

## CHAPTER 25

# The Real Truth About Easter

*"Learn not the ways of the heathen...for the customs of the people are in vain"*  
(Jer. 10:2-3 NKJV).

The Resurrection was not on Easter Sunday! Christ was not crucified on Good Friday. Easter is not a Christian name, but the title of the idolatrous "queen of heaven." Shocking statements if made to any Christian. Yes shocking, but absolutely true. Please read this whole chapter before you dismiss it as unbelievable. God will judge you on this.

You have been taught since childhood to accept Easter as the chief of the Christian holidays. You have supposed it is part of the true Christian religion to observe Lent, "Holy Week," "Good Friday," and to dress up and go to church Easter Sunday and perhaps to attend an Easter sunrise service. It is an Easter custom to buy hot cross buns at the bakery and have colored Easter eggs and chocolate Easter rabbits. Have you ever stopped to ask yourself why you believe the things you believe and do the things you do?

Because of the sheep like instinct in humans, most of us believe a lot of things that are not true and do a lot of things that are wrong. We believe and follow our leaders much like sheep to the slaughter. We place our complete trust in these leaders and never question what we believe. Well wake up! Read your Bible and ask questions. Most of us suppose these things are right, or even sacred. Here is an explanation of the true origin and meaning of Lent, Easter, and its customs.

Believe it or not, Easter was being observed 4000 years ago among the pagans! It was still being observed when the Christ-child was born. Christ did not institute it. **You can't find one word in the entire Bible that Jesus or the apostles ever observed Easter!**

The word "Easter" occurs only once in the Bible, and that only in the Authorized King James translation where "Easter" was used as the mistranslation of the word "Pascha" in Acts 12:4: "Intending after Easter to bring him forth to the people." The Revised Standard Version has correctly substituted the words "the Passover" rendering it "Intending after the Passover to bring him forth to the people."

Where did you ever find in your Bible that Peter and Paul held Easter sunrise services? That the early Christian women in apostolic days dressed up for an Easter parade? That Christians baked hot-cross buns? That the children of Christians dyed Easter eggs and ate chocolate Easter rabbits in honor of Christ's resurrection? You never found these practices taught by the inspired apostolic Church or in your Bible. Yet these or similar customs were being celebrated in pagan lands long before the days of the

Apostles!

### **Origin of Easter**

What is the meaning of the name "Easter"? You have been led to suppose the word has something to do with the resurrection of Christ. **The name Easter, which is merely the slightly changed English spelling of the name of the ancient Assyrian and Babylonian goddess Ishtar**, comes to us from old Teutonic mythology where it is known as Ostern. Ostern was the goddess of spring and the German festival of Ostara was celebrated in the spring. Schaff in his *History of the Church* (vol I, p. 373) says that **the Easter celebration was always connected with the East and sunrise** and that the transfer of the celebration of Ostara to the Christian Easter festival took place years after the death of Paul. Up until that time it was not called by the name of the pagan deity "Easter" but by the Bible name "Passover."

The Phoenician name of this goddess was Astarte. She was a mother-goddess of love and fertility. Rev. Alexander Hislop says in his book *The Two Babylons* (p.103), "**Easter bears its Chaldean origin on its very forehead. Easter is nothing else than Astarte, one of the titles of Beltis, the queen of heaven.**" **It was for sacrificing to Ashtoreth (Astarte) and other pagan gods (I Kings 11:1-11) that the Lord condemned Solomon, and rended away the Kingdom of Israel from his son.**

While this goddess was called Astarte by the Phoenicians, her name appears on Assyrian monuments found by Layard in excavation at Nineveh as Ishtar (*Nineveh and Babylon*, Vol. II, p. 629). Remember that Nineveh was that very wicked city in the Bible that Jonah was sent to preach to about their impending destruction because of their wicked ways. Nineveh the capital of Assyria was named after the goddess Ishtar, also called Nina. **In the ancient Chaldean idolatrous sun worship, as practiced by the Phoenicians, Baal was the sun god, and Astarte was his wife. And Astarte is the same as Ishtar or the english Easter. The worship of Baal was denounced by the Almighty God in the Bible as the most abominable of all pagan idolatry.**

Easter came from pagan sun worship, not from Jesus Christ or the apostles. Reverend Hislop said: "**The festival, of which we read in Church history, under the name of Easter, in the third or fourth centuries, was quite a different festival from that now observed in the Roman [and Protestant] Church, and at that time was not known by any such name as Easter. It was called Pascha, or the Passover, and...was very early observed by many professing Christians...That festival agreed originally with the time of the Jewish Passover, when Christ was crucified...That festival was not idolatrous, and it was preceded by no Lent**" (*The Two Babylons*, p.104).

### **Easter Eggs**

Did you know that dyed Easter eggs also figured in the ancient Babylonian mystery rites, just as they do today in Easter observance? Yes, they are pagan, too. Eggs

were sacred to many ancient civilizations and formed a part of the religious ceremonies in Egypt and in the Orient. The ancient Druids bore an egg as the sacred emblem of their idolatrous order (*The Mythology and Rites of the British Druids*). Eggs were hung up in the Egyptian temples as the emblem of generative life. The mystic egg of Babylon fell from heaven to the Euphrates and hatched the Venus Ishtar. Dyed eggs were sacred Easter offerings in Egypt and they still are in China and Europe today. (*Egyptian Belief and Modern Thought*, pp. 211-212).

**Why do people who believe themselves to be Christians dye eggs at Easter? The Bible never ordained or commanded this heathen custom. We do not find Christ, or the apostles or early Christians doing it in the New Testament. Then why should you do it today? Why follow this heathen custom and try to convince yourself it is Christian and that you are a Christian? God calls such things abomination!**

### **Easter Sunrise Services**

You think Easter sunrise services are beautiful? About 600 years before Christ, the prophet Ezekiel saw, in a vision, an Easter celebration. Listen to what God had to say. God was showing the prophet Ezekiel the sins of his people in a vision, which was also a prophecy for us today! "Turn again," said God, "and you will see greater abominations than these [Ezekiel had just been shown, in vision, idol worship among professing people of God]. So he brought me into the inner court of the Lord's house; and there, at the door of the temple of the Lord, between the porch and the altar, were about twenty-five men, with their backs toward the temple of the Lord and their faces toward the east; and they were worshiping the sun toward the east. Then he said unto me, Hast thou seen this, O son of man?" (Ezek. 8:15-16 NKJV).

Do you understand what this most abominable thing is? It is the identical thing millions are doing every Easter Sunday morning, the Easter sunrise service. They are standing with their faces toward the east, as the sun is rising, in a service of worship that honors the sun god and his wife, the goddess Easter. Yes, deceived into believing it is Christian, millions practice every Easter the identical form of the ancient sun worship of the sun god Baal! Throughout the Bible this is revealed as the most abominable of all idolatry in the sight of God.

Professing Christians today celebrate these pagan customs on Easter Sunday supposedly in honor of Christ and his resurrection. Easter sunrise services you were told (falsely) celebrate the Sunday morning resurrection of Jesus Christ. We will show you later that Jesus did not rise from the dead on Sunday at all! Surely the people today are sincere, but so were the pagans. They didn't know better, but we should as Christians.

