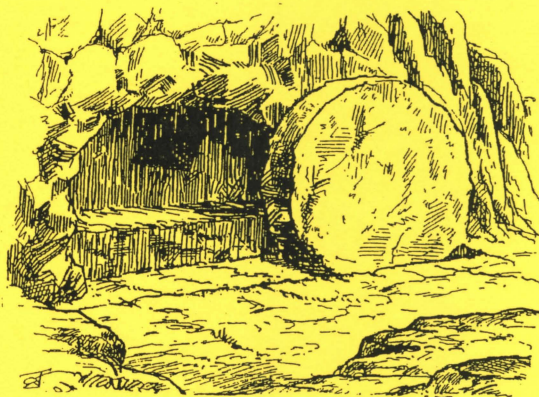
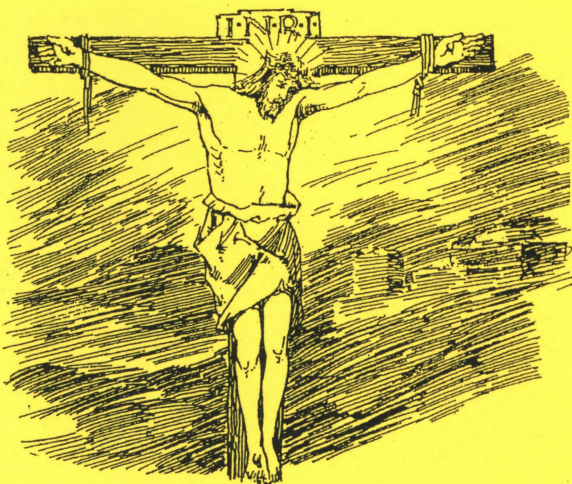


The Time of Christ's

Death and Resurrection



Manfred E. Kober, Th.D.

THE TIME OF CHRIST'S DEATH AND RESURRECTION

A Thesis

Presented to

the Faculty of the Department of Theology

Baptist Bible Seminary

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Bachelor of Theology

by

Manfred Enno Kober

April 1962

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
I. THEORIES AND PROBLEMS CONNECTED WITH THE TIME OF	
CHRIST'S DEATH	1
The Statement of the Problem	1
The Origin of the Days	2
The Problems of Establishing a Day	3
The Value of the Investigation	5
II. THE FRIDAY THEORY	7
Arguments for Friday	7
The argument from antiquity	7
The argument from simplicity	8
The argument from Matthew 12:40	9
Arguments against Friday	10
The argument from Matthew 12:40	11
The argument from Luke 24:21	13
The argument from the two Sabbaths	14
The arguments from circumstantial evidence	15
III. THE WEDNESDAY THEORY	19
Classification of Wednesday Adherents	19
Cultic adherents	19
Consecrated adherents	20
Arguments for Wednesday	21
The argument from the time in the tomb.	21

CHAPTER	PAGE
	111
The argument from the two Sabbaths	23
The argument from the interpretation of ὄψε and ἐπιφώσκω	23
The argument from the events of the passion week	24
Arguments against Wednesday	25
The argument from the complete unit theory.	25
The argument from the triumphal entry . . .	26
The argument from the visit at the tomb . .	29
The argument from Matthew 12:40	31
The argument from the interpretation of prophecy	33
IV. SCRIPTURAL EVIDENCE FOR THE TIME ELEMENTS . . .	35
Interpretation of Key Passages	35
The interpretation of Matthew 12:40	35
The interpretation of "the heart of the earth"	38
The Exposition of the Greek	40
The meaning of ὄψε	40
The meaning of ἐπιφώσκω	41
The Time of the Burial	44
Jewish customs relating to Sabbaths . . .	45
The burial	47

	iv
CHAPTER	PAGE
The Visit to the Tomb	52
The problem	53
The solution	54
The narrative	56
V. OLD TESTAMENT TYPOLOGY OF THE DEATH OF CHRIST . .	59
Christ and Genesis 3:15	59
Christ and Exodus 12	61
The meaning of the Passover	61
The ceremonies of the Passover	62
The Last Supper.	63
The antitype of the Passover	65
Christ and Hosea 6:1-2	66
Christ and Leviticus 23:10-11	68
Christ and Genesis 22:13	69
Christ and the Rest of the Old Testament	70
VI. THE DAYS OF THE PASSION WEEK	72
The Calendar Basis	72
Rejection and distortion by some	73
Calculation and reception by others	74
The Scriptural Basis	77
Friday, Nisan 8	77
Saturday, Nisan 9	78
Sunday, Nisan 10	79
Monday, Nisan 11	80

CHAPTER	PAGE
Tuesday, Nisan 12	80
Wednesday, Nisan 13	80
Thursday, Nisan 14	81
Friday, Nisan 15	81
Saturday, Nisan 16	82
Sunday, Nisan 17	82
Conclusion	83
BIBLIOGRAPHY	86

LIST OF CHARTS

CHART	PAGE
1. Chronological Chart of the Passion Week	90

CHAPTER I

THEORIES AND PROBLEMS CONNECTED WITH THE TIME OF CHRIST'S DEATH

A growing dissatisfaction with existing explanations of the events and time elements relative to the crucifixion and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ, together with the intervening time when His body rested in the tomb, as put forth by many recognized authorities, has given the impetus for this investigation.

I. THE STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The problems and main issues may easily be stated with the following questions: Did the crucifixion of the Lord Jesus Christ take place on Wednesday, Thursday, or Friday? Approximately what time of day was the resurrection? Was it in the afternoon of the weekly Sabbath, the early evening hours at the close of the Jewish Sabbath, or at about sunrise on the first day of the week, Sunday? These are the primary problems of the three-sided controversy. Other, less important issues are also closely involved, concerning the harmony of the four separate gospel accounts of the events taking place in close connection with the greatest moment of all time and eternity.

II. THE ORIGIN OF THE DAYS

It has been supposed for centuries that Good Friday marks the day of crucifixion. Catholics as well as Protestants have accepted this without dissent, and millions of believers have never even so much as heard the question raised whether it could be possible that Friday is not the day after all. To many persons a questioning of the time of Christ's death and resurrection would border on sacrilege. Most commentators have taken the side of tradition and with great erudition have expounded the original Greek text to harmonize the rest of the Scriptures with their theory.

That the resurrection occurred on Easter Sunday at sunrise is likewise a well-established tradition. Nevertheless; might it not be that false assumptions have been responsible for misinterpretation, and false conclusions drawn in days past have resulted in setting apart days not warranted by Scripture? One must conclude that it is imperative as well as scriptural to ascertain the facts. The command is given to Christians to prove all things and to hold fast to that which is good (I. Thessalonians 5:21). Every sincere Christian should be willing to see this.

It is commonly assumed that the keeping of these days is based upon early tradition and that apostolic practices continued uninterrupted through the centuries to the present.

This is far from the truth. Nothing can be established on the basis of historical continuity or tradition.¹ Palm Sunday, Good Friday, and Easter are traditions of a much later date, as church historians have ably demonstrated. No special days, apart from the first day of the week, were ever observed in New Testament times.

III. THE PROBLEMS OF ESTABLISHING A DAY

A very likely possibility of making a mistake is due, in part, to the different methods of computing time among the Romans and Jews. The former employed the system which is now used, while the latter started the new day at sundown. Furthermore, there seems to be a widespread ignorance among commentators that the Jews observed special Sabbath days, other than the weekly Sabbath. This can account for the erroneous assumptions made regarding the day of crucifixion, and once this day was set apart and observed every year for generations, it was only the next step that commentators of all persuasions should tacitly accept this position and then attempt to defend it from Scripture.²

Assuming at present for argument's sake that Friday

¹Roy M. Allen, Three Days in the Grave (New York: Loizeaux Brothers, 1942), p. 12.

²Herbert W. Armstrong, The Resurrection Was Not on Sunday! pp. 1-2.

was not the actual day of crucifixion, that tradition is wrong, and that most expositors have erred on this point, how would it be possible to establish the correct day for the crucifixion? The problem indeed becomes greater and more perplexing when it is considered that many godly men have thoroughly studied the problem and yet disagree vehemently in their conclusions. It may be almost construed as proof of Alexander Pope's assertion that "fools rush in where angels fear to tread," to attempt a minute investigation of the problem.

The question still stands as to how the correct day for the crucifixion may be established. It will be universally agreed that any study of the problem should be based, primarily, upon the scriptural record. If it is then possible to produce additional proof from an outside source, such as a historian or a computer of the historical calendar of the passion week, this may be done. But under no circumstances must the scriptural narrative be set aside in favor of some other account.

Despite the fact, however, that on the one hand certain authors state the impossibility of ascertaining the chronological date of the year of the crucifixion,³ other authors, whether they be false apostles or conservative

³R. M. Allen, op. cit., p. 13.

biblical scholars, make elaborate calculations to indicate the year, month, and day. An added problem exists therefore, because of the variation of offered dates, to determine whether or not the precise year can be calculated chronologically, and if so, which scholar's calculations are correct. The value of such an investigation may not yet be seen, but as this study proceeds, it will be demonstrated that, once the correct date for the passion week has been found, many perplexing problems will disappear.

IV. THE VALUE OF THE INVESTIGATION

At this point someone may well ask of what value it is to know the exact day of crucifixion or resurrection. Is it not merely a technical point that does not matter? And also, if some other day be established for the crucifixion and resurrection, does it mean that the Church must change her custom to the correct day or days?

If it were only a technical matter and the investigation a mere gratification of someone's vanity in proving himself correct, it most certainly would not matter in the least. If, on the other hand, the establishing of the day of crucifixion, as well as all other chronology of the passion week, results in substantiating the accuracy and harmony of the various accounts and illuminating passages which are otherwise difficult

to understand, the study is distinctly worth while. To this may be added the resulting appreciation for some of the formerly difficult New Testament passages, a better understanding of Old Testament types, and a new vision of the meaning of the cross. With these results no further incentive to pursue the subject to its conclusion will be required.

There also need be no fear that the ascertaining of the facts would have any bearing on the time-honored customs of such churches which set aside a special day to commemorate the crucifixion. In practice the day can just as well be Friday as any other. Does not Christianity observe December 25 as the birthday of Christ when it is universally admitted that He was not born on this day? The effect of the truth would thus not necessarily influence the observances of the Church, though, of course, it would be by far better to have the observances--if it is decided to have them at all--on the correct day, rather than on one we know to be wrong.⁴

The issue at hand then is to ascertain the facts regarding the death of Christ and let them witness for the truth; whether it be Friday, the day most commonly accepted; Wednesday, the day more popular among Bible students at present; or Thursday, the day in between.

⁴Ibid., pp. 15-16.

CHAPTER II

THE FRIDAY THEORY

It can be said apodictically that Good Friday is looked upon by Christendom as a whole as the day which is a perpetual memorial of the day on which Christ was crucified. Its observance is not of recent development. It has been firmly established for centuries.¹ And to relegate the idea of Friday as crucifixion day from the endearment of Christendom to the realm of false traditions cannot be tolerated without first properly presenting its claims.

I. ARGUMENTS FOR FRIDAY

The argument from antiquity. A primary argument for Friday as being the day on which Christ died is its time-honored position. Practically all great scholars of past generations accept the day. Lange, Edersheim, Alford, Smith, and Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown are just a few of those who adhere to Friday. It was not until Westcott wrote his study on the gospels² that anyone became suspicious of the accepted day. One wonders, if some other day can be established in

¹Armstrong, op. cit., p. 1.

²Brooke Foss Westcott, Introduction to the Study of the Gospel (New York: Macmillan and Company, 1886), p. 340.

It is the easiest thing to assume from these verses that the crucifixion took place immediately prior to the regular Jewish Sabbath. It is said that the women returned after Christ's burial and rested on the Sabbath (Luke 23:56). This seems to further substantiate the implication that the Jews observed the regular Sabbath during that week, that Christ hung on the cross on the day previous to the Sabbath, which was the day of preparation--namely Friday. This seems to be a simple explanation, in light of which all other Scriptures should be interpreted. By the women's visit of the tomb early Sunday morning the time of Christ's resurrection is established.

Thus the simplicity highly commends the theory, for it requires nothing which is not apparent in the text.

