

The Crucifixion of
JESUS
on
PASSOVER
NISAN 14 - THURSDAY, APRIL 10, 32 A.D.

Dr. David Newton

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*"For Jesus Christ our Passover
has been sacrificed."*

1st Corinthians 5:7

*"And they would not enter the Roman
Praetorium so they would not be
defiled and might eat the Passover."*

John 18:28

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Dedication In Memoriam

It is with a heart full of gratitude that I dedicate this book to the three Bible teachers who, since the early 1980s, were significant in discipling me toward a strong and abiding love for the integrity of God's written Word – Chuck Smith, Dr. Chuck Missler, and Dave Hunt. These men introduced me to an entirely new approach to studying Scripture. I first heard Pastor Chuck's *Word For Today* in 1981 on WEZE-AM radio during graduate business school in Boston. A few years later we moved to Orange County and he became my pastor. Also at Calvary Costa Mesa there was a business-engineering executive teaching God's Word Monday evenings in the Fellowship Hall. Chuck Missler re-invented Bible study with his 66/40 integrated message system. I then was introduced to Dave Hunt at prophecy conferences and retreats. His insights about Biblical precision were captivating. They have each stepped out of our earth-time, a reminder of their shared belief that regardless of when someone dies, each person will experience arriving in eternity at what feels like the same instantaneous moment. Together, they had HUGE impacts on how I read and teach God's living Word. I would not be three titles into my *Figure It Out* series of books apart from their discipling me into so many amazing nuances present in the Biblical narratives. It is incredible that they still teach and impact new generations of serious students of the Bible through archived audio, video, books, and notes. It was their unwavering commitment to the veracity of the Scriptures that caused me to anchor myself in a similar manner. This fascinating review of Jesus crucified on Passover is a direct testament about their faithfulness to teach the full counsel and context of His Word, so this book is dedicated to them.

INTRODUCTION

This book presents a detailed overview of the evidence that Jesus of Nazareth was crucified on the Jewish Feast of Passover, on Nisan 14, Thursday, April 10th in the year 32 AD. The annual Christian holiday of "Good Friday" has sealed in most people's minds that the Romans nailed Jesus to the cross on a Friday, two days prior to Easter Sunday. However, there are several significant Biblical problems with a Friday crucifixion. Perhaps the most notable is Jesus' own comments on this. When He was asked to provide the Jewish leaders with a tangible, miraculous sign to prove definitively He was the prophesied Messiah, His explanation was clear and without ambiguity. He unequivocally said that He [the Son of Man] would die and be "***in the heart of the earth three days and three nights***" – a direct parallel to how Jonah died and was in the belly of the great fish for three days and three nights before being resurrected. The death of Jesus and being in the heart of the earth three days and three nights is God's own direct testimony on the matter. He defined this as the ONE sign for the most clearly fulfilled event in all His earthly ministry. The definition of the Gospel is this: Jesus was crucified ***according to the Scriptures*** and raised on the third day ***according to the Scriptures*** [1st Corinthians 15:3]. If there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ has not been raised and all of Paul's preaching is in vain, our faith then is also in vain, our faith is worthless, and we are still in our sin [1st Corinthians 15:13-17].

On the most basic level of inquiry, there is no way to get “three days and three nights” with Jesus crucified on Friday afternoon. That yields only two days [Friday and Saturday] plus two overnights [Friday and Saturday]. Remember, the tomb was already empty “on the first day of the week” [Sunday] at “early dawn as the women came to the tomb bringing spices which they had prepared” [Luke 24:1], so that cannot be the third day. There is also no way to define a separate and unique third night with a Friday crucifixion. Many have tried to map or graph the days and nights for Good Friday relative to Easter Sunday and it always comes up short from fulfilling Jesus’ own words on the matter.

In addition to that crucial math regarding Jesus’ clearly stating “**three days and three nights**”, there are several explicit statements from the Biblical accounts that together present well-coordinated evidences confirming that Jesus was crucified on Thursday. Just a few pages back prior to the CONTENTS and page numbers of this book’s chapters, two significant Scripture verses are noted. In 1st Corinthians 5:7 Paul states unequivocally, “**Jesus Christ our Passover has been sacrificed**”. That is such a profound statement, that the Old Testament Passover is literally fulfilled in the person of Jesus of Nazareth, and His crucifixion was actually “the” one true Passover sacrifice [more details on this will be covered in Chapter Two]. The other verse inserted early in this book is from John’s Gospel where he expressly notes that the religious leaders would not enter the Roman Praetorium because they did not want to be defiled, which would preclude them from eating the Passover meal later that day. Passover had started on Wednesday at sunset, so the overnight trials and examinations of Jesus all took place “early” on Passover, continuing into Thursday morning, the middle of Passover day. Tens of thousands of Passover lambs would be killed around noon Thursday [“late Passover”] and eaten during the closing Passover meal

prior to Thursday sunset. If Jesus was crucified on “Good Friday”, the overnight trial would be Thursday evening into Friday morning, and the religious leaders would have already eaten their Passover. This will be reviewed in greater detail in Chapters Five and Six.

Perhaps most notable is how during Passover week in 32 AD, Thursday was Nisan 14, so the Jewish Passover started Wednesday at sunset. The afternoon of the next day [Thursday] was in fact the latter part of Passover [prior to Thursday’s sunset]. It was not just a random day that the Pharisees, Sanhedrin, and Pontius Pilate happened upon as Jesus was condemned to death by Roman crucifixion. Instead, it was a specifically designated day that fit precisely with dozens of literal Biblical prophecies. These were tangible demonstrations that Jesus of Nazareth fulfilled every facet within the Law of Moses [the Torah], which included the memorial sacrifice of the Passover lamb. This was exactly as Jesus’ second-cousin John the Baptist spoke of Him at the Jordan River, “Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world”.

The book is set up with a logical walk-through of all the Scriptures that directly speak about the centrality of Passover as a prophetic “type” of God’s plan for the redemption of His Creation. It shows how God knew before the foundation of the world that the Jewish feast of Passover would be a prophetic foreshadow of His way of salvation for mankind. Chapter One provides a detailed review of the origins of Good Friday and Easter Sunday, as they have been celebrated over the centuries. Chapter Two examines the specifics of the Jewish Feast of Passover and its significance as both an historical event in the life of Israel, as well as the prophetic background for the entire Gospel. Chapter Three reviews the preponderance of evidence for the historical 1st Century Jesus from Nazareth being the Messiah who is spoken of all throughout

the Torah, the prophets, and the Psalms – and that He is uniquely qualified to fulfill all of the Law of Moses, including the blood sacrifice of the Passover. The dozens of parallels are fascinating, as Jesus meets all the criteria to be the literal fulfillment of the Passover Lamb of God. This was specifically designed by God within ritual commandments regarding the exit from Egypt to be a precursor to the detailed Law He would later give to Moses. The symbolism of all the facets of the Passover Lamb along with the remembrance of God's faithfulness to His people is truly astounding. This extends to the additional prophetic types evident in both the portable tabernacle used by Israel in the wilderness and the construction specs of the Temple in Jerusalem [originally built by Solomon and destroyed during the siege of the Babylonians - the second Temple was reconstructed by Ezra and Nehemiah, and expanded by Herod between 20-10 BC].

Jesus is both the suffering servant who comes meek and lowly, willingly giving Himself to die on the cross, as well as the mighty King who comes to rule and reign over the earth, sitting on the throne of David. Many view these as being at odds with each other, but they simply describe two distinct times and missions. The first coming of Messiah is historic and completely fulfilled in the person and work of Jesus of Nazareth about 20 centuries ago. The second is still future when His Second Coming will also be literally fulfilled in all facets of prophecy.

Chapter Four lays out the incredible precision of the first Palm Sunday, the specific date in time when Jesus rode into Jerusalem, hailed with the Psalm of Messiah on the EXACT day prophesied over 500 years earlier by Daniel. This one day, celebrated worldwide as Palm Sunday, is a critical hinge-point in defining the historical context and accuracy of the life of Jesus. It establishes the most consistent timing parameters

for both His birth on the feast of Yom Teruah in September of 2 BC, and His crucifixion on Passover in April of 32 AD.

Chapter Five then aligns nine key evidences from the Biblical sources that together make a very strong case for Jesus being crucified on late Passover, Thursday April 10th in 32 AD, in the six-to-nine hours prior to sunset, the 14th of Nisan on the Jewish calendar. Chapter Six will then describe a step-by-step timeline of Passover week in 32 AD from Jesus in Bethany before heading to Jerusalem, all the way through His illegal arrest and overnight trials, to the Roman crucifixion at Golgotha, and then His incredible resurrection after ***three days and three nights***.

Chapter Seven focuses on the specific actions of Jesus on the cross, and how His work of redemption was entirely complete as He declared "It is finished" and willingly gave up His spirit to experience physical death. It will dig deeply into the significance of what really happened on the cross, and why the sacrifice of Jesus was entirely sufficient to atone for the sins of the world in that one incredible act of selfless love. Chapter Eight then examines where Jesus was and what He did during those three days and three nights AFTER He publicly declared "It is finished", and prior to His resurrection. This detailed Biblical account highlights what happened in those days and overnights from the close of Passover, to the Feast of Unleavened Bread, to the weekly Sabbath, and His resurrection Sunday morning. It is quite profound to examine the testimony of Jesus in Sheol [the Biblical abode of the dead] and the public display He made as He disarmed rulers and authorities, having triumphed over them. The implications harken back to Eden in Genesis chapter three, as well as His still future Second Coming to judge the world and establish His earthly kingdom.

Chapter Nine explores the spiritual and prophetic significance of the empty tomb on Easter Sunday, reviewed in light of the Jewish feast of First Fruits that began on Saturday at sunset [after the regular weekly Sabbath finished] and continued into that first Easter Sunday morning April 13th, on Nisan 17. Finally, Chapter Ten provides a review of the ways the Biblical Passover was literally fulfilled in Jesus the Messiah, the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world, and the eternal impact this has on reconciling believers to the Creator of the universe.

The Epilogue summarizes the main points from the book with some closing remarks and things to consider about Passover and Easter. This is followed by key reasons 'Why It Matters' that we understand Jesus was crucified on Passover. This is followed by several pages devoted to 'Other Views' you will encounter about the crucifixion, the resurrection, and what about going to the cross on a Wednesday. The last section lists some 'Resources' if you would like to continue to dig deeper.

While it remains highly improbable that the Church [and for that matter, the world at-large] will ever switch from the traditional Good Friday to "An-Even-Better-Thursday" observance of the crucifixion of Jesus as proposed in this book, that was never the intent for my commentary and analysis. The Biblical and historical basis for the crucifixion of Christ happening on Passover in 32 AD provides a much more consistent and accurate timeframe that matches so much better with the Biblical narrative. The annual Easter season each Spring will certainly continue to be a wonderful time that brings worldwide attention to remembering God's gift of salvation through Jesus Christ. I want to go on the record that I do not disregard or fault Good Friday observances. But I trust it will be eye-opening for you to consider the larger body of evidence that supports the Thursday-Passover date proposed in this book, and

how it connects dozens of the Biblical “dots” into quite the compelling case for Jesus being sacrificed as the literal “Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world” [John the Baptist’s quote in John 1:29].

This book agrees with the encouragement of 1st Corinthians 10:11 and Romans 15:4 - that God’s Word will always be incredibly precise in its description of events, including those pertaining to the crucifixion of Jesus and His resurrection after **three days and three nights**. It confirms the primary source of the Biblical narrative originates outside of earth and time. In the first passage, the Apostle Paul reminds us *“What was written in earlier times was for our instruction, so by perseverance and encouragement of the Scriptures we have hope”*. This remains my guiding principle in doing the research and checking everything within the robust encouragement of God’s Word and the great truth of His providential plans for mankind and His creation. In the latter passage Paul makes sure to clarify how *“All that happened to Israel was an example [for us] written down for our instruction, upon whom the ends of the ages have come”*. May the Lord richly bless your time in this book, and hopefully you will marvel at the profound truths of His Word.

- Dr. Dave Newton
January 2021
Santa Barbara, California

CHAPTER 1

The Origins of Good Friday and Easter

In 325 AD the Council of Nicaea
declared Easter as the Sunday after the
first full moon after the Spring equinox.

Britannica.com

The origins of Good Friday and Easter Sunday include multiple layers of religious and cultural influences that have cemented them into our minds – as well as our calendars. These Christian “holy days” mean different things to different folks around the world. They have religious importance in celebrating the Sunday resurrection of Jesus two days after His [presumed] Friday crucifixion. It is important to examine how and when these dates were decided upon, and who ultimately had the final say on setting these observances. This is not a trivial matter that should be relegated to some inconsequential debate at the fringes of Christian doctrine. The decisions about Good Friday and Easter Sunday tend to be rooted in the traditions of men rather than sound Biblical evidence. This chapter reviews how we got to where we are today for these two annual springtime “Christian” holidays.

EASTER SUNDAY

The New Testament writings of Luke's *Acts of the 1st Century Apostles*, as well as Paul's, Peter's, and John's letters have no explicit mention of early churches celebrating an annual "Easter Sunday", or setting aside one particular Friday every Spring to remember the day Jesus was crucified. Matthew 28:1 and Luke 24:1 both note it was "the first day of the week" when the women went to the tomb with additional spices for the body of Jesus. This "first day" was Sunday morning after the weekly Sabbath that went from Friday sunset to Saturday sunset. Unlike many western cultures, the 1st Century Middle Eastern Jewish workweek started on Sunday morning and went through until Friday sunset when the Sabbath began, during which people rested from their work [Exodus 20:9-11 and 34:21]. The early church met on the first day of the week, and that Sunday tradition has carried over into virtually all "Christian" church services worldwide.

However, there was no specific Easter Sunday remembrance observed during the year. Regular weekly Sunday "church" gathering was based on the tomb being found empty on Sunday morning, the first day of the week. No specific day was marked on the calendar every Spring to commemorate the exact date when Jesus was raised from the dead. Similarly, there are no Biblical records of the 1st Century church having a specific date for the traditional "Good Friday" set aside each year to remember the exact date Jesus was nailed to the cross. The closest regular observance about remembering the crucifixion was that Jesus, while having unleavened bread and wine with His disciples during the Last Supper, instructed them [Luke 22:19] *"This is my body, do this in remembrance of me"*. This is directly referred to by the Apostle Paul in 1st Corinthians 11:24-26. In both Matthew 26 and Mark 14, Jesus said

the bread and wine were *symbolic* of His body and His blood. When eating unleavened bread and drinking the fruit of the vine [such as the first meal of Passover, the main meal during the Feast of Unleavened Bread, and in their weekly "church" services], they were to remember Jesus dying on the cross, but there was never a specific reference to the exact day of the week or date during the year of His crucifixion. This was the same as the early church worshipping on Sunday morning, but not having a specific once-a-year "Easter" service.

Luke writes [Acts 20:7] that Paul and several of his colleagues gathered with the Christians in Troas, north of Ephesus on the west coast of Asia Minor [modern-day Turkey] on the "first day of the week" to break bread together, probably alluding to them taking communion as part of their worship service. John 20:19 states that after the resurrection, the disciples were assembled together on the *evening* of the "first day of the week", but it is not clear if this was a regular weekly worship service time. In verse 20 Jesus shows them His physical wounds from the cross, sends them out to preach the Gospel, and empowers them to forgive the sins of any who repent. Perhaps this also contributed to a "first day of the week" being the regular time for believers to meet. Paul writes [1st Corinthians 16:2] that the "first day of the week" is time to set aside tithes and offerings so that no collections are needed when he arrives. This appears as if the church is already meeting on that "first day" so it is then the weekly opportunity for believers to give tithes and offerings to the ministry during the regular time the church is assembled. Bible scholars have for centuries debated the origin of how Christians came to worship on the "first day of the week". Some inferred it was tied to the historical Hebrew culture of setting aside one day each week [like a Sabbath] to cease from work and focus on God. The first day of the week in Christian churches was not intended to become a new Sabbath

to replace the regular weekly Jewish day of rest [Exodus 23:12]. In March of 321 AD, the Roman Emperor Constantine decreed that Sunday [referred to as 'Dies Solis', the *Day of the Sun*] was now the official weekly day of rest for everyone across the Empire. Courts were closed as were various shops, mills, markets, ports, and other places of work, but farmers were allowed to sow crops or reap their harvest if deemed necessary due to the weather.

For early Christians, the Sunday start to the new week was typically referred to as "The Lord's Day", first mentioned in the document *Didache*, written in Greek sometime between the 70 AD destruction of Jerusalem and the early 2nd Century, stating, "But every Lord's Day gather yourselves together and break bread and give thanksgiving". A medieval Latin translation of a writing from Ignatius of Antioch says, "Those who walked in ancient practices" [referring to the Jewish Law] attained unto newness of hope, no longer observing the Sabbath but living in observance of the Lord's Day". This was further expanded upon in the 3rd Century AD to specifically note that Sunday was now the Lord's Day, or Resurrection Day. In the late 2nd Century, Dionysius wrote this regarding Sunday, "Today we have kept the Lord's Day" [*Dies Domini*] "on which we have read your letter".

The only time that term is used in the New Testament is in Revelation Chapter One as John bar-Zebedee, on the island of Patmos, states that when he heard a loud voice behind him like the sound of a trumpet instructing him to write in a book what he was about to be shown, John was at that time "In the spirit on the Lord's Day" as he turned to the voice he heard. In the 2nd Century AD, Justin Martyr penned a rationale for the Sabbath no longer being observed because the church gathered on the "day of the sun" [a pagan day]. The 3rd Century AD

church historian Cyprian wrote that “the Lord’s Day” was on the eighth day [the first day after the weekly Sabbath ended, which occurs on the seventh day] – the very day Jesus was found to be risen from the dead. Also in the 3rd Century, the Roman historian Tertullian advocated the first day of the week be referred to as “the Lord’s Day” to be unique from “the strange Sabbaths that should not be unobserved” – referring to the ancient [Old Testament] Law of Moses he considered no longer valid since the coming of Jesus Christ.

Many of the early church historians referred to the first day of the week being when the church was engaged in its “Agape love feast” in remembrance of the resurrection of Jesus from the dead. Peter noted [2nd Peter 2:13] that evil and deceiving men are blemishes on the church body because they are in sin as they *feast* with the believers. This is also noted by Jude [verses 12-13] who describes these wicked men within the church body as “hidden reefs” among the believers at the [implied ‘regular weekly’] “love feasts”. These men have no fear of the Lord and care only for themselves “like clouds without water they are carried by winds” [referring to the latest false doctrines], “like trees without fruit” [consider tending the vineyard from Matthew 7:17-20], “like wild waves in the sea” [see James 1:6], “and like wandering stars” [similar to 1st Timothy 4:1 and Ephesians 6:10-12]. The “love feast” was alluded to by Paul [1st Corinthians 11:20-22] as being a symbolic meal for the church, not a time to literally feast upon a large dinner.

SETTING GOOD FRIDAY

The oldest recorded use of the term “Good Friday” is from a 1290 AD manuscript - the *South English Legendary* - where “**guode Friday**” is described as commemorating the crucifixion of Jesus. The date of the Passover is Nisan 14 on the Jewish calendar, and that day of the week

fluctuates each year relative to twelve lunar months not being in sync with the actual year based upon Earth's rotation around the sun. Many early church historians noted that prior to the 4th Century AD, the Last Supper [also called the Lord's Supper], the crucifixion, and the resurrection were celebrated at the same time, on a Saturday evening prior to the regular weekly Sunday worship service.

Several sources record that the setting of Friday as the day to remember Jesus being crucified on the cross is based entirely on three words from John 19:31, *"Then the Jews, because it was the day of preparation, so that the bodies would not remain on the cross **on the Sabbath**, asked Pilate that their legs be broken and the bodies taken away"*. The assumption was these words speak of the regular weekly Sabbath that would begin at sunset on Friday. The reasoning follows it must have been late afternoon on Friday when Jesus was crucified, because the religious leaders wanted to be sure He and the two others would not still be hanging on their crosses when the weekly Sabbath started at sunset. The verse notes "they asked Pilate that their legs be broken and they be taken away". It will not be covered in detail here, this early in the book, but thankfully John added a parenthetical clarifier that was overlooked, which has a huge bearing on the Friday assumption. He noted how THAT particular Sabbath he referred to was actually a "high day" [see Chapter Five for complete details]. It was not the regular weekly Sabbath that starts at Friday sunset, 52 weeks of the year, but it was a special "high day" [also a Sabbath day of rest] that occurred between the feast of Passover [which goes from Wednesday sunset to Thursday sunset] and the weekly Sabbath [from Friday sunset to Saturday sunset]. This "high day" [special Sabbath] was called the Feast of Unleavened Bread [Leviticus 23:6], also covered in detail in

Chapters Five and Six regarding the month Nisan and Passover Week. This misinterpretation of the "Sabbath" in the context of removing the bodies from the cross became the entire basis for the Friday crucifixion.

This is also linked erroneously with the accompanying tradition that the "Last Supper" of Jesus with His disciples was eating the *final* Passover meal together, with the assumption being they did so on Thursday, and Jesus was crucified on the next day Friday. However, this does not account for several significant evidences from the Bible that the now famous "Last Supper" was actually Jesus and His disciples eating the *first meal* of Passover that happens early [just after sunset of Nisan 13] at the start of Nisan 14. Luke 22:7-23 is clear that the initial day of eating unleavened bread had come as they were making preparations for Passover. The disciples found the large upper room as instructed, and Jesus notes He earnestly desired to eat the Passover with His disciples. They begin by eating unleavened bread and drinking wine. But this is not the main meal of the Passover lamb. That happens late on Passover, prior to sunset the following day, after the lambs were killed. Jesus desired [looked forward] to Passover with His disciples, and that initial meal of unleavened bread was then their Last Supper [see Chapter Six for complete details on the Passover Week].

DON'T FORGET PALM SUNDAY

Virtually all serious Bible scholars and pastors agree that the Sunday prior to the resurrection was what is referred to as "Palm Sunday", and commemorates Jesus entering Jerusalem riding on a young donkey as crowds laid down their cloaks and palm branches along the route into the city [Matthew 21:1-11, John 12:12-19, Mark 11:1-11]. Luke is careful to record [19:38-40] how the people shouted out the Messianic Psalm [118:24] *"Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord,*

peace in heaven and glory in the highest". Knowing well that this signaled the coming of Messiah, the Pharisees told Jesus He should rebuke those who make such a claim, to which Jesus replied, *"I tell you that if they become silent, the very stones will cry out"*. It was very clear that THIS was in fact THE very specific day spoken of by Daniel the prophet [see more details on this in Chapter Three].

Palm Sunday is considered the start of "Holy Week" for Christians, and is sometimes at the beginning of the Passover Week, when an interesting overlap occurs in the sequence for: 1] the Feast of Passover, 2] the Feast of Unleavened Bread, 3] the regular weekly Sabbath, and 4] the Feast of First Fruits aligning with the Biblical accounts of the Last Supper, the crucifixion of Jesus on the cross, and His resurrection from the dead. This will be specifically reviewed in Chapter Six .

SETTING EASTER SUNDAY

It remains fascinating [and troublesome] that most of the world remains oblivious to the fact that if Jesus was crucified and died on a Friday, that being raised from the dead on **the third day** [Luke 24:7] does not line up with their traditional Good Friday and Easter Sunday, because Sunday is just the second day after Friday. Ways around this problem include counting Friday as the "first day" so that Saturday is the second day, making Easter Sunday the third day. But that still does not fit with Jesus' own words that He would be dead and buried in the heart of the earth **"three days and three nights"**. Consider that in Matthew 16:21, 17:23, Luke 9:22, and 18:33 the wording says Jesus will "rise on the third day". This is entirely consistent with **"three days and three nights"** as the Sunday morning after a Thursday crucifixion is clearly "the third day" [based on counting Friday as the first day after Thursday, Saturday

as the second day, and Sunday the third]. This will also be dealt with in much greater detail later on in Chapter Eight.

While the 1st Century church may well have been celebrating the Lord's resurrection on the first day of each week [Sunday] as their regular time to assemble for worship, breaking bread, and teaching from the Word [Acts 2:42, 20:7, and 1st Corinthians 16:2] the first written record about a specific Sunday each year being set aside as "Easter" does not occur until all the way in the 4th Century AD when the Council of Nicaea took up establishing set rules for how to calculate Easter each year based upon the benchmark of the Spring solstice in March. Various church historians allude to "Easter" being observed in some locations as early as the mid-to-late 2nd Century. The book, *Socrates and Sozomenus Historia Ecclesiastica* ['Church History' penned by Socrates and his colleague Sozomen] includes comments from the 5th Century historian Socrates Scholasticus [also called Socrates of Constantinople] that "Easter" is another of the perpetuations of customs "as many other customs have been established". He stated that the 1st Century church and Apostles did not keep an annual remembrance, and that Easter celebrations essentially sprang up due to a wide range of local customs that [over time] became more widely observed by Christians.

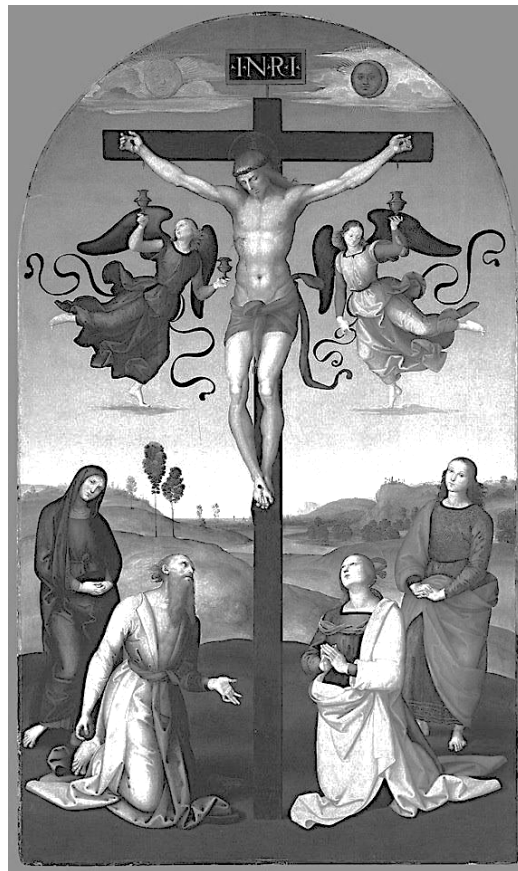
During the Middle Ages [approximately 800 years from the collapse of the Roman Empire in the 5th Century, up through the 13th Century start of the Renaissance] the tradition of the *Triduum* [three days in a row lined up] of Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and Holy Saturday were observed leading up to Easter Sunday. "Maundy" comes from the Latin word *Mandatum*, used for the Mandate given by Jesus to His disciples at the Last Supper. The *Tenebrae* [Latin word for darkness] was the start of the heaviness leading to the death of Jesus, until the

light of His new life burst forth on Easter Sunday. It is also believed to be the first time churches celebrated a sunrise service to commemorate the women coming at "first light" to the empty tomb.

Good Friday then became entrenched in Catholicism. It was decreed that no iron tools or nails could be used during this day, alluding to how Jesus was affixed to the cross by the Roman executioners. The preferred mood during Good Friday was one of intense sorrow and mourning about the cruelty done to the Lord Jesus. The church helped to nurture feelings of shame and remorse because of the people's sins being the reason for Christ having to suffer such humiliation. It remains incredibly profound that one simple assumption, regarding ***the bodies remaining on the cross with the Sabbath approaching***, locked everyone into the position that Jesus was crucified on a Friday afternoon prior to sunset and the start of the weekly Shabbat. The Catholic Church and Eastern Orthodoxy have maintained "Good Friday" for centuries, even though such a time for the death of Jesus does not match the overall Biblical narrative. If Jesus died on a Friday and was in the grave prior to sunset that could then be counted as Day-1 and then overnight to Saturday morning as Night-1. The presumed weekly Sabbath would be Day-2 and overnight to Sunday morning would be Night-2. When the women arrive at "first light" to find the empty tomb on Sunday morning, there is no logic of counting that results in Jesus being dead ***"three days and three nights"***. Even if someone tries to use the simple language of Him being raised "on the third day" [see Matthew 20:19, Luke 9:22, 24:46, Acts 10:40] after the crucifixion, Saturday is the first [next] day after Friday, and Sunday is the second day after. Counting from Friday, the "third day" would be Monday. Some in the traditional Good Friday camp try to claim that Friday is Day-1, Saturday is Day-2,

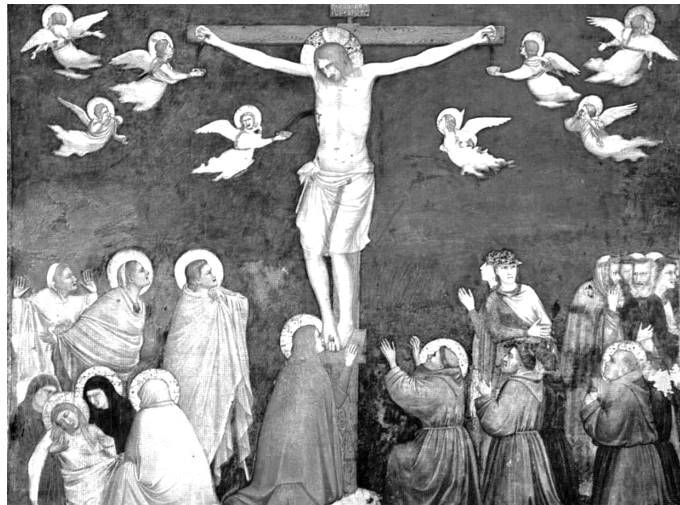
and Jesus was still dead for a short time on Sunday Day-3 prior to be resurrected and leaving the tomb. But that still leaves only two nights

When the Renaissance [rebirth] of man's creativity and artistry caught its full momentum, the painters and sculptors of the 1300s and 1400s had a major impact on developing the contemporary "Christian" viewpoint of Good Friday and Easter. Artisans such as da Vinci, Michelangelo, Tintoretto, Duccio, Botticelli, and Giotto exercised great liberty in expressing visual images that morphed over time into iconic mainstays for how people would picture Good Friday and Easter Sunday. The work below shows how Raffaello Sanzio da Urbino [usually referred to



as Rafael] did his own interpretation of Jesus hanging on the cross. This Gavari altar [Mond Crucifixion] painting depicts two angels balancing with their toes on clouds to each side catching Christ's blood in golden cups. The sun and the moon are evident in the sky above to capture the supposed eclipse that occurred as Jesus gave up His spirit and died. Rafael even produces an anachronism with the 5th Century Saint Jerome at the left side of the cross [he was not alive at the time of the crucifixion], with Jesus' mother Mary standing behind him, and then the Gospel writer John the Evangelist shown on the opposite side.

Below is the *Crucifixion* by Pietro Lorenzetti. This fresco is regarded as his best work, and reflects the thinking that had become prevalent about what happened when Jesus was put to death on the cross. Unlike Rafael's imagery, here the artist includes a large crowd [some twenty individuals depicted] that encircles the three crosses. Similar to Rafael, the artist inserts flying angels watching over the Lord as blood pours from the spear wound in His right chest area. This was revered and prayed over during annual Good Friday services.



THE TRADITION OF LENT

The Council of Nicaea [circa 325 AD] formally instituted the preparation for the Easter festival with a heavy dose of personal penitence as a way for individuals to identify with all that Jesus was willing to set aside so He could endure the cross on their behalf. This gradually morphed into an extended six weeks [40 days] of Lent, beginning on what was called Ash Wednesday [another tradition of men] set up as a specific period for habitual sinners to prepare themselves to be forgiven and restored into fellowship within the church. Today, church-goers still kneel before the priest [or pastor] who draws a cross on their foreheads with ashes. Many people take off from work the rest of the day after receiving their ashen markings. Growing up in a very traditional Catholic town in New Jersey in the 1960s and 1970s, it seemed that 90% of my classmates at our public school did not return after being excused to attend Ash Wednesday at Saint Mary's, Sacred Heart, or Christ Episcopal Church. My friends were always debating what personal vice they would give up each year during Lent to try and identify with the sufferings of Jesus.

The "Lenten" season was finalized by Gregory the Great in the mid 6th Century A.D. The first day of fasting and self-denial was defined by people showing outward sorrow about their sins as they were marked with ashes in the sign of the cross across their forehead. This remains popular with modern Catholics, Anglican, and Episcopalian churches. The 2000 film *Chocolat* [starring Juliette Binoche and Johnny Depp] weaves the themes of religious self-denial, hypocrisy, and personal lack of self-control as a woman arrives in a French village to open up a gourmet chocolate shop right at the start of Lent. There is much ado from the pious mayor and the "upstanding" and "proper" citizens who pride themselves on not indulging in such a selfish [sweet] pleasure.

MARDI GRAS

It is quite interesting to see how the traditions of men focus so much on the outward forms of piety and *"holding to a form of godliness"* they act religious so as to *"appear righteous to others, but actually deny the true power from the work of God's Spirit"* [2nd Timothy 3:5]. As Lenten denials started on Ash Wednesday, people found it acceptable to have one last round of personal indulgences the day before, which became known by the French *Mardi Gras* – literally *"Tuesday fat"*. After all, if people are going to deny all types of earthly vices for six weeks, they should *"get sinfulness out of their systems"* by actively engaging in all forms of revelry just beforehand. New Orleans and Rio de Janeiro are two cities that have become famous for indulging in every type of extravagant behavior prior to Lent's month-and-a-half of self-denial to identify with Christ's suffering. This is very similar to Jesus commenting on how the religious hypocrites did their fasting. It was not to draw them closer to God as they skipped meals and used that time to pray, but to draw special attention to their physical outward appearance so others would readily notice they were fasting. Inside their own hearts they were not seeking wholeheartedly for God [Matthew 6:16-18], and so Jesus explained their reward begins and ends with the recognition they received from people – but with no blessing or reward from God.

PAGAN ORIGINS

It is provocative, as well as tragic, that the annual celebrations devoted to *"Easter"* draw many traditions and beliefs from the decidedly pagan origins of Springtime fertility rituals, observances, and characters. One of these provocative storylines includes the Mesopotamian goddess of war and sex who is named Ishtar [the stone-carved relief on the next page is on display at London's British Museum]. She has wings and

talons like a bird, and is standing on mighty battle lions, with wise owls resting on both sides. Other fascinating details about this ancient deity are covered in the book, *Ishtar* by Louise M. Pryke, including how she was the inspiration for the Greek goddess of love and sensuality, Aphrodite, as well as Athena and Artemis [whom the Romans called Diana]. There were often hundreds of young female prostitutes employed at the temples to the Greek-Roman goddesses, resulting in many pregnancies, a sign of divine intervention in human procreation.



Many theologians trace the name Ishtar as having morphed over the centuries into our word Easter. It is from the Akkadian language where she is prominently portrayed in Sumerian poetry representing all forms of romantic love and fertility through her sexual relationship with her lover Tammuz. The Springtime solstice is the time of rebirth for the

earth [plants, animals, trees, rivers and lakes thaw, the sun shines on longer days]. Over time the church integrated various pagan images associated with new life and rebirth to align the hope of Ishtar with the celebration of Jesus' resurrection.

Another potential pagan origin of Easter comes from *Eostre*, the beautiful northern German goddess of the dawn who brings light to the world as the dark months of winter conclude, while the hope of bright sunlight restores Earth. Her name is also recorded in some 19th Century sources as *Ostara*. The 1874 book titled *Deutsche Mythologie* includes stories of the famous German rabbit that was believed to be *Ostara's* personal sacred animal. A similar German book from 1835 [also titled *Deutsche Mythologie*] by Jacob Grimm [of the "Brothers Grimm" folk-storytelling fame] also includes *Ostara* and her magical sacred hare, telling the tale of how she transformed a small winter bird into a white rabbit that then curiously laid eggs in the colors of the rainbow. This festival then carried over to Saxons in England, and in time her name may very well have progressed into our modern "Easter".

BUNNIES, EGGS, CHICKS

Whether the Akkadian Ishtar, who inspired the worship and rituals of Greek and Roman goddesses of love, or the German *Eostre* who brings the sun back to the earth as new life bursts forth each Springtime, there are decidedly pagan symbols and archetypes that have now become mainstream images associated with modern Easter celebrations. It is so interesting to see these melded right into facets of the Biblical story of the resurrection. Rabbits were well-known throughout Europe for their breeding proliferation, and were readily adopted as a symbol of new life and fertility each Springtime. Bright-colored yellow baby chicks were also seen as an image representing the hope of new life in Spring.