### **Punishment for Observing Easter**

Observe what God says He will do to those who refuse to repent of this abomination: "Is this a light thing...that they commit the abominations which they

commit here?...Therefore will I also deal in fury: mine eye shall not spare, neither will I have pity: and though they cry in mine ears with a loud voice [of course they pray to God], yet will I not hear them" (Ezek. 8:17-18 KJV). Yes punishment has begun and will intensify as we approach the Great Tribulation.

But, what if Easter is an ancient pagan festival? Isn't it still all right, if we use it to honor Christ? Well, that is the way people reason today. Let God answer that question: "Take heed...that you do not inquire after their gods, saying, 'How did these nations serve their gods? I also will do likewise.' **You shall not worship the Lord your God in that way; for every abomination to the Lord which He hates they have done to their gods**" (Deut. 12:30-31 NKJV). That is what God says. It does not matter what we think, but it does matter what God thinks. He calls these pagan Easter customs abominations and he hates them and doesn't want to be worshiped in that way.

### ***The Origin of Lent***

The apostles and the early true Church of God observed no Lenten season. John Cassian wrote in the fifth century, "**that as long as the primitive church retained its perfection unbroken, this observance of Lent did not exist**" (*First Conference Abbot Theonas*, Chap. 30).

**"The forty days' abstinence of Lent was directly borrowed from the worshipers of the Babylonian goddess.** Such a Lent of forty days, in the spring of the year, is still observed by the Yezidis or pagan Devil-worshipers of Koordistan, who have inherited it from their early masters, the Babylonians. Such a Lent of forty days was held in spring by the pagan Mexicans...Such a Lent of forty days was observed in Egypt..." (*The Two Babylons*, pp. 104-105).

### ***Apostles Observed Passover***

**God Almighty commanded His people to observe the Passover forever!** (**Exod. 12:24**). This command was given while the Israelites were still in Egypt, prior to the Old Covenant, or the Law of Moses! It pictured, before the crucifixion, Christ's death for the remission of our sins, as a type of looking forward to it. At His last Passover, Jesus changed the emblems used from the blood of a lamb and eating its roasted body to the bread and wine. Jesus did not abolish the Passover. He merely changed the symbols used.

**All the apostles of Christ and true Christians of the first and second century true Church observed the Passover, (commonly known as the Lord's Supper) on the 14th day of the first month of the sacred calendar.** Read Acts 12:3-4, Acts 18:21, Acts 20:6. Passover is a memorial of the crucifixion of Christ (Luke 22:19). Passover did not occur on Sunday, or any fixed day of the week, but on a certain calendar day of the year. The day of the week varies from year to year. Passover, reaffirms, year by year on its anniversary, the true Christian's faith in the blood of Christ for the remission of his

sins, and the broken body of Christ for his physical healing.

But what has happened? Do you realize it? **All Western nations have been deceived into dropping the festival of Passover, which God ordained forever to commemorate the death of the true Saviour for our sins, and substituting in its place the pagan festival of Easter, in commemoration of the counterfeit "savior" Baal, the sun god, named after the mythical Ishtar, his wife.** This is not Christian. It is pagan to the core. Millions have been deceived into observing this form of heathen idolatry, under the delusion they are honoring Christ. **Easter does not honor Christ!** Yet, like blind sheep, you follow the others in observing this custom. "The times of this ignorance God winked at, but now commandeth all men every where to repent" (Acts 17:30 KJV).

### **How Easter Entered the Church**

We have shown you the origin of Easter. Now lets look at just how this pagan festival was injected into professing Christian religion, as a substitute for the Passover, an ordinance of God.

**Understand that Jesus and the apostles foretold a falling away from the truth by the great majority of New Testament believers. Paul stated in II Thessalonians 2:7, "The mystery of iniquity doth already work," only some 20 years after the Church began. He referred to the very "Chaldean Mysteries," the two chief festivals of which gave rise to the modern Easter and Christmas.**

Even in Paul's day, many among those attending at Antioch, at Ephesus, at Corinth, and other places, began to apostatize and turn away from the truth. Divisions sprang up. The "mystery of iniquity" was already at work. By the year 125 A.D. the majority in most churches, especially gentile-born, were continuing in many of their old pagan beliefs and practices, though professing to be Christian! Gradually, a smaller and smaller portion of the visible churches going by the name "Christian" remained true to God and his truth. **After Constantine took control of the visible church in the early fourth century, this visible organization of the church became almost wholly pagan, and began excommunicating and persecuting all who held to the true Word of God!** Finally it became necessary for real Christians to flee in order to truly worship God. These scattered and persecuted people composed the true Christian Church. Thus, the visible, organized church that rose to power was the **false church**, the fallen woman of Revelation 17.

Revelation 17 pictures a great and powerful church with many daughter churches ruling over many nations and united with the "Holy Roman Empire". This church is pictured with great pomp, ritual and display, decked in purple, scarlet and gold, proud, worldly, and boastful. All the Western nations are pictured as spiritually drunk with her false doctrines. Their spiritual perception is so blurred by her teachings and practices they are unable to clearly distinguish the truth! She boasts she is the true Church, yet she is drunken with the blood of the saints she has caused to be martyred! They observe the festivals derived from the pre- Christian heathen. They call themselves "Christian" but

God calls them "Mystery, Babylon the Great"! Babylon means confusion. God always names people by calling them what they are. **And here are the identical ancient Babylonian Mysteries now wrapped in the false cloak labeled "Christianity", but in fact it is the same old "Babylonian Mystery System."**

You will learn as you continue to study your beliefs that many pagan customs and traditions were merged into the early "Christian" church to make Christianity more acceptable to the pagans. This so-called "Christian" church became a great false church and has many daughter churches. The true Church of God never followed or accepted these practices but kept true to the Word of God. **The true Church of God is described as a "little flock" persecuted and despised by the large popular churches. It has kept God's Festivals, not the pagan holidays.** That small true Church of God has always existed, and although scattered by persecution (Acts 8:1) and driven into the wilderness for 1260 years, beginning in A.D. 325 (Rev. 12) she continued to keep the commandments of God, and this true church still exists today.

### ***Catholics Tell The Origin of Easter***

The Catholic scholar Hefele wrote concerning Easter: "All the churches of the West, the South and the North had adopted this practice [Easter], particularly Rome, the whole of Italy, Africa, Egypt, Spain, Gaul, Britain, Lybia, Achaia; it has even been adopted in the dioceses of Asia, Pontus and Cilicia" (*History of the Councils*, Vol.I, pp. 306-307).

Notice that the Easter celebration was adopted, not from the Bible, but from the heathen, long after the death of Christ. Helele obtained this information from ancient church history written shortly after the time Easter was adopted. Here was what Socrates Scholasticus wrote in his Ecclesiastical History not long after the time of Emperor Constantine, in the fourth century:

**"Neither the Apostles, therefore, nor the Gospels, have any-where imposed...Easter...Wherefore, inasmuch as men love festivals, because they afford them cessation from labor: each individual in every place, according to his own pleasure, has by a prevalent custom celebrated [Easter]...The Saviour and his apostles have enjoined us by no law to keep this feast...just as many other customs have been established in individual localities according to usage, so also the feast of Easter came to be observed in each place according to the individual peculiarities of the peoples inasmuch as none of the apostles legislated on the matter. And that the observance originated not by legislation, but as a custom, the facts themselves indicate" (Chapter 22).**

So this ancient church historian is saying that the pagan festival of Easter was never imposed by the Apostles or Christ, and was never imposed by the Gospels of the Bible. He says the observance of Easter originated as a custom of the people.

