

THE TIMING OF THE SAVIOR'S DEATH AND RESURRECTION: CHURCH TRADITIONS VS. BIBLICAL FACTS

*Proverbs 25:2—It is the glory of Elohim to conceal a matter,
and the glory of kings to investigate a matter.*

A New Chronology of the Passion Week: Why Is It Needed?

The 'Who, What, How, and Why' of the crucifixion week have been answered fairly satisfactorily by the Christian apologists over the past two millennia. The Son of YHWH God took human form in the womb of Mary, a descendant of King David, and condemned sin in the flesh by His sinless life, paying the penalty in our stead by a very cruel, torturous death via crucifixion. Being hung on a tree, He became a curse for us. Millions of words have been said, and should continue to be said, about 'Who' He was, 'What' He accomplished during His three year ministry, and 'Why' He gave his life. But if there one thing that the scholars, Gospel pundits and church councils have utterly failed to answer satisfactorily, it is the question of 'When' Yahshua fulfilled these things. It is not for lack of interest that answers have fallen short of the scriptural criteria for truth. After all, the first Church council in 325 A.D. (Nicea) was very much concerned with establishing the proper date for pagan Easter, and less than 200 years later Dionysius gave the world 1 BC and 1 AD based solely on his desire to have Christ be 33 years of age in a year when Passover fell on Friday.^[1] Dionysius knew that the monopoly which Constantine had handed his Catholic Church was very much in jeopardy if scholars of the Church could not establish a plausible year for their Paschal event.

Yahweh Himself declares certain Times to be holy, in so many words. In scripture the seventh day of the week is the first thing hallowed. "And Elohim blessed the seventh day and sanctified it." (Gen. 2:3). We are told in the first chapter of Genesis (vs. 14) that Elohim/God created the Sun, Moon and stars for signs (symbols of spiritual import) and for seasons (moedim is the Hebrew word for appointed times or holy days), and lastly for days and years. All the holy days in Lev. 23 come under the heading of moedim/dewm (see Lev. 23:2). Calendars in every culture from time immemorial have been the province of priests, and have been played a central role in the religious life of mankind.

The first Torah command is Exod. 12:2, which declares Aviv to be the beginning of months, and the first month of the year for Israel. Perhaps, then, it is not surprising that above and beyond the healings and miracles that Christ performed which bore witness of Him, he gave but one sign of His Messiahship, the sign of the prophet Jonah (a sign concerning time), found in Jonah 1:17, i.e. that "as Jonah was three days and three nights in the whale's belly, so shall the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth" (Matthew 12:40). Beyond the improbability that Christ was referring to any portion of three days^[2], it is certain to this writer that a 1½ day interment would have been no sign whatsoever to the Jew of the first century. And it was for them that this sign was given in the first place, "the evil and adulterous generation"^[3] of Jews who rejected Him.

Death and Burial in First Century Judaism

The following is taken from Appendix 148 (entitled "The Third Day") of Bullinger's Companion Bible:

John Lightfoot (1602-75) quoted a Talmudic tradition that the mourning for the dead culminated on "the third day", because the spirit was not supposed to have finally departed till then (Works, Pitman's ed., vol. xii. Pp. 351-353). Herodotus testifies that embalmment did not take place until after three days. The Jews did not accept evidence as to the identification of a dead body after three days.

This period therefore, seems to have been chosen by YHWH to associate the fact of resurrection with the certainty of death, so as to preclude all doubt that death had actually taken place, and shut out all suggestion that it might have been a trance, or the resurrection a mere case of resuscitation. The fact that Lazarus had been dead “four days already” was urged by Martha as a proof that Lazarus was dead, for “by this time he stinketh.”

