

How Long Was Yeshua Messiah in the Tomb?

Was Yeshua our Messiah crucified on “Good Friday” and resurrected on “Easter” Sunday morning or was He crucified on Wednesday afternoon and resurrected precisely on Sabbath afternoon, 72 hours later (exactly three days and three nights) as Adventists and other traditionalists teach? Or does another possible scenario exist? How long was our Savior in the tomb (grave)? Some deny that there is a Hebrew idiom that explains that portions of days are often referred to as whole days. Bible scholars and Jewish Rabbis have weighed in on this subject; what do they have to say? What did Yeshua mean when He referred to “three days and three nights” as the only “sign” of Jonah, recorded in Matthew 12:40? Can we settle this controversy once and for all?

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First of all, I'd like to state that I do not believe that the knowledge of this topic is a “salvation” issue; however, I do believe that every true Believer and follower of Yeshua Messiah (Jesus, the Christ) can and should know when our Savior was crucified and when He was resurrected, according to the Scripture.

In the Gospel accounts of Mattityahu (Matthew), Mark and Luke, there are nine verses where Yeshua says that He will rise or be raised on “the third day.” Mark 8:31 records, “...and be killed, and “*after* three days” rise again. After the resurrection, the angels at the tomb, reminded the women that Yeshua said that He would be, “crucified, and the “third day” rise again.” (Luke 24:7). After His resurrection, when Yeshua appears to His disciples, He affirms the prophecies concerning His death and refers to His resurrection on “the third day”...*as it is written*. (Luke 24:46).

Where do we find this “*as it is written*” reference to the “third day” in the Tanakh (OT)? Was Yeshua referring to Jonah 1:17 in this passage in Luke 24:46? I believe that He was.

In Luke 22:37, Yeshua is clearly referring to the words of the prophet Isaiah (53:12), the suffering servant, that that which was written about Him would be accomplished in Him, that He would be reckoned among the transgressors (classed among criminals); for the things written concerning Him have a goal, a purpose. But what about the timing of His horrific death and His resurrection?

We know that Yeshua Messiah would make a firm covenant (THE COVENANT) with MANY, (i.e. those He is *calling out*; this Gospel went to the Jews first) for one week (of years 27 – 34 A.D.) and He would be crucified in the “*midst* of the week...” (Dan. 9: 27). Note the duality in this prophecy. He would be crucified in the midst of a seven day week and also during the midst of the prophetic “week” (of 7 years). The Lamb of Yah, by His own substitutionary sacrifice, would put an end to animal sacrifices and offerings forever (from the perspective of Yahweh Almighty, Heb. 10).

Although Messiah-rejecting Jews missed him, through Yah’s patience, He granted them another 40 years in order for them to repent (40 is the number of trial and testing), and then He destroyed the Temple in 70 A.D., using Titus and his armies, (“There shall not be left here one stone upon

another...” Matt. 24:2). After the stoning of Stephen in 34 A.D. (the end of the last prophetic week of years), the Gospel would go to the other scattered children of Israel, and to the world, as prophesied. (Amos 9:8-15; Acts 9:15).

I digress, but again I ask, can we find something more specific regarding “the third day” in the Old Testament?

In 2 Kings 20:8, King Hezekiah was raised from a terminal illness *to go up to the Temple on the third day*. Just as Yeshua was resurrected and went into the Heavenly Temple on the third day.

In Hosea 6:2 we read, “After two days he will revive us; **on the third day** *he will raise us up*, and we will live in His sight.” Again, Messiah *was* resurrected “on the third day,” just as He said.

And finally, we have the words of Messiah (Matt.12:40), where He states that the *only sign* that would be given to this evil and adulterous generation is, “the sign of the prophet Jonah,” the prophet who ran from Yah and absconded from his mission to the Ninevites, until Yah dealt with him.

Here we read, “For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the whale, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.” (Matt.12:40).

Jonah was swallowed by a fish and spent “**three days and three nights**” in the belly of a huge fish or whale. (Jonah 1:17; 2:10).

We can see that the above OT prophetic verses regarding the Messiah’s resurrection, refer to *both* expressions – “on the third day” *and* “three days and three nights.” My initial thought is that these verses must be referring to the same event; the expressions must mean the same thing, in terms of timing.

In the NT, in Acts 10:40, the Apostle Peter says, “...Him God raised up “the third day.” The Apostle Paul states the very same thing in I Cor. 15:4 that, “...He rose again “the third day.””

Do these verses negate or contradict what Yeshua said in Matthew 12:40?

Why is there so much confusion over this statement in Matthew? There appears to be a language idiom or expression at work here. Surely our Master did not contradict Himself and surely the disciples knew exactly when Yeshua was crucified and when He was resurrected.

Let’s define what we mean by a “Hebrew idiom” and see if it exists elsewhere in the Scripture.

The Hebrew Language Idiom

According to Webster’s Online Dictionary, the word “idiom” means, “an expression that cannot be understood from the meanings of its separate words but that has a separate meaning of its own.”

According to my Gage Canadian Dictionary, “idiom” is defined as, “an expression whose meaning is not predictable from the usual meanings of its constituent elements.”

There are idioms in the English language as well. For example, if I told you that I met with a friend and we “chewed the fat” all afternoon, you would know that I was referring to casual talk or chit chat. If I told you that I was going fishing, and that it would take me three days and three nights to get there, you would not immediately assume that I meant “precisely” 72 hours (not a minute more or less), *unless*, I qualified my statement with other words like, “exactly” or “precisely.” Then you would understand my meaning.

Do we see evidence of Hebrew idioms in the Scripture regarding the use of the Hebrew word “yom” rendered “day” in our English Bibles? According to the Gesenius Lexicon of the OT, “yom” can refer to:

1. day, time, year
 1. day (as opposed to night)
 2. day (24 hour period)
 1. as defined by evening and morning in Genesis 1
 2. **as a division of time**
 1. **a working day, a day's journey**
 3. days, lifetime (pl.)
 4. **time, period (general)**
 5. year
 6. temporal references
 1. today
 2. yesterday
 3. tomorrow

So, we can see from the above entry that the word “day” can refer to a *time, a division of time or period of time in the general sense.*

In the Tanakh (OT) we can see how the expression, “on the third day” can be equivalent (or interchangeable) with “*after* three days.” Please consider the following OT verses:

In this passage, Yosef (Joseph) is made the Landlord of Egypt by Pharaoh and encounters his estranged brothers. See Gen. 42:16, 17: “And he put them all in custody (in prison) **for three days**. Vs.18: **On the third day**, Joseph said to them, “Do this and you will live, for I fear Elohim” and they are released **ON** that day (from the context of verses 25-26). In this case the expression “for three days” meant only “into the third day.” Obviously, they were arrested and spent a portion of the first day in prison, all of the next day, and into the third day for some time until they were released.

1 Kings 20:29: “**For seven days** they camped opposite each other, and **on the seventh day** the battle was joined.” In this case we have “for seven days” meant only “into the seventh day”.

2 Chron. 10:5: “And he said unto them, Come again unto me **after three days**. And the people departed.” Now, verse 12: “So Jeroboam and all the people came to Rehoboam **on the third day**, as the king bade, saying, Come again to me on the third day.”

It should be evident that since the king told the people to come “**after** three days” and the people

came “**on** the third day” according to the king’s command (“Come again to me on the third day”), that “after three days” and “on the third day” amount to the very same thing.

In Esther 4:16, Esther sent a message to Mordecai and said: “Go, gather together all the Jews who are in Shushan, and fast for me. Do not eat or drink **for three days, night or day**. I and my maids will fast as you do. **When this is done**, I will go to the king, even though it is against the law. And if I perish, I perish.”

Esther says that she is going to fast, and then **after the fast** (“when this is done”, i.e. completed), she will go to the king. If the expression, “three days, night or day” is to be taken literally, it would mean 72 hours. Esther’s fast would last 72 hours, and she would not be able to go to the king until after 72 hours. This would be the fourth day at the earliest. But, is this what the Bible says? In Esther 5:1 we read, “**On the third day** Esther put on her royal robes and stood in the inner court of the palace, in front of the king’s hall.”

The fast that was to last for “three days, night or day” was, by the third day, already completed. In this case, “on the third day” is equivalent to “for three days, night or day”. Esther was not fasting when she went to see the king. For proof read Esther 5:4-6. So on the third day, Esther was drinking wine at a banquet *she prepared*, even though she said she would not eat or drink for “three days, night or day.” “Three days, night or day” must mean a period of less than 72 hours, or *portions* of three days and nights.