### ***How Easter Was Introduced Into the Church***

The practice of the New Testament Church of God was to observe the Passover, commonly known as the Lord's Supper, as an **annual** memorial of the death of Jesus Christ. **Up to this point the Church of God understood that Jesus rose from the dead after three days and nights. The crucifixion occurred upon a Wednesday. The resurrection was three days later on Saturday late afternoon, shortly before sunset. The Passover was observed annually, on the eve of Christ's death, on Nisan 14 of God's sacred calendar.** This New Testament practice was followed in the West universally until shortly after the death of the Apostle John. In the Eastern Roman Empire the true practice continued even longer.

A calendar change occurred during the middle of the second century A.D., after which new ideas began to be introduced into the professing Christian world. The true Christians who fled Jerusalem continued to use God's method of reckoning the Passover with God's sacred calendar. As the bishops of Jerusalem were succeeded by unconverted Gentiles these bishops began to invent other cycles and the calculation of the original Passover was generally rejected by the church. (*Bingham's Antiquities of the Christian Church*, p. 1152). This is how the Passover, sometimes called the Lord's Supper or Eucharist was gradually rejected.

With the rejection of God's sacred calendar by many in the professing Christian world, many now began to do what seemed right to them. They not only began to miscalculate the annual occurrence of the Passover, but in the East, they began to observe the Passover **weekly** on Saturday, the Sabbath, believe it or not! For more than 200 years this custom was a universal practice of the Eastern churches. The church historian Socrates wrote in his *Ecclesiastical History*, book V, chapter 22: "While therefore some in Asia Minor observed the day above mentioned [he means that some continued to observe the Passover on the 14th of Nisan as the apostles did], others in the East kept this feast on the Sabbath indeed." By "sabbath" all early writers meant Saturday.

So universal was the custom of observing the "Lord's Supper" on Saturday that he continued to write: "For although almost all churches throughout the world celebrate the sacred mysteries on the sabbath of every week, yet the Christians of Alexandria and at Rome, on account of some ancient tradition, have ceased to do this." Did you understand the significance of this quotation? The Passover had been transformed from an **annual memorial** in memory of the death of Christ into a **weekly observance** in honor of His resurrection, which occurred on Saturday. These weekly "passovers" were called the "sacred mysteries." A part of those ancient mysteries was later the festival of Easter. Easter entered slowly under the pretext of being a Christian custom.

Many faithful were still observing the practices of the original true Church. Others began to hold the "sacred Mysteries" every Saturday to honor, as they thought the resurrection of Jesus. But how where the false teachers going to alter the knowledge that Jesus was three days and three nights in the tomb?

### ***The Good Friday - Easter Sunday Tradition***

From the *Syriac Didascalia*, composed shortly before the time of Constantine, we have a record of what happened in those early days. False teachers began to interpret the three days and three nights in the following clever fashion:

They claimed Jesus suffered on the cross, supposedly on Friday, for about six hours. The daylight hours from nine in the morning to noon they counted as one day. The hours from noon to three o'clock, when the land was darkened, they reckoned as the first night. Then the time from three o'clock to sunset was reckoned as the second day. Friday night to Saturday morning became the second night; the daylight of Saturday, the third day; and Saturday night to Sunday morning, the third night.

A very clever argument, and it deceived a great many people! This false Good Friday-Easter Sunday tradition is still accepted and practiced today. Those false ministers twisted the real truth that Jesus was in the grave for 72 hours, three full days and three full nights. They want you to believe he was in the grave only a day and a half. This was the first time the idea of a Sunday resurrection was injected into the churches.

### ***Easter Sunday Began at Rome***

In commenting on those who did not observe the Passover in accordance with the practice of the apostles, Irenaeus, who lived toward the close of the second century, wrote to Bishop Victor of Rome, "We mean Anicetus, and Pius, and Hyginus, and Telesphorus, and Xystus. They neither observed it [the true Passover on the 14th of Nisan] nor did they permit those after them to do so" (*Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, Vol.I, p. 243). These men were Bishops of Rome. **Here is the first record, by a Catholic, that the Roman Bishops no longer observed the Passover at the correct God-given time, but on a Sunday!**

**It was Bishop Xystus who was the first recorded individual to prevent the proper observance of the Passover, and to celebrate the "sacred mysteries" annually on a Sunday.** Irenaeus spoke further of Xystus, declaring that his doctrine was in direct opposition to the practice of the remainder of the churches. Bishop Xystus (whose name is also spelled Sixtus) was living at the beginning of the second century, just after the Apostle John died. Notice that Easter Sunday did not begin with Peter or Paul in the A.D. 60's, but with Xystus in the second century!

Here you have the astounding origin of Easter Sunday in the Western churches. Together with this practice, the "sacred mysteries" were also observed every Sunday.

The introduction of this custom divided the Christians at Rome. **Generally speaking, the Western Churches (Catholic) kept Easter on Sunday, while the Eastern Churches, containing most of those who remained as part of the true Christian Church follow the Jewish rule of observing the Passover on the 14th of Nisan.**

Polycarp, the disciple of John, and bishop of Smyrna, visited Rome in 159 to

confer with Anicetus, the bishop of that see, on the subject, and urged the tradition which he had received from the apostles of observing the 14th day. Anicetus, however, declined.

About 40 years later (197), the question was again brought up between Victor, bishop of Rome, who wanted to cut off the churches of God who observed the true Passover, and Polycrate, metropolitan of proconsular Asia (The churches established through the apostle Paul). That province was the only portion of Christendom that still adhered to the Jewish usage. Victor demanded that all should adopt the usage prevailing at Rome. Polycrates refused to agree to this and gave this answer: "As for us, then, we scrupulously observe the exact day, neither adding nor taking away. For in Asia great luminaries have gone to their rest, who shall rise again in the day of the coming of the Lord...I speak of Philip, one of the twelve apostles...John the moreover, who reclined on the Lord's bosom...Then there is Polycarp...**these all kept the Passover on the fourteenth day of the month in accordance with the gospel, without ever deviating from it, but keeping to the rule of faith.**" This letter is preserved in volume 8 of the *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, pp. 772-773.

Here is proof that the apostles taught the observance of the Passover on the 14th of the first month of God's sacred calendar. Victor threatened to excommunicate Polycrates and the Christians who continued to observe the Passover, however he was restrained from doing so by other bishops, and the Asiatic churches retained their usage unmolested. We find the true Christian Passover usage from time to time reasserting itself after this, but it never prevailed to any large extent.

