like Santa Claus because he emphasizes the spirit of giving and will go so far as to say that's what Christmas is all about. Allow me to point you to the Lord Jesus Christ. God gave the very best gift that could possibly be given when He wrapped Himself in a body of flesh and was born in Bethlehem's manger destined to die on a cruel cross in atonement for the "sins" (Matt. 1:21) of His people. John 3:16, states so very well, "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." God's greatest love "gift" was Jesus Christ and He was born at a time that we call CHRISTmas. A time when God's redeemed people gather together to worship the birth of our Lord on earth. Talking about the spirit of giving, nothing can ever top that! Who

needs to emphasize Santa Claus when we need to try and pattern ourselves after Christ, our perfect example?

Like the glorious resurrection of Jesus Christ, Christmas has become a time of year when the world has cashed in on making money and diverting attention away from the true significance of the occasion. In fact, in America, people are arguing about saying either Merry Christmas or Happy Holidays. Our pagan society is trying to steal the meaning of Christmas in every way that it can. You can talk about Santa Claus all you want, but just don't talk about Jesus Christ or else you might get attacked. You can go to heathen lands around the globe and you will find Santa Claus promoted without any problem, but any mention of Jesus Christ is restricted. That ought to tell us all we need to know about Santa Claus. He has become the pagan god that claims attention in the month of December among heathens.

As Christians, we should never allow the devil to divert our attention away from the significance of either the Birth or Resurrection of Jesus Christ. We need to keep the main thing the main thing. In whatever way we choose to celebrate these occasions, we need to stay focused on the glory of God in Jesus Christ. Decorations have their place, but let them help you focus on Christ and enhance your worship of Him. Our God is a "jealous God" (Ex. 20:5) and He alone deserves our affection and worship.

I personally believe that the important news that we need to share at Christmas is not who comes down the chimney, but Who came down to earth from Heaven. Whatever, you do, don't substitute Christ for anything or anyone else in your life or home and especially in the local New Testament Church. Besides, whose birthday is it that we're celebrating at Christmas? Don't ever lose sight of the real meaning of Christmas and what it's all about. What is Christmas to you? Is it a holiday or a holy day? Instead of the church influencing culture, I'm afraid that culture has influenced the church. In fact, I've said for many years, that there is so much of the world in the church, that one can hardly tell that the church is even in the world.

Chapter 13

HALLOWEEN AND THE DEVIL

The tradition of Halloween has roots dating back several hundred years before the birth of Christ. It's a tradition that even Christian people accept without seriously questioning the purpose of its celebration. If you were to look the word up in the dictionary or encyclopedia, you would find that Halloween comes from ALL HALLOWS EVE which is the evening before All Hallows. Most folks are under the impression that this has something to do with the Christian church. However, as we take the time to study the history of Halloween, we discover that this is a celebration that precedes the Christian church by several centuries. Let's take a few moments and look into the origin of this night that is called, Halloween.

Today's observances connected with Halloween dates back to a practice of the ancient Druids in Britain, France, Germany, and the Celtic countries. This celebration honored one of their deities, Samhain, who they believed to be lord of the dead. They believed Samhain called together all the wicked souls who had died within the past year and had been condemned to inhabit the bodies of animals. The Druids customarily lit great fires on Halloween for the purpose of warding off these evil spirits (this is from where the jack-o-lantern concept comes). The date for this celebration was October 31st, the eve of the Celtic New Year.

On this same evening, the Celts also believed that the spirits of the dead revisited their earthly homes to be entertained by the living. The occasion fell during the time of year when the leaves began to fall and there was the usual seasonal decay. For this reason they thought it appropriate to celebrate DEATH. This is exactly what Halloween was, a celebration of death! It honored the god of the dead and the wicked spirits of the dead. The Druids believed that if they failed to provide acceptable food and shelter for the evil spirits, then bad spells would be cast on the living (as you can see, herein is the concept of "trick or treat"). These beliefs were not confined to northern Britain, but spread

world-wide by pagan people. In 607 AD, Pope Boniface IV of Rome incorporated pagan celebrations into Christian worship. For 200 years the Roman Catholics gathered to pray to Mary, for their dead. This took place during May and was called ALL SAINTS DAY. In 834 AD, the date was changed in order to coincide with the pagan Druidic celebration. This is how ALL SAINTS DAY and ALL HALLOWS EVE merged whenever the date was changed to November 1st.

