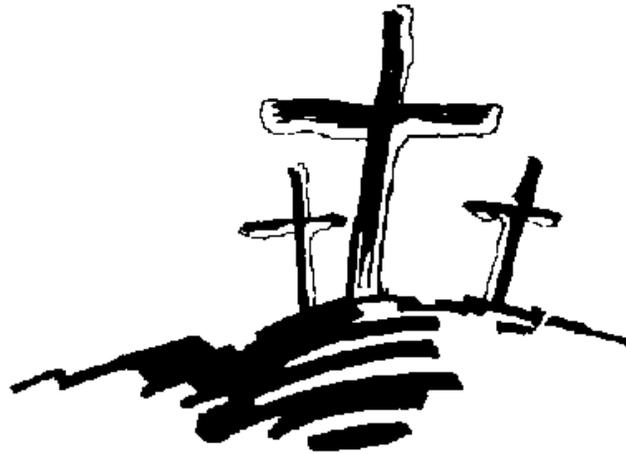


Studies of The Year and Day Jesus Died



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The Crucifixion Date

In December, 1983, newspapers across the country carried an article titled, "Scientists Say They've Determined Crucifixion Date." The article, an Associated Press release datelined London, concerned the findings of two British scientists, Colin J. Humphreys and W. G. Waddington of Oxford University, who "have concluded with 'reasonable certainty' that Christ died on Friday, April 3, in the year A.D. 33." Their findings were published in a December issue of *Nature*, a British science magazine.

The two British scientists "based their conclusions on astronomical calculations and biblical and historical references" according to the article. The AP release also states, "In the second half of their article, the scientists turn to references in the Bible and in the Apocrypha to the moon being 'turned to blood,' saying that 'in our view the phrase...probably refers to a lunar eclipse, in which case the crucifixion can be dated unambiguously.'" The two scientists claim that a lunar eclipse was visible at Jerusalem during Passover on Friday, April 3, A.D. 33.

The Traditional View

Many, no doubt, are pleased with these conclusions. The traditional date for Jesus' death among Christians through the years has corresponded with the 33 A.D. date. We based our conclusions, not on astronomical calculations but, on scripture. Jesus was about 30 when he began His ministry (Lk.3:23). His ministry lasted about 3½ years. By adding the two together and using the dating system of Dionysius Exiguus (6th century A.D.), we arrived at the date of 33 A.D. Upon the basis of these conclusions we have preached that the church was established in Jerusalem on Pentecost in 33 A.D. and that any spiritual institution founded before that time claiming to be the church of the Lord was too early to be the Lord's, and any founded after that time was too late to be the Lord's. Many church buildings built by brethren have cornerstones reading, "Established in Jerusalem, 33 A.D. Established in _____, 18?? A.D." These conclusions are all sound **IF** Dionysius did not make a mistake.

Men Make Mistakes

Regardless of how scholarly or meticulous man's efforts, man is still fallible. Dionysius did make a

costly mistake! He dated the birth of Jesus four years after the death of Herod the Great during whose reign Jesus was born.¹ By making this mistake, he has rendered his calendar ineffective as a tool in determining the date of Jesus' death. While this does not mean that Jesus did not die in 33 A.D., it does mean that our method of determining the date is in error.

Men with good intentions often make the mistake of trying to solve biblical problems by scientific methods. Such efforts reflect a tinge of unbelief. Seeking to explain the Star of the wise men (Matt.2:2) by some astronomical phenomenon ignores plain biblical statements and undermines the miraculous witness God gave to His Son's birth. Explaining the darkness over the face of the earth, when Jesus was crucified (Lk.23:44), by a solar eclipse denies God His miraculous witness to Jesus' sonship. Unbelievers hunt for such explanations. Believers accept them without question. Astronomical explanations are neither sought nor needed.

Our two British scientists have fallen prey to this fallacy. They have reached conclusions based in part upon "astronomical calculations." Supposing that biblical references to the moon "*turning to blood*"... "probably refer to a lunar eclipse," which they perceive identifies the date of Christ's death "unambiguously," they have deduced that Jesus died on April 3, 33 A.D. Their method of calculation demonstrates their ignorance of biblical terminology, its use and application, and their failure to accept by faith the biblical accounts as revealed.

When Was Jesus Crucified?

The exact date of Jesus' death is not absolutely essential to being a believer, yet to the student of biblical history the date of His death is most helpful. Some historical clues are given which contribute to a definite decision. The Christian can know within reason the date His Saviour died for him.

Luke records that John the Baptist began his ministry "*in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judea*" (Lk.3:1). Tiberius began his full reign upon the death of Augustus in 14 A.D., and Pilate ruled Judea from 26 to 36 A.D.² If Luke's fifteen years are to be counted from 14 A.D., then 28 or 29 A.D. would

correctly identify the beginning of John's ministry and subsequently that of Jesus. Many think, however, that Luke includes Tiberius' co-regency with Augustus which began in 11 A.D.³ If so, 26 A.D. must be accepted as the proper date for the beginning of the ministries of John and Jesus.

John relates that the Jews in rebuttal to Jesus' statement, "*Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up,*" said, "*Forty and six years was this temple in building, and wilt thou rear it up in three days?*" (Jn.2:19,20). Their statement is significant because the temple at that time was still under construction and was not completed until A.D. 64.⁴ The temple work was started by Herod the Great in the eighteenth year of his reign,⁵ or 19 B.C. Counting forty-six years from 19 B.C. brings us to 27 A.D. Jesus was in Jerusalem for the observance of the first Passover of His ministry (27 A.D.) when this discussion took place (Jn.2:13). It is thought that John records three other Passovers observed by Jesus during His ministry (Jn.5:1; 6:4; 12:1). If so, Jesus' death came in 30 A.D., three years after His first Passover observance.

The most widely accepted date for Jesus' crucifixion is 30 A.D. Careful students will observe that biblical historians repeatedly refer to this date. Any calculations designed to establish the date of His death must take into account that Jesus came to Bethany six days before Passover (Jn.12:1). Passover, which identifies the day the lamb was killed (Mk.14:1,12; Lk.22:1,7), came on the 14th day of the first month Abib or Nisan (Ex.12:6; Lev.23:5). The 14th did not come on the same day of the week each year. In the year Jesus was crucified, the 14th came six days after Jesus came to Bethany. This is significant because, if we count those six days from the first day of the week, Passover would come too late in the week to fit the biblical narrative. If we back up, we must back over the Sabbath to Friday to begin our count, otherwise Jesus and many other Jews violated at least the traditional Sabbath observance by making such a long journey on that day. These guidelines establish that in the year our Lord was crucified Passover fell on Thursday.

The 14th Nisan, 30 A. D.

The British scientists, Humphreys and Waddington, concluded that "Jesus died at the same time as the Passover Lambs were slain." It is evident from their article that they understood Jesus died on the 14th Nisan which in 33 A.D. was Friday, April 3.

They reconstructed the Jewish calendar to that time to arrive at this date.

This author, while appreciating their deduction that Jesus died on the 14th of Nisan as our Passover (1 Cor.5:7), believes it impossible to reconcile their deduction with John 12:1. Their findings are interesting, however, because their dates correspond with other dating tables for that time period and contribute to the verification of their accuracy. A reconstructed dating table, which appeared in Christianity Today, March 29, 1974, the results of a computer analysis, corresponds identically with the findings of Humphreys and Waddington. These tables also show that the only year between 27 and 34 A.D. that the 14th Nisan fell on Thursday was in the year 30. A.D. 27 was too early and A.D. 34 too late for the date of the Lord's death. The 14th Nisan in 30 A.D. corresponds to April 6 according to our calendar. While this does not settle the question of whether Jesus died on Thursday (Nisan 14, April 6) or Friday (Nisan 15, April 7), it does tell us the year of His death, 30 A.D.

Conclusion

Setting dates for biblical events can be a tedious matter. Numerous things must be taken into consideration before reaching valid conclusions, i.e., comparative secular history and other biblical accounts and principles. It is surprising, however, how close one can come to following the many events of Jesus' personal ministry and those of the early church, even to the days, months and years, by observing the numerous clues written within the revealed accounts. Careful deductions based upon these clues broaden our undemanding and expand our learning experience.

– From *Valley Tidings*, 10-85

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1. I.S.B.E., "Chronology of the N.T.," Vol. I, p. 644b.
 2. I.S.B.E., "Pontius Pilate," Vol. 4, p. 2396
 3. I.S.B.E., "Tiberius," Vol. 5, p. 2979
 4. I.S.B.E., "Temple," (Herod's), Vol. 5, p. 2937
 5. Ibid.