Again, we read in 1Sam. 30:11-12 where a young man who was found famished and weak, lying in a field, was brought to king David. “He ate and was revived, for he had not eaten any food or drunk any water **for three days and three nights**. David asked him, “To whom do you belong, and where do you come from?” He said, “I am an Egyptian, the slave of an Amalekite. My master abandoned me when I became sick **three days ago**.”

In this case “for three days and three nights” somehow was fulfilled when his master left him “three days ago.” Obviously “three days” could mean *portions of three days* (at the beginning and end), and the same reasoning could apply to three nights. There is no reason to assume that the young man meant *precisely* “three days and three nights” or that *exactly* 72 hours is the required meaning in this passage.

“Thus, the Old Testament gives the picture that the expressions ‘three days,’ ‘the third day,’ and ‘three days and three nights’ are used to signify the same period of time.” (*Chronological Aspects of the Life of Christ*, Harold Hoehner, Zondervan:1977).

Let’s take a closer look at “three days and three nights” from a Jewish perspective, that is, let’s consider the Jewish method of reckoning time. The evidence of the Rabbinical literature proves this Hebrew idiomatic expression. These Jewish writers have recorded in their commentaries on the Scriptures (Talmud) the principle governing the reckoning of time. Any part of a period was considered a full period. Any part of a day was reckoned as a complete day.

The Babylonian Talmud relates that “The portion of a day is as the whole of it.” In the Jerusalem Talmud, Rabbi Eleazar ben Azariah, tenth in the descent from Ezra was very specific: “*A day and a night are an Onah [‘a portion of time’] and the portion of an Onah is as the whole of it.*” An Onah simply means, “a period of time.” [J.Talmud, Shabbath 9.3 and b.Talmud, Pesahim 4a]

This Jewish method of reckoning time was understood in the numerous correlations between Jonah 1:17 (“in the belly of the fish for *three days and three nights*”) and the OT passages cited above.

There are several Bible scholars who understand that this Hebrew idiom can mean parts or portions of three days and three nights, provided they are in succession. Please consider the comments on Matthew 12:40 in the *Jamieson, Fausset and Brown, Critical And Explanatory Commentary*:

“For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale’s belly (Jonah 1.17), so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth – This was the second public pronouncement of His resurrection three days after His death. (For the first, see John 2. 19.) Jonah’s case was analogous to this, as being a signal judgment of God; reversed in three days; and followed by a glorious mission to the Gentiles. The expression “in the heart of the earth” suggested by the expression of Jonah with respect to the sea (2.3 in LXX), means simply the grave, but this considered as the most emphatic expression of real and total entombment. The period during which He was to lie in the grave is here expressed in round numbers, *according to the Jewish way of speaking, which was to regard ANY PART OF A DAY, HOWEVER SMALL, INCLUDED WITHIN A PERIOD OF DAYS, AS A FULL DAY.* (See 1 Sam. 30:12, 13; Esth.4:16; 5.1; Matt. 27.63, 64, etc.)” (Vol. II, page 42).

We have already considered the references in 1 Samuel 30 and the book of Esther, so let’s read the passage cited above in Matthew 27:63, 64. Matthew also shows the use of this Jewish idiom in this text. Notice:

“Sir,” they said, “we remember that while he was still alive that deceiver said, ‘**After three days** I will rise again.’ So give the order for the tomb to be made secure **until the third day.**”

Note that “after three days” was somehow equivalent to “until the third day.”

Wednesday crucifixion advocates exclaim, “*It’s simple arithmetic! Yeshua said there are 12 hours in a day (John 11:9), so there must be 12 hours in a night, then three days and three nights would be $(3 \times 12) = 36$ hours of day and $(3 \times 12) = 36$ hours of night, and 36 plus 36 = 72 hours, so there you have it, that’s the sign.*” And my usual reply is, “Wait a minute, you’re ignoring the Hebrew idiom and in terms of mathematical usage, you can’t take three “exact” days and nights, (i.e. 72 literal hours) and make them fit into “on the third day” or “after the third day”! (More on this later).

As stated previously, this idiom exists in the English language as well. If I said to you that I was going to visit my brother and that it would take me three days and nights, or that I’d arrive on the third day, or I’ll get there after three days, would you assume that I meant *exactly* 72 hours, not a minute more or less? Of course not. So why do so many ignore this clear evidence and testimony by the Jews, Bible scholars, and most importantly, the Scripture?

Yeshua is recorded as saying, “The Son of Man will rise again **after** three days,” and also “He will be raised again **on** the third day” (Matt.12:40). We can see that these expressions are used interchangeably. This can be seen from the fact that *most references* to the resurrection state that it occurred **on** the third day.

NT Passages Regarding The Third Day

I mentioned in the beginning of this writing that there are several passages in the NT that state that Yeshua would rise from the dead *after three days* or *the third day*, so let's quickly review them.

Matt. 16:21 "...be raised again **the third day**.

Matt. 17:23 "...and **the third day** he shall be raised again."

Matt. 20:19 "...and **the third day** he shall rise again."

Mark 9:31 "...after he is killed, he shall rise **the third day**."

Mark 8:31 "...and be killed, and **after three days** rise again."

Mark 10:34 "...and shall kill him: and **the third day** he shall rise again."

Luke: 9:22 "...and be slain, and be raised **the third day**..."

Luke 18:33 "...and put him to death: and **the third day** he shall rise again."

Luke 24:7 "...and be crucified, and **the third day** rise again."

Luke 24:21 "...and beside all this, today is **the third day** since these things were done."

Luke 24:46 "And (Yeshua) said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Messiah to suffer, and to rise from the dead **the third day**."

Acts 10:40 Peter says, "...Him God raised up **the third day**."

1 Cor. 15:4 Paul says "...and that he rose again **the third day** according to the Scriptures."

Is it possible that our beloved friends who insist that "exactly" or "precisely" 72 hours is the *only* interpretation of the phrase "three days and three nights," are in fact straining at a gnat and swallowing a camel?

It should be obvious that all of the references to the timing of the resurrection are really saying the same thing, as far as the Gospel writers are concerned. The phrase "after three days" and "on the third day," are not contradictory, either to each other or with the phrase "three days and three nights," but simply idiomatic, interchangeable terms, clearly a common mode of Jewish expression.

In John 2:19, Yeshua said to the Pharisees, "Destroy this temple, and I will raise it again **in three days**. Then in Matthew 27:63, mentioned earlier, the Pharisees said to Pilate, ... "we remember that while He was still alive that deceiver said, "**After three days** I will rise again." So give the order for the tomb to be made secure **until the third day**."

Notice, if "after three days" wasn't synonymous with "the third day," the Pharisees would have asked Pilate to guard the tomb until the fourth day. Obviously, the Pharisees considered "after three days" as ending on "the third day."

Now, let's read Jonah 1:17 again, the verse Yeshua is quoting in Matt. 12:40. "Now Yahweh had prepared a great fish to swallow up Jonah. And Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights."

Notice what C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch write concerning Jonah 1:17 in their *Commentary on the Old Testament*: "The three days and three nights are not to be regarded as fully three times twenty-

four hours, but are to be interpreted according to Hebrew usage, as signifying that Jonah was vomited up again on the third day after he had been swallowed." (C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament*, Vol. X Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, p. 398.)

George L. Robinson writes, "The statement that Jonah was in the belly of the fish 'three days and three nights,' is an oriental way of expressing the fact that he was in the fish so long that apart from God's sustaining power, *he was dead and beyond the possibility of human resuscitation.*" (George L. Robinson, *The Twelve Minor Prophets* Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1979, p. 79.) Friends, that is the key!

The Misunderstood Sign of Jonah

Did you catch that? Robinson states that the significance of the "three days and three nights" and being vomited up on "the third day" was **PROOF THAT JONAH DIED AND WAS BEYOND THE POSSIBILITY OF HUMAN RESUSCITATION!** The miracle was **NOT** that Yahweh kept Jonah alive in the belly of the fish (as some believe), otherwise Yeshua's claim to being the Messiah would be false and people could argue that He didn't really die, but the **PROOF** of His Messiahship was a genuine miracle, *a resurrection from the DEAD!*

Besides agreeing that "three days and three nights" was a Hebrew idiom, H. L. Ellison adds this note:

"Once Jonah was on dry land again, he could make some kind of estimate of how long he had been in the fish. Yet, to make any exact measure of the number of hours would have been impossible for him. Roused suddenly from a deep slumber, stupefied by the violence of the storm, and in all probability seasick, Jonah would have been in no position to know at what hour he was thrown overboard. Furthermore, on reaching the shore he would have needed time to collect his wits. Clearly, then, the term "three days and three nights" is intended as an approximation, not a precise period of seventy-two hours." (Ellison, *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, Vol. 7, p. 375.).