In support of the foregoing, we would like to refer to the work of Professor David Kraemer, PhD[4], an Orthodox Jew who teaches at Jewish Theological Seminary, who uses the Gospel accounts to establish the Jewish attitude toward death in the first century. In his chapter on “Jewish Burial Customs Before the Rabbis” we find:[5]

“The visit on the third day [by the women bringing spices for treatment and comfort of the deceased] after burial...is of particular interest. The third day is distinguished, by implication but nonetheless clearly, from the fourth day in John 11—the story of Lazarus. The story emphasizes that Jesus arrives at the tomb of Lazarus on the fourth day following his death. Because Lazarus has been dead for four days, there is an immense stench which issues from the tomb when it is opened. Nevertheless, Jesus prays to God and then calls to Lazarus to come out of the tomb. Thereupon, miraculously, Lazarus steps forth. The key to this story is the miraculous revival of Lazarus. It is miraculous because, on the fourth day following death, the stench of death gives indisputable evidence that the individual is dead and decaying. Before this, though, it is not certain that what looks like death is indeed that. For this reason, it appears, survivors visit the deceased on the third day: to anoint him with oils (for his comfort), to pray on his behalf, perhaps to visit him for the last time before death is absolutely certain, and generally to ascertain his state.” On page 22 he continues—“

We have seen in the literature of this period that the first three days following death were significant, probably because, during this time, it was not even clear that death had occurred... So people do not burst into death; they fall into it slowly.

It is clear from Dr. Kraemer’s treatment of the subject that any interment period less than three days would have failed to be a sign to Jews of the first Century that somebody had prevailed over death and the grave. For them, a person was not truly dead until after three days, when it was thought the spirit left the body and returned to God. Hence, we see the first mistake made by orthodox Christian theologians speculating about the timing of Christ’s burial and resurrection is the projection of their modern mindset about death and burial onto the Jews of that day.

The Jews Understood Yahshua’s Statements as Requiring 3 Full Days

There is evidence that even the Jewish leadership responsible for putting Christ to death understood Him to mean He would be in the tomb at least three days. The chief priests and Pharisees quoted Yahshua as saying, “After three days I will rise again,” when obtaining authority from Pilate to seal the tomb (Matt. 27:63). Two “witnesses” at Yahshua’s trial before the Sanhedrin quoted Christ as saying much the same thing (Matthew 26:61):

This one said, ‘I am able to destroy the temple of God, and through[6] three days to build it again.’

The underlined preposition is *dia* in the Greek text, which means through here, because the object of *dia* is in the genitive (possessive) case. This instance flies directly in face of any scenario where the resurrection is early in the day, for it is saying the resurrection would be after he had gone through three days of death. Nor does it say much for using the few minutes He was off the cross before sundown and counting that as an entire day. But these “witnesses” no doubt had Christ’s statement at the Temple at the first Passover (John 2:19) as their basis for their testimony, the same as the Pharisees before Pilate. This was Messiah’s first reference to the three day entombment. There the Jewish leaders asked Him (v. 18),

“What sign do you show us...? His memorable response was, “Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.” John explains by saying that:

He spake of the temple of His body. When therefore He was risen from the dead, His disciples remembered that He had said this unto them.”

The disciples were not the only ones who remembered Christ’s statement at the Temple. Therefore the scriptures tell us that the Pharisees, chief priests, witnesses at His trial, and the disciples themselves all understood Christ to have meant three full days when referring to the period preceding His prophesied resurrection. Many more passages (Matthew 16:21; 17:23; 20:19; Mark 9:31, 10:34; Luke 9:22; 18:33 indicate the resurrection would take place “on the third day.” Others use the preposition “in three days.” When combined with Matt. 12:40 and the sign of Jonah we have a conundrum. How can all of these different expressions be literal and be true at the same time? We are going to satisfy all of these conditions and show how each one was true. Think of it this way: the word of God has given us a riddle that needs to be solved. Solve it we will.

A New Paradigm for Reconciling the Different Expressions for the Length of Yeshua’s Entombment

How are we going to solve the riddle of these different expressions? Can we silence the mouths of the skeptics who say that the three days and three nights cannot be taken literally? My answer to the open-minded is an emphatic ‘Yes!’ We are going to prove Christ was placed in the tomb at the beginning of one day (i.e. just after sundown), the second or middle day was entirely spent in the tomb, and at the end of a third day he was raised by YHWH the Father. Hence, the end of the third was both on the third day and yet also within three days. However, rising at the end of the third day means He had also been dead through three days, as required by Matt. 26:61 and by the sign of the prophet Jonah.