**A final settlement of the dispute was one of the reasons that led Constantine to summon the council at Nicaea in 325. The decision of that council was unanimous that Easter was to be kept on Sunday, and on the same Sunday throughout the world, and that "none hereafter should follow the blindness of the Jews." The Passover was forbidden. That is in plain language, it was now decreed that none should be allowed to follow the ways of Christ and of the one true Christian Church!**

Everyone was now forced to observe Easter or flee the urban areas of the Roman Empire. **Decrees were passed in the fourth century imposing the death sentence upon Christians found keeping God's Sabbath, and the Passover. A great many Christians kept true to God's way and fled for their lives. Another large portion of the true Church of God, failing to flee, yet remaining true to God's Word, paid with their lives in martyrdom. Thus this politically organized Roman church grew to great size and power by adopting popular pagan practices and she gradually stamped out the true teachings, doctrines, and practices of Jesus Christ and the true Church.**

However, through all generations, through every century, though persecuted, scattered, unrecognized by the world, many true Christians have kept alive the true Church of God. It still exists today. It still keeps God's Sabbath days. It still observes the

Passover annually on the 14th of Nisan.

These are startling facts about Easter. They ought to make you wake up to the truth. Is it any wonder that Jeremiah was inspired to write: "Learn not the ways of the heathen...for the customs of the people are in vain" (Jer. 10:2-3 NKJV). Don't say carelessly that "I think what I am doing is right or it doesn't make any difference." **God says there is a way that seems right to a man, to anyone, to you, but that seemly right way ends in death (Proverbs 14:12, 16:25). It does make a difference to God in what you believe and what you do about it.** Your eternity depends on it. The whole world has been deceived. Now you know the truth and have been shown the facts from history. This is God's message to you. What will you do about it? You will be judged by what you do now. We need to return to the faith once delivered. Let us humbly and obediently observe this sacred Passover as God commands us on the 14th of Nisan.

### ***True Christians Kept the Passover***

The New Testament reveals that Jesus, the apostles and the New Testament Church, both Jewish and Gentile, observed the Passover annually. Read it in your own Bible. Here reprinted for you, are all the verses containing the word "passover," found in the New Testament (KJV):

Ye know that after two days is the feast of the passover, and the Son of man is betrayed to be crucified. -MAT 26:2

Now the first day of the feast of unleavened bread the disciples came to Jesus, saying unto him, Where wilt thou that we prepare for thee to eat the passover? - MAT 26:17

And he said, Go into the city to such a man, and say unto him, The Master saith, My time is at hand; I will keep the passover at thy house with my disciples. - MAT 26:18

And the disciples did as Jesus had appointed them; and they made ready the passover. -MAT 26:19

After two days was the feast of the passover, and of unleavened bread: and the chief priests and the scribes sought how they might take him by craft, and put him to death. -MAR 14:1

And the first day of unleavened bread, when they killed the passover, his disciples said unto him, Where wilt thou that we go and prepare that thou mayest eat the passover? -MAR 14:12

And wheresoever he shall go in, say ye to the goodman of the house, The Master saith, Where is the guest chamber, where I shall eat the passover with my disciples? -MAR 14:14

And his disciples went forth, and came into the city, and found as he had said unto them: and they made ready the passover. -MAR 14:16

Now his parents went to Jerusalem every year at the feast of the passover. -LUK 2:41

Now the feast of unleavened bread drew nigh, which is called the Passover. - LUK 22:1

Then came the day of unleavened bread, when the passover must be killed. -LUK 22:7

And he sent Peter and John, saying, Go and prepare us the passover, that we may eat. -LUK 22:8

And ye shall say unto the goodman of the house, The Master saith unto thee, Where is the guest chamber, where I shall eat the passover with my disciples? - LUK 22:11

And they went, and found as he had said unto them: and they made ready the passover. -LUK 22:13

And he said unto them, With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer: -LUK 22:15

And the Jews' passover was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem, -JOH 2:13

Now when he was in Jerusalem at the passover, in the feast day, many believed in his name, when they saw the miracles which he did. -JOH 2:23

And the passover, a feast of the Jews, was nigh. -JOH 6:4

And the Jews' passover was nigh at hand: and many went out of the country up to Jerusalem before the passover, to purify themselves. -JOH 11:55

Then Jesus six days before the passover came to Bethany, where Lazarus was which had been dead, whom he raised from the dead. -JOH 12:1

Now before the feast of the passover, when Jesus knew that his hour was come that he should depart out of this world unto the Father, having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end. -JOH 13:1

Then led they Jesus from Caiaphas unto the hall of judgment: and it was early; and they themselves went not into the judgment hall, lest they should be defiled; but that they might eat the passover. -JOH 18:28

But ye have a custom, that I should release unto you one at the passover: will ye therefore that I release unto you the King of the Jews? -JOH 18:39

And it was the preparation of the passover, and about the sixth hour: and he saith unto the Jews, Behold your King! -JOH 19:14

Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are

unleavened. For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us: -1CO 5:7

Through faith he kept the passover, and the sprinkling of blood, lest he that destroyed the firstborn should touch them. -HEB 11:28

Now that we know the pagan origin of the Easter celebration and that Jesus and his disciples kept the Passover, let's clear away the error that covers the truth about keeping the Passover, the memorial of Christ's death.

### ***How Jesus Commanded Us to Keep the Passover***

The "communion" often called the "Lord's supper," is actually the Passover, as the ordinance should more properly be called. On observing the Passover, as on every practice, Jude exhorts "that ye should contend earnestly for the faith which was once delivered to the saints" (Jude 1:3 NKJV). The Lord's supper has fallen into a mire of erroneous traditions, like so many points of the original true doctrine. Today different church denominations take this sacred ordinance in many different ways. Some churches take the Lord's supper every Sunday morning. Some take it once or twice a month. Others take it four times a year and at night. One church claims the bread and wine are literally changed into the actual body and blood of Christ. Thus Christ is sacrificed again and again on their alter at each Lord's supper. There is only one way to get back to the truth once delivered to the saints, and that is to put aside our assumptions and traditions, and then with open mind diligently search the Scriptures for the only true record of what was once delivered.

Let's examine the way Jesus observed this ordinance. We can't be wrong if we follow his example. In Luke 22:14-20 (KJV), we read, "And when the hour was come, he [Jesus] sat down, and the twelve apostles with him. And he said unto them, With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer.... And he took bread, and gave thanks, and broke it, and gave unto them, saying, This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me. Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you."

Notice, it was "when the hour was come," that Jesus introduced the unleavened bread and the wine. There was a definite time, a definite hour, when He held the ordinance as an example for us. After sundown (the days began at sunset in the Bible) Jesus sat down with His twelve disciples in an upper room (Matt. 26:18-20; Mark 14:15-17). So the time was after sunset in the evening of the 14th day of Nisan or Abib. Notice, too, He commanded them to observe it, "This do." And why do it? "In remembrance of me," said Jesus. It was then a **memorial**, in memory of His death. He instituted this New Testament way of keeping the Passover, on that tragic night, the very eve of His death.

In Matthew's account of the last supper we read, "And as they were eating, Jesus took bread" (Matt. 26:26 KJV). It was "as they were eating" that he took bread and introduced this solemn ordinance that has come to be called the "Lord's Supper." But what did Jesus and the disciples call this New Testament ceremony of partaking of

unleavened bread and wine? The Passover! "And he said unto them, With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer" (Luke 22:15 KJV). Also notice Matthew 26:2 (KJV). "Ye know that after two days is the Feast of the passover, and the Son of man is betrayed to be crucified."