Just stop to think about all of this! Halloween is nothing but pagan. It was a time of worshipping the dead, satisfying evil spirits, honoring a false deity, and the praying to Mary for the sake of the dead. Nowhere in God's Word are Christians to be partakers of this type of celebration or occasion. God warned the Israelites in Deuteronomy 18:9-14, "When thou art come into the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee, thou shalt not learn to do after the abominations of those nations. There shall not be found among you any one that maketh his son or daughter to pass through the fire, or that useth divination, or an observer of times, or an enchanter, or a witch, or a charmer, or a consulter with familiar spirits, or a wizard, or a necromancer. For all that do these things are an abomination unto the Lord: and because of these abominations the Lord thy God doth drive them out from before thee. Thou shalt be perfect with the Lord thy God. For these nations, which thou shalt possess, hearkened unto observers of time, and unto diviners: but as for thee, the Lord thy God hath not suffered thee so to do."

We can also turn to the New Testament and be reminded from First Thessalonians 5:22 to, "Abstain from all appearance of evil." It's very clear from Scripture that God does not want his people to act like heathens, practice their festivities, nor follow in their traditions.

Believers in the Lord Jesus Christ simply have no business giving recognition or honor to the devil or to his pagan practices. It is plain idolatry and blasphemy against Almighty God to promote the praying to or for dead saints or be a part of an occasion that exalts the connotation of the occult. I personally cannot understand how many churches can participate in

Halloween by having pictures of witches, spooks, and the like plastered in the very house of God. Neither can I understand why Christians (of all people) would plan a fright night party in the local church, a spook trail through the woods, or take part in a horror house.

Even worse than this, parents dress their sweet little innocent children to look like (what they think resembles) devils, ghosts, witches, zombies, and the like. How sad it is to drive by the home of a Christian and see it decorated for Halloween. Whenever we fall victim to doing this type of thing, then we are giving place to the devil.

Now, please don't misunderstand me. There is nothing wrong with churches having something in place of Halloween. There is certainly nothing wrong with children wanting to dress up in cute costumes. It's not wrong to innocently give children some candy or a piece of fruit providing that the parents approve. However, the observance of Halloween, which places an emphasis on Satanism, Spiritism, and the Occult has no place in the life of a Christian. I believe that the Christian church could and should provide an alternative to Satan's Halloween celebration.

We preach that the alternative to the Devil's Hell is God's Heaven. Well, it would be good to provide such an alternative for our young people. They need to be taught the truth because Jesus is "the truth" (Jh. 14:6) and only "truth will make you free" (Jh. 8:32). We need to teach children that the Devil and Hell are for real. Neither of these should be taken lightly and are not laughing matters. Instead of participating in the devilish attractions of the world, we should attempt to provide our youth with God-honoring and Christ-centered activities.

Children and youth need to learn that Christians can have fun without involving the Devil or giving him his due. Why can't the local church plan a Children's night, Fall Festival, Harvest Jubilee, Ho-Bo Bean Banquet, or a Tacky Party in substitution for Halloween? Many congregations today are having a Trunk and Treat in their church parking lots at which time they not only give out goodies, but Bibles and gospel tracts. Whether or not you choose to give candy when children come to your door on

Halloween night is a matter between you and God. If you chose to do so, why not give out a gospel tract along with your piece of goodie? A tract that explains the meaning of Halloween would be excellent and give you a witnessing opportunity. People need to become informed as to the meaning behind Halloween.

Pictures of black cats, witches, jack-o-lanterns, trick or treat, and all other suggestive forms of Satanic evil have no place in the Christian home. When it comes to Halloween, ghosts, witches, and monsters must be left to the Devil, who is the “prince” (Eph. 2:2) of “darkness” (Jh. 3:19). The people of God must not make fun or even play around with the forces of evil. We need to teach our children that the Devil is not just a creepy looking man in a red suit with horns and a pointed tail. He is the believer’s enemy that tries to make himself look appealing. As children of light, Christians will remain in direct opposition to him. We must learn to resist the Devil, give honor to God and glory to our Savior by seeking to be “an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into His marvelous light” (I Pet. 2:9).