Chicken eggs were adopted in Eastern Orthodox religions as a readily identified image associated with rebirth. For more than 400 years, European artisans have been fascinated with decorating eggs with colored paints, jewels, mother-of-pearl, gold, and silver as part of Springtime fertility celebrations. The *House of Faberge* was founded in Saint Petersburg in 1842, and later nationalized by Russian communists during the 1918 Bolshevik revolution. Its popular trademark was a limited edition of 69 "Imperial Easter Eggs" for the Russian Czars Alexander III and Nicolas II, of which 50 of these are still collected, many valued at between \$20 million and \$35 million each. In early 17th Century European rituals, Easter eggs were colored all across the spectrum of the rainbow, and adored [worshipped] before being eaten with the promise of female fertility and male virility.

It has now become a fixture of the annual Spring celebration of Easter to welcome the arrival of the Easter Bunny, who secretly leaves colorful woven-straw baskets full of egg-themed candies for children. Back in the 1960s, my parents gave us a half-dozen or so little yellow chicks or baby ducklings on Easter Sunday. Some parents still give their children baby bunnies, or maybe a plush stuffed-toy version of Easter rabbits. This Easter holiday has also become one of the few times each year people will attend a church service, with the emphasis on wearing brand new "Easter clothes", which are typically pastel colors for Spring, along with fancy hats or bonnets and flower corsages [see the annual advertisements online and in mailers for Old Navy, Macy's, JC Penny, Gap, and other retail clothiers]. People do Easter-egg hunts, as children giggle while running around searching for colorful eggs hidden by parents and filled with candies or other treats. And let's not forget the annual television commercials from Cadbury chocolates advertising

their special cream-filled eggs showing how cats, lions, dogs, and other animals all secretly aspire to be the 'Cadbury bunny' at Easter.

CURIOUS TRADITIONS

In the Czech Republic, Slovakia, and Croatia there is an Easter tradition for men to roam the city with a weeping willow branch [switch] adorned with ribbons as they seek out women they are to "lightly whip" as an encouragement for beauty and continued good health in Springtime. It is viewed as an incentive to finally get outside, enjoy warmer weather, and hopefully find a new love interest. The Aussies pay homage to the endangered species of the rabbit-sized marsupial - the Bilby - with all kinds of chocolates and other confections crafted in the Bilby's likeness. These are similar to the chocolate Easter bunnies, along with the yellow or pink marshmallow chicks, that are immensely popular throughout North American confectioners. Easter candy is a \$2.5 billion annual business [Statista.com], as 9-out-of-10 families celebrating Easter stock up on more than \$20 per person of sweet treats [Forbes].

Various rituals have been well-documented from Latin America, the Philippines, Russia, Greek orthodoxy, and even traditional Catholicism that emphasize the physical suffering of Jesus on the cross after He was flogged, and then proceeded through the stages of His suffering while carrying the cross to Golgotha where He was crucified. In numerous cultures, some people allow themselves to be nailed through their hands to wooden crosses so they get a chance to somehow experience some of what Jesus went through in suffering for them. The wounds to their hands are not life-threatening. They stand [unnailed] on a small wooden platform to support their weight. But these piercings do result in a great deal of pain and blood as these self-proclaimed martyrs wail and cry out to God. A March 2016 procession through San Pedro

Cutud in the Philippines included Ruben Enaje with 14 other men screaming in torment as they were nailed to crosses [for Enaje it was his 30th year in a row]. They believe this outward form of identifying with Christ will bring them favor and greater standing with God. Some even engage in gruesome self-flagellation to suffer like Jesus' flogging.

Other curious traditions include children in Finland dressing up as the "Witches of Easter-wick" before taking their straw broomsticks to wander the city's streets hunting for treats. In Papua New Guinea the trees at the entryway to the churches are decorated with tobacco leaves and cigarettes, which are then taken home by people after services. In Greece all the Easter eggs are only colored bright red, representing the blood of Jesus shed on the cross. When I was on Santorini a few years ago during Greek Orthodox Easter weekend, red eggs were at the hotel front desk, in restaurants, at taxi stops, inside and outside most shops, while women strolled the marketplaces handing them out while wishing "*Kali Anastasi*" [Good Resurrection].

CHAPTER SUMMARY

The Good Friday and Easter Sunday holidays are a fixture on the world calendar. In some cases for deeply religious rituals. For others it is just a festive Springtime celebration of nature. Many hold to traditions that have nothing to do with the crucifixion of Jesus or His resurrection from the dead. Sadly, there are churches that have so comingled Springtime and other nature-rebirth rituals with portions of the Bible, that these now overshadow any somber remembrances associated with a Good Friday crucifixion, or the joy of celebrating Jesus' Easter resurrection.

It is fascinating that the New York Stock Exchange is closed for trading on Good Friday. Some say this is out of reverence for our longstanding

tradition of being a nation founded on Christian principles. However, some attribute this to the market suffering three straight years of steep declines [losses] on Good Fridays in the mid-1890s, so the superstitious believed it was God's sign that stocks and bonds should not be trading on the day that remembers the crucifixion of Jesus. Some states have it as a holiday for banks, schools, and government offices, but it is not a national holiday. Easter being on a Sunday is already a day markets are closed, and is typically not a regular day in most people's workweek.

There are certainly good reasons to pause and remember the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross, as well as rejoice in the Good News of Him being raised from the dead. And yet, longstanding traditions of men are now so entrenched in modern society, that Mardi Gras, Lent, Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and Easter Sunday have become more cultural in their observances, while not being anchored on solid Biblical truths. Many Knights of Columbus halls, Masonic Temples, Moose and Elk Lodges, Lions and Rotary Clubs, as well as chambers of commerce, and [sad to say] churches sponsor annual Easter celebrations that have not a single mention of Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection. It is in many ways similar to how Santa Clause, Frosty, Rudolph, the Grinch, and Will Ferrell the Elf have become the central [and only] personalities for annual Christmas celebrations each December. The following chapter examines the details of the Biblical Passover.

CHAPTER 2

The Biblical Passover

“In the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month at twilight is the Lord’s Passover.”
Leviticus 23:5

PASSOVER FROM JUDGMENT

Because this book is entirely focused on presenting Jesus as crucified on the Jewish Feast of Passover, this premise automatically introduces several areas of potential conflict between the “Christian” approach to Passover and what it means, and the position of historical Judaism with regard to the original Passover. The former recognizes that Jesus [Jeho-shua] of Nazareth is the literal fulfillment of all that the first Passover foreshadowed. The latter is focused on those in the Jewish faith showing remembrance of how Jehovah miraculously delivered His people from Egyptian slavery. Various Jewish historians place the Exodus happening some 2,600 years after Creation, based on the 430 years captivity [Exodus 12:40-41] linked to the lineage from Adam to Moses. One group holds Passover as the basis for Jesus dying on the cross for the sins of the world. The other embraces a historic

benchmark in the life of an emerging nation that eventually settled into Canaan as promised to Abraham [Genesis 15:18-21], Isaac [26:3], and Jacob [28:13]. Let's examine the Spring feasts of Israel and the model of the original Passover in Egypt as these relate to God's plan for covering sin with animal blood from an atoning sacrifice. This will provide a Biblical perspective for the crucifixion of Jesus on Passover.

THREE SPRING FEASTS

Passover is one of the three Spring feasts of Israel that all occur within the same week. Passover begins on Nisan 14, is followed on Nisan 15 with the Feast of Unleavened Bread, and then comes the Feast of First Fruits on Nisan 17 [which happens to be the anniversary for the end of the great flood, when the ark of Noah rested on the mountains of Ararat]. There is strong evidence the feasts of Israel act as specific foreshadows of God's overall plan for Messiah and the nation of Israel. A thorough review of Passover will clearly show numerous "types" from the observances that all refer directly to Jesus who literally fulfills every aspect of the feast. This aligns precisely with Paul's encouragement [Colossians 2:16-17] that the feasts, the food and drink, the new moon, and the Sabbaths were all **foreshadows of things still to come**, and that the substance of these figurative "types" is Christ. This is so important in Passover being the time Jesus was crucified, as it shows the design and intention of God, having Messiah die for the sins of the world on a specific date prophesied hundreds of years before the 1st Century AD. Remember that Jesus told the religious leaders He did not come to abolish Moses and the prophets, but **to fulfill them** [Matthew 5:17-18], such that until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or even a single brush stroke will pass away until ALL has been fulfilled. The Apostle Peter understood this and wrote [1st Peter 1:10-12] that *"the prophets of old who prophesied of the grace that would come,*

made careful search and inquiries seeking to know what person or time the Spirit of Christ within them was indicating, as He [the Holy Spirit] predicted the sufferings of Christ and the glories to follow. In fact, it was revealed to them by God that they were not serving themselves, but all those who would follow and read their accounts of things which now have been announced through those who preach the Gospel". These Biblical foreshadows are so intriguing and provocative that even the "angels long to watch and see how it all unfolds".

Jehovah established the feasts for Israel as spiritual precursors of literal events that would actually take place on earth. These were celebrated for dozens of centuries prior to the birth of Jesus. Each feast is entirely prophetic in substance, depicting facets of God's plan for His Messiah. God even instructed Moses to change the order of the months in the Hebrew calendar to further communicate His insights and intentions regarding the unfolding of His plan to redeem mankind and Creation. The Bible presents detailed accounts about the seven main feasts for Israel's religious year. The original seventh month Nisan on the civil calendar was switched to the first month on God's new religious calendar given to Moses. This first month Nisan included: 1] Passover, 2] Unleavened Bread, and 3] First Fruits. Fifty days after is 4] Pentecost. The new seventh month Tishri had 5] Yom Teruah, 6] Yom Kippur, and 7] Sukkot. This new alignment appears to represent a time-sequence that follows the overall history of God's plan for mankind, from the sacrifice of Jesus for the sins of the world on Passover, to the lesson of leaven [sin], to the resurrection of Jesus on First Fruits as a model of the inheritance all believers will have their new bodies. Seven weeks later is the incredible gift of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. The remaining three Fall feasts seem to point to the still-future events of the rapture of

the church [blowing trumpets], God's plan for His Jewish remnant [Day of Atonement], and the millennial kingdom of Jesus [Feast of Booths].

IT STARTED IN EGYPT

This Feast of Passover is described in Exodus 12 as starting on Nisan 14 during the new first month of the religious calendar. As Moses engaged in high-level negotiations with Pharaoh regarding the people's release, a sequence of ten plagues – literal, physical signs from God to the Egyptians to display His incredible power – severely impacted the nation of Egypt on multiple fronts. The tenth and final manifestation of God's amazing might was that all the first born sons in the land would be killed. There is no subtlety in how Yahweh would speak about the life being in the blood. The sacrifice of a lamb without blemish [defect] could be made to atone as a covering for the death penalty. Starting in verse five of Exodus 12 Moses writes that the Lord told him and Aaron that this month [Nisan] would now be the beginning of months, as the new first month of the year. Moses then spoke to all the congregation of Israel that on the tenth of Nisan they are each to take a lamb according to their households, and if the household is too small for a lamb, then they can share a lamb with their near neighbors according to what each man should eat. The lamb needed to be an unblemished male a year old. They were then to keep it until Nisan 14 at which time the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel is to kill it at twilight [prior to sunset at the close of Passover day]. Verse-7 then explains they take some of the blood and put it on the two doorposts and the lintel of the house in which they will eat it. They eat the lamb that night roasted with fire, served with unleavened bread and bitter herbs. The instructions were very clear to not eat any of it raw or boiled in water,

but rather roasted with fire. And none of it was to be left over until the next morning [all leftovers were to be burned with fire].

Yahweh also clearly instructed the manner to eat the lamb. Men were to have their loins girded, sandals on their feet, walking staff in hand, and eat it in haste, for **this is the Lord's Passover**. Verse-12 states the Lord will go through the land of Egypt that night and strike down all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both of men and the beasts. This judgment will be executed against all the gods of Egypt because I AM the Lord. The blood will then be a sign for you on the houses where you live. When God sees the blood He will "pass over" that home and death will not happen there when He strikes the land of Egypt.

Moses records in Leviticus 23:4-8 that Passover is for the nation of Israel to remember that when they were about to depart Egypt, the angel of death would "pass over" any home that had lamb's blood brushed on the two side doorposts and the lintel crossbeam above. The people would dip hyssop branches in the blood from the lamb and sprinkle it on the entryway to their home, symbolic of the heart as the doorway to a person. The blood would be an outward symbol of their abiding faith and belief that those inside the had house put their trust in the Word from God, that He would deliver them from death. Some theologians note the hyssop branch motion is up-and-down then side-to-side which seems to draw a cross pattern. Four days earlier on Nisan 10 the *entire congregation of Israel* [plural] takes the lamb [singular] to observe it [singular] up to the start of Passover to confirm it [singular] has no blemish. Later it describes how all the congregation of Israel shall kill it [once again singular]. This could have said all those *lambs* [plural] in Israel, to observe all of *these* [plural], and kill *them* [plural]. However this wording prophetically points to the *one* Lamb [Jesus], as

He was observed without blemish prior to His crucifixion on Passover and He alone was killed [sacrificed] for the sins of the world.

The Feast of Passover presents a clear foreshadow of the crucifixion of Jesus. His blood was shed as *the Passover Lamb of God* who takes away the sins of the world [John 1:29]. That sacrifice covers the sin of those who put their trust in Jesus so that the judgment [death] which is due for sin will pass over even as the angel did pass over in Egypt. This is strong prophetic imagery. In Hebrews 5:1, Paul explains how the priest offers sacrifices for the sins of the people. But then in 7:23-25 he notes that the earthly priests were prevented by death from continuing in their duties, whereas Jesus is now a priest *forever* [permanently] and is able to save all who draw near to God through Him. He continues in Hebrews 8:5 that those priests who served were a copy [foreshadow] of heavenly things. With Christ as our High Priest [Hebrews 9:11-12], Jesus saves not as an earthly priest or “type” with the blood of goats, heifers, and bulls who are defiled, but in the heavenly realm with His own blood as the one perfect sacrifice for our sin – undefiled and *once for all*.

COVERING FOR SIN

Perhaps one of the top three or four doctrines in the Bible deals with God’s clear requirement that blood is the ultimate demonstration of atonement for sin. Romans 6:23 clarifies that the wages of sin [the just payment due] is death. That price [wage, compensation] must be paid for anyone guilty of sin against God. Blood flows throughout the body as the source of physical life. The Torah states [Leviticus 17:11] that the life of the flesh is in the blood. Paul’s Hebrews commentary [9:22] makes this prerequisite [condition] nonnegotiable, that ***without the shedding of blood there can be no forgiveness of sin***. This section of the book looks at six interesting benchmarks in God’s plan of salvation

for the sins of mankind, each based upon the shedding of blood as a sacrificial offering. These provide a timeline about the unveiling of how the eternal God provided a pathway to restore a right relationship for men and women. The first is in Genesis 3, as Yahweh addressed the original disobedience of Eve and Adam. The second is in Genesis 4, as Abel brings to the Lord a sacrifice deemed acceptable. The third is in Genesis 22, as Abraham demonstrates obedience to God by his willingness to offer up his only son Isaac as a sacrifice on Mount Moriah. The fourth occurs at the first Passover found in Exodus 12. The fifth instance is shown through the sin offerings described in Leviticus made by the priests in the tabernacle, and later in the Temple in Jerusalem. The sixth and final benchmark is described in the four gospels [Matthew 27, Mark 15, Luke 23, and John 19] as Jesus literally fulfills the role of the Passover Lamb and willingly sheds His very own blood for the sins of the entire world. In each case, God consistently shows the need for covering sin through a sacrifice.

Genesis Chapter 3 provides an intriguing account of Eve with Adam in a new state of nakedness they had not known previously. There are two different viewpoints about what it means in verse-21 that "God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife, and He clothed them". While the first position immediately infers that the "skin" was from a sheep or goat that God killed [sacrificed], symbolic of a covering for their sin, the second perspective is a bit more involved, so we will start with this one. Prior to their disobeying God's Word, these two humans knew no sin and did not need to wear man-made clothing of any kind, as they were naked, but not ashamed in any way [Genesis 2:25]. As such, they were able to have face-to-face fellowship with each other, and with Elohiym, because in their spiritual purity they were most likely clothed in light.

Many rabbinic traditions and commentaries anchor this on Psalm 104:2 that teaches how God covers Himself in light, like a cloak. The Hebrew word for light, pronounced as "Or", is spelled with these three letters: *resh vav aleph*. Another Hebrew word sounded as "Or" is for skin and is spelled with the three letters: *resh vav ayin*. Both of these words are pronounced the same - like English homophones that sound the same but have different meanings and are spelled differently. For example the "bow" of the ship and a tree "bough". The "break" from work and the train "brake". Or consider "to", "two", and "too". The only difference in the Hebrew homophones 'light' and 'skin' is the letter aleph for the former, and the letter ayin for the latter.

The ancient rabbis wrote that the difference between "light" and "skin" regarding how Adam and Eve were clothed, is captured in the gaps of the numerical values between *aleph* [represents the Hebrew number one] and *ayin* [the number seventy]. The gap is 69 [70 minus 1]. The number 69 is written in Hebrew with the letters *samech* [meaning support] and *tet* [meaning snake]. They concluded God was saying the difference between Adam and Eve clothed in light, then after their disobedience clothed with skin, was due to "support the snake", a reference to the intentional deception of Satan [the cunning serpent] in the garden. They added the perspective that the letter *aleph* [meaning strong] described them clothed in "light" before their disobedience, while the change to the letter *ayin* [meaning eye] described them in their "skin" AFTER, when their eyes were open and they then knew the difference between good and evil [obedience vs. disobedience].

A complementary passage [Isaiah 61:10] also cited by the ancient rabbis harkens back to the original pure relationship between Elohiym and mankind, where God "clothed me with garments of salvation, and

wrapped me with a robe of righteousness, as the bridegroom with the wedding garland and the bride adorned with jewels". This was the way God intended personal [sinless] interaction with His created people. It was how Adam and Eve were able to see, and speak directly with, God. A form similar to this was in place when Jehovah used to speak face-to-face with Moses [Exodus 33:11] *"as a man speaks with his friend"*. Consider how the face of Moses shown brilliantly [Exodus 34:29 and 35] when he came down from the mountain after speaking with Jehovah. Consider also how Jesus took just three of His disciples with Him up to a mountain so that He could give them a glimpse of His divine glory [Matthew 17:1-2, Luke 9:28-29] – that which He willingly had laid aside [Philippians 2:7-9] in order to endure the cross on our behalf. The gospels both say the face of Jesus shown brilliantly AND His clothing was light, and bright as the sun. Mankind was created in the image of God [Genesis 1:26], who alone possesses immortality and dwells in unapproachable light [1st Timothy 6:16]. Being clothed in light was our original stature prior to sin [disobedience] entering the world.

Eve was deceived into her disobedience. Adam however, made the choice to disobey of his own volition, joining his spouse in opposition to God's own word. Elohiym would regularly come to Adam and Eve in the cool of the day walking in Eden [Genesis 3:8] for their personal fellowship. After they disobeyed, they attempted to hide themselves from God as He came to them for this regular personal interaction. The conversation ensues about how it is this couple now understood they were naked [uncovered] and why they tried to cover themselves with leaves from a fig tree. Eve was by herself and without the spiritual covering of her husband when she was deceived [2nd Corinthians 11:3]. Adam clarifies [Genesis 3:12-13] that it was the woman who later gave

him the fruit to eat in disobedience. This clearly leaves open wide the doorway that Eve was the first one to lose her being clothed in light, such that Adam recognized a huge difference between the two of them when she had already disobeyed God, but Adam had not yet made the decision to join her in that posture. She was naked [uncovered], but he was still in his original sinless state clothed in light. When Adam does willingly disobey, his light is also removed, and they are both naked. Some Bible commentators argue [and I agree completely] that Adam represents a “type” of Jesus Christ, who decides to step into sin out of a deep love for his own bride, even as Paul notes [Romans 5:12] *“Through one man [Adam] sin entered the world, and death through sin, so death reigned from Adam to Moses, with Adam being a ‘type’ of Him who was to come”*. Paul also wrote [1st Corinthians 15:44-45] to clarify that the natural body [naked, without light] is a result of the “first Adam” who became a living soul, while the spiritual body [not naked and clothed in light] is a result of the “last Adam” who became a life-giving spirit. These passages clearly link the actions of Adam in the garden to that of Jesus. With their sinful disobedience completed, and their spiritual clothing of light removed, Adam and Eve make their own human attempt to cover their situation, but it of course failed miserably, even as our own works to try and deal with sin will always fall short of the glory of God [Romans 3:23]. This is exactly what Ephesians 5:8 confirms, that in our sinful state we were formerly darkness but now we are Light in the Lord, so now we are to **walk as children of Light** [even as we originally were intended to walk with God]. Light is also how the Church, the Bride of Christ, seems to once again be clothed at the marriage feast with Jesus the groom [Revelation 19:8].

The other interpretation is that with their awkward attempt to try and cover their sin ending in a complete failure, Elohiym personally makes them coverings from animal skins [Genesis 3:21] which will entirely redefine how He will clothe them in their nakedness [sinfulness] going forward. Paul confirms that based upon the death and resurrection of Jesus, "all who have been baptized into Christ are now also CLOTHED in Christ" [Ephesians 3:27]. In the literal sense, the "garments of skin" prepared by Elohiym could infer that one or more animals were killed in order to provide the hides for such clothing, and as such this is the first instance of blood being shed in order to have a covering for sin. But it is provocative that no animals are mentioned specifically, only that the new garment from God is 'skin'. So if this was simply the more casual reading, it infers blood was shed to make animal skins [hides] to cover the nakedness of disobedience in Adam and Eve. The more in-depth interpretation has God replacing their originally being clothed in light like God [created in His image], with a decidedly new covering of skin prepared by God to provide a satisfactory covering for their sinfulness.

Genesis Chapter 4 recounts how Adam's son Abel was a keeper of flocks, while his brother Cain was a tiller of the ground. The contrast is shown between Abel and Cain bringing two very different offerings to God. Cain offers up produce from his harvest – the fruit of the ground. Abel brings a blood offering from the firstlings of his flocks, most likely a lamb. The key issue is that Abel made his offering to the Lord in faith and from a right heart, while his brother came before God without any humility, demonstrated by his response to his grain sacrifice being unacceptable [Genesis 4:5]. He became angry and his countenance fell. Abel responded to his brother [4:7] appealing to his common sense in the attitude of his heart, "If you do well, will not your countenance be

lifted up? But if you do not do well, then sin is crouching right at that door with its desire for you, so you have to master that". Perhaps Abel understood that the shedding of blood would keep him contrite and humble before the Lord. But Cain on the other hand appeared to be boastful and proud in presenting the harvest from his fields.

It seems that the difference between the two offerings was that Abel's did in fact cost him something. The death of that lamb was a tangible loss to the entirety of his possessions, and one could speculate that perhaps he did in fact bring the "best" from his flocks. However, there seems to be no clear representation of a specific cost or price to pay in Cain laying out some fruits, grains, and vegetables from what he had harvested. Perhaps these were not the "choice" picks and top-end, but from among his surplus. Abel had to reduce the inventory count of his flocks by killing one or more animals to do the sacrifice to the Lord. Cain's pride may have been him knowing there was no significant, personal cost to him in what he brought to offer before the Lord. Paul comments on this [Hebrews 11:4], that it was by *faith* that Abel offered to God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, through which he obtained a clear witness that he was righteous, with God testifying of his gift, so that through this, although Abel is dead, **he still speaks**. Jesus testified of the offering of "*righteous Abel*" [Matthew 23:34-35] as among the prophets truly sent from God who were killed because of their witness [also Luke 11:51]. Finally, Paul again commends the ultimate sacrifice of Jesus on the cross [Hebrews 12:24] as the true Mediator of the "New Covenant", relative to the "Old Covenant" at the time of Abel. Yes there was blood shed signaling contrition in Abel's offering, but that was still only a foreshadow of the fulfilled and completed work of the Christ shedding His own blood once-for-all to cover the sins of the

world. The sacrifice of Abel was pleasing to the Lord, in the very same way those offerings made in the Tabernacle and the Temple were also symbolic of repenting and being truly sorry for one's sin.

Genesis Chapter 22 tells how Jehovah tested Abraham's love for God by instructing him to sacrifice his only son Isaac to an exact location he would show him. The events that unfold are referred to in the Hebrew as the *Akedah*, the "Binding" of Isaac by his father. Many theologians openly criticize the veracity of this portion of Scripture arguing it hints of adopting the pagan child sacrifices of that day and age. What could possibly be the underlying rationale for Jehovah making such a request and allowing it to play out right to the point of Abraham being ready to slay his son on the altar? This is quite the request, given the miraculous way in which Isaac was conceived inside his mother Sarah when she was ninety years old. Chuck Missler always noted that this was entirely God's problem, not Abraham's, because the Lord had promised descendants to Abraham [Genesis 17:9]. Paul provides the commentary [Hebrews 11:19] that Abraham reasoned in his heart that God was able to raise Isaac from the dead, so this ordeal on the mountain serves as a foreshadow or "type" of how Jesus Christ was to be received back to His Father after the sacrifice on Calvary's cross. This comes through loud and clear [Genesis 22:14] with Abraham being aware that his actions [obedience] are entirely prophetic, and they point to a still-future event that will occur on that exact same location. It is also clear in Abraham's word to the young man who accompanied him and Isaac [Genesis 22:5] when he says, "We WILL return to you" after the sacrifice and worship are completed. Hebrews 11:17-18 clarifies how Isaac was already considered "dead" from Abraham's perspective at the time of God's request for this sacrifice. So from the time of that request, right

up to when God intervenes with Isaac bound on the altar, it had been **three days** [Genesis 22:4] that Isaac had been [for all intents and purposes] already dead in Abraham's thinking.

Abraham is then clearly a representation of God the Father, while Isaac is a "type" of Jesus the only begotten Son. Mount Moriah is a ridge that runs from Mount Zion over to the Mount of Olives. To the south is the Hinnom Valley, Kidron is on the east, and Tyropean on the west side. Coming in from the south, Abraham would have to climb up about 600 feet with Isaac to "the mountains which I will tell you" [Genesis 22:2]. Over 700 years later, Abraham's descendant King David purchased this exact same location, the harvest threshing floor of Ornan [Arunah] the Jebusite, for 600 gold shekels [1st Chronicles 21:25] as the general site for where the first Temple in Jerusalem would be built by Solomon. Ten centuries later the ancient Mount Moriah was just outside Jerusalem's city walls and called Golgotha, "the place of the skull" [Mark 15:22]. Jesus was the only Son offered by His Father in the exact same place where Abraham prophetically demonstrated what God's intended plan was all along. While no death by sacrifice occurred with Abraham's son Isaac, the typology continued as they went back down the mountain to the young men who stayed with the donkey [Genesis 22:19]. But quite conspicuously there is no mention of Isaac. The next mention of him by name is not until Genesis 24:62-67 as the "un-named servant" brings Isaac to be joined to his Gentile bride Rebekah at Beer-la-hai-roi [the "well of living water"]. This parallels closely how Jesus is joined to His bride, the Church, through the work of the Holy Spirit. Interestingly, we do know later on the name of this un-named servant is Eliezer, which means "God's Helper" – the same name that Jesus uses [John 14:16] for the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will give to men [see also John

14:26, 15:26, and 16:7]. This Akedah highlights an incredible sacrifice through a foreshadow pointing to the ultimate blood offering that would be made to cover sin and reconcile mankind to God.

Exodus Chapter 12 describes all the facets of the first Passover as Israel prepared to leave Egypt. The original seventh month [Nisan] on Israel's civil calendar was to now be the beginning month [verse 2] of a new religious calendar. The tenth day of Nisan was when the lambs were selected [verse 3] and then observed for four days for any blemish. On Nisan 14 the entire assembly of the congregation [the nation] of Israel shall kill IT [singular] at twilight, the late afternoon prior to the sunset [verse 6]. The people will put the lamb's blood on the two side doorposts and the top lintel-crossbeam [verse 7]. Then God will go through Egypt that night [verse 12] to strike down every firstborn, but the blood on your houses will be a sign [verse 13], and when God sees the blood **He will pass over** and no harm will come to that household. This is an incredibly prophetic picture of how the shedding of blood will provide a covering [protection] from the penalty of death. It did not matter who was in the house, the firstborn would be spared because of being covered by the blood sacrifice. It is extremely provocative that Exodus 4:22 pronounces that this Passover act will in essence be the birth of Israel as God's firstborn son. And these then survive because they are under the protection of the blood.

The typology of Jesus literally fulfilling the foreshadows found within the Passover is significant, as He was observed without blemish for four days prior to being crucified. Jesus was crucified during the afternoon of Thursday, April 10th [the twilight of Nisan 14] as the entire assembly killed Him [singular], even as the thousands of individual lambs were being killed all throughout Judea. In Exodus 12:46 and Numbers 9:12

God's Passover foreshadow of Jesus clarifies that not a single bone shall be broken in the lamb - entirely fulfilled in John 19:33. This blood sacrifice that covers judgment would then become part of the Law given to Moses by God. It would first be demonstrated with sacrifices made by priests in the portable tabernacle in the wilderness, and then at Solomon's Temple in Jerusalem, with the specific statutes regarding offerings made for sin being laid out in detail in the Torah.

Tabernacle and Temple offerings took place for hundreds of years from the time of Moses and the Exodus-Passover into the wilderness, to the first Temple designed by David and built by Solomon, and then in the rebuilt second Temple that was in Jerusalem at the time of Herod the Great in the early 1st Century AD. There were daily sacrifices offered by the priests. Certain offerings were to confess sin and ask forgiveness of God [see Leviticus 4:1-6, 6:24-30, 7:1-6, 8:14-17, and 16:3-22]. Another set of offerings were about worshipping the greatness of God and His power [Leviticus 6:8-23, 7:11-34]. Overall, there were five categories of sacrifices, including the: 1] Burnt Offerings, 2] Peace Offering, 3] Grain Offering, 4] Offering of Reparations, and 5] Offering of Purification. The Levites attended to the daily, weekly, monthly, and special high day sacrifices by serving in 24 courses [outlined in 1st Chronicles 24:5-18], or monthly cycles that rotated every two years [24 months]. Paul comments on this routine in the role of the priests, that their sacrifices could never actually take away a person's sin [Hebrews 10:1-4], "*for the Law is only a shadow of the good that was still to come, and that the form of things could never, by the same sacrifices that are offered year after year continually, make perfect those who draw near – for in those sacrifices there is always the reminder of sin, for it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins*". God allowed the futility of

the regular sacrifices at the Tabernacle and the Temple to simply serve as a reminder that one day there would be an ultimate fulfillment of the Law to truly blot out and cover sin once and for all [Romans 6:10].

Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John each record the process of Jesus being crucified on the cross. This was God fulfilling everything that was shown previously as foreshadows of how the shedding of blood would be a figurative example of covering sin. Jehovah knew from the beginning that priestly sacrifices would not permanently remedy the situation of mankind's sinfulness. The offerings were a constant reminder that it would take more than the symbolic transfer of one's sin to a lamb, bull, or goat [even turtledoves] to truly atone for sin. At the 1st Century AD Passover in Jerusalem, with perhaps tens of thousands of lambs slain, the shedding of that blood remained inadequate to remove sin.

THE QUARTODECIMAN

The early 1st Century church had a large contingent of Gentile believers who held strongly that the celebration of Passover every Spring exactly on Nisan 14 must be avoided at all costs. This intense commitment to not recognize the "fourteenth" soon labeled them and their doctrine with the Latin term *quarto* [meaning fourth] and *deciman* [tenth] – together these were known as the *Quartodeciman* [14th]. It all came to a head during the 4th Century Council of Nicaea in 325 AD, moderated by the Roman Emperor Constantine. There were many who wanted to see the feasts and other rituals of the Jewish people altogether removed from decidedly "Christian" doctrines and practices noted in the New Testament. This was driven by intense anti-Semitic rhetoric founded in the principle that the Jews were the ones responsible for crucifying Jesus – as if the Lord's death on the cross was somehow an unfortunate mishap during His earthly ministry. This is troubling on

several fronts, the most glaring being that it removes the incredible precision and intention of God fulfilling all that had been laid out in the Old Testament writings of the Torah, the Psalms, and the prophets – that Jesus came specifically for the purpose of dying on the cross for the sins of the world. Paul sums up the entire intention and meaning of the Gospel [1st Corinthians 15:3-4] as this: *“For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that **Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures**, and that He was buried and **He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures**”*. It was NOT some type of an accident that the religious leaders in Jerusalem brought charges of blasphemy and sedition against Jesus so they could legally present Him to the Roman Prefect Pontius Pilate, for capital punishment. It was always God’s plan, before the foundation of the world [John 17:24].

Theodoret’s *Ecclesiastical History* [1.9] states how Constantine spoke: *“It was, in the first place, declared improper to follow the custom of the Jews in the celebration of this holy festival [of Passover] because their hands having been stained with crime, the minds of these men are necessarily blinded. Let us then have nothing in common with them, avoiding all contact - after having compassed the death of the Lord. Therefore this irregularity must be corrected in order that we may no more have anything in common with those murderers of our Lord, no single point in common with them”*. In his *Life of Constantine* [Book 3, Chapter 18] the well-known church historian Eusebius writes this very intense commentary from the Emperor at Nicaea: *“It appeared an unworthy thing, that in the celebration of this most holy feast [of Passover] we should follow the practice of the Jews who have impiously defiled their hands with enormous sin. Let us then have nothing in common with them, for we have received from our Saviour a different*

way". This outright loathing of the Jewish people in the 4th Century was entirely predicated on others blaming them for having put Jesus to death. Sadly it was quite a common opinion of many in those early years of the church, and variations of this antisemitism have continued for nearly twenty centuries up until our contemporary world. Quoting this is not in any way agreement or endorsement of such racist hatred, but is simply to provide some context for how and why the early church decided on the timing to celebrate Easter. I have a strong admiration and love for God's Jewish people and the modern nation of Israel. Jesus the Messiah was from a thoroughly Jewish family with a direct lineage that went back directly to King David. It very unfortunate that portions of church history include anti-Semitic rhetoric. My intention is to show clearly how the Bible demonstrates Yahweh's incredible love expressed in His plan for the redemption of mankind through Jesus.

The Nicaean Council then set the date for the annual celebration of the Lord's resurrection so it would NOT coincide with the Jewish Passover. It would be: 1] the first Sunday, 2] after the full moon, 3] following the vernal equinox - THE day each year to remember Jesus being raised from the dead. The intention was to make sure that it would not land on the same day as Passover . . . EVER! There were still on-going regular calendar discrepancies over the years within Christianity, as some countries were on the Julian solar calendar [using 365 days per year], and other countries were still on the lunar calendar. In the Middle Ages, churches in England, Ireland, France, Italy, Spain, Greece, and North Africa often ended up celebrating their Resurrection Sundays on different dates. Today, the Eastern Orthodox churches position their Easter observance on the Sunday prior to, or after, Western churches. A few years ago, while in Greece on the island of Santorini the week after

celebrating Easter in France, I observed Orthodox Good Friday and Easter Sunday in the ancient village of Pyrgos, a week after doing the same in Nice, France. It was very fun to celebrate both holidays again, but the second time within the unique traditions of the "Eastern" perspectives, mixed in right along with various "local" Greek customs.

CHAPTER SUMMARY

The primary reason for even bringing up this controversy of WHEN to celebrate Jesus being crucified and Easter Sunday is to draw attention to the difference between setting it up each year relative to the Spring equinox [in March] versus having it align with actual Biblical accounts. The crucifixion of Jesus and the Sunday of His resurrection are not about fertility, the rebirth of Mother Earth, planetary equinoxes, or other nature-based festivities. The Bible explains clearly that the Jewish Passover happens on Nisan 14 and the resurrection of Jesus was on the Feast of First Fruits - Nisan 17. The Biblical Passover serves as perhaps the most important foundation in God introducing His perfect plan for the salvation of mankind by means of an atoning sacrifice. The original obedience of Abraham on Mount Moriah with his only son Isaac culminated with Yahweh's righteous promise that He would provide Himself the sacrifice. Abraham's family line ends up in Egyptian slavery for 400 years and God institutes a blood sacrifice of an innocent lamb as atonement for death prior to the Exodus. Later, in the 1st Century AD, Jesus fulfills that promise to Abraham AND is the Passover Lamb who takes away the sins of the world. The next chapter will examine the case for Jesus of Nazareth being the Messiah spoken of throughout the Torah, Psalms, and prophets. For if He is truly the Christ [Anointed One], then He is the only one qualified to be the Lamb of God, sacrificed for the sins of the world on Passover.