The Day Christ Died

I. INTRODUCTION:

- A. Announce subject and how my interest in it was cultivated.
1. This present study is an outgrowth of some remarks made during our studies on the Life of Christ in conjunction with our studies, JOURNEYS THROUGH THE BIBLE. Some of you showed interest and some even did some study on it.
 2. My original interest was aroused by some articles written by Bill Cavender, then of Port Arthur, TX, and carried in the April and May 1974 issues of Words of Life printed at that time by James Cooper and by another article which appeared in the February, 25, 1975 issue of Tidings of Truth, a weekly publication of the Southside church in Owensboro and edited by Ken Green who lived there and worked with that church at that time. Cavender took the position that Jesus died on Thursday and Green on Friday.
 3. My first studies of Cavender's articles were not productive. There was nothing really convincing to come from it though the articles did have a lot of good solid evidence in them to support a Thursday Crucifixion which I had not considered before.
 4. After studying them a couple of weeks I laid them aside unconvinced that the day was Thursday.
 5. Green's article, which I read about nine months later, rekindled my interest. He did not seek to argue the point for a Friday crucifixion but rather ridiculed the idea that it could be on any other day. I suppose I was infuriated by his approach which gave no proof but only ridiculed the idea that it could be any other day.
 6. I was sufficiently challenged to pursue the matter further until I was absolutely satisfied in my own mind as to exactly when Jesus was crucified,
- B. Here are some things that affected my study of the issue.
1. I had previously found that scholars had reasoned that if John's account of Jesus' death were considered alone, the conclusion would have to be that Jesus died on Thursday.
 - a. Does the Holy Spirit contradict himself?
 - b. If not, then, if John teaches that Jesus died on Thursday, so do the others.
 - c. If there is a contradiction here, it is a student error and not a writer's error.
 2. The matter of Jewish time. I had always heard how the Jews counted time, but had not applied it. I also found that a lot of things brethren have argued concerning Jewish time is not so.
 3. The question of time elements being involved. I had paid little attention to whether it took any time to accomplish the revealed activities.
 - a. Have you ever considered the time elements involved in the events of betrayal night?
 - b. And the time involved in the events surrounding a trial conducted by the Jews?
 - c. And the time involved in the examinations by Pilate, Herod and Pilate again?
 - d. For the pronouncing of death and for the burial which took hours because he got a rich man's burial?
 4. The question of what was really involved in the Passover and the feast of Unleavened bread and the time elements involved.
 5. Jewish law and traditions regarding their trials and other affairs on feast days also shed light.
 6. My findings in these area were enlightening and helped me greatly in reaching a conclusion as to when Jesus died. I think you will be enlightened also.
- C. MY CONCLUSION:
1. I concluded that Jesus was betrayed, tried and crucified as He had said on Thursday, April 6, 30 AD which was the 14th of Nisan, the day called Passover by the Jews.
 2. I concluded that he died as our Passover Lamb at the same hour the Jews began killing their Passover lambs, as the scriptures teach (1 Cor.5:7).
 3. That he was buried during the night, which was the next solar day by their way of reckoning time, called Preparation, which is our Friday. That day, April 7th, 30 AD, the 15th of Nisan
 4. That he was resurrected on April 9th, the 17th of Nisan, 30 AD.
- D. THESIS: The next few lessons will be designed to look over the evidence to reach a valid conclusion.

II. BODY

A. THE RECKONING OF BIBLICAL DAYS.

1. The seven day week is of Biblical origin (Gen.1; Ex.20:8-11).
 - a. Six days for labor.
 - b. One for rest.
2. God's solar day included *EVENING* and *MORNING* (Gen.1:5).
 - a. NOTE: The evening preceded the morning. The day was counted from sunset to sunset.
 - b. The civil or solar day was 24 hours (Lev.23:32). While the scriptures refer to a civil day, the word day usually means the daylight period.
 - c. Of the day in Gen.1, (ISBE, p. 2982), says, "Evening and morning in accordance with what we know was the method of reckoning the day of 24 hours, i.e. from sunset to sunset."
 - d. "The civil day was from sunset to sunset." (Bible Handbook Halley, 21st Ed., 1957, Page 140).
 - e. "The commencement of the civil day varies in different nations: the Babylonians reckoned it from sunrise to sunrise; the Umbrians from noon to noon; the Romans from midnight to midnight; and the Athenians and others from sunset to sunset. The Hebrews naturally adopted the latter reckoning.." (A Dictionary of the Bible, Smith).
 - f. On this point all scholars agree.
3. Note how the Sabbath observance was a 24 hour observance.
 - a. Sabbath was the seventh and final day of the week.
 - b. It began at evening and continued until the following evening.
 - c. God so instructed it (Lev.23:32).
 - d. The Jews so understood it (Neh.9:13)
 - e. Josephus tells us that a priest would sound the trumpet "At the beginning of every seventh day, **in the evening twilight, as also at the evening when the day was finished**, as giving notice to the people when they were to leave off work, and when they were to go to work again." (Wars, B 4, 9, 12, p.767).
 - f. He also relates an answer given by seditious John to Titus the Roman General, how that Titus ought to respect the Jewish sabbath in which the Jews ceased from all labors and points out that even in the night they will not do any thing" (Jos, Wars, 4, 2, 3).
 - g. The sabbath lasted 24 hours and the Jews ceased all labors (Ex.20:8-11; 31:12-19; 35:2-3; Num.15:32-36). It is important to remember that if Jesus died on Friday and was buried any time after sunset, those who buried him violated the sabbath which started at sunset and required the ceasing of all work.
4. The divisions of the solar day:
 - a. Day, i.e., daylight period. This was divided into twelve hours which differed in length due to the difference in the sun at the different seasons. When Jesus was crucified the days and nights were approaching equal lengths.
 - b. Night, i.e., the dark period. This was divided into four divisions. Often called watches (Matt.14:25; Lk.12:38). The first part of the darkness was called evening, then night, midnight, and cockcrowing (Mk.13:35).
5. How Time was counted.
 - a. As you, no doubt, have heard, any part of a day was considered as a whole day. This is true but we must always bear in mind that when a Jew counted days he was usually counting daylight periods.
 - b. To illustrate: Consider the expression "today, tomorrow and the third day" (Lev.7:16-17; 19:5-6; Judg.19:9-10; Lk.13:32-33).
 - c. If one were talking at night he would simple say "tomorrow" (Gen.19:33-34; Acts 20:7; 23:31-31).
 - d. If one were intending to identify the next day he would simply call it tomorrow. The examples are plentiful.
 - e. If one were intending to identify the day after tomorrow, he would call it the third day or fourth day etc., and the same is true if counting backward (2 Chron.10:5,12; Jno.2:1; Matt.15:32 & Mk.8:2; Acts 10:30).

- f. Every specific day counted included all the nights incorporated within them and any night if necessary up to the end of the period specified but not to enter another day. Illustrate: Acts 10:30 The fourth day included the day up to the 9th hour and the preceding night too. Looking forward, the third or fourth day could also include the night (if necessary) until the beginning of the next day.
 - g. Sometimes the nights are counted and distinguished from the day (Acts 27:27,29,33,39).
 - h. Some have quoted Lightfoot who cited the Jerusalem Talmud as saying, *“that a day and a night together make up a NUCHTHEMEROS, and that any part of such is counted as the whole.”* Lange’s Commentary p.226. This Greek word is used only once in the N.T. in 2 Cor.11:25. Surely, neither Paul or the Jews intended to leave the impression that just falling into the water on a given day was equal to spending a day and night there. What that statement says is, that any part of a day and night constitutes the whole of a day and night.
 - i. HOWEVER, when a given number of days and nights are given it is designed to show without question that parts of both the days and night specified are involved (Cf.Gen.7:11-13,17; Ex.24:18; 34:25; Deut.9:9-11; 1 Sam.30:11-13; Cf.Jno.1:17; Matt.12:40). **There is a grave fallacy here: it is reasoned that since the identification of a day may include the night that the identification of a specific number of days and nights may be less than the number specified.**
6. Illustrating our conclusions by the statements referring to Jesus’ resurrection. The following expressions are all equal to the same thing:
- a. THREE DAYS AND THREE NIGHTS (Matt.12:40).
 - b. THE THIRD DAY (Matt.15:21; 17:23; 20:19; Mk.9:31; 10:34; Lk.9:22; 18:33; 24:7; 24:46; Acts 10:40; 1 Cor.15:4).
 - c. IN THREE DAYS (Matt.26:61; 27:40; Mk.15:29; Jno.2:19-20; *WITHIN* Mk.15:58).
 - d. AFTER THREE DAYS (Matt.27:63; Mk.8:31).
 - e. THE THIRD (DAY) (Lk.13:32).
 - f. **It is true you can have three days without having three nights and three nights without three days but you cannot have three days and nights without parts of all of each.**
7. Passages which are often confused:
- a. UNTIL THE THIRD DAY (Matt.27:64) This passage is confused because of when it was spoken and with reference to what it meant.
 - b. TODAY IS THE THIRD DAY SINCE (Lk.24:21) This passage is confused because of when it was spoken and because the word SINCE is ignored.
8. SUMMARY: It should be evident from our studies that when the Jews counted days they were counting daylight periods and when they counted nights, as they sometimes did (Acts 27:27,33), they were counting the darkness from sunset to sunrise. One need not count the nights in association with the days unless there is some over riding reason to do so as all nights are included between the days (and vice versa) but, if there was a need to emphasize an equal number of nights with the days mentioned it would be necessary to mention them.
- B. THE RECKONING OF BIBLICAL MONTHS
1. The Jewish year consisted of twelve lunar months
 - a. This accounted for 354¼ days of the Jewish year.
 - b. Therefore, every 3 years, 7 in every 19 years, they added a month.
 2. The first month of the calendar was called Abib or Nisan.
 - a. This month becomes important to our study because it was during this month that Jesus was Crucified.
 - b. It is listed as having 30 days [as shown on our chart](#).
 3. Passover and the feast of unleavened bread (Ex.12:1-20).
 - a. These are two separate feasts though they came to be seen as one because they are joined together. The Passover was a feast to be observed on the 14th at even. The lamb was eaten at night. The Feast of unleavened bread was observed for the seven days following Passover.
 - b. The Feasts were instituted in Egypt (Ex.12:1-51).