Don’t be afraid for people in your community to know that you are different. If you are saved, let the world know that you are a child of God. Be careful how you and your family observe the night of October 31st. If you want your little children or grandchildren to have some candy, then go buy them a bag full. That way, you can be sure that it’s safe. Let us strive to live daily a life that would bring honor to God and promote the truth of Jesus Christ to our sinfully contaminated and traditionally degraded society. May God give His people the desire, discernment, and courage to not only know the truth, but the power to practice it in everyday life. That’s a major theme found in the Book of James, believing and behaving correctly. We can claim to believe the Bible, but our testimony and credibility will be ineffective if we make no attempt to put the teachings of God’s Word into daily living.

Chapter 14

CREMATION AND CULTURE

Culture is always changing, oftentimes from generation to generation. In contrast to culture, truth never changes. Culture can be defined in different ways, but for the sake of this chapter, let me say that it is socially transmitted patterns of beliefs or behavior based upon human intellect and acceptance. On the other hand, truth, as Christians know it, is simply that which is without error. Jesus said that He was “the truth” in John 14:6 and that His Word is “truth” in John 17:17. In fact that same verse of Scripture tells us how we can be set apart from the world by the application of God’s Word. In its entirety, it reads, “Sanctify (to make holy, separate, set apart) them through thy truth; thy word is truth.” The “them” that is referred to in verse 17 are the apostles for whom Jesus was directly praying, but indirectly, it’s referring to all believers in the Lord Jesus Christ down through the ages of time.

God’s Word is the Christian’s roadmap for living. It is God’s written revelation of Himself. Holy Scripture is the inerrant, infallible, and inspired Word of God. I think it was D.L. Moody that said something like, the Bible will keep you from sin or sin will keep you from the Bible. The more we study and apply God’s Word, the more we will find ourselves being conformed into the image of Christ. That should be the desire of every born again child of God.

I don’t claim to have all the answers to all the questions, because I know my own limitations better than anyone else. As I began writing this book, I had not even thought of inserting the subject that makes up this particular chapter. However, due to particular circumstances I felt compelled to address this matter. As a pastor, I’ve conducted memorial services for people who chose to be cremated. In doing so, I never lambasted the family or said anything to them about my views. In fact, in the past, I never said anything to anyone about cremation unless I addressed

it in a sermon when I was speaking about Christian burial or if someone directly approached me and asked for my opinion.

People certainly have the right to differ with me and if you do, I'll respect and love you regardless. I only hope that you will treat me likewise. After what I've already written regarding the Easter Bunny, Santa Claus, and Halloween, I may as well speak to the subject of cremation since it is a growing trend in our modern day American culture, even among professing Christians.

To begin with, the Word of God should be the final authority for every Christian. I realize that there can be various interpretations to a given passage of Scripture even among the best of theologians. That just goes to prove that we all are currently seeing "through a glass darkly" (I Cor. 13:12). None of us have all the answers to all the questions and we all stand in need of sanctification and spiritual growth in the grace and knowledge of God's Word. I would simply like to share with you my views on cremation and let God do with it as He sees fit.

Personally, I cannot find the practice of cremation mentioned a single time in reference to a believer's burial in Holy Scripture. Every time when either an Old Testament or New Testament believer died, there was always bodily burial. Besides, what better example do we need other than the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. Let me, once again, take you to the burial of Jesus immediately after He was taken from the cross.

"And after these things Joseph of Arimathaea, being a disciple of Jesus, but secretly for fear of the Jews, asked of Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus: and Pilate gave him leave. He came therefore, and took away his body. And there came also Nicodemus, he who at the first came to him by night, bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about a hundred pound weight. So they took the body of Jesus, and bound it in linen cloths with the spices, as the custom of the Jews is to bury. Now in the place where he was crucified there was a garden; and in the garden a new tomb wherein was never man yet laid. There then because of

the Jews' Preparation (for the tomb was nigh at hand) they laid Jesus" (John 19:38-42).

At this point, allow me to pause and remind you that Jesus hung on the cross to bear the curse of sin for His people. Galatians 3:13 says, "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree." This reminds us of the Old Testament passage from Deuteronomy 21:22-23, "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." Even the dead bodies of condemned criminals were treated with respect.

Jesus Christ was the sinless Son of God "who knew no sin" (II Cor. 5:21). He purchased our redemption with His shed blood on Calvary's cross as described in First Peter 1:18-19, "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your fain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without spot."