CHAPTER 3

Jesus is Messiah

"I tell you, before Abraham was, I AM."

John 8:58

FROM THE BEGINNING

Having looked at the origins of Good Friday and Easter Sunday, along with key facts about the Biblical Passover, it is now time to focus in on the case that Jesus of Nazareth is in fact the Messiah spoken about by the prophets all throughout the Old Testament. If the historical Jesus is truly the one person among everyone who has ever lived on planet earth to meet all the requirements that define God's "Anointed One", it is imperative that such a case be explored in detail from all across the Biblical record. Messiah is not simply someone who showed up at a random time and did some good things before falling into the hands of evil men who cut short what was otherwise a promising ministry. On the contrary. Messiah is a specific person designated by God before the foundations of the world to be the Savior of mankind. He shows up throughout the prophetic narrative of the Torah, as well as the Psalms,

and the writings of the prophets – with God always leading, guiding, directing the earthly events of humankind toward the “fullness of time” when Messiah came into the world to provide Himself as a covering for sin. Jeho-shua was that man, born in Bethlehem, raised in Nazareth, the One who ministered for nearly three years, fulfilling in EVERY way all things spoken of Him over the centuries of time before He was born.

The initial Biblical statement about Messiah comes in Genesis 3:15 describing Him coming from the ‘seed’ of a woman. And while the fallen angel Lucifer will bruise Him on the heel, He will in turn *crush the head* of Satan. This describes the temporary impact that death would have on Jesus [a minor bruise], contrasted with the permanent victory Jesus’ resurrection has had over Satan. In Colossians 2:15 Paul teaches that Jesus’ finished work on the cross has actually disarmed rulers and authorities in the dark, sinful realm of the spiritual dimension, as *He made a public display of them, having triumphed over these by His completed work*. Ephesians 6:12 adds more details to the ‘rulers and authorities’ as Paul states that Christians do not merely wrestle against flesh and blood in this world, but *our conflict is with rulers, powers, and world forces of this darkness, against spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places*. His earthly life was therefore engaged in spiritual matters beyond what men could simply see and hear about. When sin entered the world, and death through sin [Romans 5:12] by the one man Adam, death then spread to every person, for all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God [Romans 3:23]. It is Messiah who then fulfills God’s plan to make a provision for mankind’s sins, offering a free gift of salvation to everyone who would simply accept it. This was written of throughout the Bible for nearly 4,000 years before His birth.

THE BIBLE POINTS TO JESUS

There are literally dozens of specific passages in the Bible that speak to how the writings of the Old Testament were designed as foreshadows, images, or "types", that clearly showed the ways God would confirm His promised Messiah at both His first coming [when Jesus was born in Bethlehem, grew to a man, and completed His appointed ministry], and His Second Coming [at a still-future date]. Everything that happened in Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy was specifically ordained by God to be both the recording of what Jehovah was actually doing with Israel in those times, while also foreshadowing the ways He would fulfill everything through His Mashiach.

The first key indicator is when Jesus tells the Pharisees [John 5:39], *"You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life, but these actually testify of Me"*. He knew that the writings in the Torah, Psalms, and prophets were pointing out time and again God's larger plan of redemption for mankind. The sacrifices in the tabernacle, and later the Temple, the weekly Shabbat, circumcision, ceremonial washings and purification rites, the feasts, the bronze serpent, the Passover blood, the ark of Noah, the altar of incense, blowing the shofar, Joseph and Joshua, olive and fig trees, even the very specific arranging of the tribes as they camped around the tent of meeting in the wilderness [the configuration made a cross] – *all* pointed to Jesus Christ. Paul addresses a somewhat similar concept when he wrote in Ephesians 3:3-6 explaining that through the direct revelation from the Lord he understood the "mystery" with insight from the Old Testament, that *"In prior generations was not known, as it has now been revealed"*. He was speaking of the Gentiles who would become partakers alongside Israel in God's wonderful plan of redemption, including receiving the Holy Spirit. The prophet Joel [2:28] was

certainly looking ahead when he wrote God's declaration, *"It will come about that I will pour out my Spirit on all mankind"*. Paul was then living that very fulfillment as he preached the Gospel and saw first-hand how the Gentiles came to faith in Jesus and received God's Spirit.

THE WITNESS OF THE TORAH

God's promise of Messiah continues through the five books of Moses [the Torah]: in Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. Perhaps one of the most interesting facets is from Acts 3:22 where the Apostle Peter quotes from Deuteronomy 18:18 how the Lord spoke that He would *"raise up a prophet from Israel like Moses, put His words in His mouth, and He shall speak all that I command"*. Then again, in Acts 7:37, Stephen also uses the same quote of Moses: *"God will raise for you a prophet like me from your brethren"*. And in John 7:40, after the crowds listened to Jesus teach they responded, *"This really is **the Prophet**"* [referring to the words of Moses they knew so well]. God prepared mankind to look for, and know, Messiah when He came, as He would have to meet very stringent requirements specifically spoken of for thousands of years before He came to earth. Messiah is clearly noted in Genesis 3:15, as *"her seed"* [of a woman], which confirms Mary being pregnant by the Holy Spirit while still being a virgin. The seed is typically associated with the man, but she had not yet known Joseph intimately. As a confirmation of this, in Genesis 12:3, Abraham is given the prophetic promise that through him ALL the families of the earth will be blessed. This was Abraham's belief, that this promise from God would one day happen through his 'seed' [singular], not his seeds [plural]. This is the same 'seed' [singular] from Genesis 3 and Genesis 12 – a specific person. This was clearly taught and referenced by Paul

writing in Galatians 3:16 when he explained this is *not referring to many* but just to One, and this is the Christ [Messiah].

In Genesis 22, Abraham [the Father] is set to offer his only son Isaac [a foreshadow of Jesus] as a sacrifice on Mount Moriah. Isaac carried the wood up to the exact place God showed to Abraham. When God intervened, noting that Abraham believed and obeyed, Abraham then says prophetically in verse 14: *"In the mount of the Lord it will be provided"*. Roughly two thousand years later, that very same place just outside Jerusalem was known as Golgotha, the 'place of the skull'. Jesus carried the wooden crossbeam on His shoulders up that same mountain as God the Father sacrificed His only Son on the same location that was foreshadowed by Abraham and Isaac. It is interesting that after this, Isaac is not mentioned again until he is joined to Rebecca, his Gentile bride [Genesis 24], brought to him by the "unnamed servant" [a type of the Holy Spirit], the same as Jesus the Bridegroom is joined to His Bride in Revelation 19:6-9 and 21:9.

Also in Genesis 49:10 it speaks prophetically about Messiah, that the scepter [national sovereignty, autonomous reign] shall not depart from Judah until Shiloh comes. Shiloh is used in the Talmud as a personal name for Mashiach, and also interpreted the same way by the Essenes in the Qumran community in their *'Patriarchal Blessings'*. Jesus was very likely born in September of 2 B.C. on Yom Teruah, the Jewish feast of blowing trumpets [shofars]. When Rome officially ended Jewish sovereignty as a nation in 6 A.D., the religious leaders, scribes, priests, and Pharisees were distraught and wailed that the scepter had now departed Judah, but Messiah had not come. Could Yahweh have lied? It was not known to them that up in Nazareth at that same time was a seven year-old boy growing up with His mother Mary, adopted father

Joseph, and several brothers and sisters, and that Messiah had in fact come just as God had promised 2,500 years earlier in Genesis.

Jesus the Messiah literally fulfills being the Passover Lamb spoken of in Exodus 12. John the Baptist pointed to his second cousin Jesus when He came to the Jordan, *"Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world"* [John 1:29 and again in verse 36]. Their mothers Elizabeth and Mary were cousins. As Passover week began and the lambs were selected and observed for four days to see if there was any blemish in them, Jesus was also examined for those same four days on Nisan 10, 11, 12, and 13 [Sunday April 6th through Wednesday April 9th of 32 AD] and no blemish was found in Him. The Passover lambs in Israel were being examined prior to being killed on Passover evening [Thursday afternoon]. Jesus would also be killed on Passover evening, and He hung on the cross for approximately six hours [9:00 AM until 3:00 PM] – in the twilight of Passover. And like the lambs in Exodus 12 [a foreshadow of Jesus], no bone was broken in Messiah, confirmed by Psalm 34:20 and fulfilled in John 19:33-36 when the Roman soldiers found Jesus already dead and did not break His legs. How could Jesus manipulate the events of His life and the actions of so many other people in order to perfectly align Himself with prophecy after prophecy written and spoken of Messiah? Such an explanation defies logic.

Furthermore, Moses wrote in Numbers 24:17 he could see Him [God's promised Messiah], but not now, not in Moses' lifetime. He could behold Him, but not near. It would be in a still-future date from the perspective of Moses. For ***a star shall come out of Jacob*** and a scepter shall rise out of Israel. Matthew 2:2 confirms the Magi came to worship Him who was born 'King of the Jews' for ***they saw His star as it rose***. Revelation 22:16 states clearly that Jesus is in fact the 'bright morning

star' [this is not to be confused with Isaiah 14:12 speaking of Lucifer the morning star and son of the dawn fell from heaven]. Moses also records in the similar manner he lifted up the bronze serpent in the wilderness [Numbers 21:9] so that anyone in the Israelite camp who looked upon it would be healed of their snake bites. So too John 3:14-18 records Jesus saying, *"As Moses lifted up the bronze snake, so too the Son of Man must be lifted up, that whoever looks to Him and believes in Him will have eternal life"*. Jesus was lifted up on the cross so that ALL who will look upon Him and believe will have their sins forgiven.

THE WITNESS OF THE PROPHETS

God's promise of the Messiah continues throughout the writings of the prophets, men and women like Zechariah, Isaiah, Ruth, Malachi, Daniel, Hosea, Esther, Samuel, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Micah. For example, Jeremiah explains that a day is coming [31:31] when the Lord will make a brand New Covenant with the house of Israel, with the house of Judah. And this will NOT be in accordance with the one the Lord did with their forefathers when He led them by the hand out of Egypt, for Jeremiah says that Israel broke that covenant. This confirms what Jesus said [Luke 22:20] as He took the cup with His disciples during the initial meal of unleavened bread at the start of Passover [the Last Supper], *"This cup which is poured out for you is the New Covenant in my blood"*. Paul notes this commemorative meal in 1st Corinthians 11:25, and refers again to it in Hebrews 8:8. In verse 13 of Hebrews 8, Paul clarified the New Covenant has now rendered that original Covenant obsolete. In Hebrews 9:15 Paul further explains how the New Covenant by the death of Jesus has redeemed all the transgressions committed under the original covenant. Finally in Hebrews 12, the New Covenant in Jesus' blood is noted as being better than Abel's sacrifice, so it would be the true fulfillment of the Passover lambs being killed [which

were only symbolic and could never actually cover sin]. Zechariah 12:10 states that they will look upon Him whom they have pierced, referring to how the Roman soldier thrust his spear into the side of Jesus' chest, causing blood and water from the enlarged cardiac sack to pour out. This is similar to Isaiah 53:5 stating Messiah would be pierced for our transgressions – direct reference to the nails driven into His feet and hands. It continues *"By His stripes we are healed"* referring specifically to the lashing wounds on the back of Jesus, because Pilate had Him scourged [see Matthew 27, Mark 15, Luke 18, and John 19].

The prophet Zechariah also wrote [chapter 11:12-13] that Messiah would be betrayed for 30 pieces of silver. Judas Iscariot was paid those same 30 pieces of silver by the Chief Priest [Matthew 26: 14-15] in exchange for telling where Jesus was so they could send soldiers to arrest Him. Later, Judas regrets what he did and returns the silver to the Jewish leaders [Matthew 27:3]. Because it was then 'blood money' they did not want to accept it back into their Temple treasury, so they instead used those funds to purchase a potter's field. This was then known in the Aramaic as the *"Akeldama"*, the *field of blood*.

Samuel prophesied [2nd Samuel 17:12-16] that Messiah is a descendant of King David. This is consistent with both Isaiah 11:1 that *"A shoot will spring from the stem of Jesse"* [who was David's father] *"and a Branch from his roots will bear fruit"*, as well as in verse 10, that Messiah will be of *"the root of Jesse who will stand as a signal for the peoples, and whose resting place will be glorious"*. These prophecies also match Jeremiah 23:5-6, describing how the Lord will raise up from David a *"Branch of Righteousness"* – a King to reign and prosper, to execute judgment and righteousness in the earth. And in His days, Judah will be saved and His name will be called the *"Lord of Righteousness"*.

Jeremiah 33:14-15 agrees that the Lord will raise the true Branch of David's line. Finally, Isaiah 9:6-7 continues the same topic with how the Wonderful Counselor and Prince of Peace *"will rule forever with fairness and justice from the throne of His ancestor David"*. These are such specific statements about Messiah, that it would be impossible for one man to fulfill their details simply by accident or random chance. It is therefore very compelling evidence that Jesus of Nazareth is in fact that One spoken of repeatedly over the centuries by the prophets.

In Malachi 3:1 it has the specific statement that Messiah will have a ***messenger who comes ahead of Him***. Jesus said in Matthew 11:7-10 that John the Baptist was more than just another prophet sent from God, but that he was *"the one about whom it is written, 'Behold I send my messenger ahead of You who will prepare Your way before You'."* Isaiah 40:3 described a voice calling, *"Clear the way for the Lord in the wilderness, make smooth in the desert a highway for our God."* When some priests and Levites were sent to John the Baptist at the Jordan River [John 1:19-24] they asked him directly, "Who are you?" and he replied, *"I am a voice crying in the wilderness, make straight the way of the Lord"*. In John 3:11-12 the Baptist also said, *"After me comes One who is more powerful than I, whose sandals I am not even worthy to carry - and He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire"*. How could Jesus coordinate with His second cousin John for the two of them to hatch a plan that presents themselves as the ones who fulfill these detailed prophecies about Messiah and the forerunner?

In the fourth chapter of Ruth, Boaz is a prophetic foreshadow of Jesus when he completes the role of "Kinsman-Redeemer" [the Goel] by purchasing a Gentile bride [Ruth] to marry, who is a Moabite widow. She is introduced to Boaz by an "un-named servant", who is a type of

the Holy Spirit, similar to Genesis 24, as the Spirit gets a Gentile bride Rachel for Isaac [who is another Old Testament foreshadow of Jesus Christ]. These preview Messiah, who also purchases His Gentile bride [the Church] by His death on the cross, demonstrating Himself to be our Kinsman-Redeemer, and He will return Israel to its promised lands. It is worth noting the “un-named servant” is mentioned earlier in Genesis 15:2 as Eliezer [meaning Comforter]. Boaz proceeds to redeem the homeland for the Jewish woman Naomi and returns her to the ancestral town. There is a provocative toast at the wedding of Boaz and Ruth [chapter 4, verses 11-12] that first declares for Ruth to be like Rachel and Leah, both of whom built the house of Israel [their sons are the 12 tribes]. Then it says, “May your house be like the house of Perez [the illegitimate son of Tamar who played a harlot with her father-in-law Judah] as offspring the Lord will give you by this young woman Ruth”. This is certainly quite the controversial marriage send-off because Deuteronomy 23:2 says very that at the birth of a child out of wedlock the lineage is cursed until the tenth generation removed in the future. In this particular case, that tenth generation in Judah’s line goes through Salmon [who is the 6th in line], to Ruth’s husband Boaz [the 7th], then to their son Obed [8th], and then to their grandson Jesse [9th], who is the father of David [the 10th generation]. David is then freed from that curse and is able to be the anointed King of Israel.

The prophet Hosea made an extremely interesting statement about Messiah [chapter 11, verse 1] “*When Israel was a youth I loved Him and out of Egypt I called my Son*”. This infers that even when Jacob, who is later renamed Israel, was only a young boy or teenager, and just two generations removed from the promise to Abraham of Messiah, that ***God already loved His Son***. Jesus would not be born until 2,000 years

after Abraham, and yet at the time of Israel being a youngster, Yahweh already loved His Son. This same Son, would be called out of Egypt. This is not speaking of Moses coming out of Egypt, but of *Him who is eternal*, loved hundreds of years before Moses was even born. In Matthew 2:13-14 Joseph is alerted by God in a dream to take his wife Mary with their newborn son Jesus to Egypt and remain there until the Lord tells them it is safe to return, because Herod is going to search for the Child to kill Him. So in the middle of the night Joseph got up and took his family to Egypt. Then in verses 19-23 Matthew records that when Herod had died in early 1 BC [probably between four and eight months after Jesus was born in September of 2 BC], an angel of the Lord appeared telling Joseph it was safe to return to Judea. So Joseph, Mary, and Jesus returned as the Lord instructed, and settled in the Galilean village of Nazareth. It is not conceivable that Joseph and Mary were orchestrating such logistics so they could position Jesus to fulfill such a precise prophecy describing Messiah.

It is also worth noting in the closing of Matthew 2:23 the gospel writer inserted an interesting commentary, "This would fulfill what was **spoken** of through the prophets, 'He shall be called a Nazarene'." The Old Testament has no *written* mention of a Nazarene by any prophet. But that is entirely consistent with what Matthew wrote. This was **spoken**, so they knew this from the oral tradition being passed down verbally, and this is attributed to the prophets [plural], which means more than one had prophesied [**spoken**] that Messiah would be distinct as a Nazarene. This is also consistent with Isaiah 53:3 that Messiah would be "despised and rejected", even as Philip told Nathaniel [John 1:45-46] that they had found Mashiach, Jesus from Nazareth the son of Joseph, and he replied, "*Can anything good come out of Nazareth?*"

THE WITNESS OF THE PSALMS

Perhaps the most provocative of the Old Testament prophecies of Messiah occurs throughout Psalm 22. Taken at its face value and most basic reading, it is a narrative stated in the *first person singular* that describes crucifixion from the convincing perspective of the individual who is hanging on the cross. Jesus, who is the author of the Word of God, calls out attention to this Psalm when He shouts from the cross, “Eloi, Eloi, Lama Sabachthani”, which means My God, My God, Why have You forsaken me – exactly as this Psalm begins. This would have been noticed immediately by the religious leaders who were present at the crucifixion. They would immediately recognize Jesus was quoting directly from that Psalm’s introduction. It is provocative to imagine how they interpreted why it was that Jesus would reference such prophecy. The next prophetic reference to Jesus on the cross is in verses 6, 7, and 8 as the one being crucified says, *“I am not a man, but like a worm, a reproach of men and despised by the people – all who see me sneer at me and wag their heads saying, ‘Let’s see the Lord deliver you, let God rescue you’ ”*. We see in Luke 23:9 that one of the other two men crucified with Jesus hurled abuses at Him, saying: “If you’re the Christ save yourself and us”, and Matthew 27:42 records that those watching Jesus hang on the cross mocked Him and scoffed while taunting with: *“He saved others, but He can’t even save Himself?”* Luke’s gospel adds [23:35] even the religious rulers sneered at Jesus, “He saved others, let Him save Himself if indeed this is the Christ of God, His Chosen One”. The next section of Psalm 22 [see verses 11, 12, and 13] has the person on the cross say, *“Be not far from me God, trouble is near, and none can help me”*. He continues, *“Many strong bulls surround me and open wide their mouths like a ravening and roaring lion ready to attack”*. Matthew 27 says that the onlookers hurled abuses, making fun of Him.

Then in verses 14 and 15 is the description of the one experiencing the final stages of dying: *"I am poured out like water, all of my bones are out of joint. My heart is like wax and melting inside me."* He continues with, *"My strength is dried up like a potsherd"* [old broken piece of a clay pot, brittle and cracked], *"and my tongue cleaves to my jaws"*. Jesus' body was contorted and bent out of shape. His shoulders, elbows, hips, legs, wrists, and ankles were dislocated from their sockets and joints. He had been bleeding for several hours and was extremely dehydrated when He called out, "I thirst" [John 19:28] so they put a sponge soaked in sour wine on a stick and held it to his lips [verse 29], but Jesus did not drink. In verse 17 He says He can see, and even count, His protruding bones from under His stretched out skin, as they stare at Him. It is so profound, that a description of this tortuous death was prophesied. It defies logic this could be by coincidence to match up so well with what Jesus experienced while hanging on the cross.

The sixteenth verse from Psalm 22 expressly states, *"They pierced my hands and feet"*. Once again, a startling prophetic word as the Romans did not even develop crucifixion for capital punishment until around 200 BC, yet David wrote this Psalm roughly 750 years before then. Mark 15:24-25 along with Matthew 27:33-36 and Luke 23:33 record how the Romans crucified Jesus, meaning nails were driven into His hands and feet onto the cross. It cannot be random chance that the historical Jesus just happened to parallel all of this Biblical prophecy. This continues in Psalm 22:18, as the one on the cross sees those at His feet dividing up His garments among them by casting lots. Luke 23:34 records the Roman soldiers did cast lots among themselves for Jesus' clothing. In John 19:23 this is clarified with more details, as they divided up Jesus' outer garments into four equal parts [one for each soldier], but they cast lots [rolled dice] to see who would get the tunic

which was woven in one piece and had greater value. The final Hebrew word in Psalm 22:31 to close out this prophecy is Asah [pronounced "aw-saw"] translated either as "*He has done it*" or "*It is done*". This points directly to John 19:28 as "*Jesus knew that all things on the cross were now completed*" so in John 19:30 He proclaims from the cross "Tetelestai" [in the Greek, "*It is finished*"]. That is the same Hebrew term used in Psalm 22. Taken together, these prophetic images and descriptions are incredibly remarkable. Jesus quotes Psalm 22:1 in asking why God has forsaken Him. He endures those who sneer and mock Him. He can see His bones twisted and He is extremely dehydrated. Both His hands and feet are pierced through with nails. The soldiers divided His clothing and cast lots for it. And Jesus concluded the ordeal of His death with the same word that concludes this Psalm, declaring "It is finished" – completed, all done.

The resurrection of Messiah is also spoken of. In Psalm 16 as Jesus dies, and goes down to Sheol ["the abode of the dead"], His physical body does not experience decay as He is raised up after **three days and three nights**. The Jews understood that the fourth day in a tomb was when the body began to decompose. This was clear in John 11:39 when Jesus instructed the stone rolled away from the tomb of Lazarus, but was warned there would be a "stench" after four days in the grave. David speaks prophetically of Messiah in Psalm 110:1-4, "*The Lord says to my Lord, 'Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies your footstool, you are a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.'*" In Matthew 22:41-46 Jesus specifically asks the religious leaders about this very Psalm by surmising, "If David calls Him Lord, how is it that He is his son?" and none of these learned Torah scholars could answer Him. Matthew includes a side note that from that point

on, no one even dared to ask Jesus any more questions. Paul clarifies this Messianic content in Hebrews 5:6, 6:20, and 7:17. Messiah is also named in Psalm 118:22 as the “Stone which the builders rejected, who became the *Chief Cornerstone*”. Jesus confirms this in Matthew 21:42 when He comments on how the Jews will not believe in Him, and that the vineyard set aside originally for God’s chosen Israel will be given over to Gentiles, such that those who trip over and fall on this Stone [Him] will then be scattered to the wind like dust.

GOD’S AMAZING PLAN

The “Anointed One” is by definition an individual person, specifically designated by God to be the remedy for the sins of mankind. The entire Biblical account is focused on this singular theme: that a loving and all powerful God created mankind for relationship with Him, but man’s disobedience severed that. God then makes a perfect substitute for the spiritual death that is due for sin. The Genesis-to-Revelation narrative tells the specific story of God’s preparations and plan for Messiah to save mankind and restore the original personal relationship for all eternity. This was always God’s plan and intent from before the foundation of the world [Ephesians 1:4]. Jesus the Messiah came for this exact purpose [1st Peter 1:20] and appeared for our sake. He was with the Father before the world even was [John 17:5].

THE BETHLEHEM PROBABILITY

The preponderance of evidence that Jesus of Nazareth meets and fulfills each and every prophetic word from the Old Testament about Messiah is absolutely mind-boggling. To match up on just two or three of the specific conditions would require overwhelming statistical odds. Think about the underlying math for such a match. The probability of one event followed by a second event is the product of the two

individual probabilities. So, if there is a 15% chance the next car driving past our survey site is green, and also a 10% chance it is speeding, then together that is just a 1.5% probability the next car is *both* green and going faster than the posted speed limit. If we include a 50% chance only one person is in the car, and a 2% probability it is a convertible, the likelihood the next car we see is a speeding green convertible with no passengers is calculated as $.15 \times .10 \times .50 \times .02 = .00015$. That is just 15 cars out of ***one hundred thousand***. Assigning probabilities to the top ten prophecies about Messiah results in such a tiny percentage, the odds of someone being that “Anointed One” completely defy random chance. This means if someone met several of those exact descriptions, we would be compelled to conclude that He actually is Messiah, because there could be no other logical explanation.

Consider this example of being Messiah by chance. The prophecy written in Micah 5:2 says He will be born in Bethlehem Ephratah, the “city of David” located about six miles south of Jerusalem. He will be a ruler for all of Israel, and He is eternal, “*His goings forth are from long ago, the days of eternity*”. Many gospel historians agree Jesus was born in Bethlehem, and His lineage connects directly to King David. He is also from the tribe of Judah [Matthew 1:1-6 and Luke 3:31-34]. These align Jesus as meeting critical requirements of Messiah. Bethlehem is first mentioned in Genesis 35:19. Rachel died giving birth to Benjamin in Paddan, and she was buried on the way to Ephratah [which is Bethlehem]. Today the city has a population of 30,000 – however, archaeologists infer that back in the first century AD, as Judea was under Roman rule, the population of Bethlehem was well under 1,000 residents, and probably only around 600. When trying to count the total number of births in Bethlehem, the time of Micah’s prophecy was

during the reign of King Hezekiah in Israel [715 to 696 BC], so that leaves around 700 years until the turn of the millennium. Add another 70 years until Jerusalem was conquered by the Romans under Titus Vespasian and that leaves a total window of time equal to 770 years. The reason for including births up until 70 AD is because when the Second Temple was completely destroyed, all the scrolls, codices, and written records were burned by the Romans and lost forever regarding who within the Jewish population came from which of the twelve tribes of Israel. This means that today, no persons of Jewish descent have any way to know from which tribe is their individual heritage. No persons today can definitively know that their lineage can be traced to one of the specific tribes of Israel: Benjamin, Reuben, Gad, Simeon, Dan, Levi, Issachar, Naphtali, Asher, Zebulun, Joseph, or *Judah*, the one tribe defined in Genesis 49:10 as the heritage of Messiah.

Using sophisticated population-models with various assumptions about the 1st Century ratios of men-to-women, average family size, infant mortality [perhaps as high as 30%], and average life expectancy [around age 36], there would only be around seven births per year on average that survived in Bethlehem. This means the total number of people born in Bethlehem from Micah's prophecy of Messiah [circa 700 BC] up to the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD is about 5,400 [770 years x 7 births per year = 5,390]. Assume half the births were male, and that is roughly 2,700 boys born in those 770 years. Assume a somewhat equal distribution among those twelve tribes [5,400 divided by 12], then only 225 boys were born of the tribe of Judah. Jesus of Nazareth is then one male birth from among 225 boys of Judah born in Bethlehem during those 770 years. Think on that for a moment. There are likely no more than 225 male candidates ever *in the entire history of earth who could be Messiah* – someone born in the city of David and able to verify

being of Judah's tribe, born prior to the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD, the last time verifiable ancestry records were still accessible. The *Population Reference Bureau* in Washington, D.C. [www.PRB.org] calculates in its 2020 report that a 108 billion people have ever been born in total on planet earth. This assumes homo sapiens [they say are similar to modern humans] going back 50,000 years. As such, the 7.6 billion current population [in 2020] represents just seven percent of all the people who have ever lived on earth. Graph that exponential curve from 50,000 years ago to today, then mark the 770 years from 700 BC to 70 AD and it is reasonable to assume that four percent of everyone ever born on earth was during that 770-year window of time [this totals 4.32 million people]. Those 225 males born in Bethlehem would then represent just five-thousandths of one percent probability [0.00005] the fifth decimal place] from the 4.32 million persons born on earth during those 770 years. That is definitely provocative, considering how being born in Bethlehem is just ONE of the requirements of being Messiah.

When additional Biblical specifications about Messiah are folded into this equation, it becomes increasingly evident how difficult it is for one person to match the requirements of say, three or four facets, let alone be aligned with more than 100 prophetic profile specifications about Messiah. Multiplying in all the probabilities for every prophecy covered earlier in this chapter, takes the Bethlehem birth probability of 0.00005 and inserts 90-to-100 additional zeros to the right of the decimal. The *National Science Foundation* notes that there are only "ten to the 80th power" total molecules in the entire universe. But the probability of someone being Messiah has even more zeros in the denominator than that. The probability someone else has your exact same DNA signature [completely identical genome] is less than one in seven trillion. There

are only 7.6 billion people on the planet, so the statistical chance is so small it is essentially zero. The probability one man could fulfill each of the Biblical prophecies about Messiah is even smaller. If that is the case, there are only two positions regarding Jesus. It is either an incredible coincidence that He matched so many conditions by purely random chance, OR He is in fact [He has to be] Messiah, that "Anointed One", the Christ spoken about all throughout the Bible.

THE WITNESS OF JESUS

At first glance it may seem illogical to examine the testimony of Jesus about Himself. After all, dozens of people over the last two centuries have announced themselves to be the true Messiah, including the likes of Ann Lee [founder of the Shakers, she claimed she was the female incarnation of Christ on Earth], Arnold Potter [Mormon leader who claimed to be the Son of God, and died jumping from a cliff while attempting to ascend to heaven], Sun Myung Moon [claimed he was the Second Coming of Jesus Christ], Jim Jones [founder of the People's Temple, claimed he was the reincarnation of Jesus], David Koresh [who founded the Branch Davidians, claimed he was the Son of God, the Lamb], Emmanuel Odumosu [Nigerian founder the Universal College of Regeneration in Lagos, who changed his name to Jesu Oyingbo], and even Charles Manson [he said he was Jesus Christ resurrected]. Each of these claims were entirely baseless. None of them matched any true Biblical requirements to be Messiah. Consider the counsel of Gamaliel [Acts 5:34-39] regarding two other men of the 1st Century in Judea who were so-called Messiahs. Each and every other self-proclaimed Messiah has died and has a headstone on their gravesite. Jesus is the only one who said He would be resurrected, and today there is no cemetery that can be visited where Jesus remains dead and buried.

A quick review of Jesus' own words about Himself provides additional context about the astronomical probability and precision that He meets the requirements to be Messiah. In John 8:58 Jesus said that *"before Abraham was, I AM"*, meaning He is saying that He is the pre-existent, eternal God. In fact, they understood He was actually saying He was the One who spoke to Moses at the burning bush [Exodus 3:1-17]. In John 10:22-42 the Jews gathered around Jesus at the Portico of Solomon in the Temple and asked, "How long will you keep us in suspense, if you are the Christ, tell us plainly". Jesus replies, "I told you, and you did not believe the works that I do in my Father's name, these testify of me". The verifiable miracles He did over and over again in their presence were a clear testimony. He plainly told them, but they did not believe Him because He said they were not His sheep. He made it clear that His true sheep hear His voice as their Shepherd, and they follow Him. He then said, in verse 30, "I and the Father are one". Jesus is also testified as Messiah [Matthew 16:13-17] when He asks his disciples, *"Who do people say that I am?"* and Peter replies, *"You are Mashiach, Son of the living God"*. Jesus clarifies that it was not simply Simon Peter's thoughts in his own mind that came up with this, but *"My Father in heaven revealed this to you"*. Jesus of Nazareth clearly states that He is in fact the Messiah, the "Anointed One".

THE NAZARETH SYNAGOGUE

Jesus begins His public ministry at age 30 [Luke 3:23] right in line with Numbers 4:3 which states the designated age to begin formal service to the Lord. If Jesus was born on September 29th of 2 BC, He turned 30 on September 29th in 29 AD. His second cousin John the Baptist was six months older [confirmed in Luke 1:41-44]. John was most likely born during Passover of 2 BC, so he turned 30 in March of 29 AD and was

preaching for six months about preparing the way for Messiah while he baptized men and women in the Jordan River. Jesus' first formal action as a 30-year old man starting His ministry was to stand and read aloud the scroll of Isaiah in His hometown Nazareth synagogue, recorded in Luke 4:14-30. He opens up to the place we know as Isaiah 61:1-2 and read: *"The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me because the Lord has anointed me to bring good news to the afflicted, He has sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to captives and freedom to prisoners to proclaim the favorable year of the Lord"*. Then He made this remarkable statement, *"Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing"*. Can you imagine the shock and incredulity among everyone gathered there in that tiny synagogue? This is quite astonishing, that this man would claim his prophetic word from Isaiah was talking specifically about Him. But what is even more provocative is that Jesus did not finish the full passage. He stopped at *"proclaim the favorable year of the Lord"* and did not continue reading: *"and the day of vengeance of our God, to comfort all who mourn"*. This is how Jesus separated His first coming [at that time] from His Second Coming at a still-future date. Messiah comes first to die for the sins of the world, offering love, mercy, and forgiveness of sin. When He returns to earth with His church at the Second Coming, Jesus will exact judgment on sin in that *"day of vengeance"* [Jeremiah 46:10, Isaiah 63:4, Romans 12:19, and Hebrews 10:30]. Notice in the passage Jesus reads that He says of Himself *"The Lord has **anointed** Me"*. This Hebrew word *"mashach"*, is the root word in the name *"Mashiach"* – which means *"**Anointed** One"*.

Jesus continued that He brings "good news" to those "afflicted", and not just physical ailments, but the spiritual affliction of sin. The Hebrew word for good news is *"basar"* – translated in the New Testament as *"euaggelion"*. This transformed into the English word Gospel. Do you

understand how incredibly profound this is? Jesus is specifically stating He is the Anointed One [Mashiach in the Hebrew, Christos in Greek, Christ in English] AND the One bringing Good News [Gospel]. The entire message is about redeeming the afflicted. Sin is mankind's spiritual affliction, and Jesus was the remedy for this in His ministry.

THE EMMAUS BIBLE STUDY

Another key passage to examine is when Luke writes [24:13-35] how after the resurrection as Jesus walked the seven miles to Emmaus with two of His followers [one of them is Cleopas], *"That beginning with Moses and all the prophets, He explained the things concerning Himself in all the Scriptures"*. Consider for a moment that particular teaching by Jesus. The Son of God who had just recently been raised from the dead is providing a first-hand monologue about who Messiah is and why He had to suffer and die. This means there were probably dozens of passages, topics, and foreshadow "types" written into the Hebrew Scriptures [our Old Testament] that Jesus was able to draw from, and these explicitly pointed in a prophetic manner to all of the events, actions, and testimony about Himself. The two walking with Him were well aware of these passages in the Torah, the prophets, and the Psalms – and Jesus was connecting all the dots, so they could fully understand how the recent death of Jesus on the cross fulfilled Scripture. Luke 24:32 records them reflecting, *"Were not our hearts burning within us while He was explaining the Scriptures to us?"*

JESUS FULFILLS THE LAW

Matthew records in his gospel [5:17-18] where Jesus teaches a rather lengthy sermon on a mountain. Chuck Missler always referred to this as the *"Manifesto of our King"*. The underlying theme was to expand and amplify what was spoken of in the Law of Moses. Jesus expounded on

the specific details of how this should look in everyday life. Having just told His listeners they are to be as salt and light in the world, He then states [verse 17] "Do not think I come to abolish the Law and the Prophets, I did not come to abolish **but to fulfill**, for truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or stroke of the pen shall pass from the Law **until ALL is accomplished**". Jesus is expressly stating that His ministry will literally fulfill the entirety of what was written by the prophets about Messiah. This is quite provocative, as it lays out a template through which we should interpret the true meanings of everything from God's Law. Jesus' sermon defined what true Godliness looks like. Those who follow Him should recognize they are poor in spirit, mourn over their sin, they are meek, with a hunger and thirst for righteousness, they are merciful, pure in heart, and peacemakers who will be persecuted by the world. The Law is not about the list of things to *do*, but identifying with the character of God. That's why Paul's commentary on this in Romans 10:4 is "*Christ is the END of the Law for righteousness to all who believe*". This does not mean Jesus nullifies the Law of Moses. Rather, He is the only One who was able to FULFILL every specific enactment of the Law, and that is how **Jesus literally fulfills this** as the Anointed One.

