

Outline Studies
in
Biblical Chronology
A Continuous Chronology
from
Creation to the Cross

The Passion of Our Lord
and
The Birth of The Church
An Elaborated Biblical Chronology



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Outline Studies in Biblical Chronology

A Continuous Chronology from Creation to the Cross

Ch. 10: The Passion of Our Lord and the Birth of the Church

Abstract

The unfolding of events during that period of history known as our Lord's passion, an occasion with temporal duration extending from Jesus' Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem until His bodily resurrection from the dead, is set forth in Scripture in quite intricate detail. In this study the included chronological detail in relevant texts is examined in a quite complete and thorough manner. Now, from the broader perspective of God's age-long redemptive program, the succession of events occurring over the extent of our Lord's passion have important connection with events recorded in OT texts carrying particular redemptive typology and salvific implication. Most significant among these include that of Passover, certain other feasts prescribed under Mosaic Law, as well as the historical experience of the prophet Jonah. As such, the chronological layout of our Lord's passion must reveal precise correspondence with and consistent fulfillment of all relevant OT texts with 'time-prescriptive' terms. Particular emphasis is given to showing that intricacies associated with both the Passover pattern as well as the sign of Jonah find precise fulfillment in the Gospel records of our Lord's passion. Further, it is demonstrated that the implied redemptive type and chronological succession specified in the set patterns for the Feasts of First Fruits and Pentecost find precise fulfillment, respectively, in Christ's resurrection and in the birth of the Church on that historic Pentecost highlighted with great signs and wonders 50 days following our Lord's resurrection. As a logically deduced outcome from this study, some accent is placed on contradictions between the presented chronology and long-standing traditions relative to such pivotal days in the nominal Christian calendar as Palm Sunday and Good Friday, as well as to our understanding of the occasion of our Lord's celebration of the Last Supper when He met with His disciples in an upper room and instituted the sacrament of the Lord's Table.

Author's Perspective and Motivation

It can be rightly stated, and so without exaggeration, that the passion of our Lord Jesus Christ encompasses the most significant sequence of events in the history of the world. The revealed flow of events surrounding Christ's passion is given extensive prophetic foundation in OT texts and occupies the largest portion of the Gospel narratives. These Scriptures communicate prescriptive typology, redemptive anticipation and implication, foundation for doctrines such as soteriology and eschatology, and, with particular relevance to this study, appear in accompaniment with substantial chronological ordering of inter-related events. At root in the prophetic texts are salvific particulars holding eternal implications for man as well as the whole of creation, and do so providing core connections that underlie irrefutable facts convincingly connecting Jesus of Nazareth with God's uniquely appointed "seed of the woman" sent to be the Overcomer of the Curse. The Gospel accounts move on to present the Lord Jesus Christ as the One whose very life, death, and resurrection comprise God's only provided means whereby sinners alienated from God might be regenerated. Furthermore, with the joining of such OT and Gospel accounts with revelatory riches set forth in the Epistles, we learn the profound truth that persons thus "born of God" are eternally reconciled to the Creator, even placed as peculiar objects of love and grace as adoptive sons knowing personal relational union with the holy, Triune Godhead.

Now, the riches of this whole body of revelatory grace in the Lord Jesus Christ is presented in a divinely-ordered chronological flow of real historic events covering a period of roughly 4000 years following the beginning of the world. Not only that, this revealed flow of historical events also sets forth in pure and refined words the very revelatory enlightenment which ought to invigorate studied investigation by the creature made in God's own image. As such, and since there exists a divinely-articulated chronology communicated with specific and intricate detail concerning this most significant event, it seems logical that a coherent and cross-textually consistent analysis of the full-scope of events properly associated with Christ's passion merits directed investment toward discovery of the full truth regarding God's word and work. Such pursuit carries potential for one to encounter significant insights into the Person and work of God's appointed and anointed "seed of the woman", confronting substantive detail to undergird and enrich one's personal faith in the glory of God's redemptive working in Christ. The yield from such analysis is a strengthened apologetic for the Christian faith along with deepened tap-roots of conviction regarding God's redeeming work, electing grace, and His call to committed discipleship.

For these reasons and more, this author believes that a correct and comprehensive detailing of the full scope of our Lord's passion, even one that is powerfully elucidated through careful delineation of chronological detail, is a faith-enriching, exposition-enlightening, and apologetic-worthy pursuit. A pursuit incorporating the unfolding of precise chronological detail included in the inspired texts of infallible revelation should never be deemed as a peripheral issue in relation to the Christian faith, and neither to the personal faith of individual believers. In the experience of this author, such study illumines significant connections across OT and NT texts, magnifies the unity of purpose and amazing intricacy of detail within the rich body of sacred writings concerning God's redemptive working in history, and accents with definitive clarity God's salvific purpose in the Person and work of His incarnate Son. This preeminent and prevailing redemptive design of God in history has been worked out in time following an ordained chronological flow, a flow whose precise and comprehensive terms should never be relegated to, say, information unimportant to faith or to the undergirding of such important doctrines as the inerrancy of Scripture. It is self-evident that the received prophetic Scriptures and Gospels are purposefully imbued with chronological content, and this fact should be seen as emphasizing the value of studied examination of chronology as an integral element pertaining to special revelation, revelation that has been authoritatively communicated for the creature's benefit, and especially so as it connects with God's redemptive working in the Person of His Incarnate Son.

Outline Studies in Biblical Chronology

A Continuous Chronology from Creation to the Cross

Ch. 10: The Passion of Our Lord and the Birth of the Church

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The Passion of Our Lord and The Birth of The Church

An Elaborated Biblical Chronology

Preface

The traditionally accepted view of the chronology of our Lord's passion maintains that Jesus was arrested one night in the Garden of Gethsemane, examined before the Sanhedrin and the High Priest that same night, sent to trial before Pilate early in the morning, escorted to Herod for examination and questioning, then returned to Pilate for the exchange-release of Barabbas together with final sentencing unto death by crucifixion. After sentencing He is forced to participate in a slow-moving entourage along the Via Dolorosa leading up to Golgotha where He is nailed to a Roman cross by 9:00 a.m. It somewhat strains one's imagination to ponder how all these events could be arranged, some certainly without advance warning or preparation, in such a brief period during the previous night and morning of the very day when the Passover lamb was to be sacrificed. Not only does such an extensive array of events occurring in such a brief span of time stagger the mind, it is also true that the sign of Jonah could not possibly be fulfilled in its truly literal terms if Christ did indeed fulfill the most definitive sign He gave concerning His Messiahship. Multiple sources have constructed schemes whereby the '3-day–3-night' sign of Jonah might be "rationally reckoned" with a Friday crucifixion, followed by a Sunday morning resurrection. However, the fact of the matter remains that terms of the sign of Jonah must be "strangely elasticized" to fit into any such hypothesized chronology of our Lord's passion.

Several perplexing issues arise when contemplating this nominally accepted chronology.

- Can the authority and infallibility of Scripture really be sustained if qualified contradictions must be allowed in texts containing statements with plain, time-specific chronological detail?
- If quite "elasticized" treatments of chronological statements are deemed legitimate, what are the implications for a literal-linguistic-historical hermeneutic when seeking to understand and interpret other Biblical texts?
- How do we decide which other texts communicating information with specificity comparable to the sign of Jonah should be granted similar interpretive license?

It is the author's conviction that we should never be content to negotiate the accuracy and authority of plain statements of Scripture to sustain traditionally accepted views or practices, even those with long-standing acceptance among conservative scholars. Further, compromise ought to be met with outright rejection when plain statements of fact are unambiguously validated in Scripture. It is also the author's thesis that the Bible, from Genesis onward, contains sufficient, coherently-consistent information to support a literal fulfillment of passages communicating chronological content. The Christian faith rests on the immovable foundation of an authoritatively-infallible Bible, and a purported failure of a precise historical fulfillment of chronological detail in explicit statements uttered by the Lord Jesus Christ pertaining to His personal uniqueness and surpassing work of redemption deserves studied examination and forceful refutation.

A critical analysis of the temporal flow of the events surrounding the time of our Lord's passion is described in this study. It is argued that the Scriptures contain a wholly consistent, internal chronology of the events surrounding our Lord's passion. Specifically, a chronology of our Lord's passion that is based entirely on prophetic, typological, and historical texts is proposed which stands in stark conflict with the nominally accepted chronology. There is no intention underlying this work to depreciate in any way our celebration of Good Friday when we remember, in a particularly focused and profoundly significant way, our Lord's death until He comes again for His saints. The aim rather is directed toward demonstrating that the Scriptures are authoritatively reliable in the full scope of literal terms used to describe the events surrounding our Lord's passion, and that we can confidently state: "not one word of our Lord's plain words has failed".

Introductory Remarks

The purpose of this report is to set forth a proposed chronology of that period of our Lord's earthly life often referred to as the time of His passion. Specifically, we endeavor a chronological detailing of the time extending from His Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem and continuing through the birth of the Church on Pentecost. As such, the presented chronology seeks to establish the temporal order of events during this most significant period in the history of the world since creation. In discerning the chronological flow of key events in this brief period of time, it is the author's intention to undergird all temporal sequencing solely with unambiguous detail clearly stated within the texts of Holy Scripture: hence the subtitle, *"A Biblical Chronology"*. Further, it is the author's thesis that the Scriptures provide sufficient temporal information to construct a chronology of our Lord's passion that achieves a coherent consistency between all texts containing pertinent chronological detail, both prophetic and historic.

Author's Note: The qualified term "proposed chronology" is used in the above paragraph because the temporal sequencing of events in our Lord's passion presented here conflicts with the flow of the events as traditionally understood over recent centuries of church history. The presented chronology also exposes some "interpretive conflicts" relative to a number of respected commentaries and explanatory notes appearing in several Study Bibles. However, since the presented chronology derives solely from straightforward statements of Scripture, and involves a synthesis that satisfies the overarching criterion of internal consistency and coherency, the author believes that the chronology given here can be properly subtitled *"A Biblical Chronology"*.

When it comes to a studied consideration of God's pure, refined and true Word, no expressed detail in the authoritative text should be dismissed as unimportant, especially in regard to the works of God. And, to the present topic, none of the works of God surpass His mighty and glorious work of redeeming lost sinners from their helpless state of just and eternal condemnation. Furthermore, since God is sovereign and immutably true, we should expect that all chronological detail in His prophetic declarations have, or will have, explicit fulfillment in real time and with impeccable precision. Temporal information contained in His prophetic declarations must necessarily be found to be true when examined in the light of infallible Scriptural accounts detailing their historical fulfillment.

To this point, it is the author's thesis that the Scriptures contain two rigid chronologies that must be fulfilled in the days of our Lord's passion. The first pertains to that chronology associated with the festival of Passover – the most significant and widely-known parable of redemption in the entire history of Israel. Even a cursory study of Scripture readily reveals the prophetic and typological significance of the inaugural enactment of Passover to God's redemptive purpose and plan accomplished through His Incarnate Son. The Lamb of God who, because He was sacrificed as the "Passover Lamb" for sinners, is God's appointed Substitute who takes away the sin of the world.

The second rigid chronology in view is that pertaining to an astounding detail in the life of the prophet Jonah; namely, his being embodied for three days and three nights in the belly of a sea monster. The experience of Jonah holds profound prophetic and typological relevance to the Son's accomplishment of redemption for sinful man in a way similar to that of the Passover. The significance of Jonah's prophetic type is unmistakable because our Lord, on multiple occasions, referred to it in quite explicit terms as the supreme and most definitive sign that would validate His claim to be Israel's Messiah and the long-promised Redeemer.

Insisting on a strict fulfillment of these two prophetic types is pivotal to constructing a consistent chronology of the last weeks of our Lord's earthly ministry. The Scriptural texts for each of the two prophetic types contain time-specific information, and to brush such content aside in order to justify a chronology which contradicts explicit statements, is to sacrifice truth on the altar of and for the sake of

tradition. Truth is sacred, and is worth searching out and contending for, even if alternate and entrenched rationalizations have to be broken down and discarded.

"Do not think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish, but to fulfill." *Matt. 5:17*

"Jesus answered them, 'Has it not been written in your Law ...? ... (and the Scripture cannot be broken).'" *John 10:34-35*

Common rationalizations of some extant chronologies of our Lord's passion involve a figurative and elastic 'compression' of the meaning of the word "day" as it is used in Scripture. However, in the very same texts where Yahweh's explicit commands appear pertaining to Israel's great feast days, including Passover, the definition He employs in His use of the word "day" is clearly articulated. It is in fact consistent with His earliest definition of the term, that which He specified at the beginning of creation.

Comment: The meaning of the word "day", as it is has been clearly articulated in Scripture since the beginning of creation, always refers to an "evening-to-evening" period of time.

"And God called the light Day, and the darkness He called Night. And the evening and the morning were the first day." *Gen. 1:5*

When a set number of time-specific "day-night" periods is delineated, no interpretive basis exists for altering its meaning to refer to some incomplete set of full "night-day" cycles (12-hour night, 12-hour day cycles).

Comment: The Hebrew reckoning of "day" always included the time period extending from sunset to sunset (from evening to evening).

"In the 1st month, on the 14th day of the month *at evening*, you shall eat unleavened bread, until the 21st day of the month *at evening*."

Ex. 12:18

"In the 1st month, on the 14th day of the month *between the 2 evenings* is the LORD's Passover."

Lev. 32:5

"... from *evening until evening* you shall keep your Sabbath." *Lev. 32:32*

As an example of a text where the above comments apply, consider the following statement in reference to a servant David encounters while hiding as a fugitive under King Saul.

"And they gave him a piece of fig cake and two clusters of raisins, and he ate; then his spirit revived. For he had not eaten bread or drunk water for 3 days and 3 nights." *1 Sam. 30:12*

The whole context, containing a number of explicit details, argues strongly for a literal interpretation of the duration of the period of time (3 days and 3 nights) that David was without food and water, a time period which must be understood as being as literal as the specific foods he was offered.

The chronology presented herein respects the definition and use of the term "day" as being consistent with usage in the texts quoted in the comment statements above. Further, it achieves a synchronization with a precise harmony of all events surrounding Biblical accounts of our Lord's crucifixion and resurrection – even a synchronization that unifies all time-specific information pertaining to these and related events noted in the broader scope of Scriptural accounts.

The presentation which follows begins with a laying of groundwork essential to the proposed chronology. A correlation of the two pivotal chronologies, namely those of the Passover Pattern and the Sign of Jonah, is then presented. An important aspect integral to the coherency of the chronology is then addressed; namely, the pivotal place of the Feasts of First Fruits and Pentecost. The point is made that the salvific significance of these feasts finds a particular and noteworthy fulfillment in the birth of the Church. The chapter closes with considerations pertaining to the place of the Last Supper within the full Passover Pattern, exposing again conflict between Biblical specifications and traditional understanding of the sequential flow of events.