- c. The manner of their observance.
 - 1) A lamb of the 1st year, without spot or blemish was to be penned from 10th to 14th day (v.5).
 - 2) To be killed on the 14th at evening (footnote: "between the two evening"). Numerous sources say that the time of the killing of the Passover was between the hours of 3 and 5 on the 14th (Deut.16:6).
 - 3) The lamb was to be offered in the temple in Jerusalem (Deut.16:2,5-7).
 - 4) Each family was to have a lamb unless the family was too small at which time they were to join with another (Ex.12:3-4). Companies of from 10 to 20 eat together.
 - 5) The lamb was to be roasted whole and eaten with unleavened bread and bitter herbs (Ex.12:8-9).
 - 6) It was to be eaten during the night following the 14th. If anything was left until morning it was to be burnt with fire (Ex.12:10; 34:25; Num.9:12; Deut.16:4).
 - 7) None were to go out of the door until the next morning (Ex.12:22). Whether this part of the feast was observed or not, I do not know (Cf.Ex.12:24; Num.9:3-5,12).
 - 8) Not a bone to be broken (Ex.12:46; Num.9:12)
 - 9) The daylight of the 15th of Nisan was the first day of the feast of unleavened bread. It lasted 7 days in which no leaven could be eaten.
 - 10) On the first and seventh days holy assemblies were called (Ex.12:16; Lev.23:4,7-8).
 - 11) The first and the seventh were also special sabbaths in which no servile work was to be done (Ex.12:16; Lev.23:7-8; cf.23:37-38,40).
4. The death of Christ during Passover is not by accident.
 - a. He is said to be The Lamb of God (Jno.1:29). The only lamb of significance in the O.T. was the Passover.
 - b. He is said to be without spot and without blemish (1 Pet.1:18-29).
 - c. He is said to fulfill the prophesy of the Passover Lamb that a bone not be broken (Jno.19:36).
 - d. And Paul calls him our Passover (1 Cor.5:7).

RECREATION OF ACTIVITIES

C. ACTIVITIES UP TO PASSOVER, 14th NISAN

1. A Brief Survey of His Judean Ministry up to the Final Week
 - a. Having ended His Galilean ministry, He goes up to Jerusalem with His disciples for the Feast of Tabernacles and the final 5 or 6 months of His ministry.
 - b. In Jerusalem the rulers of the Jews sought to lay hold on him and put him to death (Jno.10:31-39).
 - c. He then goes to Perea and after a brief spell returns to Bethany to raise Lazarus (Jno.10:40-42).
 - d. When the Jews again seek to kill him (Jno.11:47-57), He goes to Ephraim and then back to Perea.
 - e. As the Passover draws near, He returns toward Jerusalem, passing through Jericho, He comes to Bethany six (6) days before Passover (Jno.12:1). The day he came to Bethany was Friday, the 8th of Nisan.
 - 1) These six days are very important because they help us pinpoint the exact day of Passover the year Jesus was crucified (Mk.14:12; Lk.22:1,7).
 - 2) Counting six days from Friday places the Passover on Thursday.
 - 3) The fact that a Sabbath is involved in this six day period is critical in determining the day.

NOTE:

 - a) If the six days are counted from Thursday, the triumphant entry would have to be placed upon the Sabbath and the events of that day would have been a violation. Also, it would place Passover too early in the week to fit the narrative.
 - b) If the six days were counted from Sabbath it would mean that Jesus made the long Journey from Jericho to Bethany (Aprox. 16 miles) on the Sabbath day, an act that would have been in complete violation of the Sabbath.

- c) If we count from Sunday, Passover would come to late in the week for the events that transpired.
- 4) Without doubt the 14th of Nisan came on Thursday the year Jesus died.
2. The Final Week Up to Passover
- a. The Sabbath Evening Supper at Bethany (Jno.12:2-9; cf.Matt.26:6-13; Mk.14:3-9). John seems to be the account that places this supper where it belongs. Matthew and Mark seem to place the account where they do to emphasize the character of Judas. James Orr says, *The arrival In Bethany Is placed by John "six days before the Passover" (12:1). Assuming that the public entry into Jerusalem took place on the Sunday, and that the 14th of Nisan fell on the following Thursday, this would lead to the arrival being placed on the Friday or Saturday preceding, according to the mode of reckoning. It is in the highest degree unlikely that Jesus would Journey from Jericho on the Jewish Sabbath; hence He may be supposed to have arrived on the Friday evening. The supper at which the anointing by Mary took place would be on the Saturday (Sabbath) evening. Matthew and Mark connect it with events two days before Passover (Mt.26:2; Mk. 14:1), but parenthetically, in a way which leaves the other order open*" (ISBE, "Jesus Christ", p. 1655).
- 1) Now, this is the supper where Mary anointed Jesus' feet.
 - 2) And Judas is rebuked for objecting to her action.
- b. The Sabbath, of course, is spent in rest.
- c. The next day, the 1st day of the week, we have the Triumphant entry into Jerusalem (Jno.12:12-18; Matt.21:1-16; Mk.11:1-11; Lk.19:28-46).
- 1) Jesus sent two of his disciples to fetch the colt.
 - 2) He made his Journey into Jerusalem an that day.
 - 3) Jesus cleansed the temple (Matt.21:12-16; Lk.19:45-48)
 - 4) He returns to Bethany for the night (Matt.21:17; Lk.21:37-38).
- d. The Morning of the Next day, Monday (Matt.21:18-22; Mk.11:12-19).
- 1) Jesus cursed the fig tree.
 - 2) Teaches in the temple during the day.
 - 3) Then goes out of the city again for the night (Mk.11:19).
- e. On Tuesday (Matt.21:23-25:46; Mk.11:20-13:37; Lk.20:21-36).
- 1) They passed by the withered fig tree on the way to Jerusalem.
 - 2) Jesus answers all his adversaries and puts them to silence. Scolds the Pharisees.
 - 3) He then goes to the Mount of Olives and foretells the destruction of Jerusalem and talks to his disciples about preparedness.
 - 4) After which he foretells his betrayal and crucifixion (Matt.26:1-2).
 - a) In this text Jesus pinpoints the DAY of his betrayal and crucifixion. The Passover, the 14th Nisan.
 - b) It is still two days away. Being Tuesday when he spoke these words, Thursday is the day that Jesus pinpoints as the Day of his betrayal and crucifixion (cf.Lk.22:1 & 7; Mk.14:12).
 - c) The language used demands that the events foretold follow in the evening of the second day and before the beginning of the third day, Otherwise "tomorrow" would have been the proper expression and if he were seeking to identify what would happen during the next daylight period or after it he would have said either "in three days" or "after three days." Jesus is first pinpointing his betrayal which came after two days.
 - d) This is significant because if Jesus was crucified on Friday and you count it and Friday night, Saturday and Saturday night you have only as much time as involved in Jesus statement here. After two days never means tomorrow, so the expression "after two days" and "in three days" do not mean the same thing. Remember, Jesus was raised on the 1st of the week before sunrise and before the count of that Day.
 - e) Let no one confuse it. Jesus identified the Passover the day they killed the Lamb, as the day he would be betrayed and crucified.

- f) The fact that Jesus ties His betrayal and crucifixion together as taking place on the day of Passover shows that He is talking about His Crucifixion on the 1st of unleavened bread.
- 5) It is also on Tuesday that the Chief Priests and Scribes sought how they might take Jesus (Mk.14:1-2; Lk.22:1-2 Matt.26:3-5; cf.Lk.19:47-48).
 - a) On Monday these rulers had been aroused (Mk.11:18; Lk.19:47).
 - b) They had set themselves on the course to Kill Him.
 - c) However, they did not intend to kill him on the FEAST which was the 15th of Nisan. If the Jews kept their word, they had to take Jesus captive before the 15th.
- f. Wednesday
 - 1) Judas conspires with the rulers to betray Jesus (Matt.26:14-16; Mk.14:10-11; Lk.22:3-6). We are not told when but apparently it was after the Jews made their determination and the next day at evening.
 - 2) There are no recorded activities of Jesus on Wednesday. No doubt he was in seclusion.
- g. Summary of the evidence thus far.
 - 1) Jesus Identifies the Passover, the day they kill the lamb, the 14th of Nisan as the DAY he would be betrayed and crucified.
 - 2) The Jews determine to take Him but NOT ON THE FEAST, lest there be an uproar among the people. The Jews made this decision because:
 - a) They held Holy Days sacred and refused to have tribunals on them (Jos, Ant. 16/2/3), Consider quotes from files Feast Days,
 - b) The sacredness of such a day would have demanded an uproar from among the people.
 - c) This policy was rigidly kept (Acts 12:1-4).
 - 3) So, if Jesus was crucified on Friday, he died a day later than he foretold and on the day the Jews said they would not kill him. If they did, where was the uproar?