Paul's letters to the Romans and Galatians define how the Law shows us our sinfulness and that our trespasses have increased. It continued until the 'Seed' [from Genesis 3] had come as promised. The Law was placed in charge of us to lead us to Messiah, so that now through faith we are no longer under the Law of Moses and now in bearing other's burdens as Jesus did for us, we are fulfilling the Law of Christ [Galatians 6:2]. Jesus was once asked by the religious leaders to explain which of the commandments is the greatest. They meant this as a way to trap Him, as He would have to select one command being superior to the others,

and they hoped this would be an awkward concept to try and talk His way through. In Matthew 22:36-40 His reply was simply to “Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, and mind” – and then He said the second is to “Love your neighbor as yourself” [Jesus is quoting Leviticus 19]. Jesus further states that the entire Law and prophets depend entirely on these two commandments. It is here that the Lord is focusing on the heart, and not the outward actions of an individual.

PROPHETS LOOKED AHEAD

The Apostle Peter’s first letter [1:10-12] comments on the juxtaposition of those who wrote about Messiah in the Torah, prophets, and Psalms [when the coming of Jesus was still a future date that had not yet happened]. These are compared to those who are able to recognize with 20/20 hindsight Jesus is in fact Messiah, based on everything that happened at His first coming. Peter writes: *“Regarding this salvation, the prophets who prophesied of the grace that would come to you made careful search and inquiry seeking to know what person or time the Spirit of Christ within them was indicating, as He predicted the sufferings of Christ and the glories to follow”*. This is incredibly thought-provoking to consider that the writers of the Old Testament, while fully inspired by the Holy Spirit, were also human just like you and me, with a natural curiosity about the content of what they penned. Peter explains they did fully understand that what they were writing was not serving them [in their own time], but was intended *for future generations coming after them*. In verse 12 Peter clarifies this point about the Gospel [good news] coming from the Holy Spirit and containing *“things into which angels long to look”*. Think of that. Even these “messengers” of God [*angelos* in Greek] looked at the unfolding

plan of redemption with a sense of wonder as to what exactly the Almighty was doing with regards to His sovereign plan for mankind.

The prophets who prophesied of the grace that would come to you and me, they made ***careful search and inquiry*** about this unfolding plan about which they wrote [it was very engrossing and intriguing to them]. The promised Messiah was always at the forefront of each prophecy they received from the Lord through the witness of the Holy Spirit. In Peter's second letter [1:20-21] he adds more detail about this process of how NO prophecies in Scripture are ever a matter of one's own interpretation, because NO prophecy was ever made only by the act of human will, but men specifically moved [inspired] by the Holy Spirit spoke from God. Jeremiah, Isaiah, Malachi, Moses, Samuel, Hosea, Ezekiel, Micah, Daniel were not making up their own thoughts about God and Messiah. God spoke through them by His Spirit, and they were confident what they wrote was truthful, reliable, and without error. They rested in the words they penned being a spiritual insight into the unfolding plan of God for salvation. The specifics of their writings stirred in them excitement and positive anticipation that God would do something amazing when Messiah finally arrived. This Anointed One would fulfill the foreshadow ["type"] of the priest who intercedes for the people with the Father. He would heal the brokenhearted [Psalm 147:3], set captives free [Isaiah 61:1, confirmed in Luke 4:14], loose the bonds of wickedness [Isaiah 58:6], and rule on David's throne in a kingdom with no end [Isaiah 9:7]. But He would also be despised and rejected [Isaiah 53:1-3], suffer and die [Luke 24:46] to fulfill every detailed aspect of the Passover Lamb by shedding His own blood [1st Peter 1:19 and Hebrews 9:12] as the sacrifice to cover the sins of the world. It is an absolutely fascinating endeavor to see these different

men, from all across the centuries past, covering hundreds of years, moved by the Holy Spirit to write about God's Messiah.

WRITTEN FOR OUR INSTRUCTION

Paul writes in Romans 15:4 that *"Whatever was written in **earlier times** was for our instruction"* [referring to those men who were alive during and especially after Jesus had come] *"so that by perseverance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we would have hope"*. Those **earlier times** are a direct reference to the Torah, Psalms, and prophets laying out a comprehensive and systematic plan of God to redeem mankind from the disobedience of Adam [Genesis 2 and 3]. Hebrews 11:1 is a great reminder that faith is that tangible assurance of things *hoped* for, and the deep abiding conviction inside our hearts that the things not yet seen are true. THAT is Biblical faith. This is what characterized the prophets of old as they wrote about God's Messiah. He was still to come at a future date they would not see in their own lifetimes. One such example is Moses writing in Genesis 14 about Melchizedek the priest, and confirmed in Hebrews 7:1 as the "King of Righteousness" and "King of Salem" [Shalom means 'peace', also used in the city named *Jeru-Shalom*]. This priest and king brought out bread and wine as He blessed Abraham [Genesis 14:17-19]. Remember the one who bestows the blessing is always greater than the one being blessed [Hebrews 7:7], so He supersedes Abraham in stature and importance. Abraham also paid Him a tithe [one-tenth] of the spoils of war. David wrote [Psalm 110:4] He was a foreshadow of Messiah. In Hebrews 7:3-4 Paul explains Melchizedek had no father or mother, and was without genealogy, with no beginning of His days or end of His life, but is made like the 'Son of God' as a priest perpetually. Paul previously confirmed [Hebrews 5:6] that Jesus is then truly *"A priest forever according to the*

order of Melchizedek". This "King of Peace" [similar to Isaiah 9:6] is exactly how John [14:27] describes the ministry and character of Jesus.

BIBLICAL FORESHADOWS OF MESSIAH

Paul also noted [Colossians 2:16-17], *"No one should be your judge regarding food or drink in the Law, or feasts, a new moon, or a Sabbath day, **these being mere foreshadows** of what was to come, **and the substance of these belongs to Christ**".* This is a powerful statement about the Anointed One. Foreshadow is the Greek word 'skia' which means "an image cast by an object representing the form of that object". Paul is drawing attention to the reality that God meant for those things written down about Israel's history regarding the Law, were all intentionally earthly representations of the truth about Messiah and God's plan for mankind. A well-schooled Pharisee from Tarsus who studied in Jerusalem under Gamaliel, Paul states four specific matters of the Law being foreshadows: 1] dietary requirements of food and drink, 2] the feasts, 3] the new moons, and 4] the Sabbath days. It is quite profound to attribute the substance of these foreshadows directly to Jesus with the Greek word "soma", meaning body. His commentary could then be read in this way, "The images you see in Scripture represent an actual Person, the body of these is Mashiach". Literally, everything pertaining to the food, drink, feasts, new moons, and Sabbaths is completely about Jesus, the Anointed One.

The first foreshadow of food and drink links directly to Old Testament references to 'bread and wine' and has its actual substance fulfilled in Jesus. Consider the Last Supper as the remembrance of His sacrifice for the sins of the world [Luke 22:19 and 1st Corinthians 11:24-25]. The second foreshadow speaks of the true meaning of Israel's seven feasts: 1] Passover, 2] Unleavened Bread, 3] First Fruits, 4] Pentecost, 5] Yom

Teruah, 6] Yom Kippur, and 7] Succoth [see Chapter Eight]. Each of these seven celebrations contains specific representations of Messiah fulfilled by Jesus. The third foreshadow refers to the “new moon” on the first day of the lunar months for Israel. This was considered a holy day, when a prophet would hear the word of the Lord [1st Samuel 20:5, 2nd Kings 4:23, Ezekiel 26:1, 29:17, Psalm 81:3, Isaiah 66:23, Amos 8:5]. The 1st of Tishri on the Jewish civil calendar [late September] would have been a new moon time for the people to hear the Word from the Lord. There is strong evidence that Jesus was born on the First of Tishri, as Jehovah sent the Word [Logos] to His people in the form of a young boy born in Bethlehem [see Book-2 in the *Figure It Out* series, *The Birth of Jesus on Yom Teruah*, 2020]. The last foreshadow noted by Paul is about Sabbath days. The Jews understood Shabbat to be for them to commemorate the way Elohiym [in Genesis 1] rested on the seventh day from His work of creation. Keeping the Sabbath is one of the Ten Commandments and was often a hot topic discussed by Jesus with the religious leaders. They tried to trap Jesus with questions about whether His disciples should be casually picking a few wheat kernels [Matthew 12:1 and Mark 2:23] because that was ‘working on Shabbat’. He made the ruler of the synagogue very upset because He had healed someone during Shabbat [Luke 13:14]. As they debated how to best keep Shabbat and what it meant to not “work” on Shabbat, Jesus made it clear: “*The Sabbath was made for man and it was not man who was made for the Sabbath*” [Mark 2:27]. Then Jesus really delivers the clincher saying ***He is Lord of the Sabbath*** [Matthew 12:8, Mark 2:28, Luke 13:15]. Jesus is saying two things. First, the Sabbath day of rest was made for man, and man was not made for the day of rest, so that the creation of mankind was actually for Jesus. Second, He is clearly explaining that Messiah is Lord over the Sabbath, far more important

than holding onto a particular day prescribed in the Law of Moses. Jesus had eternal authority to overrule Pharisees, priests, scribes, Sadducees, and the Chief Priest because He was the One who initiated [originated] the Law in the first place, from the beginning.

THE GENESIS PROPHECY LINEAGE

One absolutely incredible prophetic foreshadow regarding “types” about Mashiach is the lineage from Adam’s fall to God’s judgment of mankind’s sinfulness. At first glance, the fifth chapter of Genesis reads like a footnote-citation covering the lives of Adam, his son Seth, and the subsequent offspring through to Noah [the ninth generation from Adam]. Each man is listed with his age, both when he had his son and when he died. The research of Chuck Missler provides an invaluable insight about the prophetic significance inherent in the birth order of these ten patriarchs. While a typical Hebrew lexicon for proper names is not always able to simply do a direct translation of a Biblical name into an English equivalent, the examination of the roots within the Hebrew proper name does open the door to a fascinating prophetic message that was no doubt placed there intentionally by the Holy Spirit.

Consider Noah’s grandfather [Genesis 5:25-27] Methuselah. There are many references to him in pop-culture because he is noted as having lived longer than any other person in history [969 years]. His name is a combination of the root words *Muth* meaning “death”, with *Shalach* which means “to bring”. Methuselah [Muth-Shalach] died in the very same year that the great flood began. The lineage in Genesis 5 says Methuselah was 187 years old when he had his son Lamech, who was 182 years of age when he had his son Noah. Doing the math, Methuselah was 369 [187 + 182] when his grandson Noah was born. The flood started when Noah was 600, so Methuselah was 969 when

the flood waters began, and this is also the age at which he died. What is really profound is to consider the meaning of the names for these ten men in their exact sequence from Adam to Noah.

Seth was named by Eve: “the Lord **has appointed** me another son” [after Abel was murdered]. Enosh [root word Aanash] means ‘mortal’ or ‘frail’. Kenan means ‘sorrow’. Mahalal-El is a conjunction of ‘blessed’ and God, ‘El’ [Elohiym]. The name Jared is from *Yaradh* meaning ‘shall come down’. Enoch means ‘teaching’ or ‘proclaiming’. This matches Jude 14-15, as *Enoch proclaims* his prophecy for “*The Lord comes with His myriads and myriads, to execute His judgment*”. Genesis 5:24 says Enoch did not see death, for he walked with God and then he was not,

Hebrew	Translation
ADAM	Man
SETH	Is Appointed
ENOSH	Mortal
KENAN	Sorrow
MAHALAL-EL	The Blessed God
JARED	Shall Come Down/Descend
ENOCK	Proclaiming/Teaching
METHUSELAH	His Death Shall Bring
LAMECH	The Despairing
NOAH	Comfort/Rest

and God took him. He is a foreshadow or “type” of the snatching away known as the rapture of the church that will happen prior to God’s judgment once again on the earth [Enoch was “snatched away” before the flood]. Methuselah has already been covered. Lamech is the root of our English words lament and lamentation, while Noah comes from the root Nacham which means comfort or rest. This cannot be coincidence. There you have it, the story of the Gospel clearly laid out in Genesis 5 that: *Man is appointed mortal sorrow but the Blessed God shall come*

down teaching that His death shall bring the despairing comfort and rest. Random chance? Provocative design? Or perhaps a very specific foreshadow of what was to come, and the substance of this is Christ.

THE LENS OF FORESHADOWS

Reading through the Old Testament uncovers various people, events, and practices that each foreshadow different aspects of who Messiah is, as well as when and why He came to earth. The entire history of Israel is arguably an on-going barometer of God's overall redemptive plan for mankind. The Biblical accounts are well-integrated with their messaging content and context. They cross-reference with each other and match up in every detail. The origin of the narrative with its hundreds of images and "types" could not have come about by coincidence. The entire process-flow has clear purpose and laser-focused intention. Such precision in structure and sequence can only be attributed to an overriding design by a Designer from outside Earth's temporal realm.

The Jewish rabbis have stated they will not fully comprehend the Scriptures until Mashiach comes and explains everything. And when He does, He will not only interpret each passage of the Bible, but also the meanings behind every word, as well as each letter, including the spaces between the letters. These intentionally positioned models, images, and "types" all provide distinctive foreshadows of not only the big picture of God's redemptive plan, but also the smallest details regarding people, places, and times. Consider Paul's commentary in 1st Corinthians 13:12, *"For now we only see through a glass dimly, but then face-to-face, because then I will know fully, just as I also have been fully known"*. Right now, we get to see God's plan and process, even though it is not 100% fully revealed in every aspect and detail. But

when we one day see the Lord face-to-face, we will know everything in its entirety, in the exact same way that He right now knows everything.

CHAPTER SUMMARY

The evidence that Jesus of Nazareth meets all the criteria of Messiah is overwhelming. He was clearly spoken about in the Torah, the prophets, and the Psalms. The Biblical narrative weaves one continuous theme: God made His promise and completed it in His perfect timing. The proposition of Messiah comes down to whether the birth of this man Jesus is the literal fulfillment of all those Biblical prophecies. There are over 200 prophetic passages in the Old Testament about Messiah. This is arguably the basis for everything in the Bible leading to the birth of Jesus. This chapter presents a persuasive foundation about Mashiach. Not fantasy, folklore, wishful thinking, or legend about a mythological character. Not a concept, state-of-mind, or Christ-consciousness but a *real* Person. The source texts confirm this man, Jesus from Nazareth, born in Bethlehem, and put to death in April of 32, is in every way Messiah. He meets *all* the prerequisites recorded in the Old Testament. The *Encyclopedia of Bible Prophecy* [J. Barton Payne] has 137 separate predictions in the Bible about Messiah from 3,000 verses in the Old Testament. Nearly 600 of those passages refer to the *person* of Messiah, not some sort of Jewish archetype. *The Complete Book Of Bible Prophecy* [Mark Hitchcock] clearly outlines the various passages that contain specific prophecies about Messiah. Many excellent web resources have sound Biblical information regarding the Anointed One. Check T.A. McMahon and Dave Hunt at TheBereanCall.org as well as JewsForJesus.org and JesusFilm.org for summaries of Old Testament prophecies about God's promised Messiah. The next chapter examines the incredible precision about Jesus and the first Palm Sunday.

CHAPTER 4

The Precision of Palm Sunday

The crowds ahead of Jesus and those who followed
were shouting ‘Hosanna to the Son of David’,
‘Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord.’

Matthew 21:9

Perhaps the most important foundation of aligning both the birth and crucifixion of Jesus rests in the detailed calculation performed in the 1894 book *The Coming Prince* by Scotland Yard’s Sir Robert Anderson, as he laid out the timeline for each and every day associated with the prophecy of Daniel Chapter 9. This amazing endeavor pinpointed the exact day on which Jesus rode into Jerusalem and was hailed as Messiah, based upon seven 7-year periods of years plus a subsequent sixty-two 7-year periods. These began with a very specific decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem. Anderson worked closely with the Astronomer Royal just outside London at the Greenwich Observatory – where the Prime Meridian longitude demarcates “Greenwich Mean Time” [GMT], the basis for all time zones across the globe. Placing Jesus, riding on a donkey into the city on Sunday, April 6th in 32 A.D.

forever etched an historical benchmark in the ancient timeline. It fits precisely with literally everything associated with the life of Jesus. This puts Jesus entering Jerusalem on Nisan 10 on the Jewish calendar, which was the start of Passover week. This puts Passover on Nisan 14, from sunset-Wednesday April 9 to sunset-Thursday April 10. This fits exactly with the Feast of Unleavened Bread between sunset-Thursday April 10th to sunset-Friday April 11th, immediately after Passover as a special Sabbath – the “high day” noted by John 19:31. This then puts the regular weekly Sabbath on sunset-Friday April 11th until sunset-Saturday April 12th. The next day [Nisan 17] is Sunday April 13th, the Feast of First Fruits – the day Jesus was resurrected from the grave.

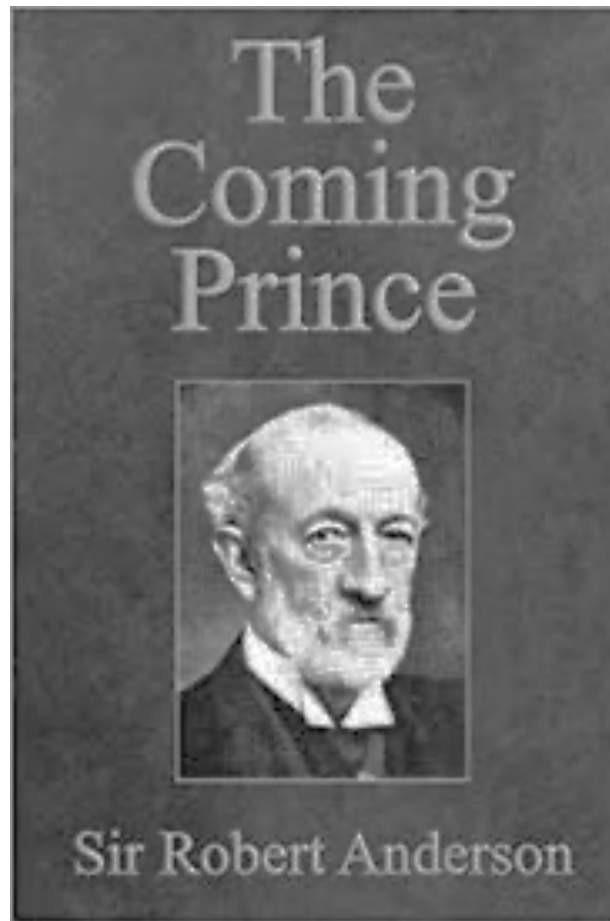
ANOTHER ANCHOR POINT

My October 2020 book in the *Figure It Out* series - *The Birth Of Jesus On Yom Teruah* - does a very detailed timeline analysis of the reigns of Augustus Caesar over the Roman Empire, Publius Sulpicius Quirinius over the Roman province of Syria [that included Judea], and the death of Herod the Great [as per the historian Josephus] “after an eclipse, but prior to Passover”. These anchor the birth of Jesus within the narrow window of between 6 BC and early 1 BC – the one time period overlap that includes all three of these Biblically-referenced rulers. Additional clues are examined that home in on the Fall of 2 BC for Jesus’ birth, most notably on Tishri 1 – the Jewish Feast of Blowing Trumpets. This happened on September 29th in the year 2 BC. With that date, it puts Jesus starting His earthly ministry at age 30 [Luke 3:23, Numbers 4:3] in September of 29 AD – six months after his second-cousin John the Baptist turned 30 [in April of 29] and began his public ministry at the Jordan River. John’s gospel records three separate Passovers during the life of Jesus [chapters 2, 6, and 11], which cover Jesus at age 30

and-a-half in the Spring of 30 AD, at age 31 and-a-half the following Spring of 31 AD, and then at age 32 and-a-half in April of 32 AD. This third Passover is when Jesus died on the cross, as the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world. The precision of Anderson's Palm Sunday provides a perfect fit for Jesus being born in September 2 BC, and then entering Jerusalem as a man of 32 and-a-half years of age, in His third year of public ministry [consistent with all of the gospels]. He is born when Augustus, Quirinius, and Herod are all alive and aligned in their respective reigns, and Jesus stands before the 5th Roman Prefect, Pontius Pilate, in April of 32 AD [who ruled from 26 to 36 AD]. Such accuracy could not simply be due to an accidental alignment. Instead, ***the Precision of Palm Sunday*** opens wide the door that places Jesus' birth 32 and-a-half years earlier, consistent with the accounts of the designated age when He began His ministry [Luke 3:23, Numbers 4:3].

ANDERSON'S CALCULATION

It is incredibly fascinating to meticulously go through each and every detail of the fine work performed by Sir Robert Anderson in evaluating the literal chronology from Daniel's prophecy of the arrival of Messiah the King. This prophetic word given to God's people Israel was quite deliberate – there will be seventy of these seven-year periods [Shabua] specifically designated and grouped in three sets: 1] seven "sevens", and 2] sixty-two "sevens", clearly linked together as sixty-nine "sevens" from that specific decree until the Messiah Nagid, and then 3] there is a final "seven" [Shabua] standing on its own – the 70th "seven". That Jehovah would know from outside the confines of physical earth-time and space of one particular decree to be made expressly to "rebuild and restore Jerusalem", and from that unique date there would be exactly sixty-nine of these seven-year Shabua until another exact event



when Messiah Nagid ["Anointed King"] would be revealed defies all possibilities of mere coincidence or simple random chance. This kind of specificity does not allow for various forms of interpretation, as is the case with so much of the supposed fortune-telling and psychic readings happening within our world from would-be "gifted" seers or savants. Anderson and the Astronomer Royal utilized the ancient contemporary context of Daniel's 360-day years for each of those sixty-nine 7-year periods [483 years total]. Multiplying the 483 years times 360 days per year produced 173,880 days between the starting and ending points.

This very specific period of time begins with “the decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem”, and culminates with “Messiah the King”.

A SPECIFIC DECREE

It is reassuring that the decree was not some kind of generic statement that could be associated with all kinds of personal interpretations. For example, a typical Las Vegas psychic might look on 600 people in the audience and declare, “There’s someone here tonight who has some unfinished business with a brother”. Well that could apply to perhaps 50-100 of the attendees – vague enough to allow multiple individuals to believe the ‘supposed’ gifted insight is just for them. If Daniel had prophesied something like, “From the decree that God is mighty and sovereign, as He rules over His nation in times of trouble, until Messiah the King . . .” there would not be a firm anchor point from which to initiate the timing until Messiah is revealed. But thankfully, this is not the case. Instead, the decree was incredibly specific, such that there are not several of these over the centuries, any of which could have been the trigger for the timeline. This EXACT decree is recorded in Nehemiah Chapter 2. The record starts with: “*And it came about in the month Nisan, in **the twentieth year of King Artaxerxes**, that when I was before him and took up the wine and gave it to the king, now I had not been sad in his presence*”. The dialogue ensues between Artaxerxes and Nehemiah. The king asks “What would you request?” and the reply is, “Send me to Judah, to the city [Jerusalem] of my father’s tombs, that I may rebuild it”. Letters from the king are then drafted to provide Nehemiah safe passage for this Jewish slave to travel into Judah, as well as to Asaph, the keeper of the king’s royal forest, so that timber will be released to Nehemiah for the construction work.

The reign of Artaxerxes is well documented in the historical records as being nearly 40 years, starting in 465 BC, and continuing until his death in 425 BC in his capital city of Susa [also called Shushan, located in the southwest corner of modern day Iran, east of the Euphrates and Tigris



Rivers, above the Persian Gulf]. His more formal Greek surname was "Makro-Kheir", translated Long-Hand. The Latin "Longimanus" was also used as a popular moniker for this grandson of King Darius the 1st. The record of Nehemiah 2:1 says it was in the twentieth year of his reign [445 BC] that he made this notable decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem. He is an historical person, ruling in a real kingdom, and making a specific declaration to another historical person [Nehemiah]. This really happened. Anderson's work shows that in 445 BC, the 1st of Nisan on the Jewish calendar occurred on March 15th. That date is then the starting point for those 173,880 days until 'Messiah the King' as per Daniel Chapter 9. The intervening years between 445 BC and getting into the early 1st Century AD initially approximated the 483 years that

represent the 7 "sevens" and 62 "sevens" [69 Shabua multiplied times 7 years per period = 483 years]. The preliminary framework was to count 483 years ahead from 445 BC to 38 AD. But these Shabua [periods of seven years] were based on the Babylonian calendar [and subsequent Persian versions] that used 360 days per year. Anderson used the more accurate way to account for the actual 365.2422 days per year. He also converted from the Julian calendar [from 46 BC] to the Gregorian calendar [from Pope Gregory XIII in 1582]. He adjusted for leap years in using the total number of days in the 69 Shabua, so his final work is based on the 173,880 days.

This would show the very day Jesus rode into Jerusalem on a colt, the foal of a donkey, to fulfill Zechariah 9:9, *"Behold your King is coming to you, meek and humble riding on a donkey even a colt, the foal of a donkey"*. This was also the 10th of Nisan and the beginning of Passover week in Jerusalem [see Luke 19 for details of that first Palm Sunday]. In fact, it was such an exact day that Jesus withdrew [John 6:15] to the mountain alone when they tried to make Him king prior to that exact day, because it was not yet His time. This occurred again in John 7:30, as well as John 7:44, and each time He said that His hour had not yet come. The April 6th [Nisan 10] day was so precise that when the people hailed Him with the Messianic Psalm 118, the Pharisees told Jesus to rebuke the people. They knew this meant Jesus was being received as the Anointed One. But Jesus said [Luke 19:40], *"I tell you, if these people become silent, the very stones will cry out"*. That was literally Jesus' designated day as prophesied by Daniel.

Daniel wrote this prophecy around 600 years before Jesus of Nazareth fulfilled it. In fact it is so precise and remarkable in its accuracy that many critics try to claim that this portion of Daniel must have been

written after the fact. But we know for certain there was a complete Old Testament containing the book of Daniel at least 300 years before Jesus entered Jerusalem. The Septuagint Bible [LXX] in the common Koine-Greek language was translated from the Hebrew in the 3rd Century BC. Seventy Jewish scholars finished this task in Alexandria, Egypt during the reign of Ptolemy II Philadelphus [he reigned from 285 to 247 BC]. Therefore, Daniel's prophecy was in the Biblical record for almost three centuries before Jesus rode into Jerusalem.

CHAPTER SUMMARY

The precision of Palm Sunday establishes an excellent benchmark on the timeline of human history that puts Jesus of Nazareth in the city of Jerusalem on the exact date of Sunday, April 6th in the year 32 AD. It provides the anchor-point in advance of a Passover crucifixion coming up four days later on Thursday, April 10th. Coordinating the work of Sir Robert Anderson's Palm Sunday with Jesus' birth on Yom Teruah in the Fall of 2 BC is by far the best and most consistent fit of the Biblical narratives about Passover week as covered in the four Gospels. Daniel wrote an indisputable prophecy that was in the Septuagint Bible about 1300 years before Jesus was born. Artaxerxes Longimanus did exist, he was King of the Achaemenid Empire, confirmed by historians, and he made the decree to Nehemiah. The timeline from his granting that the city of Jerusalem be rebuilt fits an exact date of March 15, 445 BC. When adjusted for calendar changes and leap years, the date arrives precisely on that first Palm Sunday. Absolutely fascinating! The next chapter will now closely examine a wide range of specific evidences that together define a very strong case for the Thursday-Passover. It aligns all four Gospels into a combined and synchronized timeline that goes from Palm Sunday until the Passover crucifixion of Jesus.

CHAPTER 5

Evidences For Thursday Passover Crucifixion

They led Jesus from Caiaphas to the Praetorium,
and they did not enter the Praetorium so they
would not be defiled, but might eat the Passover.

John 18:28

There are arguably nine unique evidences mentioned in the Scriptures that support the crucifixion of Jesus on the Thursday Passover in 32 AD. This chapter examines each of these in greater detail and shows how they all align with the sequence of events during the Passover week. Taken together, these make a strong and persuasive case for the death of Jesus literally fulfilling the foreshadow exhibited in Yahweh's original Passover in Egypt, roughly 1,600 years prior. The chapter begins with a review of the foundational bases that position Jesus of Nazareth, in His early 30s, in Jerusalem during the Passover week of April 6-13, 32 AD. Then as each evidence is reviewed, the cumulative effect of these will be summarized in building the case for a Thursday Passover crucifixion.

FOUNDATIONAL TIMELINE

The precision of the Palm Sunday date covered in the previous chapter lays out the primary foundational calendar template onto which the various details about the Passover week can be added. That April 6th date in 32 AD for Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem also provides a solid context for the Wednesday-sunset-to-Thursday-sunset Passover feast of Nisan 14 [April 10th]. This date fits very well with Jesus' birth in September of 2 BC, His age of 30 when He started His ministry, and the nearly three years of ministry from September in 29 AD through the Passover week in 32 AD. The crucifixion of Jesus on the Thursday Passover is based on coordinating these nine separate evidences that provide a unified narrative to align all the Biblical accounts. This is in contrast to the basis for "Good Friday" which hinges on the single assumption of Mark 15:42, "Evening was come, it was *the day before the Sabbath*". This statement has been misinterpreted that the regular weekly Sabbath was approaching at sunset on Friday, so Jesus must have been crucified that same Friday afternoon. In contrast, the basis for the Thursday crucifixion during the closing hours of Passover is supported by nine different evidences that, taken together, fit the Biblical sequence of events and describe a clearer picture of how Jesus' sacrifice on the cross fulfills the original Passover in its entirety.

The case for the Thursday Passover crucifixion of Jesus begins with the calendar that can place Him in Jerusalem on a very specific date, and at an age entirely consistent with when He was born, when He started His ministry, how many years He ministered in Judea, as well as the time when Pontius Pilate served as the Prefect of the Syrian Province in the Roman Empire. My prior book in the *Figure It Out* Series, *The Birth Of Jesus On Yom Teruah*, makes the case for Jesus being born on

September 29th of 2 BC. That was Tishri 1 on the Jewish calendar, the Feast of Blowing Trumpets, New Year's Day. That birthday is six months after Jesus' second-cousin John the Baptist was born to Elizabeth and Zacharias. John also began his ministry at age 30 [as per Numbers 4:3] in the Spring of 29 AD. Jesus would then begin His ministry at the same age later that same year [confirmed in Luke 3:23]. The Gospel of John records three Passovers for Jesus in His ministry [John 2:13, 6:4, 11:55]. The first was in the Spring of 30 AD when Jesus was 30 and-a-half years of age. The second was in the Spring of 31 AD when He was 31 and-a-half. The third was in April 32 AD when Jesus was six months shy of His 33rd birthday. This date for His birth is consistent within the context of when Passover occurred on April 10th of 32 AD, and the precision of Palm Sunday as prophesied by Daniel.

Sir Robert Anderson's calculations put Jesus entering Jerusalem on Sunday, April 6th in 32 AD. That was also Nisan 10, the official start of Passover week that year. Jesus rides into the city on the borrowed colt, the foal of a donkey, exactly as Zechariah 9:9 states, *"Rejoice greatly daughter of Zion, shout in triumph daughter of Jerusalem, behold your King is coming to you, He is just an endowed with salvation, humble and mounted on a donkey, a colt, the foal of a donkey"*. Jesus is not in His mid-20s or approaching 40. His age is entirely consistent with being born in 2 BC, starting His ministry at age 30, and being in Jerusalem for His third Passover six month before He would have turned 33.

JESUS IS THE LAMB

Another very foundational component that fits the full context of Jesus being crucified on the Thursday Passover in April of 32 AD, is the way Jesus is specifically identified as THE Passover Lamb who fulfills the Biblical "type" of the lambs slain in Egypt at the original Passover. This

is not coincidental or even trivial. It is the basis to an understanding of God's perfect plan of salvation for the world. The shedding of blood and sprinkling it on the doors in Egypt was foreshadowing a future day when God would provide a remedy for sin by the sacrifice of His blood on the cross of Calvary. Let's examine these details closely.

Elizabeth [the wife of Zacharias] and Mary [married to Joseph] are most likely related to each other as cousins [Luke 1:36], so that John the Baptist [born to Elizabeth in April of 2 BC] is then six months older than his second-cousin Jesus [born in September 2 BC]. If John began his public ministry at that same age of 30 [April of 29 AD] then he would have been baptizing people in the Jordan River and also prophesying about the Messiah for six months before Jesus arrived from Nazareth. Matthew identifies the Baptist [Matthew 3:3] as the one who literally fulfills the Isaiah 40:3 prophecy, *"The voice of one crying in the wilderness, 'Make ready the way for the Lord [clear the way for the Lord in the wilderness], make His path straight [make smooth in the desert a highway for our God]'"*. This prophecy is also recorded in Luke 3:4 and John 1:23. The latter passage is in the context of when the priests and Levites went out to the Jordan to see John in person and asked him, "Who are you?" [John 1:19]. John first makes it very clear he is NOT the Anointed One – the Mashiach [John 1:20], to which they reply, "Are you Elijah?" "Are you the Prophet?" and John gives an emphatic "No" in response to each of their inquiries. This is extremely provocative because the Messiah, Elijah, and Moses [always understood to be THE Prophet with a capital "P"] are the three who are seen together when Jesus is transfigured to display His concealed glory to Peter, James, and John [Matthew 17:1-4, Mark 9:1-4, Luke 9:28-33]. Peter also wrote about this [2nd Peter 1:16-18] incredible experience he saw, and there is

strong evidence Moses and Elijah are the two witnesses to the world at the time of earth's difficult tribulation [described in Revelation 11].

When the Baptist first sees his second-cousin Jeho-shua [Jesus' name in Hebrew means "God is salvation"] he points to Him and makes this incredibly profound prophetic statement, **"Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world"** [John 1:29]. He continues with verse 30, that Jesus is *"He on behalf of whom I said, 'After me comes a Man who has a higher rank than me, for He existed before me' "*. This is incredible, that even though John knows full well that Jesus was born to Mary six months AFTER he was born to Elizabeth, he knows the eternal nature of the Son of God, that He existed prior to John's birth. The Baptist explained [John 1:26-27] that he baptized with water for the repentance of sin, but he is not even worthy to untie the sandal straps of the Anointed One coming after him. The very next day John is standing with two of his own disciples when Jesus approached and he again states plainly [John 1:36], **"Behold the Lamb of God"**, after which these two disciples left John to follow Jesus. These two were most likely John bar-Zebedee [the Gospel writer] and his brother James bar-Zebedee [not James the brother of Jesus]. They were nicknamed by Jesus 'boanerges' [in Greek] meaning "sons of thunder".

The Jewish Passover week always started on Nisan 10 [Exodus 12:3-6], when all the lambs are selected and carefully observed for four days to confirm they were spotless and without any blemish. This began on Saturday at sunset as the regular weekly Sabbath concluded. Those four days of Nisan 10, 11, 12, and 13 are each prior to the Passover that begins on Nisan 14. Jesus was also thoroughly examined during those four days, beginning with Palm Sunday [April 6, 32 AD] and continuing on Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday [April 7, 8, and 9].

These four days start with Jesus upending the booths/tables of the moneychangers in the Temple [Luke 19:45] while the chief priests, scribes, and leaders of the people began looking for ways to destroy Him. In verse 48, Luke clarifies that they could not find anything against the Lord because the people were so amazed by the Word He spoke. His examination for blemish continues in Luke 20 as He is questioned about His authority and explains the parable of the vine-growers, and then defines spiritual priorities relative to paying taxes to Caesar. In verse 27 Jesus explains the resurrection to the Sadducees [who say there is none], and He continues in Chapter 21 teaching them about the widow's offering, and then His Second Coming.