Jesus was treated and hanged like a common criminal, but according to Scripture even criminals were deserving of a decent burial and were not permitted to be left unburied after execution. This reminds me of the burial of the seven descendants of Saul who were killed by the Gibeonites and left for dead in the open for the vultures to eat. It was Rizpah, who had been one of Saul's concubines that bore two of these seven men, who instigated the burial. It is recorded that she guarded the bodies of the seven men from being devoured until they could be properly buried. After collecting the bones of Saul and Jonathan from an obscure grave in Jabeshgilead, they were buried in the sepulcher of Kish, Saul's father, along with the bodies of the seven men (II Sam. 21:1-14).

We can go all the way back to the first recorded death in Scripture when Cain killed Abel and God asked him, “What hast thou done? The voice of thy brother’s blood crieth unto me from the ground. And now art thou cursed from the earth, which hath opened her mouth to receive thy brother’s blood from thy hand” (Gen. 4:10). I’m not trying to stretch the scriptures to make it say what I want it to say, but from the wording of this text, it sounds to me like the “earth ... opened her mouth” to receive Abel’s dead body. However, I’ll have to admit that with Cain being the pagan that he was, I guess that it’s possible that this could have been the first act of cremation. But, with the mention of blood, referring to the manner of death that he died, I lean toward a bodily burial. Cremation would have been in keeping with Cain’s actions. He refused to give God a proper sacrifice; therefore, why should he regard any dignity of human burial?

Without going into the history of Abraham and God calling him out of paganism, it’s recorded that when he died, “his sons Isaac and Ishmael buried him in the cave of Machpelah, in the field of Ephron the son of Zohar the Hitite, which is before Mamre; The field which Abraham purchased of the sons of Heth; there was Abraham buried, and Sarah his wife” (Gen. 25:9-10).

Jacob left instructions pertaining to his death in Gen. 49:29-33, “And he charged them, and said unto them, I am to be gathered unto my people: bury me with my fathers in the cave that is in the field of Ephron the Hittite, In the cave that is in the field of Machpehah, which is before Mamre, in the land of Canaan, which Abraham bought with the field of Ephron the Hittite for a possession of a burying place. There they buried Abraham and Sarah his wife; there they buried Isaac and Rebekah his wife; and there I buried Leah. The purchase of the field and the cave that is therein was from the children of Heth. And when Jacob had made an end of commanding his sons, he gathered up his feet into the bed, and yielded up the ghost, and was gathered unto his people.”

In the last chapter of Genesis we read of Joseph’s death and how he wanted his remains to eventually be taken back to the land that was promised to his forefathers. The last three verses of

Genesis records these words, “And Joseph said unto his brethren, I die; and God will surely visit you, and bring you out of this land unto the land which he sware to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob. And Joseph took an oath of the children of Israel, saying, God will surely visit you, and ye shall carry up my bones from hence. So Joseph died, being an hundred and ten years old: and they embalmed him, and he was put in a coffin in Egypt” (Gen. 50:24-26).

It was a common practice in both the Old and New Testaments for burial to occur in a cave or sepulcher (referring to a grave or tomb). Today, some people prefer a mausoleum in which to be buried which is very much like a sepulcher. A mausoleum can either be inside a larger building, containing several or many spaces or an outdoor building with multiply spaces. Back in the days of the early church, catacombs were underground cemeteries popular around Rome.

The point that I’m trying to make is simply that the human body deserves respect after death. When God created man in the Garden of Eden, He said, “Let us (Father ...Son ... Holy Spirit) make man in our (Father ...Son ... Holy Spirit) image, after our (Father ... Son ... Holy Spirit) likeness” (Gen. 1:26). “So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them” (Gen. 1:17). In these two verses, I’ve inserted Father, Son, and Holy Spirit after the words, “us” and “our.” There is only one God, but He is a triune God. In the creation of man, God made both the man and woman after his “image,” a trinity. We know that man is a “body” (Jam. 2:26) in which lives his “soul and spirit” (Heb. 4:12). Therefore, man was made a trinity after the “image” of our triune God. The eternal soul and spirit are merely housed in the body of flesh until death. After death, the real you, your soul and spirit will exist eternally. For the born again believer, he will live forever with the Lord in Heaven, but for a lost sinner, he will suffer in the torments of eternal Hell.