The argument from Matthew 12:40. Two verses, Matthew 12:40 and Luke 24:21, require a rather loose interpretation by those that hold to the Friday theory. These passages, indicating that Christ would be in the heart of the earth "three days and three nights," are by no means considered a death blow to the theory. It is said that because Christ was general in many of His other prophetic statements, this expression also is general and of a veiled nature, despite the fact that Christ is using the literal wording of the Old Testament. It in no wise specifically circumscribes the

the time that Christ lay in the tomb.³

Anderson, and all others who propound this theory, have to indicate that Christ ate the Passover meal. This was done on the 15th of Nisan, in the evening following the killing of the Passover lamb. This occurred on the 14th of the month of Nisan. The explanation is given that Jesus rightly was crucified on the day of preparation, but this was the preparation for the weekly Sabbath, instead of the day prior to the Sabbath on which the feast of the Passover was eaten.⁴

II. ARGUMENTS AGAINST FRIDAY

In light of the seemingly strong evidence in favor of this theory, is there anything which may be adduced against it? In order to show that the Friday theory is erroneous, it must first be demonstrated that the theory does not meet all the conditions, and then another theory must be shown which will fit equally well all the evidence used for Friday and the arguments which can be brought against Friday.

³R. C. H. Lenski, Interpretation of St. Matthew's Gospel (Columbus, Ohio: The Wartburg Press, 1943), p. 494.

⁴Robert Anderson, The Coming Prince (Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 1957), pp. 111-113.

It is very probable that a question will be raised by some regarding an attempt to disprove the Friday theory. What is the difference? Is the question worth investigating? To this it must be answered that the question is all-important, for on it depends the authority and truthfulness of the Lord Jesus Christ. While He was teaching the people, the Pharisees asked Him for evidence of His authority as the Son of God: "Master, we would see a sign from thee" (Matthew 12:38). And it was to this challenge that Christ replied in the familiar words of Matthew 12:40.

The argument from Matthew 12:40. Christ answered the Pharisees:

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. (Matthew 12:39-40)

Jesus staked His authority on this. If He did not remain in the tomb for three days and three nights, He is not the infallible Son of God.⁵ Once it is admitted that this means exactly what it says, the Friday theory has lost its case. Even such higher critics as Driver, Briggs, and

⁵M. R. De Haan, Jonah (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan Publishing House, 1957), p. 118.

Plummer admit that, although tradition insists that Christ lay in the grave only one day and parts of two others, Christ added "three nights," which meant exactly what He said it to mean.⁶

It is impossible to make the time stretch three days and three nights if the crucifixion occurred on Friday. It is not at all necessary to assume that "three days and three nights" implies exactly seventy-two hours. The condemning factor is that only two nights or less are provided for by a Friday crucifixion. Other Scriptures (Matthew 26:61; Mark 9:31; John 2:19), translated "in three days," allow for an interpretation of "within three days," or "inside of three days." The emphasis is on the fact that the action must be completed within the limit of three days. Again, even the higher critics admit that the Hebrew expression in Jonah 1:17, "And Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights" refers to three literal days and literal nights. And Jesus said distinctly that as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the fish, so He would be the same length of time in the heart of the earth.

Now it must be admitted that the ancient rabbis,

⁶Willoughby C. Allen, Commentary on the Gospel According to St. Matthew (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1907), p. 139.

according to the Talmud, counted part of a day as a whole day. And thus by resorting to some Jewish custom, two hours or so on Friday, all day Saturday, and a few hours on Sunday are supposed to be equivalent of three days and three nights. However, the Bible is not interpreted by the Jewish Talmud. Christ rejected the Talmudic traditions of the Jews, and using the same literal expression as was used of Jonah, said "three days and three nights," and not one day and two nights.⁷

The argument from Luke 24:21. The answer of this verse, made by the two disciples to Christ on the road to Emmaus on Sunday afternoon after His resurrection, is indeed a heavy indictment of Friday:

But we trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel; and beside all this, to day is the third day since these things were done. (Luke 24:21)

The case against Friday looks black, indeed, for Sunday is not the third day since Friday.

There are those who object that the term "the third day" contradicts the statement "after three days." (Mark 8:31) But the solution to this apparent problem is found in the Scriptures themselves. A look at Esther 4:16 and 5:1 will

⁷Herman L. Hoeh, The Crucifixion Was Not on Friday, pp. 1-2.

suffice to indicate that the expression "on the third day" is equivalent to "after three days and three nights." Queen Esther had implored the people to fast for her for three days and three nights and then, on the third day, she went before the king.⁸

The argument from the two Sabbaths. Another difficult hurdle for Friday to surmount has to do with the fact that there were two Sabbaths in that eventful week. There was a "high day," the day after the regular Passover (John 19:31); then there was, of course, the regular weekly Sabbath.

Matthew 28:1 contains proof that there were two Sabbaths. The first clause is rendered, "In the end of the Sabbath," of more correctly, "after the Sabbath." However, to translate that phrase literally it should be rendered "after the Sabbaths." The Greek word translated "Sabbath" has the plural form in the original (*σαββάτων*). This is admitted by all.

As further proof for at least two Sabbaths, the fact should be noted that Luke says that the women prepared spices and then rested on the Sabbath (Luke 23:56), whereas Mark

⁸William L. Pettingill, Bible Questions Answered (Findlay, Ohio: Fundamental Truth Publishers, n.d.), p. 184.

writes that they bought the spices when the Sabbath was already past (Mark 16:1). If these two passages refer to one and the same Sabbath, then the Scriptures contain a gross contradiction.⁹

Some seek to explain the plural of "Sabbath" by assuming that the day was a doubled Sabbath; that is, the annual Sabbath and a weekly Sabbath had come on the same day. How this could make two Sabbaths out of one is not too clear. Certainly, a doubled Sabbath would be a new thing under the sun.

Why is it that the plural word has been translated singular? It must be that the translators were simply ignorant of the fact that the Jews had other Sabbaths besides the weekly Sabbath. And assuming that Christ was crucified the day before the weekly Sabbath, everything must bend to their Friday theory, even if it means a mistranslation of the Word.

The arguments from circumstantial evidence. There is additional evidence which can be produced against the Friday theory. When it is taken by itself it may not carry much weight. Nevertheless, on top of all the direct evidence it must be recognized.

⁹Roscoe G. Sappenfield, "Did Christ Die on Wednesday, Thursday, or Friday?" Our Hope, LXIII (April, 1957), 620.

There is, first of all, the argument from the two silent days of the passion week. Commentators who subscribe to the Friday theory--and nearly all of them do--are forced to conclude that there are two silent days in this week. Counting from the arrival at Bethany, six days before the Passover, it is said that there is absolutely no record of two whole days. This seems very strange when one considers the amount of space devoted to the events of the last week, as compared with the rest of Christ's earthly ministry.

Approximately one-third of all that is written in the combined gospels relates entirely to this last week, out of a lifetime of thirty-three years and a public ministry of over three...Every moment of His time appears to be accounted for [from the time of the arrival at Bethany], until the morning of the resurrection.¹⁰

Yet when these days are pieced together, the Friday proponents calmly assert that two whole days are missing! And few there are who will even admit this; most of them do not deal with the entire chronology of the passion week, obviously because they sense some incongruity.

One last evidence to be brought against the Friday theory is that of typology. Great spiritual truths are taught through types in the Old Testament. The Lord Jesus Himself recognized this and indicated at various times that He Himself

¹⁰R. M. Allen, op. cit., p. 23.

was the fulfillment of a type. So, for instance, in John 3:14 He taught that the serpent which Moses lifted up in the wilderness was a type of salvation through His own lifting up on the cross.

When John the Baptist called the people's attention to Christ as the Lamb of God, he thereby meant that the Passover lamb was a type of the Lord Jesus Christ. And the Apostle Paul likewise had a clear understanding of this truth, when he wrote to the Corinthians, "For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us." (I. Corinthians 5:7)

Despite the fact that this comparison will again be discussed later on, it would be well to briefly note how Christ completely fulfilled the type of the Passover lamb. In Exodus 12 it is seen that the Passover lamb was set aside for death on the tenth day of the month and it was sacrificed on the 14th of Nisan, four days later. When Christ came riding into Jerusalem on an ass, as prophesied by Zechariah (9:9), He was rejected by the nation of Israel (Luke 19:47) and thus automatically set aside as God's lamb, earmarked for death. If the type holds true to form, He should have been put to death after four days; but from Sunday to Friday are five days.¹¹ Surely everyone has heard of dilemmas with horns, to one of

¹¹A. G. Krushwitz, A Scriptural Calendar of Passion Week, pp. 1-2.

which one might cling if his position failed; but here is a dilemma without horns.

Based upon these cited objections, it can be seen that Friday does not meet all the scriptural conditions for the day of the crucifixion. The great strength of the Friday position--its antiquity and uncontroverted acceptance--has been undermined by the fact that this universal acceptance of the theory led to forced interpretations to fit the assumed conditions. There have been no argumentative constructive foundations laid for it.

Is there then some other day which will meet the conditions in an acceptable manner? Those who adhere to the Wednesday theory steadfastly affirm that Wednesday can meet every test and is the only day probable and possible. Therefore it will be ^{wice} to leave Friday and to state and analyze the claims for Wednesday.

CHAPTER III

THE WEDNESDAY THEORY

One writer proudly asserts that only he could be right:

We have now located, with Bible proof, two of the prophetic days, the triumphal entrance on Saturday, and His trials and crucifixion on Wednesday. Let us now find the day of His resurrection; then we promise you showers of proof establishing all [*italics in the original*] the days.¹

What is the "Bible proof" for Wednesday, and where are these "showers of proof" establishing Wednesday as the day of Christ's death? Before this subject is taken up, it will be necessary to briefly mark the divisions among the Wednesday adherents.

I. CLASSIFICATION OF WEDNESDAY ADHERENTS

Cultic adherents. The zealous adherents of the Wednesday theory may be classified into two groups. First, there are those who vehemently defend Wednesday as the crucifixion day because they belong to a cult which holds that Christians in this age must keep the law and therefore are bound to keep the Sabbath. Perhaps the most cultic of these

¹ William Fredrick, Three Prophetic Days (Clyde, Ohio: William Fredrick, Publisher, n.d.), p. 25.

men is Herbert W. Armstrong. He writes:

The New Testament reveals that Jesus, the apostles, and the New Testament Church, both Jewish and Gentile-born observed God's Sabbath, and God's festivals-- weekly and annually!²

Other groups also stress the necessity of keeping the Jewish Sabbath. The Seventh-day Adventists and other Seventh-day sects are especially outspoken on this. Many a book and pamphlet has been written to defend their position and to demonstrate that Christ died on Wednesday and rose on Saturday afternoon, giving Christians therefore no basis to observe the first day of the week. Perhaps the most widely distributed booklet of this nature is Authoritative Quotations on the Sabbath and Sunday, issued by the Voice of Prophecy. It attempts to take away any ground for a Sunday observance.

Consecrated adherents. The other group which adheres to the Wednesday theory--and this is by far the larger group--does so because it has a love for the Scriptures and considers them as the Word of God. In sensing the impossibility of the Friday theory, the constituents of this group endeavor to do all justice to the biblical teaching concerning Christ's death and resurrection. The cultic motive and slant is foreign to them, while there are still those in their ranks, to be sure, who hold that the resurrection occurred on Saturday.

²Herbert W. Armstrong, Easter is Pagan! p. 12.

II. ARGUMENTS FOR WEDNESDAY

The argument from the time in the tomb. Whether a group among those contenting for Wednesday has one or the other of the above-mentioned viewpoints, the pivotal point for them is still Matthew 12:40. The term "three days and three nights" is assumed to mean exactly seventy-two hours. This period of time, it is insisted, includes the interval from the time the Savior's body was placed in the tomb until He arose from it.³

The different viewpoints have already been briefly mentioned. Some groups--usually the sects--place the entombment at or before six o'clock on Wednesday evening, the exact moment at which the Jewish day changed to the next. Seventy-two hours later, either before or exactly at six o'clock on Saturday evening, Christ arose. In either case, if this were true--and this is usually why this theory is proposed--there would be no justification for the observance of the first day of the week. For if the resurrection did not occur on the first day of the week, then Sunday is of no special significance. To have Christ rise at exactly 6 p.m. on Saturday neatly saves the proponent the problem of explaining how Christ

³R. A. Torrey, Difficulties in the Bible (Chicago: Moody Press, 1907), pp. 104-105.

could have risen on the Sabbath; neither does it compel him to hold that Christ rose on the first day of the week.