Luke ultimately notes [23:4] that Pilate will testify publicly that he finds no guilt in Jesus. Messiah, the Passover Lamb, is without blemish. John records in the Revelation [5:6-9] given to him by Jesus while imprisoned on Patmos in the Aegean Sea [southwest of Ephesus off the coast of Asia Minor] a scene where *"Between the throne with the four living creatures and elders, a Lamb was standing as if it had been slain, and He took the book out of the right hand of Him who sat on the throne, while the living creatures and elders fell before this Lamb, singing a new song, 'Worthy are You to take the book and break its seals', for You were slain and purchased to God with your blood those from every tribe, tongue, people, and nation"*. Then in verse 12, the angels of the heavenly realm join in with a loud voice, *"Worthy is the Lamb who was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing"*. The testimonies of John the Baptist, and the written account of John bar-Zebedee together confirm Jesus of Nazareth as the **Lamb of God** who takes away the sin of the world. In addition, Isaiah prophetically says that Messiah [53:7] is the **"Lamb that**

is led to slaughter, and like a sheep that is silent before His shearers, so He did not open His mouth". This references Jesus being quiet as He stood before Herod [Luke 23:9] who questioned Him at length, yet Jesus gave no answers. John [19:9] notes Pilate asked, "Where are you from?" but Jesus gave no answer. John identifies the Lamb as Jesus [Revelation 5:5] – *"The Lion of Judah and the Root of David"*. These foundations all confirm Jesus as **the Lamb of God**.

The Passover lambs killed in Egypt were symbolic of how the One true Lamb of God would come at a future day and His blood would provide the permanent covering for sin. The Apostle Paul writes convincingly to his fellow Hebrews [10:1-18] that the Passover in the Law of Moses was simply **a foreshadow** of good things to come at a still-future date. All those sacrifices made continually year after year could not make perfect those who draw near, otherwise they would have ceased to be offered after the first time, because the people offering them would have been made clean and had no further consciousness of being sinful. For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sin. Jesus then removes the need for on-going sacrifices when He offers Himself in His own body as the perfect sacrifice "once for all" [verse 10]. This is so critical to understand how the Passover lambs point directly to Jesus, as THE literal **Lamb of God** who fulfills every facet of the Passover.

Paul can confidently tell the Corinthian believers in his first letter [5:7] **"Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us"**. Think of the profound impact of that declaration. He follows up in his second letter [5:21] that Christ was actually MADE SIN for us – Jesus literally became our sin in our place, and took the penalty for that sin, confirming Isaiah 53:6, that *"Yahweh laid on Him the iniquity of us all"*. All of these examples are not simply a form of allegory or figurative language about 1st Century

Jesus and the Hebrew Passover lambs. The gospel is anchored in Jesus literally fulfilling that prior foreshadow of the Passover lamb's blood being the acceptable covering for death. Jesus also shed His own blood to cover the sins of the world, with a permanent "once-for-all" [Hebrews 9:12] willing sacrifice that made atonement for sin.

The stage is now perfectly set with the foundational components of the timeline and Jesus identified as the literal **Lamb of God**. He then enters Jerusalem at age 33 and-a-half on the EXACT day prophesied by Daniel some 500 years earlier. The crowds of people hailed Him as Messiah when they cried out loud the words of Psalm 118. John the Baptist, the last Old Testament prophet, is that forerunner of Messiah prophesied by Isaiah, and he clearly identifies Jesus as **the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world**. Jesus' nearly three years of public ministry culminate in the very reason for which He came to earth – to fulfill all the prophecies about Messiah suffering and dying, then being resurrected from the dead when He conquers death and the grave. Jesus fully comprehends and openly declares [Matthew 18:11, Luke 19:10] "The Son of Man has come to save that which was lost". He also states, "The Son of Man came to give His own life a ransom for many" [Mark 10:45]. Jesus came specifically to die on the cross, and it was for that same purpose He came to that very hour [John 12:24-27]. Paul also confirms [1st Timothy 1:15] that Christ Jesus came into the world for the singular and direct purpose - to save sinners. He sums up the Gospel [1st Corinthians 15:3-4] with, "*I deliver to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and He was buried and He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures*". Let's review all the evidences.

EVIDENCE No. 1 - JESUS' PASSOVER PLAN

With these foundations in place, the first explicit evidence that Jesus was crucified on Passover, Thursday April 10, Nisan 14, is to see how Jesus personally described His third Passover. Jesus celebrated three Passover feasts during His nearly three years of public ministry, from September of 29 AD up through April of 32 AD. These are in John chapters 2, 6, and 11 respectively. There are several places in the Gospels where Jesus states that He fully expects to be crucified **on the Jewish Passover**. This is entirely consistent with the foundational passages covered in the previous section of this chapter. After Jesus finished a thorough teaching [Matthew 25] using parables of the ten virgins being ready and the talents entrusted to servants of the master, then concluding with His Second Coming and final judgment of sin, He transitions to what is clearly a very frank and straightforward statement directly to His disciples in Matthew 26:1-2,

***"You know that after two days the Passover is coming
and the Son of Man is to be handed over for crucifixion".***

This could not be any more conclusive. Jesus states two very specific conditions. First, coming up in **two days** it will be Passover. The second is that on *that* Passover He just referenced, **He will be handed over for crucifixion**. This is personal and specific testimony from Jesus Himself. Counting these two days until Passover means the next day is Nisan 13 which begins at sunset on Tuesday April 8th. The second day begins at Wednesday sunset [the end of Nisan 13]. This is the start of Nisan 14, the beginning of Passover. Jesus fully understands that He is going to die on the cross as the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world – **handed over for crucifixion on Passover**. This will be entirely in line with the statements prophesied by His second-cousin John the

Baptist at the Jordan River. Jeho-shua [meaning "God is salvation"] is **THE Lamb of God** who takes away the sins of the world [John 1:29]. He knows that the traditional Passover is coming in two days, and it is on this long-celebrated feast He is going to be handed over for crucifixion. His testimony establishes Passover as THE day He will be killed. He knows this is the reason He came into the world. He will personally fulfill the foreshadow of the lamb being slain, providing substitutionary blood of the Lamb to cover the penalty of death.

Consider this timeline. Luke 22:7 explains the day had arrived of eating unleavened bread for the start of Passover. Later on Passover was the time when the lambs would be sacrificed. Nisan 14 begins at sunset on Wednesday evening, April 9th. Overlapping the western calendar days of the week with the Jewish days of the week can sometimes read and feel a bit confusing. But remember, as the day grew darker heading into evening on Wednesday, it would soon be "early" on the *beginning* of the Feast of Passover that started at sunset. The main Passover meal that eats the lamb is not at the start of Nisan 14 [just after sunset]. That main meal is eaten **late** on Passover, which is in the afternoon [twilight] prior to sunset on the following day [Thursday, April 10th]. The Jewish "day" of Passover on Nisan 14 begins with eating unleavened bread [Wednesday evening April 9th] – like breakfast to start the new day. This is why Luke 22:15 has Jesus say to His disciples, "I have earnestly desired to eat this Passover with you, **BEFORE I suffer**". Those closing three words are key to understanding the timing going on here. Jesus does START the Feast of Passover with the twelve disciples. However, the final meal of Passover would happen on the "evening" of the feast, at the close of Nisan 14 in the late afternoon of Thursday, April 10th prior to sunset in twilight. This is clearly prescribed in Exodus 12:8, that

the lamb is eaten on ***the same night as the preparation day it was killed*** [see verse 6]. Remember the lambs are observed for any blemish for four days [so Nisan 10-to-11 is day one, 11-to-12 is day two, 12-to-13 is day three, and 13-to-14 is the day four]. Then ***"the whole assembly of the congregation kills IT at twilight"*** in the late afternoon prior to the main Passover meal on the close of the Jewish day at sunset.

Just after sunset on Wednesday, April 9th, Jesus would in fact BEGIN Passover with His disciples, as they reclined around the table to share together in the opening meal of Passover - eating unleavened bread. This is the famous "Last Supper" that incorporates the matzah and the fruit of the vine. The longstanding traditional view has been that Jesus ate the final Passover meal of lamb as the Last Supper. But in the Biblical record there is ***no mention by Jesus of the Passover lamb*** during their meal. That is quite conspicuous that Jesus would not have done a great teaching [object lesson] about Himself and the slain lamb if they were eating the final Passover meal at twilight on Thursday during the close of the feast. Instead, the focus of Jesus is on the opening meal of Passover "early" into the feast just after sunset on Wednesday, April 9th as the Passover was beginning. They have the flat matzah [unleavened] bread and wine. Luke 22:19-20 describes how Jesus distributes these to His disciples as an object lesson about how His death on the cross is to be remembered through the symbols of the bread [His body broken for them] and the wine [this cup poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood]. Matthew 26:19 states clearly the disciples ***prepared the opening meal*** of Passover, and then verse-20 shows them ***reclining at the table when it was evening*** [post-sunset]. If this had been the main Passover meal of lamb, they would have eaten it late in the afternoon [twilight] PRIOR to the sunset [not the evening].

In Matthew 26:26, Jesus took unleavened [matzah] bread, blessed it, broke it, and gave it to His disciples saying, *"Take and eat, this is my body broken for you"*. In the following verses [27-28] He took the cup of wine and gave thanks, and gave it to them saying, *"Drink from it all of you, for this my blood of the covenant which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins"* [also recorded in Mark 14 and Luke 22]. Paul notes this same opening meal of Passover [1st Corinthians 23-28] *"the Lord Jesus on the night He was betrayed"* which clearly shows this meal happened on the **same evening** Judas showed up [after the meal] in the garden to betray Jesus when the soldiers arrested Him. Jesus knew and fully understood He would be hailed as Messiah at the start of Passover week in 32 AD, and so He testified, *"You know that after two days the Passover is coming and the Son of Man is to be handed over for crucifixion"*. He would then literally on Nisan 14 be **the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world**.

EVIDENCE NO. 2 - 'BEFORE' THE PASSOVER

The gospel of John [13:1-2] has an intriguing and very interesting comment to start the chapter that sets the timing for the upcoming events in the narrative: *"Now BEFORE the Feast of the Passover, Jesus knowing that His hour had come, that He would depart out of this world to the Father, having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end, so then during supper, Satan had already put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon, to betray Jesus"*. This is incredibly profound that John wants his readers to know this happens **BEFORE the feast of the Passover**. That "feast" is synonymous with the closing meal of Passover that occurs in the twilight of Nisan 14, prior to sunset, AFTER the lambs have been killed, and everyone eats the main meal of the feast as described in Exodus 12. If Jesus was

crucified on a supposed "Good Friday" they would have already been finished with everything related to the feast of the Passover. But John makes very clear that it is **BEFORE the feast** when this next sequence of events occurs during those final hours prior to Jesus being crucified.

Remember, Wednesday evening, April 9th after sunset was the start of the 24 hours of Passover that ended the next day [Thursday, April 10th] at sunset. The main Passover meal happens late afternoon Thursday in the twilight. All of Israel kills the lambs between midday and twilight as the preparation for the final Passover meal. John states, "Now **BEFORE the Feast of the Passover**" speaking of almost 24 hours earlier than that main meal, the start of Passover at sunset Wednesday. The initial meal is eating unleavened bread [like breakfast to begin the day]. This does not support "Good Friday". He would not refer to "**BEFORE Passover**" if Jesus was crucified on Friday, because that would have been AFTER Passover. The BEFORE comment confirms the Last Supper and the events that followed [Jesus arrested and the overnight illegal trial] occurred prior to the closing meal of the Passover feast. When the opening meal of unleavened bread was completed [Last Supper], Matthew [26:30] and Mark [14:26] record that Jesus and His disciples sang a hymn together, and then went outside the city to the Mount of Olives. It was then Jesus explicitly said He, the Shepherd, would be stricken and the sheep would scatter – referring to the Roman cohort and Jewish Temple guards coming with Judas Iscariot to arrest Him.

Evidence No. 1 was Jesus' statement, "**You know that after two days the Passover is coming and the Son of Man is to be handed over for crucifixion**". Jesus states that He will be crucified on Passover. And Evidence No. 2 is the statement that "**It was BEFORE the Passover**"

confirming the Last Supper and going to the Mount of Olives happen prior to the close of the Passover feast coming at twilight Thursday.

EVIDENCE No. 3 - WHY JUDAS DEPARTS

In John 13:21, Jesus tells His disciples that one of them is going to betray Him. In verse 24, Peter asks Jesus to tell them all of whom He is referring about this act of betrayal. Verses 26 and 27 explain how Jesus tells them He will dip a morsel of food and give it to the one who will betray Him. He dips the morsel of food and gives this to Judas [identifying him as the one set to betray Jesus to the religious leaders]. And then Jesus said directly to Judas, *"What you do, do quickly"*. The passage however, notes that the disciples literally had no idea why Jesus said those words to Judas [verse 28]. The next evidence about the Thursday crucifixion on Passover comes in John 13:29 where John hears the disciples rationalize why Judas has gotten up from the table and left the room after Jesus told him to "do quickly" what he is set to do. John was present for the Last Supper [John 13:23], leaning on Jesus' chest as they reclined for the opening meal. Verse 29 confirms the disciples misunderstanding of why Judas departed early, *"For they supposed that because Judas had the money box, Jesus was saying to him, 'Go and buy the things we will need for the Feast' "*. This confirms again that Jesus and His disciples had not yet eaten the main Passover meal after the lambs would be killed [the main meal of the feast]. They ate the opening meal [unleavened bread, wine] after sunset Wednesday - the Last Supper. Their response to Judas exiting the room shows they thought Jesus' words, *"What you do, do quickly"* were not about betraying Jesus to the religious leaders for thirty pieces of silver, but were simply Jesus telling Judas to go and buy the rest of what they will need for the closing Passover meal prior to sunset the

next day. This confirms again they had not yet eaten "the Passover", the main meal with the lamb that comes at the close of the Feast.

Evidence No. 1 is ***"after two days the Passover is coming and the Son of Man is to be handed over for crucifixion"***. Evidence No. 2 is ***"It was BEFORE the Passover"***. Evidence No. 3 is the disciples reasoning that Judas leaves early to purchase ***what is still needed for their closing Passover meal*** they expected to be coming up the following afternoon.

EVIDENCE No. 4 - THE PREPARATION

The next crucial passage from Scripture is often easily overlooked in John's gospel [19:31]. This concerns the rationale for speeding up the deaths of Jesus and the other two crucified with Him. The soldiers were instructed to break their legs so those on the crosses could not support their body weight, making breathing almost impossible and they would quickly suffocate. John records that they are dying on their respective crosses and it is ***"the time of preparation"***, referring to ***the last hours of Passover***. It fits exactly with the Apostle's prior comment in John 19:4, stating it was ***"the day of preparation for the Passover"***. The main Passover meal would be eaten in the twilight [late afternoon] and then Passover is concluded at sunset. The late afternoon twilight is when everyone is at home for ***"the preparation"*** of the final meal of Passover. The lambs were killed as part of ***"the preparation"*** for the closing meal as described in Exodus 12:8-9 [the blood is drained and the meat is roasted with fire, never boiled, and eaten along with unleavened bread and bitter herbs]. Jesus was already dead as the soldiers came to break His legs. He had given His own life willingly [John 10:17-18] and no man took it from Him, as He laid down His life on His own initiative. When the penalty for sin was set to be completed [John 19:30] Jesus declared, *Tetelestai*, meaning "It is finished" and bowed His head and

gave up His spirit. This was BEFORE the final Passover meal was eaten. It was ***"the time of preparation"*** and shows Jesus was crucified and died on late Passover. This Passover ***"day of preparation"*** was also confirmed by Luke [23:54] as Joseph of Arimathea takes the body of Jesus from the cross and wraps it in linen, then laid the body in a new tomb, for it was the ***"preparation day"*** and almost the special "high day" Sabbath John confirms [19:31] coming in the next Evidence No. 5.

Evidence No. 1 is ***"after two days the Passover is coming and the Son of Man is to be handed over for crucifixion"***. Evidence No. 2 is ***"It was BEFORE the Passover"***. Evidence No. 3 is the disciples reasoning that Judas leaves early ***to purchase what is needed for the closing Passover meal*** coming up the following afternoon. Evidence No. 4 states Jesus was crucified at ***"the time of preparation"*** before the close of Passover.

EVIDENCE No. 5 - SPECIAL HIGH DAY

Also connected within that same passage [John 19:31] is the additional information that at sunset on Thursday [the close of Nisan 14], it would then be the start of Nisan 15 which is the beginning of the Feast of Unleavened Bread. John is careful and very deliberate to insert this parenthesis about this special ***"high day"*** so his readers know that after Passover comes the Feast of Unleavened Bread. This is described in Leviticus 23:5-6, ***"In the first month [Nisan] on the fourteenth day at twilight is the Lord's Passover, then on the fifteenth day of the same month as Passover is the Feast of Unleavened Bread to the Lord"***. This was a special ***"high day Sabbath"*** when no work was to be done. There were seven of these annual "high Sabbaths": 1] the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, 2] the last day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, 3] Pentecost, 4] Yom Teruah, the Feast of Blowing Trumpets, then 5] Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement, 6] the first day of Sukkot,

the Feast of Tabernacles, and 7] the last great day of Sukkot. These "High Sabbaths" did not allow any work to take place, which would include removing the three dead bodies from the crosses.

If they did not speed up their deaths by breaking their legs, the three men would have hung on the crosses for quite some time before they died. Death by crucifixion was a long drawn-out agonizing process that could take two or three days. The bones would be disjointed, breathing would be difficult, and dehydration would set in – plus there was a slow and steady loss of blood from the wounds where the nails entered the wrists and feet. But dead bodies could not be touched [taken down] during a "High Sabbath" because it would make the attending persons unclean. At first glance the casual reader assumes that the "Sabbath" referred to in John 19:31 is the regular weekly Shabbat that starts at Friday sunset [Exodus 20:8-11]. For over 1,600 years this is the ONLY rationale for "Good Friday". However, John provides this exceptional parenthetical clarification: ***"for THAT Sabbath was a high day"***. The Greek word is "megas-hemera" [megas is transliterated to our English "mega", such as Mega-Millions in the California Lottery, or megaton to denote the yield of a nuclear weapon]. It was also used in John 7:37 referring to a grand [high] final day of Sukkot, the Feast of Tabernacles that Jesus attended with His disciples on Tishri 15.

With Passover on Thursday, April 10th in 32 AD, this special "high day" follows immediately on Friday, April 11th, going from sunset Thursday to sunset Friday. Then Friday sunset is the start of the regular weekly Shabbat, and no work was done from Friday sunset to Saturday sunset. Dave Hunt notes this unique "back-to-back Sabbaths" in his 1993 book *How Close Are We?* in Chapter 16 titled "Forget Good Friday". The sequence of time is compelling. The tail-end of Passover is Thursday

afternoon. At sunset starts the special "high day" for 24 hours to Friday sunset – the weekly Sabbath. That goes 24 hours until Saturday sunset. This means no work can be done from the close of Passover [the start of Unleavened Bread] on Thursday April 10th, until Saturday April 12th sunset as the weekly Sabbath concludes. THIS is the reason the religious leaders wanted the crucified men off the crosses, because otherwise they could potentially be hanging there until Sunday morning due to those "back-to-back" Sabbaths that allow no work to be done – such as removing bodies from the wooden crossbeams.

Evidence No. 1 is ***"after two days the Passover is coming and the Son of Man is to be handed over for crucifixion"***. Evidence No. 2 is ***"It was BEFORE the Passover"***. Evidence No. 3 is the disciples reasoning that Judas leaves early to ***purchase what is needed for the closing Passover meal*** coming up the following afternoon. Evidence No. 4 states Jesus was crucified at ***"the time of preparation"*** before the close of Passover. Evidence No. 5 is: ***"THAT Sabbath was a high day"*** to start the Feast of Unleavened Bread, not the regular weekly Sabbath at sunset Friday.

EVIDENCE No. 6 - ROMAN PRAETORIUM

John's Gospel account explains [18:28] that as Jesus was brought from Caiaphas to be presented to Pontius Pilate, ***"The religious leaders of the Jews did not enter into the Roman Praetorium so that they would not be defiled, but might eat the Passover"***. Luke writes being defiled by Gentiles [Acts 21:28] as the Jews in Asia Minor confronted Paul because "he brought Gentiles into the Temple and defiled this holy place". Peter explained this same concern [Acts 10:28], "You know it is unlawful for a Jew to visit a foreigner". Ezra 9:11 declared, "This land [Canaan, Judea] is unclean by the filthiness of their abominations". If they went into that Gentile hall, they would be defiled and "unclean".

This would require a series of ceremonial purification washings for 24 hours to be properly cleansed, so they would have to miss partaking of the main Passover meal that was still to come later that Thursday afternoon. This clearly shows that ***it was the day of Passover when Jesus was being accused***, and ***He would be crucified*** several hours later on that same Thursday, ***in the afternoon during the closing of Passover***.

Evidence No. 1 is ***"after two days the Passover is coming and the Son of Man is to be handed over for crucifixion"***. Evidence No. 2 is ***"It was BEFORE the Passover"***. Evidence No. 3 is the disciples reasoning that Judas leaves early to purchase what is needed for the closing Passover meal coming up the following afternoon. Evidence No. 4 states Jesus was crucified at ***"the time of preparation"*** before the close of Passover. Evidence No. 5 is: ***"THAT Sabbath was a high day"*** to start the Feast of Unleavened Bread, not the regular weekly Sabbath at sunset Friday. Evidence No. 6 confirms the religious leaders did not enter the Roman Praetorium so ***they would still be able to eat the closing Passover meal***.

EVIDENCE No. 7 - PETER'S DENIAL

The illegal overnight trial of Jesus began Wednesday evening after the Last Supper concluded around 10:00 PM. The sequence of events was:

- 1] ***The Last Supper*** in the upper room with the opening Passover meal of unleavened bread [around 6:00-10:00PM]
- 2] ***The Mount of Olives and Gethsemane*** where Jesus asks His disciples to stay awake and pray with Him [most likely between 10:30 PM and 11:30 PM, which is why the disciples are so tired and fall asleep].
- 3] ***Jesus is arrested*** most likely soon after 11:30 PM.
- 4] The accusations against Jesus start in front of Annas [perhaps 12:00 midnight to 12:30 AM].

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- 5] **Jesus is sent to Caiaphas** [around 1:00-1:30 AM], then to
 - 6] **The full Sanhedrin** [around 2:00-2:30 AM], then Jesus has an
 - 7] **Initial audience with Pilate** [about 3:00-3:30 AM], who sends
 - 8] **Jesus before Herod** [perhaps 4:00-4:30 AM], who sends
 - 9] **Jesus back to Pilate** a second time [5:00-6:00 AM].
 - 10] **Pilate convicts Jesus for execution** [6:00-7:00 AM] has Him flogged [7:00-7:30], Jesus/Simon of Cyrene carry cross to Golgotha [7:30-8:30], crucifixion at 9:00 AM [Mark 15:25]. About 3 hours pass from Pilate's order for Jesus to carry the cross through the city and when He is nailed to it.
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NOTE: All times are estimates and allow for travel between the different venues.

It is profound that Luke 22:54-55, Matthew 26:69-75, Mark 14:66-72, and John 18:13-18 each describe Peter's denial of Jesus, exactly as Jesus had prophesied in Matthew 26:34 and Luke 22:61. Luke notes that when Peter is following Jesus overnight from venue to venue, he is outside the hall in the courtyard and warming himself by a fire that was kindled. This shows it was probably before dawn on that cool Thursday morning. The timing is confirmed [Luke 22:60] when Peter denies the Lord a third time after which he **hears the rooster crow**. Roosters crow at the "first hour" [6:00 AM, dawn] as the sun begins to rise. This is consistent with the context that Passover started at Wednesday sunset, and it is still Passover early Thursday morning when Peter denies Jesus. Over the next few hours [this was around 6:00 AM] Pilate orders Jesus to be flogged, Roman soldiers press a twisted crown of thorns onto His head, drape a purple robe over His shoulders, then mock and taunt Him. In the next hour [7:30 to 8:30 AM], Jesus and Simon of Cyrene carry the crossbeam to Golgotha, and Jesus was crucified at the "third hour" [Mark 15:25] – 9:00 AM on Passover. The four Gospels describe various additional details [Matthew 27, Mark 15, Luke 23, and John 19].

Evidence No. 1 is ***"after two days the Passover is coming and the Son of Man is to be handed over for crucifixion"***. Evidence No. 2 is ***"It was BEFORE the Passover"***. Evidence No. 3 is the disciples reasoning that Judas leaves early to ***purchase what is needed for the closing Passover meal*** coming up the following afternoon. Evidence No. 4 states Jesus was crucified at ***"the time of preparation"*** before the close of Passover. Evidence No. 5 is: ***"THAT Sabbath was a high day"*** to start the Feast of Unleavened Bread, not the regular weekly Sabbath at sunset Friday. Evidence No. 6 confirms the religious leaders did not enter the Roman Praetorium ***so they would still be able to eat the closing Passover meal***. Evidence No. 7 is Peter denies Jesus three times and ***hears the rooster crow at around 6:00 AM, early Thursday morning on Passover***.

EVIDENCE No. 8 - GOING TO THE TOMB

The unique situation of back-to-back Sabbaths [Evidence No. 5] meant that once Jesus was laid in the tomb late on Passover [Thursday afternoon, sometime in the twilight between 3:00 and 4:00 PM, a few hours prior to sunset], no work was allowed for both the special high day [Thursday-sunset-to-Friday-sunset] *and* the regular weekly Sabbath [Friday-sunset-to-Saturday-sunset]. The women could not be able to go to the tomb with additional embalming spices on Thursday evening. They could not go all day Friday during the special "high Sabbath". They could not go Friday evening because the regular weekly Sabbath had begun. They could not go all day Saturday, as they had to "rest according to the commandment" [Luke 22:55-56]. And they did not go after sunset Saturday evening because it was dark. Matthew says the women went to the grave ***"after the Sabbath on the first day of the week, as it began to dawn"*** [28:1]. Mark says the women came ***"very early"*** on the first day of the week [16:2]. Luke's Gospel [24:1] states the

women came to the tomb on the first day of the week ***"at early dawn"***. Luke records [24:22] how Cleopas and the other walking with him explained to Jesus on the road to Emmaus that the women went to the tomb ***"early in the morning"***. John says they ***"came early to the tomb while it was still dark"*** [20:1], referring to the time right before dawn.

Evidence No. 1 is ***"Passover is coming and the Son of Man is to be handed over for crucifixion"***. Evidence No. 2 is: ***"It was BEFORE the Passover"***. Evidence No. 3 is the disciples reasoning that Judas leaves early to ***purchase what is needed for the closing Passover meal*** coming up the following afternoon. Evidence No. 4 is Jesus was crucified at ***"the time of preparation"*** before the close of Passover. Evidence No. 5 is: ***"THAT Sabbath was a high day"*** - the Feast of Unleavened Bread, not the regular weekly Sabbath at sunset Friday. Evidence No. 6 confirms the religious leaders did not enter the Roman Praetorium ***so they would still be able to eat the final Passover meal***. Evidence No. 7 is Peter denies Jesus three times and ***hears the rooster crow at around 6:00 AM, early Thursday morning of Passover***. Evidence No. 8 is the women cannot get to the tomb until Sunday morning at dawn because of the back-to-back Sabbaths when no work could be done.

EVIDENCE No. 9 - THREE DAYS, THREE NIGHTS

The Jewish religious leaders came to Jesus [Matthew 12, Matthew 16, Luke 11] and prodded Him relentlessly with their constant request that He perform some kind of supernatural sign for them in order to clearly demonstrate He was Messiah. Mark records [8:12] Jesus sighed deeply in His spirit and said, "Why does this generation seek for a sign?" The Apostle Paul, also a Pharisee, fully understood the reason they wanted Him to perform a sign. He wrote [1st Corinthians 1:22] "For indeed Jews ask for signs while Greeks search for wisdom". Jesus responded to

them [Matthew 12:39, Mark 16:4] with this very provocative statement, *"An evil and adulterous generation seeks after [craves for] a sign, and yet a sign will not be given except the sign of Jonah the prophet, for as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, **the Son of Man shall be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth**".* Jesus would not stoop to their taunts and perform a sign or miracle [remember this was the exact same interest Herod had when he finally got to see Jesus in person]. Jesus did not have to prove Himself to these skeptics at their bidding. He had done multiple miracles of healing the sick, restoring sight to the blind, making lepers clean, raising from the dead the daughter of Jairus, and calling Lazarus to life from his grave. Jesus understands how the religious leaders think and function, so He tells them the *"sign of Jonah"* is a foreshadow to be fulfilled by the Son of Man. This is an incredibly provocative reply.

Jonah was thrown overboard by the shipmates and drowned in the deep, in the heart of the seas, as the currents engulfed him, and the heavy breakers and wind-blown billows covered him [see Jonah 2:3]. He clarifies [verses 5-6] that the water encompassed him to the point of death as the great deep engulfed him and seaweed wrapped around his head, as he descended down. As he was drowning [verse 7], he remembered the Lord. The preamble in verse 2 is clear that Jonah did in fact experience physical death, and went down to the depth of Sheol [the abode of the dead]. No person descends to Sheol unless they are dead. Job [21:13] notes how godless men spend the days of their lives in prosperity, but then die and go down to Sheol. The Psalmist writes [89:48] *"What man can live and not see death? Is he able to deliver his own soul from Sheol?"* Proverbs 1 notes how man is swallowed up in death and goes down to Sheol. Isaiah prophesied [14:9] that Sheol

from beneath anticipates the arrival of the dead, and arouses the spirits of those already there, many leaders of the earth and kings from their thrones. Ezekiel 31:17-21 records how those who were slain by the sword go down to Sheol and lie still there. Hosea [13:14] prophesies about those who will one day be ransomed [by Messiah] from death, the power of Sheol, asking, "Death where is your thorns? Sheol where is your sting?" in Luke 16, Jesus related the true account of a beggar who died and went down to Sheol and had interaction with a rich man who had also died and gone to the abode of the dead. This was not a parable, for these men were specifically named, as was Abraham.

The sign of Jonah referred to by Jesus is all about one who dies and is brought back to life. God used the great fish to supernaturally grab Jonah's dead body from the sea. After being in the belly for three days and three nights, the Lord brought Jonah back to life. He then prayed to the Lord from inside the great fish [2:1] and the Lord commanded the fish [2:10] to vomit Jonah out onto the dry land of the seashore. With Jonah as His foreshadow of resurrection from the dead, Jesus told the religious leaders [Matthew 12:39, Mark 16:4] the sign you seek for me to do will not be given. You are wicked and adulterous in your motives for such. Only the sign of Jonah will be given to you. As he was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so too ***the Son of Man shall be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth***. It is the direct testimony from Jesus that specifically defines this ninth evidence in support of the Thursday Passover crucifixion. Consider the straightforward way the Passover crucifixion matches the testimony of Jesus. He is sacrificed around 9:00 AM Thursday April 10th, the latter half of the Nisan 14 Passover [started Wednesday-sunset on April 9th].

Jesus is taken down from the cross after 3:00 PM, and His dead body is laid in the tomb provided by Joseph of Arimathea.

- The rest of Thursday up until sunset is **DAY-1**.
- Overnight Thursday to Friday morning is **NIGHT-1**.
- Friday until sunset that begins the weekly Sabbath is **DAY-2**.
- Overnight to Saturday morning is **NIGHT-2**.
- Saturday until the sunset close of the Sabbath is **DAY-3**.
- Overnight Saturday into Sunday morning is **NIGHT-3**.

These are EXACTLY the ***"three days and three nights"*** that Jesus said He would spend in the heart of the earth [Sheol]. His words do not work with Good Friday – where Jesus is in the grave Friday as DAY-1, overnight to Saturday is NIGHT-1, all day Saturday is DAY-2, then overnight to Sunday is NIGHT-2. Two days and two nights contradicts Jesus' own testimony about the sign to be given about his resurrection.

The prophetic statement from Jesus also fits with the wording that He will be raised ***"on the third day"*** [Matthew 16:21, 17:23, 20:19]. In fact, orders were given [Matthew 27:64] for the grave to be secured ***until the third day***, otherwise His disciples may come to steal Him away and say to the people "He has risen from the dead". Luke also records Jesus will be raised ***"on the third day"*** [Luke 9:22, 18:33, 24:7, Acts 10:40]. It is also confirmed by Paul [1st Corinthians 15:4] that Jesus was raised ***"on the third day"***. Jesus crucified on Passover Thursday has Friday as the first day after, Saturday the second day after, and when the women arrive at the tomb He is already raised ***"on the third day"***. This does not work with Good Friday, as Saturday is the first day after Jesus is crucified, and Sunday is then only the second day after – not the third. Take a moment to review the following summary of the nine evidences that together confirm Jesus was crucified on the Thursday-Passover.

EVIDENCE No. 1 ***"Passover is coming, the Son of Man is to be handed over for crucifixion"***. Jesus says He will be crucified on Passover.

EVIDENCE No. 2 is ***"It was BEFORE the Passover"*** [the Last Supper].

EVIDENCE No. 3 The disciples believe Judas is leaving to ***purchase what is needed for the closing Passover meal*** the following afternoon.

EVIDENCE No. 4 Jesus was crucified at ***"the time of preparation"*** before the close of Passover [while the lambs were being killed].

EVIDENCE No. 5 ***"THAT Sabbath was a high day"*** to start the Feast of Unleavened Bread, not the regular weekly Sabbath at sunset Friday.

EVIDENCE No. 6 The religious leaders did not enter the Roman Praetorium ***so they would still be able to eat the final Passover meal***.

EVIDENCE No. 7 Peter denies Jesus three times and ***hears the rooster crow at around 6:00 AM, early Thursday morning, and still Passover***.

EVIDENCE No. 8 ***The women cannot go to the tomb until Sunday morning at dawn because of the back-to-back Sabbaths***.

EVIDENCE No. 9 The direct testimony of Jesus states that just like the sign of Jonah, He will be in the grave ***three days and three nights***.

CHAPTER SUMMARY

The foundational elements are in place. If Jesus was born in September of 2 BC and His second-cousin John the Baptist was born six months prior in April of 2 BC, then they begin their ministries in 29 AD when they each turned 30 years of age. The Baptist is the forerunner of Messiah and offers a water baptism for those repenting of their sin. He is literally the final "Old Testament" prophet, that voice crying in the wilderness, "Prepare the way of the Lord". He tells those who ask that he is not THE prophet [Moses] nor is he Elijah, and He is not Messiah, and clarifies he is not worthy to loosen Messiah's sandals. He explains that he must decrease so that Messiah might increase, and his own

disciples leave him to follow Jesus. And when John sees Jesus at the Jordan, he boldly declares that His second cousin Jeho-shua [His name means "Jehovah is salvation"] is **the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world**. That lamb is the foreshadow of Messiah found in the Passover lambs that are sacrificed for their blood to cover death. Jesus is in Jerusalem for Passover week in 32 AD. He is 31 and-a-half years old at His third Passover [John chapters 2, 6, 11]. He enters Jerusalem on the exact day prophesied by Daniel and confirmed by Sir Robert Anderson, Palm Sunday, April 6, 32 AD – the 10th of Nisan.

And while it was not included as one of the previous nine evidences presented in this chapter, there is also a tenth matter that supports the Thursday crucifixion. In John 12:1 it says, "**Six days before Passover Jesus went to Bethany** where Lazarus was, whom He raised from the dead". This means it was Nisan 8 [six days prior to Nisan 14 Passover]. Bethany is two miles from Jerusalem [John 11:18]. Jesus had been in Jericho [Matthew 20:29 and Luke 19:1] before He went to Bethany. Jericho is 13 miles northeast of Bethany. Chuck Missler notes if Jesus went from Jericho to Bethany six days before Passover, that would be just two days before His triumphal Palm Sunday entry to Jerusalem. The trip from Jericho to Bethany would take more than a Sabbath day's journey for it to occur on the Sabbath, if Passover was on Friday. The math does not work for Jesus to go from Jericho to Bethany [13 miles probably takes two days], then leave Bethany to ride into Jerusalem on Nisan 10. If Nisan 14 was a Friday [start of the Sabbath], it also does not allow for the Feast of First Fruits to be the second of back-to-back Sabbaths with the weekly Friday Sabbath, and have Jesus raised on Sunday [Leviticus 23:15 "the morrow after Sabbath after Passover"].