I agree completely. You will recall reading in II Cor. 11:25, where the Apostle Paul in summarizing his sufferings says, "three times was I beaten with rods, once I was stoned, three times I suffered shipwreck, **a night and a day** I have been in the deep." Is it logical to assume that Paul was implying that he spent "exactly" 24 hours in the sea? Of course not. Now if Paul would have added another qualifier like "exactly," or "precisely," or from this hour to that hour, or "a full day and night" or something to that effect, then it would be a different story, but he doesn't say that.

If Paul was tossed overboard by the waves at some time in the evening and spent a portion of the night in the sea until the next day when he was rescued, his expression conveys a *part* of a night and a *part* of a day, that is, 24 hours *is not* implied, nor does the expression have to be taken literally.

Getting back to the "sign of Jonah," the significance of "three days and three nights" or on "the third day" was proof that Jonah was beyond resuscitation; he was *really and truly dead!* As Gesenius says regarding the Greek word for "sign" (Strong's G4592 – *sēmeion*) in Matt. 12:39: "1. a sign, mark, token...2. *a sign, prodigy, portent*, i.e., an unusual occurrence, transcending the

common course of nature; 1. of signs portending to remarkable events soon to happen. 2. of *miracles and wonders by which God authenticates the men sent by him*, or by which men prove that the cause they are pleading is God's."

Clearly, the "sign" of Jonah is something that can be **seen and witnessed**. You don't "see" *hours and minutes*! The "sign" is not exactly or precisely 72 hours, but in the same sense as Jonah's miracle was witnessed by the Ninevites, Yeshua says that **HE** (that is, **HIS DEATH AND HIS RESURRECTION**) **WILL BE THE SIGN**, in the very same way, as Gesenius also states, "in the miraculous experience which befell Jonah Himself."

This is the witness of the "third day," "as it is written" or "according to the Scripture"!

In Matthew 16:4 Yeshua refers to the sign of Jonah again, but this time no mention is made of "three days and three nights." "A wicked and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given unto it, but the **sign of the prophet Jonas**. And he left them, and departed."

Luke isn't in disagreement with Matthew when he omits the reference to "three days and three nights." He records Yeshua as saying, "...This is an evil generation: they seek a sign; and there shall no sign be given it, but the **sign of Jonah** the prophet. For as **Jonah was a sign** unto the Ninevites, **so shall also the Son of man be (a sign) to this generation.**" (Luke 11:29, 30).

Luke was a Gentile, which explains why he didn't use the Hebrew idiom of "three days and three nights." In fact, throughout his Gospel and the book of Acts, (Luke 9:22; 18:33; 24:7, 21, 46; Acts 10:40), Luke uses the much clearer and more direct "the third day," which is also used by Matthew, Mark, Peter, and Paul, as I showed earlier. The *precise amount of time* that Jonah was in the belly of the fish is *not essential* to the "sign" of Jonah!

The "sign" of Jonah was his miraculous resurrection to life after spending three days and three nights in the belly of a whale (his grave) or as Yeshua said "after three days" or on "the third day." The expression of "three days and nights" as I have already proven, was never intended to convey that we must interpret it to mean exactly 72 hours without any deviation whatsoever. Nowhere does Yeshua state that he means *precisely* 72 hours, but rather, His words would be fulfilled as long as portions of three days AND three nights *in succession* are fulfilled! Yahweh resurrected Jonah on the third day, and the Father would raise His Son in like manner!

The number three is very significant in the Bible. It is the number of "divine perfection," "completeness," and also the number of "finality" and "decision." Yeshua had a public ministry for "three years" (27 A.D. – 30 A.D.). Peter denied Messiah "three times" and after the resurrection Yeshua asked Peter "three times" if he loved Him. In the Torah we read that when a man had defiled himself by touching a dead body, he was to purify himself on the "third day."

"He shall purify himself with the water on the third day and on the seventh day; *then* he will be clean. But if he does not purify himself on the third day and on the seventh day, he will not be clean." (Num. 19:12)

It's very interesting to read what E. W. Bullinger has to say about the significance of being dead for at least three days; he tells us:

“The Jews did not accept evidence as to the *identification* of a dead body after three days. “This period seems, therefore, to have been chosen by the Lord . . . to associate the fact of resurrection with the certainty of death, *so as to preclude all doubt that death had actually taken place, and shut out all suggestion that it might have been a trance, or a mere case of resuscitation.* The fact that Lazarus has been dead ‘four days already’ was urged by Martha as a proof that Lazarus was dead, for ‘by this time he stinketh’ (John 11:17, 39). “We have to remember that corruption takes place very quickly in the East, so that ‘the third day’ was the proverbial evidence as to the certainty that death had taken place, leaving no hope.” (*The Companion Bible*, appendix 148, page 172).

Now, think about this. If the Messiah had been in the grave for just a little more than two nights and one day (Friday night, Saturday day and night) then that amount of time would have been insufficient to prove that he was really dead! Some may have claimed that he wasn’t *really* dead, he just *appeared* to be dead; he was just unconscious since they removed him from the torture stake hastily because it was the “preparation day” for the first holy day of the Passover Feast.

Therefore, it was absolutely imperative that Yeshua be in the grave for at least THREE DAYS. And these three days would include the previous evenings. His resurrection could not be legally denied! This is the only “SIGN!” This is the legal, Biblical Torah proof that Yeshua Ben Yosef (Joseph) is indeed our Messiah and our Savior! But, there’s more! The *proof* is also evident by what followed His miraculous resurrection!

The “sign of Jonah” also includes something that escapes most readers. Recall Yeshua’s words, “...For as **Jonah was a sign** unto the Ninevites, **so shall also the Son of man be (a sign) to this generation.**” Besides his resurrection from the dead, how else was Jonah “a sign” to the Ninevites?

Let’s read Matthew’s account for the context: “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. The men of Nineveh shall rise in judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: because they repented at the preaching of Jonas; and, behold, a greater than Jonas is here.” (Matt. 12:40, 41)

Don’t you see? Yahweh wanted Jonah to preach repentance to the Ninevites so that they could be physically saved from destruction. This can be seen as a type of the spiritual salvation that Yahweh would one day offer to the Jews (and Benjamites and Levites), to other children of the Lost House of Israel (the other 10 Israelite tribes), (Matt. 15:24) and eventually to the entire world!

Jonah didn’t want to preach repentance to the “Gentiles,” so he ran from Yahweh’s call, which brought Yah’s wrath upon him through a storm while he was on a ship. The seafaring men knew he brought a curse, so in order to save the ship, he jumps into the sea and *sacrifices himself*, thinking this was his only way to save the crew. As soon as he jumps ship into his watery “grave,” the storm ends. Jonah was inside the belly of the fish, his “tomb,” for a period of time, expressed idiomatically, as “three days and three nights.”

Jonah repents and confesses that SALVATION IS OF YAHWEH (Jonah 2:9). Yahweh resurrects Jonah and has the fish vomit him onto the beach. “So Jonah arose and went unto Nineveh, according to the word of Yahweh,” to preach a message of repentance from sin, or face destruction. The Ninevites believed Yahweh and they repented in sackcloth and ashes from the least to the greatest, even the king, who proclaims a national fast day, and they are saved alive, by the grace of Yahweh.

What was the real sign, the real witness of the prophet Jonah? Certainly being delivered from the grave after three days was definitely a part of it, but the sign or witness included *preaching the salvation of Yahweh through repentance*. That's precisely why Yeshua said that the men of Nineveh would "rise in judgment" against His generation, and shall condemn it, because THE NINEVITES REPENTED AT JONAH'S PREACHING! AND ONE GREATER THAN JONAH, THE CREATOR OF THE UNIVERSE, CAME TO PLANET EARTH TO DIE FOR THEIR SINS, IN THEIR PLACE, AND OFFER THEM ETERNAL LIFE, but the Jews of Yeshua's generation, for the most part, DID NOT REPENT, although many did believe.

After Yeshua's resurrection, he explains what his disciples were *witnesses* to. "And He opened their understanding, that they might comprehend the Scriptures. Then He said to them, "Thus it is written, and thus it was necessary for the Messiah to suffer and *to rise from the dead the third day, and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And you are "witnesses" of these things.*" (Luke 24:45-48).