Part 1. An Elaboration of Pivotal Chronological Constraints

The Passover Pattern

The Scriptures declare unequivocally that Christ is “our Passover” (*1 Cor. 5:7*), the anointed and appointed One who was sacrificed for our redemption. Such a statement implies that the Jewish festival/rite of Passover, in its divinely ordered pattern and purpose, has prophetic-specific and deeply-typological connections with our Lord in His passion. The death of the Passover lamb prefiguring the death of the Incarnate Son of God, plus the pivotal role of Passover in securing release of Israel from their bondage in Egypt, along with their formation as a people living in unique relationship with Yahweh, are elements having both a prophetic and a typological significance in the glorious outcome of our Lord’s passion; namely, the singular basis for transferring sinners from the domain of darkness and bondage into the light and liberty of life in Christ. We should, therefore, expect to find the pattern pertaining to the Passover lamb to have a detailed fulfillment in the passion of our Lord.

“This month shall be the beginning of months for you;”

Ex. 12:2

“On the 10th of the month they are each one to take a lamb for themselves, ... Your lamb shall be an unblemished male a year old; ... And you shall keep it until the 14th day of the same month, then the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel is to kill it at twilight.”

Ex. 12:3-6

“Now this day will be a memorial to you, and you shall celebrate it as a feast to the LORD; throughout your generations you are to celebrate it as a permanent ordinance.” *Ex. 12:14*

“Seven days you shall eat unleavened bread, ... And on the 1st day you shall have a holy assembly, and another holy assembly on the 7th day; ...”

“You shall also observe the Feast of Unleavened Bread, ...”

“In the 1st month, on the 14th day of the month at evening, you shall eat unleavened bread, until the 21st day of the month at evening. Seven days there shall be no leaven found in your houses;”

Ex. 12:15-20

The pattern for Passover is clearly set forth in *Ex. 12*.

The lamb is selected on the 10th of Nisan and killed on the 14th of Nisan.

The intervening days were days of observation (testing) to prove that the lamb was without blemish.

We note that these days, the 10th and 14th of Nisan, are fixed – they define the beginning and ending of Passover irrespective of the days of the week on which they fell.

Month	10 th day of	11 th day of	12 th day of	13 th day of	14 th day of
Nisan	Nisan	Nisan	Nisan	Nisan	Nisan
	Passover lamb	Lamb	Lamb	Lamb	Passover
	selected	observed	observed	observed	lamb killed

The Feast of Unleavened Bread encompassed a whole week (7 days) and immediately followed the day on which the Passover lamb was sacrificed.

The Feast began on the 15th of Nisan and continued through the 21st of Nisan, and both of these ‘book-end’ days of the Feast were hallowed as High Sabbath days.

Month	15 th of	16 th of	17 th of	18 th of	19 th of	20 th of	21 st of
Nisan	Nisan	Nisan	Nisan	Nisan	Nisan	Nisan	Nisan
	High						High
	Sabbath						Sabbath
	Day						Day

The Sign of Jonah

The sign of Jonah is a decidedly time-specific period which our Lord referred to with such definitive emphasis that we should expect to read of its precise and detailed fulfillment. No less authority than our Lord spoke of this sign in explicit terms, marking it on multiple occasions as the key sign validating His Messiahship. The terms of the sign require that the period of time the body of Jesus rested in the tomb, following its placement there by Joseph of Arimathea on the eve of the Passover sacrifice until His glorious resurrection on the dawn of the first day of the week, would correlate with a most reasonable specificity with the 3 days and 3 nights that the prophet Jonah spent in the belly of a sea monster.

"And the Passover of the Jews was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. ... And He made a scourge of chords, and drove them all out of the Temple. ... The Jews ... said to Him, 'What sign do You show to us, seeing that You do these things?' Jesus answered and said to them, 'Destroy this temple, and in 3 days I will raise it up.' ... But He was speaking of the temple of His body."
John 2:13-21

"And He began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and the chief priests and the scribes, and be killed, and after 3 days rise again. And He was stating the matter plainly."
Mk. 8:31-32a

"Then some of the scribes and Pharisees answered Him, saying, 'Teacher, we want to see a sign from You.' But He answered and said to them, 'An evil and adulterous generation craves a sign; and yet no sign shall be given to it but the sign of Jonah the prophet; for just as Jonah the prophet was 3 days and 3 nights in the belly of the sea monster, so shall the Son of Man be 3 days and 3 nights in the heart of the earth.'
Matt. 12:38-40

[See "Part 1. Appendix A" (pp. 171-173) for a summary of related texts and brief comment.]

The text of *Lk. 24* is strongly suggestive of the factual fulfillment of the sign of Jonah. When our Lord walked and discoursed with the two disciples on the Emmaus road on Resurrection Sunday, these two disciples commented that three days had elapsed since that day when Jesus was delivered over to death and was crucified. Note the text and comment below.

"And they said to Him, 'The things about Jesus of Nazareth ... how the chief priests and our rulers delivered Him up to the sentence of death, and crucified Him. But we were hoping that it was He who was going to redeem Israel. Indeed, besides all this, *it is the third day since these things happened.*' "
Lk. 24:19-21

Comment:

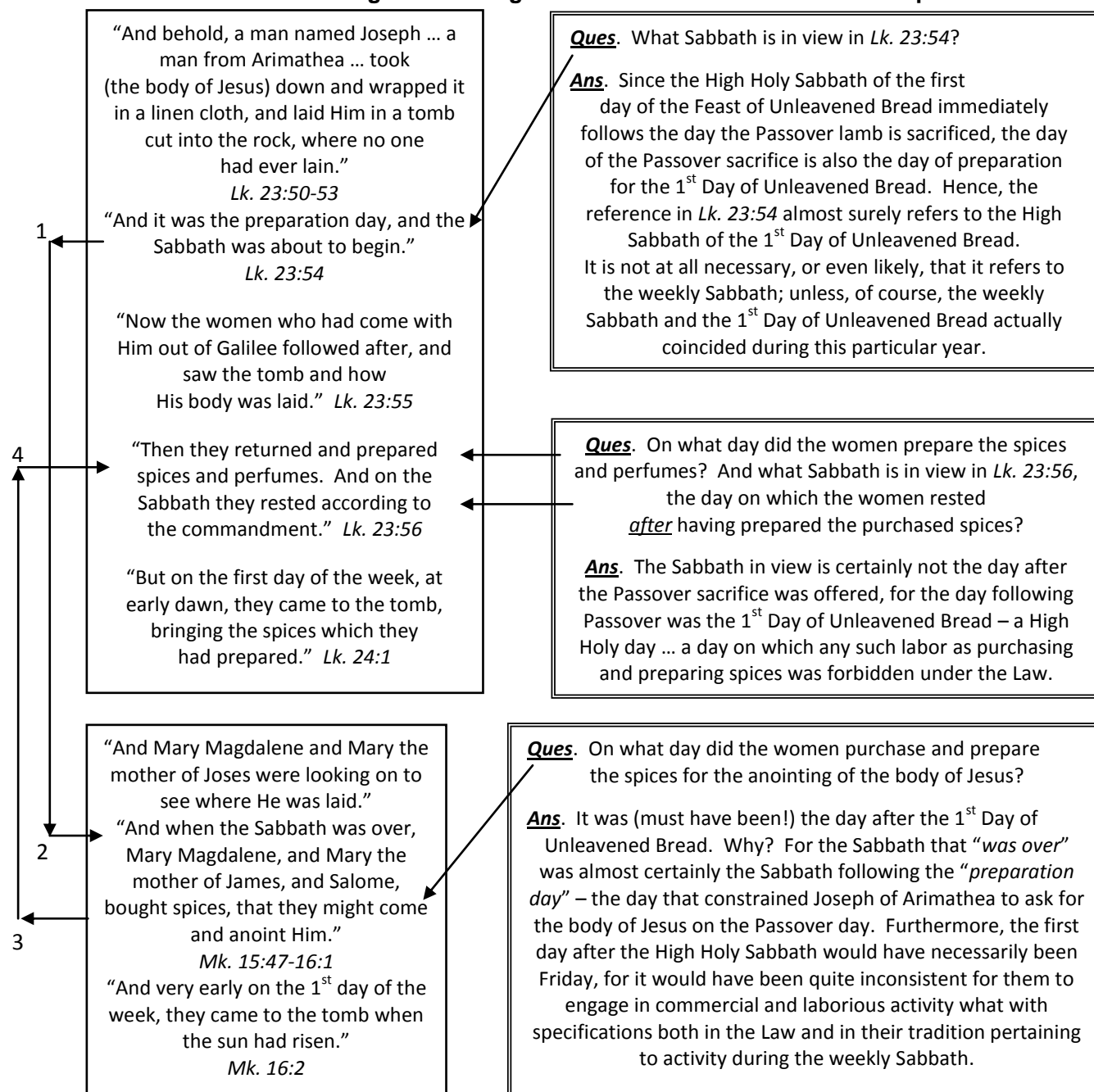
The Greek Interlinear text presents the last phrase of *Lk. 24:21* as, reading in a direct transliteration (a direct word-for-word manner):
"these things 3rd this day brings today from which these things happened".
The wording seems to support the paraphrased sense:
"three days have elapsed between the crucifixion and today, and this is now the fourth day".

It seems quite clear that nothing short of a literal fulfillment of the sign of Jonah is intended by the Biblical text. Furthermore, the sign of Jonah was taken seriously by Jesus' enemies as they petitioned Pilate for a guard at the tomb precisely because of the widespread knowledge of His emphasis of the importance of this sign as a validation of His claims.

"Now on the next day, which was the one after the preparation, the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered together with Pilate, and said, 'Sir, we remember that when He was still alive that deceiver said, "After three days I am to rise again." Therefore, give orders for the grave to be made secure until the third day ...' " *Matt. 27:62-64*

- Note #1: *Acts 10:40* and *I Cor. 15:4* give validating support for the fulfillment of the Sign of Jonah.
- Note #2: "Part. 1 Appendix A" (pp. 171-173), as noted above, provides a compilation of texts speaking to the duration of time between the burial of our Lord's body and His resurrection from the dead.

A Correlative and Chronological Ordering of Details in Luke's and Mark's Gospels



Comment. It is logically clear that purchase of spices and perfumes and preparation for the anointing of Christ's body occurred after both Passover day and the first High Sabbath of Unleavened Bread, but yet before the beginning of the weekly Sabbath (a necessary inference since the women were fully prepared for anointing the body very early on the first day of the week). Hence, it is convincingly essential that at least one intervening day existed during which normal business activity and physical labor were both possible and permissible *between* the 1st Day of Unleavened Bread *and* the weekly Sabbath. Further, specifics of the sign of Jonah require that this be but a single day, namely Friday.

Note: A presentation of the above correlative analysis in an alternate form containing amplified detail appears in Figure 1 (see next page). Figure 1 contains a layout exhibiting the correlation of relevant texts with greater clarity and better suited for possible distribution in lecture contexts.

The Prescribed Passover Calendar An Elaborated Chronology of Events in the Year of our Lord's Passion: Part 1

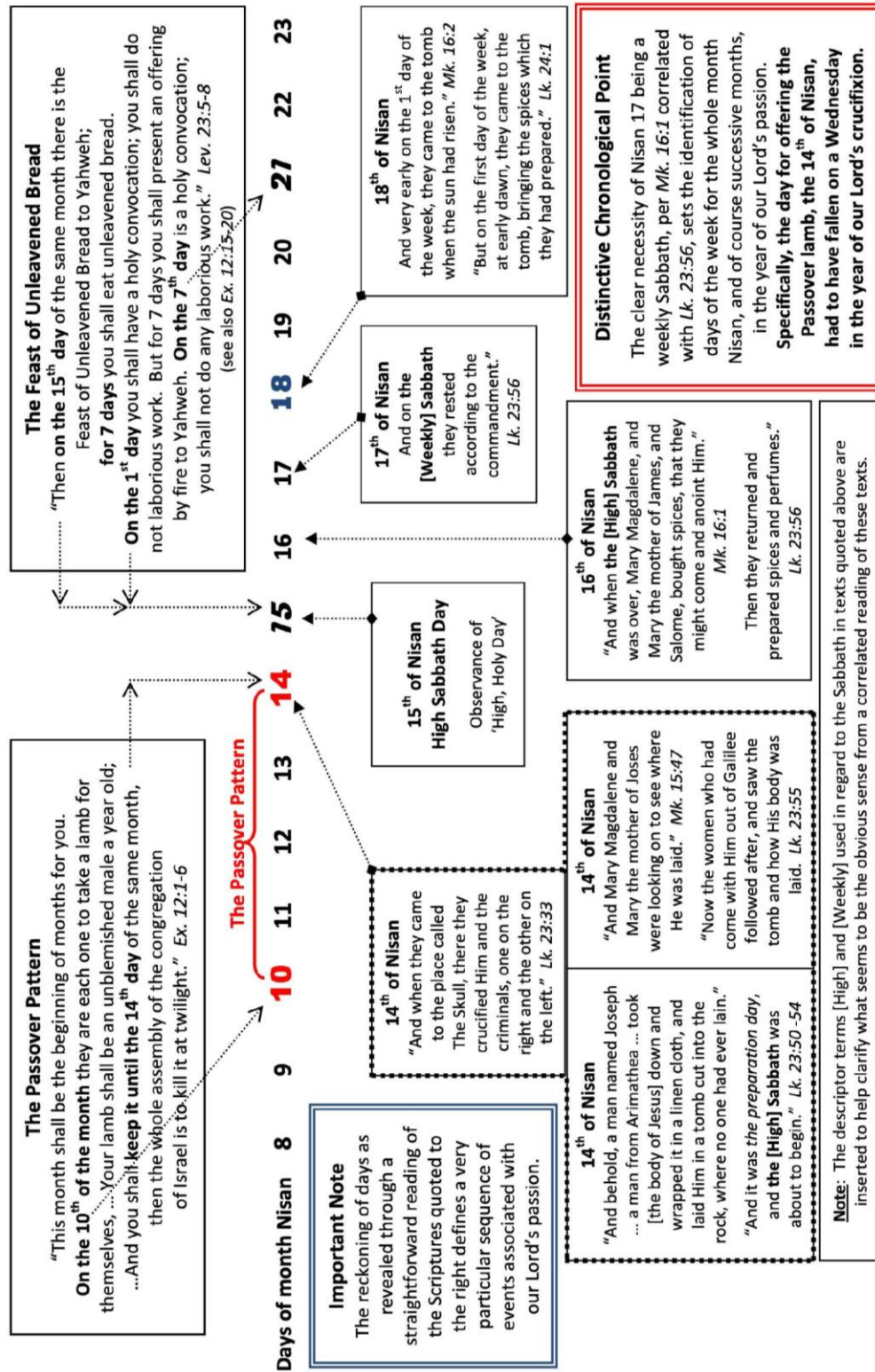


Figure 1. An Elaborated Chronology of Events in the Year of our Lord's Passion #1

A Correlated Union of the Passover Pattern and the Sign of Jonah

Three key questions of pivotal importance relative to a chronology of our Lord's passion are:

- On what day of the week was the Lord arrested, initiating the Passover pattern; that is, on what day of the week did the 10th of Nisan fall in the year our Lord was crucified?
- What was the temporal relationship between the High Sabbath (i.e., the 15th of Nisan) initiating the Feast of Unleavened Bread and the weekly Sabbath in the year of our Lord's crucifixion?
- Since the resurrection of our Lord occurred on the 1st day of the week (i.e., immediately following the weekly Sabbath during this week of Passover), is there sufficient time to fit the sign of Jonah and the Passover pattern within this 'week of weeks' in history?