So we have seen that the Bible shows that this ordinance was at the very time of the Passover. Jesus knew that His time had come. He was our passover, sacrificed for us (I Cor. 5:7). The Passover had always been held on the eve of the 14th of God's first month, according to the Sacred or Jewish Calendar. It was the night of the final and last Passover supper that Jesus introduced these New Testament emblems, the unleavened bread and the wine, in place of the lamb that was always slain annually.

To understand the connection between this sacred ordinance of the New Testament, and the passover of the Old Testament, let us make a quick examination of the background of the passover.

### ***The Old Testament Passover***

The original passover marked the exodus of the children of Israel out of Egypt. God had been pouring out his plagues upon the Egyptians to induce Pharaoh to let the Israelites go. You probably remember this if you ever saw the movie The Ten Commandments. It has to be the best movie ever created. It has been shown on television a number of times since it was created over 30 years ago. You will find the events of the passover recorded in Exodus 12.

The Israelites were told to take a young lamb without spot or blemish, a type of Christ, the Lamb of God, and to kill it in the evening on the 14th day of the first month. As soon as it was killed, the blood was to be sprinkled over the doorposts of their house. The lamb was to be roasted, and eaten in haste. At midnight, the angel of the Lord passed through the land striking dead all the firstborn of the land. But, "when I see the blood, I will pass over you," the Lord told the Israelites. That's where the name "passover" came from.

For seven days the Israelites ate only unleavened bread with their meals. The 14th day of the first month, Abib (Nisan), was the passover, and the 15th day was a feast day or annual holy day (Exod. 12:15-16 and Numbers 28:16-17). The 15th day was the first of seven days of unleavened bread, and the seventh of these, or the 21st day was also a holy feast day, or annual Sabbath, called a "high day" even still today by the Jewish people. Year after year Israel continued to observe the passover.

### ***Passover Instituted Forever***

The passover was instituted as an ordinance forever. Notice Exodus 12:24 (KJV): "And you shall observe this thing as an ordinance for you and your sons forever." Yet, someone might say that the passover was done away with. Some will say circumcision was not done away with, but was changed. Today it is in the heart (Romans 2:29). In

both cases God meant forever, and so, as we have seen, Jesus changed the manner of observance of the passover for New Testament times. No longer do we kill a lamb and eat it, since the Lamb of God has been sacrificed once and for all. Instead, we take unleavened bread, symbolizing his broken body, and the wine, symbolizing his shed blood, as a memorial of Christ's death.

### ***To Be Observed Annually***

The Passover was to be observed annually, along with the Days of Unleavened Bread. "You shall therefore keep this ordinance in its season year to year" (Exod. 13:10 KJV). The time for commemorating passover and the feast following is once a year. Jesus said "This do in remembrance of me." Why do it? Because the Passover was commanded forever. Jesus set us an example (1 Peter 2:21), observing it at this set time once a year (Luke 2:42).

Paul gave directions in the 11th chapter of I Corinthians regarding what is commonly but erroneously called the "Lord's supper." Some have misunderstood verse 26 (KJV), which says: "As often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup," and interpret it to say "take it as often as you please." But it does not say that! It says "as often" as we observe it, "ye do shew the Lord's death till he come." And Jesus commanded, "This do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me" (verse 25 KJV). We do it in remembrance of the Lord's death, a memorial of His death. Memorials of momentous occasions always are observed annually, once a year, on the anniversary of the event they commemorate.

Jesus instituted the Passover on the 14th of Abib on the Hebrew Calendar. He was sacrificed for us on the same exact day of the year that the passover lambs always had been slain. The first century Church of God under the original apostles continued to observe this ordinance once a year at the set time. The Days of Unleavened Bread were still observed. Notice Acts 20:6 (KJV): "And we sailed away from Philippi after the days of unleavened bread." That was about A.D. 57. Then notice Acts 12:3. The Holy Spirit inspired these words to tell us the time of year: "Then were the days of unleavened bread." That could not have been written had these days been done away with, being kept only by Jews who had rejected Jesus as the Messiah. Finally notice Acts 12:4: "...intending after the passover to bring him forth to the people." Peter had been arrested and put in prison and yet we find the passover and the Days of Unleavened Bread being kept over 10 years after the New Testament Church had been established.

Now notice I Corinthians 11:27,29 (NKJV): "Therefore whoever eats this bread or drinks this cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. For he who eats and drinks in an unworthy manner eats and drinks judgment to himself, not discerning the Lord's body." This is not speaking about a Christian being worthy or unworthy to take it. It is speaking of the manner in which we do it. To take it unworthily is to take it in the wrong manner.

Suppose the Israelites in Egypt had observed this ordinance at some other than

this set time. They would not have been saved when the death angel passed at midnight! **God does things on time.** He has given us an exact time for observing the Passover. Let us return to the faith once delivered. Let us observe this solemn, sacred ordinance of the Passover as we are commanded, and at the time set apart in the Bible, after sundown on the 14th of Abib, or Nisan, on the sacred Hebrew calendar.

### ***The Crucifixion Was Not on Friday!***

We have already stated that Easter Sunday does not commemorate the resurrection! Christ was also not crucified on Good Friday! Now Jesus was crucified and he was resurrected. That is the whole basis of the Christian faith. But those events did not happen on the days we now call Good Friday and Easter Sunday morning. Before you blindly dismiss this issue, read through it with an open mind and heart. It's hard to accept at first, but it's absolutely true. Here is proof of the true dates of the crucifixion and the resurrection.

It is a commonly believed tradition that Jesus was crucified on Friday, and that the resurrection occurred about sunrise on Easter Sunday morning. It is a tradition that millions have accepted without proof. Few have ever thought to question or prove this Good Friday-Easter tradition. Yet the Bible tells us to prove (test) all things. The Bible, the sole historical record of this event, is the only dependable authority for proof. Any tradition that conflicts with God's revelation must be dismissed as false.

**Either the Good Friday-Easter Sunday tradition is a fable, or you have no Savior!** How can we say that? Well, Jesus gave only one sign to prove that He was the Messiah, and that sign was the length of time He would be dead and buried. The doubting Pharisees were asking Jesus for a sign in proof of His Messiahship. Jesus answered and said: "**An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas: For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth**" (Matt. 12:39-40). If Jesus did not fulfill that sign, than He was an impostor and you are without a Savior!

### ***The Significance of This Sign***

**The fact of the resurrection itself was not proof that Jesus was the Messiah, for other men had been resurrected from the dead.** Jesus offered but one evidence, and that was the length of time He would be in the grave before being resurrected. Think what this means. **Jesus staked His claim to being your Savior and mine upon remaining exactly three days and three nights in the tomb.** If he remained just three days and three nights inside the earth, He would prove himself to be the Savior, if he failed in the sign, He must be rejected as an impostor!

No wonder Satan has caused unbelievers to scoff at the story of Jonah and the whale or great fish. No wonder the devil has set up a tradition that denies Jesus is the Messiah. **They say Jesus was placed in the tomb shortly before sunset Friday, and**

**rose at sunrise Sunday morning, two nights and one day.**

This one and only proof given by Jesus for His Messiahship has greatly bothered the commentators and religious leaders. Their attempts to explain away this sole proof for Christ's divinity are ludicrous in the extreme. They must explain this away or their Good Friday-Easter tradition collapses. One commentator explained it this way: "Of course we know that Jesus was actually in the tomb only half as long as He thought He would be!" Others would have us believe that the expression 'three days and three nights' means three periods, either of day or of night. Theologians and scholars deny that Jesus fulfilled this sign. In so doing so they deny the only proof Jesus gave that He is the Messiah, the Savior of the world.