That is the true sign and witness of the prophet Jonah! Many verses in Scripture confirm that the Apostles were witnesses that Yeshua died and was resurrected, and they were commissioned to spread the reality of this Good News, preaching repentance and forgiveness of sins to all nations. This is what is significant, this is what is important, not some precise or exact moment of time.

What has happened since the Great *Protestant* Reformation? The Jews today (one tribe of Israel), for the most part, still reject their Messiah, including other Israelites today who have lost their identity, who actually descend from the Lost Ten Tribes (Families) of Israel (but, now found – Europeans, Americans, Canadians, the British, etc.). Many Israelites and most non-Israelites today are lost in man-made pagan religions. But the message of salvation through Yeshua, and the true Gospel of the coming Kingdom of Yahweh still goes forth throughout the world today by true followers of Yeshua Messiah who are like a small voice crying out in the wilderness. HalleluYah!

Twenty centuries ago, the stiff-necked Jewish leadership was looking for a political Messiah, but they got the cart before the horse. In other words, Messiah's *first order of business* was to redeem a Kingdom people of Israelites who would inherit the Kingdom in righteousness, but *that* required a solution to the problem of sin first (Col. 1:12-15). He would return later for His Spiritual Bride.

Two Plus Two Equals Five

No matter how hard you try, you cannot fit "three days and nights" or even "the third day" into a Friday crucifixion and Sunday morning resurrection. If we count days from Friday, we only have two days (assuming you count Sunday morning, but Yeshua had already risen *before* sunrise).

Let's not forget that Biblical days begin and end at sunset ("The evening and the morning were the first day." (Gen. 1:5, 8, 13, 19, 23, 31). Even if we count *portions* of days and nights from Friday afternoon, you have:

Friday afternoon (portion of a day)

Friday night (first night)

Saturday day (second day)

Saturday night (second night)

That's only two days and two nights! It doesn't fit!

And even if you add Sunday morning, that's still only two nights and three days! Even if you allow for the Hebrew idiom, there is absolutely no way that you can fit "three days and three nights" into a Friday afternoon crucifixion and a Sunday morning (before sunrise) resurrection. This theory falls flat on its face! Traditionalists are blinded by their ignorance (and often, their arrogance).

But as we shall see, Yeshua wasn't resurrected on Sunday morning at sunrise, as the world has been falsely led to believe, which means that the (Good?) Friday crucifixion /Easter (Ishtar) Sunday morning resurrection, is a complete hoax! This theory has Yeshua in the grave for only two days and two nights, which does not fulfill the Scripture and the prophetic picture, the only "sign" that Yeshua gave and fulfilled. "After three days" or on "the third day" doesn't fit this Friday scenario either, since three days after or the third day from Friday, is Monday, not Sunday!

The Wednesday crucifixion theory is also terribly flawed! Three days from Wednesday is Saturday and our Savior did not rise Saturday morning or Saturday afternoon, before sunset! There are no verses that support this erroneous belief. As you can see:

Wednesday afternoon (portion of a day)
Wednesday night (first night)
Thursday day (second day)
Thursday night (second night)
Friday day (third day)
Friday night (third night)
Saturday day (fourth day)
Saturday night (fourth night)

That's four days and four nights! And if you include Sunday morning, you have five days and four nights! This doesn't fit either!

Clearly, this does not conform to the prophecies and the words of our Master! The ONLY sign that would be given to that generation, is that He would be in the grave THREE days and THREE nights, proving that He was the true Messiah, the Savior of the world!

Myths Leave Too Many Unanswered Questions

I have asked several simple questions of those who embrace this Wednesday crucifixion belief and no one has provided a satisfactory response to any of these questions:

If Yeshua was resurrected 72 hours after He was placed in the tomb, that would require a Sabbath afternoon resurrection, since he was placed in the tomb shortly after he died (3:00 pm) and before sunset on the Preparation day, (before the Passover Seder and First (High) Day of Unleavened Bread). This would probably be around 4:00 PM or there about.

So, why is there no clear record of the woman visiting the tomb on the weekly Sabbath afternoon or before sunset? Where are the two or three required witnesses to a Saturday afternoon resurrection? (Deut. 19:15). Who was there to record the time of the resurrection and if there was no one there with a stopwatch (or sun dial) to witness the event, how does anyone know that he was in the tomb for *precisely* 72 hours? How could the precise time of Yeshua's resurrection be a *sign to that generation* of Jews if no one was there to record that time?!?

It is clear however, that the woman visited the tomb early on Sunday morning (before sunrise) and Yeshua first appeared to Mary Magdalene (Mk.16:9; John 20:17). She was so excited to see that the Master was alive, so much so, that she was clutching His arm, determined not to let go. Yeshua says to her, "Stop clinging (or holding) onto me because I have NOT YET ascended (gone back) to the Father in heaven."

Now, if Yeshua was resurrected on Sabbath afternoon, some time before sunset, and yet He *first* appeared to Mary on Sunday morning and says that He had not yet ascended to His Father, then where was He and what was He doing for the almost 12 hours between Saturday afternoon and Sunday morning?

After Yeshua died, supposedly on a Wednesday, then the ensuing day was an annual Sabbath (Thursday), the First Day of Unleavened Bread. Now, the woman came to anoint His body early *Sunday*, "bringing the spices that they had prepared." (Luke 24:1, Mark 16:1). Why did the woman wait until Sunday morning to do the work of anointing Yeshua's body when they could have come to the tomb *after the annual Sabbath*, on Friday morning or Friday afternoon before the weekly Sabbath? Why wait until early Sunday morning?!?

If the woman visited the tomb late on Sabbath afternoon and the resurrection had already occurred (according to the theory), then they would have seen that the angel had rolled away the stone from the entrance to the tomb. If this were true, then why would the woman be discussing who would roll the stone away for them on Sunday morning? We read in Mark 16:3, "And they said among themselves, Who shall roll us away the stone from the door of the sepulchre?"

And why would the women be visiting the tomb early Sunday morning, in the first place, if they knew that Messiah had already risen the previous afternoon? This makes no sense.

Finally, when I was taught both a Friday and then a Wednesday crucifixion, there is another verse that never made sense to me until I understood the truth, and that verse is Luke 24:21. Two disciples of Messiah were traveling to Emmaus on the first day of the week, (Sunday) following the resurrection, and Yeshua joined up with them, (hiding his identity) and He walked and talked with them. Now notice the account:

"Now behold, two of them were traveling that same day to a village called Emmaus, which was seven miles from Jerusalem. And they talked together of all these things which had happened. So it was, while they conversed and reasoned, that Yeshua Himself drew near and went with them. But their eyes were restrained, so that they did not know Him. And He said to them, 'What kind of conversation is this that you have with one another as you walk and are sad?' Then the one who was Cleopas answered and said to Him, 'Are You the only stranger in Jerusalem, and have You not known the things which Happened there in these days?' And He said to them, 'What things?' So they said to Him, 'The things concerning Yeshua of Nazareth, who was a Prophet mighty in deed

and word before Elohim and all the people, and how our chief priests and rulers delivered Him to be condemned to death, and crucified Him. But we were hoping that it was He who was going to redeem Israel. Indeed, besides all this, *today is the THIRD DAY since all these things happened.*” (Luke 24:13-21).

Let’s assume (Yah forbid), that there was a gas explosion on Thursday and my house burned down to the ground. Then I met some friends at Timmy’s on Sunday morning for coffee and I describe the scene with all the emergency crew, the ambulance, the paramedics, the firefighters, policemen and neighbors, and I’m surprised that you (a close neighbor) were not aware of these events, and then I say, “today (Sunday) is the *third day since all these things happened!*” Which day would you think the fire took place? Which day would you think that I was referring to – Wednesday, Thursday or Friday? Just work backwards and you’ll figure it out.

The “all these things,” the *events* that the disciples were discussing, clearly refers to the condemnation and public execution, the murder of an innocent man! If Sunday was the THIRD day SINCE these events took place, then logically, Saturday would be the SECOND day *since* these events and Friday would be the FIRST day “SINCE” these events. Thus, THURSDAY MUST BE THE DAY OF “THESE EVENTS!”

The simple truth was staring at us all along, right in front of our faces! This true statement by the disciples is *not* a mistranslation or a forgery as some believe. No Bible scholar or commentator suggests that; the proof is incontrovertible.

If we count “three days” from or after Thursday, the day Yeshua was crucified, we come to Sunday, (April 9/Abib 17), exactly the length of time since the crucifixion implied by the two disciples on the road to Emmaus, as they spoke to Messiah. That Sunday would have been FOUR days from or after a Wednesday crucifixion date and only TWO days from or after a Friday crucifixion, but THREE days from or after a Thursday crucifixion!