Interpretations of this sort are not entirely acceptable to those sincere believers who merely wish to honor God's Word. By them the solution is offered that the interment of Christ's body was retarded for a few moments, allowing Nicodemus and the others to bury Him just after sunset, but definitely at a time within the following day. Dr. De Haan writes therefore, not without some ambiguity as to the exact moment of burial:

Our Lord Jesus Christ was crucified on Wednesday, He died at three o'clock Wednesday afternoon, and was buried at or about sundown that same evening, and remained in the tomb until Saturday evening, and arose at the conclusion of the sabbath. The Jewish day began at sundown and ended at sundown. Hence, Jesus was in the tomb from Wednesday evening until Saturday evening, arising at the beginning of the first day of the week which began immediately after sundown. Only thus can we understand the words of our Lord Jesus, that like Jonah, He would be in the heart of the earth for "three days and three nights."⁴

Generally speaking, those who believe in the Wednesday crucifixion seek to do honor to the Scriptures. They show that they are willing to take God at His word when they insist on an interment of seventy-two hours. Yet another commendable point to their theory is the recognition that there were at least two Sabbaths during the passion week.

⁴De Haan, op. cit., p. 120.

The argument from the two Sabbaths. Though the Wednesday proponents may not agree on the exact number and position of Sabbaths during the week in which Christ was crucified, they do recognize that there was not merely the weekly Sabbath. There is unanimous agreement among them that with the Jews the fifteenth day of this month was always a Sabbath, no matter on what day of the week it came. It was an annual Sabbath, entirely apart from the weekly Sabbath.⁵

The argument from the interpretation of ἄψευδ and ἐπιφώσκω. Those who are not familiar with the Wednesday theory may wonder how it is possible to place the resurrection of Christ in the evening. The need for it to be placed there, instead of early Sunday morning, is apparent; as otherwise Christ's entombment would have exceeded the seventy-two hour mark by several hours!

As proof for this position, two Greek words from Matthew 28:1 are adduced, where it is recorded that the women went to the tomb, supposedly on Saturday evening. The words themselves will be discussed in detail later. Suffice it to say that the contention is that in employing these two words, Matthew is describing the visit to the tomb by the same women,

⁵Fredrick, op. cit., p. 15.

immediately after the Sabbath was over--not on the next morning. Some suppose that just one visit was made to the sepulchre, others believe there were several visits, because of the different accounts.⁶

The argument from the events of the passion week.

Those who examine the writings of the different Wednesday proponents are soon brought to the conviction that there is great confusion relative to the exact events of the passion week. Scriptural accounts are very specific in describing the events of that week. But just as there is one day missing if Christ was crucified on Friday, so there is one day too many if Wednesday was the actual day of crucifixion. To remedy this dilemma the triumphal entry is shifted from Sunday to Saturday, the Jewish Sabbath. Some who subscribe to a Wednesday crucifixion do not mention the triumphal entry at all; others know that it must have been four days before the crucifixion but say that the 10th of Nisan fell on a weekly Sabbath that year. But in the latter case there is no attempt made to establish the correct chronological year.⁷ The position is obviously only a "city of refuge." Consequently it is possible to always detect someone subscribing to the Wednesday theory, when he states that Christ rode as Messiah

⁶R. M. Allen, op. cit., pp.28-29.

⁷Fredrick, op. cit., p. 14.

into Jerusalem on the Sabbath day, instead of Palm Sunday.

These then are the main arguments for the Wednesday theory: Christ's entombment lasted exactly seventy-two hours; Christ's triumphal entry took place on Saturday; and four days later, on Wednesday, He died. Then exactly seventy-two hours after His burial He arose.

While the integrity and sincerity of the theory's proponents is unquestionable, the degree to which many have employed their God-given common sense and reasoning faculties in following out all the ramifications of the theory, is open to serious question. This theory does not satisfy every condition, despite the many statements made to that effect.

II. ARGUMENTS AGAINST WEDNESDAY

The Wednesday theory is packed with inconsistencies and erroneous conclusions, unsupportable by either Scripture or common sense. This shall be demonstrated in the following pages.

The argument from the complete unit theory. The whole theory stands on very precarious ground. It is a complete unit theory. Each of its parts is like a link in a chain, and if one link breaks the whole theory will completely collapse. Once it can be positively demonstrated that the triumphal entry was not on the Jewish Sabbath but rather on

the first day of the week, then the crucifixion could not possibly have taken place on Wednesday. It will be remembered that the triumphal entry was on the 10th of Nisan and the slaying of the Passover lamb was in that year, as in all years previously, on the 14th of Nisan, four days later.

Furthermore, a demonstration that Matthew's account of the women's visit to the tomb is identical to the visits recorded by the other evangelists, will all but destroy the Wednesday theory.⁸

The argument from the triumphal entry. There is, first of all, strong circumstantial evidence that Christ did not come to Jerusalem on Saturday. All four gospel writers record Christ's triumphal entry (Matthew 21, Mark 11, Luke 19, John 12). If the triumphal entry had taken place on the Sabbath, as the Wednesday advocates insist, certain grave questions could be raised. First of all, had Christ ridden on the ass on the Sabbath day, He most certainly would have been criticized for it. Had He not been criticized before (Matthew 12:10; Mark 2:24; Luke 13:14; John 9:36) for supposedly violating the Sabbath day? And would it not seem out of order and entirely incompatible with a Jewish Sabbath to have crowds

⁸R. M. Allen, op. cit., pp. 31-32.

singing, shouting, and breaking off branches from the palm trees, whenever criticism was leveled against the breaking of heads of grain (Matthew 21:16)? This surely would have been a gross violation of the usual solemnity with which a Sabbath was regarded.

In addition to this, the journey between Bethany and Jerusalem, which Christ made with His disciples on the same day (Mark 11:11), was two and a half Sabbath days' journeys away, for Bethany was located a mile beyond the summit of the Mount of Olives. Jesus returned to Bethany on the same day (Mark 11:11) and therefore, He and His disciples walked at least five Sabbath days' journeys on one day.⁹

To further indicate that Jesus would have violated the Sabbath, it may be said that the cleansing of the temple, which Matthew and Luke imply was on the same day, could under no circumstances have been carried out on a Sabbath. Religious legalists like the Jews would never have tolerated the transaction of commercial business that day, even though they permitted to have the temple defiled for worldly gain on other days.

An added bit of conclusive evidence against the Lord's entrance into Jerusalem on the Sabbath may be rightly called

⁹H. B. Hacket (ed.), "Bethany," Smith's Dictionary of the Bible (New York: Hurd and Houghton, 1871), I, 285.

chronological evidence. These proofs are given in distinction to the circumstantial evidence produced above.

Sir Robert Anderson, well known for his scholarship and erudition, has been of invaluable service to Christianity by his calculation of certain scriptural dates. He is generally accepted as an authority on chronology relating to the prophecy and coming of Christ. Because his calculations shall be referred to later, suffice it to say for the present that his conclusions concerning the triumphal entry place the date on the 6th of April, A. D. 32, which is Sunday, the 10th of the month of Nisan.¹⁰ Since the slaying of the Passover lamb was four days later, Christ most certainly could not have been crucified on Wednesday. Some Wednesday proponents (like De Haan) agree with Anderson's chronology and yet still cling firmly to the Wednesday crucifixion.

One is caused to wonder why the advocates of the Wednesday theory have not bothered to figure out some of these implications for themselves, instead of calmly asserting that Wednesday is the only day which meets every condition and is true to the teaching of the Word.

¹⁰Anderson, op. cit., p. 127.

The argument from the visit at the tomb. It is necessary to bring further arguments against the Wednesday theory to demonstrate how ill it fits all the facts.

When the date of the crucifixion is tabulated as being Wednesday, the 14th of Nisan, it follows logically that Thursday, the 15th, is the special Passover Sabbath. Thus Friday becomes a secular day between the two Sabbaths. According to the Wednesday theory, the women bought spices on this day and prepared them, then waited until the weekly Sabbath was passed before they made any move whatsoever to go and embalm the body.

That spices were bought sometime after the entombment of Christ is plainly evidenced by the Scriptures (Mark 16:1, Luke 23:56; 24:1). It has been explained by some that the period of seventy-two hours was necessary to dispel all claims that Christ was not dead. This may perhaps be true, for science has demonstrated that mitotic cell divisions and other vital processes can continue for some time after death. However, if the case of the death of Lazarus is recalled, it should be noted that Lazarus' body was decomposing after four days already. But we are led to believe by the Wednesday advocates that the women failed to go to the tomb on the intervening secular day--^{Friday}~~Thursday~~--but passed up the opportunity for another forty-eight hour period. Then the women are supposed to have gone to the tomb at the

same period which was offered by Martha as an objection to the opening of Lazarus' tomb. How can this be?

It seems obvious that the women went back to the grave because they considered the embalming after the death of their Lord insufficient and incomplete. And they wished to stay the dissolution of the body for as long as possible. The only logical conclusion to the matter is that the women didn't go back to the tomb any earlier than they did because they couldn't. There was no intervening day!

To follow the theory that Mary Magdalene and the other Mary (Matthew 28:1) went to the tomb Saturday evening after sunset already is sheer inanity.¹¹ Elsewhere (Luke 24) the specific information is given that Mary Magdalene (and perhaps the other Mary) were among the party that went to the tomb early the first day of the week. Why Mary Magdalene neglected to tell the others that they were going on a fool's errand in the morning is difficult to understand. If Christ had already met her the night before, why should she go along in the morning and then naively inquire where they had laid the body of Christ (John 20:2)? It is far easier to reconcile the different accounts of the visit to the tomb by holding that they were separate reports of the same event

¹¹Fredrick, op. cit., 105-106.

than to accuse Mary Magdalene of being some sort of a somnambulist.¹²

The argument from Matthew 12:40. It has already been stated that the basis upon which the Wednesday theory is build is Matthew 12:40:

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.

Nothing thus far has been mentioned concerning the proper interpretation of this verse. Wednesday advocates sum up their understanding of the verse thus:

Seventy-two hours later, exactly three days and three nights, at the beginning of the first day of the week (Saturday at sunset), He arose again from the grave. When the women visited the tomb just before dawn next morning, they found the grave already empty. So we are not driven to any such makeshift as that any small portion of a day is reckoned as a whole day and night, but we find that the statement of Jesus was literally true. Three days and three nights His body was dead and lay in the sepulchre.¹³

It should be noticed that in Matthew 12:40 the time interval is three days and three nights. No mention is made of hours, but Wednesday proponents are quick to claim that this means exactly seventy-two hours. Of course, only this period of time is advantageous to their theory, for any less

¹²R. M. Allen, op.cit., pp. 42-44.

¹³Torrey, op. cit., pp. 104-105.

or more number of hours just would not do. The signal import of the phrase here is not that exactly seventy-two hours should be fulfilled, but that the Lord meant exactly what He said; nothing more, nothing less.

The inconsistency of the Wednesday theory is that having determined that "three days and three nights" means exactly seventy-two hours, its proponents insist that Jesus therefore literally fulfilled this by being in the grave for seventy-two hours. Thereafter, all Scripture bearing upon the subject is made to fit this interpretation. Perhaps a rather lengthy quotation from Allen's book is in order, because he skilfully goes right to the heart of the matter:

Three nights and three days, although the equivalent in duration, is not a substitute expression for three days and three nights, for they cannot be reckoned from the same starting-point nor do they terminate at the same time. It might be conceded that there are cases where it would not make any difference which expression was employed, but the present instance cannot be classed among them for the vital point at issue here is the question of when the designated time terminated [*italics in the original*]. There is a difference of twelve hours between them, and the Wednesday advocates are using this very expression to advance the time of the resurrection twelve hours over that generally accepted. If Jesus meant three nights and three days it seems logical to assume that, knowing the distinction, He would have used that expression rather than the one recorded. It also seems logical that we should accept His statement just as He expressed it...than to stretch the expression to mean exactly 72 hours, which is not necessarily implied by His words.¹⁴

¹⁴R. M. Allen, op. cit., pp. 46-47.

The argument from the interpretation of prophecy.