A PROPOSED TIMELINE OF YESHUA’S DEATH AND RESURRECTION

<p>Aviv 14 Passover, Crucifixion day. He dies at 3 PM. Christ taken off the cross just prior to sundown. Aviv 14 ends at sundown, and a new day begins.</p>	<p>Aviv 15 High Day Sabbath (1st Day of Unleavened Bread), but dead could be attended to. Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus place Him in tomb after sundown of the 14th. Tomb sealed by Pharisees ‘late’ on the [High Day] Sabbath (Mt. 27:66 and 28:1a).</p> <p>Day One in the Tomb.</p>	<p>Aviv 16 Weekday when buying of spices, (Mark 16:1) and other work could be done. Spice preparation for burial was costly and time-consuming.</p> <p>Day Two in the Tomb.</p>	<p>Aviv 17 Weekday preparation for weekly Sabbath. Luke 23:56 says the women rested according to the commandment after preparing the spices on this day. Yeshua rose from the dead before sundown Friday.</p> <p>Day Three in Tomb.</p>
---	---	---	---

Tuesday March 27	Wednesday March 28	Thursday March 29	Friday March 30 <i>This day near sundown is both on, in and after three days.</i>
------------------	--------------------	----------------------	--

This paradigm also satisfies the requirement for a full three days and three nights mentioned by the Savior in Matt. 12:40, whose model is the time period Jonah spent in the belly of the whale. In the outline above we can see that Tuesday night, Wednesday night, and Thursday night were the three nights, while Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday daylight periods were the three days. When we let the Bible interpret the Bible, we see that the Savior in John 11:9 defines a day as comprising 12 hours: “Are there not twelve hours in the day?” We may naturally infer from this that the Messiah also ascribes twelve hours to the night. Therefore, as E.W. Bullinger^[7] has pointed out, the Savior was making reference to six approximately twelve hour periods just as in Jonah chapter 1, and the reference to both night periods and day periods eliminates the possibility of it being figurative.

What this paradigm does not satisfy are the theologians bent on upholding the authority of their churches, an authority derived not from the apostles, but from the Council of Nicea and Constantine, when these matters were finally put in stone. What theologians and Church leaders are wont to tell lay Christians, but which is understood by anyone who has studied Church history, is that Sunday is nothing more than the weekly celebration of a supposed first day resurrection, and became the Church’s excuse for not keeping the Saturday Sabbath holy. What the so-called Church fathers thought about Sunday resurrections means little to the person who realizes, along with Martin Luther, how scripturally deficient many of the Catholic Church fathers were. Most of the Church fathers in the West after the second century did not know Greek; they only knew Latin. Martin Luther said knowing the scriptures in Latin was like drinking from a mud puddle compared to knowing them in their original languages, which he compared to a rushing mighty stream. In other words, the meaning of *mia ton sabbatwn* (one of the Sabbaths) was quite lost on them. And even if they had known its literal meaning, their penchant for interpreting scripture allegorically meant that the phrase would not be understood or applied literally. How very few stop to consider how anti-law, anti-Jewish, anti-woman, anti-marriage, anti-sex, and anti-God-of-the-Old Testament the ‘Church fathers’ were. Ambrose of Milan forgot that it was his sins that put Christ up on the cross, not just the Jews’ political machinations with Pilate. Jerome, the most erudite linguistic scholar of them all, made the priesthood celibate almost single-handedly (contrary to what Paul taught in Timothy and Titus and Corinthians). The fruits of mandatory celibacy have come home to roost in almost every generation. Jerome’s strict asceticism was more typical of a Greek philosopher than a Christian.^[8] Justin Martyr, Origen, and a host of other Church ‘fathers’ allegorized away the significance of the Old Testament and its laws. For example, the monks commissioned to create our oldest surviving complete MS, the Codex Sinaiticus--dating to only a decade after Constantine’s death—included the flamingly anti-Semitic Epistle of Barnabas (140 A.D.) as part of their Canon. In it, the pseudonymous author^[9] claims a demon came down and convinced the Jews of the need to keep YHWH’s law literally. He spends time attempting to persuade his readers that it is acceptable in YHWH’s eyes to eat pork, and that the symbolic lesson behind this is to not associate with humans who are like pigs, and other such nonsense.