The Greek word translated “since” is the preposition “*apo*” (Strong’s G575) with the pronoun “*hos*” (Strong’s G3739) and denotes “separation,” the chief meaning is “from” or “away from.” It does not signify “inclusive” reckoning or counting. The disciples DID NOT SAY that “he had been dead two days already, (implying a Friday death) and this was the third day,” as most people interpret this verse, in order to cling to a traditional Good Friday crucifixion.

If we count the amount of time that Yeshua was in the grave, when He was buried by Joseph of Arimathaea, we arrive at the following:

- Thursday afternoon (portion of a day)
- Thursday night (first night)
- Friday day (second day)
- Friday night, or Shabbat (second night)
- Saturday day (third day)
- Saturday night (almost the whole night)

That’s three days and three nights! Now, that fits!

This scenario fulfills the prophetic type, the words of our Savior, and the words of the disciples

perfectly! Yeshua had risen just moments before the sun had risen on Sunday morning!

The Mystery of The Two Sabbaths

The simple truth is that Yeshua was crucified on a THURSDAY that year, and the women couldn't do the work of anointing Yeshua's body on *Friday or Saturday* because **BOTH DAYS WERE SABBATHS** and that kind of work was forbidden!

After the High Day Sabbath on Thursday night, the woman rested *according to the commandment* (that's the fourth Commandment, the weekly Sabbath) as Luke tells us. Joseph of Arimathaea asked Pilate for Yeshua's body and "he took it down, and wrapped it in linen, and laid it in a sepulcher that was hewn in stone, where no one had ever lain before. **That day was the Preparation, and the Sabbath drew near.**" (23:54) That Sabbath was the Passover Seder and the First Day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread! *Preparation days* precede the weekly *and* annual Sabbaths.

Yes, it was the Preparation for the Passover and Feast of Unleavened Bread! The Sabbath that drew near was the High Day Sabbath of the 15th of Nisan (Abib), the ensuing evening meal with the lamb and bitter herbs is called the Passover Seder, it was the kick-off meal, so to speak, of the First Day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread! Yah's days begin and end at sunset or from "even to even" (Lev.23:32).

The Passover Seder was eaten with unleavened bread (Ex. 12:8; Lev. 23:6), just as the Jewish historian Josephus confirms in *The Antiquities Of The Jews*, "When that Feast which is called the Passover was at hand, at which time our custom is to use unleavened bread, and a great multitude was gathered together from all parts to that feast." (Book 20, Ch. 5, 3.)

It's interesting to note that not only was the sacrificial lamb called the passover (2Chron. 35:1), but eventually the entire seven day Feast was called the Passover Feast (see Luke 2:41).

In fact, all of the Gospel writers testify that there were two Sabbaths that week.

The Apostle John confirms that this Sabbath was the *High Day* of Passover, in John 19:31 we read, "The Jews therefore, because it was the PREPARATION (the day leavened products were collected and put out of their homes, and the day the lambs are slain for the Passover Seder), that the bodies should not 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."

John uses the phrase "high day" to differentiate this Sabbath from the weekly Sabbath. I agree that the words "high day" in their *modern* Jewish usage, usually refer to the Fall high holy days of Yom Teruah, the Days of Awe, and Yom Kippur.

The Greek word rendered "high" in John 19:31 is μέγας or *mega*, (Strong's G3173), meaning "great" or "special." This is a more proper translation as shown in many other Bible translations, as follows:

"(and a very special Sabbath, because it was the Passover)" (NLT);

“and the next day was to be a special Sabbath” (NIV);
“for that sabbath-day was a great day” (Moffat);
“for that sabbath day was a great one” (YLT);
“for the day of that sabbath was a great *day*” (DBY);
“for that Shabbat was a special one” (HNV);
“since it was an especially important Shabbat” (CJB).

Yes, that Sabbath was a “great day,” a “special one,” or “especially important Sabbath” because it was the Passover and First Day of Unleavened Bread, which fell on the 15th day of the first month (beginning at sunset). Back to back Sabbaths were later outlawed by Rabbinic tradition. ¹

There are seven annual Sabbaths besides the weekly Sabbaths. There are Spring holy days [Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread (the First Day and Seventh Day are holy days); Shavuot (Feast of Pentecost), 50 days after the First Day of Unleavened Bread], and there are Fall holy days [Yom Teruah; Yom Kippur; Sukkot; and Shemini Atzeret] .

The fact that annual holy days were also called Sabbaths is evident from Leviticus 23:32, where Yahweh says of Yom Kippur (the Day of Atonement), “from evening to evening you shall celebrate your Sabbath.” Yom Teruah (Day of Blowing or the Feast of Trumpets), is another holy day, and is also clearly called a “Sabbath” (Lev.23:24). Also, speaking of the First Day of Sukkot (the Feast of Tabernacles), and Shemini Atzeret, (The Eighth Day), Yah calls them “a Sabbath of rest,” and “Sabbath-rest” (verse 39).

With respect to the double, Friday/Saturday, back-to-back Sabbaths in 30 A.D., Matthew’s Gospel makes it even clearer. Matthew sheds more light, but you need to examine the Hebrew word translated “sabbath” in order to really understand it.

We read in Matthew 28:1, “Now after the Sabbath, as the first *day* of the week began to dawn, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came to see the tomb.”

According to the Interlinear Scripture Analyzer, the literal Greek reads this way: “But AFTER THE SABBATHS, at the lighting up into the first of the Sabbaths (week), came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to view the grave.”

The Greek word for “Sabbath” in this verse is – *Sabbaton* – it is used in the singular and in the PLURAL — and the Interlinear Scripture expresses it in the plural. Why? Because, as previously stated, there were *two Sabbaths* that week – Friday, the annual Sabbath, the First Day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, which began the previous evening with the Passover Seder, and Saturday, the weekly Sabbath! (Although the word “Sabbaton” is a plural word, it can also refer to the weekly Sabbath, and to the “week” itself, and is sometimes translated that way).

The key to understanding this entire time-line mystery, requires a break from man-made tradition. Yeshua Messiah was NOT crucified on a Friday or a Wednesday, but in fact, He was crucified on

¹ The Mishnah, compiled approximately 200 C.E., presents evidence against this later Hillel postponement rule and records that back-to-back Sabbaths were historically occurring *before* the release of the Hillel calendar in the 4th century. (Besah 2:1 and Sukkah 5:7) YHWH’s sacred calendar pre-dates the four postponement rules. It is based on observation (visible faint crescent) of the new moon (first day of the new month). http://www.waoy.org/Yahweh_s_True_Calendar.pdf

Thursday, April 6, 30 A.D. The JFB commentary says in the note for Daniel 9:27, “Jesus died in the middle of the last week, 30 A.D.” (pg. 641).

When you begin to understand that there were two back-to-back Sabbaths that year, it all becomes plain and simple! The *annual High Day* fell on a Thursday at sunset to Friday at Sunset, and then the *weekly Sabbath* began from Friday at sunset to Saturday at sunset.

Most people don't realize this truth because they have been blinded by Rome and her Protestant daughter's false Sunday-keeping theorists, or they have been blinded by Sabbath-keeping groups who are out of touch with their Hebrew roots and do not observe Yahweh's annual Holy Days, at their appointed times. Yahweh is not the author of confusion, men are (1 Cor. 14:33).

Picking up the story again in Luke, who wrote about the death of Messiah on the *Preparation day* (14th of Abib/Nisan), says, “and the Sabbath drew on.” (Luke 23:54). Yes, that's the Holy Day “special” Sabbath of the Passover meal and First Day of Unleavened Bread, which began at sunset. Next, we read. “And the women who had come with him (Joseph of Arimathaea) from Galilee followed after, and they observed the tomb and how His body was laid.” This occurred before the annual Sabbath.

The woman returned home and began to prepare the spices and ointments. Then Luke writes that the women “rested *the sabbath day according to the commandment.*” This would be the weekly Sabbath, Friday at sunset to Saturday at sunset, according to the TEN COMMANDMENTS, and specifically, the *Fourth Commandment* (vs. 56).

This explains why the woman waited until early Sunday morning to anoint Yeshua's dead body. “Now upon the first day of the week, *very early in the morning*” (John says, *while it was yet dark*), the women came to the tomb bringing the spices, which they had prepared (Luke 24:1).

Mark also records both Sabbaths and is in agreement with the other writers. He says that, evening was approaching and that day was the preparation day before the Sabbath (the annual Sabbath of the Passover Seder and First Day of Unleavened bread), not FRIDAY; Joseph of Arimathaea requested Yeshua's body from Pilate, and the woman followed him to see where Yeshua was laid (Mark 15:42 – 47). Again, after the weekly Sabbath (Saturday) was past, the women came to the tomb early Sunday morning, before sunrise (Mark 16:1).