Since man was made in the “image” of God and his body houses the soul and spirit, it deserves respect in a proper bodily burial. We are not to take our bodies for granted. First

Corinthians reminds the Christian in chapter three, verses 16-17, “Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are.” Then in First Corinthians, chapter six, verses 19-20, “What? Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s.” My recommendation is, don’t treat one’s body with any less respect in death as you would in life. That body is the house in which one’s soul and spirit lived upon earth. For the Christian, the body will someday be raised to a glorified state and for the Non-Christian it will be raised to eternal damnation.

Not only do we see that the body of Jesus was treated with respect after His death, but we’re reminded of the body of Lazarus. Jesus deliberately did not show up any sooner when Lazarus died because He was going to raise him from the dead. The full story is recorded in the eleventh chapter of John, but the verses to which I call attention begin with verse 38. “Jesus therefore again groaning in himself cometh to the grave. It was a cave, and a stone lay upon it. 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 had been dead four days. Jesus saith unto her, Said I not unto thee, that, if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God? Then they took away the stone from the place where the dead was laid. And Jesus lifted up his eyes, and said, Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me. And I knew that thou hearest me always; but because of the people which stand by I said it, that they may believe that thou hast sent me. 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 said unto them, Loose him, and let him go. Then many of the Jews which came to Mary, and had seen the things which Jesus did, believed on him” (Jh. 11:38-45).

Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead to demonstrate His mighty miracles. Only God can raise the dead. Lazarus was raised to someday die again, but Jesus died and arose to never die again. With this I call to your attention several aspects of Lazarus' burial. It's stated that he had been dead "four days" and that by this time "he stinketh." Upon death, the human body begins to deteriorate rather rapidly. For that reason, it must be buried quickly unless properly dealt with, such as being embalmed. In the case of Jesus as recorded in the 19th chapter of John, His body was wrapped in "linen clothes" along with "spices." It's stated that "a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about an hundred pound weight ... was brought" for this purpose. Because of the special "high day" Sabbath and the seventh day Sabbath being back to back, or because of the stone covering the door of the sepulcher, the women were not able to enter the tomb until the first day of the week at which time they discovered it empty.

Their purpose in coming was to pay respect to His body and add additional "spices." Mark 16:1, "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." Regardless of the smell of Lazarus, it did not keep Jesus from performing his miracle and neither did it keep the women away from the sepulchre of Christ. The respect shown to His dead body is remarkable and ought to speak loud and clear to us today.

Most of the original twelve apostles apparently died violent deaths. Scripture does not record the details of how they died except for Peter and Judas Iscariot; however, from history and legend we learn something about their suffering. We are told that **Matthew** suffered martyrdom by a sword or spear. **John** was boiled in oil, but was released later to be sentenced to prison on Patmos. He is the only apostle to die peacefully. **Peter** was crucified upside down. **James the Less** was either crucified, stoned, or beaten to death. **James the Great** was beheaded. **Bartholomew** was either beaten with clubs or flayed to death by a whip. **Andrew** was crucified. **Philip** was crucified and while hanging on the cross, he was also stoned. **Simon** was sawn in

pieces. **Thomas** was stabbed with a spear. **Jude** was killed with arrows.

Other disciples, such as Matthias (the replacement for Judas Iscariot) was stoned and beheaded. Paul was also beheaded. Mark died after being dragged by horses through the streets. Luke was hanged. Later in church history we read of Polycarp who was put to death for his faith. In his martyrdom, Polycarp is recorded as saying, "Eighty and six years I have served Him, and He has done me no wrong. How then can I blaspheme my King and Savior? Bring forth what thou wilt." There are some conflicting views as to how Polycarp died. Some say that he was burned at the stake. If so, this man was, shall we say, cremated at the stake, but it was not his choosing. Others claim that he was martyred before his body burned. He was put to death for his faith in Jesus Christ.

John Wycliffe, known for translating the Bible into the language of the people, is said to have died a natural death. However, sometime later we are told that his remains were dug up, and then in an act of contempt they were burned and scattered. The Roman Catholic Church burned Jan (John) Hus at the stake and then scattered his ashes in contempt. Hus was a great man of God that was very influential as a predecessor to the Protestant movement of the sixteenth century. It's been said that as flames engulfed his body that he sang a hymn to the Lord. Being cremated and having one's ashes scattered has frequently been seen as a contemptible act of degradation against the human body.

Down through history, it has been recorded how Christians have been beheaded, burned at the stake, and fed to lions. In the eyes of the world, Christians are disgusting. But, Jesus reminds us that "if the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you. Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also" (Jh. 15:18-20).