Based on careful analysis, from a chronological perspective, of the records of our Lord's burial contained in the Gospels of Luke and Mark, it seems a requirement that the High Sabbath of the 1st Day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread and the weekly Sabbath during the week of His crucifixion were separated by a single day – Friday of Passover week. With this key and rigidly rooted result in hand, a definitive merging of the chronologies of the Passover Pattern and the Sign of Jonah becomes possible – a merging wherein both of these vitally important signs relating to our Lord's passion can be seen as having been fulfilled with rigorous precision.

A Combined Chronology – The Passover Pattern & The Sign of Jonah					
Month Nisan	10 th of Nisan Jesus arrested	11 th of Nisan Jesus on trial	12 th of Nisan Jesus on trial	13 th of Nisan Jesus on trial	14 th of Nisan Jesus crucified
	<i>Note:</i> Since the 10 th fell on the Sabbath, the arrest occurred at the evening				
	Saturday	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday
Month Nisan	14 th of Nisan Crucifixion of our Lord	15 th of Nisan	16 th of Nisan	17 th of Nisan	18 th of Nisan Resurrection of our Lord
		Day #1 in tomb	Day #2 in tomb	Day #3 in tomb	
	Night #1 in tomb	Night #2 in tomb	Night #3 in tomb	Resurrection as 1 st day of week begins	
	Passover Day (lamb slain)	High Sabbath (1 st of Unleavened Bread)		Weekly Sabbath	1 st day of the week
	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday

In the union of these two time-specific signs relating to our Lord's passion there is another chronological consideration that begs for analysis: the scheduling of the Feast of First Fruits. Per the specific instruction in *Lev. 23*, the Feast of First Fruits is scheduled to occur in the midst of the week-long (actually, a period extending over 8 days) Feast of Unleavened Bread. In particular, the text of *Lev. 23:11* (see also *Lev. 23:15*) specifies that the sheaf of first fruits of the harvest is to be presented before Yahweh on "*the day after the Sabbath*" (*alt.*, "*the morrow after the Sabbath*" KJV). The pivotal interpretive question requiring resolution is:

Which Sabbath is in view? Is it the first High Sabbath, or is it the weekly Sabbath intermediate to the 'book-end' Sabbaths of the Feast of Unleavened Bread?

An Elaborated Chronology of Events in the Year of our Lord's Passion: Part 2

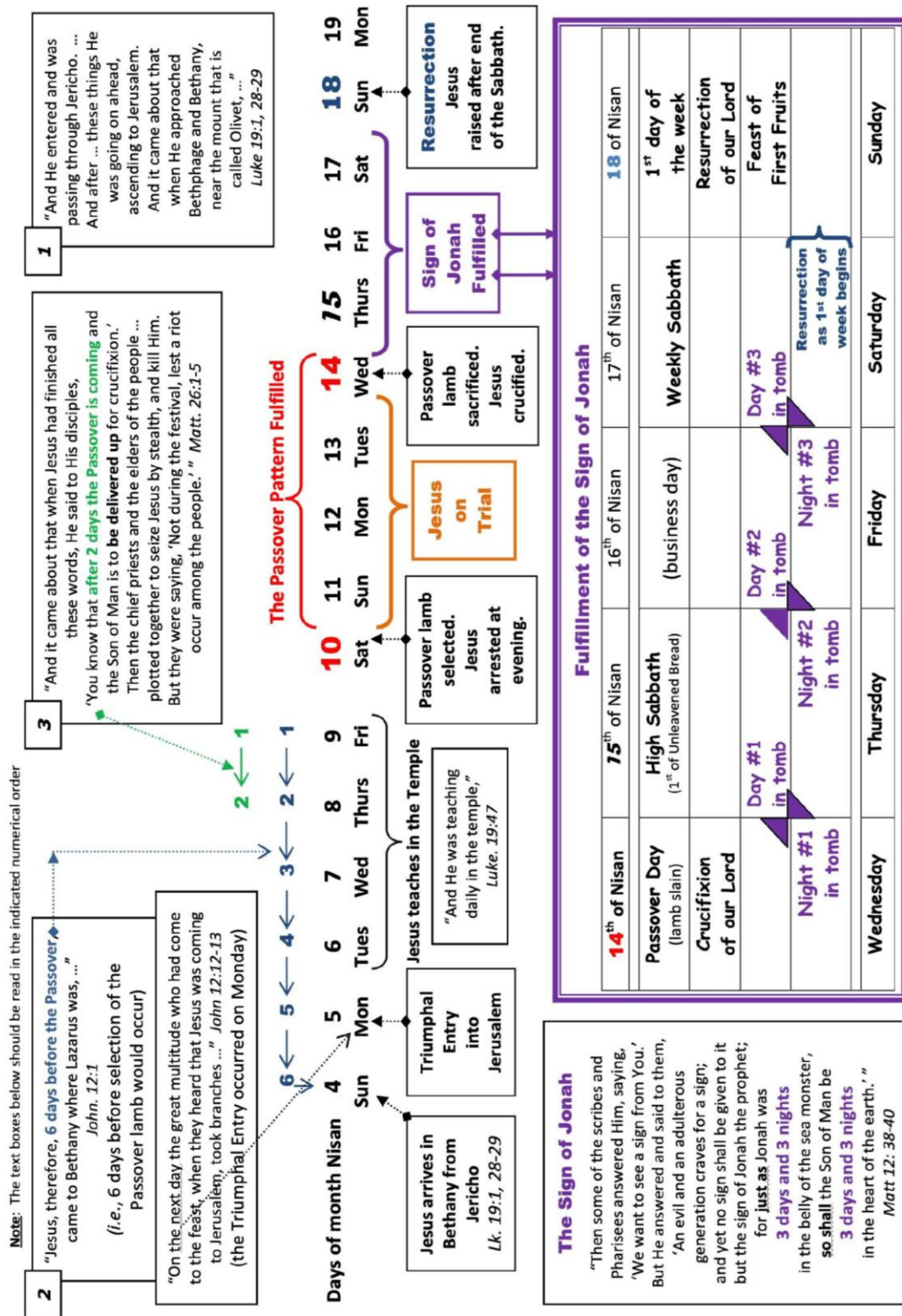


Figure 2. An Elaborated Chronology of Events in the Year of our Lord's Passion #2

Issues Pertaining to the Appointed Feasts of Yahweh

Appointed Times (Feasts) for Israel The Festival of Passover and The Feast of Unleavened Bread

“The LORD spoke again to Moses, saying,
‘Speak to the sons of Israel, and say to them,
“The LORD’s appointed times which you shall
proclaim as holy convocations – My appointed
times are these: ...” ’ ”

Lev. 23:1-2

“In the 1st month, on the 14th day of the month
at twilight is the LORD’S Passover.”

“Then on the 15th day of the same month there
is the Feast of Unleavened Bread to the LORD;
for 7 days you shall eat unleavened bread.”

“On the 1st day you shall have a holy
convocation; you shall do no laborious work.”

“But for 7 days you shall present an offering
by fire to the LORD.

On the 7th day is a holy convocation;
you shall not do any laborious work.”

Lev. 23:5-8

Appointed Time (Feasts) for Israel The Feast of First Fruits and

The Feast of Weeks (Pentecost or Harvest)

“Then the LORD spoke to Moses saying, ‘Speak to the
sons of Israel, and say to them, “When you enter the
land which I am going to give to you and reap its
harvest, then you shall bring in the sheaf of the first
fruits of your harvest to the priest. And he shall wave
the sheaf before the LORD for you to be accepted;
on the day after the sabbath the priest shall wave it.” ’ ”

Lev. 23:9-11

“You shall also count for yourselves from *the day after
the sabbath*, from the day when you brought in the
sheaf of the wave offering; there shall be 7 complete
sabbaths. You shall count 50 days to the day
after the 7th sabbath; then you shall present a
new grain offering to the LORD.” ...

“On this same day you shall make a proclamation as
well; you are to have a holy convocation. You shall do
no laborious work. It is to be a perpetual statute in all
your dwelling places throughout your generations.”

Lev. 23:15-21

The pivotal question pertaining to the timing of the Feast of First Fruits is: What day is in view in the phrase “*the day after the Sabbath*”? There are only two possible answers to the question.

- It refers to the day after the inaugural High Sabbath of the Feast of Unleavened Bread. That is, the Feast of First Fruits perpetually falls on the 16th of Nisan.
- Alternatively, it refers to the day after the weekly Sabbath that falls somewhere within the week-long festival of the Feast of Unleavened Bread. That is, the Feast of First Fruits perpetually falls on the 1st day of the week (i.e. on Sunday).

Stated in an alternate way, the options for the scheduling of the Feast of First Fruits are:

- The feast day is tied tightly to the High Sabbath – the day immediately following the High Sabbath associated with the 1st day of Unleavened Bread.
- The feast day is tied specifically to the weekly Sabbath – the day immediately following the weekly Sabbath (i.e., it perpetually falls on the 1st day of the week ... a day which necessarily lies sometime within the full span of days prescribed for the Feast of Unleavened Bread)

Numerous commentaries and Study Bibles suggest that the correct interpretive answer is the one noted first in the set of bullet points listed above. That is, these sources suggest that one is to take the statements in *Lev. 23:11, 15* as referring to the day after the High Sabbath of the Feast of Unleavened Bread – the 16th of Nisan. This view is seemingly presented without any substantive consideration of attendant chronological information possibly constraining that interpretation, and most often without any basis for rejecting the alternate answer to the question.

It is the opinion of this author that the widely promulgated interpretive choice, which assumes the “*day after the Sabbath*” to refer to the 16th of Nisan, has serious implications regarding the prophetic type communicated by both the Feast of First Fruits and the Feast of Pentecost. The Feast of First Fruits is surely a prophetic type with direct typical reference to the resurrection of Christ, that event which with certainty occurred on the 1st day of the week (i.e., on the day immediately after the weekly Sabbath).

“But now is Christ risen from the dead,
the first fruits of those who are asleep.
For since by a man came death, by a man
came the resurrection of the dead.
For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ will all
be made alive. But each in his own order:
Christ the first fruits, after that those who are
Christ’s at His coming.”
1 Cor. 15:20-23
“That Christ should suffer, and that He should
be the first that should rise from the dead, ...”
Acts 26:23 (KJV)

“He is also head of the body, the church;
and He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead,
so that He Himself will come to have first place
in everything.” *Col. 1:18*
“... Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness,
and the first begotten from the dead, ...”
Rev. 1:5 (KJV)
“And not only this, but also we ourselves,
having the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves
groan within ourselves, waiting eagerly for our
adoption as sons, the redemption of our body.
For in hope we have been saved,” *Rom. 8:23-24a*

The view holding that the Feast of First Fruits necessarily fell on the 16th of Nisan automatically dictated that the day of Pentecost would always fall on the 6th of Sivan, the prescribed date noted in multiple Study Bible notes and charts for the Feast of Pentecost. This date for Pentecost is computed by simply counting 50 days from the 16th of Nisan using an inclusive reckoning of days (i.e., including the 16th of Nisan plus the 6th of Sivan in the counting of 50 days). A chart of the Jewish calendar is included below with a demonstration as to the reckoning of days for these feasts.

Nominal Reckoning of Feasts of First Fruits and Pentecost in the Jewish Calendar				
Sacred Calendar	Sacred Calendar	Days per Month	Gregorian Calendar	Civil Calendar
1 st month	Nisan	30	March – April	7 th month
2 nd month	Iyar	29	April – May	8 th month
3 rd month	Sivan	30	May – June	9 th month

Computation of the 50 day period from First Fruits to Pentecost		
16 th Nisan → 30 th Nisan	1 st Iyar → 29 th Iyar	1 st Sivan → 6 th Sivan
15 days	29 days	6 days
50 days total		

It is quite clear that, if the Feast of First Fruits is persistently set for the 16th of Nisan, the day immediately following the High Sabbath of the 15th, then it is only occasionally possible that Nisan 16 would fall on the first day of the week. Since it is beyond dispute that our Lord arose from the dead on the first day of the week, and since the Scriptures present Christ as the fulfillment of this feast, this interpretive view for the setting of the date for the Feast of First Fruits seems to inject an intra-Biblical inconsistency. Further, fixing the date for the feast to occur on the 16th of Nisan also weakens the longstanding and tightly-held connection between this feast and the Church’s celebration of the Lord’s Day on the first day of the week. Does the Lord’s Day only on occasional years correspond to the day set in the Law for the Feast of First Fruits?

By contrast, *IF* the day after the weekly Sabbath (i.e., always falling on the 1st day of the week) is indeed the selected date for the Feast of First Fruits, *THEN* the stipulated span covering both seven Sabbaths and 50 days (using inclusive reckoning) will consistently place *both* the Feast of First Fruits *and* the Feast of Pentecost *on a Sunday*. This interpretive view affords strict textual consistency and, furthermore, comports fully with the historical record in the year Christ was crucified. It is, in fact, the firmly held thesis of this author that the latter interpretation for the dates for the Feasts of First Fruits and Pentecost, as they are Biblically set in relation to Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread, is not only preferred, but in truth must be the proper, even necessary, interpretation.