A major segment of those who have cast their lots in favor of the Wednesday theory produce as one of the proofs for holding to this position the utterances of Gabriel to Daniel in the book of Daniel, chapter nine:

And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself; and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined. And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week; and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and oblation to cease. (26-27a)

It is falsely regarded that the antecedent of "he" in verse 27 is the "Messiah" of verse 26. Without regard for the "prince" that is mentioned, nor the proper interpretation of the last clause of verse 26--which can even by the furthest stretch of the imagination not apply to Christ--the theory is expounded that here is a clear prophecy that Messiah would only minister for three and a half years, and that He would be crucified on Wednesday, in the middle of the week.¹⁵

The assertions of one of these adherents may be quoted here to give the exact position:

In a sense this is a dual prophecy. Christ died in the midst of the prophetic week of seven years, after 3 1/2 years of ministry; but He also died in the midst of the week--Wednesday!¹⁶

A careful study of the angel's words will show that

¹⁵Fredrick, op. cit., p. 20.

¹⁶Hoeh, op. cit., p. 9.

only verse 23a applies to the Messiah; the other portion finds its fulfillment in the one who is elsewhere referred to as the "beast" (Daniel 12:11, Revelation 13:1). His prototype was Antiochus Epiphanes, who sacrificed a sow upon the altar. There is absolutely no basis for asserting that Daniel 9:26-27 prophesies the exact time when Christ would be crucified in the passion week.

Perhaps these stated reasons will suffice to show that the claim of the Wednesday proponents has been founded upon sand. Facts will not confirm the claim that only this theory can satisfy the Scripture narratives and all conditions in every respect. Once it can be demonstrated that another day can meet all conditions and has consequently fewer problems and difficulties, simple logic and scholarly honesty require that Wednesday be abandoned as the day on which the spotless Lamb of God--the true Passover--was slain.

CHAPTER IV

SCRIPTURAL EVIDENCE FOR THE TIME ELEMENTS

Because it has been shown that neither Friday nor Wednesday adequately satisfies the various factors pertinent to the time of the crucifixion, there is inferential proof that Thursday was the day. If this is true, the correctness of this day ought to be capable of being logically demonstrated. The diverse Scripture references relative to this monumental event must fall into their proper place, without conflict or contradictions. If Thursday be the proper day, the theory would necessarily have to be harmonious and free from incongruities.

I. INTERPRETATION OF KEY PASSAGES

The Interpretation of Matthew 12:40

The two theories which have been discussed have been founded upon certain key passages; and one of the main passages for each theory has been Matthew 12:40, which has been interpreted in the light of certain false assumptions. For the purpose of discovering exactly how the verse has been misinterpreted, it would be expedient to keep the exact wording of the verse in mind:

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.

Matthew 12:40 in the light of John 2:18. At a different occasion Christ was asked by the Jews for a sign of His authority. To this He replied, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." (John 2:18) In this instance He spoke of the temple, His body (2:21). Although the occasion for and the statement of Matthew 12:40 is entirely different, the Wednesday proponents have interpreted this passage as having application to Christ's body as well. Then, based upon a further assumption that the burial took place around 6 p.m., the Wednesday theory is fabricated. Christ's body having to be in the grave for three days puts therefore the resurrection at approximately 6 p.m. Saturday evening.¹

Matthew 12:40 in the light of I. Corinthians 15:4.

Often this verse is produced to prove that Christ's body lay in the grave for three days. The verse reads, "And that he was buried and that he rose again the third day, according to the Scriptures." But it cannot be proven conclusively that this does not merely refer to the prophecy or the burial in Isaiah 53:9, "And he made his grave with the wicked and with the rich in his death." This prophecy has been precisely fulfilled; Christ was crucified with the two thieves and yet was

¹R. M. Allen, op. cit., pp. 48-50.

given an honorable burial by the rich Joseph of Arimathea (John 19:38-42). But no matter in what disposition His body was, in John 2:18 Christ was speaking of His human habitation, His body, which He would not be able to use again until the third day, when He would be resurrected. And this is to what Paul makes reference in I. Corinthians 15:4.

Matthew 12:40 in the light of Ephesians 4:9. In Matthew 12:40 Christ was not speaking of His body. The Apostle Paul announced where Christ was for the three days and three nights: "Now that he ascended, what is it but that he descended first into the lower parts of the earth?" (Ephesians 4:9) The same teaching is given in 1. Peter 3:9. While His body lay dead in the sepulchre, Christ was in the lower parts or heart of the earth.

Matthew 12:40 in the light of Luke 23:43. There is still another verse of Scripture which would at least indicate that Christ was not speaking of His body in Matthew 12:40. To the repenting thief on the cross He said, "Today shalt thou be with me in Paradise." (Luke 23:43) What would have been the difference if Jesus had said, "Today thou shalt be with the Son of Man in Paradise"? Absolutely none. The real person of Jesus was not the body but the soul and spirit. Had it been the body, then it must be assumed that the thief was buried with Him on that same day in the same tomb.

The Interpretation of "the heart of the earth"

The logical inference is inescapable that the "three days and three nights in the heart of the earth" have reference to the place of the living personality of Christ rather than to His body in the tomb. The phrase designates the place where Christ was between His death and resurrection.

It would be dishonest to deny that great theologians have held to either view; that is, that the body or person of Christ is meant. Most of those who are generally considered orthodox have indicated that reference is made to the Lord's spirit rather than to His body. To these belong König, Meyer, Stier, Webster, Wilkinson, and Alford. The Roman Catholic Church holds the same view.²

Old Testament typology. A fact that is commonly overlooked by most expositors deals with the state of Jonah while he was in the belly of the great fish. Though the fact cannot be employed to either prove or disprove the above interpretation of Matthew 12:40, it is nevertheless interesting to notice that Jonah was dead while he was in the fish. De Haan demonstrates in a very convincing manner that this was the case.

²James Morison, A Practical Commentary on the Gospel According to St. Matthew (Boston: N. J. Bartlett and Company, 1884), p. 217

The soul of Jonah went into sheol (Jonah 2:2) from whence he cried, while his body rested in death in the abdomen of the fish (Jonah 2:1). Also, there is a description of the place of "sheol" or "hades," namely at "the bottom of the mountains."³

New Testament teaching. Once the truth of Matthew 12:40 is understood, it is easy to comprehend that the Scripture itself sets the start for the three days and three nights. If the heart of the earth is the same as Abraham's bosom (Luke 16:27) or Paradise (Luke 16:32), and if the spirit of Jesus went there immediately upon His death--which it did--then there is no problem in determining at what time of day this took place. The Scriptures are clear on this. Christ died at the ninth hour (Jewish time), or about 3 p.m. (Mark 15:34; Luke 23:44). To apply this time to the Wednesday element would mean that Christ rose three days and three nights later, or around 3 p.m. on Saturday afternoon. But had He remained in the grave until sunset or a few minutes past--as Wednesday advocates assert--He would have been dead seventy-five hours and would have been raised on the fourth day, instead of on the third.⁴

³De Haan, op. cit., pp. 80-82.

⁴R. M. Allen, op. cit., pp. 53-55.

II. THE EXPOSITION OF THE GREEK

In Matthew 28:1, another pivotal verse for the various theories, there are used two controversial words which should be given some consideration. The verse under discussion reads as follows: "In the end of the sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to the sepulchre."

The words in question are ὄψε̄ , in the phrase ὄψε̄ δε̄ σαββᾱτιων̄ . Upon these two words most of the Wednesday advocates base their pronouncement that two of the women already made an evening visit to the sepulchre. This is to be conclusive proof that Christ had risen shortly after sunset on Saturday , rather than around sunrise on the first day of the week. The other gospels simply mention a morning visit, so it is this verse only upon which the argument hinges. It was already pointed out earlier that it seemed ridiculous for the two women to whom the resurrected Christ appeared Saturday evening, to go back to the tomb on Sunday morning to anoint His body.

The Meaning of ὄψε̄

The definition of ὄψε̄ as given in the Greek lexicon is "after a long time," "at length," "late." It also can mean "late in the day," "at even." The adverb is in direct opposition of the word πρω̄ῑ .

It must be recognized that the usage of this word admits for considerable latitude of meaning, according to the lexicon definition.⁵ The underlying thought for the word in English is "later on," "after," "subsequently," "following." Despite these broad meanings it will be admitted that the secondary meaning "at even" is permissible. And those that subscribe to the Wednesday theory hold to this. The evening is said to be between 6 p.m. and 9 p.m. Therefore, as far as the time element of that word is concerned, one would be justified in saying that it suggests a time near the end of the Sabbath. Let this be granted, notwithstanding the fact that Lenski rightly remarks,

It is unfortunate that the R. B. has translated *ὄψε Σαββάτων*, "now late on the Sabbath day." This would say that the women came to the tomb late on Saturday instead of early Sunday. This might be the sense of the Greek words used in the classics, but in Koine *ὄψε* is used as a preposition and means "after," "long after something."⁶

The Meaning of ἐπιφωσκούση

This word modifies *ὄψε* and although the other word might be translated in various ways, *ἐπιφωσκούση* has a more limited meaning. It is a form of the verb *ἐπιφώσκω*.

⁵Liddell and Scott, Greek-English Lexicon (New York: Follett Publishing Company, 1956), p. 509.

⁶Lenski, Matthew, op. cit., p. 1147.

There is some little difficulty here, because the end of the sabbath (and of the week) was at sunset the night before. It is hardly to be supposed that St. Matthew means the evening of the sabbath, though ἐπέφωκε is used of the day beginning at sunset (Luke xxiii. 54, and note). It is best to interpret a doubtful expression in unison with the other testimonies, and to suppose that here both the day and the breaking of the day are taken in their natural,⁸ not their Jewish sense [all italics in the original].

Alford notices the two different interpretations, and yet what he assumes is the correct Jewish sense of the word is in actuality nothing more than the imposed meaning, derived through "circular interpretation."

It can be seen that if the interpretation of Luke 23 verse 54 were equally applied to Matthew 28 verse 1, those subscribing to the Friday theory would find themselves impaled on the horns of a monstrous dilemma. To be consistent, they would have to hold that Christ was buried at 6 p.m. on Friday and rose at 6 p.m. on Saturday, exactly twenty-four hours later.

As far as the Wednesday proponents are concerned, they are also in a dilemma. It has been shown that the specific interpretation necessitates a reference to the beginning of daylight. Consequently, both ὄψε and ἐπιφωσκούση properly translated in the verse would render it thus: "Late

⁸ Henry Alford, The Greek Testament (Boston: Lee and Shephard, Publisher, 1885), p. 309.

after the Sabbaths, as it began to get light, toward the first day of the week came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the other sepulchre."

The record harmonizes perfectly with that of Mark, Luke, and John. There is no evidence that Christ rose Saturday evening at 6 p.m. or shortly thereafter. Rather, simultaneously with the visit to the tomb by the two women on Sunday morning, there was a big earthquake and the stone was rolled away from the tomb (Matthew 28:2). It is the most probable conclusion that Christ rose then or just prior to the earthquake.

For the present, sufficient discussion has been given to the time of the Savior's death and resurrection, and it would be advisable to see what may be learned regarding the exact time of His burial.

III. THE TIME OF THE BURIAL

For an extensive investigation of this seemingly simple problem the work of Allen should be consulted. He alone seems to have harmonized properly the various gospel accounts and listed their logical sequence. No one else, as yet, seems to have reached a similar conclusion on grounds of Scripture, though it seems to be the only conclusion possible in light of the Jewish culture, as well as the literal meaning of the Greek language. Allen's view, though greatly

condensed, is given below, after a discussion of the customs regarding the Jewish Sabbaths.

It is generally believed among Christians that Christ was buried around 6 p.m. on the day of crucifixion. Those subscribing to the Wednesday theory emphasize this fact because they start the period of seventy-two hours then. The Friday advocates hold their view because they assume that the weekly Sabbath started then.

Jewish Customs Relating to Sabbaths

A word which is often mentioned in connection with the events of the passion week is "the preparation." The Greek word for this is παρασκευή. Luke 23:45 reads, for example, *Καὶ ἦρα νύ παρασκευή* -- "and it was preparation day." The meaning of the verb *παρασκευάζω* is "to get ready," "prepare," "provide", "furnish."⁹

The background for this day of preparation is given in Exodus 16:5,22-29, where Moses instructs the people concerning the commandments of the Lord:

This is the day which the Lord hath said, Tomorrow is the rest of the holy sabbath unto the Lord: bake that which ye will bake today, and seethe that ye will seethe; and that which remaineth over lay up for you to be kept until the morning. And they laid it up till the morning... And Moses said, Eat that today; for today is a sabbath unto the Lord; today ye shall not find it in the field... See, for that the Lord hath given you the sabbath, therefore He giveth you on the sixth day the bread of

⁹Liddell and Scott, op. cit., p. 527.

two days.