### ***The Bible Definition of Days***

The Bible definition of the duration of "nights and days" is simple. In the Hebrew language, in which the book of Jonah was written, the expression "three days and three nights" means a period of 72 hours, three twelve hour days and three twelve hour nights.

Notice Jonah 1:17 (KJV): "And Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights." The critics admit this was a period of 72 hours. Now, Jesus distinctly said that as Jonah was three days and three nights in the great fish's belly, so He would be the same length of time in His grave.

As Jonah was in his watery "grave" for 72 hours, after which he was resurrected by God, by being vomited up, to become a savior to the people of Nineveh upon proclaiming God's warning to them, so should Jesus be 72 hours in His grave, thereupon being resurrected by God to become the savior of the world. (Jonah 2).

Did Jesus know how much time was in a day and in a night? Jesus answered, "Are there not twelve hours in a day? If anyone walks in the day, he does not stumble...But if one walks in the night, he stumbles..." (John 11:9-10 NKJV). Now Jesus just gave the definition of a day saying there are 12 hours in the daylight portion of a day. So, here is a daytime period and a nighttime period, each 12 hours in length, making a whole natural day.

**Text after text tells us that Jesus rose the third day.** Notice how the Bible defines the time required to fulfill "the third day". In Genesis 1:4 God "divided the light from the darkness. And God called the light day, and the darkness he called night. And the evening [darkness] and the morning [light] were the first day...And the evening and the morning were the second day...And the evening [now three periods of darkness called night] and the morning [now three periods of light called day] were the third day (Gen. 1:4-13 KJV). Here we have the only Bible definition that explains and counts up the amount of time involved in the expression "the third day." It includes three nights and three days, which Jesus said contained 12 hours, for a total of 72 hours.

### ***It Doesn't Add Up***

How can you figure three such 24-hour periods, three days and nights, from Friday evening to Sunday morning? All Friday night is one night. The daytime of Saturday is one day, and Saturday night makes two nights. You have only one day and two nights. That is not three days and three nights.

We have examined two scriptures, in Matthew and in Jonah, both setting the duration of the body of Jesus in the tomb as three days and three nights, which the Scriptures plainly define as 72 hours of time. Now there is another expression used in the New Testament, the expression "after three days." Notice Mark 8:31 (KJV): "And He began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things, and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again." Another expression is used by Jesus in Mark 9:31 (KJV): "For He taught His disciples and said to them, 'The Son of Man is delivered into the hands of men, and they shall kill Him. And after that He is killed, He shall rise the third day.'" In Matthew 27:63 (KJV) Jesus said: "After three days I will rise again." The expression "after three days" cannot possibly be less than 72 full hours. Finally in John 2:19-21 (KJV), "Jesus answered and said unto them, Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up...But he spake of the temple of his body." To be raised up in three days after being crucified and buried, could not be more than 72 hours. If we are to accept all the testimony of the Bible, we must conclude that Jesus was exactly three days and three nights, three full 24-hour days or 72 hours in the grave.

Yes, Jesus would rise "the third day" after he was killed, and also "after three days." What day would be rise if he was crucified and buried on late Friday? If Jesus had been killed on Friday afternoon, the first day would be Saturday, the second day Sunday, and the third day would be late Monday afternoon. Yet, nobody thinks he rose on a Monday. In fact Jesus was already resurrected by Sunday morning. **The Good Friday-Easter tradition just does not add up. Either Jesus was not crucified on Good Friday, or He did not fulfill his sign and He is therefore and impostor and not the Messiah.**

Did Jesus fulfill His sign? Turn to Matthew 28:6 (KJV). Here is the testimony of the angel: "He [Jesus] is not here; for **He is risen, as He said.**" **Jesus did fulfill his sign exactly. He is the Savior.** Then he could not have been crucified on Good Friday! Plainly, Friday was not the day of the crucifixion!

### ***Where the Good Friday-Easter Idea Originated***

Then how do these so-called wise theologians know Jesus was crucified "Good Friday" and rose "Easter Sunday"? The simple answer is they do not know it, for it is not true! It is merely tradition, a tradition we have been taught from childhood and carelessly assumed! Jesus warns against "**making the word of God of none effect through your tradition**" (Mark 7:13 KJV). It was prophesied that many would deny the sign of Jonah and would deny that Jesus actually is the very Christ. "But there were also false prophets

among the people, even as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Lord who brought them...and many will follow their destructive ways..." (II Peter 2:1-2 NKJV).

It was the Roman church fathers, steeped in traditions, who first began to teach that the crucifixion occurred on Friday. They soon also attempted to change the year of Jesus' birth, the year that He began His ministry, the length of His ministry, the days of His death and His resurrection from the dead. Astounding proof exists of these attempts to change the days of the resurrection and of the crucifixion. James A. Walther, in "The Chronology of Passion Week," in the *Journal of Biblical Literature*, mentions that numerous Catholic writers for centuries maintained that Jesus ate the Passover Tuesday night and that Wednesday morning He was taken by the Jewish mob.

### **Which Day Was the Passover?**

Only two matters are needed to prove when the crucifixion and the resurrection of Jesus occurred. One is to determine the calendar dates of the Passover during the years of Christ's ministry. The other is to determine the exact year of the crucifixion.

According to the gospel records, Jesus was crucified on the Passover day, Abib (or Nisan) 14, immediately before the Feast of Unleavened Bread. Jesus instituted the New Testament Passover on that day. See John 18:28 as proof that day was the Passover. By using God's sacred calendar, as given to and preserved by the Jews, we can know precisely which day the Passover was in the year of the crucifixion. It was to the Jews to whom God committed His revelation or oracles (Roman 3:2) and God's calendar.

One may ask what if some of the Jews lost or corrupted the calendar? The Bible gives us the answer in verses 3 and 4 of Romans 3 (NKJV): "For what if some did not believe? Will their unbelief make the faithfulness of God without effect? Certainly not! Indeed, let God be true but every man a liar." If the Jews did not believe in what God committed to them, they must preserve them or God has failed to be God. God required the Jews to preserve His sacred calendar and they have preserved it flawlessly from generation to generation to this day.

Here is a chart of the dates of the Passover verified from God's sacred calendar according to computations preserved since the days of Moses.

Dates	Passover
A.D. 27	Wednesday, April 9
A.D. 28	Monday, March 29
A.D. 29	Saturday, April 16
A.D. 30	Wednesday, April 5
A.D. 31	Monday, March 26
A.D. 32	Monday, April 14
A.D. 33	Friday, April 3

Some theologians believe the crucifixion was in A.D. 30 others in A.D. 33, and still some in A.D. 31. The Passover occurred on Wednesday in A.D. 30 as well as in A.D. 27. The only Passover that occurred on Friday was in A.D. 33 on April 3<sup>rd</sup>. As we will prove later this could not have been the day of crucifixion.

## **Two Possibilities**

In 30 A.D. the first of Abib (Nisan) occurred on March 22nd at 19:59 or 7:59 PM., this is approximately two hours after sunset. Therefore, the correct calculation for the first of Abib is March 23rd. The spring equinox that year occurred on March 23 at 3:18 AM, the same day as the first of Abib. Now add 14 days including March 23 and Passover occurred on April 5, a Wednesday and well within the season.