It is apparent from Samuele Bacchiocchi’s ground-breaking book *From Sabbath to Sunday*, that Christians even in the Western part of the empire were still meeting and worshipping privately on both the Sabbath and “Lord’s day” (a misnomer for Sunday), well into the 4th Century. All Constantine’s edicts (and the Church which he created) managed to do was anathematize and drive underground the small minority who were willing to die for the keeping of the Passover and the Sabbath. Easter, a patently pagan term deriving directly from the Babylonian fertility cult, was adopted in the place of both Passover and Sabbath, because Sunday was nothing more than a weekly Easter, as Bachiocchi demonstrates.

In a day when Christianity's enemies are on the ascendant, it is time to direct our attention to ideological icons made of stone. The Christian iconoclasts of the 7th and 8th Centuries went about destroying the statues and idols standing in supposedly Christian cathedrals and cities, because they rightly believed that in this respect, Christianity was less righteous than the Moslems who strictly forbade the use of idols.^[10] It is time to reconsider ideas we thought were carved in stone and take an honest look at the doctrinal foundations of Christianity. They are firm when founded on scripture, but when they are not, they are like a house built on sand about which Christ prophesied, "And the rains descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell; and great was the fall of it ^[11] (Matthew 7:27)."

Yeshua Was Not in the Tomb on Any Part of the 14th of Aviv (Passover Day)

A Friday crucifixion and Sunday morning resurrection do not allow for three days and three nights in the tomb. Furthermore, since Biblical and Jewish days began and ended at sundown, and since it is by no means certain that Joseph of Arimathea placed the body in the tomb prior to sunset, Bible interpreters have simply assumed that they have part of Friday to count as one of their three days. Notice, Matt. 27:57 says:

And evening having come,^[12] a rich man from Arimathea coming up to Pilate, requests the body of Yeshua. KJV

The Hebrew Gospel of Matthew, by George Howard, a very early witness to what the original Hebrew text of Matthew may have said, says this:

At evening time (literally, "to the time of evening" in the Hebrew text), a rich man ...came to Pilate and asked him for the body of Jesus."

The Hebrew concept of "evening" (indeed the Semitic concept throughout every culture in the Middle East for thousands of years) can best be understood by consulting Baumgartner's Hebrew-English lexicon. In his exhaustive study of the Hebrew word for evening--erev (bre)-- it is clear that all the cognate Semitic languages from Egypt to Mesopotamia understood 'r'v as referring to the time of sunset and later (not afternoon, as the rabbis later interpreted it). This ancient root 'r'v meant "the going down, and the going in."^[13] When the sun went down, those working outdoors went into their domiciles.

Mark 15:42 says the same thing as Matthew, i.e. that it was near sunset (already evening was occurring) when Joseph of Arimathea came to Pilate boldly:

Now evening occurring, since it was a preparation which is toward a sabbath, Joseph of Arimathea...came with daring, entered in to Pilate and requests the body of Yeshua,

The account in Mark 15:44-45 states that Pilate was amazed if Yahshua were already dead. Only after calling for the centurion and ascertaining how long Yahshua had been dead (which must have taken some time), did Pilate then grant permission to Joseph to take the body. The combining of Matthew's account with Mark 15 yields the result that entombment was after sundown, not before. Mark in the very first chapter of his Gospel (Mark 1: 32) takes the pains of explaining just what is meant by the term evening (Greek=oiav):

Now evening occurring [identical Greek phrase as Mark 15:42 and Matthew 27:57], when the sun sets, they brought to Him all those who have an illness and those who are demoniacs. And the whole city was assembled at the door.

Most commentators realize that the reason the people waited until sunset was to avoid upsetting the Pharisees and leaders of the synagogue, who foolishly assumed that healing on the Sabbath was work.