The Jewish Sabbath was no fast day and yet the Jews had to make the preparation of food on the previous day. Therefore, every day before a Sabbath was designated a "preparation day."

As has been previously indicated, apart from the weekly Sabbaths, there were other Sabbaths in the Jewish ceremonial year. These are minutely described in Leviticus 23. Seven of these Sabbath days are mentioned in their order as follows:

1. The Passover Sabbath on the fourteenth day of the first month.
2. The Unleavened Bread Sabbath on the very next day.
3. The Feast of Firstfruits on the seventeenth day of the month.
4. The Feast of Pentecost, fifty days later.
5. The Feast of Trumpets, in the seventh month.
6. The Feast of Atonement.
7. The Feast of Tabernacles.¹⁰

Each of these Sabbaths was to be a day of rest, with complete cessation of labor (Leviticus 23:25). And each Sabbath had its day of preparation.

Now a complication would arise if two Sabbaths fell

¹⁰De Haan, op. cit., pp. 122-123.

on succeeding days. The first Sabbath would be considered the day of preparation in name only. Only one day would be available to prepare for both. This was exactly the situation in the passion week. (The last chapter will deal in detail with this area.) A proper understanding of these Sabbaths and their preparation will help in explaining puzzling references in the gospels. The way in which the days of the Passover week were described permitted considerable latitude of expression. It is therefore necessary to interpret these accounts in the light of the Jewish customs.¹¹

For example, John writes, "And it was the preparation of the passover, and about the sixth hour." (John 19:14) He means that it was about 6 a.m. (according to Roman time) on the 14th of Nisan, which was the preparation day for the Passover Sabbath, starting at 6 p.m. The term "Passover" refers to the feast day. The words "feast of" are omitted because there was one particular passover day requiring a day of preparation.

The Burial

Previous discussion has shown that Christ died around the ninth hour, or three o'clock in the afternoon. The

¹¹R. M. Allen, op. cit., pp. 62-62.

subsequent events in the drama are recorded in John 19:31:

The Jews therefore, because it was the preparation, that the bodies should remain upon the cross on the sabbath day, (for that sabbath day was an high day,) besought Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away.

This was still on the day of preparation, the 14th, and therefore must have taken place before 6 p.m.

Jewish customs relating to burial. The common belief is that the Jews desired to have the bodies taken away before the incipient day. There is, however, a wealth of contrary evidence in all four gospels, which indicates that this was not so. The Jews merely took care that the body should not remain on the cross during the daytime of the following day. The literal rendering of the explanatory clause in this thirty-first verse of John 19 is "for the day of that Sabbath was a great one." The *ἡ ἡμέρα* would be superfluous unless it specially indicated the daytime, instead the whole twenty-four hour period.

The Jews did not particularly care when the Roman soldiers removed the bodies from the crosses, just as long as they would not be there on the following day. The Mosaic law relating to such a case is found in Deuteronomy 21:22-23:

And if a man have committed a sin worthy of death, and he be to be put to death, and thou hang him on a tree; His body shall not remain all night upon the tree, but thou shalt in any wise bury him that day....

The evening time. The argument might be raised that both in Matthew 27:57 and Mark 15:42 there are strong indications that the words "when the even was come" set the time of the burial before sunset on the crucifixion day.

Closely connected with ὄψε̅ , the word discussed earlier, is the word ὀψίας̅ , translated "evening" in these two passages. There can be no doubt that the word has reference to the evening, after sunset, or the evening watch. The same word is used in Mark 1:32 where there is a clear indication that the time period explained commences with the setting of the sun: "And evening having come, when the sun did set." The phrase ὀψια̅ δὲ γενομένης̅ expresses completed action, for the participle is second aorist in tense; and so the entire phrase could be legitimately translated, "When it was already evening, there came a rich man of Arimathea..." In none of the six times that the word is used in the New Testament is there any implied reference to the time before sunset. There is nothing in the references which will not fit into a time period following the setting of the sun.¹²

The logical conclusion from this rather extensive discussion of "evening" must be that the next day, the 15th of Nisan, had already started when Joseph of Arimathea went to Pilate to ask for Christ's body. And the body must still

¹²Robert Young, Analytical Concordance to the Bible (New York: Funk and Wagnalls Company, n.d.), pp. 209-310.

have been hanging on the cross. The reason why Joseph went so late is not given. Perhaps one writer is correct when he remarks that

"when even had come" gains significance from the context that he "took courage" (Mark 15:42f.). His going to Pilate on such an errand was brazen audacity. Besides courage it called for extreme caution. He chose the time when everyone would be indoors partaking of the Passover meal.¹³

Pilate did not agree at once. Probably with customary oriental deliberation he inquired how Jesus could be dead so soon. Then to get proof that Joseph's words indeed were true, he sent for the centurion (Mark 15:45). It is possible that the centurion was called to come from Golgatha. The fact is certain, however, that considerable time must have elapsed before Joseph--carrying his hundred pounds of spices (John 20:39)--with the others reached the cross.

More time must have passed before the body was taken down, carried to the tomb, and the embalming began. John records (19:39-40) that linens and a great quantity of aromatics were used for the process. This must have been very time consuming.

The embalming. The general picture therefore is that much time passed by before the body of Christ was placed into

¹³J. Spencer Kennard, "The Burial of Jesus," Journal of Biblical Literature, VXXIV (December, 1955), 230.

the tomb. It seems entirely feasible that this was not done until 9 or 10 p.m. Several hours must have been consumed in the embalming. The hundred pounds of spices were used up, otherwise there would be no reason for the women to return on another day, having bought more.¹⁴

Only now does the real meaning of the language of Luke 23:53-54 become apparent:

And having it taken down, he wrapped it in a linen cloth and placed it in a tomb hewn in a rock, in which no one ever yet was laid. And it was preparation day, and a sabbath began to grow toward daylight.

Day was approaching. Christ's loyal disciples had worked the greater part of the night! But now it was Sabbath and they were defiled by a dead body. In all haste they concluded their work, so that they would not be seen. The law made provision that they could eat the Passover, which they had missed, one month later (Numbers 9:10-12). But by then Christ was risen and, He being the Passover lamb, there was no more necessity for the eating of the meal.¹⁵

The violation of the Sabbath. Should there be any objection that this view compels the disciples to violate a Sabbath by working, it need only be pointed out that the law commands only concerning this Sabbath, "...ye shall do no

¹⁴R. M. Allen, op. cit., pp. 67-68.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 69.

servile work therein." (Leviticus 23:7b) Other people died on these Sabbaths and nowhere in the law was there said anything against the burial of a body on such a day. Had the body been permitted to remain unembalmed, the disciples would have had to wait for two days, and by that time the decomposing of the corpse would have started, making the embalming useless.

The women rested on the seventh-day Sabbath "according to the commandment" (Luke 23:56b) and, having bought spices, returned to the tomb early Sunday morning to finish the embalming of their beloved Savior. Great controversy exists concerning that visit. Mark, Luke, and John definitely record a visit to the tomb early Sunday morning. Matthew's account, however, is very disputed as to when the visit took place.

IV. THE VISIT TO THE TOMB

All four gospel accounts record the visit to the sepulchre. It forms the connecting link of evidence between the dead and buried Savior and a gloriously risen Lord.

In light of the discussion of the words $\delta\psi\epsilon$ and $\epsilon\eta\phi\acute{\omega}\sigma\kappa\epsilon$ of Matthew 28:1, it would hardly seem necessary to devote another section to the study of the time when the visit(s) took place. However, the problem has a clear solution.

The Problem

Since the problem is such a puzzling one to many minds, and since there must be a definite answer as to why the four gospel accounts differ on this matter, at least a brief attempt should be made to establish the harmony of the gospel records on this important matter. The key passage in each gospel is as follows:

In the end of the sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week... (Matthew 28:1)

And very early in the morning, the first day of the week, they came unto the sepulchre at the rising of the sun. (Mark 16:2).

Very early in the morning they came unto the sepulchre. (Luke 24:1)

The first day of the week cometh Mary Magdalene early, when it was yet dark, unto the sepulchre. (John 20:1)

Writing of the chapters in which these various accounts of the visit to the tomb appear, that great scholar, Henry Alford, expressed considerable doubt:

Supposing us to be acquainted with every thing said and done, in its order and exactness, we should doubtless be able to reconcile, or account for, the present forms of the narratives; but not having this key to the harmonizing of them, all attempts to do so... carry no certainty with them. And I may remark, that of all the harmonies, those of the incidents of these chapters are to me the most unsatisfactory. Giving their compilers credit for the best intentions, I confess they seem to me to weaken instead of strengthening the evidence, which now rests (speaking merely objectively) on the unexceptionable testimony of three independent narrators, and of one, who besides was an eye-witness of much that

happened.

The Solution.

This perhaps somewhat lengthy quotation from Alford indicates how even men of great learning are perplexed by these accounts. Yet the problem is by no means as unsolvable as the quotation might make it appear. Space will not permit to quote the separate accounts of the early morning visits. The narratives are familiar to most people. An effort will be made to merely piece together, as well as possible, the various details in the separate accounts for the purpose of reconstructing the scene at the tomb on that resurrection morning.

Most Wednesday proponents have arrived at the conclusion that there was an evening visit (according to Matthew) and a morning visit (according to the other gospels). But as has been sufficiently demonstrated, this cannot possibly be. The two women mentioned by Matthew were the same ones who, according to Mark, went to the tomb in the morning. Matthew relates how they even spoke to the Savior. Assuming that people behaved like human beings in those days, instead of inveterate somnambulists, there was no need for them to return with spices on the next morning, pretending that they knew nothing about His already being risen.

Each evangelist tells the story in his own way with

an eye to his reader or readers for whom he has planned his entire record. Should someone attempt to trace the reasons each had for including just what he did, he would be on some uncertain ground and dare not be too insistent. Instead of becoming critical, men should be grateful for the records that they have.¹⁷

The four narratives we have stand as four witnesses. When one reads these gospel records, the one attitude of even the most critical reader must be that the reports are true in even every detail. This attitude is unaffected by the science of textual criticism, which should only rest in the hands of competent scholars. The scholars' approved results are most precious. Therefore no part of the testimony that is offered dare be discredited on any subjective or dogmatical grounds as some critics have done. So, for instance, Briggs and Driver accuse Matthew of maliciously mutilating Mark's record of the sunrise visit to the tomb while they charge Mark with the "misunderstanding of his Aramaic authority" for the account.¹⁸

Whether or not an individual reader is able to fit

¹⁷R. C. H. Lenski, Interpretation of St. Luke's Gospel (Columbus, Ohio: The Wartburg Press, 1951), p. 1168.

¹⁸W. C. Allen, op. cit., pp. 26-30.

all the pieces in the records together has no bearing on the truth and the correction of these pieces themselves. What one man cannot do proves nothing in regard to more competent men. One should learn to patiently content himself with the fact that there are some problems--and they are few in number--that have not yet been cleared up. The Christian student has only one duty, namely, properly to combine all the testimony and thus to reconstruct the entire story. The statement, whether made by Wednesday advocates or anyone else, that this can never be done is unwarranted.

The Narrative

Matthew gives the moment of starting preparation for the journey by his use of ὄψε, and the general time of arrival by ἐπιφώσκειν. John probably has reference to the time he knew his mother left the home, "it still being dark."

(John 20:1) Luke emphasizes the time of the journey itself, "very early in the morning," (Luke 24:1) and Mark the time of arrival at the tomb, "and very early in the morning."

(Mark 16:2). The various emphases on the time of the visit reveal only too clearly the various viewpoints from which the writers explained the visit.