Considering the entirety of the evidence in this chapter, it all supports Jesus being crucified on the Thursday Passover, nailed to the cross at the third hour [9:00 AM] and He died at the ninth hour [3:00 PM]. It was "twilight" of Passover, when all the lambs across Jerusalem and Judea were killed and eaten as described in Exodus 12. While thousands of Jews remembered how the angel of death would "pass over" those in Egypt who were covered symbolically by the blood of the lambs, on THIS Passover the one true Lamb of God was at that exact same time laying down His own life on Golgotha, literally [not symbolically] as a blood sacrifice for the sins of the world. While people were brushing lamb's blood on their wooden doorposts and lintel, Jesus' blood was being shed on a wooden Roman cross. When they ate their final Passover meal of lamb, Jesus had willingly given up His spirit and died. All the key events of the Last Supper [at the Wednesday start of Passover], the near-midnight arrest of Jesus in the garden of Gethsemane, the sequential overnight illegal trials before Annas, Caiaphas, the Sanhedrin, Pilate, and Herod, the concessions made by Pilate, the flogging of Jesus, the crucifixion - ALL occurred on Passover. This was *BEFORE* all those in Jerusalem would partake of the slain lambs at their closing Passover meal. Everything happened in an exact manner to fulfill the Torah, prophets, and Psalms. The next chapter provides the detailed events of that Passover week.

CHAPTER 6

Passover Week in 32 A.D.

You know that after two days the Passover is coming
and the Son of Man is to be handed over for crucifixion.

Matthew 26:2

This book has introduced the origins of Good Friday and Easter Sunday, along with the progression of various rituals, customs, and beliefs man has introduced and attached to these annual Springtime holidays. We looked at the details of the Biblical Passover and how the blood sacrifice of the lambs in Egypt foreshadows the sacrifice Messiah would make in Him literally being the Lamb of God. Chapter Three examined strong Biblical bases that Jesus of Nazareth is Messiah, who was promised by God all throughout the writings of the Old Testament. Next came the precision of Palm Sunday being the exact date when Messiah would be revealed as written by the prophet Daniel some five centuries before. The previous chapter had the foundational timeline for Jesus being Messiah, with equally foundational Biblical references to Him as the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world. It then showed nine separate and specific evidences that clearly support

the Thursday Passover crucifixion. With these five chapters in place, it is time to develop a comprehensive chronology for all of the events that occurred during the Passover week from April 6th to 13th in 32 AD.

PASSOVER WEEK OUTLINE

These are the key events related to the crucifixion of Jesus on Passover.

- | | |
|------------------------------|--|
| <i>Palm Sunday</i> | Jesus rides into Jerusalem on the exact day prophesied in Daniel 9, Sunday April 6 th . The crowds hail Him as Messiah with Psalm 118 as He rides a donkey's colt [Zechariah 9:9]. |
| <i>Jesus Examined</i> | For four days Jesus teaches in the Temple. [Matthew 21-22, Mark 11-12, Luke 19-21]. |
| <i>Last Supper</i> | Jesus eats opening Passover meal with His disciples – unleavened bread with wine, and institutes: "Do this in remembrance of Me". |
| <i>Washes Feet</i> | Jesus serves His disciples [John 13:5-17]. |
| <i>Jesus Teaches</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - In my Father's house are many mansions. - I go and prepare a place for you. - If you know me, then you know the Father.
 - I will ask the Father to send the Helper. - I am the vine, you are the branches.
 - This is my command, to love one another. - The world will hate you, as it does Me.
 - When my hour comes, you will remember. - When the Spirit of truth comes, He will guide you into all truth.
 - In a little while you will not see me but then you will see Me again. The world will rejoice but you will grieve.
 - I have come from the Father, and will leave the world and return to the Father. |

<i>Jesus Prays</i>	"Father, the hour has come, glorify Your Son I glorified You on earth having accomplished all you gave me to do. I have given them Your Word, and the world has hated them. I ask that they be one, even as You Father are in Me, and I in You, and they be in Us."
<i>Mount of Olives Gethsemane</i>	After the Last Supper Jesus and His disciples cross over the Kidron ravine to the garden.
<i>Jesus Arrested</i>	Judas arrives with Roman cohort, Temple Guards, and Jesus is led away in shackles.
<i>Illegal Trial</i>	Jesus is first before Annas. Then he is taken to Caiaphas. Next He is with the Sanhedrin. Jesus is sent to Pontius Pilate, who sends Him to Herod, and then He is back to Pilate.
<i>He is Smitten</i>	As the Shepherd is taken down, in order to see the sheep scatter [Zechariah 13].
<i>Silver Coins</i>	Judas Iscariot betrays Jesus to the priests for a payment of thirty pieces of silver exactly as described in Zechariah 11:12. The guilt of his action causes him to return this 'blood money' and it is then used to purchase a potter's field [Zechariah 11:13].
<i>Scourged</i>	The flogging Jesus endured with the Roman whip left His back with long deep wounds as described in Isaiah 53:5.
<i>Jesus Mocked</i>	Crown of thorns pressed into His head and a robe draped over His bloody back.
<i>Beard Ripped</i>	Isaiah 50:6 says Messiah will give His face to be smitten such that His beard would be pulled out and He would be spit upon.
<i>Unrecognized</i>	Isaiah 52:14 says Messiah will be so badly marred and beaten as to not be recognized.

<i>To Golgotha</i>	Jesus carries His crossbeam, but falters. The Romans force Simon from Cyrene, the father of Rufus and Alexander, to carry the cross [Matthew 27:32, Mark 15:21, Luke 23:26].
<i>On the Cross</i>	Psalm 22 is a compelling first-person view of crucifixion through the eyes of the one on the cross, beginning with Jesus crying out "Eloi Eloi Lama Sabachthani" [My God, My God, why have you forsaken Me?] drawing attention to all who watched on Golgotha.
<i>With Criminals</i>	Jesus was crucified between two criminals exactly as stated by Isaiah 53: 9 and 12.
<i>Nails</i>	Roman crucifixion with nails through the hands and feet is described in Psalm 22:16.
<i>Casting Lots</i>	The Roman soldiers rolled their dice to see which of them would get Jesus' inner robe and His outer cloak [Psalm 22:18].
<i>Save Yourself</i>	Was the taunt of those [Matthew 27:42] at the cross, as prophesied in Psalm 22:8.
<i>"I Thirst"</i>	And Jesus was given sour wine [like vinegar] mixed with gall to drink, exactly as stated in Psalm 69:21.
<i>Pierced Side</i>	Isaiah 53:5 states clearly that Jesus would be pierced, exactly as the Roman thrust his spear into Jesus's side.
<i>Unbroken Legs</i>	To speed up death, the soldiers were told to break the legs of Jesus and the other two crucified with Him, but when they came to Jesus He had already voluntarily given up His Spirit, so they did not break His legs, just as stated in Psalm 34:20 and to describe the slain lambs in Numbers 9:12, Exodus 12:46.

Messiah Cut Off	As per Daniel 9:26, Jesus was cut off [<i>karath</i>] meaning 'killed', but not for Himself, as He dies for the sins of the world.
The Tomb	Jesus was buried by Joseph of Arimathea, a wealthy Judean, in a brand new tomb he owned exactly as described in Isaiah 53:9.
Raised	Jesus was raised from the dead after three days and three nights, exactly as foretold in the manner of Jonah 1:17, and the typology of Isaac and Abraham described in both Genesis 22:4 and Hebrews 11:19.
Jerusalem	The city will be destroyed AFTER His death, described in Daniel 9, 11, and 12.

PASSOVER WEEK TIMELINE

DAY-1 SUNDAY APRIL 6, NISAN 10

The opening day of Passover week in 32 AD included the Lord riding into the city of Jerusalem on the colt, the foal of a donkey, just as Zechariah 9:9 prophesied some 500 years prior. The weekly Sabbath had ended at sunset the Saturday evening before, so this was the first day of the new week, when everyone in the city would be back to the busy activities associated with the start of celebrations and rituals for the Feast of Passover. Jesus allows Himself to be formally recognized as Messiah. The crowds sing out Psalm 118, "Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord", while they lay down their cloaks along with palm branches when this early 30s prophet-teacher rides into the city in humility, straddling a small donkey. The lambs have now been selected from among the flocks all throughout Jerusalem and across Judea, to be observed for the four days leading up to the beginning of Passover on Wednesday at sunset. The Jewish day of Nisan 10 ends at sunset on

Sunday. The upcoming morning will be Monday, April 7th. There will be continued anticipation about doing all the preparations for this solemn feast to remember how Jehovah God passed over the homes in Egypt covered by the lamb's blood. This entrance into the holy city happened immediately after Jesus had been in Bethany [about 2 miles away] where He had raised Lazarus from the dead. While the miracle of bringing His dear friend back to life after he had been in the grave for four days brought joy to those in the city of Bethany, John 11:47-48 notes that the chief priests and Pharisees convened a special council that declared, *"What shall we do, for this man is performing many miraculous signs? – if we let Him go on like this, all men will believe in Him and the Romans will come and take away both our place and our nation"*. The High Priest at that time was named Caiaphas. He replied with what proved to be a prophetic word [verses 50-52] that **Jesus would die for the nation**, and those scattered abroad, who would be gathered together in one as the children of God.

John 11:53 then draws the proverbial line-in-the-sand, as from this day on *"they planned together to kill Him"*. Jesus retreats to Ephraim with His disciples to avoid walking publicly among those Jews seeking to kill Him. John 11:55-57 clarifies the timing of these events, *"For now the Passover of the Jews was near and many went up to Jerusalem to purify themselves"*. The religious leaders were waiting at the Temple each day seeking Jesus, asking themselves, *"Do you think He will come to the Passover feast? – so the chief priests and Pharisees gave orders that if anyone knew where Jesus was, they would have to report it to them so they could seize Him"*. John 12 continues with the narrative, how it was *"six days until Passover"*, so this covers from the regular weekly Sabbath [Friday sunset April 4th] until Saturday sunset April 5th, then to

Sunday the 6th. Then comes Monday the 7th, Tuesday the 8th, and Wednesday, April 9th – Passover starts at sunset. When verse 12 of John chapter 12 refers to the “next day” it is capturing the wording for Nisan 10 beginning Saturday April 5th at sunset, ***right after the weekly Sabbath ended*** [the next day], and when the first day of the new week began [it will not be Sunday April 6th until after midnight].

Matthew 21:12 records that after Jesus entered Jerusalem, His first action was to go up to His Father’s house – the Temple – and drive out the moneychangers. He also healed many who were ill, and then in verse 15 Matthew notes the chief priests and scribes became indignant because having watched these wonderful things Jesus did for the poor and sick, the children were shouting out about Him, saying, “Hosanna Son of David”. Verses 17-18 explain that Jesus left Jerusalem in the evening and traveled back to Bethany before returning again on Monday, April 7th. While the gospel writers tell of the plans to kill Jesus there is also a plan [John 12:10-11] to kill Lazarus, whom Jesus raised from the dead, *“Because on account of Lazarus coming back to life, many of the Jews were going away from the religious leaders and were instead believing in Jesus”*. As sunset rolls in to close out Nisan 10, the new day will be Nisan 11, and the overnight brings in Monday, April 7th.

DAY-2 MONDAY APRIL 7, NISAN 11

The religious leaders, scribes, Pharisees, Sadducees, priests, and other rabbis [lawyers] who are experts in the Torah will continue to examine Jesus in various dialogues, theological discussions, and confrontations regarding the meaning and applications of the Law of Moses. These passionate, and often heated, conversations will ultimately result in the clear recognition that there is no blemish found in Jesus. Matthew 21, Mark 11, Luke 20, and John 12 all parallel one another in covering the

days leading up to the start of the Passover and the Last Supper. The main focus is on Jesus using parables to convey spiritual topics to the crowds. These were in response to the religious leaders pestering Jesus with the same question, "Tell us by what authority You are doing these things, who gives you such authority?" [refer to Matthew 21:23-27, Mark 11:27-33, and Luke 20:1-2]. Jesus turned the tables on them by asking them a prerequisite question they would have to answer, after which He would answer their pressing Him about what authority He had. Jesus asked them whether John the Baptist's ministry was truly ordained from heaven, or was it simply that of a man doing his own thing. The gospels explain that Jesus understood if they answered "John was from God", He would counter: "Then why did you not believe him?" If they say John was a man without heavenly authority, they feared the people who said John was a true prophet, the voice of one crying in the wilderness, "Prepare the way of the Lord". The Jewish day of Nisan 11 ended at sunset on Monday, as Nisan 12 began. When the city awakes the following morning it will be Tuesday, April 8th.

DAY-3 TUESDAY APRIL 8, NISAN 12

Mark 14:1-2 notes that it was now just ***two days until the Passover*** [see also Matthew 26:1-5, Luke 22, and John 11:45-53], which would be followed by the Feast of Unleavened Bread, and the chief priests and scribes were trying to figure out "how to seize Jesus by stealth and kill Him". It is interesting to read [Mark 14:2] that they tried to rationalize how they did not want to arrest Jesus during the festival or else "the people might riot". After that triumphal entry of Palm Sunday, Jesus is very popular among the crowds of everyday Jews [Luke 21:38 says they ***"got up early in the morning to listen to Jesus in the Temple"***]. There are several more rounds of interaction about the Law between Jesus

and the leaders of the people, as He teaches in various parables to make specific points about the nature of God and His perfect plan for salvation through His Messiah, who will fulfill each part of the original legal covenant that Yahweh made with Moses.

John 12:23 explains that Jesus clearly tells His followers the specific hour is approaching [has come] for the Son of Man to be glorified. He clarifies this [verse 14] by saying that unless a grain falls into the ground and dies it cannot bear fruit. This is a direct reference to how Jesus must also die and be buried before He can bear the incredible fruit of victory over death in His resurrection [on the Feast of First Fruits]. Jesus is fully aware of the painful torture and suffering that will come and that He will be separated from the Father. In John 12:27 He asks if the Father can save Him from this particular hour that is approaching, but willingly submits [verse 28] "Father, glorify Your name", as a voice from heaven confirms, "I have both glorified My Name [in the past] and will glorify it again" [coming at the death and resurrection of the Son]. Jesus confirms this by referring to how He will be "lifted up" so that all men may be drawn to Him for salvation [verse 32]. This directly refers to the prophetic way in which Moses lifted up the bronze serpent in the wilderness, so that all who looked to it were healed of their snake-bites [Numbers 21:8-9]. In the exact same manner, Jesus shows that He fully understood [John 12:33] "the kind of death by which He was to die" – He too would be "lifted up" [on a Roman cross]. The Jewish day Nisan 12 ends at sunset on Tuesday, as Nisan 13 begins. When everyone rises the next morning, it will be Wednesday, April 9th. Later that evening the Passover feast will begin after sunset.

DAY-4 WEDNESDAY APRIL 9, NISAN 13

Sunset on Wednesday, April 9th is the close of Nisan 13. Nisan 14 then starts the Passover feast after sunset. Jesus told His disciples He has been looking forward to eating the opening meal of Passover with them [Luke 22:15]. He understands His death on the next afternoon [late on Nisan 14] will fulfill each facet of the Passover, providing a blood sacrifice that atones for sins. Observing the annual Passover foreshadows Jesus as the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world. The Passover has its very substance in Christ [Colossians 2:17]. Jesus told His disciples the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected, then killed and raised on the third day [Matthew 16:20-21, Mark 8:31, Luke 9:21-22]. He will be with them at the opening meal of Passover, but He will be hanging on a cross in about 15 hours. The chronology of the Last Supper are as follows:

<i>After Sunset 6:00 PM</i>	<i>Jesus shares the opening meal of Passover with His disciples.</i>
<i>During Last Supper</i>	<i>Judas is prepared to betray Jesus.</i>
<i>After Supper</i>	<i>Jesus washes the disciples' feet.</i>
<i>After Foot-Washing</i>	<i>Jesus says "Truly I tell you, one of you will betray Me". Judas leaves the room after Jesus says, "What you do, do quickly".</i>
<i>After Judas Leaves</i>	<i>Jesus explains where He is going they cannot come. Peter claims he will lay down his life for the Lord, but Jesus tells Peter he will deny Him three times before the dawn on the next day.</i>

Mark 14:12-17 and Luke 22:8-13 recount how Jesus sent some disciples to a house to secure a large room for the opening meal of Passover they will share together after sunset, when they partake of unleavened bread with new wine. This starts the 24 hours of Passover.

The overnight into Thursday will be a nonstop movement of Jesus from Annas, to Caiaphas, then the Sanhedrin, then Pilate, Herod, and back to the Roman Prefect Pontius Pilate at the Praetorium. The overnight trial of Jesus was not legal. The Sanhedrin had no power to enact the death penalty for a capital offense [John 18:31]. There was no public open-forum. The rush-to-judgment was predicated on the religious leaders wanting to eat the final Passover meal of lamb later that afternoon at twilight on Passover [John 18:28]. They want Jesus tried and sentenced during the dark overnight hours from Wednesday evening April 9th to Thursday afternoon April 10th. As Passover winds down, the final meal of lamb will be eaten in the twilight, prior to sunset and the start of the Feast of Unleavened Bread on Nisan 15.

Jesus was arrested in the Gethsemane garden by the betrayal of Judas around midnight. It was probably just a few hours after they had finished the Last Supper - the opening meal of their Passover. The Sanhedrin never conducted trials during the dark overnight hours, but rather during the daytime, typically right after the morning offering was made at the Temple. It was only after this religious ritual that the rabbis [lawyers] were ready to begin any formal proceedings brought before them with regard to someone violating the Law of Moses. This was the basis for all their legal statutes and authority, the process of reviewing evidence and witnesses, and then enacting penalties for violations.

The illegal trial follows an awkward and circuitous chain of events that includes six venues at six different stages in this sequence:

- Stage-1** After Jesus was arrested in the garden, He was taken to the court of the High Priest where He is accused in the presence of Annas, the former High Priest [but his time of service had ended]. He was succeeded by his son-in-law Caiaphas who was currently serving as the High Priest [John 18:12-24].
- Stage-2** Jesus was sent over to Caiaphas the current High Priest, a combined session with the Sanhedrin that included scribes and the elders [Matthew 26:57].
- Stage-3** Jesus was sent to the Roman Prefect Pontius Pilate, who examined Jesus inside the Praetorium.
- Stage-4** Pilate says he finds no guilt in Jesus [Luke 23:4]. He learns Jesus is a Galilean and sends Him to Herod.
- Stage-5** Herod was excited to finally see Jesus in person. He had heard a lot about Him and was hoping Jesus would do some signs or miracles. But Jesus does not say a word to Herod
- Stage-6** Herod is frustrated and sends Jesus back to Pilate, who tries to release Jesus due to his annual Passover act of mercy, but the crowds yell, "Crucify Him" so Pilate ceremonially washes his hands of Jesus' fate. He orders Jesus to be flogged and then led up the Hill to Golgotha for crucifixion.

The only recourse left to them was to put Jesus before the Roman procurator Pontius Pilate who had the official power to judge and pass sentence with the death penalty for a capital offense. It is curious that the trial of Jesus does not end with the official Roman Prefect [Pilate] until all of the unofficial *ad-hoc* audiences have been completed. These yielded no basis for a conviction of a capital offense. In John 18:29

Pilate asks, "What accusation do you bring against this man?" The religious leaders explain that if Jesus was not an evildoer they would not have brought Him before the authority of Pilate. In verse 31 Pilate's frustration with them comes through as he says, "Take Him yourselves, judge Him according to your own law". But they reply, "We are not permitted to put anyone to death".

Israel lost its identity as a sovereign nation when in 6 AD Rome replaced Judea's king Herod Archelaus with a Roman military Prefect named Coponius, who ruled the "Syrian Province" [of which Judea was a portion] until 9 AD. He was succeeded by Marcus Ambivulus [ruled from 9-12 AD], then Annius Rufus [12-15], Valerius Gratus [15-26], and then Pontius Pilate [who ruled from 26-36 AD]. Notice how this fits perfectly with Jesus being on trial during the Passover week of 32 AD. This is right in the middle of Pilate's tenure as Prefect. Flavius Josephus noted that Rome's decision in 6 AD to remove the scepter from Judah was viewed by the religious leaders as a contradiction to the prophecy of Genesis 49:10 which said this scepter [national identity] would *not* be removed until Messiah had come. The announcement by Rome in 6 AD that Israel is no longer a nation but merely the area 'Judea' within the larger Syrian Province, resulted in the Jewish religious leaders wailing in the streets of Jerusalem and tearing their robes because they could not imagine how Yahweh could have lied. From their point of view, Messiah had not yet come, but the scepter had indeed been removed. But if Jesus was born in September of 2 BC, then He was at that time seven years old, living in Nazareth with His mother Mary and adopted father Joseph, along with some siblings. Yahweh had not lied, and Messiah had in fact already come before the scepter had departed from Judah. It is very interesting to see that this huge positive response to Jesus riding into Jerusalem and being hailed as Messiah was probably the

main reason the religious leaders wanted to take hold of Him and kill Him in a *non-public manner*. This was to not arouse a revolt among the crowds who would likely defend Jesus. Matthew 26:3-5 states clearly, *"The chief priests and elders of the people were gathered together in the court of the High Priest Caiaphas, and they plotted together to seize Jesus BY STEALTH and kill Him, but they were saying, 'Not during the festival, otherwise a riot might occur among the people'".* This provides the reasoning behind using Judas to betray Jesus. He brought some of the Roman cohort and Temple guards to Gethsemane during the late evening after the opening meal of Passover, where it was dark and no one else was around to see. This is entirely consistent with the *stealth* spoken of in Matthew's gospel account. In John 18:3-8 the soldiers arrive with lanterns, torches, and weapons, as if to arrest a well-armed militant criminal. Jesus simply asks, "Whom do you seek?" They reply "Jesus of Nazareth". He then says, "I AM He" and the guards all fall back to the ground when they hear this.

As the Passover on the 14th of Nisan comes to an end, Jesus will have been crucified at the third hour [9:00 AM], and hung on the cross until He gave up His spirit and died at the ninth hour [3:00 PM]. With the approaching special "high day" coming at sunset Thursday [the start of Nisan 15], the dead body of Jesus would be removed from the cross and placed in a new tomb owned by Joseph from Arimathea, who was granted permission directly from Pilate. He was assisted by Nicodemus [John 19:38-39] who was of the Sanhedrin. This is the first "day" that Jesus was in the tomb. As Nisan 15 begins at sunset with the feast of Unleavened Bread, that overnight into Friday morning will be the first "night" that Jesus is dead and buried in the grave.

DAY-5 THURSDAY APRIL 10, NISAN 14

After the crucifixion of Jesus late on Passover [the tail end of Nisan 14] the sunset coming up on Thursday April 10th is the start of Nisan 15, the Feast of unleavened Bread. Jesus's body has been in the grave during the close of the Passover [prior to sunset]. All throughout Jerusalem and Judea, people have completed the closing Passover meal during the twilight. There can be no leftover lamb as everything must be either eaten or burned with fire. The Jewish day of Nisan 14 ends at sunset Thursday, and this is when the people will once again eat unleavened bread with a strong emphasis on remembering how they quickly fled Egypt, as well as the way that sin puffs up a person's heart with sinful pride, even as leaven infects and puffs up the entire lump of dough.

The crucifixion began at 9:00 AM [Mark 15:25]. Matthew 27:45 recounts how at the sixth hour [Jesus was on the cross for three hours] darkness fell upon the land until the ninth hour [3:00 PM]. The unnatural darkness covered Jerusalem, lasting the final three hours until Jesus died [see also Mark 15:33 and Luke 23:44]. The approaching new day is a high day [a special Sabbath]. The physical body of Jesus is in the tomb with a heavy stone rolled shut across the entrance. Those initial three hours on Thursday prior to sunset [about 3:00 PM to 6:00 PM] is **Day-1** of the "three days and three nights" that Jesus is in the heart of the earth. Overnight Thursday to Friday morning is the **Night-1**.

DAY-6 FRIDAY APRIL 11, NISAN 15

The regular weekly Sabbath begins at sunset on Friday, at the close of the special high day for the Feast of Unleavened Bread. Remember, Passover was followed by Unleavened Bread, which was immediately followed by the weekly Sabbath. No work was allowed to be done on the special high day [Thursday sunset to Friday sunset], and now there

will again be no work done the next 24 hours from Friday sunset until Saturday sunset. The physical dead body of Jesus remains in the sealed tomb. The twelve hours from sunrise to sunset on Friday prior to sunset define **Day-2** while overnight Friday to Saturday morning is **Night-2**.

DAY-7 SATURDAY APRIL 12, NISAN 16

The regular weekly Sabbath continues from Friday sunset into all day Saturday until sunset. The twelve hours from Saturday morning's sunrise to sunset later that day is **Day-3** and overnight Saturday into Sunday morning is then **Night-3**. This is most likely a very anxious day for Jesus' followers for two reasons. First, no one has been able to get to the tomb since the stone was rolled to seal it on Thursday afternoon after Jesus' dead body was interred. The special high day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread was a Sabbath and no work could be done. This carried into Friday's sunset and the regular weekly Sabbath, another 24 hours when no work was allowed. The women want to add embalming spices to the body as it will begin undergoing decay on the fourth day. This was a long wait, lasting approximately 50-to-60 hours, beginning Thursday afternoon when Jesus was taken off the cross prior to the start of the "special high day" Sabbath, then overnight Thursday, plus all day Friday, overnight Friday, all day Saturday, and then the additional overnight from Saturday night to early Sunday morning. The women were not able to go to the tomb when the regular weekly Sabbath ended on Saturday at sunset because it was dark. It would be difficult to travel to the grave site, and hard to see doing their work inside the darkness of the tomb. This is why they went "at first light" [dawn] around 6:00 AM on Sunday morning April 13th, Nisan 17.

The second reason for being anxious is that they knew in the back of their minds, Jesus had told them He would be raised from the dead on

the third day. In Mark 8:31 Jesus is very specific saying, *"The Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again"* [the same is found in Matthew 16:21 and Luke 9:22]. Jesus also told them [Mark 14:21] *"the Son of Man is to go just as it is written of Him"*. If that was going to happen, they could easily count out from the close of Passover to Friday [the 1st day after], Saturday [the 2nd day after], and Sunday [the 3rd day after]. They would reason Jesus would have to rise from the grave sometime Sunday [that "third day after"].

DAY-8 SUNDAY APRIL 13, NISAN 17

The gospels record that the women went to the tomb with those spices on "the first day of the week" [Sunday], at "early dawn" [Luke 24:1]. Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came to the grave "as it began to dawn" on "the first day of the week" [Matthew 28:1]. Now when the Sabbath was over [Mark 16:1-7], Mary the mother of James, Salome, and Mary Magdalene brought spices to anoint Jesus' body, "very early on the first day of the week" they came to the tomb. It was "the first day of the week" as Mary Magdalene came to the tomb, it was still dark and she saw the stone already taken away [John 20:1]. Together these four separate writers agree that the women arrived at the tomb very early on the first day of the week [Sunday] and the stone was rolled back from the entrance to the grave, meaning Jesus was already risen.

Traditionally dawn is considered the "first hour" - what we call 6:00 AM. The "third hour" was 9:00 AM, the "sixth hour" was 12:00 noon, the "ninth hour" was 3:00 PM, and sunset was twelve hours since the first light of that morning. Mark 15:25 says that Jesus was crucified on the third hour, meaning He was nailed to the cross around 9:00 AM on Thursday, April 10th - the latter half of the Passover on Nisan 14. This

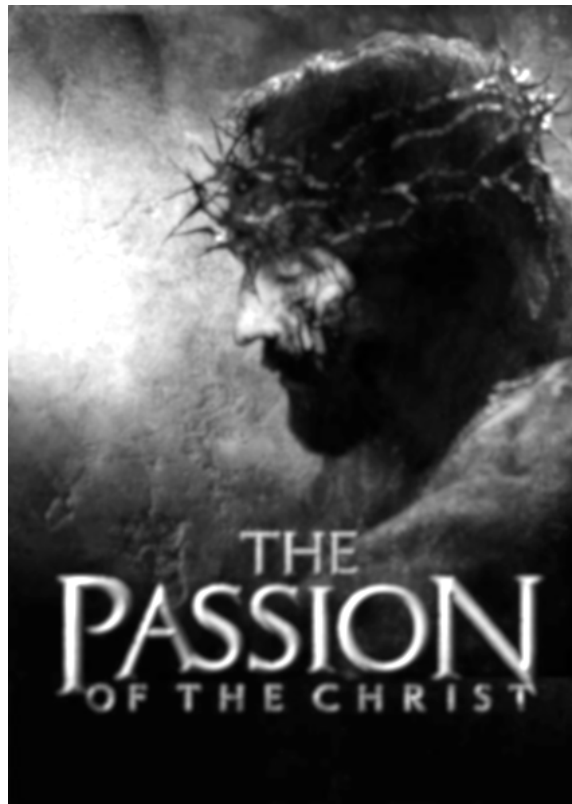
same wording for time is used in other places in the Bible. In Acts 2:15 it explains that men filled with the Holy Spirit were not drunk as some had supposed, for it was only the "third hour" [9:00 in the morning]. It was also the "third hour" in Acts 23:23 as the Roman commander ordered 200 soldiers to get ready to safely transport Paul to Caesarea. Matthew 27:45 recounts how at "the sixth hour" darkness fell upon the land until "the ninth hour". This is not inconsistent with Mark 15:25 that Jesus was crucified at the third hour [9:00 AM], then three hours passed before this unnatural darkness rolled into Jerusalem at the sixth hour [12:00 noon]. This blackened sky lasted until 3:00 PM [the same is found in Mark 15:33 and Luke 23:44].

Considering that Jesus was scourged, had His beard ripped out, had a sharp crown-of-thorns pressed down into His scalp and forehead, and had nails driven into His hands and feet, many inquire whether He still bears those scars in some form within His resurrected body. Perhaps this is what made Him unrecognizable to Mary when she saw Jesus at the garden tomb [John 20:11-18]. This may explain John's commentary [John 21:12] about when they saw Jesus after His resurrection at the shoreline on the Sea of Galilee as, "None of the disciples ventured to question the Lord, 'Who are you?' knowing that it was the Lord", and why they were so fearful as they gazed at Jesus when He appeared to them in the room with the doors shut [John 20:19]. And maybe this helps us understand why the two men who walked with Jesus seven miles from Jerusalem to Emmaus did not recognize Him at first, as their eyes were unable to see it was Jesus [Luke 24:13-16]. This could also be the underlying reasoning why John bar-Zebedee uses the language in Revelation 5:6 to describe the heavenly scene shown Him by Jesus, where he *"Saw between the throne and the elders a Lamb standing, as*

if it had been slain". Does Jesus still have marks in His glorified post-resurrection body that remain from when He was crucified? The offer made by Jesus to Thomas [John 20:27] clearly seems to support this viewpoint, as a direct invitation was made to *"Reach here with your finger and see my hands"* [concerning the holes in Jesus' wrists], and *"Reach here with your hand and put into my side"* [regarding where the Roman spear had been thrust, causing water and blood to flow from the side of Jesus' chest]. Zechariah 12:10 states emphatically when Jesus is ruling in His kingdom at the Second Coming, ***"They will look upon Me whom they have pierced and will mourn and weep bitterly"***, as they remember the crucifixion.

FILM DEPICTION

The 2004 film from Mel Gibson, *The Passion of the Christ*, took great pains to have the dialogue among the actors use the authentic ancient 1st Century Aramaic, as it told the story leading up to the Crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus. While so much of the film was committed to being historically authentic, the overall message seemed to convey that Jesus had been executed as if His true mission on earth was somehow mistakenly cut short before He was able to complete His work. My comments are directed at the scenes in the garden where Jesus prays to the Father whether there is any way this cup can be averted, as He is asking for this allowance. The lack of firmly shoring up Jesus stating very emphatically, *"Not my will, but Your will be done"* appears to be lost on an average movie-goer. The audience is more persuaded about



how disconcerting it is that Jesus has to die, when the true message of His coming was that He willingly sacrificed His own life for the sins of the world. John 10:18 is clear, that no man took away Jesus' life but He laid it down willingly of Himself. This is confirmed in John 3:16, Romans 5:8, and especially in Philippians 2:6-8, that although Jesus existed in the form of God, He did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, *but voluntarily emptied Himself*, taking on the form of a bondservant being made in physical likeness of a man, so *He then humbled Himself by becoming obedient to death*, even the gruesome death on that Roman cross at the place of the skull – Golgotha.

CHAPTER SUMMARY

It is intriguing that AFTER Jesus was resurrected, He came alongside two who were walking the seven miles from Jerusalem to Emmaus [Luke 24:13-29]. One of them was Cleopas. Jesus asked them about the recent events in Jerusalem [concerning His death] and then walked with them while expounding the Old Testament, showing how it was necessary that the Christ had to suffer [verse 27] as He explained these things about Himself. Jesus, no doubt, taught using passages such as Isaiah 53:5 – that Messiah would be wounded for our transgressions, crushed for mankind's iniquities, the chastisement that would bring peace, and by His stripes we are healed. He had also taught on this BEFORE His crucifixion [Matthew 16:21] having just said He was the "Anointed One" [in Hebrew 'Mashiach'], *"From that time on He began to show His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things, be killed, and be raised up on the third day"*.

Jesus made it quite clear to His disciples that He was going to die and go to the Father [John 16:29]. Having plainly told His disciples that He was in fact the Christ in Matthew 8:27-30, Jesus then taught them the Son of Man [He] must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests, and the scribes, to be killed. This is also recorded by Luke [9:22-24] and includes His specific comments about the cross, as the means of His death. That must have been a very awkward moment, to have Jesus say that following Him was similar to taking up one's own cross [the way Romans executed capital punishment]. Mark 14:21-25 also shows Jesus explaining to His disciples that He will be "betrayed" and "His blood will be poured out for many" within a New Covenant. John writes from his first-hand experience [12:23-33] that Jesus said His hour was coming for Him to be glorified, clarifying this within the context of a grain of wheat that must die first before it can bear any

fruit. Jesus then states that He also will be “lifted up” in order to draw all men to Him, and John specifically explains that this was Jesus indicating the type of death He would die.

His death would not be an accident or by some random circumstances. Just as He entered into Jerusalem on the specific day noted by Daniel’s prophecy, so too He would voluntarily lay down His life for the sins of the world in a very specific manner. John explains [10:18] that Jesus said, *“No one takes my life from me, but I lay it down on my own initiative; I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again”*. John states this once again in his first epistle [1st John 3:16], that the only reason we can know love, is that He showed us love by voluntarily laying down His own life for us, even as He told the disciples [John 15:13] there is no greater love than someone laying down His life for His friends. Paul comments on this very action [Philippians 2:7-8], that Jesus was in the appearance of a human [just like you and me] and yet He took on the role of a bondservant and humbled Himself in this likeness of identifying with us, by being obedient, even to His own death on the cross. Paul reminds the young Pastor Timothy in Ephesus [1st Timothy 2:5-6] that there is only one God and one Mediator between God and mankind, and that is the man Jesus, who is the Christ, who gave Himself a ransom for all.

The preponderance of the evidence confirms that Jesus was most likely crucified on the Passover – Thursday April 10th in 32 AD – as He fulfills every aspect of the Lamb of God who was slain for the sins of the world. The next chapter looks closely at what happened when Jesus hung on the cross from 9:00 AM until 3:00 PM at the close of Passover.

CHAPTER 7

What Actually Happened on the Cross

Therefore when Jesus had received the sour wine
He said, "Tetelestai - It is finished". Then He
bowed His head and He gave up His Spirit.
John 19:30

The evidence presented so far may seem somewhat overwhelming as you try to process exactly how everything fits into a fully aligned body of evidence to produce a single well-coordinated narrative that ties it all together. It is interesting to hear the Bible speak about God sending His Son, the promised Messiah, "in the fullness of time". The date when Jesus entered Jerusalem, hailed as Messiah as the crowd shouted out Psalm 118 "Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord", was an EXACT date. Chapter Four of this book introduced the invaluable work of Scotland Yard's Sir Robert Anderson in calculating the precision of that first Palm Sunday being on April 6th in 32 AD. That was Nisan 10 and the start of Passover week. The prior chapter discussed the entire

sequence of events during that Passover week in 32 AD. This chapter focuses in on the specifics of what actually happened as Jesus hung on the cross. Chapter Six overviewed the full week, and now we turn attention to that six-hour window of time in which Jesus was nailed to the cross [around 9:00 AM], experienced intense suffering, and gave up His spirit in a literal, physical death [around 3:00 PM].

NAILED TO THE CROSS

The gospel of John [19:17-18] records, “They took Jesus and He went out bearing His own cross to the Place of the Skull, which is called in Hebrew, Golgotha, there they crucified Him and two other men, one on either side and Jesus in between” [Mark 15:22, Luke 22:33]. Below is a



iron nail found driven through the heel bone from a skeleton on display at Israel’s *National Museum*. Matthew also notes the crucifixion was on Golgotha [27:33] and the two others were convicted of robbery [27:38]. It must have been a murder-robbery, because they were found guilty of a capital crime that was deserving of the death penalty.