The Feasts of First Fruits and Pentecost: Layout of Chronological Options

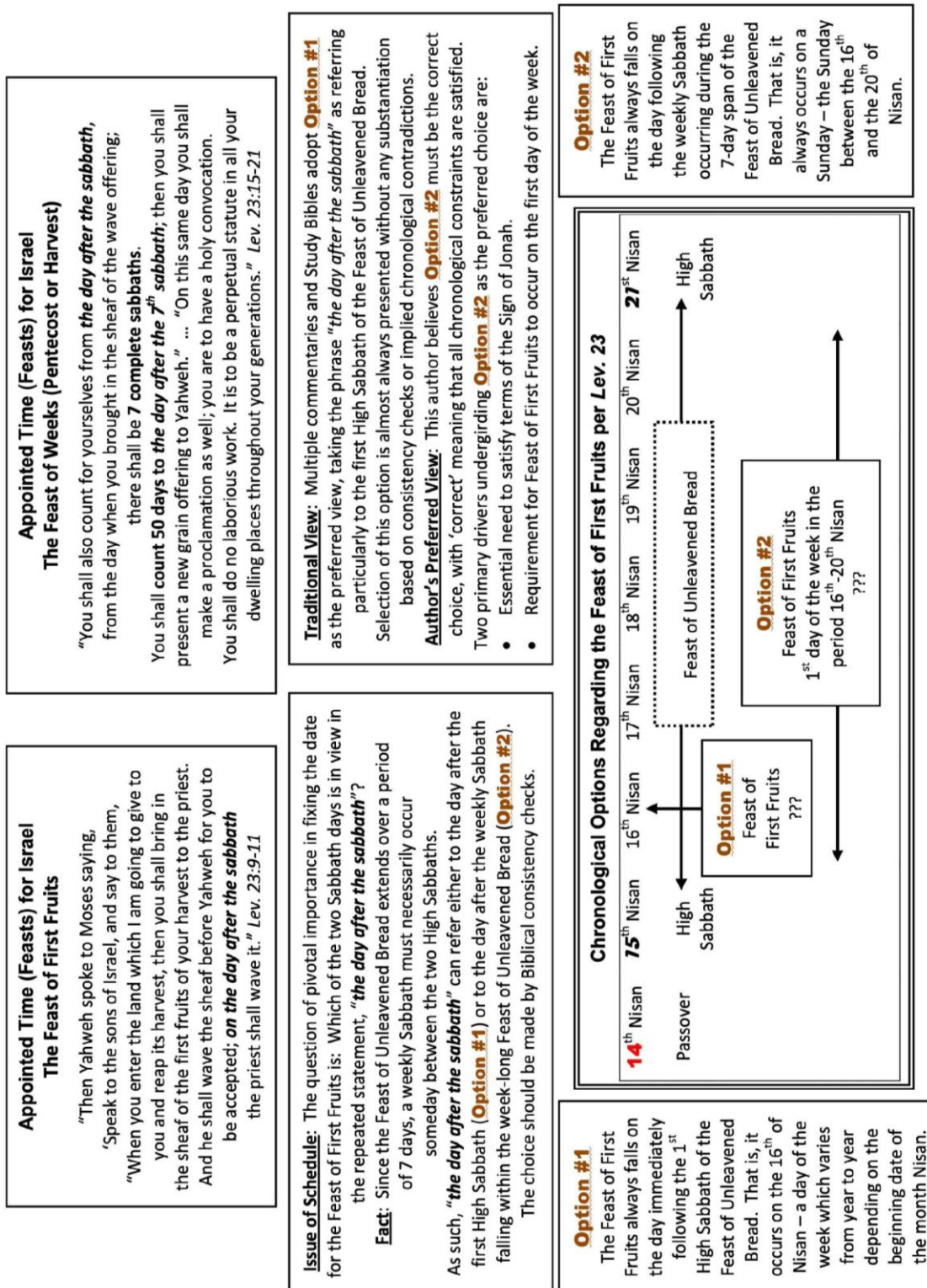
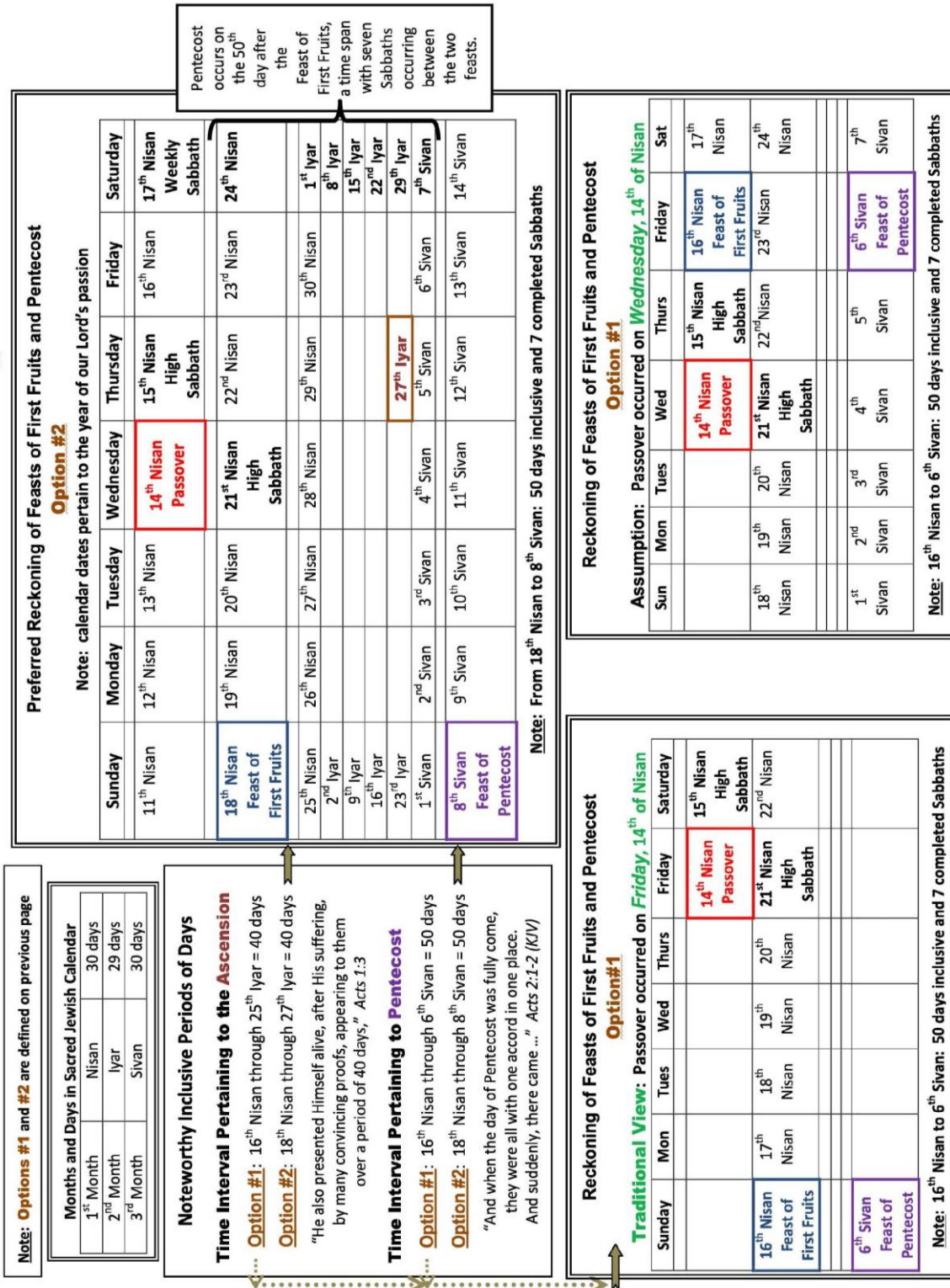


Figure 3. The Feasts of First Fruits and Pentecost: An Elaborated Chronology #1

The Feasts of First Fruits and Pentecost: An Elaborated Chronology



Pentecost occurs on the 50th day after the Feast of First Fruits, a time span with seven Sabbaths occurring between the two feasts.

Figure 4. The Feasts of First Fruits and Pentecost: An Elaborated Chronology #2

Scheduled Dates for Feasts of First Fruits and Pentecost per Differing Chronological Options

Dates for Yahweh's Appointed Times: Comparing Options for the Feasts of First Fruits and Pentecost					
	Option #1	Option #2	Option #1	Option #2	Option #3
Nisan 14 Passover Lamb Slain	1 st High Sabbath (Passover Shabbat)	Feast of First Fruits on day after High Sabbath	Feast of First Fruits on day after High Sabbath	Δ Feast of First Fruits on day after Δ (1 st Weekly Sabbath) Δ	Δ Feast of Weeks Δ Pentecost Δ (Shavuot)
Dates under Corrected chronology	Nisan 15 Thursday	Nisan 16 Friday	Nisan 16 Friday	Nisan 18 Sunday	Sivan 8 Sunday
Dates under Traditional chronology	Nisan 15 Saturday	Nisan 16 Sunday	Nisan 16 Sunday	Nisan 16 Sunday	Sivan 6 Sunday

Note #1
The Law was given at Sinai early in the 3rd month of Israel's journey from Egypt; that is, in the month Sivan when Pentecost was scheduled.

"In the 3rd month after the sons of Israel had gone out of the land of Egypt, on that very day they came into the wilderness of Sinai." Ex. 19:1

Note #2
"And when the day of Pentecost was being fulfilled (fully come, [KJV]), they were all in one place. And suddenly ... they were all filled with the Holy Spirit ..." Acts 2:1-4

"fully come" [KJV] = in the state of being fulfilled completely, fully accomplished.

The sending of the Spirit during that first Pentecost following our Lord's crucifixion was a fulfillment of the implicit "prophetic-type" purposed in the institution of the Feast of Pentecost.

Note #3
The Sabbath principle, established as an age-enduring creation ordinance, and given particularly poignant and forceful emphasis in the Law, was never intended to have a destined end once the prophetic type of the appointed times of First Fruits and Pentecost were fulfilled.

Quite to the contrary, the enduring purpose of the Sabbath was to simply shift one day, from the last day of the week to the first day of the week, and to do so in hallowed commemoration of Christ's resurrection and of the Father's and the Son's sending forth of the Holy Spirit, that pivotal action which gave birth to this new redemptive agency called the Church, the bride of Christ.

Figure 5. Scheduled Dates for the Feasts of First Fruits and Pentecost Under Differing Chronological Options

A Coordinated Chronological Layout of Our Lord's Passion

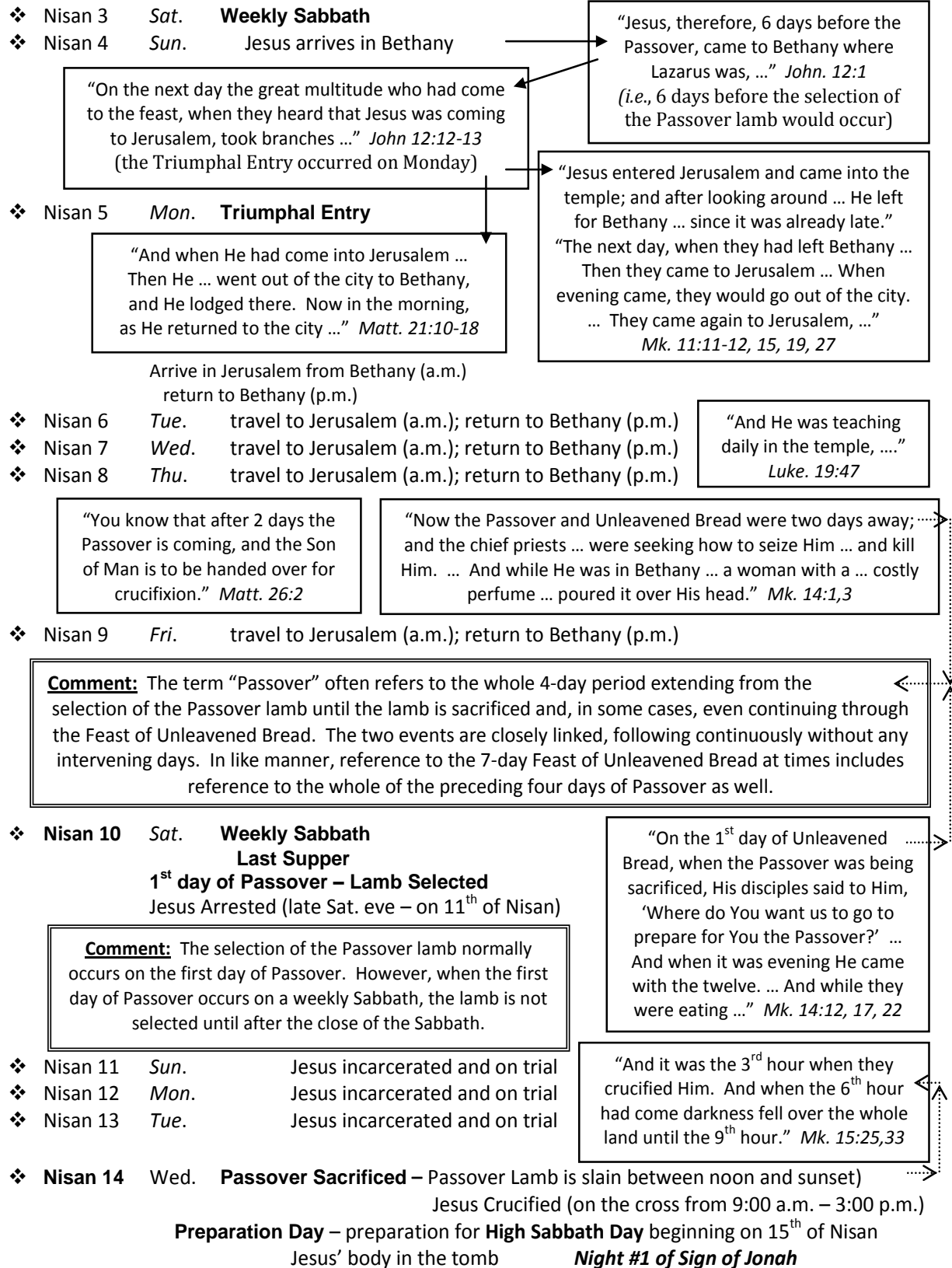
Thus far no consideration has been given to the full scope of events that occurred in the weeks immediately preceding our Lord's crucifixion and resurrection. In particular, it should be noted that *IF* the Lord Jesus was indeed arrested on the evening following the close of a weekly Sabbath, as already proposed in the preceding discussion of the Passover Pattern, *THEN* the Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem must have taken place some days prior to His arrest. The proposed chronology would, therefore, require not only an adjustment per the usual understanding that our Lord was crucified on Friday, but would also require a rescheduling of the day nominally celebrated as Palm Sunday. There is the implication that these two days, as they are commonly set in the Christian calendar, correspond to the actual days of the week on which their historic precedents occurred. However, that is an assumption that rests on medieval church practice, and seems not to derive from any careful chronological synthesis that achieves consistency between the multiple Biblical texts that provide both the prophetic type and the historical detail of real events.

The origin of Good Friday as the day of commemoration of our Lord's crucifixion in the Christian Church calendar is unclear, but it certainly dates back to medieval times and, perhaps, even prior to the 7th century. The origin of the celebration of Palm Sunday one week prior to Resurrection Sunday likely had its formative root around the same time.

It is clear from considerations presented here that the nominal church calendar cannot be supported by an 'historical-literal-linguistic' interpretive approach to Scripture. Undoubtedly, the Friday date stems from such statements that our Lord was crucified on a "preparation day", the "day before a Sabbath" (e.g., *Mk.15:42; John 19:14*). As already noted, however, these time designations do not clarify *what Sabbath* and *which preparation day* are in view when simply taken as isolated statements. The nominal setting of the celebration of Palm Sunday one week before Resurrection Sunday, and the commemoration of the crucifixion of our Lord on Good Friday, derives from an interpretive assumption. It is an assumption that necessitates Scripture being viewed as containing quite figurative language allowing an "elastic" meaning of the term "day" along with an unwarranted liberty in interpreting prophetic types. The approach taken here is to consider all reference to historical detail in Scripture as nothing less than literal history presented with infallible rigor and requiring evidence of precise fulfillment.