Having felt the need for more spices and ointments after the hurried burial on Thursday night (early Friday Jewish time), the women had decided to buy more and return to

the tomb after the two Sabbaths were past. Right after sundown on Saturday, when the stores opened again after the weekly Sabbath, they bought the necessary aromatics and prepared them. Awaiting the dawn of the first day of the week, they already started out while it was yet dark. They arrived just at sunrise.¹⁹

There is little imagination necessary to visualize what transpired upon the arrival at the tomb. On the way they had probably some doubt as to their strength being adequate to remove the stone from the entrance of the tomb. Beyond question they had no idea that a Roman guard had been placed by the tomb nor that a seal had been put on the stone.

Then they came within sight of the tomb, and to their consternation see that the stone has already been removed and the door is exposed. They all lead to the same natural conclusion that the tomb has been rifled by the enemies of Jesus, the Jews.

An angel had come from heaven (Matthew 28:2) and rolled away the stone and then sat on it. While the women were on their way, the dead body of Jesus Christ in the tomb had come to life and moved out of the closed sepulchre through the rock. Because of its very nature this act

¹⁹R. M. Allen, op. cit., pp 134-136.

was witnessed by no one. The soldiers saw and heard nothing of it. The tomb was then empty. But in the next instance-- just as signs of nature had accompanied the death of Christ-- an earthquake shook the ground, an angel flashed from the sky, perhaps touched the stone, making it fly from its place; the soldiers lay like dead, recovered, and then fled. The stone lying flat on the ground revealed that the sepulchre was empty: the angel sat upon it, and before the women arrived he entered the tomb. There is no way the movements of the other angel can be traced.

The women were convinced that the body of Jesus had been stolen by the Jews. Therefore Mary Magdalene turned and ran for help. She apparently did not see the angels. A short while later she reached Peter and John. She tells them, "They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulchre, and we know not where they have laid him." (John 20:2) In meantime the other women have seen the angels and returned to tell the message of the angels to the disciples.

Peter and John start to go to the tomb, and after probably meeting the returning women on the path, they run the rest of the way, only to find the tomb empty, with the linen bands still there, neither cut nor stripped off. A strange sight to behold! Those flat wrappings certainly confirmed the testimony of the women: Jesus was indeed risen from the dead!

CHAPTER V

OLD TESTAMENT TYPOLOGY OF THE DEATH OF CHRIST

All the Scriptures speak of Christ. While talking to two of His disciples on the road to Emmaus He reproved them for not knowing this fact:

O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken; Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory? And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself. (Luke 24:25-27)

The Old Testament clearly teaches the death of Christ and His resurrection, in types and symbols. (Luke 24:46) If this is true, then these Scriptures must certainly speak of the exact time at which the lamb of God should be slain, and be gloriously raised as Lord and God. Some of these Old Testament passages will be briefly discussed to see how clearly and marvelously the sufferings of Christ were foretold, confirming the thesis that He died on the fifth day of the week and was raised on the first day.

I. CHRIST AND GENESIS 3:15

The first prophecy of Scripture relates to this combination of suffering and triumph for the Son of God. Christ, the seed of the woman, was to bruise the head of the serpent, Satan. But Satan would be permitted to bring affliction and

suffering to the Messiah, by bruising His heel.

Many other references could be adduced which teach the suffering of Christ, such as Isaiah 53, Psalm 22, and Psalm 69. That Christ used the Old Testament types on various occasions for the teaching of deeper spiritual truths is evident. In His talk with Nicodemus He referred to the serpent lifted up in the wilderness as illustrating what He had to go through. His use of Jonah is another sign. Beyond dispute, the greatest type which Christ fulfilled is that of the Passover lamb.

II. CHRIST AND EXODUS 12

The meaning of the Passover. A brief summary will suffice to indicate what the keeping of the Passover involved. When God announced to the children of Israel His plan of redemption by blood from the bondage of Egypt, He started their calendar with the month of Nisan (Exodus 12:2). The Israelites were commanded to take a male lamb of the first year, without blemish, and set it aside on the tenth day of the month (12:3,5). Then they were to keep it until the evening of the fourteenth day, when it was to be killed. Its blood was to be caught in a basin, then immediately applied to the lintel and side-posts of the door (12:7). The lamb was then taken into the house, roasted, and eaten later that

night, in the early hours of the 15th of Nisan. And no one could go outside until the morning (12:22).

Those dwelling within the blood-sprinkled doors would be passed over by the angel of death, therefore the entire occasion was designated "the Passover." This was to be from then on an annual memorial, to be observed forever (Exodus 12:14).

The institution of the tabernacle changed only slightly the Passover routine. It need only be mentioned that among other minor changes the Passover would be slain earlier in the evening or late afternoon, between three and six o'clock, instead of at the exact time of the setting of the sun: "Thou shalt sacrifice the passover at even, at the going down of the sun." (Deuteronomy 16:6).

The ceremonies of the Passover. The "Passover," in its real sense, is the slaying of the lamb. In close connections is the eating of it. These ceremonies, as noted, occurred on separate days, the 14th and 15th of Nisan, respectively, and necessitated certain terms to identify them. To these two ceremonies must be added a third observance. This is the elimination of all leaven from the Jewish meals for an entire week, from the 14th to the 21st of the month of Nisan. The 14th was called "the preparation day" for the "feast of the Passover," or "feast day," a

term given to the following day, although only a few hours intervened between the killing of the lamb and the eating thereof. The term "Feast of unleavened bread" applies to the entire week during which the use of leaven was forbidden. (Exodus 12:28). There is much difficulty connected with determining the exact Jewish customs of Christ's time, but as far as can be ascertained, especially in light of the Old Testament commandments, these are the right days for the Passover, as well as the proper terms for the days.¹

III. THE LAST SUPPER OF THE DISCIPLES

Commentators are at great variance with each other in setting the time for the last supper. There are those who hold that the last supper was eaten on the 13th, on the 14th, or on the 15th--and many are the proposed reasons. The issue at stake is not so much whether the crucifixion occurred on Wednesday, Thursday, or Friday, but rather it is a matter of reconciling the various accounts for the purpose of systematically setting forth the events on the days of the passion week (chapter VI).

When was the last supper eaten? Most people commonly identify it with the eating of the Passover lamb on the evening,

¹Hacket, op. cit., III, pp. 2349-2351.

that is, the first part of the 15th of Nisan. But this is impossible. John tells us that Christ was crucified on the preparation of the Passover, or, in other words, on the 14th of Nisan (John 19:14). Of course John knew what happened, because he was one of the disciples sent to make preparations for the meal. The statement is clear that the Jews had not yet eaten the Passover before Christ was crucified:

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

Of necessity the conclusion follows that Christ could not have died as the Passover Lamb and at the same time have eaten the Jewish Passover. The objection might be raised that indeed Mark 14:12 seems to indicate that the Passover was eaten by Christ and His disciples:

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? (Mark 12:14)

In light of the above explanation, however, it may be briefly mentioned that it was an universal practice among the Jews to set aside the leaven a whole day before the legal first day of unleavened bread. And the clause "when they killed the passover" serves merely as an identification of the feast of unleavened bread, at the time of the Passover.²

²R. M. Allen, op. cit., pp. 83-85.

The preparation which the disciples may have thought to be for the next day was made the preparation for an immediate meal which became the Paschal meal of that year. The events of the following morning rendered the regular Passover impossible. The time, therefore, at which the supper took place, was shortly after sunset, in the early evening hours of Thursday, the 14th of Nisan, which started, -as must be remembered, at 6 p.m. Christ's remarks will gain real meaning when these facts are kept in mind.

"And he said unto them, with desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer," (Luke 22:15) for here He informs His disciples that He would like to eat the Passover with them but is unable to do so. If this interpretation on the Last Supper seems strange or forced, it should be remembered that while the memory of events was still fresh, as it was at the time when the gospels were written, statements which seem perplexing now may have been readily intelligible from a knowledge of the connecting facts.³

The antitype of the Passover. It was mentioned earlier that one of the benefits for this whole study would be the clearer understanding of Old Testament typology, which of necessity accompanies this investigation. Perhaps nowhere

³Westcott, op. cit., pp. 339-340.

is there a clearer foreshowing of the events of the passion week than in the Passover. Christ was a lamb without blemish and without spot, free from all sin. He was chosen on the 10th day of Nisan, for it was then that the triumphal entry into Jerusalem was made. At this time He was set aside by the Jewish nation and rejected as their Messiah--marked for death. Not a bone of Him was broken (John 19:36 cf. Exodus 12:46, Psalm 34:20), and He was killed on the 14th of Nisan at the exact time of the slaying of the lamb. Truly, the type is marvelously fulfilled in every detail and Paul well remarks that "Christ our passover is sacrificed for us." (I. Corinthians 5:7)

III. CHRIST AND HOSEA 6:1-2

Again it is the Apostle Paul who wrote that Christ rose again the third day, "according to the Scriptures." (I. Corinthians 15:4) Therefore it is not surprising that both direct types and prophecies refer to the three-day interval of Christ's death. The prophet Hosea makes an urgent appeal to Israel:

Come, and let us return unto the Lord: for he hath torn, and he will heal us; he hath smitten, and he will bind us up. After two days will he revive us: in the third day he will raise us up, and we shall live in his sight. (Hosea 6:1-2)

This prophecy has its primary application to Israel.

Nevertheless, antitypically the language is so framed as to refer in its full accuracy only to the Messiah, the ideal Israel (Isaiah 49:3), who was raised on the third day. Although Israel was smitten as a nation, the Messiah was the one that actually took the punishment for the nation which rejected Him (Isaiah 53), and it was said of Him that "he shall prolong his days and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand." (Isaiah 53:10)⁴

There is more meaning in Hosea's words than appears at first. Just as God completed the work of creation on the sixth day, having made man, and started His rest on the seventh day, even so the Lord Jesus, finishing His work of redemption near the end of the fifth day, entered into His first full evening-morning rest day on the sixth day. With Christ the whole human race was dead and the judgment pronounced upon Adam was carried out. The seventh day, the interruption of the rest of God, was at the same time eliminated. All creation was restored to the condition preceding the fall--then it was in a judicial sense; soon it will be in actuality. For the second and last time God and man were able to keep the seventh day rest.⁵

⁴Robert Jamieson, A. R. Fausset, and David Brown, Commentary of the Old and New Testaments (Hartford, Conn.: S. S. Scranton and Company, 1871), p. 655.

⁵R. M. Allen, op. cit., pp. 99-100.

The third day indicated the beginning of a new creation. It is the true rest day and the Sabbath had only been a sign of this to Israel. This new day is prophesied by the Psalmist:

The stone which the builders refused is become the head stone of the corner. This is the Lord's doing; it is marvelous in our eyes. This is the day which the Lord hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it. (Psalm 118:22-24)

This then, concisely, is "the Lord's Day," the day on which Christ should be raised up and live in the sight of God (Hosea 6:2). The exact day of the week on which this should be established is indicated in type in Leviticus, the twenty-third chapter.

IV. CHRIST AND LEVITICUS 23:10-11

Jehovah commands Moses to

Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When ye be come into the land which I give unto you, and shall reap the harvest thereof, then ye shall bring a sheaf of the firstfruits of your harvest unto the priest: And he shall wave the sheaf before the Lord, to be accepted for you: on the morrow after the sabbath the priest shall wave it. (Leviticus 23:10-11)

Only as the New Testament is consulted will it become apparent that this ceremony speaks of the death and resurrection of Christ. He Himself exclaimed, "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die it bringeth forth much fruit" (John 12:24). There is another

verse which comes as a natural sequence, "But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept" (I. Corinthians 15:21). To be the antitype for the firstfruits, Christ needed to be raised at the same time that the priest lifted up the sheaf of the firstfruits, namely on the "morrow after the sabbath," which is the first day of the week.⁶

V. CHRIST AND GENESIS 22:13

Among outstanding types of the three-day period of death in the Old Testament is that of Abraham and his obedience to God's command to offer up to his son Isaac.

This familiar passage in Genesis need not be quoted, but it is interesting to notice the New Testament commentary on the verses, given in Hebrews 11:17-19:

By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac: and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son. Of whom it was said, That in Isaac shall thy seed be called: Accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead; from whence he also received him in a figure.

From the time that Abraham decided to obey God in this matter, Isaac was as good as dead. This is the reason why Isaac was received back from the dead "in a figure." This was done, according to Genesis 22:4, on the third day, when

⁶Ibid., pp. 101-102.