OBSERVERS

John was standing nearby watching along with Mary Magdalene, Mary of Clopas, Jesus' mother Mary, and her sister [19:25-27]. Jesus looked down at them and told Mary to now consider John as her son, and for John to think of Mary as his mother. John confirms that from that point in time, he did take Mary into his household to care for her. She had no doubt been a widow for some time, because Mark writes [6:1-4] that when Jesus went back to Nazareth to teach in the synagogue, the local people called Him, "The carpenter, the son of Mary, brother of James, Joses, Judas, Simon, and these His sisters". It is very conspicuous there is no mention of Joseph, as he had probably already died.

THE INSCRIPTION

John includes that an inscription written by Pontius Pilate was affixed to the cross [19:19] "JESUS, THE NAZARENE, KING OF THE JEWS". Matthew clarifies [27:37] it was placed above His head, providing an additional inference the cross probably had an extension of the vertical post that went above the horizontal crossbeam - the most logical place where an inscription would have been placed "above His head". This inscription is shown below, first in Latin:

IESVS NAZARENVS REX IVDÆORVM

Jesus Nazarene King of Jews

That same inscription is shown below written in Greek:

Ἰησοῦς ὁ Ναζωραῖος ὁ βασιλεὺς τῶν Ἰουδαίων

Jesus the Nazarene the King of Jews

Notice on the top of the next page how incredibly provocative it is to view the same inscription written in Hebrew [read from Right-to-Left].

HaYehudim	v Melech	HaNazarei	Yeshua
הַיְהוּדִים	וּמֶלֶךְ	הַנָּצְרִי	יֵשׁוּעַ
ה	ו	ה	י
H	W	H	Y

Yeshua HaNazarei vMelech HaYehudim is an intriguing acrostic that spells **YHWH**. This is how the name of God was written in the Torah, Psalms, and the prophets [without vowels]. It was pronounced either **Yahweh** or **Jehovah**. How amazing that this inscription in Hebrew: Yeshua [God is salvation], HaNazarei [of Nazareth], v Melech [the King], HaYehudim [of Jews] would result in “YHWH” written above Jesus as the Son of God gave Himself a sacrifice for sin at the exact same location [on Mount Moriah] where Abraham prophetically offered up his only son. This is as an exceptional testimony that **Jesus is God**. When the religious leaders saw what Pilate wrote in Latin, Greek, and Hebrew they said, “Do not write ‘King of the Jews’ – but rather ‘He said He was King of the Jews’ [John 19:20-22]. Pilate replied, “What I have written, I have written”, meaning Pilate decided it would stay as it was.

CASTING LOTS

The account of Matthew notes Roman soldiers cast lots to divide Jesus’ clothing [27:35]. This infers that He and the other two men were naked hanging on the cross. This was further humiliation to bear being entirely exposed like that, even as the victim was bleeding and had great difficulty breathing. John adds some details to this [19:23-24] noting that they tore Jesus’ larger outer cloak into four pieces [one for each soldier], but the tunic He wore underneath was of higher quality fabric woven in one piece, so that is the clothing for which they cast lots.

MOCKING

As Jesus hung on the cross, people passing by yelled abuses at Him, shaking their heads in disgust [Matthew 27:39-44] saying, "You were going to destroy the Temple and rebuild it in three days, why don't you save yourself, come down from the cross if you are the Son of God?" The chief priests, elders, and scribes mocked, "He saved others, but cannot save Himself, if He is King of Israel let Him come down from the cross and we will believe; He trusts in God, let God rescue Him, if God delights in Him, He said He was the Son of God". The two robbers also mocked. Luke 22:35-39 and Mark 15:29-32 note intense mocking, while Luke 23:41-43 says one of the criminals stated later on that they did deserve to be executed, but Jesus had done nothing wrong. He asked Jesus to remember him in His kingdom. Jesus replied he would be with Jesus in Sheol that very day. These fulfill Psalm 69:20 about Messiah's suffering, "Reproach has broken my heart and I am so sick, I looked for sympathy but there was none, and for comforters, but I found none".

TIMING

Mark says [15:25] Jesus was crucified at the third hour [9:00 AM]. Matthew 27:45, Luke 23:44, and John 19:14-15 appear to state Jesus was crucified at the sixth hour. This seems to be a contradiction among the four gospel writers. One very plausible explanation is that Matthew, Luke, and John are using the Roman timing system [midnight to midnight], while Mark is using Jewish timing [sunset to sunset]. For the Romans, the third hour is 3:00 AM, the sixth hour is 6:00 AM, and so forth through evening until the day ends at midnight. For the Jews, the third hour is 9:00 AM, after the new day begins at dawn, 6:00 AM. Mark says Jesus was crucified at the third hour, 9:00 AM. John 19:14 says Jesus was still on trial at the sixth hour [6:00 AM Roman time] when Pilate said to the Jews, "Behold your King". This is very plausible

because Mark 15:33 says that ***“when the sixth hour had come along”*** darkness fell over the whole land until the ninth hour. He refers to that sixth hour [9:00 AM] in the context of the crucifixion being already in progress, namely, it *started* at the third hour [9:00 AM] and by the time ***the sixth hour had come along*** [12:00 noon], it was THEN that the darkness came until the ninth hour. The wording is consistent with the *start of the action* preceding the *subsequent action* when the sixth hour had come along. Luke’s wording is similar [23:44] that ***about the sixth hour*** in this process is when the darkness came. This language also infers the crucifixion was already in progress, when at a later time during that progression on the cross, the darkness fell on Jerusalem. The first three hours Jesus was on the cross were ***before the sun was obscured*** [Luke 23:45] at midday. That then lasted for three hours until Jesus willingly gave up His spirit and died at 3:00 PM. Jesus was nailed to the cross at 9:00 AM and subsequently, three hours into His suffering came the unique sign of darkness at midday. His 3:00 PM death is the ninth hour [Luke 23:44 and Matthew 27:46]. Timing in the 1st Century AD was nothing like the accuracy of time we take for granted now in the 21st Century, where smartphones and smartwatches are tuned to a global array of satellites across standardized time zones. In ancient days, sundials were the method of timekeeping, with an “hour” being the smallest unit of time to capture the sun’s positions across the sky [no minutes or seconds]. In Mark 13:35 Jesus tells His disciples they will not know the time of His return, it could be evening, midnight, when the rooster crows, or morning. These four “times” cover after sunset [people are awake, having dinner, relaxing before bed], the middle of the night [most everyone is sleeping at 12:00 AM], then the dawn of the new day [around 6:00 AM], followed by the busy six hours of morning between dawn and midday. In Matthew 20:1-9 Jesus tells

the parable of the vineyard and defines time as the: 1] third hour after dawn [9:00 AM], 2] sixth hour [noon], and 3] the ninth hour [3:00 PM].

WINE AND GALL

Matthew writes [27:34] they offered Jesus sour wine mixed with gall, but after tasting it He did not drink more. The gospel of John records [19:28-29] this was to fulfill Scripture when Jesus said, "I am thirsty". Mark [15:23] describes it as a mixture of wine with myrrh. Psalm 69:21 says prophetically of Messiah, "They also gave me gall and for my thirst gave me vinegar to drink". This sour wine was soaked into a sponge that was affixed to a branch of a hyssop tree so it could be raised up high enough to get to His mouth [John 19:29]. This provides some insight into the height at which Jesus was "raised up" – being higher than those who stood and watched [He was above their eye-level]. This cheap wine in a jar on Golgotha probably was a regular offer to those being crucified, as alcohol and myrrh could help dull the intense pain.

FINAL WORDS

Jesus cried out from Psalm 22, "Eloi, Eloi, Lama Sabachthani", meaning "My God My God why have you forsaken me?" This happened at that ninth hour [3:00 PM] according to Matthew 27:46-50, as some thought He called out for Elijah. They again offered Jesus sour wine soaked in a sponge stuck to a reed to move it up to His lips, as they mocked Him, "Let us see whether Elijah will come to save Him". Luke records that He cried out with a loud voice, "Father into your hand I commit my spirit" [23:46]. It was after these final words that Jesus was physically dead. The crowds beat their chests [Luke 23:47-48] in anguish, while the Roman centurion, after seeing this and hearing Jesus' final words, began to praise God and said, "Certainly this man was innocent".

PSALM 22 FULFILLED

These previous descriptions of Jesus suffering on the cross for six hours [from 9:00 AM until He gave up His spirit at 3:00 PM] align with the first-person singular description of crucifixion from Psalm 22. The first verse is exactly what Jesus cried out from the cross, "Eloi, Eloi, Lama Sabachthani". Take a moment and refer back to Chapter Three and the subsection titled *The Witness of the Psalms* which covers this in great detail. Also, read the entire Psalm carefully, as it is an incredible witness and insight to 1st Century crucifixion, 750 years before the Romans began using it for capital punishment. Remember these words:

"Be not far from me God, trouble is near, none can help".

"Many strong bulls surround me and open wide their mouths like a ravening and roaring lion ready to attack".

"I am poured out like water."

"All of my bones are out of joint."

"My heart is like wax and melting inside me."

"My strength is dried up like a potsherd and my tongue cleaves to my jaws".

"I can count my protruding bones under my stretched skin."

"They pierced my hands and feet".

"They divide up His garments and casting lots."

"Asah" [in Hebrew] "It is done" [in Greek, Tetelestai].

THE TEMPLE VEIL

When Jesus gave up His spirit, Matthew 27:51, Mark 15:38, and Luke 23:45 write that the massive and heavy veil at the front of the Holy of Holies in the Jerusalem Temple "was torn in two from top to bottom". It is described in 2nd Chronicles 3:14 as being made of violet, crimson, and fine linen with cherubim woven in. Josephus [*Wars of the Jews* - V]

writes the veil was the same height as the doors, “embroidered, truly wonderful, a kind of image of the universe, and signs mystical in the heavens representing living creatures”. The message was clear. By the sacrifice of Jesus for the sins of the world, we now have direct access to God without a barrier to keep us out, or need of a priest on our behalf.

CHAPTER SUMMARY

The crucifixion lasted six hours, from 9:00 AM until 3:00 PM. Halfway through this painful ordeal, 12:00 noon – the sixth hour, a supernatural darkness covered the land for the remaining three hours Jesus hung on the cross. The suffering and death of Jesus were literal and physical. He completed His work ON THE CROSS. His declaration of “Tetelestai” is clear – His work was finished before He gave up His spirit. When He died, His blood paid in full the wages of sin [Romans 6:23] for all who accept the free gift. His sacrifice was once-for-all [Romans 6:10, Hebrews 7:27, 9:12, 10:10, and 1st Peter 3:18]. There is no longer any need to make regular, on-going sacrifices for sin. Such traditions and actions of man were rendered obsolete, and are no longer needed.

Jesus fulfilled everything prophesied of Messiah in the Old Testament foreshadow, and covering of blood from the spotless Passover lamb [Revelation 5:5-6]. He literally “became sin for us” [2nd Corinthians 5:21] and was “lifted up” [John 3:14] so “all who look to Him will be saved”. Paul summarizes this finished work on the cross [1st Corinthians 1:18] - *“The Word [Logos] of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to those who are being saved it is the power of God”*. Jesus, the Logos, did His work on the cross – the best and most tangible example of the power of God. The next chapter examines what took place during those **three days and three nights** before Jesus was physically raised in His new body on the Feast of First Fruits.

CHAPTER 8

Three Days Three Nights

For as Jonah was three days and three nights
in the belly of the great fish, so also the
Son of Man shall be three days and three nights
in the heart of the earth.

Matthew 12:40

Jesus clearly stated He would be **three days and three nights** in the heart of the earth. This first means that the physical flesh and bones of His earthly body laid still in Joseph of Arimathea's tomb. But what of His spirit? Where was Jesus during that time and what was He doing before His body was resurrected and He exited the grave? Remember, Psalm 16:10 very clearly says of Messiah, that His soul will *not* be left in Sheol, and God will *not* allow His Holy One to see corruption. Peter quoted this in his sermon from Acts 2:27. The most important point is that Jesus did NOT go to hell [*Hades*, in the Greek] bearing the sins of the world. Peter clarifies [1st Peter 2:24] Jesus **bore our sins on the cross** [not in Sheol]. It was on the cross where He paid in full for the sins of the world He took upon Himself. Our debt was paid on the cross by Him. Nothing else had to be done after He said "Tetelestai" - for it was at that moment His work was entirely finished.

It is worth examining what the Bible says about where Jesus was and what He did during those **three days and three nights**. There are three main positions to review. It is most important to not speculate or introduce man's thoughts and ideas about where Jesus was and what He did in that time period of which He testified. As always, the focus of this book is to examine what God's Word says about this time.

The first position says Jesus preached the gospel message of salvation to those in Sheol who had already died in faith of the hope promised to Abraham. This is based on 1st Peter 3:19 as Jesus was *"Made alive in the Spirit, in which He went and made proclamation to the spirits now in prison, who once were disobedient, when the patience of God kept waiting in the days of Noah"*. That is a complex passage to understand. Some believe He preached His finished work on the cross to those in Sheol who had previously died *without faith* in the promise made to Abraham. When they heard Him they believed and were "saved" as Jesus shared the gospel with them, so He emptied out Sheol when He "led captivity captive" [Ephesians 4:8]. However, there is nothing in the Bible that speaks about a second chance to believe *after* a person dies, *"for it is appointed for men to die once and after this comes judgment"* [Hebrews 9:27]. A few exceptions are those *miraculously* raised from the dead, such as: the widow of Zarephath's son [1st Kings 17], an Israelite man [2nd King's 13], Eutychus [Acts 20], the daughter of Jairus [Luke 8], Jesus' friend Lazarus [John 11], or Tabitha [Acts 9]. It is a more consistent interpretation that Jesus [preaching in the Spirit] went into Sheol and announced He was the One who fulfilled the long-awaited promise made to Abraham, that God would provide Himself the sacrifice [Genesis 22:8]. Then, in the same way that believers in Christ who died after the cross of Calvary are "absent from the body and then

present with the Lord" [2nd Corinthians 5:6-8], their belief in God's promise of Messiah was like Abraham and was "rendered unto them as righteousness" [Genesis 15:6], so those are the ones Jesus led out of Sheol. This fits the earlier context where Peter says [1st Peter 1:10-11] about salvation, "*the Spirit of Christ within the prophets was He who predicted the sufferings of Christ and the glories to follow*". Jesus was the One who proclaimed beforehand all about His sufferings, and He completed His witness after the work was finished on the cross.

A second view says Jesus suffered torment for **three days and three nights** in Sheol, similar to the man described in Luke 16. This is based on Acts 2:24, that "*God raised Jesus up again, putting an end to the agony of death, since it was impossible for Him to be held in its power*". But that is not speaking of Jesus' agony of death. A more consistent interpretation is that His resurrection put an end to the agony of death that burdened mankind. Biblical context teaches death could not hold Jesus in its power [Acts 2:24]. It then logically follows, there is no way suffering in Sheol could have any power over Jesus. When He died that physical death, His earthly body did die, but the moment His spirit departed the flesh and bones, it was impossible for death to control Him. Jesus *never* experienced pain or torment after death, as death and the grave were both defeated on the cross, confirming Paul's word [1st Corinthians 15:55] about Hosea 13:14, "Death, where is your victory? Death, where is your sting?"

The third view is Jesus was boasting-proclaiming His great victory over Satan, death, and the grave. But there is no Biblical basis that Sheol is where Satan resides, so that does not make sense. We do know that Jesus was clearly fulfilling His own prophetic word about His death and resurrection, recorded first in Matthew 12:38-40. He was engaged in

tense dialogue with Pharisees and legal scribes who asked Him directly, "We want to see a sign from you". The account in Matthew 16:1-4 has both Pharisees and Sadducees scrutinizing [testing] Jesus with many questions that culminate with them asking for Him to "show a sign from heaven". The initial reply from Jesus is similar to the famous poem of English seafarers: *"Red sky at night, sailors' delight, Red sky in the morning, sailors take warning"*. He rebuked them, that while they knew how to discern signs about the weather, they were completely unable to discern "the signs of the times". In each of these accounts Jesus provides His critical reply, that they are a wicked and adulterous generation, and the only sign they will get [His resurrection]. Before we further examine **three days and three nights**, Paul provides background regarding this matter of their interest in signs, wonders, and miracles.

JEWS WANT SIGNS

The Apostle Paul, a self-titled "Pharisee among Pharisees" because of his high-level education and intense zeal for all things pertaining to the Law and Judaism, made this observation [1st Corinthians 1:22] about the difference between the 1st Century Jews and the Greek-Hellenists: *"For indeed Jews ask for signs, and Greeks search for wisdom"*. The full counsel of the Torah shows clear evidence that Israel had become used to Yahweh doing supernatural signs and wonders to confirm His presence to the nation. Think back on the incredible signs and supernatural wonders worked through Moses and Aaron in petitioning Pharaoh to release the people from Egyptian slavery. The sign of Lot's wife and the utter destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. The burning bush. A pillar of fire by night and cloud by day to lead the people. Parting the Red Sea. Manna from heaven. Gideon's fleece. Ravens feeding Elijah. The walls of Jericho. Aaron's rod budding blooms.

Healing with the bronze serpent. Jeroboam's withered hand. Elijah holding back the rains, and bringing them again. Parting the Jordan River. This list goes on and on. And yet John 11:47 and 12:37 say the chief priests and Pharisees said of Jesus, "This man is performing many signs" and "He performed many signs before them, *but they did not believe in Him*". Jesus said of the Jews [John 4:48], "Unless you see signs and wonders you will not believe". John comments [20:30-31] there were many other signs Jesus performed NOT written in his Gospel, but THESE are written so you may believe Jesus is the Christ. And John closes out his gospel [21:15] with "There are **many other things Jesus did**, if they were written in detail I suppose the world itself could not contain the books that would be written". It is clear Jesus did MANY signs to demonstrate and affirm His divine nature and power.

GREEKS WANT WISDOM

In contrast to Israel asking for signs and miracles, the Greek-Hellenists of the 1st Century sought after knowledge and wisdom about the world. The virtuous life was about learning new things - different perspectives on the meaning of human existence. Consider the Greeks of Athens, and any visitors to their city, who regularly assembled at the Areopagus [Acts 17:18-21] "to spend their time in nothing other than telling of, or hearing about, something new". Ares was their God of war [Romans called him Mars], and Pagus [means rocky hilltop] was "Mars Hill". It is a large rock outcropping a few hundred yards from the Acropolis in downtown Athens. I have hiked up the rocked-hewn stairs and sat like they did 2,000 years ago, imagining it is the late 50s of the 1st Century. Looking across at the iconic columns of the Parthenon, I have read aloud Paul's discourse from Acts 17:22-34, as he highlights the Greeks' statues all throughout the city, most notably the one erected to "The Unknown God". It is exhilarating to picture Paul with the Stoics and

Epicureans, engaged in their weekly *"telling and hearing something new"*. This is a different context from Paul's engaging the Pharisees, Sadducees, and others from Israel's religious elite.

Having made the distinction between asking for signs and seeking after wisdom, Paul notes how each type of person responds to the Gospel. In verse 23 of 1st Corinthians 1 he explains, *"Preaching Christ crucified is to the Jews **a stumbling block**, and to the Gentiles **utter foolishness**"*. Such a Gospel message makes no sense to either group. The Jews looked for truly spectacular displays of Messiah's power, not a meek and lowly *Suffering-Servant* sacrificing His life on a Roman cross. The Gentiles were looking for incredible depths of philosophical wisdom and knowledge. It was absurd to the Jews that Messiah dies, rather than overthrows the Romans to rule on David's throne. It was laughable to the Greeks that a man from Israel died on a cross to cover their sins.

ONLY ONE SIGN

It is in this contextual setting that Jesus speaks very plainly and quite specifically [Matthew 12:39-41 and 16:4] *"A wicked and adulterous generation craves for a sign, and yet no sign will be given but the sign of Jonah the prophet, for just as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so too will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth"*. Consider this additional emphasis on the matter. Jesus said when the time of judgment comes, the men of the Assyrian city of Nineveh [to whom Jonah was sent in the early-to-mid 8th Century BC] will stand up alongside this 1st Century AD generation to personally condemn these Pharisees and Sadducees and scribes of the Law - because those from Nineveh DID *listen* after the sign of Jonah *and they repented* of their sin. Jesus continued, *"And yet, something far greater than Jonah is right here now in front of you"*.

Three Days Three Nights

Jesus, in His own personal testimony, states that this single sign will be His death and resurrection. This is the same way Jonah foreshadows as a parallel message of the Gospel [1st Corinthians 15:3-4], that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and was buried and raised on the third day according to the Scriptures”.

It is so important to understand how Jonah is a specific Old Testament “type” of Jesus. Typical Bible storybooks for kids and illustrations presented to adults always miss a key facet of what really happened to Jonah. The generally accepted version is that after going overboard into the Mediterranean Sea when they left Joppa, he was alive when a whale came and scooped him from the waves, and he lived inside the sea mammal for three days and three nights. Those images are often something like Jiminy Cricket and Pinocchio sitting on their raft inside the great whale Monstro. But the full Biblical account in Jonah chapters 1 and 2 shows that Jonah *died before he was in the great fish*. He looks back [past tense] on his ordeal and states clearly [Jonah 2:3-7] that seawater encompassed [overcame] him to the point of death [he drowned] as the great deep engulfed him, as seaweed entangled and wrapped around him like bars forever as he descended into the pit [Sheol]. His ***three days and three nights*** in the fish were as a dead man. It was from a physical drowning-death that God raised him back to life. It must have been a thoroughly shocking experience for Jonah to find himself alive again in this massive fish, having come back from being dead for three days and three nights. He then prayed to the Lord for help, *having come up from Sheol* [he was resurrected], and [verse 10] the fish then vomited him onto dry land. Jonah was probably only alive in the great sea creature a few minutes before he was ejected out to the beach. This is an amazing foreshadowing, the ONE sign from Jesus.

WHERE WAS JESUS?

In the same way Jonah died and went down to Sheol, so too Jesus died and went down to Sheol “the abode of the dead” [also called the abyss]. Prior to Jesus’ finished work on the cross, Sheol is where all who died went [Luke 16:20-31]. We previously examined three main views of what took place during the time between Jesus breathing His last breath in this physical world on Thursday afternoon, April 10th – near the close of Passover – and when He rose and exited the tomb before the women arrived early Sunday morning. The saving work of Jesus was entirely finished when He willingly gave up His spirit and physically died on the cross. There was no additional work to do for the salvation of mankind. Many false teachers in contemporary churches support unbiblical doctrines that claim Jesus did not fully complete the work of redemption on the cross, but that during those three days and three nights His body was in the grave, He was doing all kinds of things in Sheol – fighting demons or battling Satan in order to secure salvation for mankind. These have absolutely no support in the Scriptures [most notably, Satan and demons do not reside in Sheol]. On the cross He was very specific and clear, “Tetelestai - It is finished”. The Greek ΤΕΤΕΛΕΣΤΑΙ means *executed, fulfilled, performed, accomplished, paid*. It is in the *perfect tense* so it means it already happened and has results that continue into the future. This is unique from the *past tense* which simply means it happened and there is no on-going action.

Immediately after Jesus died, He descended into Sheol. Growing up in a Presbyterian church, I memorized the Apostles Creed, that Jesus was “crucified dead and buried, He descended into hell, the third day He rose again from the dead.” But Jesus did not go down to hell [a place of torment]. He went to Sheol, which includes both hell on one side of

the abyss, and a place of rest in Abraham's promise on the other. Paul asks [Romans 10:7], *"Who will descend into the abyss?"* - which means *"to bring Christ up from the dead"*. Paul says [Ephesians 4:8] that when Jesus ascended on high He led captive a host of captives and He gave gifts to men. Verses 9 and 10 explain, *"This expression 'Jesus ascended' means He had to descend into the lower parts of the earth, and He who descended is Himself also He who ascended far above the heavens"*. Quite a lot to understand here. These are typically interpreted relative to Luke 16:19-31, where Jesus explains the literal interaction of two men who died [prior to Calvary] and went down to Sheol. One was at rest in his faith of the promise to Abraham, *"God will provide Himself the sacrifice"* [Genesis 22:8]. It is interesting that Abraham was also in Sheol at rest in that same promise, waiting for the perfect sacrifice when Messiah would come. The other man was in a place of conscious torment and requested someone rise from Sheol to warn his five brothers of what happens after death. Abraham replies to him that these family members have Moses and the prophets [the Torah and prophetic writings of Daniel, Jeremiah, Isaiah, Zechariah, Amos, Malachi] so ***let them hear that testimony of Messiah***. The man asks for a miracle, like ***someone rising from the dead***, so his brothers would repent. But Abraham prophesies of the miracle of the Christ who was still to come, *"If they do not listen to Moses and the prophets they will not be persuaded even if someone rises from the dead"*.

The Biblical narratives all point to Jesus, in the Spirit, descending into Sheol to preach [announce] He is the long-awaited Messiah who has just fulfilled the promise God made to Abraham, to provide Himself the sacrifice to atone for sin [Genesis 22:8]. This is what those in Sheol had waited for. With Jesus soon to be resurrected in a new glorified body as the *First Fruits* [model] of believers who will also receive a new body,

the believers who died *before* the cross of Calvary could now make that transition. They would no longer be absent from the body and in Sheol, but now they would be absent their dead, earthly bodies and present with the Lord in their new resurrection bodies. Their belief and faith in God's promise to Abraham had been "*rendered unto them as righteousness*". These are the captives Jesus led out of Sheol.

SPIRITUAL TRANSACTION

A spiritual-contractual transaction took place while Jesus was bleeding and dying on the cross on Passover in Jerusalem, Nisan 14, April 10th in 32 AD. Jesus, the great High Priest [Hebrews 4:14] had become the literal sacrificial Passover Lamb that was slain. He who knew no sin, was made sin on our behalf so we could become the righteousness of God [2nd Corinthians 5:21]. This was the fulfillment of the New Covenant Jesus had just spoken about with His disciples [Luke 22:20]. Jesus is Messiah, and it was the Father's good pleasure for the fullness of God to dwell in Him and through Him, to reconcile all things to Himself, having *made peace through the blood of the cross*, He has now reconciled all who were formerly alienated and hostile and engaged in evil deeds, *in His fleshly body through death*, in order to present you before Him holy and blameless, beyond reproach [Colossians 1:19-22]. That is what transpired on the cross. The wages of sin are death. That wage was paid-in-full with the death of Jesus Christ on our behalf.

The transaction was both physical in this temporal, earthly realm, as He literally died on a wooden Roman cross on the Golgotha hill, on Passover in 32 AD, AND it was spiritual, "*canceling the certificate of death consisting of decrees against us that were hostile to us, and He took it out of the way having nailed it to the cross*" [Colossians 2:14]. That death penalty was justly paid for – the wages for our sin. It took

place during the April 32 AD Passover to fulfill the original pass-over in Egypt that introduced the blood of a spotless lamb as the foreshadow for how a substitute can be justifiably made, saving others from death. But wait, there is so much more in the spiritual component of the death that occurred on Golgotha. When Jesus died on the cross, ***“He disarmed rulers and authorities, and made a public display of them, having triumphed over them, through Himself”*** [Colossians 2:15]. His physical death on the cross took care of the legal requirement for our debt – restoring us to our right [original] relationship with God.

CHAPTER SUMMARY

Jesus died a literal, physical death on our behalf. He stated clearly that the sign of Jonah would be the ONLY sign necessary to substantiate He was the Christ. After He died on the cross, Jesus descended into Sheol to announce the fulfillment of God’s promise to Abraham. All who had faith and fully believed during their earthly lifetimes [prior to Jesus’ death] had that faith and belief count as righteousness, the same as Abraham. The witness and testimony of Jesus was wonderful news that set them free from the abode of the dead, as Jesus ascended leading captivity captive. He had finished His work of atonement on the cross. The Scriptures are clear that Jesus then personally proclaimed this “Good News” to those who had previously died without having yet seen God’s promise of Messiah fulfilled. It was no doubt a joyous message to receive from the Lord – alluding to Psalm 40, *“I waited patiently for the Lord – He lifted me up out of the abyss”*, and confirming [Psalm 139:7-8] *“In the depths of the abode of the dead, behold You are there”*. What a thrill specifically for Abraham, who was also in Sheol, to finally lift up his eyes once again and see firsthand ‘Jehovah-Jireh’ fulfilling the original promise of Genesis 22:13-15. The next chapter looks at the Easter Sunday resurrection on First Fruits.

CHAPTER 9

Easter Sunday

The Feast of First Fruits

On the first day of the week at dawn, they came to the tomb and found the stone rolled away, and when they entered they did not find the body of Jesus.

Luke 24:1-3

The previous chapter examined what happened in the **three days and three nights** after Jesus died. This chapter focuses on the resurrection of Easter Sunday, April 13th in 32 AD – Nisan 17. The Feast of First Fruits began after the Sabbath at sunset on Saturday and went until sunset on Sunday [see Leviticus 23]. It also started the countdown of the 50 days [seven 7-day weeks plus the next day] until Pentecost, the Feast of Weeks. Moses recorded in Genesis 8:4 that the flood of Noah ended on the 17th day of the seventh month as the ark rested on the mountains of Ararat. This means Jesus was resurrected from the dead on the anniversary of the end of God's judgment of sin in the world with the flood. At the time of Noah, Nisan was the seventh month. Nisan was originally the seventh month on the civil calendar of God's people, but in Exodus 12:2 God told Moses, as they prepared to leave

Egypt, the seventh month will now be the *first month* in the new religious year, and Tishri [the first month of the civil year] would now be the seventh month for God's covenant and the annual feasts. Peter wrote [1st Peter 3:20-21] God waited patiently in the days of Noah, one hundred years as the ark was constructed. Only eight people were saved, having gone through the water, a symbol of baptism, like those saved by the resurrection of Jesus. Some scholars believe Israel walked through the Red Sea on Nisan 17 [Exodus 3:18 says they were a 3-day journey out of Egypt, which is the 17th after Passover on the 14th].

THE EMPTY TOMB

There must have been many anxious moments among the followers of Jesus after He was taken down from the cross and laid in the tomb near the end of Passover. When sunset arrived, the special high day for the Feast of Unleavened Bread began. No work was to be done on this special High Sabbath from Thursday-sunset to Friday-sunset. When it concluded, the regular weekly Sabbath started at Friday-sunset and went to Saturday-sunset. As it got dark on Saturday April 12th, the Feast of First Fruits began the 17th day of Nisan, three days after Passover. The women waited until first light [dawn] on Sunday to go to the tomb. It was still the first day of the new week, the second half of First Fruits. The Gospels say that the stone was already rolled away [Matthew 28:2, John 20:1, and Luke 24:2] when they arrived at the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea. Matthew records [28:1-4] a severe pre-dawn earthquake occurred and an angel from the Lord came down from heaven and rolled away the heavy stone and sat upon it. He adds that the Roman soldiers guarding the tomb fell back as if they were dead. The account in Luke 24:1-5 says two men [angels] in dazzling bright clothing stood nearby. Mark 16:1 identifies the three women who accompanied Jesus'

mother Mary to the tomb: Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, Mary's sister Salome [in Matthew 28:1 "the other Mary"]. John 19:25 mentions these women at the crucifixion: Jesus' mother Mary, Mary Magdalene, Mary mother of James, Mary of Clopas [also Mark 15:40]. Matthew 27:56 identifies Mary the mother of James and Joseph. Her husband was Alphaeus and her son "James the son of Alphaeus" was one of Jesus' twelve disciples. He was later referred to as "James the less" to not be confused with James the brother of Jesus, who became one of the lead elders in the Jerusalem church after the resurrection. They were concerned how they would roll aside the heavy stone. When they got to the tomb, it was already rolled away and a man [angel] in a white robe was seated inside. The four Gospel writers convey the same core truth of that first Easter Sunday – Jesus was not in the tomb, He was risen, He was risen indeed. He had in fact shown that "only ONE sign shall be given you", just as He prophesied, that the Son of Man had been *three days and three nights in the heart of the earth*, and He was risen from the dead *on the third day*.

JESUS IS OUR FIRST FRUITS

In the same manner that the Passover of Exodus was a foreshadow of God's plan of blood-redemption to be fulfilled in Messiah, so too the Feast of First Fruits of Leviticus 23 is a spiritual foreshadow pointing to the resurrection of Jesus from the dead. Jesus' brother James also writes [1:17-18] that *"every good thing and every perfect gift is from above and comes down to us from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variance or shifting shadow, and Jesus Christ exercised His own will and brought us forth by the Word of Truth so that **we would be a kind of first fruits among His creation**".* In Romans 8:23 Paul says that believers have *the first fruits of the Holy Spirit*, even as we groan

deeply within ourselves, waiting eagerly for our adoption as sons, **the redemption of our physical bodies**. The earthly body of Jesus was just like our own mortal flesh. He was flesh and blood, bones and muscles. After He was resurrected, Jesus' body had upgraded capabilities. Paul clarifies [1st Corinthians 15:20] that now Christ has been raised from the dead and **He is the first fruits of all those who died previously**. He explains in verse 23 that there is an order [sequence] for those who are resurrected, **Jesus being the first fruits in His new body**, and then after Him, all those who die a physical death will have already been raised, because when they die they are immediately "*absent from their body and present with the Lord*" [2nd Corinthians 5:8]. This order means that Jesus was raised first as the model for all those who follow His lead. When Jesus will 'snatch away' His Church [1st Thessalonians 4:13-18], those who are alive on Earth at that time will not precede those who had already died previously, as the "**dead in Christ are raised first and then those who are alive will be caught up to meet the Lord in the air**".

RESURRECTION BODY

Paul confirms [1st Corinthians 6:14] that God raised Jesus **and will also raise us through His power**. Jesus taught [John 12:24] that a grain of wheat goes into the earth and dies to bear fruit. Paul explained our new bodies at the Rapture [Greek word *harpazo* = snatching away] will be our perishable body raised as **imperishable**, the mortal body from our physical life puts on **immortality** [1st Corinthians 15:53-55] and this process fulfills Hosea 13:14, "Death is swallowed up in victory, Death where is your victory? Death where is your sting?" Paul asks, "How are the dead raised, and in what kind of body?" [1st Corinthians 15:35-49]. It was noted in the prior section that after Jesus was raised, He had amazing upgraded capabilities. Paul explains [verse 37] "*that which*

dies [like seed being sown] is not the body which is to be". Compare a grain of wheat to a tall sheaf that grows from the seed. It is 4-feet tall with a dozen stems and large kernels. The small grain sown is wheat. The tall sheaf is also wheat, but in a new form. That is the model for how our perishable-mortal body is sown at death and resurrected in an imperishable-immortal body that resembles the original body that died, but with additional features and functions far beyond the original. Paul continues [verses 38-47] there are various types of bodies in God's Creation. In the resurrection, dishonor of the original body is raised in glory, weakness is raised with power, natural becomes *spiritual*. Then verses 48-49 explain our original body is an earthly form, while those in heaven have heavenly capabilities. When raised in our new body, *"We will also bear the image of the heavenly"*. That is very exciting!

Consider Jesus in His resurrected body for forty days after He was raised. It was a tangible body, not a floating spirit or apparition. Jesus had hands and feet, He was flesh and bones, and He could be touched [Luke 24:39]. Jesus will give life to our mortal bodies [Romans 8:11]. The new body of Jesus had enhanced capabilities. He could suddenly appear in a physical location and leave in an instant. Jesus just showed up inside a locked room [John 20:26]. He suddenly approached and walked with those on the road to Emmaus, and when they stopped for dinner, He blessed the bread, gave it to them, and just as suddenly vanished [Luke 24:13-31]. Jesus ate food in His new resurrected body [Acts 10:40-41 and the shoreline breakfast in Luke 24:42-43]. This new heavenly form of our body will be similar to the angels. *"In the resurrection, we will not be married, but **we will be like the angels in heaven**"* [Matthew 22:30]. Angels do not have feathered wings [nor will we], as depicted in centuries of artwork. In the Bible angels appear as

"men" [such as Genesis 18-19, Daniel 10, Acts 12, Hebrews 13:2]. Man was created **a little lower than angels** [Hebrews 2:7-9]. Our new bodies will clothe us in light [Daniel 12:3, Matthew 13:43]. Those who die *before* the Rapture are immediately present with the Lord in a new body, and those who are alive then are instantly translated in the blink of an eye [1st Corinthians 15:52] so all believers can be in heaven at the marriage of the Lamb to His bride [the Church]. Mortal bodies do not have the functional capability to step out of temporal-physical Earth and into the extra-temporal dwelling of God. We will have resurrected bodies as we return to Earth after the marriage of the Lamb, to live on a renewed planet [Romans 8:19-21] for ten centuries with Jesus ruling on David's throne [Revelation 20:5-6]. When this present universe melts [2nd Peter 3:10-12] God brings in His new heaven, new earth, and new Jerusalem [Revelation 21:1-2]. We then live forever in our new bodies [1st Corinthians 15:54-56] for God has prepared a place [John 14:2-3] unlike anything we could ever think or imagine [1st Corinthians 2:9].