Nobody would ask for such a death as these, but as followers of Christ, we don't know what we must face before life is over. If we are called upon to die for our Lord, then we must consider it a privilege to do so. But, regardless of in life or in death, we are called upon to glorify Him. Back in the Old Testament, I recall when Nebuchadnezzar threw Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego into the fiery furnace to be burned to death. This is one cremation that God stopped. However, according to God's sovereignty, there are times when God ordains that one is martyred and there are times when He delivers from persecution. Such a death is not one that anyone would desire. At this point, I cannot help but think of the old song, **Shady Green Pastures**. The chorus goes something like this:

**Some through the waters, some through the flood,
Some through the fire, but all through the blood;
Some through great sorrow, but God gives a song,
In the night season and all the day long.**

First Corinthians the thirteenth chapter is often referred to as the love chapter. I call your attention particularly to the words found in verse three, "though I give my body to be burned." This is not talking about cremation nor is it speaking of someone who would set his body on fire trying to prove their love for the Lord. However, I believe that it refers to those who say that they would willingly be martyred for their Lord, by being burned to death, but at the same time fail to properly demonstrate love for others. On the cross, Jesus showed us that His love for us is not wordy, but demonstrative. He didn't just say that He loved us, but He showed us. "This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you" (John 15:12). Jesus taught us by His example how to live a life of love for others and how to bury those that we love with dignity and respect.

Cremation in and of itself is and always has been a pagan practice. Why should Christians deliberately follow pagan practices and traditions? That is my question throughout this book as I've dealt with other worldly traditions. As I have

mentioned earlier, I once again return to the Book of Colossians. These words are as relevant for us today as when Paul wrote them to the church at Colosse, “As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him: Rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving. Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ” (Col. 2:6-8).

In other words, don't let the devil rob you of truth, exchanging it with worldly intellect and principles. False teachers and pagan practices surround us, but God has called His people to a higher standard. He has called us to be separate from the world unto Holiness.

“Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? And what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? Or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? For ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, And will be a Father unto you , and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty” (II Cor. 6:14-18).

Many well-meaning Christians argue that cremation is less expensive than bodily burial. That may very well be true depending upon the circumstances. However, people can shop around and find less expensive ways of bodily burial. Herein lies a big problem. Most people do not budget and make their funeral arrangements and burial plans in advance. I highly recommend it. By doing so, you can price such things as cemetery plots, grave markers, and funeral home arrangements and determine just how much you want to spend when it comes time for your death and

burial. You can have a bodily burial without spending a fortune. The determining factor for the Christian is answered in the question, “is cremation a Christian or pagan practice?” That answer is crystal clear! In my opinion, that is not even debatable.

The most important question that one must ask himself or herself is, “where will my soul (the real me inside this body of flesh) be one second after death?” If you have never come to faith in Jesus Christ through repentance of sin, then you’re not ready to die. Only God can save your soul. By realizing that you’re a sinner in need of Christ, hating your sin so much that you repent of being a sinner, believing that God sent His only begotten Son into the world to die in your place on the cross and suffer your shame of sin, by confessing that Jesus Christ died for you, and believing that He arose on the third day, you can discover peace with God, new life in Christ, and hope beyond the grave (Rom. 3:23, 6:23, Lk. 13:3, Jh. 3:16, Eph. 2:8-9, Rom. 10:9)

FINAL THOUGHTS

Throughout this book, I'm sure that you've discovered that I've often been very repetitive in several areas. That was intentional because repetition is a way of learning, especially in either hard to understand subjects or subjects that deserve emphasis. I'll never forget a preacher that was emphasizing the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ in his message. He kept repeating throughout the sermon that, "the dead man won't be dead no more." I remember it to this day! That's the most important thing that I want you to remember about this book. Jesus Christ, the Son of the Living God, came to earth, lived a perfect life, died in sacrificial atonement for the sins of His people on the old rugged cross, was buried, satisfied the righteousness demands of the Father in payment for sins, and that "the dead man won't be dead no more."

With that thought, I'm reminded of another old song written by Robert Lowry, **Christ Arose**. Listen to the words carefully.

"Low in the grave He lay-Jesus my Saviour! Waiting the coming day-Jesus my Lord!

Vainly they watch His bed-Jesus my Saviour! Vainly they seal the dead-Jesus my Lord!