On the next two pages a coordinated chronology of the full period of our Lord's passion is attempted, beginning with His Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem, continuing through His glorious resurrection from Joseph of Arimathea's tomb, and then extending further to include the Feast of Pentecost which forms the unmistakable birthday of the Church. The coordinated chronology is developed starting with an insistence that both the Passover Pattern and the Sign of Jonah are fulfilled with literal precision, and that other related time-specific detail pertaining to this time period as recorded in the Gospels is nothing less than a reliable account of true history. The presented chronology is not intended as exhaustive. No detailed layout of certain intervening events, such as our Lord's movements during the days just prior to His arrest, or an unambiguous day-by-day schedule of His trials, or His varied appearances following His resurrection is included. A chronological ordering of some of these intervening events (e.g., His trial before the Sanhedrin, His trials before Pilate and Herod, and the issuing of sentence for His crucifixion) necessarily require some speculation since the Scriptures do not provide fixed, time-specific information relating to their consecutive occurrence at prescribed time intervals. We know that each of these listed events occurred, but beyond this fairly scant Biblical reference exists for assigning specific events to a specific day (i.e., beyond fixing the trial before the Sanhedrin as occurring very early on the 11th of Nisan and that He was sentenced to carry His cross on the Via Dolorosa on the morning of the 14th of Nisan). An attempted layout of these latter events, albeit somewhat speculative at points, appears in Part 2 of this chapter.

The Passion of Our Lord: A Coordinated Biblical Chronology



"The Jews therefore, because it was the day of preparation, so that the bodies should not remain on the cross on the Sabbath (for that Sabbath was a high day)" John 19:31

❖ **Nisan 15 Thu. High Sabbath (1st day of Unleavened Bread)**

Jesus' body in the tomb
Jesus' body in the tomb

Day #1 of Sign of Jonah

Night #2 of Sign of Jonah

❖ **Nisan 16 Fri. Preparation Day – preparation for the weekly Sabbath**

Women purchase and prepare spices to anoint the body of Jesus

"When the **Sabbath** was over, [the women] bought spices, so that they might come and anoint Him." Mk. 16:1

Note: The Sabbath in view is the High Sabbath of the Feast of Unleavened Bread. Purchasing of spices occurred after this Sabbath.

"Then they returned and prepared spices and perfumes. And on the **Sabbath** they rested according to the commandment." Lk. 23:56

Note: The weekly Sabbath is in view. The spices were already purchased and prepared the previous day – that is, on Friday.

Jesus' body in the tomb
Jesus' body in the tomb

Day #2 of Sign of Jonah

Night #3 of Sign of Jonah

❖ **Nisan 17 Sat. Weekly Sabbath**

Jesus' body in the tomb

Day #3 of Sign of Jonah

Resurrection

(occurring at the dawn of the 1st day of the week = early after end of Sabbath)

"And very early on the first day of the week, they came to the tomb when the sun had risen." Mk. 16:2

"Now on the 1st day of the week, very early in the morning, they, and certain other women with them, came to the tomb bringing spices which they had prepared." Lk. 24:1 (NKJV)

"Now on the 1st day of the week Mary Magdalene came early to the tomb, while it was still dark, and saw the stone already taken away from the tomb." John 20:1

"Now after the Sabbath, as the 1st day of the week began to dawn, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came to the tomb." Matt. 28:1 (NKJV)

A.T. Robertson: "Now late on the Sabbath as it began to dawn toward the 1st day of the week, ..." "This careful chronological statement according to Jewish days clearly means that before the Sabbath was over, that is before 6 p.m."

Note: One commentator suggests that "Sabbath" could legitimately be rendered "Sabbaths" – the genitive case and the plural number allowing the verse to begin as: "In the end of the Sabbaths, at the dawning toward the 1st day of the week" ... thus implying two Sabbaths were completed before dawn of the 1st day of the week.

❖ **Nisan 18 Sun. Feast of First Fruits – Resurrection Day (1st day of the week)**

Jesus meets Mary Magdalene, disciples on the road to Emmaus, etc.

❖ **Nisan 19 Mon.**

❖ **Nisan 20 Tue.**

❖ **Nisan 21 Wed. High Sabbath (7th Day of Unleavened Bread)**

(completion of the Feast of Unleavened Bread)

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-
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Ascension: 40 days after the Resurrection
Pentecost: 50 days after the Resurrection

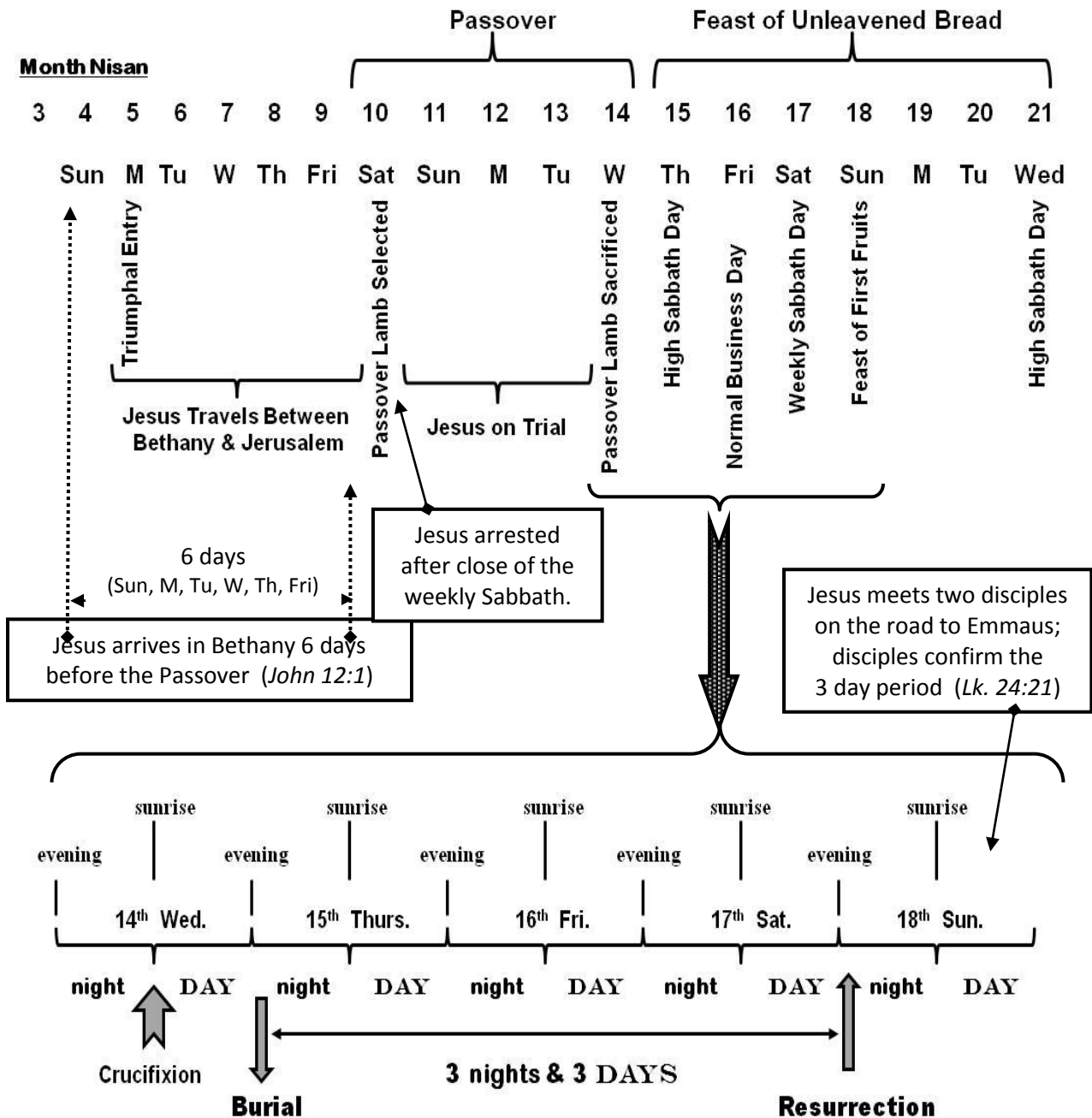
❖ **Sivan 8 Sun. Feast of Pentecost (alt., Feast of Weeks or Harvest)**

The Birthday of the Church

(exactly 50 days following the **Feast of First Fruits**, with 7 completed Sabbaths)

"... He also presented Himself alive, after His suffering, by many convincing proofs, appearing to them over a period of 40 days ..." Acts 1:3

A Chronological Summary of Our Lord's Passion



Comment: Time of the Resurrection

According to this chronology the resurrection occurred after sunset on the weekly Sabbath. The view that it occurred early on Sunday morning is an assumption – no Biblical text demands it. Nothing requires the resurrection to necessarily occur simultaneous with the earthquake and the removal of the stone from the opening of the tomb.

Quote: "Now late on the Sabbath as it began to dawn toward the 1st day of the week" Matt. 28:1."

"This careful chronological statement according to Jewish days clearly means that before the Sabbath was over, that is before 6:00 p.m., this visit was made 'to see the sepulchre'. ... clearly Mark is speaking of sunrise and Matthew of sunset. Why allow only one visit for the anxious women?" A.T. Robertson "Word Pictures in the New Testament"

Concluding Remarks: Part 1

The prophetic and typological significance of the Feast of First Fruits and the Feast of Pentecost should not be easily glanced over in our consideration of the passion of our Lord and in the worship of the Church. These feasts were main-stream celebrations in the Jewish economy under the Old Covenant and, with their fulfillment forming foundation stones for the birth of the Church, they certainly should in no way be deemed peripheral under the New Covenant. As such, their place in the worship of the Church, and in a coordinated chronology of this brief, foundational, and richly blessed period in the history of the Church, is not of secondary importance.

The Feast of Passover, including the Feasts of Unleavened Bread and First Fruits, and the later Feast of Pentecost, speak of the riches of Christ in the fullness of His saving work of stupendous grace – His work of redemption, of propitiation, of substitutionary atonement, of adoption and reconciliation, and of sanctification. The saving work of Christ pertains not just to his redeeming-propitiatory-atonement work, but also to the gift of the indwelling Spirit who performs His operational work of sanctification in a life, and of the uniting of regenerated sinners in a living, communicative relationship with the Father and the Son, and a guaranteeing of the future resurrection of the body, bringing the purchased sinner into the fullness of an eternal life-union with the Triune Godhead.

In regard to the subject of this report, the Word of God includes specific chronological details that shine an intriguing and an embellishing light on His amazing and most gracious work of salvation. A review of the Gospels readily reveals that this great work accomplished by the Incarnate Son in that crucible of agony and suffering unto death on a Roman cross, and that victory over sin, death and the grave in His gloriously triumphant resurrection, receives the most extensive textual coverage of any topic. Furthermore, the process of accomplishment of this great work contains significant chronological detail that is often neglected, and which is widely misrepresented. This report has been directed toward accentuating the exacting chronological detail concerning our Lord's passion. Even more pointedly, the objective has been to emphasize the coherency and consistency of the Word, a coherency and consistency that even reaches down to intricate chronological detail, and extends to the precise fulfillment of both detail and purpose of prophetic type in our Lord's passion.

Comment re the Feast of Pentecost.

The Feast of Pentecost (*alt.*, Feast of Harvest, or Weeks) was celebrated exactly 50 days covering seven weekly Sabbaths following the Feast of First Fruits. The leading purposes of this feast were to lead the worshipper to "rejoice" and "remember" (*Deut. 16:11-12*).

The Feast of Pentecost coincided closely with the time (*i.e.*, the 3rd month) the Law was given at Sinai (see *Ex. 19:1, 10-11, 16*).

Later in Israel's history the feast came to be celebrated as the occasion of the giving of the Law – the originating occasion of the Old (Mosaic) Covenant. It is clear that from the beginning the Law was to be read at the Feast of Pentecost during each Sabbatical (7th) year (*Deut. 31:10-13*), with the purpose that each generation would learn to fear the LORD and to observe the Law – a divine objective that has relevance for all people of all eras (see *Eccl. 12:13-14*).

With this perspective, the giving of the Spirit and the birth of the Church on the day of Pentecost takes on a very peculiar and precious significance. The Church, that body of 'called-out ones' living under the headship of Christ, the Inaugurator of the New Covenant, is not to be seen as wholly exempt from the Law. Quite to the contrary, the Church is composed of that blest communion of saints in whom the Law is already fulfilled in Christ, and in whom the terms of the Law are being progressively fulfilled by individual saints as he/she walks "according to the Spirit" – walking under the sanctifying work of the Spirit who produces His fruit in the life of a redeemed and justified sinner, conforming that 'new creature in Christ Jesus' to the very likeness of Christ.

The chronology proposed and defended here has a very particular and important implication, one that the nominal reckoning misses. It regards the birth of the Church and the Church's celebration of the Lord's Day (i.e., the 1st day of the week as contrasted with the 7th day per the Creation and Mosaic Covenants). The implication quite simply stated is:

- The gathering of the Church on the 1st day of the week commemorates not only the resurrection of our Lord, along with His conquest over sin, death and the grave, but it also commemorates the birthday of the Church, the day of Pentecost – that great day when the Comforter-Convictor-Counselor was sent to indwell every 'called-out' saint as a "first fruits" guarantee of the redemption of their bodies; that is, their adoption as sons of God and their establishment as joint-heirs with the Lord Jesus Christ.

A Retrospective Note: Since the Lord Jesus fulfilled the sign of Jonah with literal precision, we can glance backward in history and say with unshakeable confidence that the Biblical record of Jonah and the sea monster must of necessity also be nothing short of historical reality. Specifically, the Biblical account stating that Jonah spent 3 days and 3 nights in the belly of the sea creature can never be relegated either to myth or to allegory.

Ques. Why can we be so sure of the veracity of Jonah's experience?

The answer can be reasoned as follows. *IF* Jesus indeed spoke of a notable OT event as true history, and then used the chronological detail of that event as the key sign validating His claim to be Israel's Messiah, and *IF* we then find irrefutable evidence of the literal fulfillment of the precise terms of His claim regarding that sign,

THEN we must conclude that the historical basis for the sign must be a true event reported with the same precision as its fulfillment in the earthly life of our Lord Jesus Christ.

IF we assume that the contrary is true, that the sign was fulfilled in the passion of Christ but the record of Jonah is mythical, *THEN* we are left to conclude that both Jesus and the OT record are equally untrustworthy. Beyond this, *IF* Jesus is found to be basing His stringent, validating claims on a myth, and further that He fails to fulfill His claims made on the basis of His acceptance of myth as true history, *THEN* He is exposed as a liar and a fraud.

His own resurrection must then, by implication, be seen as nothing less than a monstrous hoax and we are left with no Savior.