It's important to understand that the disciples and their families celebrated the annual Passover Seder that year, without Yeshua, and *without the understanding* of what Messiah's sacrifice really meant. It wasn't until *after the resurrection* when the Messiah appeared to them and “opened their understanding” (Luke 24:45; John 20:22), that they finally began to realize that according to the Scripture, a sinless Savior had come to deal with humanity's sin problem and separation from their Heavenly Father.

Yeshua Messiah was the suffering Servant, his sacrificial death was the fulfillment of all the many years of animal, ritual sacrifices offered daily by the priests and annually by the High Priest. The Levitical priesthood for all intents and purposes had come to an end (from Yahweh's perspective, not unconverted Jews) and was fulfilled that very day! Yeshua, our Passover Lamb, is the Lamb of Yah who takes away the sins of the world! Your debt has been paid, but you must repent and accept His payment in your stead before you can be acquitted. (Acts 2:38).

If you don't accept His (ransom) life, His sacrifice, then you have to pay for your own sins with your own life. And then you're dead, forever. This is the second death (after you are resurrected, judged and found guilty). As the Scripture says, "For ALL have sinned..." and, "The payment for sin is death, but the gift of Yah is *eternal life* through Yeshua Messiah." (Rom. 3:23; 6:23).

I believe that I have proved beyond a shadow of doubt that there were two back-to-back Sabbaths in the year of the crucifixion of our Savior, Yeshua Messiah – Friday (Abib 15), the annual Sabbath of Passover/Feast of Unleavened Bread and Saturday, the weekly Shabbat (Abib 16) in 30 A.D.

Now, let's take a closer look, first, at the burial, and then the resurrection of Yeshua Messiah according to all four Gospels. As stated previously, all visits to the tomb were on Sunday morning before sunrise, but there are a couple verses that some people struggle with. There is no record that the women made any visits to the tomb on the weekly Sabbath afternoon or before sunset. This can be easily proven, but first, let's see when Yeshua was placed in the tomb.

The Burial of Yeshua Messiah

We know from the Torah that the Passover lambs were killed on the 14th of Nisan (Abib) in the evening, just before sunset, (Ex. 12:6; Lev. 23:5) usually from about 3:00 to 5:00 pm according to Josephus, the Jewish historian: "So these high priests, upon the coming of their feast which is called the Passover, when they slay their sacrifices, from the ninth hour to the eleventh...". (*The Works of Josephus, The Wars of the Jews*, Bk. 6, Ch.9.3, pg.749).

Contrary to what many people think, Yeshua DID NOT celebrate the Passover with His disciples the year He died (30 A.D.), nor did He institute a *new* passover, for the simple reason that He would be in the grave, so he could not attend the Passover Seder with His disciples that year. In the year of His crucifixion, YESHUA MESSIAH "WAS" THE PASSOVER LAMB. (1 Cor. 5:7).

The Passover Seder (meal) *followed after* the slaying of the lambs, and Yeshua would never violate the Torah and introduce a new or different Passover or what some erroneously refer to as a "New Testament" Passover. At His last farewell supper with His disciples, He introduced a New Covenant ratified with His blood. There was no lamb present at that meal, at His last *supper* with His disciples because the lambs had not been sacrificed at the Temple yet. Those who claim that Yeshua changed the Passover Seder to another day have no evidence and are plainly deceived. Yeshua fulfilled Torah, He didn't come to do away with the Torah (Matt. 5:17 – 19).

Yeshua, our Savior, was crucified at the EXACT MOMENT the passover lambs were slain at the Temple in order to fulfill the prophetic type of *our* Passover lamb, the "Lamb of Elohim" who takes away the sins of the world." (John 1:29). Animal blood provided only a temporary covering for sin.

Therefore, the preparation day that He was killed on, in the evening, just before sunset, was the 14th of Abib/Nisan, the preparation day for the ensuing first Holy Day of Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread, which day is also called a Sabbath according to Torah. This is evident from Leviticus 23:32 where Yah in speaking of Yom Kippur (the annual Day of Atonement) says, "from evening to evening you shall celebrate your Sabbath."

The annual holy days are also called Sabbaths in addition to the weekly Saturday Sabbath, which

incidentally, most of the world ignores today because they have been deceived by Mystery Babylon the Great and her confused harlot daughters.

Yom Teruah (Day of Blowing the shofar) or Feast of Trumpets is called a Sabbath (Lev. 23:24), as are the First Day of Sukkot (Feast of Tabernacles) and Shemini Atzeret, (The Eighth Day) (Lev. 23:39).

Most people today celebrate man-made holy days or holidays (Christmas, Easter or Ishtar, the pagan traditions or inventions of men), so they are unfamiliar with Yah's Holy Days, or Annual Sabbaths, just as they remain in ignorance concerning His weekly Sabbath (Saturday), which incidentally, Yahweh or Yeshua *never changed* to Sunday. The weekly Sabbath was incorporated into His Moral Law, the Ten Commandments (Ex. 20:8). NO ONE on earth has the authority to change Yahweh's Moral Law, not even the papacy of Rome!

Rome has made a false claim to have changed the Sabbath; her quasi-Chaldean/Judaized version of the priesthood is a false Babylonian man-made religion, with all of her false popes, bishops, cardinals, priests, monks, nuns, etc. etc., who will be judged, and the wicked among them will be thrown into the lake of fire, where they will be consumed forever, just as if they had never existed. May Yah grant them all repentance, before it's too late.

So, getting back to the events surrounding the burial of Yeshua, Luke writes, "And behold, there was a man named Joseph, a counselor; and he was a good man, and a just; (The same had not consented to the counsel and deed of them;) he was of Arimathaea, a city of the Jews: who also himself waited for the kingdom of God. This man went unto Pilate, and begged the body of Yeshua. And he took it down, and wrapped it in linen, and laid it in a sepulcher that was hewn in a stone, wherein never man before was laid. And *that day was the preparation*, and the sabbath drew on." (Luke 23:50-54).

Some claim that this is Friday, the preparation for the *weekly* Sabbath, but this is false, since the ensuing Sabbath was PASSOVER AND THE FEAST OF UNLEAVENED BREAD!

This was NOT the weekly Sabbath as many have been led to believe, but this was the First Holy Day annual Sabbath of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, the Passover MEAL, which followed after the slaying of the Passover lambs. This should be obvious to any Bible student.

John makes this abundantly clear by writing, "The Jews therefore, because *it was the preparation*, that the bodies should not remain upon the cross *on the sabbath day (for that sabbath day was an high day), (or Great Day)* besought Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away." (John 19:31).

It is clear that our Savior was buried just before sunset, on the preparation day of an annual Great Sabbath Day, that preceded the weekly Sabbath Day.

In reality, there were "three Sabbaths" during that Feast. An annual Sabbath, the First Day of Unleavened Bread, which occurred on Friday (Abib 15), then the weekly Sabbath (Abib 16) which occurred on Saturday, and then the Last day of the Feast, the 7th Day of Unleavened Bread (Abib 21), another annual Sabbath, which occurred on the *following* Thursday. Now, let us see when the resurrection took place.

The Gospel Accounts of the Resurrection

Let's begin with Luke's account, since he gives a more detailed account of the order of events, as they occurred. Recall that in Luke 23:56, we read that after the women visited the tomb to see where Yeshua's body was laid, that they rested on Shabbat according to the commandment. In the very next few verses we read:

“Now on the first day of the week, ***very early in the morning***, they, and certain other women with them, came to the tomb bringing the spices which they had prepared. But they found the stone rolled away from the tomb. Then they went in and did not find the body of the Lord Yeshua. And it happened, as they were greatly perplexed about this, that behold, two men stood by them in shining garments. Then, as they were afraid and bowed their faces to the earth, they said to them, ‘Why do you seek the living among the dead? He is not here, but is risen!’” (NKJV Luke 24:1-6).

Notice, Luke says that the women visited the tomb *very early in the morning*. This would be their second visit, since the first visit to the tomb was before the annual Sabbath (Luke 23:54, 55). This time of day would be very early in the morning before the sun came up. It would be similar to the time Yeshua got up to pray, as we read in Mark 1:35, “Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Yeshua got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed.” (NIV) The NKJV basically says the same thing, “Now in the morning, having risen a long while before daylight, He went out and departed to a solitary place; and there He prayed.”