Abraham lifted up his eyes and saw the place afar off. There is a possibility that the mountain in Moriah, spoken of in Genesis 22:2, where the offering was made, is the same place where Christ was offered up. Josephus indicates that "it was the mountain upon which king David afterward built the temple."⁷ Although this cannot be shown beyond the shadow of a doubt, it nevertheless is a probability, and it certainly would be true to the type.

VI. CHRIST AND THE REST OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

There are many other types and direct prophecies of Christ's death and resurrection. The instance of Jonah in the belly of the fish, used by Jesus Christ Himself to expound this truth, is one of these. To this sufficient reference has been made.

Another passage in which emphasis has been placed on the three-day period is Exodus 8, where Moses expresses his desire before Pharaoh to take the Israelites a three days' journey into the wilderness to sacrifice to the Lord.

(Exodus 8:26-27)

The spiritual meaning of the three days is easily discernible. Egypt is a type of the old life, the bondage of the flesh. God would never reveal His way to the Israelites until they were separated a three-days' journey from the

⁷Josephus, Antiquities, 1. XIII, 2.

flesh life. The three-day separation obviously is the death of the believer to the old life, followed by resurrection with Christ on the third day.

Numerous other examples of Old Testament types could be listed here. These, however, must suffice to show that the prophets clearly spoke of Christ in relation to the time of His death and resurrection. The Old Testament clearly shows the three days of death as symbolizing the finished work of one of the members of the Godhead. The seventh day is a commemoration of the work of redemption by the Son; and the first day the new order of things through the finished work of the Holy Spirit by whom the resurrection and the new life became certainties.

CHAPTER VI

THE DAYS OF THE PASSION WEEK

Thursday is the day of the crucifixion! This has been shown to be so by a careful analysis of the Scripture passages used by the adherents of the Wednesday and Friday theories, which were claimed to prove their position. In addition to ^{these} those verses, there is a great amount of circumstantial evidence, as well as Old Testament typology, which favors Thursday.

Only one more proof need to be adduced to demonstrate that Christ died on Thursday and rose on Sunday. If Thursday fits harmoniously into the detailed chronology of this week which is given by the gospel writers, there remains no more argument against Thursday and reason to still cling to the unscriptural, illogical Wednesday and Friday positions.

I. THE CALENDAR BASIS

Thus far it has seemed wise only to use the Word of God in the attempt to establish the day of crucifixion. The reason for this is plain. The Bible must always be the Christian's first and final basis for doctrine and practice. But in establishing a teaching of Scripture, in addition to the internal evidence itself, outside arguments may be employed, especially if they appear to be founded on logic and truth.

Rejection and distortion by some. Among those who hold the various theories of the time of Christ's death are those who deny that it is at all possible to calculate the exact year and day of the crucifixion. It should suffice to refer to the viewpoint of just one of these men:

Let it be reiterated, for the sake of clarity, that we positively cannot determine, on a primary basis of the calendar, or secular history, upon which day of the modern week the corresponding day of the Jewish month of Nisan, fell. Such is impossible until the exact¹ year of the crucifixion can be stated with certainty.

Allen holds it an impossibility that the year and day can be established. However, much credit should be given him for his ability to demonstrate from the Scriptures alone, beyond the shadow of a doubt, that the crucifixion took place on Thursday.

There is another group of people who resort to calendar calculation as one of the key arguments for their theory. They will go to any extreme to prove their position through use of the historical calendar. Because of their zeal to expound their theory, whether scriptural or not, and because of the extreme variation in their results, their calculations must be rejected. Self-styled scholars of this caliber can best be detected by their premise that Christ died in a certain year. They would not dare divulge to others the secret of

¹R. M. Allen, op. cit., p. 148.

where and how they might have derived at such a date. But once they have established the year, without explanation, they proceed to determine laboriously the month and the day. An example of this follows:

The writer has received two documents from our U. S. Naval Observatory at Washington, D. C., confirming the claims of the Old Testament and New Testament that Jesus Christ was crucified on Wednesday, the 14th of Nisan, by proving that the new-moon, between March 4th and April 10th in A. D. 30, fell on March 22, at 6:00 P. M. Greenwich Civil time. According to Jerusalem time, this would be about 9 P. M. and that would put the new moon in and about the end of the first watch of the Jewish night, of the fifth day of the first week, of the first month, Nisan, which is the first month of the Hebrew year.²

One can search in vain throughout this cited work for the way in which the year A. D. 30 has been calculated. A failure to establish this negates all other calculations.

Calculation and reception by others. There is another distinct group of those who hold to one of the three theories. In this group there is primarily one person whose calculation of the year and day of the triumphal entry of Christ has been acclaimed and accepted by most of evangelical Christendom as being correct. Sir Robert Anderson's monumental work, The Coming Prince, has stood for many decades the test of time and scrutiny of scholars. Writing of the day on which Christ made

²Kruschwitz, op. cit., p.3.

His triumphal entry, in relation to the Seventy Weeks of Daniel, he says,

And the date of it can be ascertained. In accordance with the Jewish custom, the Lord went up to Jerusalem upon the 8th Nisan, "six days before the Passover." But as the 14th, on which the Paschal Supper was eaten [sic] fell that year upon a Thursday, the 8th was the preceding Friday. He must have spent the Sabbath, therefore, at Bethany; and on the evening of the 9th, after the Sabbath had ended, the Supper took place in Martha's house. Upon the following day, the 10th Nisan, He entered Jerusalem as recorded in the Gospels.

The Julian date of the 10th Nisan was Sunday the 6th April, A. D. 32. What then was the length of the period intervening between the issuing of the decree to rebuild Jerusalem and the public advent of "Messiah the Prince,"-- between the 14th March, B. C. 445, and the 6th April, A. D. 32? THE INTERVAL CONTAINED EXACTLY AND TO THE VERY DAY 173,880 DAYS, OR SEVEN TIMES SIXTY-NINE PROPHETIC YEARS OF 360 DAYS, [capitals in the original] the first sixty-nine weeks of Gabriel's prophecy.³

It is hoped that this extensive quotation will indicate beyond doubt that the Thursday crucifixion is correct. If the triumphal entry was on Sunday, the 10th, four days later, the time when the Passover would be slain, must be Thursday. Anderson's testimony increases in value when it is recognized that he does not hold to a Thursday crucifixion. (His error is that which is peculiar to most older theologians: a failure to recognize that there were two Sabbaths in the passion week.)

Men like De Haan see the correctness of this calculation

³Anderson, op. cit., pp. 127-128.

in that they place Thursday on the 14th of Nisan, which is proper. But they nevertheless have been so enamored with the exact seventy-two hour position, that they place the crucifixion on Wednesday, having been compelled to shift the triumphal entry back to the Sabbath.

There is one important fact brought out by all those who have made an extensive study of the days of the Passover week. There is universal admission that if Christ made His public entrance into Jerusalem on Sunday, then He must have been crucified on Thursday. This is plainly stated by one author:

...Whatever day of the week He made His triumphal entrance that day was the tenth day of the month that year. If Sunday was the tenth, then the following Thursday was the fourteenth and Christ must have been crucified on Thursday, and not on Friday, as we have been taught. This is evident from the fact that the day on which Christ was crucified "was the preparation day of the Passover." The Passover was prepared the day before it was eaten.⁴

This evidence for Thursday on the basis of a historical calendar should be conclusive. Daniel's sixty-nine weeks were literally fulfilled. Anderson correctly calculated that these weeks of years ended with Christ's rejection at His triumphal entry--on Sunday, the 10th of Nisan, A. D. 32. Christ, our Passover, was slain on the 14th of Nisan, which

⁴Fredrick, op. cit., pp. 17-18.

consequently must have been a Thursday. Thus, the three most important days of the passion week have been established. The triumphal entry, on Sunday, the 10th of Nisan; the crucifixion on Thursday, the 14th of Nisan; and the resurrection, on Sunday, the 17th of Nisan.

In conclusion there remains only the filling in of the scriptural details in relation to the other days of the week.

II. THE SCRIPTURAL BASIS

In presenting the gospel story of these days in its simplest, most logical form, it will be on the basis of such information as is provided by the scriptural narratives. A proper start for the chronological account can be the final stage of Christ's trip to Jerusalem for the Passover, as He arrived in Jericho.

Friday, Nisan 8. Jesus and His disciples stopped at Jericho for some time, where they were guests of Zacchaeus, the publican, during the night, and Zacchaeus was converted (Luke 19:1-10).

In the morning they started from Jericho, with some women from Galilee, and perhaps others. And that day they traveled eighteen miles to Bethany. On their way two blind men were healed (Matthew 10:29-34) and Jesus foretold His

death and resurrection (Mark 10:32-34). They arrived at Bethany toward evening, six days before the Passover:

Then Jesus six days before the paslover came to Bethany, where Lazarus was which had been dead, whom he raised from the dead. There they made him a supper and Martha served. (John 12:1-2a)

This was the day of preparation. Only John tells of the intervening events, between the arrival at Bethany and the journey into Jerusalem.

Saturday, Nisan 9. After sunset the supper was eaten which Mary and Martha had prepared for them. The key to the whole chronology is found here. This matter of the supper (John 1:2-11) not being eaten until after the new day had started appears to be universally overlooked. Friday exponents are forced to include two silent days in their chronology. Most Wednesday exponents insist that either the trip from Jericho to Bethany or the triumphal entry must have occurred on the Sabbath.⁵ Jewish custom invariably placed the supper after the new day had started, in the evening. Thus when John says, "On the next day" (John 12:12), he means that this was the day after the supper, and not the day on which Christ came to Bethany.

At this supper Jesus was anointed by Mary with precious spikenard (John 12:3). It was also at this time that

⁵R. M. Allen, op. cit., p. 150.

Judas went out to the chief priests to sell Jesus (Matthew 26:14-16).

The following daytime still part of the Sabbath day, was a time of rest. No doubt many people were flocking into Bethany to see Lazarus who had been raised from the dead and the One who was able to raise him from the dead.

Sunday, Nisan 10. This day signified the end of the sixty-nine weeks of Daniel:

On the next day much people that were come to the feast, when they heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem, Took branches of palm trees, and went forth to meet him, and cried, Hosanna: Blessed is the King of Israel that cometh in the name of the Lord. (John 12:12-13)

The details of the triumphal entry are familiar to all: two disciples being sent into the nearby village for the colt; Jesus' riding into the city in fulfillment of Zechariah 9:9 and Daniel 9:25a; the Hosannas of the multitudes; and the official presentation of Jesus as their King (Mark 11:1-11).

Jesus presented Himself as King probably in the morning, but it is worthy of note that He remained in the temple all day, looking round about Him (Mark 11:11), giving the people and rulers a full opportunity for even a belated acceptance of Him. And this is also the reason for His long-suffering during this age of grace. Christ is patiently

waiting and offering lost sinners one last chance to trust Him as their only salvation (II. Peter 3:9).

Monday, Nisan 11. "And now the eventide was come, he went out unto Bethany with the twelve" (Mark 11:11). Jesus returned to Bethany for lodging in the early evening hours.

In the morning Jesus and His disciples returned to Jerusalem, and on the way Jesus cursed the barren fig tree (Mark 11:12-14). Arriving at Jerusalem, Jesus cleansed the temple (11:15-18). After a day of teaching and meeting the assaults of His enemies, Jesus returned once more to Bethany (11:19).

Tuesday, Nisan 12. Jesus and His disciples went back to Jerusalem on Tuesday morning and found the fig tree tried up. This day was the Messiah's last day of public ministry. During the course of the day His authority was questioned (Matthew 21:23; 22:46). After Jesus answered the Herodians, the Pharisees, and the Sadducees, He pronounced Woe upon the Pharisees (Matthew 23:13-36).

The extreme passion which Christ had for Jerusalem is seen in His lamentations over Jerusalem (23:37-38). After He and His disciples had departed from the temple to the Mount of Olives, He delivered the Olivet Discourse (Matthew 24-25).

Wednesday, Nisan 13. It is not certain where they

lodged this night, or where they spent the day, but beyond doubt the hours of the day were spent in solitude. It was the day on which the Jews put away all leaven from their homes, in anticipation of the Passover. Jesus tells Peter and John to go and engage the upper room for the Passover. (Matthew 26:17-19; Mark 14:12-16; Luke 22:7-12)

Thursday, Nisan 14. In the early hours of Thursday, shortly after sunset, Christ and the disciples went to the place prepared and had there the "Last Supper." The incidents of this evening are too well known to necessitate enumeration. Suffice it that three things be mentioned: the Upper Room Discourse, the agony in Gethsemane, and the betrayal by Judas.