We are still in our sins and without hope in the world.

However, since the record of Jonah is indeed true history, and since Jesus literally fulfilled the Sign of Jonah just as He claimed prophetically, we thus have a solid foundation for faith that rests on both sure words and validated history.

The truth of the matter is that our Lord's precise fulfillment of both the Passover Pattern and the Sign of Jonah stand forever as two infallible proofs that undergird the veracity of His Word, and provide a rationally firm and a firmly rational basis for the Christian faith. We have the sure word of prophecy made more sure, for "Now is Christ risen from the dead" – a resurrection occurring precisely after spending "3 days and 3 nights in the heart of the earth", just as He stated prophetically (*Matt. 12:40*).

The substitutionary atonement of the Lord Jesus Christ is a real event fulfilling His own prophetic declaration, as well as earlier prophetic word and type, and all based on true history. Furthermore, since He now holds an eternally indestructible life, He is the unshakeable and undeniable first fruits of all saints who die in faith ... and all believers in Christ are a people who are in possession of an indestructible and imperishable, living hope.

Appendix A

Scriptural References and Associated Comments pertaining to 'The Sign Of Jonah'

Introductory Comment

The table below presents a number of texts pertaining to the sign of Jonah, plus attendant comments consistent with key perspectives underlying this study. The printed texts are not exhaustive in capturing general references to the time our Lord's body was in Joseph of Arimathea's tomb. However, they do set forth and compare both general and specific statements with explicit reference to the sign of Jonah.

Scriptural Reference	Comment
"And the LORD appointed a great fish to swallow Jonah, and Jonah was in the stomach of the fish for 3 days and 3 nights." <i>Jonah 1:17</i>	
"An evil and adulterous generation craves for a sign; and yet no sign will be given to it but the sign of Jonah the prophet; for just as Jonah was 3 days and 3 nights in the belly of the sea monster, so shall the Son of Man be 3 days and 3 nights in the heart of the earth." <i>Matt. 12:39-40</i>	This is a determinative statement of specific temporal duration. It must form the defining, guiding and constraining chronological term in respect to all other more general statements that declare simply that Christ would rise again on the 3 rd day. General statements, even though they may appear multiple times, ought not to be raised to such interpretive weight that they over-rule specific statements containing definite and clearly inflexible terms.
"An evil and adulterous generation seeks after a sign; and a sign will not be given it, except the sign of Jonah." <i>Matt. 16:4</i>	The defining terms of the sign of Jonah were set forth earlier in Matt. 12:39-40 (see above). In this follow-on reference our Lord is giving repeated emphases to the point that the sign of Jonah serves, in the implied specificity of its terms, the decisive validation of His Messiahship.
"From that time Jesus began to show His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised up on the 3 rd day." <i>Matt. 16:21</i>	The same text is repeated in <i>Mk. 8:31</i> and <i>Lk. 9:22</i> , but the following additional words appear in <i>Mk. 8:32a</i> : "And He was stating the matter plainly." "And He said this freely – frankly, plainly and explicitly, making it unmistakable." (Amplified) These words in Mark's Gospel, since it is a parallel statement to <i>Matt. 16:21</i> (see above), certainly pertain to the sign of Jonah – which has been clearly declared to consist of 3 days <u>and</u> 3 nights in the tomb.
"And while they were gathering together in Galilee, Jesus said to them, 'The Son of Man is going to be delivered into the hands of men; and they will kill Him, and He will be raised up on the 3 rd day.'" <i>Matt. 17:22-23</i>	See also <i>Mk. 9:30-31</i> , where the continuation of the text has the added words: "But they did not understand this statement, and they were afraid to ask Him." <i>Mk. 9:32</i>
"Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem; and the Son of Man will be delivered to the chief priests and scribes, and they will condemn Him to death, and will hand Him over to the Gentiles to mock and scourge and crucify Him, and on the 3 rd day He will be raised up." <i>Matt. 20:18-19</i>	See also <i>Mk. 10:32-34</i> and <i>Lk. 18:31-11</i> . The last phrase in <i>Mk. 10:34</i> is rendered: "... and 3 days later He will rise again."

"Then He opened their minds to understand the Scriptures, and He said to them, 'Thus it is written, that the Christ would suffer and rise again from the dead the 3rd day, ...'." *Lk.24:45-46*

"The Jews then said to Him, 'What sign do You show us as your authority for doing these things?' Jesus answered them, 'Destroy this temple, and in 3 days raise it up again.' " *John 2: 18-19*

"We are witnesses of all the things He did both in the land of the Jews and in Jerusalem. They also put Him to death by hanging Him on a cross. God raised Him up on the 3rd day and granted that He become visible, not to all the people, but to witnesses who were chosen beforehand by God, that is, to us who ate and drank with Him after He arose from the dead." *Acts 10:39-42*

Note: Jesus was not in the tomb on the day of His crucifixion – He was entombed at the close of the preparation day and, as such, on the dawn of the Sabbath (i.e., on the eve corresponding to the beginning of the first High Sabbath of the Feast of Unleavened Bread). As such, the day of His crucifixion should not legitimately be counted as one of the 3 days in the tomb.

"When evening had already come, because it was the preparation day, that is, the day before the Sabbath, Joseph of Arimathea came ... and asked for the body of Jesus." *Mk. 15:42-43*

"It was the preparation day, and the Sabbath was about to begin (to dawn)." *Lk. 23:54*

"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 that He was raised on the 3rd day according to the Scriptures, and that He appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve." *1 Cor. 15:3-5*

"As the crowds were increasing, He began to say, 'This generation is a wicked generation; it seeks for a sign, and yet no sign will be given to it but the sign of Jonah. For just as Jonah became a sign to the Ninevites, so will the Son of Man be to this generation.' ... "The men of Nineveh will stand up with this generation at the judgment and condemn it, because they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and behold, something greater than Jonah is here." *Luke 11:29-30, 32*

To depreciate the literal fulfillment of this sign in relation to our Lord is to depreciate that Jonah was a real person who wrote both of his own real personal experience and of his real prophetic proclamation to the people of Nineveh.

Summary Comment

The texts quoted above show that the days of our Lord's entombment, that period between His burial and His resurrection, are referred to in both time-specific terms and in comparatively general terms. No one should reasonably argue that both sorts of terms, specific terms and general terms, are to be held as equally 'time-definitive' and carrying equal 'literal quality'. However, all of these references must comport – they must necessarily and uniformly cohere with unqualified internal consistency. Furthermore, any literal quality springing from the texts, when considered as a 'unitary whole', must be derived firstly and primarily from those particular statements that contain inflexible and incontrovertible terms. Then, and only in a subsequent manner, should the general terms be interpreted within the framework and the full light of the specific terms. This interpretative approach is in full accord with the high and long-standing principles of conservative hermeneutics and scholarship.

This author argues in this light, and so with quite settled conviction, that adoption of this outlined approach to a study of the sign of Jonah and its fulfillment in the passion of our Lord will only find full internal coherence and cross-textual consistency if our Lord's crucifixion actually occurred in a year for which the day of Passover fell on a Wednesday.

An Elaborated Chronology Extending from the Triumphal Entry through Pentecost Distinctive Points Deserving Emphasis

<p>Specific vs. General Chronological Markers An Interpretive (Exegetical) Principle</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Specific statements containing quite definite and inflexible terms regarding a time period or event must never be overruled by contrary inferences drawn from more general and less precise statements pertaining to the same time period or event. General statements concerning a time period must never be assigned a determinative weight that leads to a conclusion contrary to any aspect that is delineated by clear and precise terms in a quite specific statement pertaining to the same time period or event. <p>Reformation Study Bible <i>Matt. 12:40, "3 days and 3 nights".</i> <i>Mk. 8:31, "after 3 days".</i> <i>"This is also a conventional expression for a short period."</i></p> <p>MacArthur Study Bible <i>Matt. 12:40, "3 days and 3 nights".</i> "An expression of '40 days and 40 nights' may in some cases simply refer to a time longer than a month. ... 3 days and 3 nights was an emphatic way of saying '3 days', and by Jewish reckoning this would be an apt way of expressing a period of time that includes parts of 3 days. Thus, if Christ was crucified on a Friday, and His resurrection occurred on the 1st day of the week, by Hebrew reckoning this would qualify as 3 days and 3 nights. All sorts of elaborate schemes have been devised to suggest that Christ might have died on a Wednesday or Thursday, just to accommodate the extreme literal meaning of these words. But the original meaning would not have required that sort of wooden interpretation."</p> <p>The Defender's Study Bible <i>Matt. 12:40, "3 days and 3 nights".</i> If [this phrase] is taken to mean literally 72 hours, there would be an apparent contradiction ... The problem is resolved if one assumes that any portion of a day or night could be idiomatically reckoned as a 'day and night'."</p>	<p>The Sign of Jonah A Specific Chronological Marker</p> <p>"Then some of the scribes and Pharisees answered Him, saying, 'We want to see a sign from You.' But He answered and said to them, 'An evil and an adulterous generation craves for a sign; and yet no sign shall be given to it but the sign of Jonah the prophet; for just as Jonah was 3 days and 3 nights in the belly of the sea monster, so shall the Son of Man be 3 days and 3 nights in the heart of the earth.'" <i>Matt 12: 38-40</i></p>	<p>The Sign of Jonah: Related Implications</p> <p>The fact that a coherently consistent reading of the Gospel accounts requires that Jesus' body was entombed for the literal period of 3 days and 3 nights, so also those same Gospel accounts ensure that the prophet Jonah was also 3 days and 3 nights in the belly of a sea creature.</p> <p>Skepticism abounds concerning accepting a literal reading of the inspired account testified by Jonah himself concerning the duration of his time in the sea creature, and various rationalizations have been proposed for why such a literal acceptance should be dismissed. Nevertheless, as the evidence is unassailable that Jesus literally arose from the dead after 3 days and 3 nights in the tomb, He has been authentically and convincingly validated as the sinless Son of Man. Thus, the fulfillment of His own precise statement of the most definitive claim to His Messiahship stands forever as an authenticating stamp on the truth of Jonah's testimony.</p> <p>Point: The literal fulfillment of both the testimony of Jonah and Jesus' prophetic claim that His fulfillment of the sign of Jonah would be the definitive proof of His Messiahship rest on the very same fully reliable and utterly unassailable foundation. To claim that it is legitimate to accept one while denying the other is to step over logic and to set aside truth. Either both are true or both must be false. But it has been resoundingly validated that Jesus arose after 3 days and 3 nights in the tomb, and so it is unquestionably true that Jonah also spent 3 days and 3 nights in the belly of the sea creature.</p>
	<p>The Sign of Jonah General Chronological Markers</p> <p>"From that time Jesus Christ began to show His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and raised up on the 3rd day." "And while they were gathering together in Galilee, Jesus said to them, 'The Son of Man is going to be delivered into the hands of men; and they will kill Him, and He will be raised on the 3rd day.'" "Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem; and the Son of Man will be delivered to the chief priests and scribes, and they will condemn to death, and will deliver Him to Gentiles to mock, scourge and crucify Him, and on the 3rd day, He will be raised up." <i>Matt. 16:21; 17:22-23; 20:18-19</i></p>	

Figure A-1. Specific vs. General Chronological Markers and the Sign of Jonah

Part 2. The Occasion of the Last Supper and the Trials of Christ

In construction of a chronology of the events occurring during the period of our Lord's passion, a further set of important, yet related, correlative questions arise:

When, in relation to the day of our Lord's crucifixion, was the Last Supper held?

On what eve in the Passover pattern did Jesus meet with His disciples and fulfill the stated purpose of His heart:

"I have earnestly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer; for I say to you, I shall never again eat it until it is fulfilled the kingdom of God" (*Lk. 22:15-16*)?

The Gospel accounts clearly correlate the fulfillment of this desire with the occasion when Judas was identified as the betrayer of the Christ, and set it as occurring just before Jesus entered Gethsemane and engaged in that most intense time of communion with the Father. Furthermore, it was on the very night following this supper that He was arrested and escorted bound to the house of Annas for the first in a sequence of trials leading to His being delivered up for crucifixion.

In what is an established element in the traditional chronology of our Lord's passion, this supper is understood as occurring on the eve immediately preceding Jesus' crucifixion on the 14th of Nisan, the Biblically prescribed day for offering of the Passover lamb. However, such a sequential order for these events raises certain perplexities with respect to the Biblically prescribed pattern for the Passover celebration, as well as for the order followed even in traditional celebrations of the Passover feast today. These perplexities are addressed here in a relatively brief, albeit reasonably logical, order.

The Prescriptive Order for the Passover Feast

The Biblically defined order for commemoration of the Passover feast is set forth with considerable specificity and clarity in the following texts.

"And you shall keep [your lamb] until the 14th day of the same month, then the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel is to kill it at twilight. ... And they shall eat the flesh that same night, roasted with fire, and they shall eat it with unleavened bread and bitter herbs. ... And you shall not leave any of it over until morning, but whatever is left of it until morning you shall burn with fire." *Ex. 12:6-10*

"Thus Yahweh spoke to Moses in the wilderness of Sinai, in the 1st month of the 2nd year after they had come out of the land of Egypt, saying, 'Now, let the sons of Israel observe the Passover at its appointed time. On the 14th day of this month, at twilight (between the two evenings), you shall observe it at its appointed time; you shall observe it according to all its statutes and according to all its ordinances.'" *Num. 9:1-3*

"Then on the 14th day of the 1st month shall be Yahweh's Passover. On the 15th day of this month shall be a feast, unleavened bread shall be eaten for 7 days. On the 1st day shall be a holy convocation; you shall do no laborious work." *Num. 28:16-18*

"... at the place where Yahweh your Elohim chooses to establish His name, you shall sacrifice the Passover in the evening at sunset, at the time that you came out of Egypt. And you shall cook it and eat it in the place which Yahweh your Elohim chooses. And in the morning you are to return to your tents." *Deut. 16:6-7*

One readily observes that these texts reveal a rather tight continuity between the 14th and 15th days of Nisan. More specifically, there is seen to be a unitary blending of the commemorative flow across the close of Passover on the 14th and the beginning of the Feast of Unleavened Bread on the 15th. Further to this point, it is helpful to note that the terms "Passover" and "Unleavened Bread" are occasionally used in Scripture, as well as in Jewish custom, in an encompassing and interchangeable sense because of the unitary connection of these days. Either one of these terms is used in some texts to speak concerning the full extent of this feast period, as can be demonstrated from the following texts.

"Now the Feast of Unleavened Bread, which is called the Passover, was approaching." ... "Then came the day of Unleavened Bread on which the Passover had to be sacrificed." *Lk. 22:1, 7*

"On the 1st day of Unleavened Bread, when the Passover was being sacrificed, His disciples said to Him, 'Where do You want us to go to prepare for You the Passover?' " *Mk. 14:12*

"And when [Herod] saw that it pleased the Jews, he proceeded to arrest Peter also.