It was still dark outside, the eastern sky was just beginning to light up, the sun had not risen yet.

Luke is saying the same thing regarding the resurrection morning; the women arrived at the tomb when it was still dark, just **BEFORE THE RISING OF THE SUN!**

John's Gospel makes it perfectly clear. The women came to the tomb, not on Sabbath afternoon, but on Sunday morning **BEFORE SUNRISE** and Yeshua had already risen! We read: “Now on the first *day* of the week Mary Magdalene went to the tomb early, ***while it was still dark***, and saw *that* the stone had been taken away from the tomb.” (John 20:1).

Okay, let's see what Mark says. “Now when the Sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, Mary *the mother* of James, and Salome had bought spices, that they might come and anoint Him.” (Mark 16:1). So, Mark agrees with Luke and John that the women were getting their spices together to go to the tomb and the Sabbath was already over, it had passed. And in the very next verse we read:

“And ***very early in the morning*** the first *day* of the week, (that would be early Sunday morning) they came unto the sepulchre *at the rising of the sun*.” John says it was still “dark” when the women came to the tomb, but Mark *appears to say* that the sun was rising. Is there a contradiction here? I don't think so. There is no contradiction in the Scriptures, so let's take a closer look at the KJV phrase, “at the rising of the sun.”

According to the Blue Letter Bible, this phrase, “at the rising of the sun” in the Greek language reads, “*anatellō (at the rising) tou (of the) hēlios(sun)*.”

The Greek word, “*anatello*” is Strong's #G393, meaning “*to cause to rise*.” The prefix “*ana*” is Strong's #G303 and can also mean “*by*” or “*up to*” or before. In other words, the women came to

the tomb “by the rising of the sun,” or “*up to* the rising of the sun” or “before the rising of the sun” or according to my Interlinear Scripture, “at the up-rising of the sun.” This would certainly fit in with the clear statement in John’s Gospel, that the women came while it was still *dark*, before the rising of the sun, before daybreak.

All of these accounts (Mark, Luke and John) are in agreement, two and three witnesses are required by Torah, so, now let’s review Matthew’s account, he is the fourth witness. Matthew’s account has been the center of controversy for Wednesday crucifixion advocates. Let’s read the text.

Matthew 28: 1, 5, 6: “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 see the sepulcher . . . And the angel answered and said unto the women, Fear not ye: for I know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified. He is not here: for he is risen, as he said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay.” (KJV).

Matthew allegedly pinpoints the time of the resurrection on Saturday afternoon. Their argument goes something like this. “*Since Matthew tells us that when the two Marys went to the tomb “in the end of the sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week,” they discovered that Christ had already risen, this means that His resurrection occurred in the last part of the Sabbath before the next day began.*”

Nobody stops to think what these women were doing at the tomb on Sabbath afternoon. Were they coming to do the work of anointing, which they would not have even considered doing on the Sabbath, or were they just taking a leisurely stroll to the tomb at twilight, just before nightfall? For what purpose? It makes no sense.

To defend their position, they conclude that the dawning of the first day should be interpreted as being the *beginning of dusk* (evening) rather than of dawn (morning). They reason that “*since the Sabbath ends at sunset, it would be impossible for ‘dawn’ to mean morning here, for the sun would not rise until some 12 hours later. It could not be in the end of the Sabbath and morning at the same time.*”

Do you believe that Matthew contradicts the other Gospel writers? This is a clever interpretation, but they’re reading something into the text that simply isn’t there. Their reasoning is flawed for three reasons. First of all, let’s look at the expression, “In the end of the Sabbath.”

According to the online Blue Letter Bible, the Greek word for “end” here, Strong’s G3796 is “*opse*” and can mean “late in the day,” but also, by extension, “after the close of the day,” and “in the end.” Therefore, although this verse could indicate that Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came to visit the tomb of Yeshua late in the day of the weekly Shabbat, it can also mean “after the close of Shabbat.”

In the Thayer Greek-English Lexicon, this word “*opse*” is defined as: “adverb of time, *after a long time, long after, late*; a) esp. *late in the day . . . i.e., at evening. . . the sabbath having passed, after the sabbath, i.e. at the early dawn of the first day of the week . . .*”. Thus, we see that this word can be used of the latter part of a day, or of a period of time AFTER a particular day.

Samuele Bacchiocchi, in his booklet, *THE TIME OF THE CRUCIFIXION AND THE RESURRECTION*, also states that Matthew is referring to the “end” or “after” the Sabbath, that the

Greek here cannot mean dusk. He writes, "In Mark 13:35, however, *opse* ("evening") clearly designates the first watch of the night, from about sunset till about 9 p.m.: "Watch therefore for you do not know when the master of the house will come, in the evening (*opse*) or at midnight, or at cockcrow, or in the morning" (Mark 13:35). The fact that "*opse*" could mean not only the late hours of the day, but also the early hours of the new day, suggests the possibility that Matthew may have used the term as an approximate time reference simply to indicate that the Sabbath was over when the women went to the sepulchre."

He adds, "The same conclusion is reached by Edward Lohse, though from a different basis. He finds that the phrase *opse sabbaton* of Matthew 28:1, corresponds to the Rabbinic *mosa'e shabbat* " and thus means the night from the Sabbath to the first day of the week. (Eduard Lohse, "Sabbaton," *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, 1971), vol. VII, p. 20.)

I think that it's clear that the plain sense of this verse is: "After the Sabbath, as the first day of the week was dawning...". Mark says the Sabbath was past. Several Bible translations recognize this:

"Now after the Sabbath, as the first *day* of the week began to dawn..." (NKJV)

"After the Sabbath, at dawn on the first day of the week..." (NIV)

"Now after the Sabbath, toward the dawn of the first day of the week..." (ESV)

"Now after the Sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first *day* of the week..." (NASB)

"Now after the sabbath, toward the dawn of the first day of the week..." (RSV)

"Now after the Shabbat, as it began to dawn on the first day of the week..." (HNV)

"After Shabbat, toward dawn on Sunday..." (CJB)

The second reason the Saturday afternoon hypothesis is false is because of the *second time element* in Matthew, which supports the meaning of *opse sabbaton* as "after the sabbath" rather than "late on the sabbath," specifically, the expression, "as it began to *dawn* toward the first day of the week."

The key word to understanding this whole mystery is the Greek word, which is translated "*as it began to dawn*." According to the Blue Letter Bible, it is Strong's G2020, *epiphōskō*, meaning, "to begin to grow light." According to Young's concordance, it means "to begin to dawn upon." According to Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon, it means, "to grow light, to dawn."

In Luke 23:54 *epiphosko* is translated "drew on" (KJV) in reference to the approach of the annual Sabbath at sundown. I can see how this word could be confusing and misunderstood by many since Luke says this Sabbath "drew on;" however, Bible expositors are generally in agreement that the verb *epiphosko* is used in its literal meaning of "to dawn" in Matt. 28:1. This word is derived from the Greek *epiphaukō* (G2017), meaning, "to shine upon," a form of *epiphainō* (G2014), "to show to or upon," "to bring to light."

When the women visited the tomb it was still dark, just beginning to "*grow light*," it wasn't *growing dark*, or *getting dusk*, the brief moment of twilight between sunset and nightfall. We must conclude that the "dawning" in Matthew's Gospel is literal, as in the other Gospels, which brings us to the third and final reason why the Sabbath afternoon resurrection is unsound – because it contradicts the testimony of Mark, Luke and John!

From the evidence presented we can see that Matthew's account is *not* contradictory. This conclusion is based on the parallel statements of the other Gospel writers, who explicitly place the

visit of the women to the tomb “at early dawn” (Luke 24:1; Mark 16:2; John 20:1) with John adding “when it was yet dark.”

The women only made “two visits” to the tomb, not three. The first visit was when they witnessed where Yeshua’s body was laid, late on the preparation day of the annual Sabbath of Passover, and again when they came to anoint Yeshua’s body, early Sunday morning, before sunrise (when it was yet dark). And when they came to the tomb they discovered that the stone had been rolled away and Yeshua had already risen!

The Moment of the Resurrection

Can we pinpoint the exact moment of the resurrection of Yeshua Messiah? Yes, I believe that we can, and it is Matthew who provides us with these details. Do you remember the events that took place at the moment when Messiah died on the torture stake?

“And Yeshua cried out again with a loud voice, and yielded up His spirit. Then, behold, the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom; and the earth quaked, and the rocks were split, and the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised; and coming out of the graves after His resurrection, they went into the holy city and appeared to many.” (Matt. 27:51 – 53).