John's narrative in John 19:31-32 indicates that the Jewish leaders^[14] did not go before Pilate to ask that he do something specific (Greek word is *erotaw*), i.e. expedite the death of Yeshua and the others being crucified with Him by having their legs broken, until after Yeshua had already expired--after 3 PM. So this dispatch was likely between 3:30 and 4:30 PM in the afternoon. An hour or two later, as evening/sunset is occurring, Joseph comes to ask permission to bury Yeshua's body, and Pilate is surprised that He is already dead. So even though Pilate had earlier complied with the Jews' request that His legs be broken^[15], Pilate was still surprised that Yeshua was dead already. Therefore Pilate dispatched a centurion to Golgotha to bring back certain word of His death, and then granted permission to Joseph of Arimathea.

John 19:39-40 adds further detail to our story by informing us that Nicodemus carried 75 pounds of myrrh and aloes to help Joseph treat the linen burial cloth with aromatics, according to Jewish burial custom. There are others who think the aloe and myrrh were dry aromatics intended to dry up his extensive body wounds. The application of this ointment to the body and/or wrapping must have taken quite some time, and would not have taken place inside the cramped quarters of the tomb. This was all done prior to Him being laid in the tomb, and suggests strongly that the final placement of the body was well after sunset.

Acts 9:37 shows that it was customary to first wash the body of the deceased before proceeding to the next step. It is unthinkable that Joseph and Nicodemus would not have washed Christ's body before wrapping it with the treated linen [even though the text is discreet in omitting this detail]. Hence, all the evidence argues against this process being completed prior to sundown. Even if the myrrh and aloes which Nicodemus brought were already in the prepared state^[16], i.e. precious (and sticky) ointment, the application of the ointment onto the linen cloths would have taken the men more than an hour, and possibly much longer. There is the probability that this operation took place at a private location (perhaps Joseph of Arimathea's house), due to the need for water. In conclusion, since Matt. 27:57 indicates it was near sundown or evening when Joseph besought Pilate, there is no way he:

1. walked from Fort Antonia where Pilate was,
2. bought fine linen wrapping (Mark 15:46),
3. walked to Golgotha and took the body down
4. took the body to his private residence or a private place with water
5. washed the body, and treated the body wounds with dry myrrh and aloes
6. completed the application of the same to the linen, then
7. dressed the body with the linens, and
8. finally transported the body of Yeshua to his private tomb, and performed all of these things before dusk was over.

Now since Friday evening was part of the same day (the seventh-day Sabbath), and in no way would have been considered as part of a different day than Saturday (since both comprised the holy Sabbath), orthodox Christianity and those who believe in a Sunday resurrection have little basis for arguing that Sunday was the third day after He was buried. So if the Churches truly wish to maintain their confession in the Apostle's Creed, that Christ "died, was buried, and rose the third day," the above analysis indicates that a Sunday morning would only be the second day after He was buried/ laid in the tomb.

Mainstream theologians would prefer simply to ignore Matthew 12:40 and Jonah 1:17, since these verses mitigate against the Good Friday/Easter Sunday scenario of tradition. The taking of these scriptural passages literally as three full days and three full nights is bolstered further by the Bible's own definition of a day as comprising twelve hours (John 11:9, referred to earlier).

The Scriptures Never State the Resurrection Occurred on Sunday

Scholars and religionists should be honest enough to admit that there is no scripture that tells us explicitly when the Savior rose from the dead. The only verse that comes close to doing so is Mark 16:9. The literal translation from the Greek is as follows:

But after having risen, He appeared first to Mary Magdalene (out of whom He had cast seven devils) early on first Sabbath.

The participial phrase that begins the verse contains the aorist form of the verb *anastemi* (anastav), and is translated correctly as “having risen” by Green’s Interlinear. Rules governing Greek participles will tell you this “having risen” took place at an indefinite time prior to when He first appeared to Mary Magdalene. The phrase “early on first Sabbath” *proi proth sabbatou* can only be modifying the verb “manifested” (*efanh*), which means His resurrection had occurred at some indefinite (aorist) time in the past, prior to His appearing to her.