Now it was during the days of Unleavened Bread. And when he seized him, he put him in prison delivering him to four squads of soldiers to guard him, intending after the Passover to bring him out before the people. So Peter was kept in the prison ..." *Acts 12:3-5*

That a quite unified celebratory connection is employed in reference to these separately named events seems unmistakable. Further, recognizing a more encompassing usage of either of these distinguished terms is quite helpful in avoiding conflicts between statements appearing in different Gospel accounts of Jesus' passion. In fact, if this unity is not recognized and a rigid and strict separation between "Passover" and "Unleavened Bread" is enforced, interpretive and chronological confusion can arise.

The Last Supper and the Traditional Chronology

In accordance with the Biblically prescribed pattern for Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread, the 14th of Nisan is referred to as the "day of preparation". In particular, this day is the one prescribed for the lamb to be killed and for engaging all required preparations for the "feast meal", which included the removal of all leaven from each dwelling and only unleavened bread be baked. Families gathered for this celebratory meal in commemoration of the divinely orchestrated and hastily engaged exodus of Jacob's descendants from Egypt, and the meal was to be eaten after the setting of the sun on the 14th, or more particularly, during the emerging evening hours of the night of the 15th of Nisan, the beginning hours of the first day of Unleavened Bread. This schedule was almost surely the pattern followed when Jesus attended His first Passover feast at 12 years of age under the tutelage of Joseph and Mary (*Lk. 2:41-42*). His attendance at that time was in accordance with the commemorative pattern followed by the full cohort of religious leadership in Jesus' day, which was most likely in explicit accordance with the prescribed terms of the Law (*Ex. 23:14-17; 34:23; Deut. 16:16*).

With the foregoing foundation in hand, we can reasonably set forward the following postulate:

- The Biblically prescribed feast replicating the original pattern undertaken in the exodus from Egypt begun on the 15th of Nisan, and involving the roasted Passover lamb which was slain on the 14th, could NOT have been the specified meal Jesus purposed to celebrate with His disciples in the upper room the night before His arrest.

Basis for Postulate: It is self-evident that the slaying of the sacrificial lamb always preceded the commemorative feast, which means that Jesus would have necessarily already been crucified before sunset on the 14th of Nisan, and therefore before the stipulated time for the meal. As such, the particular meal Jesus ate with His disciples in the upper room on the eve before His arrest, the Last Supper, should NOT be seen as having direct and explicit correspondence with the traditional meal celebrated now for millennia by Jewish peoples in the beginning hours of Nisan 15.

The Last Supper and Proffered Alternate Chronologies

A Proffered Reconciliation:

Because of the foregoing conflict existing with the Last Supper and the stipulated timing of the Passover Feast on the eve of Nisan 14 and early-night of Nisan 15, some have speculated that the crucifixion must have in fact occurred on the 15th of Nisan. However, in the opinion of this author, such a suggestion can be summarily dismissed as self-contradictory. The day of Christ's crucifixion and burial was definitively noted as being on the "preparation day" – the noted day specifically set for removal of leaven from every dwelling and preparation for the holy convocation set for the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread. Further to the point, we note that the religious leaders are said to have refrained from entering

the Praetorium during Christ's trial before Pilate to avoid defiling themselves, in order not to contravene the rigid stipulations of the Law in relation to eating the Passover Feast (*John 18:28*). Now this considered action by the priests and scribes has reference to an occasion scheduled to occur only *after* Jesus had already eaten the meal with His disciples and had been arrested. Thus, Jesus would have already been arrested and held bound in the first stage of the civil trial *before* the scheduled eating of the Passover on the eve stipulated in the Law, if indeed the crucifixion occurred on Nisan 15. As such, the proffered means noted for overcoming the identified perplexity regarding the timing of the Last Supper, which the Law clearly specifies as occurring in the early hours of Nisan 15, can be summarily dismissed and deserves no further consideration.

Accepted Church Custom:

With a proposed crucifixion on the 15th of Nisan definitively "ruled out of order", we are led to give consideration next to the alternate suggestion that the Last Supper was held on the evening immediately prior to the day of His crucifixion. That is, the Last Supper was held on the evening of the 13th of Nisan. Or, perhaps more precisely, it occurred on the opening hours of the 14th (following Jewish custom in the reckoning of days), which would have been a full 24 hours *before* the Biblically prescribed schedule for the feast to begin (see *Num. 28:16-17*). Then, and in full accordance with the received traditional chronology, the arrest and trial could have occurred during the night of Nisan 14, followed by His crucifixion beginning by 9:00 a.m. on the 14th. However, with the Last Supper occurring on the closing hours of Nisan 13, we are confronted with a different sort of perplexity. The evident perplexity associated with this schedule can perhaps be best exposed by the following set of questions:

- What fulfillment basis or precedent would have given originating force, or compelling foundation, for such an alteration to be made in the scheduled time for the "Passover meal"?
- What signifying sense (alt., what typifying redemptive meaning) should be assigned to the traditional symbols in the Passover meal if held on the 13th, especially since the Passover lamb is not to be slain and roasted until later the following evening?
- Was there any historical or traditional precedent in the era of our Lord's first advent for a celebratory meal to be held on this particular evening, what with Mosaic Law explicitly prescribing that this commemorative feast with enduring sacred significance is not scheduled to occur until the following evening?

Associated Question: Would the Jews be inclined to accept Jesus' claim to be the true Messiah, and especially His particular fulfillment of the redemptive type implicit to the Passover Lamb, if Christ did not celebrate the Passover in compliance with the historical chronology of the exodus and with custom firmly rooted in the Mosaic Law?

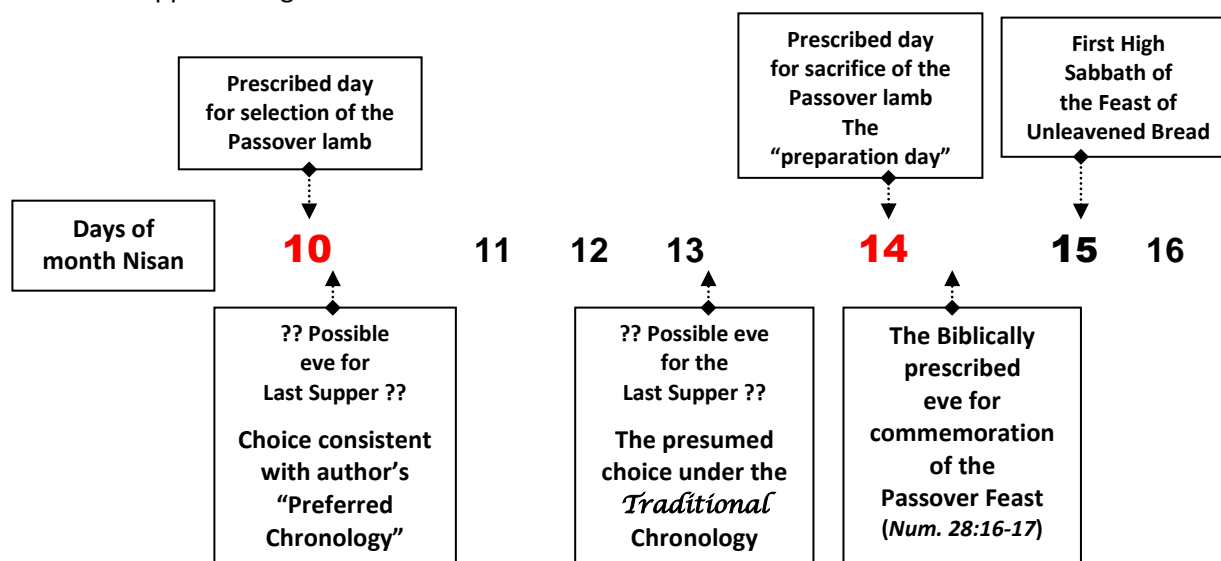
Point: If we allow momentary deference for either the crucifixion occurring on Nisan 15 or the Last Supper being held on the eve of Nisan 13, we can note that both proffered suggestions at least satisfy the absolute minimum condition that Jesus necessarily celebrated the Last Supper *before* He was crucified. This basic and essential fact overcomes the particular perplexity associated with the contradiction noted previously under the heading "The Last Supper and the Traditional Chronology" – a perplexity which looms large when holding to the traditional chronology *and yet* insisting that the celebrated Last Supper constituted the Biblically prescribed Passover feast. However, in the case of the latter of these proffered chronologies noted under the sub-heading "Accepted Church Custom", even that with widespread acceptance across Christian communities of various persuasions today, namely that the Last Supper was held on the eve of Nisan 13, this schedule for the Last Supper finds neither prescriptive Biblical foundation nor typifying redemptive root. And further to this point, the author is unaware of any traditional practice during the OT era where Nisan 13 was set as the day to commemorate the exodus, and therewith a prefiguring of the associated redemptive type of Christ on the evening *before* the "preparation day". Hence, the perplexity that attends a causal choice for specifying Nisan 13 as the date for the Last Supper compels this author to seek an alternate option,

particularly one that can be respected as satisfying defined aspects consistent with the full scope of specified Biblical terms for the Passover Pattern.

The Last Supper in a Preferred vs. Traditional Chronology

In order that an identifiable root exist within the broader Biblical pattern for the Passover as foundation for our Lord's deliberate selection of the day for His convening the Last Supper, the only reasonable and available alternative is to see the Last Supper occurring on the Lamb Selection eve, namely on Nisan 10. This option, along with the immovable correlative necessity that *Mk. 16:1* with *Lk. 23:56* require Passover to have fallen on a Wednesday, along with the essential fulfillment of the specific terms of the Sign of Jonah (*Matt. 12:38-40*), these all conjoin to provide Biblical bases that undergird this author's proposed chronology of the passion of our Lord detailed in Part 1 of this chapter.

The chart below summarizes several chronological considerations pertaining to the possible scheduling of the Last Supper during the entire extent of the Passover Pattern.



The Trials of Christ

It is immediately apparent that, since the arrest of Jesus definitely occurred during the night following celebration of the Last Supper, and since the Last Supper occurred on the eve of the "Lamb Selection Day" in this "preferred" chronology, three intervening days had to have transpired between the Last Supper and the crucifixion. As such, the time during which Jesus was bound and undergoing trial evidently extended over several days, and could not have been confined entirely to the limited span of the night of His arrest and the very limited early morning hours as postulated in the Traditional Chronology. Thus, to advance support for the preferred chronology offered here, an elemental outline of the trials of Christ is presented. The outline is divided into two sections, separating the initial religious phase from the subsequent civil (alt., Roman) phase. Selected Biblical texts are quoted alongside the outline of events to lend possible support for a temporal spacing of these distinct phases of Christ's trial, having it unfold over Nisan 11, 12 and 13, days that intervened between Christ's arrest and His crucifixion (alt., between His celebration of the Last Supper and the crucifixion).

Note: The Biblical accounts of the several trials of Christ nowhere require these trials to have definitively occurred on the very morning following the night of His arrest. Of course, neither does any explicit time-specific information demand that these trials extended over several days. Nevertheless, at least several temporal markers do appear in the Biblical accounts which seem to place in reasoned question whether these trials could have actually been consummated in the brief span of several hours of a single night as presumed by the Traditional Chronology.

The Religious Trial Temporal Considerations

Phase 1: Trial before Annas

- *John 18:12-14, 19-24*

Comment: Annas and his son-in-law Caiaphas held a co-regency as high priests when John the Baptizer began his ministry (*Lk. 3:2*). However, Caiaphas is the sole occupant of the office at the time of Christ's arrest (*John 18:12*). Yet only a brief time later, soon after Pentecost, Annas is again noted as the high priest (*Acts 4:6*). The office seems to have become quite politicized, although retained within this one family for a seemingly extended time.

Phase 2: Trial before Caiaphas

- *Matt. 26:57; Mk. 14:53; Lk. 22:54; John 18:24*

Note: This trial occurs in Caiaphas' home. (*Lk. 22:54*)

- *Matt. 26:59-68; Mk. 14:55-56; Lk. 22:63-65*
The chief priests seek witnesses to support their case, but much of the testimony was either contrived or contradictory.

Note: Jesus is mocked and beaten by the High Priest's guards in Caiaphas's presence.

Ques. How long did it take to hear testimony from "many" adversarial and contradictory witnesses?

Ques. At what hour would the cock normally crow? Do not roosters generally crow only as dawn is imminent, or even as the rays of the sun first begin their brightening of the eastern horizon?

Phase 3: Trial before the Council (Sanhedrin)

- *Lk. 22:66-71*

Ques. What time might be indicated by the temporal designators "when morning had come", "early in the morning", and "when it was day"?

Comment: Passover always occurred within but a few weeks of the spring equinox, implying that the rising and setting of the sun were very closely separated by 12-hour increments. As such, this trial before the Council seemingly could not have commenced before 6:00 a.m. (*Lk. 22:66*), but certainly could not have concluded earlier than 6:00 a.m. This leaves but 3 hours maximum for the full scope of the civil trial, and Christ led up to Golgotha and nailed to the cross by 9:00 a.m. (*Mk. 15:25*)

The 3 hours between sunrise and the crucifixion must necessarily encompass a spontaneously arranged meeting before Pilate, a subsequent spontaneously arranged meeting before Herod, and a return meeting with Pilate during which Pilate receives a warning message from his wife stimulated by an earlier dream. All these events are then followed by a debate involving the choice to release of Barabbas in the place of Christ, then the issuance of the death sentence plus another subsequent mocking with Christ dressed in royal robes and brutally scourged. Only then is the journey to Golgotha commenced.

"So the Roman cohort and the commander, and the officers of the Jews, arrested Jesus and bound Him, and led Him to Annas first; for he was father-in-law of Caiaphas, who was high priest that year."

"Annas therefore sent Him bound to Caiaphas the high priest." *John 18:12-13, 24*

"And they led Jesus away to the high priest; and all the chief priests and the elders and the scribes gathered together. And Peter had followed at a distance, right into the courtyard of the high priest; ... Now the chief priests and the whole Council kept trying to obtain testimony against Jesus to put Him to death, and they were not finding any.

For many stood up and began to give false testimony against Him, and yet their testimony was not consistent." *Mk. 14:53-56*

"And as Peter was below in the courtyard, one of the servant girls of the high priest came ... and said, 'You, too, were with Jesus the Nazarene.' But he denied it ... And he went out onto the porch. ... But he began to curse and swear, 'I do not know this man you are talking about!' And immediately a cock crowed a second time. And Peter remembered how Jesus made the remark to him, 'Before the cock crows twice, you will deny Me three times.' And he began to weep." *Mk. 14:66-72*

"Now when morning had come, all the chief priests and the elders of the people took counsel against Jesus to put Him to death; ... and delivered Him up to Pilate the governor." *Matt. 27:1-2*

"And early in the morning the chief priests with the elders and scribes, and the whole Council, immediately held a consultation; and binding Jesus, they led Him away, and delivered Him to Pilate." *Mk. 15:1*

"And when it was day, the Council of elders of the people assembled, both chief priests and scribes, and they led Him away to their council chamber, ..." *Lk. 22:66*

Ques. Would not the phrase, "when it was day", have reference to a time not earlier than sunrise?