Death cannot keep his prey-Jesus my Saviour! He tore the bars away-Jesus my Lord!

Up from the grave He arose, With a mighty triumph o'er His foes; He arose a Victor from the dark domain, And He lives forever with His saints to reign, He arose! He arose! Hallelujah! Christ arose!"

Jesus Christ is alive and He is alive forevermore. Hallelujah! He is God and someday, "Wherefore God also hath highly

exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father” (Phil. 2:9-11). Either in this life you will respond to Him in faith as Lord and Savior or in the next as Lord and Judge.

It will never be fully known on this side of Heaven all the details of Christ’s crucifixion. In fact, we don’t have either the recorded day of Christ’s birth nor more details about His death. However, that doesn’t change the glorious truth of WHO He is or WHAT He did in His coming to earth. If the Lord had wanted us to know more information, then He would have preserved it down through history. Well then, you might ask, “Why even bring up the subject concerning the day of the week Christ was crucified?”

I believe that such a question helps us dig into some beautiful truths of the Old Testament. I’ve attempted to do just that in this book. The majority of Christians with whom I come into contact, shy away from the Old Testament. I grew up in a local church from the time I was in the cradle roll. However, it wasn’t until I was a young adult in Bible College that I discovered the beauty of the Old Testament. I had a teacher that made it come alive and when I saw Jesus in the pages of the Old Testament, it set my soul on fire. I’ve said all of that to say, by asking the question found in the title of this book, we can see how the crucifixion of Christ was in perfect agreement with God’s descriptive plan laid out many years before His birth in Bethlehem.

There are so many unanswered questions when you begin looking at all the difficult passages in Scripture that are hard to reconcile. This one thing I know, the Bible never contradicts itself and such areas as the day of Christ’s crucifixion, must be left to God alone. There are many things that we as believers will never fully understand on this side of Glory, but it is with God given faith that we must trust our loving Heavenly Father. I don’t understand all of the Bible, but I believe it from cover to cover. Neither do I understand how God could love me so much to send

His Son to die for me and choose me to be one of his dear “little children” (a term of endearment found throughout the epistle of First John).

Having said all of this, I leave you with this final thought. Some may ask, “Why even write a book on this subject?” Not only do I want to stimulate your biblical thinking, but remind you that we’ll never know it all. We must learn to “live by faith” (Rom. 1:17), trust in a Sovereign God, and remember that “whatsoever is not of faith is sin” (Rom. 14:23). I realize that there are many people who will read this book and highly criticize my views. You may be saying, get a life man! There’s nothing wrong with hiding Easter eggs, playing Santa Claus, doing Halloween, or cremating my loved ones. Well, that is a decision that you will have to make and answer only to God. One thing that I will say without apology. Christ must be pre-eminent (Col. 1:18) in our lives and nothing should distract from Him in any aspect of our lives.

Christians need to be a people separated from the world unto God. For that reason, we ought to live a life that is not in agreement with the world, but one that is different from the world. Instead of adopting the pagan practices of the world, Christians need to be swimming upstream against the tide of this world. What are we teaching our children and passing on to the next generation? Are we teaching them to believe in a lie or stand for the truth and always tell the truth? Why should they believe in Jesus if we teach them to believe in the reality of Santa Claus, the Easter Bunny, Halloween, or disrespect the human body made in the very image of God? Do we tell them to do as we do or do as we say do? Do they see us one way on Sunday and another way during the week? Don’t you know that they can see through us better than we realize? We’re all going to die. Are we going to leave behind a pagan memory or one of Christian practice?

As I think back over the past many years, I reflect upon various instances when I saw a person for the last time. That last time is the mental picture that I remember the most when I think of the individual. People are entitled to their opinions. Some want an

open casket, some do not. Some want an expensive casket, some do not. Some don't even want to be embalmed nor buried, but have their cremated ashes spread in an open field, in the ocean, or some other place. Regardless of how one is buried, it will not determine the destiny of one's soul. It will leave behind a testimony and say something about one's beliefs, but where one spends eternity will depend if their name is written in the Lamb's Book of Life.

“And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire” (Rev. 20:12-15).

Is your name written in the Lamb's
Book of Life?

Have you been washed in the blood of Calvary's
Lamb?

If you were to die tonight, where would you spend
eternity?

“Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be
saved” (Acts 16:31)