The arrest took place sometime between midnight and 3 a.m. Jesus was led before the gathered assembly for examination; after sunrise He had His three trials, followed by the journey to Golgatha, where He was crucified around noon. At approximately the ninth hour Jesus gave up His spirit. From that time on the prophetic three days and nights of Matthew 12:40 begin to be fulfilled.

This day was also the day of preparation for the feast of the Passover. The Passover lamb was to be eaten that night.

Friday, Nisan 15. At 6 p.m. the Passover Sabbath

started. Joseph of Arimathea went to see Pilate and then, together with the women, he buried Jesus. These faithful people worked most of the night, until dawn. All of this day, until 6 o'clock at night, the special Sabbath is being observed.

Saturday, Nisan 16. After the Passover Sabbath was over the seventh-day Sabbath started, on which the people also rested. All shops were closed and no business was transacted. The women eagerly awaited 6 p.m. so that they might buy spices and prepare them for the purpose of finishing the embalming of Christ's body at early dawn.

Sunday, Nisan 17. The women prepare for the anticipated visit to the tomb. While it is yet dark (John 20:1) the women leave for the sepulchre and arrive just at day-break. They find the tomb empty. Jesus had probably risen even while they were yet on their way. He is no longer a dead Christ but a risen Lord.

After Jesus had appeared to Mary Magdalene sometime in the morning, He revealed Himself to Peter (Luke 24:34). In the afternoon Jesus appeared to two disciples as they are on their way to Emmaus (Mark 16:12). Last of all, the same day at evening He appeared to the disciples in the closed room, Thomas alone being absent (John 20:19-20; Luke 24:36).

III. CONCLUSION

That Christ died on Thursday is absolute certainty. There is no contradiction or forcing of texts when the incidents of the various days are arranged in the above manner. The simplicity with which all recorded events harmonize when Thursday is recognized as the true crucifixion day should readily be apparent from this last chapter and especially the appended chart.

The time-honored, almost universal theory that Christ died on Friday must go. Credit should be given to Westcott for being the first theologian to detect a fly in the Friday ointment; namely that there were two Sabbaths in the passion week.⁶ Once this has been acknowledged the whole theory falls, for none of the other arguments are strong enough to support the theory.

The Wednesday theory, held by most contemporary evangelicals, must also go. It is predicated upon the idea that Christ had to remain in the tomb for exactly seventy-two hours. But it has been demonstrated that there is no scriptural support for this concept. Christ prophesied that He would be in the "heart of the earth" for this time, not in the grave, where His dead body lay. And the futile

⁶Westcott, op. cit., p. 229.

attempt by some to shift the crucifixion therefore to the early morning hours⁷ will not stand up in light of the contrary evidence of Scripture. Neither will a false calculation of the historical calendar or a readjustment of the chronology of the passion week lead to the scaling of the insurmountable problems which the Wednesday theory contains.

In closing, it will not be denied that a Thursday crucifixion still has its problems. For one thing, it is only natural for the Western mind to demand exactly seventy-two hours in the interpretation of "three days and three nights," as opposed to the Jewish system in which part of a day was counted as a whole day. So, in actuality, Christ was in the heart of the earth three days and three nights by being there part of one day, two whole days, and three whole nights.

Another difficulty seems to lie in the fact that it is impossible to determine the exact hour of the resurrection. However, the exact time (it probably was right at sunrise) is not of nearly such great significance as is the day on which Christ became victor over death and the grave. And it is certain that Christ rose on the first day of the week, after

⁷Kennard, op. cit., p. 229.

He had died on Thursday at 3 p.m. and was placed in the tomb around 9 p.m. These are demonstrable facts!

Difficulties in ^{the} Scriptures should by no means result in uncertainty on the part of the Christian, nor imply a neglect of their study. But it is a responsibility of every believer to beware of being like the unlearned and unstable who wrest the Scriptures to their own destruction (II. Peter 3:16), merely to make them fit their preconceived ideas.

Despite some minor difficulties, a Thursday crucifixion is beset by far less problems than either a Friday or Wednesday crucifixion. And just as the trustworthiness of a witness is established not only by the amount of truth his evidence contains, but also by the absence of contradictions and mistakes, so it must be the peremptory conclusion that Christ indeed laid down His life on Thursday and then rose again victoriously on the third day--according to the the SCRIPTURES. Soli Deo gloria!

BIBLIOGRAPHY

A. BOOKS

- Alford, Henry. The Greek Testament. 4 vols. Boston: Lee and Shephard, Publishers, 1885.
- Allen, Roy M. Three Days in the Grave. New York: Loizeaux Brothers, Publishers, 1942. 159pp.
- Allen, Willoughby C. The International Critical Commentary. Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1907. 338pp.
- Anderson, Robert. The Coming Prince. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Kregel Publications, 1957. 311pp.
- Andrews, Samuel J. The Life of Our Lord. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1863. 624pp.
- De Haan, M. R. Jonah. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan Publishing House, 1957. 168pp.
- Edersheim, Alfred. The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah. 2 vols. New York: Anson D. F. Randolph and Company, 1886.
- Fredrick, William. Three Prophetic Days. Clyde, Ohio: William Fredrick, Publisher, n.d.. 230 pp.
- Gray, James M. Bible Problems Explained. London: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1913. 127pp.
- Hacket, H. B. (ed.). Smith's Dictionary of the Bible. 4 vols. New York: Hurd and Houghton, 1871.
- Jamieson, Robert, A. R. Fausset, and David Brown. Commentary of the Old and New Testament. Hartford, Conn.: S. S. Scranton and Company, 1871. 1347pp.
- Lake, Kirsopp. The Resurrection of Jesus Christ. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1912. 291pp.
- Lange, John Peter. The Life of the Lord Jesus Christ. 4 vols. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan Publishing House, 1958.
- Lenski, R. C. H. Interpretation of St. Matthew's Gospel. Columbus, Ohio: Wartburg Press, 1943. 1181 pp.
- _____. Interpretation of Mark's Gospel. Columbus, Ohio: Wartburg Press, 1946. 775pp.

- _____. Interpretation of St. Luke's Gospel. Columbus, Ohio: Wartburg Press, 1951. 1212pp.
- _____. Interpretation of St. John's Gospel. Columbus, Ohio: Wartburg Press, 1952. 1444pp.
- Liddell, Henry George, and Robert Scott. Greek-English Lexicon. New York: Follett Publishing Company, 1956. 835pp.
- Morison, James. A Practical Commentary on the Gospel According to St. Matthew. Boston: M. J. Bartlett and Company, 1884. 635pp.
- Neander, Augustus. The Life of Jesus Christ. New York: Harper and Brothers, Publishers, 1855. 450pp.
- Pettingill, William L. Bible Questions Answered. Findlay, Ohio: Fundamental Truth Publishers, n.d. 402pp.
- Sadler, M. F. The Gospel According to St. Matthew. New York: James Pott and Company, 1890. 494pp.
- Smith, William L. New Testament History. New York: Harper and Brothers, 1870. 780pp.
- Torrey, R. A. Difficulties in the Bible. Chicago: Moody Press, 1907. 125pp.
- Weiston, William. (trans.). The Works of Flavius Josephus. Philadelphia: James B. Smith and Company, 1860. 974pp.
- Westcott, Brooke Foss. Introduction to the Study of the Gospels. New York: Macmillan and Company, 1880. 476pp.
- Young, Robert. Analytical Concordance to the Bible. New York: Funk and Wagnalls Company, n.d. 1090pp.

B. PERIODICALS

- Kennard, J. Spencer. "The Burial of Jesus," Journal of Biblical Literature, LXXIV (December, 1955), 227-230.
- Suppenfield, Roscoe G. "Did Christ Die on Wednesday, Thursday, or Friday," Our Home, LXIII (April, 1957), 457-459.

C. PAMPHLETS

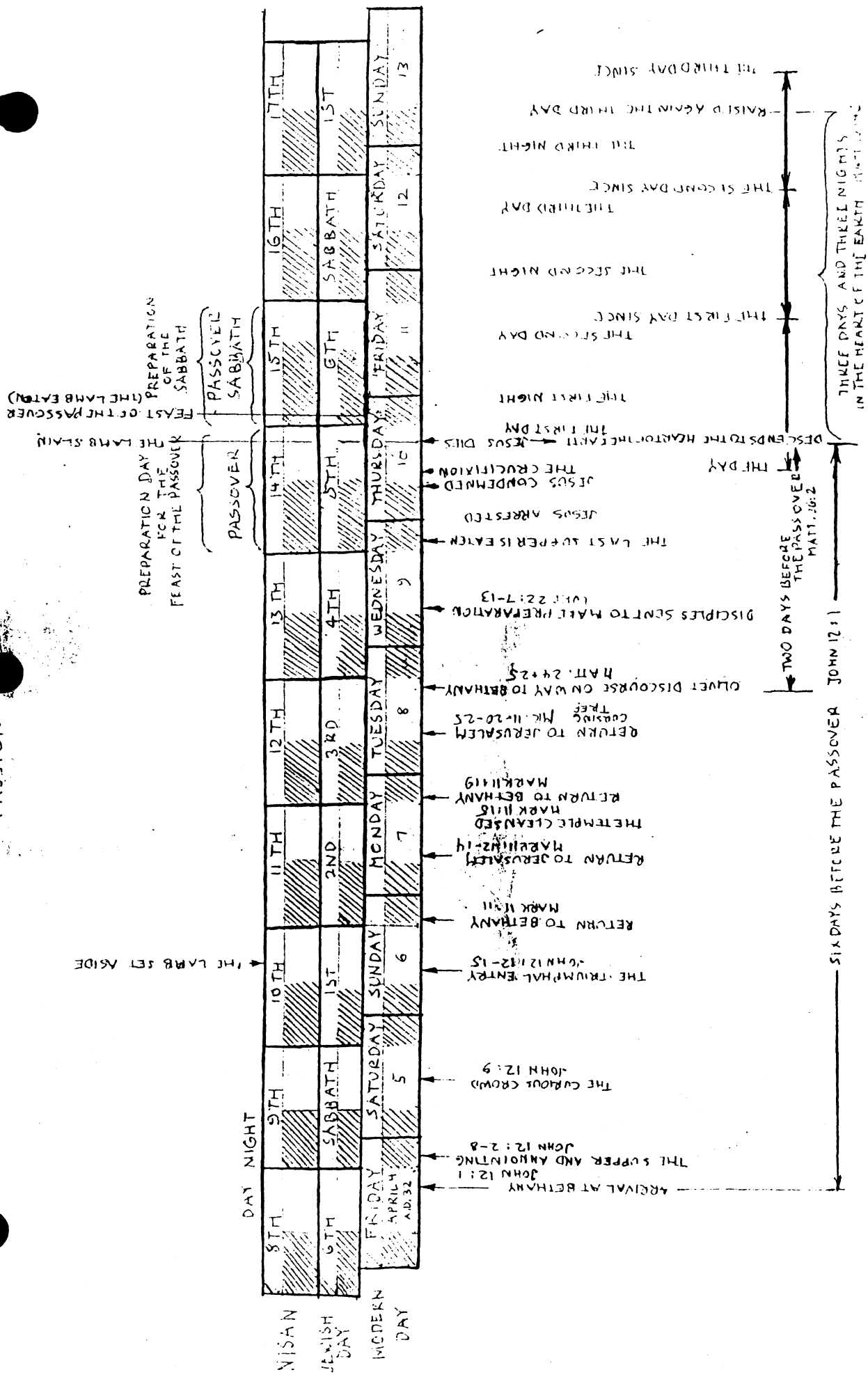
Armstrong, Herbert W. "Easter is Pagan." 13pp.

_____. "The Resurrection was Not on Sunday!" 12pp.

Krushwitz, A. G. "A Scriptural Calendar of the Passion
Week."

The Voice of Prophecy. Authoritative Quotations on the
Sabbath and Sunday. 31pp.

CHRONOLOGICAL PASSION WEEK



SIX DAYS BEFORE THE PASSOVER JOHN 12:1

TWO DAYS BEFORE THE PASSOVER MATT. 26:2

THREE DAYS AND THREE NIGHTS IN THE HEART OF THE EARTH