CHAPTER SUMMARY

Jesus was raised on Easter Sunday to fulfill the Feast of First Fruits. This provides a way to understand the resurrected body all believers will have one day. Jesus is BOTH our Passover [1st Corinthians 5:7] and our First Fruits [1st Corinthians 15:20-23]. He died for our sin as the Passover Lamb, and was raised as our First Fruits, bringing hope for all who will eventually die in this earthly life. The eternal life promised to believers will occur in a resurrection body exactly like Christ's when He was raised on Easter Sunday in 32 AD. This fulfills what Jesus has gone on to prepare for those who love Him and accept Him as Lord and Savior [John 14:1-2]. The last chapter coming up examines all the ways the Passover has now been literally fulfilled.

CHAPTER 10

Passover Literally Fulfilled

For Christ our Passover also has been sacrificed.
1st Corinthians 5:7

There are many places in the Bible that identify Jesus as the Passover Lamb of God. The above words from Paul to the church in Corinth [and us today] are perhaps THE most direct clarification that Jesus the Christ is the literal fulfillment of Passover. The conclusion of this book is in the title: *The Crucifixion Of Jesus On Passover*. Jehoshua from Nazareth is Messiah and there is excellent evidence He died on the cross for the sins of the world on Passover, Nisan 14, Thursday, April 10th in 32 AD. Jesus then embodies the entirety of what Passover actually means. The overall dossier of evidence within the Biblical account has been presented and is quite compelling. Jesus fulfilled every facet of the annual Jewish feast that originally commemorated Israel's Exodus from Egyptian slavery, but by design it was a specific foreshadow of God's incredible plan for the salvation of mankind through the shedding of innocent blood. Truly ***Christ our Passover was sacrificed for us.***

Jesus stated clearly to the Jewish religious leaders [Matthew 5:17-18] that He did not come to abolish [do away with] the Law of Moses or the writings of the Prophets [such as Daniel, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Zechariah, Ezekiel, Amos, Malachi], but He had come to literally fulfill the entirety of these. Jesus put additional special emphasis on this by adding, *"Until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or even a brushstroke of the pen shall pass from the Law until ALL is fulfilled"*. The original language says "iota" [the smallest letter in the Greek alphabet] and brushstroke is "keraia" [the accent marks and diacritical lines used to write Hebrew letters, similar to an apostrophe in English]. Chuck Missler always referred to how the rabbis would say they would not fully understand the Scriptures until Messiah comes, and when He does, He will not only interpret every Bible passage, but will also interpret each word, the letters in each word, the accent marks of each letter, and even the meaning of the spaces between the letters.

CHRIST OUR PASSOVER

Every facet of the Passover points to Jesus of Nazareth fulfilling all that the Law and prophets proclaimed for centuries before His arrival. Jesus rode into Jerusalem on Nisan 10 – the very same day the nation begins to examine the lambs for four days to see if there is any blemish in them. He then presented Himself for those same four days prior to Passover and was found without any blemish [sin]. Peter comments on this [1st Peter 1:18-19], *"You were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life that was inherited from your forefathers, but with **precious blood as of a lamb unblemished and spotless – the blood of Christ**"*. God stated clearly [Genesis 2:17] that the penalty for sin was death, "Do not eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil for in the day you shall eat of it you will surely die".

Paul wrote [Romans 6:23] "The wages for sin is death". For centuries, the sins of the people of Israel [personal blemishes] were symbolically transferred by the priest to an innocent animal that was killed in place of those who had sinned. Yahweh made it clear [Exodus 12:11-13], "It is **the Lord's Passover**, and **when I see the blood I will pass over you**". Blood from sacrifices was always on the brazen altar in the Temple each day, as God declared [Leviticus 17:11], "The **life of the flesh is in the blood** and I have given it to you on the altar to make atonement for your souls, it is **the blood by reason of the life that makes atonement**". The perfect sacrifice is not simply blood to be reminded of one's sin, but actually and forever removes sin and cleanses the conscience of sin. Psalm 40:6-7 says the Lord does not require burnt offering and sin offering, but the entirety of the Scriptures is written of Jesus.

The tenth chapter of Paul's discourse to the Hebrews [verse 1-15] states these incredible parallels between the sacrificial system in the Law of Moses that point directly to the crucifixion of Jesus the Messiah:

Verse-1 The **Law is only a foreshadow** and can never by the same sacrifices offered year after year make perfect those who draw near.

Verse-2 If animal sacrifices had been sufficient, **they would not have ceased to be offered**, because the one for whom it was offered would no longer have a consciousness of sin.

Verse-3 But those on-going sacrifices end up serving as a reminder of sins year after year.

Verse-4 For it is entirely impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to actually remove the sins of a person.

Verse-5 Jesus knew when He came into the world it was not about Temple sacrifices and offerings, **but His body**.

Verse-6 God took no pleasure in whole burnt offerings and other sacrifices for sin.

Verse-7 Jesus declared that in the fulness of the Torah and Psalms and the prophets it is all written about Him, to do the ultimate will of God who sent Him.

Verses 8-9 He did away with the first to establish the second.

Verse-10 By this will of Jesus we have been sanctified through the offering of Christ's body once for all.

Verse-11 Priests stand in the Temple and offer time after time the same sacrifices which can never take away a person's sin.

Verse-12 But after Jesus offered Himself as the One sacrifice for sins for all time, He sat down at the right hand of God.

Verse-13 And Jesus now waits from that time onward until His enemies are made His footstool.

Verse-14 For by His One offering Jesus has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified.

Verse-15 The Holy Spirit testifies to us about all of this.

Paul clearly demonstrated the huge differences between the earthly priests who did their work over and over, using animal sacrifices that could never truly cover sin, compared to Jesus who is an eternal Priest who offered His own body as the One perfect sacrifice that forever removes sin, while also cleansing the conscience of sin for all time. What Passover introduced and then continued through the Mosaic Law, Jesus fulfilled as the perfect, spotless Lamb of God.

CHRIST IN THE SEDER

The main Passover meal continues to be celebrated by Jews all over the world. The Seder [meaning "order"] is the ritual feast that happens after nightfall on the first evening of Passover, or the second for those not living in Israel. Today it lasts for seven days in Israel and eight days outside the nation. The house is cleansed of all leaven. This is the *bedikat chametz*, symbolic of removing sin. It remembers the people exited quickly from Egypt with no time for their bread to rise before baking. A small bit of leaven is hidden in the house for the children to find it so it can then be removed. Today, *afikomen* is broken matzah wrapped in a cloth and hidden. After the meal it is found, unwrapped, and eaten. *Jews For Jesus* teach this is symbolic of Jesus' body [broken for us] wrapped for burial, then resurrected in remembrance of Him. It however, was not part of the original Passover in Exodus.

The matzah has pock-marks [little holes] and dark burn-lines [stripes] from baking. These point to Isaiah 53: 5, that Messiah was pierced for our transgressions and by His stripes we are healed. The lamb is observed for four days beginning on Nisan 10 to ensure it has no blemish. The opening meal is unleavened bread with wine. The main meal is roasted lamb served with bitter herbs [*maror* in Hebrew]. The *karpas* [parsley] is symbolic of the hyssop and is dipped in sea water to remind of the Red Sea crossing. There is also *charoseth*, a mixture of nuts, wine, apple, and cinnamon. The lamb's shank-bone is not to be broken [Exodus 12:46] - just like Jesus on the cross [John 19:33]. Three ceremonial cups are symbolic of the Last Supper [Luke 22:17-18], the cup served after dinner [Luke 22:20], and the cup of blessing that parallels the blood of Jesus [1st Corinthians 10:16]. Elijah is believed to be the forerunner of Messiah [even though John the Baptist already

fulfilled that role]. Elijah will bring peace to earth in preparation for Messiah. Today's Seder leaves an empty chair and empty cup for him in case this is the year he arrives. It is fascinating that the two witnesses on earth who proclaim God's judgment [Revelation 11:3-6] are most likely Moses and Elijah, who were also with Jesus as He revealed His divine glory [transfiguration] to Peter, James, and John on the mountain [Matthew 17:3, Mark 9:4, Luke 9:30]. Jewish tradition expects Moses and Elijah to return based on both Deuteronomy 18:15 [Moses] and Malachi 4:5 [Elijah]. Jesus agreed [Matthew 17:10-13] Elijah had come a first time [mid-10th Century BC], John the Baptist preached in the spirit of Elijah before the first coming of Christ, but was killed, and the actual Elijah will come in the future as a witness before the Second Coming.

CHAPTER SUMMARY

The original Passover in Egypt and the contemporary celebration each year both recognize how innocent blood was a substitution to cover the penalty of death for not obeying God's Word. The centerpiece is the spotless lamb, in which no bone is broken. When God saw the blood, His judgment of death would **pass over** the home – a foreshadow of the ultimate plan for the atonement of sin. Jesus is the spotless Lamb of God who fulfilled that "type" as He was crucified on a remembrance of Passover some 1,200 years after the original Exodus from Egypt. It was the third Passover of Jesus' earthly ministry. It was a Passover like none other, as His sacrifice *blotted out the decree of sin against us, and our debt was nailed to the cross when He died* [Colossians 2:14]. Truly Jesus was the Lamb of God [John 1:29] who takes away the sins of the world, and remains the Lamb who has been slain [Revelation 5:6].

EPILOGUE

For by *one* offering Jesus has perfected for
all time those who are sanctified.

Hebrews 10:14

The above passage was written by the Apostle Paul to his beloved nation of Israel, describing how the finished work of Jesus on the cross was a *one-time* gesture that covers sin for *all time* – able to perfect every person who is then sanctified through the literal fulfillment of the Passover sacrifice. It is sometimes overwhelming to consider that God in His infinite wisdom knew from before the creation of the world that He would give His chosen people Israel a foreshadow of His ultimate plan to redeem them [and the world] from sin. The entry into Egypt by Joseph being sold into slavery by his brothers [Genesis 37] was God's means to position Joseph into senior government leadership well in advance of the seven years of famine for which he was able to plan. His family was then brought to Egypt to find food, and was reunited with a

Epilogue

son [and brother] they thought had died. Israel settled in Goshen [northern Egypt] and prospered as a distinct people. Then, Egypt subjugated the nation into four centuries of slavery. Yahweh raised up Moses and empowered him to confront Pharaoh so the nation would be allowed to leave and go into the land promised to Abraham. The final action of God on behalf of His people was a specific judgment of death. This could be covered by blood from a lamb so that God's wrath would **pass over** those who put their faith in His provision.

The beloved physician Luke wrote down for his colleague Theophilus numerous *Acts of the Apostles*, noting in chapter 17 and verse 11 that there were believers residing in the city of Berea who were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they searched the Scriptures daily to see if in fact the teachings about Jesus being Messiah and His dying for the sins of the world were true. He was clearly commending their reputation as not only being eager to receive what had been taught them, but also their initiative to diligently search God's Word to see whether all the topics being taught by Paul and other disciples of Jesus were in fact true. My intention is never to imply that all the positions presented in this book are the only correct interpretation of when Jesus was crucified. There are obviously competing positions in dozens, if not hundreds, of theology books, online podcasts, as well as Bible commentaries on the shelves of scholars [see the Resources page that concludes this book]. Some of these learned theologians have Jesus being crucified on the traditional "Good Friday". Others argue for a Wednesday crucifixion, while some even agree with my Thursday position – even though they use a different year on the calendar, and some do not even state that their Thursday was Passover.

WEDNESDAY AND FRIDAY PROBLEMS

The online *Wiki* about the crucifixion of Jesus essentially merges various contributors into the interesting caveat that, "Most theologians assume Jesus was crucified on the traditional Good Friday". However, even those cannot agree on what day or year this would have occurred.

Now that you have read this book cover-to-cover, you will understand my strong support and preference for the crucifixion of Jesus on the Jewish Feast of Passover in the year 32 AD, which was April 10th, Nisan 14 on the Jewish calendar. This fits well with numerous interconnected evidences, most notably matching Jesus' own testimony that the ONE sign given by Him to prove He is Messiah was the sign of Jonah, that Jesus would be **three days and three nights** in the heart of the earth. It also matches very well with several statements about the Passover meal not being eaten prior to Jesus being nailed to the cross.

The April 10th date in 32 AD also provides a great match with Jesus coming into Jerusalem four days earlier on April 6th [Palm Sunday] as per Sir Robert Anderson's detailed calculation from Daniel's prophecy of Mashiach Nagid being revealed exactly 173,880 days [7 sevens and 62 sevens] from the March 14, 445 BC decree to "restore and rebuild Jerusalem" [recorded in Nehemiah 2]. This perfect fit has Jesus turning 30 in the Fall of 29 AD. Then ministering the oft-quoted "three years" [September 29 AD up until the Spring of 32 AD] exactly as the Gospels record Jesus at three Passovers: first in the Spring of 30 AD, the second in 31, and the third when He was sacrificed on Passover in 32.

Decades of "live" television coverage of Good Friday services in Saint Peter's Square, Rome or Saint Patrick's Cathedral on Fifth Avenue in New York City have ingrained Friday as the traditional day Jesus was

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crucified. These are followed by Easter specials and parades that say nothing about the resurrection of Jesus, but put all their emphasis on colored eggs, baskets, chocolates, candies, flowered bonnets matched to festive Springtime pastel clothing, and of course the Easter Bunny. Sad to say, the Easter events, movies, and online media continue to cover Easter without any mention of Jesus and the empty tomb.

A careful review of the case presented in this book will connect ALL the major points from the Biblical records aligned with the timing and geopolitical contextual setting from the extra-Biblical sources. My prayer is this will draw you into an even deeper love for God's Word as you see time and again how precise its message is among the various writers in the Old and New Testaments regarding the crucifixion of Jesus for the sins of the world. May God richly bless you in celebrating the truth that underlies the Biblical foreshadow of the Feast of Passover, and then the amazing story of the Gospel – that Jesus was resurrected to new life, as the stone was rolled away to reveal an empty burial tomb on the Sunday morning following Passover. It was the Feast of First Fruits and is forever embraced by Christians worldwide as "Resurrection Sunday".

WHY IT MATTERS

The Lord's testimony is sure,
making wise the simple.
Psalm 19:7

Many people ask me quite frankly and directly, "Dr. Dave, why does it even matter what day we remember the Lord's death?, I mean, isn't the most important thing that He died for our sins and then rose from the dead?, why get caught up in the controversy of Friday vs. Thursday?" And similarly they inquire, "Does it really matter that Jesus was literally **three days and three nights** in the heart of the earth?" These are all fair questions to pose. In a long-established culture that has for centuries held that "Good Friday" is the sacred day on which Jesus was nailed to the cross, along comes this book offering an alternative perspective on the day, date, and timing based on re-examining the entirety of the Biblical accounts through the lens of prophetic foreshadows that are specifically noted by Jesus, and later by the Apostles Peter and Paul. The testimony of the Lord, as shown through His Word, is sure. It is truthful and wholly reliable. Every person can depend on it. The Bible makes even our simple and limited minds quite wise. Each account in God's Word of men, women, cities, nations, kingdoms, oceans, seas, rivers, as well as mountains, valleys, and plains is real. The languages

and places are historically accurate. Archaeology has time and again confirmed God's narrative, and where it may appear silent regarding a certain ruler or location, it simply means those evidences have not yet been discovered. Archaeology consistently supports the Middle-East Biblical timeline. It is amazing to see God's Word ultimately confirmed.

Consider that John bar-Zebedee was led to include in his Gospel that the day coming up right after the Passover crucifixion was a special high day – the annual Feast of Unleavened Bread which is the 'Sabbath' the religious leaders were concerned about when they did not want the bodies to remain on the crosses. This started at sunset as Passover concluded on Thursday, and went until Friday sunset, at which time the regular weekly Sabbath began. And thankfully John also noted why the Jewish leaders would not enter the Roman Praetorium on the Wednesday overnight of Passover that went into the wee hours of Thursday. It was because they had not yet eaten their final Passover meal and did not want to be defiled [declared "unclean"] by entering a Gentile hall. The ceremonial purification rituals to be cleansed from that Roman contact would not be completed in time for them eat the closing Passover meal prior to sunset on Thursday. These kinds of details are deliberately specific and unambiguous, making the written accounts even more credible about what really happened. With all the attention given to historical bases for apologetics about Christianity, applying similar research and diligence to the Biblical account of the crucifixion of Jesus yields well-coordinated, verifiable evidences that fit together, showing once again the Bible is reliable and trustworthy. This topic really **Matters** because the Word of the Lord is upright and all His works are, and will remain, entirely trustworthy [Psalm 33:4].

OTHER VIEWS

There remains a wide range of perspectives and disagreements within the Christian community about the timing and events associated with the crucifixion of Jesus, as well as the matter of whether Jesus was ever even raised from the dead. The broader academic and pop-culture world also presents "Good Friday" and "Easter Sunday" as those unalterable holiday celebrations of men firmly entrenched in traditions not to be challenged. These two holy days of Christendom continue to be observed each Spring by nearly three billion people worldwide without much interest [or concern] about the nuances in the Biblical accounts. There are numerous strong opinions about whether Jesus is even an historical person, let alone where He even fits with the Easter Bunny, egg hunts, marshmallow chicks, or Cadbury chocolate rabbits.

With regard to "Good Friday" or this book's advocating for the "Even-Better-Thursday", it still seems to be of little interest in the world to draw attention to a gruesome and bloody death penalty crucifixion in the 1st Century AD. The Roman cross has now become a ubiquitous symbol and is prominently worn as jewelry on necklaces, bracelets, and earrings. It sits atop thousands of churches, while the Red version is synonymous with international relief for those suffering. It is quite fascinating and provocative that a means of executing a tortuous capital punishment in the ancient world is now a revered symbol of unconditional love, humility, and selfless service to others, as that

defining religious image for billions of Christians. The following pages survey a wide range of perspectives and opinions about the crucifixion of Jesus and His resurrection from the dead. We will also examine the merits and concerns regarding the proposed Wednesday crucifixion, and popular challenges to how and whether Jesus was even killed in this manner. This will hopefully provide a better understanding of how controversial everything about Jesus remains in today's world.

THE CRUCIFIXION

The *Smithsonian Magazine* reported [September 17, 2012] that a newly found manuscript fragment, believed to be 1,600 years old, supports a longstanding conspiracy theory that Jesus had a wife [like Dan Brown's 2003 mystery-thriller novel *The DaVinci Code*].

This ancient papyrus, about the size of an ATM card and pressed between two sheets of plexiglass consisting of 33 words on 14 lines, apparently has a phrase in the center where Jesus says, "my wife". The text was probably composed in Greek about a century or so after Jesus' crucifixion, then copied into Coptic about two centuries later. Some group of early Christians drew spiritual strength from portraying Jesus as having a wife, probably Mary Magdalene.

This kind of speculation has no basis in any of the Gospels, but tends to draw a lot of attention from those who ultimately want to cast Jesus as nothing more than an average man who had god-like facets attributed to Him by starry-eyed followers.

In April of 2017, the *Washington Post* published an opinion piece by Robin Jensen, "Five Myths About The Cross", in which she challenges the shape of the cross and whether the nails in the feet and hands [wrists] were sufficient to support a man [see the top of the next page].

The iconic image of the Christian cross tends to feature a central vertical beam transected by a perpendicular beam about a third of the way down. But the actual crosses Romans used for executions probably took a different shape. Jesus' cross was more likely to have been T-shaped [a Tau cross that resembles the Greek letter]. While some physical evidence for nailing the feet of crucifixion victims has been found by archaeologists, it would have been impossible to fix the condemned to a cross by nails alone.

Her strongest concern is that the early church did not spend much time talking about the crucifixion. The article further explains:

For almost 1,000 years, the Christian church emphasized Paradise and not the crucifixion. There was, in short, little to be gained in proclaiming a crucified saviour in that setting in which crucifixion was a grisly reality, and some early Christians tried to avoid reference to Jesus' crucifixion. Crosses were extremely rare symbols for Christians to use before the mid-4th Century.

Muslims typically believe Jesus was not the Son of God, was entirely mortal, and was NEVER crucified. AlArabiya.net featured a June 2012 review of the supposedly 1,500 year-old Gospel of Barnabas:

The Gospel of Barnabas, which analysts believe is in addition to the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John attracted attention for suggesting that Jesus foretold the coming of Mohammed. The document, written in Syriac [a dialect of Aramaic], states Jesus said, "I confess before heaven, I am a man, born of a woman, and subject to the judgment of God". Barnabas says Judas Iscariot is the one who died on the cross instead of Jesus.

These are two common themes that show up in multiple forms from literally dozens of "Biblical scholars" who introduce unverified outside

sources they claim shed the final light of truth on the real story about Jesus – that He was not, and never claimed to be, the Son of God, and did not die on the cross for the sins of the world. This puts the book of Barnabas in direct contradiction with the four Biblical Gospels. The source is highly suspect, but continues to be quoted and cited.

PBS [Public Broadcasting Station] published the *Arrest and Execution* by Michael White [University of Texas at Austin] that spins an entirely new perspective on the Passover week in the final days of Jesus' life. It is focused on the unreliability of the four Gospels due to differences in how each author covers the events of Jesus' life. White's main point is:

The story of Jesus and the money-changers clearly brings Him to the attention of the Temple leadership and Roman authorities, it is in effect what gets Him killed. My own feeling is there's very little role by the Jewish authorities in the crucifixion of Jesus. The idea that the masses of Jewish people had some voice in the death of Jesus is not part of history, but a legacy of some later tradition.

Many simply dismiss the Gospels on personal preferences, as indicated with: "My own personal feeling is ..." The same PBS feature included comments from John Dominic Crossan of DePaul University stating his ideas and biases about the Gospel accounts of the crucifixion of Jesus:

The details of the last words of Jesus were totally in the realm of a gospel and not of history. Mark tells us Jesus died being mocked and in agony, but I think Mark is writing for the experience of people who are dying like that and need the consolation that Jesus had died that way before, feeling abandoned by God.

The philosophical inclinations of 'scholars' 2,000 years removed from the original events and primary source documents remain one of the of the most glaring biases displayed in commenting on the crucifixion. An April 23, 2017 column was featured in the UK's *Daily Star* by Henry Holloway, "Jesus Wasn't Crucified: Shock Discovery Could Collapse Christianity". This once again references the gospel of Barnabas:

Barnabas was one of Jesus' 12 disciples, and his account is that Jesus ascended to heaven before Judas Iscariot could lead Roman soldiers to arrest Jesus on the Mount of Olives. Judas is mistaken for Jesus and ends up being crucified.

The source document has been regarded by many as a forgery from the Middle Ages, but the narrative continues to resurface every year at Easter, calling into questions whether Jesus died on Calvary's cross.

ABCnews.com posted [July 2010] "Jesus May Not Have Died On The Cross" [Russell Goldman] citing theologian Gunnar Samuelsson:

Despite the crucifix's proliferation in art and literature, there is scant evidence in the Bible or other ancient sources to indicate that Christ was killed on a cross. While there are numerous references to 'suspension devices' used for execution at the time of Christ's death, I found no explicit references to the classic T-shaped cross. There is no distinct punishment called 'crucifixion' and no distinct 'crucifix' mentioned in the ancient texts, including the Gospels.

The challenge to any form of historically verifiable crucifixion used by the Romans has been noted for centuries to question the Gospels. This continues to be cited as 'clear evidence' to undermine the veracity of the Scriptures and the overall historical accuracy of the crucifixion.

Many challenges to the crucifixion go one step further and claim there is no historical evidence that Jesus ever existed. The *Washington Post* published the December 2014 article by Raphael Lataster [he teaches religious studies at the University of Sydney], "Did Historical Jesus Really Exist? The Evidence Just Does Not Add Up", in which he says:

Numerous secular scholars have presented their own versions of the so called 'Historical Jesus' - most of them are, as J.D. Crossan puts it, "an academic embarrassment". Filled with mythical and non-historical information, and heavily edited over time, the Gospels certainly should not convince critics to trust even the more mundane claims made therein. The methods traditionally used to tease out rare nuggets of truth from the Gospels are dubious. In sum, there are clearly good reasons to doubt Jesus' historical existence, if not to think it outright improbable.

It is fascinating to read dozens of similar commentaries, where they claim there are no eye-witness accounts of Jesus' life. But that simply skips right over the first-person language of John's personal testimony, where he speaks about his own direct interaction with Jesus, having spent nearly three years with Him, seeing His miracles, hearing His teachings – "What **we have heard and seen with our eyes**, and our hands handled" [1st John 1:1]. John notes that he personally leaned onto Jesus while reclined at the Last Supper [John 13:23]. Peter plainly stated [2nd Peter 1:16] the **disciples were eye-witnesses of Jesus**.

THE RESURRECTION

The next group of 'Other Views' involves those who concede Jesus was probably crucified on a Roman cross, but they deny He was raised from the dead. It is typically based on the "scientific absurdity" that a dead person could come to life after being in a grave three days and three

nights. The 1965 book *The Passover Plot* [Hugh Schonfield] was based on the idea that Jesus was so obsessed with being Messiah that He recruited the twelve disciples to help Him seemingly fulfill every prophecy, including fabricating a tale of Jesus' resurrection [this was made into a 1976 film of the same title]. It relies almost entirely on the John's account of getting the bodies off the crosses before the Sabbath began [same misinterpretation for a Good Friday crucifixion]. It is provocative that Schonfield's focus on John 19:31 never touches on John's parenthetical clarification for the special "high day" [Feast of Unleavened Bread]. His book launched the ***Swoon Theory*** that Jesus was rendered unconscious on the cross due to physical exhaustion and dehydration. He was only thought to be dead as He was taken down, wrapped for burial, then placed in the tomb. Because He had only fainted while hanging on the cross, the cool stone grave allowed Him to regain consciousness, then He unwrapped Himself and rolled aside the stone of the tomb. This seems impossible considering the Roman soldier thrust his spear into Jesus' side causing blood and water to flow from the cardiac sack. Doctors confirm that this signifies rupturing the heart, which means death. Joseph of Arimathea would certainly have noticed a faint pulse or breathing when they embalmed Jesus' body. If Jesus only swooned, how did He, in such a weakened state, have strength to roll away the stone from the *inside* of the tomb.

Another rebuttal to the resurrection is the ***Substitution Theory***, in which Simon from Cyrene [forced by the Roman soldiers to carry Jesus' cross] was inadvertently crucified among the confusion of the Roman soldiers, Temple guards, Jewish priests, scribes, and religious leaders. There were two other criminals sentenced for crucifixion, so in that huge crowd Simon was thought to be among the condemned and ended up nailed to the cross intended for Jesus. While Simon remained dead and

buried, Jesus was able to recover from His flogging and appear to many who then believed He had been resurrected. Some extensions of this have gone so far as to say that Jesus had a disciple or other close associate who resembled Jesus in physical stature and appearance - so much so he was like a twin brother. It was this look-alike individual who was nailed to the cross, even as all those present on Golgotha believed it was Jesus the Nazarene. A few days later Jesus presented Himself to His disciples and other witnesses as having been resurrected. This has no factual, historical, or logical basis as there is no mention anywhere in the Bible of such a 'twin' or the plot to utilize such deception.

The ***Stolen Body Theory*** purports that the disciples came to the tomb and physically overtook the heavily armed, professional Roman soldiers assigned to guard the tomb. The account in Matthew 27:62-66 says on the "next day after the day of preparation" the religious leaders went to Pilate and asked that the tomb be made secure until the third day, otherwise His disciples can take the body and say to the people, "He has risen from the dead". Pilate granted them a guard [the Greek term *koustodia*, like the English custodian] and said they should make the tomb "as secure as you know how", which included a seal affixed to show the stone had not been moved. The Greek connotes several soldiers comprised a "guard", and Matthew 28:4 lends support for this, noting that after an angel rolled away the stone, the "keepers of the tomb did shake and became like dead men" [keepers is plural and refers to several guards posted at the tomb]. This theory requires Peter, James, John and others to physically overtake the soldiers, then remove the dead body of Jesus to an undisclosed location and create the story they had seen Him resurrected. The entire purpose of a guard at the tomb was to not allow this very action to occur.

The **Hallucination Theory** presents the idea that the various accounts of people seeing Jesus alive after the crucifixion are actually instances of mass delusion. His disciples and others so wanted to believe Jesus was alive again that they “thought” they saw Him in the days after He was buried. It is very difficult to believe that “more than 500 brethren at one time” [1st Corinthians 15:6] shared in a mass delusion at the same time. The Bible records ten times where Jesus appeared to people after He was resurrected, so every one of these would have to be the very same hallucination: 1] Mary Magdalene in John 20:16-17, 2] the other woman in Matthew 28:8-10, probably Mary of Clopas or Mary the mother of James and Joanna, 3] Simon Peter in Luke 24:34, 4] the two walking to Emmaus in Luke 24:13-43, 5] all of the disciples, not including Thomas in Luke 24:36, then 6] all of the disciples with Thomas in John 20:26-29, 7] seven disciples at the Sea of Tiberius in John 21:1-2, 8] 500 brethren at one time, many of which were still alive to testify to that at the time Paul wrote 1st Corinthians 15:6, 9] His brother James and the eleven surviving Apostles in 1st Corinthians 15:7, and 10] those present at His ascension in Luke 24:50-53. He also appeared to Saul of Tarsus riding into Damascus [Acts 9] as Jesus personally called him to be the twelfth Apostle, even as He had individually called the others to follow Him.

One other position counter to the resurrection is the **Vision Theory** in which Jesus did in fact appear to many people after the crucifixion, but He was never “alive” again in His physical body. Instead, He appeared as a vision, similar to various [supposed] accounts of people seeing a vision of the virgin Mary [the shepherd girl in 1858 Lourdes, France or the peasant boy in 1531 Guadalupe, Mexico]. However, Jesus offered Thomas to put his hand in His side where the spear had been thrust, or place his fingers in the nail holes [John 20:27]. Luke actually confirms Jesus was NOT merely a spirit [24:36-39] noting that the disciples were

frightened as Jesus stood in the room with them, *because they thought they had seen a spirit*, but Jesus told them to not be afraid and to see the wounds in His hands and His feet. They then gave Jesus broiled fish with a honeycomb and He ate the food [Luke 24:40-43]. Jesus also had breakfast prepared on the seashore after His disciples finished fishing [John 21:9-14] and He broke the bread and fish with them. These were not the actions of a spirit, ghost, or some kind of ethereal vapor. It was Jesus in the flesh, speaking, eating, and interacting with people.

There is also the ***Wrong Tomb Theory*** that claims the women, and later the disciples after them, got confused about exactly where Jesus had been buried, so they ended up at the wrong tomb, which was empty, and they then believed the Lord had risen. Perhaps the most logical explanation for some of these “theories” is that the Romans and Jewish religious leaders could have simply produced the dead body of Jesus and that would easily settle: 1] being at the wrong tomb, 2] did the disciples steal the body away, or 3] any substitution of Simon of Cyrene or the “twin” look-alike was clearly NOT Jesus. And WHY would the disciples so commit their lives to a lie about Jesus if He had not been raised? Would they preach and pen their Gospels [Matthew, Mark, John], and letters to the churches [1st 2nd and 3rd John, 1st 2nd Peter], as well as Jesus’ brothers writing the books of James and Jude? Most of them were killed for a firm commitment to their eye-witness testimony of Jesus being resurrected – not some version of a Passover plot.

WHAT ABOUT WEDNESDAY?

This book supports the Thursday, Passover crucifixion, directly linked to the Precision of Palm Sunday [Chapter Four], Jesus literally fulfilling the prophetic foreshadows of the Passover lamb, and His testimony about the ONE sign given to conclusively demonstrate He is Messiah. The

traditional "Good Friday" is based solely on the misinterpretation of John 19:31 where the 'Sabbath' approaching is the basis to remove the bodies off the crosses. The online Wiki compilation for "The crucifixion of Jesus" essentially merges various contributors into this single caveat, *"Most theologians assume Jesus was crucified on the traditional Good Friday, however, even those cannot agree on what year this occurred"*.

There are also many pastors, theologians, scholars who argue for Jesus being crucified Wednesday [Chuck Missler has his Passover crucifixion on Wednesday]. This is based on trying to develop the fullest definition of "three days and three nights". Wednesday-to-Thursday is argued as a more complete DAY [in the sense of 24 hours]. Then Thursday-to-Friday is another 24-hour DAY, and Friday-to-Saturday a third complete DAY. There are then three NIGHTS in the Jewish sense for the close of each day at sunset on Thursday, Friday, and Saturday. Jesus is raised at the beginning of the Jewish "day" that starts with sunset Saturday. The math on this is a bit awkward because of a fourth overnight on Wednesday [the day proposed for the crucifixion]. This seems to get discounted in the attempt to merge the Jewish "days" with the matters of daylight and darkness in the overnights. One may ask for an explanation about, "Are there not four nights within Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday?" Their response is Jesus left the tomb at the start of the "day" that went from Saturday-sunset to Sunday-sunset, so there is no fourth NIGHT.

The other problem is that this Wednesday sequence is in a vacuum without any specific Wednesday-to-Sunday days within an exact week and calendar-year. It simply gets the resurrection on the "first day of the week" which begins at sunset Saturday and goes overnight and through to sunset Sunday. There is no specific year when it happened

that would place it at a particular Passover week. This is in contrast to this book placing Jesus at age 32 and-a-half in His third year of ministry riding into Jerusalem on the EXACT day spoken of by Daniel - Sunday, April 6th in 32 AD [Nisan 10, the start of Passover week in that very specific year]. Nisan 14 Passover began Wednesday at sunset with the Last Supper and continued into Thursday as Jesus was crucified, died, and was buried BEFORE the final meal of Passover when the lambs are eaten. This sequence of days then aligns very well with the special "high day" of Unleavened Bread, followed by the regular weekly Sabbath, and then Jesus being raised on the Feast of First Fruits, after Saturday overnight to Sunday, Nisan 17 - ***three days and three nights***.

In summary, the popular-traditional position that Jesus was crucified on "Good Friday" has serious concerns with Jesus' own testimony of ***three days and three nights*** as well as Him being raised ***on the third day***. Many academics and theologians challenge whether Jesus was even crucified. Others raise doubts about the resurrection. It is good to be familiar with these other views. The following section has Resources with additional commentaries on the Passover crucifixion of Jesus. It is worth knowing how and why others develop their positions. My hope is this book will establish an excellent foundational footing for the events of Passover in 32 AD, and a well-crafted lens through which to view how all the prophecies, dates, and names fit together in a coordinated narrative. May God richly bless you as you search the Scriptures daily.

RESOURCES

There are various different proposals, models, and positions in theology books, Bible commentaries, magazines, online lectures, podcasts, seminary courses, conferences, seminars, and websites devoted to the crucifixion of Jesus, including the following:

John MacArthur and Grace To You [GTY.org]

NationalGeographic.com

The Jesus Film Project [JesusFilm.org]

Chuck Missler and Koinonia House [KHouse.org]

Christianity.com

Reasons For Hope [ReasonsForHopeJesus.com]

Lambert Dolphin [LDolphin.org]

BiblicalArchaeology.org

Dave Hunt and T.A. McMahon [TheBereanCall.org]

BibleStudyTools.com

History.com

LiveScience.com

Roger Oakland [UnderstandTheTimes.com]

BlueLetterBible.org



This *Resources* list could go on for dozens of pages. It is interesting to see and hear other theories and perspectives about the crucifixion of Jesus. The key is to find cogent explanations that fit exactly on multiple events recorded throughout the Bible. It is my position and conclusion that the material presented in this book does that quite well.