D. THE ACTIVITIES OF PASSOVER DAY

1. Passover day is the day the Lamb is killed. It is often called the first of unleavened bread (Matt.26:17-19; Mk.14:12-18; Lk.22:7-13).
 - a. As we have pointed out, the civil day began at Sunset.
 - b. Peter and John are instructed to prepare the Passover.
 - 1) According to Luke, Jesus first instructs them to make the preparations.
 - 2) They then ask Him, WHERE to make the preparations. There was more to preparation than killing and roasting the lamb.
 - c. Jewish tradition tells us the Jews made their preparation on the evening of the 13th, which in reality is the beginning of the 14th. They drew the water then for the kneading of the bread, got the wine, herbs, bought the lamb and got the stores needed. USE QUOTES:

In discussing Lk.22:7-13, Go and prepare, The Interpreter's Bible says, "It was the evening of the day before the Passover, the day when the water was drawn and the bread kneaded for the feast, when all leaven had to be put away from Jewish households." (The Interpreter's Bible, Vol. 8; page 373 in Exegesis).

"On the evening of the 13th the head of the family searched the house with a lighted candle, that he might seek out all leaven. The hour on the 14th at which one must refrain from eating leaven was variously fixed." (A Dictionary of the Bible, Vol. 3).

"The night preceding the 14th of Nisan was especially set apart for this inspection by candlelight or lamplight, not by moonlight, though it was not necessary to examine by candlelight places that were open to sunlight. Study was suspended in favor of this duty of inspecting holes and corners." (The Jewish Encyclopedia, "Passover" Vol. 9, p. 550).

“The prohibition against leaven is strictly observed, The searching for hidden leaven on the evening before the Passover and its destruction in the morning have become formal ceremonies for which appropriate blessings and declarations have been included in the liturgy since the days when Aram. was the vernacular of the Jews.” (ISBE, Vol. 4, p. 2258, “Passover”, by Nathan Isaacs.

“On the evening of the thirteenth of the month the father of the family went round the whole house with a lighted candle searching out all cakes made from ordinary cereals with the addition of leaven. After that until the end of the festival no leaven was allowed to be used. The next morning all work stopped except that of tailors, barbers, and washerwomen. Then in the evening the regulation was observed that all male Jews within a radius of fifteen miles were to appear at the temple bringing an offering, to consist of a lamb not less than eight days and not more than a year old. These lambs were brought by groups of men containing ten to twenty persons, and to avoid crowding, they were admitted by relays into the Temple court where the alter stood. There each man killed his lamb, and the priests, standing in two rows with bowls of gold and silver respectively, caught the blood as it flowed, and dashed it at the foot of the alter, where the drain conveyed it away quickly. Each lamb was then hung on a nail or peg, and flayed and dressed, and its fat offered on the altar.” (Everyday Life In New Testament Times, by A.C. Bouquet, page 201).

- d. It appears to me that since we now know the traditional practice, that the question of the disciples as to WHERE they were to prepare indicates that it was the early preparations that they were to make and not the offering of the lamb and the roasting of it. Also, since Jewish practice dictated that all males were to appear in the temple together when offering the lamb, that the lamb could not have been offered without the presence of the rest of the company present.
- e. I suggest that Peter and John went before the other disciples to make the necessary arrangements and that Jesus and the rest of the disciples follow in due time while it is still evening. Evening was the first part of the new day and lasted from sunset until about the third hour of the night or about our 9 o'clock.
 - 1) “And when the evening was come” (Matt.26:20).
 - 2) “And in the evening” (Mk.14:17). It is to be noted that the Greek text is practically the same.
 - 3) “And when the hour was come” (Lk.22:17).
 - 4) “Now before the feast of the Passover” (Jno.13:1).
 - 5) Conclusion: I suggest that the time when Jesus came was shortly after Peter and John had searched the place and made the preparations for that evenings meal. Probably a couple of hours after Peter and John had gone.
- f. The evidence that suggest that this supper was not Passover:
 - 1) John says this supper was before the feast. Ordinary food was not eaten on Passover after noon on the 14th.

“All work, except that belonging to a few trades connected with daily life, was suspended for some hours before the evening of the 14th Nisan. It was not lawful to eat ordinary food after midday” (A Dictionary of the Bible, “Passover,” p. 496).

If the above statement is true, The supper had to be the feast or a supper a day before the feast. John says it was before the feast so the feast could not have been observed accordingly until the next evening.

- 2) The lamb is never mentioned or hinted at. Where is it?
- 3) There is no reference to the true significance of the Passover ever mentioned. This was part of it.

- 4) Luke records that Jesus said, "I will not any more eat thereof, until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God" (Lk.22:15-16). What did he mean?
 - a) Did he mean he would not eat of the Jewish Passover again until it was fulfilled in the Kingdom? If so we must ask, is the Jewish Passover fulfilled in the kingdom and do we eat of it? The answer is Yes and No. While Jesus is the fulfillment of the Jewish Passover, we do not eat the Jewish Passover in the Kingdom.
 - b) What we eat in the Kingdom is the Lord's Supper which is the memorial feast of our Passover. If what we eat is what Jesus ate, then it was not the Jewish Passover He ate.
 - c) If Jesus meant that He would eat the Jewish Passover with them but would not eat of it any more until the K came, his words were meaningless. The Kingdom was only 53 days from being established but the next Jewish Passover was a year away.
 - d) In order for His words to have any meaning at all he had to mean he would not eat of this Passover, meaning the memorial supper.
 - e) The impact of what Jesus was saying was that he would not be there to eat the Passover with them. No doubt He desired to eat it with them, but he would die before its observance.
- 5) While Jesus ate supper that night he did not eat the Jewish Passover.
- g. Jesus instituted the memorial supper (Matt.26:26-29; Mk.14:22-25; Lk.22:19-20).
- h. During the meal Jesus made it known that one would betray Him (Matt.26:21-25; Mk.14:18-22; Lk.22:21-23; Jno.13:18-28). It is likely that the discussion about the betrayal took place at different times during the evening.
- i. The question of who would be the greatest in the kingdom came up (Lk.22:24-30).
 - 1) Jesus teaches them a lesson on humility, and
 - 2) Washes their feet (Jno.13:4-17).
- j. Judas leaves sometime after 9 P.M. Possibly as late as 10:30 or 11:00. (Jno.13:27-30). It was night, meaning, the evening watch had ended.
 - 1) Jesus dips sop and gives it to Judas.
 - 2) Then tells him to do what he had planned to do.
 - 3) The other disciples understand that Jesus was telling Judas to buy some things needed for the feast or to give something to the poor.
- k. Jesus then comforts his disciples and taught them concerning the coming of the Holy Spirit (Jno.13:31-16:33)
- l. Jesus then prayed with his disciples (Jno.17).
- m. They sang a hymn and went out (Matt.26:30; Mk.14:26).
- n. On the way to the Mount of Olives, Jesus foretold of His denial by Peter (Matt.26:31-35; Mk.14:27-31; Lk.22:31-38).
- o. Then Jesus prays in Gethsemane (Matt.26:36-46; Mk.14:32-42; Lk.22:39-46).
- p. Judas comes to the Garden to betray Him (Matt.26:47-56; Mk.14:43-52; Lk.22:47-53; Jno.18:1-12).
- q. He is then taken before the High Priests, first Annas then Caiaphas (Matt.26:58-68; Mk.14:53-65; Lk.22:54,63-65; Jno.18:13-14,19-24).
- r. In the Palace of the High Priest, Peter denies Jesus (Matt.26:69-75; Mk.14:66-72; Lk.22:55-62; Jno.18:15-18,25-27)
- s. Jesus is then taken before a council (Matt.27:1; Mk.15:1 Lk.22:66-71).
 - 1) It should be noted here that there were several kinds of councils. There was a 23 member council and the 71 member Sanhedran.
 - 2) There were also religious and political councils. Jesus was probably tried by a political council though the High Priest might chair both.
 - 3) Religious councils never met at night, political council did. It is possible that Jesus was brought before both kinds. One at night and one in the daylight hours.