That phrase definitely does not mean “first day of the week”, as the chapter by that title will demonstrate. It refers to the “early morning of the first [weekly] Sabbath” after Passover. Those who believe it does must explain why Mark uses *mias sabbatwn* in verse 2 of chapter 16. The existence, so close by, of different expressions for the same day, is an argument against idiomatic usage by the author. If Mark was using an idiom to refer to Sunday, he would not switch from *mia* to *proth* to refer to “first day.”

All the other passages in the Gospels^[17] have to do with when the women came to the tomb, not when He arose. Therefore, the only way to derive exactly when He arose is through deduction and inference, three days and three nights being only one part of that equation. Since the phrase that denotes the arrival time of the women is *mian sabbatwn* in Matt. 28:1 and *mia twn sabbatwn* in Luke 24:1 and John 20:1, and since these phrases mean one of two things—“one of the Sabbaths” or “first day of the week”—therefore the entombment must be three or four days prior to a Saturday or Sunday morning. This limits our search for the year of the crucifixion to a year when the Passover happened at the middle of the week, on either a Tuesday or a Wednesday. Since the visible crescent of the moon used to calculate the first day of Aviv (the first Biblical month in spring) causes the Passover, the fourteenth day of Aviv, to fall on Sunday or Monday in 29 and 32 A.D., these years do not allow for the resurrection to fall near the weekend.^[18]

The Women Bought Spices between the 15th of Aviv and the Weekly Sabbath

Yahshua died on Passover day, fourteen days after a New Moon. The Law of Moses plainly declares the 14th of the first month to be the Passover, and it was definitely on this day that Christ died. There was urgency expressed by the Jewish leaders to get him down from the cross before the annual Sabbath, the first day of Unleavened Bread, which was the 15th day of Aviv. Numerous passages in the Gospels tell us that the day of the crucifixion was also “preparation day” for the first Sabbath of Unleavened Bread. The women had to wait an entire day, until the annual holy day had passed, before venturing forth to purchase spices, as per Mark 16:1:

And when the Sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome, bought sweet spices, that they might come and anoint Him with oil.

The Friday-Sunday scenario does not allow for either the time or the work involved in buying and preparing spices. No shops were open late on Friday. On the chance that the women were able to buy spices after Saturday sundown, not enough time remains to have prepared them and come to the tomb

Sunday morning. But the chief problem is that Luke 23:56 indicates they prepared the spices and ointments before resting on the weekly Sabbath:

And they (the same women mentioned in Mark 16:1) returned and prepared spices and ointments, and rested according to the commandment.

Yet Mark 16:1 says they bought spices after the Sabbath was past. Very few scholars indeed have tried to reconcile these two passages. It is apparent that Mark is referring only to the High Day Sabbath, the First Day of Unleavened Bread, which fell on the 15th of *Aviv*, the day after Yahshua was killed. The afternoon Yeshua was killed is referred to as “a preparation which is toward a Sabbath” (epei hn Paraskeun o esti prosabbaton), which, with the absence of the definite article, would also tend to limit it to an annual Sabbath. Therefore, harmonization of these scriptures leads to the conclusion that there were in-between days that week during which spices could be bought and the work of preparing them performed before resting according to the Fourth Commandment (Luke 23:56), on Saturday.

The second reason for rejecting Friday Passover/Sunday resurrection is astronomical. Since Passovers are counted from the New Moon, it is possible now to know the Gregorian dates of Passover with a fair amount of certainty in any year. Knowing that date provides the day of the week. This information can be obtained by anyone with astronomical software, such as *Redshift* or *Starry Night*. The most plausible year for a Friday Passover fourteen days after a crescent is 33 A.D.[\[19\]](#) But this requires a four year ministry, which is too long.

Another major reason Friday does not work is the following: John 12:1 says that Yahshua came to Bethany six days before the Passover, which would place His trip to Bethany on a weekly Sabbath. Comparison with other passages in the four Gospels shows that this journey to Bethany was from Jericho, twelve miles from Jerusalem. The early Christians who invented the myth of Palm Sunday, the supposed day of the Triumphal entry, would admit that this is true; but this wreaks no havoc with their theology, since they believe Christ came to do away with the Sabbath. What better way to show disdain for the Fourth Commandment than by having Christ journey uphill over rugged terrain twelve miles in from Jericho on the Sabbath! John 12:12 shows it was “on the next day” after His supposed Saturday arrival at Lazarus’ house for the special meal there, that the Triumphal entry occurred. But it is unlikely that Christ journeyed twelve miles uphill all the way from Jericho on a Saturday. It was customary for Him to enter into the synagogue on the Sabbath day (Luke 4:16), not use that holy time to make arduous hikes.