"Then the whole body of them arose and brought Him before Pilate." *Lk. 23:1*

Comment: It seems quite unlikely that the initial arrival before Pilate for this unscheduled meeting could have occurred earlier than 6:30 a.m., perhaps even later.

The Civil Trial

Phase 1: First trial before Pilate

Pilate, Roman governor (procurator) of Judea: 26-36 A.D.

- *John 18:28-32*
- *Lk. 23:1-5:* The specific charge brought before the court is enunciated.
- *John 18:33-38a:* Pilate proceeds to interview Jesus.
- *Lk. 23:4; John 18:38b:* Pilate makes his 1st declaration of Christ's innocence.
- *Mk. 15:3-5:* Pilate intensifies his interrogation of Jesus, seeking to establish legal cause for Jesus to be released.
- *Lk. 23:5:* The gathered Jewish leaders accuse Jesus of subversive teaching, offering testimony that such teaching occurred while He was in the region of Galilee, a territory within the jurisdiction of Herod Antipas.
- *Lk. 23:6-7:* Pilate issues an order for Jesus to be transferred to Herod Antipas' quarters, as Herod was in Jerusalem at this time.

Phase 2: Trial before Herod (Herod Antipas)

Herod Antipas was a descendant of Esau; it was Herodias, his illegitimate wife, who incited him to have John the Baptizer martyred.

- *Lk. 23:8-11:* Herod interrogated Jesus "at some length", but Christ remained resolutely silent before him; the chief priests and scribes persist in hurling angry accusations at Jesus; Herod and his soldiers mock Jesus with contempt. Herod issued no verdict against Jesus, passively declaring Jesus' innocence, and ordered Him to be returned to Pilate's jurisdiction.

Ques. Did Jesus' appearance before Herod Antipas occur on the same day (Nisan 11?) as His first appearance before Pilate? Could such a judicial transfer from Pilate to Herod have been spontaneously arranged, per the Traditional Chronology, so early on the very morning following His night arrest?

Ques. Might not Jesus have been kept in custody by Pilate until the following day (Nisan 12 in this preferred chronology) when likely necessary political arrangements facilitating a judicial transfer to Herod could be arranged?

Phase 3: Second trial before Pilate

- *Lk. 23:13-15:* Pilate makes his 2nd declaration that Jesus is innocent with respect to any charges under Roman law.
- *Mk. 15:6-10:* Pilate chooses to present the crowd with an alternative: either crucify Christ or the murderer-seditionist named Barabbas?
- *Matt. 27:17-19:* Pilate receives a message of warning concerning the innocence of Christ from his wife at this later juncture of the trial.
- *Matt. 27:20-22; Lk. 23:18-22:* The crowd presses for the release of Barabbas over Christ; Pilate's 3rd attempt to release Jesus is frustrated.
- *John 19:1-5:* Pilate scourges Jesus, supposing sympathy gained as a scourged prisoner might favorably influence the crowd to accept Pilate's earlier (3rd) attempt at securing Jesus' release.
- *John 19:6-7:* Pilate's effort is bluntly rebuffed, yet he refuses to pronounce that Jesus is worthy of the Roman sentence of crucifixion. Pilate considers Jesus' "King of the Jews" claim to be a totally empty threat to Rome, for Israel is securely subjugated under Caesar's kingship. (*John 18:33-39*)
- *John 19:7-11:* Pilate suddenly becomes greatly alarmed when he hears word that Jesus claims to be "the Son of God". Pilate proceeds to interrogate Jesus with respect to this higher-level "Kingship" claim, for any substance to such claim might in fact comprise a threat against Rome.

"Phase 3: Second trial before Pilate" continued on next page.

Note: Pilate was procurator (alt., governor) in Judea while Herod Antipas was tetrarch of the region of Galilee, both appointed by Imperial Rome.

Note: Herod Antipas was the son of Herod the Great, that evil tyrant who ordered the murder of all under 2 yrs. of age in Bethlehem following the birth of Jesus.

Question: What with Herod Antipas' longer-standing desire to meet and discourse with Jesus, is it not reasonable to see this trial lasting for even several hours? Might it have occurred on Nisan 12 rather than on the morning of Nisan 11, the day following Jesus' night arrest in the Garden of Gethsemane?

Question: Might not the dream of Pilate's wife concerning the issue of Christ's innocence be more reasonably seen as occurring on the previous night – even the night following Pilate's first encounter with Christ on Nisan 11 when he sought to declare Christ's innocence? Alternatively, might not the dream have happened the night following Christ's trial before Herod, for Pilate now learns that Herod has refused to issue a judicial decision and the matter of Christ's guilt is, by default, now placed squarely before him again – now to be faced the next day (Nisan 13).

The Civil Trial (cont'd.)

Phase 3: Second trial before Pilate (cont'd.)

- *John 19:12*: Pilate makes another attempt to release Jesus, however the charge of possible sedition against Caesar emerges and casts Pilate in a delicate position of being in potential jeopardy before Caesar – jeopardy of releasing a seditionist from a sentence worthy of death.

Note: At this juncture Pilate becomes aware that the essential charge of the Jews against Jesus was His claim of Kingship/Messiahship – a charge which could be interpreted by Pilate's superiors as a planned act of sedition against Caesar. Sedition ranked as a most solemn, even treasonous, charge in the eyes of Roman authority, and Pilate's governorship would certainly be challenged if he did not respond with issuing a death sentence for such a treasonous plot.

- *John 19:14-15*: The Jews completely overturn Pilate's attempt at release when they claim, "We have no king but Caesar", leaving Pilate confronted squarely by the Jews' charge of Jesus as a seditionist.
- *John 19:16; Matt. 27:24-26; Lk. 23:24-25*: Pilate relents in his attempts to have Jesus released and, with the charge of treason now holding prominent position in the proceedings, he turns Him over for crucifixion.
- *Matt. 27:26; Mk. 15:15; Lk. 23:22-25*: Pilate orders Jesus to be scourged one more time before delivering Him over to the Roman cohort under command of a centurion for crucifixion.
- *Matt. 27:27-31; Mk. 15:16-20*: Pilate's armed militia escort Jesus into the Praetorium, at which time they seize the opportunity to engage Him in another extended time of brutality and mockery.

Ques. With respect to the issue of time, how long might a session of brutal, de-humanizing treatment of this sort have lasted? Is it not reasonable to see this as requiring at minimum the goodly part of an hour?

- *Matt. 27:32; Mk. 15:21-22; Lk. 23:26; John 19:17*: Jesus proceeds in profound physical weakness, and with staggering and halting steps, along the route to Golgotha. The centurion is moved to enlist Simon of Cyrene under armed command to pick up Jesus' cross beam and to follow the prisoner along the death march winding its course up the hill.

Ques. Again with respect to the issue of time, how long time might the march from Pilate's hall to the brow of Golgotha have taken? The entourage necessarily arrived at Calvary in time for Jesus to be nailed to the cross beam He was asked to carry by 9:00 a.m. (see *Mk. 15:25*)

- *Mk. 15:25-27; Lk. 23:32-33; John 19:18*: Jesus is bound to His cross at 9:00 a.m., and was crucified on the center cross along with two other criminals.
- *Matt. 27:45-50; Mk. 15:33-37; Lk. 23:44-46*: At 12:00 noon a mysterious darkness came over the land, which continued until 3:00 p.m. when Jesus gave up His life and died.

Summary Note

Some of the important "temporal designators" appearing in the Biblical accounts of the trials of Christ are highlighted.

Jesus is arrested in Gethsemane during the night following the Last Supper.

In the trial before the High Priest, witnesses were solicited to testify against Jesus with respect to Jewish Law. The text explicitly states that "many" witnesses were assembled and gave testimony.

Three 'time-specific' qualifiers are used with respect to the last phase of the religious trials which, so it would seem, place quite restrictive constraints on the available time for the various aspects of the sequence of civil trials:

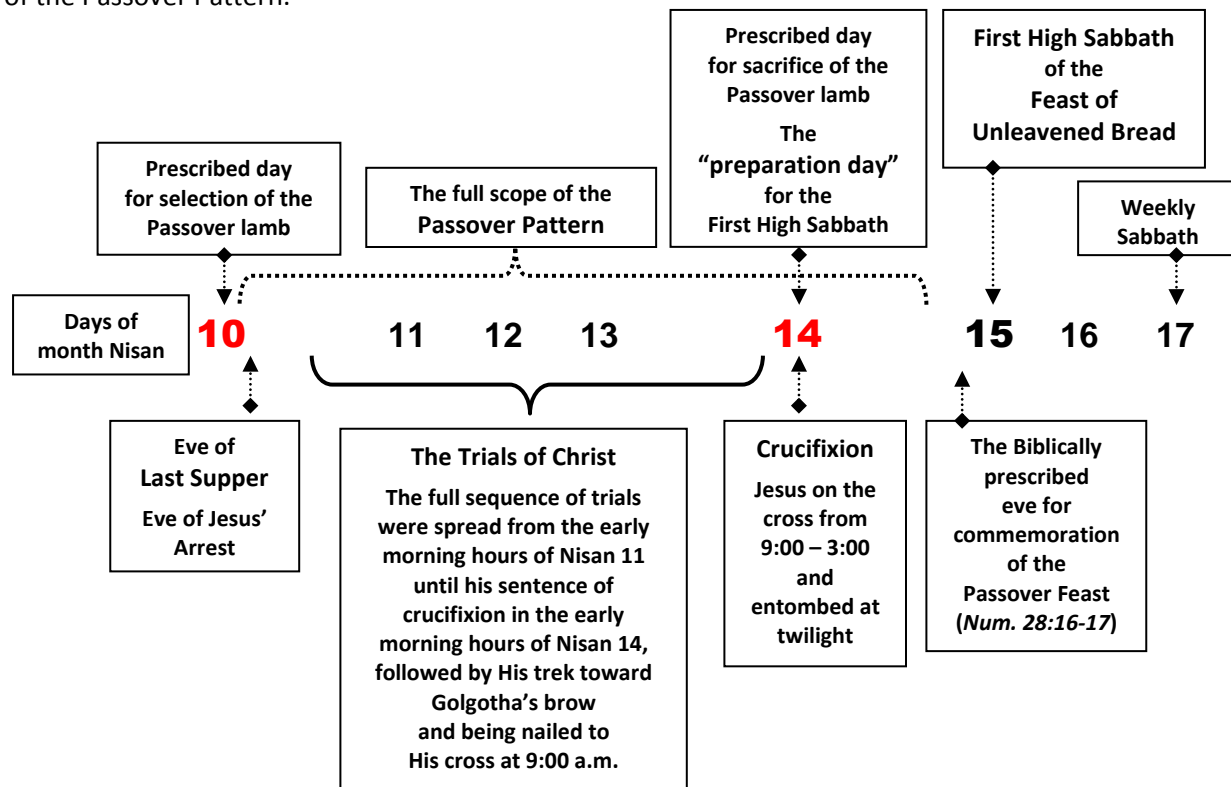
- "when morning had come"
- "early in the morning"
- "when it was day".

The Scriptures state clearly that Jesus was crucified at 9:00 a.m. Hence, there seems to be a maximum of 3 hours over which to fit in all phases of the civil trials, the several episodes of mocking and scourging of Jesus, and for the slow-moving entourage of criminals, Roman cohort, and crowd to move from the Praetorium to Golgotha.

Conclusion: It strains the imagination to rationally conceive of such an extensive array of events, some certainly arranged spontaneously, to fit into such a narrow time span as 3 hours.

The Last Supper and Trials of Christ: A Biblically ‘Compelled’ Chronology

With the foregoing considerations in hand, the following modifications to the temporal layout of the Passover Pattern appearing on page 178 might properly be offered as a ‘compelled’ Biblical chronology of the Passover Pattern.



In the placing of the Last Supper on the eve of Nisan 10 as communicated in the above layout, although unquestionably an integral day within the full Passover Pattern as fulfilled by Christ, it yet stands in strong contradistinction with respect to the Biblically-mandated “between the two evenings” (at twilight) Passover feast per *Num. 9:1-3*. At the same time, the schedule proposed in this layout allows for a more logical and reasonable understanding of the full scope of intervening events following Christ’s arrest and leading up to His crucifixion at 9:00 a.m. on Nisan 14.

The chronology of Passover Pattern events as postulated here in the year of our Lord’s passion comports fully with the coordinated chronology presented on pages 166-168 in Part 1. It is emphasized that the temporal extent of the period associated with our Lord’s passion in this coordinated chronology should be properly understood as encompassing a full two-week period, not a single week as is purported to be the case in the entrenched Traditional Chronology. For clarity and specificity, the occasion of our Lord’s Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem in the coordinated chronology (see detail on pages 166-168) places Palm Sunday a full two weeks *before* our Lord’s resurrection from His full 3-day entombment in Joseph of Arimathea’s sepulchre. Furthermore, the (so-called) ‘compelled’ chronology set forth above places the Last Supper on the eve of the first day of the week exactly one week following the Triumphal Entry.

It is this author’s firm conviction that the layout of events in our Lord’s passion, as set forth herein, emerges quite straightforwardly from, and stands firmly on, consistently-reasoned and Biblically-rooted analysis. With that said, however, this author reiterates that advocacy of this full-scope of the coordinated chronology, including the argued placing of the Last Supper and the extended period for the trials of Christ, should NOT be understood as a plea for a wholesale disruptive change in the traditional calendar for the church’s celebration of the salvific working of the incarnate Son in His substitutionary atonement and His stupendous victory over sin, death, and the grave.

End Comment

The principal ‘take-away’ from this investigative endeavor concerning the chronological flow of events during the time of our Lord’s passion is, quite simply stated, that the infallible Word of God, the very revelatory word from God who cannot lie and who will never deceive, must be rightly accepted as fully trustworthy in every local expression of truth, even in descriptive and prescriptive statements communicating chronological detail. Furthermore, this Word of God ought to be seen as possessing an intrinsic and consistent unity across the whole breadth of inspired revelation, even an intrinsic consistency necessarily extending across all inter-related references to chronological detail. This author contends that the Biblically-grounded, chronological conclusions advocated in this chapter relating to the narrow subject of our Lord’s passion and the birth of the Church should be seen as encouraging confidence, and so with compelling weight, in both the verbal and the plenary inspiration of Scripture. Also, it should serve to enhance reverential respect for the Spirit’s effectual confirmation of this fact in personal approaches to every text of Scripture and at any level of analysis of a text. That is, every text, including any and all texts communicating chronological detail, ought to be respectfully accepted as true (infallible in respect to original language), be ‘rightly divided’ in textual analysis or exposition, be consistently placed in proper local and global context, and be faithfully integrated in an understanding of the temporal flow of God’s plan and purpose for the ages.