- t. Jesus was then led to Pilate (Matt.27:2; Mk.15:1; Lk.23:1-5; Jno.18:28). John says that the Jewish officers would not go into the Judgment hall lest they be defiled and not be able to eat the Passover. If the Passover had been eaten the night before, they had missed it because it was already day, and too late to eat it. But John indicates it was yet to be eaten. Since it was to be eaten in the night, it would have to be eaten the next night which is precisely what we have been saying.
- u. Jesus is sent to Herod (Lk.23:7-12).
- v. Herod sends him back to Pilate (Matt.27:11-28; Mk.15:2-20; Lk.23:13-25; Jno.18:29-19:16).
 - 1) Pilate finds no fault in him.
 - 2) His wife warns him not to have anything to do with Him.
 - 3) Pilate seeks to avoid the matter by releasing one at the Feast. They call for Barabbas.
 - 4) He then seeks to avoid crucifixion by having Jesus scourged.
 - 5) NOTE: John says three things of note to identify the day.
 - a) The Jews had not yet eaten the Passover (v.28).
 - b) Pilate released one at the Passover each year, which he did on this day (Jno.18.-39), and
 - c) it was the preparation of the Passover, the 14th of Nisan (19:14).
- w. Jesus was crucified (Matt.27:29-49; Mk.15:21-36; Lk.23:26-45; Jno.19:16-29).
 - 1) Simon of Cyrene helps bear the cross.
 - 2) They cast lots for his garments.
 - 3) They crucified Jesus about 9 AM.
 - 4) Between two thieves.
 - 5) There was darkness over the whole land from 12 to 3 PM.
 - 6) At the 9th hour or 3 PM Jesus cried with a loud voice "I thirst" and was given vinegar.
 - 7) Sometime thereafter, we don't know just when, he died.
- x. The death of Jesus and the events thereafter (Matt.27:50-56; Mk.15:37-41; Lk.23:46-49; Jno.19:30-37).
 - 1) Jesus died.
 - 2) The veil of the temple was rent in twain.
 - 3) Earth quaked and rocks rent.
 - 4) The graves were opened of many saints (After Res.).
 - 5) Many bodies of the saints which slept arose.
 - 6) The centurion confessed.
- y. The scene of the death and those present.
 - 1) The centurion and those with him (Matt.27:54).
 - 2) Mary and the other women.
 - 3) The chief priests, scribes and elders are there early but seem to have left the scene.
 - 4) Those that passed by.
 - 5) After Jesus died, people returned to the city (Lk.23:48).
 - 6) At this time no one has asked for Jesus body.
- z. The Jews came to Pilate and asked that the legs be broken (Jno.19:31).
 - 1) It was said to be the preparation when they came.
 - 2) They did not want the victims on the cross on the Sabbath.
 - 3) For that sabbath was an High Day. It is difficult to know whether the sabbath referred to was the special sabbath or the regular weekly sabbath. If the special sabbath was meant it needs to be understood that these were "high" (great) days (cf.Jno.7:37). If the weekly sabbath is in mind, it was a "high" sabbath because it occurred during the feast.

NOTE: The time of the Jews request is unknown. At the time they are unaware of Jesus' death. Pilate is in his palace when they make their request and also unaware that Jesus is dead. He sends soldiers to brake the victims' legs. They brake the legs of the two thieves but, finding Jesus dead already, they only pierce His side. WHY DO THE JEWS MAKE THIS REQUEST? I suggest the following:

“The length of this agony was wholly determined by the constitution of the victim, but death rarely ensued before thirty-six hours had elapsed. Instances are on record of victims of the cross who survived their terrible injuries when taken down from the cross after many hours of suspension (Jos. Vita, 75). Death was sometimes hastened by breaking the legs of the victims and by a hard blow delivered under the arm pit before crucifixion.” (ISBE p. 762).

In talking about the watch of the soldiers attending the crucifixion, *A DICTIONARY OF THE BIBLE* says, “This was necessary from the lingering character of the death, which sometimes did not supervene even for three days, and was at last the result of gradual benumbing and starvation.” (page 125).

Albert Barnes says, “In the punishment by crucifixion, life was lengthened out for four, five or eight days... The common period to which persons crucified would live was several days. To compensate for those lingering agonies, so that the full amount of suffering might be endured, they increased their suffering by breaking their limbs, and thus hastened their death.” (Com. on John, page 373).

“The agony lasted at least twelve hours, in some cases as long as three days. To hasten death the legs were broken, and this was considered an act of clemency. The body remained on the cross, food for birds of prey until it rotted or was cast before wild beasts. Special permission to remove the body was occasionally granted,” (The Jewish Encyclopedia, “Crucifixion” Vol. 4, p. 373).

“It may, however, be asserted that death would not take place until the local inflammation had run its course; and through this process may be much hastened by fatigue and the alternate exposure to the rays of the sun and the cold night air, it is not completed before forty-eight hours, under ordinary circumstance, and in healthy constitutions; so that we may consider thirty-six hours to be the earliest period at which crucifixion would occasion death in a healthy adult.” (A Cyclopaedia of Biblical Literature, Edited by William Lindsay Alexander, D.D., F.S.A.S., etc., Published by J. B. Lippincott and Co., Philadelphia, 1875 “Crucifixion, Death by” p. 594).

“Death, which might come within a few hours or only after several days, was brought on by different causes; by loss of blood from the scourging and especially the nailing, if this cut large veins in the wrists; by being torn to pieces by wild dogs and other animals at night, particularly if the victim was fastened to a low cross; by hunger, thirst and exposure; and probably often by asphyxiation. If the whole weight of the body had to be supported by the arms, the chest muscles would soon become paralyzed and the lungs lose their proper functioning; hence the need of the sedile, without which the victim would have had to support himself principally by his fastened feet.” (Louis F. Hartman C.S.S. R., Encyclopedia Dictionary of the Bible, A Translation, 2nd Revised Ed. 1954-1957, McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., New York, New York - 1963, “Crucifixion”, p. 463).

“Death came slowly - often after many days - as the result of fatigue, cramped muscles, hunger, and thirst.” (The Interpreter’s Dictionary of the Bible, Abingdon Press, George Arthur Duttrick, Dictionary Editor, 1962, Vol. 1., p. 749).

THE REASON FOR THE JEWS REQUEST IS SEEN, THEN. The weekly sabbath was still 24 hours away and their interest, no doubt, is to get them down before the weekly sabbath begins.

It is to be noted that the exact time of Jesus’ death was sometime after the 9th hour, or our 3 PM, and before evening. It is assumed and probably correctly that he died near the 9th hour toward evening. As to when the Jews came to Pilate, it is not known, but (1) had to be sometime

before Joseph came to the cross and before he claimed the body from Pilate, and (2) sometime after Jesus died. Since the new day began at Sunset, the preparation referred to in Jno.19:31 depends upon when they came. The 14th Nisan, Thursday, was the day of preparation for Passover (Jno.19:14), and the 15th which began at sunset was the day of preparation for the weekly sabbath. As to which preparation is in view in Jno.19:31, I must confess, I cannot tell, and do not really think it matters. In either case it is likely that they came either just before sunset or at about sunset. As we shall see shortly, circumstances related to us by the four gospel writers demand these conclusions.

E. THE EVENING OF THE NEW DAY, FRIDAY.

NOTE: John and Luke tell us the day was Preparation while Matthew and Mark signify it with the coming of evening.

1. Apparently Joseph of Arimathea came to the scene of the crucifixion first (Matt.27:57; Mk.15:43).
 - a. It is possible that Joseph was with the group of Jews who went to Pilate to request the breaking of the legs and thus accompanied the soldiers to the scene where he learned of Jesus' death.
 - b. It was discovered officially that Jesus was dead at the time of the breaking of the legs of the thieves.
 - c. Jesus was merely pierced with a spear and out of his side came blood and water (Jno.19:34).
 - d. It was after this that Joseph requested Jesus' body (Jno.19:38).
2. Joseph makes his request in the *EVENING* (Matt.27:57; Mk.14:42). Note the following sources on the word evening:
 - a. Vine: "The word really signifies the late evening, the latter of two evenings as reckoned by the Jews, the first from 3 PM to sunset, and the later after sunset; this is the usual meaning."
 - b. Thayer: "i.e. either from our three to six o'clock PM, Matt.8:16; 14:15; 27:57; Mk.4:35; or from our six o'clock PM to the beginning of night; Mk.15:42 among others."
NOTE: Thayer has a contradiction. He sights Matt.27:57 as the early evening and Mk.15:42 and the late evening. They must be the same.
 - c. In the ISBE in discussing the Hebrew and Greek words, page 1041, "The words are used in slightly different meanings: (1) the time of sunset, the beginning of the Hebrew day, as in Lev.15, where directions are given for the removal of uncleanness, which took place at sunset. (2) Twilight, the time of approaching darkness when lamps are lighted; (3) The early part of the night (Prov.7:9; Ezek.12:7)." Note: While the author here discussed primarily O.T. usage, the N.T. usage should not be considered as different.
 - d. The expression occurs sixteen times in the four gospels. I do not know of a single passage where the context prohibits the identification of the evening being the beginning of a new day when the sun sets.
 - 1) In most cases the context is clear that it means the time of sunset.
 - 2) When Matthew's first usage (8:16) is compared to Mark 1:32, it is clear that the setting of the sun is the time of day identified by the expression.
 - 3) Sometimes it appears to identify different times within the evening period but always the period from sunset to night which was the first watch of the night.
 - e. Reason shows that the word *evening* is intended to signify the beginning of a new day.
 - 1) It is used in no other sense in the N.T.
 - 2) The many events that are recorded to have taken place in sequence preclude this being anything other than the beginning of the new day.
3. Mark identifies the new day beginning as the Preparation (Mk.15:42), the day before the Sabbath. This is the new day when Joseph came to Pilate and the same day on which he buried Jesus.
4. Consider the following events in relationship to the time required.
 - a. A certain amount of time must be allowed for the accomplishment of the events surrounding Jesus' death. According to Jewish time there was approximately 3 hours and 15 minutes from the 9th hour until sunset.