## **The Year of the Crucifixion**

The exact year of Christ's death may be determined from several basic dates. These dates are so precise that there can be little doubt that the Passover upon which Jesus was crucified occurred on Wednesday, April 5th in A.D. 30.

The first date is the year in which Artaxerxes issued his decree to restore and build Jerusalem. Daniel 9:25-26 records that there would be 69 prophetic weeks (483 years) till the Messiah would come, after which he would be cut off or crucified for the sins of the whole world. Artaxerxes' first year was 475 B.C.<sup>1</sup> Artaxerxes gave to Nehemiah the command to rebuild Jerusalem in his twentieth year of ruling in 455 B.C. (Nehemiah 2:1-8). And just 69 weeks of years or 483 year later would bring us to the autumn of A.D. 26, the year the Messiah would appear. Jesus was anointed the Messiah during his baptism by John in A.D. 26 (Luke 3:21-22), which was 483 years after the decree of Artaxerxes to restore Jerusalem. The descent of the dove as Jesus came up out of the water was a sign that He was the One anointed by the Spirit of God as the Messiah of His people (Is. 11:2; 42:1; 61:1).

The next fact we need to know is the age of Jesus when He was baptized and began his ministry. The only account of this was written by Luke (Luke 1:1-4). In this account it is plainly stated that when Jesus began His ministry He "began to be about thirty years of age" (Luke 3:23 KJV). As Jesus was about 30 years old in the autumn of A.D. 29, then He must have been born in the autumn of 5 B.C. The time of Jesus birth is important. Jesus was born before the death of Herod the king (Matt. 2:15). Remember, Herod had all the male Jewish male children killed under the age of 2 years (Matt. 2:16). According to information from Josephus, the Jewish historian, in *Antiquities of the Jews*, XVII, and Jewish tradition we can set the date of Herod's death about the 17th of February in 4 BC. Jesus was just a few weeks old at the time of Herod's death. The latest possible date for the birth of Jesus was the autumn of 5 B.C., before winter arrived (Luke 2:8). This places the commencement of Jesus' ministry 30 years later in the

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<sup>1</sup> See the Chapter on Daniel's Seventy Weeks for a full explanation.

autumn of the year 26 AD.

In Luke several other dates are implied to assist in dating the Baptism of Jesus: the 15th year of Tiberius (26 AD, according to his accession as co-emperor with Augustus), while Pontius Pilate was in office (during 26-36 AD), while Herod Antipas was tetrarch (4 BC- 39 AD) and Philip tetrarch (4 BC-37 AD). In Luke, chapter 3, verse 23, it is stated that Jesus' ministry began when he was beginning to be about 30 years of age. If Jesus was born in 5 B.C. as we proved, he would have been 33 1/2 years old in 30 AD, and this would come within the dates of the governorship of Pontius Pilate. Pontius Pilate was the Roman governor of Judaea (AD 26-36) under the emperor Tiberius. He presided at the trial of Jesus and gave the order for his crucifixion. These limits make a speculation of Jesus' Baptism and the start of his ministry about AD 26.

**Table 1: Counting Yearly, Jesus Christ's Birth in 5 B.C. and 33 1/2 year ministry from Trumpets to Trumpets, from 5 B.C. to Passover\* 30 A.D. as follows:**

Calendar Year	5	4	3	2	1	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Count	-	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Calendar Year	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19
Count	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23
Calendar Year	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	-
Count	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	33+	-

**(The indicated "+" sign is a half year)**

This makes Christ 33 and a half years old on Passover 30 A.D. As previously stated, Christ was 30 years of age when baptized, and when adding His ministry of three and one half years, will find Him 33 and a half years of age. According to these calculations, Christ died very shortly before sunset on April 5, 30 A.D.

We also must remember that both the Julian calendar and the Gregorian calendar add a year zero (See "New & Full Moons 1001 B.C. to A.D. 1651" by Herman H. Goldstine). This does not happen in the Hebrew calendar count. So every year that the Gregorian calendar states, it is really one year earlier on the Hebrew count. We must also remember that the Hebrew calendar starts their year in September. So their years are from September to September. Not in the spring as God states in Exodus 12:2. "This month shall be unto you the beginning of months: it shall be the first month of the year to you."

There is one other piece of data that favors the date of 30 AD. Pilate was

appointed prefect of Judaea through the intervention of Sejanus, a favorite of the Roman emperor Tiberius. Protected by Sejanus, he incurred the enmity of the Jews by insulting their religious sensibilities, as when he hung worship images of the Emperor throughout Jerusalem and had coins bearing pagan religious symbols minted. This line of reasoning involves the attempted coup that was thwarted at about this time in Rome. Sejanus was trying to gradually overthrow the emperor Tiberius. In the midst of his machinations, his plot came to light. Tiberius arrested Sejanus and had him executed. There followed an extremely bloody purge lasting about 2 years, where suspected co-conspirators were tracked down all over the empire and executed. During this period, anyone who was an appointee of Sejanus' was in great danger. One such appointee was Pontius Pilate! Perhaps this explains why the Jewish mob was able to intimidate Pilate into killing Christ with the threat, "If you release this man, you are no friend of Caesar's!" (Jn.19:12 Living Bible). Historians have for a long time pointed out that this story of Pilate backing down before a Jewish crowd is completely out of harmony with the other descriptions we have of Pilot as a ruthless, brutal, anti-Semitic tyrant. If, however, this incident occurred during the purge of Sejanus' appointees, it is very likely that blackmail of this kind would have been effective. Pilate was exposed to sharper criticism from the Jews, who may have capitalized on his vulnerability by obtaining a legal death sentence on Jesus (John 19:12). The rebellion of Sejanus was found out and he was executed in the year 31 AD. Thus this explanation will work for the 30 AD crucifixion date, but not for the 33 AD date.

One of the most important facts recorded is that of the reign of Emperor Tiberius, whose reign began on September 17, 12AD. It was in the 15th year of Tiberius that John the Baptist began to preach repentance around the Jordan River before Jesus was baptized by him. Luke names Pontius Pilate as governor of Judea when John received his call: "Now in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judea...the word of God came to John: (Luke 3:1-2 KJV). Pilate ruled for 10 years (A.D. 26-36). These facts help us narrow down the start of John's ministry to a one year period.

### **Date of the Crucifixion**

To find the date of the crucifixion, we now need only to find out how long the ministry of Jesus lasted. The prophet Daniel foretold that the length of Christ's ministry would be one half of a prophetic week of seven years. In the midst of that prophetic week He caused the need of sacrifices for sin to cease by offering Himself for the sins of the world. He was "cut off" in the midst of the week, making the ministry at His first coming three and one-half years (Dan. 9:25-27). Christ died in the midst of the prophetic week of seven years, after three and one-half years of ministry, but in another sense he also died in the midst of the week, Wednesday. Since Jesus began His ministry not later than A.D. 26 and it lasted three and one-half years, He must have been crucified in A.D. 30 on Wednesday, April 5. See the dates of the Passover chart. If he was crucified in A.D. 33 on a Friday Jesus would have rose 3 days and nights later on a Monday afternoon. We know that was not so because we know the angel said he was already risen when Mary went to the tomb on early Sunday Morning. Yes, the tradition that Jesus was

crucified on Friday and rose on Easter Sunday is proved false. So we know that the correct year is A.D. 30 because he was crucified on Wednesday afternoon and put in the grave before sunset. He then arose on late Saturday afternoon exactly 72 hours later.