The main reason, however, that Friday Passover does not work, is for the reason mentioned earlier; to wit, that it is impossible to maintain belief in a literal three days “in the heart of the earth” with the Friday evening-Sunday scenario.

Was the Messiah Resurrected on Sunday?

The timing of the Savior’s resurrection is a very controversial subject because many traditions are tied to it, not the least of which is observance of Sunday as a day of rest and worship. When considered in the light of astronomical evidence limiting the year of the passion, a strong case will be presented in this book against the figurative, idiomatic interpretation of the Greek phrases describing when the women discovered the empty tomb. The conventional translations that render the phrase “first day of the week” (*mia twn sabbatwn*), should more correctly read, “one of the Sabbaths.” [\[20\]](#) For those who doubt whether Torah-observant Jews would come to the tomb on Sabbath morning, we shall in a later chapter cite the Talmud and Dr. David Kraemer to prove that there was absolutely no prohibition against ministering to “the needs and business of the dead” on the Sabbath in the first Century.

Was a Wednesday Crucifixion and Late Saturday Resurrection Possible?

The literal translation of *mia twn sabbatwn* (mia ton sabbaton) prevents the possibility of a Wednesday crucifixion and late-Saturday resurrection. The Wednesday/Saturday scenario has up until now been the main one advanced by those who believe Yeshua was three days and three nights in the tomb. During the middle of the last century, the Church of God Sabbath-keeping movement greatly copied and spread Bullinger's ideas supporting three days and three nights. Herbert Armstrong had come into contact in Oregon with leaders of the Church of God 7th Day, who had a century earlier split with the Seventh Day Adventists. All of the Worldwide Church of God groups spread Bullinger's idea that the three and three nights fell between Wednesday and Saturday. Those who believe in Wednesday-Saturday, while accommodating far more facts in the historical record than the traditional Friday-Sunday view, run into problems when they try to find a year where it is possible astronomically possible to have a Wednesday Passover.

Lunar crescents were observed to begin months, as we prove in Appendix I. Based on this, in 28 A.D., the Passover fell on Tuesday, just as it did in 31 A.D. But Christ could not have died any earlier than 29 A.D. to accommodate the historical facts highlighted in this book. In 29 A.D. the Passover fell on Sunday or Monday, hence it will not accommodate the end of the three days falling near the weekend. In 30 A.D. the lunar conjunction was at 9 PM on Wed. night, March 22, the very earliest the crescent could have been seen by Jewish observers in Palestine would have been the next day, Thursday evening. Therefore 30 A.D. in no way accommodates a Wednesday Passover. In 32 A.D. the same situation presents itself as in 29 A.D. The crescent was on either Sunday or Monday night, placing the Passover either on a Sunday or a Monday. So 32 A.D. is absolutely unworkable. Passover definitely was on Friday in 33 A.D., but by the time the evidence in all the chapters of this is book is weighed, 33 A.D. is not an option for the year of the crucifixion. The material in this chapter alone forces one to choose between the scriptural accounts and Church authority, because it is only the presumptive, perfunctory treatment of this issue by the Catholic and other Church intelligentsia over the centuries that gives any credence whatsoever to the Friday crucifixion. The moon and the heavens have a lot to say about it, not to mention the scriptures covered in this chapter alone. They do not favor either a Wednesday or a Friday crucifixion. E.W. Bullinger and the Church of God 7th Day never attempted to use astronomy to find a plausible year for a Wednesday Passover/crucifixion. If they would have had access to the astronomy software available to my generation, they would have been as frustrated as I have in trying to find the year when Passover could fall on Wednesday.