- b. Could all of these things have been done in 3 hours and 15 minutes? At 3 o'clock he cried out "Eli, Eli." and those that watched questioned as to what was meant. Jesus then cried "I thirst," and someone runs and puts the vinegar to Him, and then sometime thereafter, He dies. The earth quakes, the veil of the temple is rent. There is no evidence of rushed activity recorded. The Jews go to Pilate and ask that the legs of the victims be broken, and Pilate listens to them. This takes time. He then sends soldiers to carry out the request. Then sometime thereafter, Joseph comes to the scene and sees that Jesus is dead. Leaving the cross, he goes to Pilate, asks to see Pilate, and when allowed in asked for the body of Jesus. Pilate can't believe that Jesus is dead already, so in order to verify that he is dead, he sends for the centurion in charge of the crucifixion to come to the headquarters to confirm that he is dead and how long (Mk.15:44). Pilate then gives the body to Joseph. Joseph goes shopping and buys fine linen (Mk.15:46) for the burial. He then goes back to the cross, takes Jesus down from the cross, carries him to the tomb, washes the body, embalms it with the help of Nicodemus. They wrap his body pouring in spices, giving him a rich man's burial, put him in the tomb and roll the stone to the door, all in 3 hours and 15 minutes? You may think so, but not I.
- c. Now for a closer look at the time involved with Joseph.
- 1) By implication (Matt.27:57), Joseph first came to the scene of Crucifixion, and according to John he came after the soldiers had broken the legs of the thieves.
 - 2) Joseph then went to Pilate and begged the body of Jesus. It took time to do this.
 - 3) But Pilate did not know Jesus was dead. The Jews had not told him Jesus was dead and the soldiers had not reported it. Wonder Why? The Jews probably did not know He was dead to tell Pilate and the Romans were not concerned. They let victims die and remain on the cross for the birds to eat.
NOTE: The Jews had before requested that the victims legs be broken and the bodies taken away, Since the bodies were still on the crosses, it indicates that the request could not be fulfilled until death had occurred. This is further borne out by the fact that Pilate did not give the body of Jesus to Joseph until he was certain Jesus was already dead.
 - 4) Pilate marveled that Jesus was dead so soon. He had ordered the legs to be broken to hasten death but could not believe Jesus was already dead.
 - 5) Pilate sends for the centurion in charge to come and report on the matter (Mk.15:44). All of this takes time.
 - 6) Pilate asks the centurion if Jesus has been dead "any while," "been dead long". He had been dead for a while. Possibly 3 or 4 hours. Long enough for there to have been some change in His body as indicated by the blood and water that flowed from his side.
 - 7) Pilate then gives the body to Joseph. If some official document was needed, as it likely was, this too would have taken some time.
 - 8) Joseph then goes somewhere to purchase burial linen.
 - 9) He goes back to the cross and takes the body down. This takes time.
 - 10) Nicodemus comes and helps him. They take the body of Jesus to a garden near by. This also takes some time. They wash the body and wrap it in spices and linen all of which takes time.
- d. Let us not forget that Jesus got a rich man's burial:
- 1) It was foretold by Isaiah (Isa.53:9).
 - 2) The linen purchased by Joseph was very expensive (cf. The Fourfold Gospel, by McGarvey, pp. 693, 736). Mark says he bought FINE linen (15:46).
 - 3) And Nicodemus brought 100 pounds of Myrth and Aloes (Jno.19:39). This was estimated to be about 75 American lbs.
 - 4) Some authorities I checked tell us that it took from 8 to 10 hours to wrap a body with spices.
 - 5) It should not be forgotten that John specifically says the spices were wound in with the linen clothes. There is no way that Joseph and Nicodemus could have done all of this in the short space required for Friday.

- 6) Some contend that Ananias was buried in less than three hours (Acts 5:7-9). It should be noted, however, that he was only wound or bound up and not buried with the elaborate pomp as was Jesus.
5. Commentators constantly imply that it was needful for Joseph and Nicodemus to rush Jesus into the tomb. I challenge you to read the texts and see if you can detect any urgency on their part.
- a. There is a need for urgency only if Jesus was crucified on Friday. In that case it would be necessary for the attendants to move swiftly because of the on coming weekly sabbath.
 - b. In the event Jesus was Crucified on Thursday that need is eliminated. It was the first day of Unleaven Bread that was considered a sabbath by nature of the institution. You see, The Feast of Passover occupied the night of the 15th and the Feast of Unleaven Bread begin as the separate Feast at Day—Break. This was the day designated as a special sabbath. Joseph and Nicodemus did not break that sabbath as the burial of Jesus would be accomplished before day break.
6. That Day is identified as PREPARATION.
- a. Bear in mind that Joseph began his process of burying Jesus in the evening which was the beginning of the new day. That new day was Friday and it was called Preparation by the Jews.
 - b. So, the day Jesus died was Passover day, the 14th of Nisan but the day he was buried was the Preparation. It had begun at sunset. Note the following texts:
 - 1) Mark 15:42 - And now when the evening was come, because it was the preparation, that is, the day before the sabbath Joseph of Arimathea... went in boldly unto Pilate, and craved the body of Jesus.
 - 2) Luke 23:52-54 - 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 preparation, and the sabbath drew on.”
 - 3) John 19:42 - There laid they Jesus therefore because of the Jews’ preparation day; for the sepulchre was nigh at hand.”
 - 4) Everyone agrees that Jesus was buried on Friday which is identified as the Preparation. The only question is, was Jesus crucified on Thursday and buried during the night or was he crucified and hastily buried before the new day began? The evidence points to the Thursday crucifixion.
 - c. Luke says, “And the sabbath drew on” (Lk.23:54).
 - 1) Translators often render texts so as to explain their concept of how things happened. With their feeling the Friday crucifixion must be upheld, they have mistranslated this text.
 - 2) The definite article “the” is not found in the manuscripts. It has been added by the translators. Where the definite article is absent the proper rendering should be “a” sabbath. Remember, we have a double sabbath here. Preparation day was also a special sabbath and while it did not take on the significance of the weekly sabbath it was so designated. As observed earlier, this sabbath could not begin until day break.
 - 3) Again, the translators supported their theory by translating EPIPHOSKO as “drew on.” This word means “to grow light” “to dawn” (Vine, pp. 270, 338). It is used here and in Matt.28:1 where it is correctly translated “to dawn.”
 - 4) In conclusion we have Joseph coming in the evening to beg the body of Jesus. This was the beginning of the new day, the day of preparation and they spent the night burying him finishing as the day began to dawn of the special sabbath of that day. They did not break that sabbath because it had not begun.
 - d. The women prepared spices and rested on the sabbath.
 - 1) The texts tell us that the women watched to see where they laid Jesus (Matt.27:61; Mk.15:47; Lk.23:55).
 - 2) They then returned to the place where they were staying and prepared spices and ointments which would have been forbidden on The sabbath. This would likely indicate that, they were unaware of the full burial that Jesus had received. In all probability, Joseph had taken the body down from the cross by himself. Taken it to the tomb and washed it before Nicodemus

arrives, John is the only writer who mentions Nicodemus and he only in reference to the wrapping of the body and the tomb.

- 3) It should also be noted that Luke tells us that the women rested “the” sabbath day according to the commandment. They, therefore, did not prepare the spices and ointments on the sabbath.
- 4) Here again the translators do their thing. They fail to translate an important word, the greek word “men” which occurs in the manuscripts. The word has the force of “indeed.” Though I have no translation that translates it, I do have an interlinear (Marshall’s) that does. He translates it “And [on] the indeed sabbath.” Of this word Green says, “a particle serving to intimate that the term or clause with which it is used, stands distinguished from another, usually in the sequel.” (Greek and English Lexicon to the New Testament, Thomas Sheldon Green, p. 115). The force of the word here appears emphasize the weekly sabbath in comparison to the special sabbath which had occupied Friday.
- e. John says they buried Jesus where they did because it was the Jews Preparation (Jno.19:42). This has been used to teach that they buried him on Friday, but it needs to be remembered that Jesus was from Galilee. Burying him among his kin could have demanded considerable time. While the weekly sabbath was still hours away, it was the day of preparation in which much had to be done. It was also a special sabbath.