**Table 2**

**Dates of the Passover for the Years 29-33 A.D.**

Year	Passover	Day
A.D.29	April 16	Saturday
A.D.30	April 5	Wednesday
A.D.31	March 26	Monday
A.D.32	April 14	Monday
A.D.33	April 3	Friday

**note: All times are from Jerusalem.**

***Which Day was the Crucifixion?***

Notice this fact: In order to be three days and three nights, 72 hours, in the tomb, our Lord had to be resurrected at exactly the same time of day that His body was buried in the tomb. If we can find the time of day of the burial, then we have found the time of day of the resurrection. If the burial, for instance, were at sunrise, then for the body to be left an even three days and three nights in the tomb, the resurrection, likewise had to occur at sunrise, three days later. If the burial were at noon, the resurrection was at noon. If the burial were at sunset, the resurrection was at sunset, three days later.

So let's realize that the time of day Jesus left the tomb has to be at the same time of day as his burial, only three days later. Today we begin and end our days at midnight. But in the 1st century, the people in Judea reckoned their days from sunset to sunset, at sunset the new day began. Now, as we have shown, Jesus instituted the New Testament Passover, or Lord's supper, after sunset in the evening of the 14th of the first month, called Nisan, in A.D. 30. This was on Wednesday, April 5 according to Jewish reckoning of the day beginning at sunset, but we'd call it Tuesday evening. Jesus was arrested in the morning hours of Wednesday, put on trial, and crucified later that day.

Now we turn to Mark 15:34(NKJV): "And at the ninth hour [3 pm] Jesus cried out with a loud voice saying, 'Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?' which is translated, 'My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?'" Then in verse 37, "...Jesus cried out with a loud voice, and breathed His last." So Jesus died some three hours before sunset on the day of the crucifixion (Matt 27:46, Luke 23:44 NKJV). Jesus was buried before this same day

ended, before sunset (Matt. 27:57; Luke 23:52-54; John 19:42). John adds, "So there they laid Jesus, because of the Jew's Preparation Day, for the tomb was nearby." According to the laws observed by the Jews all dead bodies must be buried before the beginning of a Sabbath or feast day. Hence Jesus was buried before sunset on the same day He died.

### ***When Was the Resurrection?***

Therefore, notice carefully, the burial of Christ's body was in the late afternoon! It was between 3pm and sunset as these scriptures prove. The resurrection had to occur at the same time of day and just three days later. **The resurrection of Christ occurred in the late afternoon near sunset. Jesus did not arise at sunrise as many presume he did.** Startling as this fact may be, it is the plain Bible truth. If Jesus rose at any other time of day, He could not have been three days and three nights in the grave and would not have fulfilled the sign of Jonah.

The first investigators, Mary Magdalene and her companions, came to the sepulcher on the first day of the week (Sunday) very early, while it was yet dark, as the sun was beginning to rise at dawn (Mark 16:2; Luke 24:1; John 20:1). Now these are the texts that most people have supposed stated the resurrection was at sunrise Sunday morning. But they do not say that at all! When the women came to the tomb early Sunday morning, they found the tomb was already open. Jesus had already risen. The angel said; "He is already risen! He is not here" (Mark 16:6 See also Matt. 28:5-6, Luke 24:6). Of course, Jesus had been resurrected the previous evening. **Jesus rose from the dead late Saturday afternoon. So the time-honored tradition of a Sunday morning resurrection is shattered.**

Someone is sure to notice Mark 16:9 (KJV), "Now when Jesus was risen early the first day of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom he had cast seven devils," thinking this text says the resurrection was upon Sunday. If you will read the whole sentence, it does not say that at all. The expression "was risen" is in the perfect tense. It does not say that he "was rising" or "did rise" from the grave. No, early the first day of the week "He was risen." Also note, that in the original Greek the phrase "early on the first day of the week" refers to the early part of the day, the evening, for a day began at sunset. So this is referring to Saturday night. Of course he was risen by Saturday night. He had risen late Saturday afternoon, so naturally, He was risen Sunday morning.

### ***Two Sabbaths in One Week?***

Notice the crucifixion day was called "the preparation" or day before "the sabbath" (Matt. 27:62; Mark 15:42; Luke 23:54). **Perhaps you have noticed that the Scriptures say the day after the crucifixion was a Sabbath. Hence, for centuries, people have blindly assumed the crucifixion was on Friday.** We have shown that the crucifixion day was call "the preparation day" The preparation day for the Sabbath. But for what Sabbath? John gives us the definite answer; "It was the preparation of the Passover" (John 19:14 KJV). John explains further in verse 31 (KJV), "For that sabbath

day was a high day." Now a high day is a Holy day. The next day then was a Sabbath, but not a regular weekly Sabbath, which was always observed on the seventh day of the week. You see there were also seven special annual Sabbaths that God commanded to be observed. Annual Sabbaths fall on certain annual calendar dates and on different days of the week in different years. These Sabbaths might fall on Monday, on Thursday, or on Sunday. This particular Sabbath was the first of those seven annual holy days, known as the First Day of Unleavened Bread. There were two Sabbaths in that week, first the annual Sabbath, and then the weekly Sabbath.

This day, the Passover, was the day before and the preparation for the Feast day, or annual high day Sabbath, which occurred on the 15th of Abib. The Hebrew calendar shows that in the year Jesus was crucified (30 A.D.), the 14th of Abib, Passover day, the day Jesus was crucified was Wednesday, **and this annual Sabbath or high day was Thursday.** This was the Sabbath that drew on as Joseph of Arimathea hastened to bury the body of Jesus late Wednesday afternoon. So there were two separate Sabbaths that week.

**According to Mark 16:1, Mary Magdalene and her companions did not buy their spices to anoint the body of Jesus until after the Sabbath was past. They could not prepare them until after the Sabbath, yet after preparing the spices, they rested the Sabbath day according to the commandment!** (Luke 23:56). Study these two texts carefully. There is only one possible explanation: **After the annual high-day Sabbath, the First Day of Unleavened Bread, which was Thursday, these women purchased and prepared their spices on Friday, and then they rested on the weekly Sabbath, Saturday, according to the commandment (Ex. 20:8-11).** Then on Sunday morning the women came very early to the tomb to apply the additional splices and ointments to the body of Jesus (Luke 24:1). Comparisons of these two texts prove that there were two Sabbaths that week, with a day in between. Otherwise, these texts contradict each other. Thus the Bible proves that the resurrection was not on Sunday morning and the crucifixion not on Friday.

Christ did fulfill His sign. Another proof that Christ was in the grave the full length of time He expected to be is found in I Corinthians 15:3-4 (KJV): "For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, How that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures." His death and burial were according to the Scriptures and not contrary to them. **Christ died and was buried before sunset on Wednesday afternoon, He rose Saturday, the Sabbath, late afternoon, shortly before sunset, and at the same time He was buried.**