But wait, we have narrowed it down to one year—31 A.D. The balance of the book will be spent showing a plethora of historical, astronomical, calendrical, Talmudic, and scriptural reasons that point to that year. In that year Passover could have either been March 27th, a Tuesday, or April 25th, a Wednesday. This is due to the fact that it is a year when one has to decide whether a 13th month was intercalated. We will show why the stars, not just the Sun and Moon, play a determining role in this matter. We will devote a short chapter as to why any date more than a month past the equinox is too late, and hence, why April 25th is too late. There we will focus on Gen. 1:14—"Let there be lights in the firmament of the heavens...and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years." It will also touch on the signs of the zodiac that YHWH designed to picture the very plan of salvation, and why the Passover fell when the Sun was in Aries.

Another consideration in determining the year of the crucifixion is the year of the Messiah's birth. In the next chapter we will highlight the best that current scholarship has to say on that subject. It is a fascinating study, to say the least, and one that will prove the veracity and accuracy of scripture.

^[1] This bold assertion will be fairly easily proven in a later chapter of the book.

^[2] Read appendices 144, 148 and 156 of Bullinger's Companion Bible-- "While it is true a 'third day' may be a part of three days, including two nights, yet 'after three days' and 'three days and three nights' cannot possibly be so reckoned. This full period admits of the Lord's resurrection on the third of the three days, each being preceded by a night."

^[3] Matt. 12:39—"an evil and adulterous generation seeks after a sign; and there shall no sign be given it, but the sign of Jonah the prophet."

^[4] Professor Kraemer, a contemporary scholar, is a foremost authority on death and burial in ancient Judaism.

^[5] See page 21-22 of Death and Burial in Rabbinic Judaism, by David W. Kraemer.

^[6] See Wm D. Mounce, *BBG*, dia as a preposition in the genitive case.

^[7] Appendix 144 and Appendix 148, Bullinger's Companion Bible

^[8] "Wherefore if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances: Touch not, taste not, handle not, which are all to perish with the using; after the commandments and teachings of men? (Colossians 2:20-22)."

^[9] The Apostle Barnabas of the Book of Acts, the apostle who welcomed Paul into the Church, had nothing to do with the second century epistle bearing his name.

^[10] The iconoclasts believed God was granting success to Mohammed's followers as a judgment against the idolatry and shortcomings of orthodox Christianity.

^[11] The same words are used in Rev. 17-18 to describe the fall of Babylon the Great, the great harlot Church who has led the mainstream Churches with her anti-Mosaic heretical doctrines that put the Bible and YHWH in such bad light.

^[12] See Green's Interlinear, page 765. Oqiv genomenhv does mean "evening having come."

^[13] Article *bin ha arbayim* at www.americaspropheticdestiny.com, proving that *erev* meant dusk or evening, and not afternoon, throughout the OT. Baumgardner's Hebrew lexicon confirms this conclusion.

^[14] I have elsewhere demonstrated that the term "Jews" is used by John to refer to the Jewish leaders (see John 1:19, 24).

^[15] John makes it clear that Jesus' legs were not broken, because He was already dead when the soldiers came to Him; nevertheless, a soldier pierced His side with a spear.

^[16] This is in contrast to the raw, unprepared spices which the women bought after the High Sabbath was over (Mark 16:1), which had to be *prepared* (Lk. 23:56).

^[17] Matt. 28:1, Mark 16:2, Luke 24:1, John 20:1

^[18] But that has not stopped some big-name scholars from postulating those years!

^[19] This indeed turns out to be the real reason Dionysius Exiguus established 1 BC and 1 AD on the years he did, so that Christ would be about 33 years old in a year when Passover could fall on a Friday. But his Dec 25th 1 BC birth for Christ is at least 2-3 years too late, since Matt. 2 says that Herod was alive and Yeshua was a toddler living in a house when the wise men arrived. Herod's death was in January of 1 BC, as modern scholars are beginning to realize. See The Star That Astonished the World, by Ernest Martin.

^[20] The Concordant Literal NT translates all eight places in the NT where "first day of the week" occurs in other translations as "one of the sabbaths" or "first sabbath"