F. Sabbath, the next day following Preparation.

1. The women at the cross when they have observed where Jesus was buried return, prepare spices and rest on the sabbath (Lk.23:56).
2. As Sabbath begins (at evening) the chief priests and Pharisees request of Pilate that the tomb be sealed and watched (Matt.27:62-66).
 - a. They relate to Pilate how that Jesus had said, “After three days I will rise again.”
 - b. They request that the sepulchre be made sure until the third day.
 - c. The reason: Lest the disciples come by night and steal him away. This reasoning shows that their coming to Pilate was as the sabbath was beginning to insure that he would not be stolen that night.
 - d. Pilate gave them their request.
3. Their request shows our conclusions are correct.
 - a. The reason they had not come to Pilate earlier is not because Jesus died on Friday but because:
 - 1) There was no need for a watch previous to this. Jesus was in the process of being buried during the night of preparation. The Jews most likely did not know that Joseph and Nicodemus were burying him. If they did, they also knew that Joseph and Nicodemus were honorable men (Mk.15:43; Lk.23:50; Jno.3:1; 7:50-52; 19:39), who would neither steal the body of Jesus or perpetrate a fraud. The Jews probably learned of the burial place during the day of preparation.
 - 2) The second reason for not needing a watch was that Jesus had said “after” three days he would rise again and a premature departure from the tomb would have rendered Jesus a false prophet. Also, it would have been next to impossible for His disciples to have stolen Him away in broad daylight with the city so full of tourists.
 - b. The Jews only requested that the tomb be sealed UNTIL the third day.
 - 1) There is a difference in both Greek and English in the words **after** and **until**. While after (meta) can and does at times mean amid, it signifies also what follows or is after. It never means until. On the other hand, until (heos) simply means up to or as far as. While it does not address what happens afterward, it does permit what comes after. Illustrate: If I say to you, “meet me after 5 PM at Jerry’s” you would know that at any time, including 5 PM that you could be there, but the word after also gives you some flexibility. If you were to ask, “how long should I wait?” and, I replied “Wait for me until 6 PM”, you would understand that if I did not arrive by 6 PM you would be free to leave. The words have entirely different meanings.

- 2) The Jews understood this. They repeat Jesus' words how that "after three days" he would rise again and then request a watch "until the third day." Those who think these expressions mean the same neither know English or Greek.
- 3) This helps us to distinguish between what actually happened and what has been taught happened. DID THEY REQUEST A WATCH UNTIL THE THIRD DAY FROM JESUS' CRUCIFIXION, OR FROM THE TIME THEY TALKED WITH PILATE?
 - a) If the reckoning of time had been as we have been taught, namely that Jesus was crucified on Friday and any part of a day is a whole day, their request would have been fulfilled, and the watch removed before Jesus was resurrected. The third day accordingly would have begun at sunset on Saturday according to that method of reckoning.
 - b) It should be apparent then that their request came on Saturday as the day began and would have been a sufficient request to have covered the period in question even when using the falacious method of time reckoning It would have covered a full two day period, Saturday and Sunday, up to sunset on Sunday the beginning of Monday. This would have been the total time needed to prove Jesus a false prophet.
 - c) On the other hand, if only the daylight periods were counted and Jesus was crucified on Thursday, as we believe the Bible teaches, their request would have been meaningless as only one night could have remained in the request and the watch would have been removed 24 hours before Jesus was raised. If we use that method and count from Friday the time requested would have been fulfilled with the coming of day on the first day of the week, and the need for a coverup for the watch would have been removed. They could simply have said the time of their watch was over and they were not responsible for what happened after it was over.
 - d) However, if we count the time from sabbath, their request is for a watch UNTIL the third day, which will be the daylight of Monday and more than sufficient to prove Jesus is a false prophet unless he is risen.
- c. Pilate grants their request (Matt.27:65).
- d. They make the sepulchre sure. They seal the stone and set the watch (v.66).

G. Sunday, the first day of the week.

1. Matthew says, "In the end of the sabbath." Marshall's Interlinear says the word for "sabbath" is in the plural. This is a possible recognition by Matthew of the double sabbath that we have been talking about. It is possible, also, that his use of the word is to indicate the end of a week as the word sabbath was used to denote a week.
2. The time of the resurrection is clear. The accounts say:
 - a. "In the end of the sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first **day** of the week, came... " (Matt.28:1)
 - b. "And when the sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome, had bought sweet spices, that they might come and anoint him, And very early in the morning the first **day** of the week, they came unto the sepulchre at the rising of the sun" (Mk.16:1-2).
 - c. "Now upon the first **day** of the week, very early in the morning, they came unto the sepulchre" (Lk.24:1).
 - d. "The first **day** of the week cometh Mary Magdalene early, when it was yet dark, unto the sepulchre" (Jno.20:1).
 - e. When we have considered all that is said in these three accounts, we must conclude that Jesus was raised on the first of the week before daybreak. It was very early in the morning, in fact it was yet dark, though it was beginning to dawn. The point is well made that Jesus was raised during the night and before daybreak (Lk.24:22).
 - f. Even the Jews were willing to admit that He left the tomb during the night (Matt. 28:13). This is significant because when counting the days, the daylight portion of the first day of the week is not counted.

3. The two men on the road to Emmaus (Lk.24:13-33).
 - a. The time of this meeting on the first day of the week is in the afternoon toward evening (v.29).
 - b. In their discussion with Jesus on the road they rehearsed the events of the past few days that had occurred in association with His death and then say, "Today is the third day since these things were done" (v.21). The Greek word, as our word, means "forth from" and separates what is said in this case from the events of the day they occurred.
 - 1) Their expression indicates that the time when Jesus was supposed to have been raised was past and shows unbelief on their part. While they acknowledged the tomb was empty, no one acknowledged seeing him. Jesus accuses them of unbelief (v.25).
 - 2) Jesus accusation would have been unjustified if the time stipulated for His resurrection had not already been fulfilled.. If it were only the third day, counting the day of crucifixion and that was Friday, there was still time for them to be convinced.
 - 3) If Jesus was crucified on Friday, technically, the first day of the week would have only been the second day since the crucifixion.
 - 4) It would have been proper to have referred to Thursday and the events of Thursday as happening four days ago, and it is proper to have said, "Today is the third day since these things were done" while referring to the same day.

H. Testimony Of Early Church Writers

1. Justin Martyr: "On the day of Passover ye took him, and on the day of Passover ye crucified him." (Dial cum Trypho, Ch. 111).
2. Irenaeus (Adv, Judaeas, Ch. 8).
3. Clement of Alexander: "The Lord did not eat his last Passover on the legal day of the Passover but on the previous day, the 13th, and suffered on the day following, being himself the Passover." (Fragment from Chron. Paschal, p. 14, edit. Demdorf).

III. SUMMARY

A. The Only Real Evidence Of Substance For A Friday Crucifixion:

1. The obvious inferences in the synoptic gospels that Jesus ate the Jewish Passover before His Crucifixion.
 - a. I pointed out to you, at the time I discussed those inferences, that this is the hardest thing I have to deal with in arguing the Thursday Crucifixion.
 - b. The inferences are strong but, as pointed out, accepting these inferences as true raises many questions:
 - 1) Where was the offering of the lamb in the temple and the appearance of Jesus and the rest of the disciples before God as required by the Law?
 - 2) Why is the Lamb not mentioned as a part of the supper eaten by Jesus and the disciples?
 - 3) Why is the significance of the Passover never mentioned?
 - 4) Why is the Passover called supper rather than the feast it was?
 - 5) Why does John say Jesus ate supper and it was before the feast, thus making a distinction?
 - 6) Why do the disciples think purchases for the Passover could be made on the night of Passover if indeed the Passover was eaten and already over?
 - 7) Why do the Jews show concern about being defiled and being rendered unfit to eat the Passover if it has already been eaten?
 - 8) And why do we not have the Jewish Passover in the Kingdom today if that is what Jesus ate that night because He said he would eat it new with his disciples in the kingdom?
 - 9) These and many other questions are raised by this position. While I have some problem dealing with the inferences that Jesus ate the Passover the night of his betrayal, I also find many questions for which I have no answer when taking the Friday Position.
2. In an attempt to harmonize all the passages dealing with the Friday Theory, the advocates have had to explain passages in unnatural ways and place forced explanations upon them.

B. The Basic Arguments Of Our Position Explained.

1. Jesus' affirmation that He would be in the heart of the earth three days and three night, in (within) three days, the third day, after three days He would rise again, all of which mean the same thing.
 - a. We showed that the expression "after two days" cannot mean the same things as "after three days." However, if Jesus was crucified on Friday these expressions must mean the same thing.
 - b. The only way to harmonize all of these expressions is to recognized the proper count of Biblical time and count all the days and nights included. Only by a Thursday crucifixion can these statements be harmonized.
2. Jesus' declaration that He would be Betrayed and Crucified on Passover, i.e. the day they killed the lamb (Matt.26:2).
3. The Jews stated determination NOT to kill Jesus on the Feast (Mk.14:2).
4. John's statement that the supper eaten by Jesus on the night of His betrayal was before the Feast (Jno.13:1).
5. John's information that the Jews had not eaten the Passover on the morning of Jesus' crucifixion (Jno.18:28).
6. The Gospel writers' statements that a new day, the preparation, begin before Joseph requested the body of Jesus demanding that Jesus was crucified the day before preparation which would have been Thursday.

C. Conclusion

1. It has been said by some that this information really does matter. To this I disagree.
 - a. Because if the death of Jesus is not understood from the standpoint of exactly how it happened we could not have a full understanding of His death. Getting at the truth opens up many closed doors. I challenge your thinking.
 - b. Because, if the death of Jesus is not correctly understood I have accepted and believed some things as being true which are false. That would mean I have tried to explain away truth spoken by my Savior. The Friday Theory weakens the power of Jesus Resurrection.
 - c. Because we have an obligation to be right as near as possible in everything that we teach. When there are holes in our understanding it is because something is missing. God expects us to study.
 - d. While I do not believe misunderstanding a matter of this nature will ultimately damn our souls, it is important for our full spiritual growth to learn all we can.
2. It does not matter to me whether you agree with me on this matter or not. I do not hold that against anyone. Weeding a garden is hard and very difficult to do and demands reaching into a resource most of us don't like to use. Cutting out spiritual weeds is just as difficult.
 - a. If I have opened up some new avenues of thought, I am pleased.
 - b. If not, I have failed.
3. My main purpose in such studies as this is to try and cultivate within you a desire to learn. If I accomplished that goal, I will have been successful.

Arguments for Thursday Crucifixion

I. INTRODUCTION

A. Background to this study.

1. I frequently make a statement to the effect, "Depending upon whether Jesus was crucified on Thursday or Friday."
2. I made this statement last Sunday in one of the sermons.
 - a. Someone mentioned it to me.
 - b. Didn't know anyone questioned when Jesus was crucified.
 - c. I make that kind of statement to accommodate those who hold to a view different to the one I hold.
 - d. Six years ago I discussed it and it is in order again.

B. My View before some diligent study.

1. Back in the early 70's I read some articles by Bill Cavender that raised some questions in my mind.
2. I always held without question the Friday Crucifixion.
3. I not only found that the questions were valid but found other things that were also interest and convincing.
4. Brethren have just plain missed the boat on this one.

C. Before I get into the reasons *why* we believe in a Thursday crucifixion, let me establish some things about time count.

1. [Note the chart.](#)
2. Note how Jews counted time. Days and nights.
3. Establish how we know when Passover was in 30 AD.
 - a. John 12:1 says, "*Then Jesus six days before the passover came to Bethany.*"
 - b. This passage is significant because of the Passover's connection to the crucifixion.
 - c. We know that Jesus was crucified either on the day of Passover or the day following Passover.
 - d. Passover came on the 14th Nisan (Lev.23:5-6).
 - e. If Passover was on Friday that would mean Jesus traveled a long distance on the Sabbath.
 - f. If Passover came on Wednesday, it would mean Jesus came to Bethany on the previous Thursday, and the triumphant entry into Jerusalem was on the Sabbath. That would place the Passover too early for this week.
 - g. So, Jesus had to come to Bethany on Friday, were He ate the Sabbath evening meal and rested on the Sabbath before the Triumphant entry on the first day of the week.
 - h. The activities of Monday and Tuesday are outlined in the gospels. They concluded with the Olivet discourse.

D. THESIS: I will consider six reasons why the crucifixion of Jesus had to take place on Thursday.

II. BODY

A. **Three Days And Three Nights.**

1. "*For as Jnoas 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*" (Matt.12:40).
 - a. Parts of days and nights are included. Meaning: parts of three days and part of three night.
 - b. The only way for this to be literally true is for a Thursday Crucifixion.
2. After three days. "*And he began to teach them, that the Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected of the elders, and of the chief priests, and scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again*" (Mark 8:31).
3. In three days. "*This fellow said, I am able to destroy the temple of God, and to build it in three days*" (Matt.26:61).
4. Within three days. "*We heard him say, I will destroy this temple that is made with hands, and within three days I will build another made without hands*" (Mark 14:58).

5. The third day. *"From that time forth began Jesus to show unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day"* (Matt.16:21). This expression occurs at least a dozen times.
6. They all mean the same thing obviously except that in some cases the expression does not necessarily include the others.
 - a. For example: *"Within," "in," "the third"* do not necessarily include 3 nights, yet, they do not exclude 3 nights.
 - b. *"After three days"* indicates three days will pass before the declared event occurs.
7. Three days and three night is included in all of the statements.
8. This being the case, Jesus had to die on Thursday. Note it on the calendar.

B. Jesus Named Passover as Day of Death.

1. *"And it came to pass, when Jesus had finished all these sayings, he said unto his disciples, Ye know that after two days is <the feast of> the passover, and the Son of man is betrayed to be crucified"* (Matt.26:1-2).
 - a. I have a dozen or more translations and all of them say Passover.
 - b. NIV says, *"As you know, the Passover is two days away--and the Son of Man will be handed over to be crucified."*
 - c. Mark says on the first of unleavened bread, the day they killed the Passover (Mark 14:12).
2. Jesus was to be handed over to be crucified on Passover.
 - a. Jewish days started at sunset.
 - b. Jesus was betrayed up in the night.
 - c. He was crucified the next day which was the same day of the week.
 - d. Jesus said he would be crucified therefore on the day they killed the Lamb. That was Thursday.
 - e. Add to this the fact that Paul said that Jesus is our Passover (1 Cor.5:7).
3. Jesus therefore pinpointed the day of crucifixion.

C. Jews Refused Crucifixion on Feast Day.

1. *"But they said, Not on the feast day, lest there be an uproar of the people"* (Mark 14:2).
 - a. The feast of Passover was held at night. The Jews therefore excluded crucifixion after the close of day.
 - b. The people expected there would be an uproar if Jesus was crucified on a feast day.
 - c. If Jesus was crucified on Friday, it would have been a feast day and there should have been an uproar.
 - d. There is no sign of there being an uproar.
2. The evidence indicates that Jesus was crucified before the feast and an uproar averted.

D. The Supper Was Before The Feast.

1. John relates that the meal eaten by Jesus on the night he was betrayed was not the Feast.
 - a. *"Now before the feast of the passover, when Jesus knew that his hour was come that he should depart out of this world unto the Father, having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end. And supper being ended, the devil having now put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's <son>, to betray him"* (John 13:1-2).
2. Answer the objection usually raised about the other three gospels indicating Jesus ate the Passover.
 - a. The disciples made preparation for eating the Passover. This all Jews did on that day.
 - b. But there is no mention made of the Lamb in association with the supper observed.
 - c. In fact Luke records Jesus as saying, *"With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer: For I say unto you, I will not any more eat thereof, until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God"* (Lk.22:15-16). He desired to eat the Passover but would not.
 - 1) If Jesus was going to eat that Passover with them, His statement is meaningless.

3. The disciples did not know they had eaten the feast because they thought Judas went to buy things for the feast (Jno.13:29). So therefore Thursday.

E. Feast Had Not Been Eaten on Crucifixion.

1. *"Then led they Jesus from Caiaphas unto the hall of judgment: and it was early; and they themselves went not into the judgment hall, lest they should be defiled; but that they might eat the passover"* (John 18:28).
 - a. If the disciples had eaten the Passover, how come these Jews had not?
 - b. Note, this is the Passover, not the Feast of Unleavened Bread.
2. Therefore, Jesus died before the Passover Feast was eaten.

F. Jesus Was Buried on Preparation Day.

1. Joseph requested the body of Jesus from Pilate in the **evening**, the beginning of a new day.
 - a. *"When the even was come, there came a rich man of Arimathaea, named Joseph, who also himself was Jesus' disciple: He went to Pilate, and begged the body of Jesus. Then Pilate commanded the body to be delivered"* (Matt.27:58).
 - b. The evening was the first part of a new day. *"And now when the even was come, because it was the preparation, that is, the day before the sabbath, Joseph of Arimathaea, an honourable counsellor, which also waited for the kingdom of God, came, and went in boldly unto Pilate, and craved the body of Jesus"* (Mark 15:42-43).
2. Joseph spent the night burying the body of Jesus.
 - a. They gave him a rich man's burial.
 - b. It normally took 8 to 10 hours for a rich man's burial.
 - c. Luke says, *"And that day was the preparation, and the sabbath drew on"* (Luke 23:54).
 - 1) The definite article *"the"* is omitted in the original language. The rendering should be *"a" sabbath*.
 - 2) *"Drew on"* is from the same word that is translated *"dawn"* in Matt.28:1.
 - d. That Preparation Day was also a special Sabbath.
3. Again, the language of the NT shows a Thursday Crucifixion.

III. CONCLUSION

- A. It is not a soul threatening thing for one to believe that Jesus died on Friday.
- B. It is heartening though to be able to reconcile all of these passages which cannot be reconciled otherwise.

NISAN in 30 A.D.

1st Day Sunday		2nd Day Monday		3rd Day Tuesday		4th Day Wednesday		5th Day Thursday		6th Day Friday		Sabbath Saturday	
Night	Day	Night	Day	Night	Day	Night	Day	Night	Day	Night	Day	Night	Day
											1		2
	3		4		5		6		7		8		9
	10		11		12		13		14		15		16
	17		18		19		20		21		22		23
	24		25		26		27		28		29		30