What an incredible, momentous event! There was a great, powerful earthquake which ripped the thick four inch veil apart in the temple from top to bottom. This event dramatically symbolized that Yeshua’s sacrifice and the shedding of His own blood was a sufficient atonement for our sins. It signified that the way into the Holiest Place (into the Presence of Yahweh) was open for all people, for all time, for Jew, other fellow scattered Israelites, and whomsoever Yahweh Elohim would call to repentance. (Heb. 10:19, 20). In Heaven’s Temple He would anoint the Ark of the Covenant in the Most Holy Place. Yeshua is the Door; He is the ONLY WAY to the Father! (John 14:6).

Notice, that also at the time of the great earthquake that there was a *resurrection of saints* (followers of Yahweh’s Path or Way) to temporal life (vs.52). Matthew also tells us in the very next verse that there was *another* resurrection of a number of saints *when Messiah arose*, who were also in their graves, they also were resurrected and entered Jerusalem and appeared to many!

Do you see? EARTHQUAKES ARE OFTEN ASSOCIATED WITH RESURRECTION!

What did Mary Magdalene and the other Mary find when they arrived at the tomb? Remember, that this visit occurred before sunrise, while it was *yet dark*. Notice!

“Now after the Sabbath (or “Sabbaths”), as the first *day* of the week began to dawn (not yet sunrise), Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came to see the tomb.” (Matt.28:1).

“And behold, there was a GREAT EARTHQUAKE; for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat on it.” (Matt.28:2).

Without any doubt in my mind, the resurrection of Yeshua Messiah occurred at the ***precise moment of this great earthquake!***

But the angel answered and said to the women, “Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Yeshua who was crucified. He is not here; for He has risen, as He said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay.” (Matt. 28:5, 6).

It is evident that when the great earthquake occurred and the angel came to roll back the stone from the tomb, that that is the exact moment of the Messiah’s resurrection!

In fact, the dead who are asleep in Messiah will be resurrected to ETERNAL LIFE at Messiah’s Second Coming, which will also be accompanied by a GREAT EARTHQUAKE!

Consider the following verses, no commentary is necessary.

“Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed—in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last shofar (that’s the Seventh Shofar!). For the shofar will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.” (1Cor. 15:51, 52).

“For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the Chief Messenger, and with Yahweh’s shofar (that’s the last or 7th shofar). The dead in Messiah will rise first.” (1Thess. 4:16)

“but in the days of the *sounding of the seventh angel*, when he is about to sound, the mystery of Elohim would be finished, as He declared to His servants the prophets. (Rev. 10:7)

“The *seventh angel sounded his shofar*, and great voices in heaven followed, saying, “The kingdom of the world has become the Kingdom of our Lord, and of his Messiah. He will reign forever and ever! (Rev. 11:15)

“And the twenty-four elders sitting on their thrones in Elohim’s presence fell on their faces and worshipped Elohim saying, “We thank you Yahweh, Elohim of heaven’s armies, the one who is and who was; because you have taken your great power, and begun to reign. The nations raged, but now your rage has come, the time for the dead to be judged, the time for rewarding your servants the prophets and your holy people, and those who stand in awe of your name, both small and great. It is also time for destroying those who destroy the earth.” (Rev. 11:16 – 18).

“Then the Temple of Elohim in heaven was opened, and the Ark of the Covenant was seen in the Temple; and there were flashes of lightning, voices, peals of thunder, an EARTHQUAKE and violent hail.” (Rev. 11:19).

Now that we know that Yeshua Messiah was resurrected on Sunday morning, when it was still dark (John 20:1), just before sunrise, at the moment of the earthquake, having been crucified the previous Thursday, this all fits perfectly, like a completed jig-saw puzzle! His words would be fulfilled as long as “three days AND three nights” (portions at the beginning and end) would be fulfilled.

Messiah did rise from the grave on Sunday, the first day of the week (which began at Saturday evening at sunset), it just wasn’t the traditional Easter (pagan Ishtar) Sunday “Sunrise” resurrection as most people believe, but still, the significance of this day cannot be overlooked.

As William Dankenbring notes in his detailed article supporting a Thursday crucifixion:

“Sunday is sometimes referred to as the “eighth day” of the week. That is, the week consists of seven days, ending with the Sabbath day. The “next” day – Sunday – would be the “eighth” day if we continue counting. Similarly, the Feast of Tabernacles is seven days in the fall of the year (Lev.23:34-36). The next day is the Feast of “Shemini Atzeret” – which simply means, “The eighth day.” Seven plus one is eight. Seven represents a completed week, a completion. The first day represents a “beginning.” The “eighth” day – which is a new “FIRST” day – represents a “NEW beginning.” That is, “renewal,” “resurrection,” a “new commencement.” Thus symbolically, the FIRST day of the week as the Scriptures imply represents the day of Christ’s “new beginning,” “renewal of life,” His resurrection!”

He continues, “This picture would not fit if He were resurrected at the “end” portion of the weekly Sabbath. There would be no symbolism in that. But even as the “Eighth” day of Shemini Atzeret represents a new beginning, so the “eighth day” when Christ was resurrected also represents a “new beginning”!” (Prophecy Flash, March – April 2002, p. 13).

There are still a few loose ends that we need to tie up before we get into the final “clinching” proof. When we have established the year in which Yeshua began his ministry, and the duration of his ministry, then we will know the year he was crucified. I know that I have already referred to these dates earlier, but I haven’t provided any proof yet.

When Did Messiah’s Ministry Begin?

When did Yeshua begin His ministry? There are Bible Commentators like JFB, who believe that it was in 27 A.D. and others who think it was a different year. One of the greatest proofs in the Scriptures affirming that Yeshua Ben Yosef is indeed the long awaited Messiah, is the prophecy recorded in Daniel, chapter 9, the well-known “70 weeks prophecy.”

This amazing prophecy predicted the very year the TRUE MESSIAH would begin His public ministry and it was fulfilled by none other than the Son of David, Yeshua Ben Yosef, the Son of Yahweh! Let’s take a quick look at this major prophetic event and see when this enigmatic prophecy was fulfilled.

Before, we look at this prophecy, we need to understand that these “70 weeks” follow a pattern often referred to by Bible students as the “day for a year” principle of prophetic interpretation. There are many examples in the Scripture that reveal this principle, like the punishment pronounced upon the unbelieving Israelites who wandered in the desert for 40 years, a year for each day (40 days) that they searched out the Land of Promise. (Num.14:34).

The prophet Ezekiel, who, like Daniel, was a captive in Babylon, received a prophecy concerning the siege of Jerusalem and by a strange gesture of lying first on his left side for the space of three hundred and ninety days, and then on his right side for the space of forty days, he was to bear the iniquity of the house of Israel. “... I have appointed thee each day for a year.” (Ezek. 4:3-6).

Then each week of Daniel’s 70 week prophecy would mean a year of prophetic fulfillment or 70 x 7, which equals 490 years! Messiah alluded to this prophecy, when Peter asked Him, “...“Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? Up to seven times? Yeshua said to him, “I do not say to you, up to seven times, but up to *seventy times seven!*”” (Matt. 18:21 – 22).

That's Daniel's prophetic 70 times 7 or 490 YEARS, the PROBATIONARY PERIOD FOR THE JUDGMENT AGAINST THE JEWS IN JERUSALEM! Let's read the prophecy:

“Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy (Place).” (v. 24)

“Know therefore and understand, *that* from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the **Messiah the Prince** *shall be* seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times.” (v. 25)

“And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be CUT OFF, but not for himself: and the people of the prince (Titus) 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.” (v. 26)

“And he (Messiah) shall confirm the Covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make *it* desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate.” (v. 27)

It's important to note that this 70 week period was “determined” or applied to the *Jewish people*, Daniel says, “for *your* people and *your* Holy city. The other tribes of Israel were already scattered to the winds in the Assyrian captivity which occurred over a century earlier, before the Babylonian captivity of the Jews. The post-exile Jews continued their wicked, sinning ways and the longsuffering of Yahweh was about to run out. How many times would He forgive them for their disobedience and continual acts of rebellion? Daniel 9:24:

“A period of *seventy sets of seven* has been decreed for your people and your holy city to finish their rebellion, to put an end to their sin, to atone for their guilt, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to confirm the prophetic vision, and to anoint the Most Holy Place.” (“*Kodesh Kodashim*” or Holy of Holies). Messiah accomplished all of the above at His first coming, death and resurrection.

The 70 weeks or 490 years are divided into *three distinct periods in succession*, and each successive period is assigned certain specific events: 1) Seven weeks (or 49 years) would be allowed for the restoration of the Jewish nation; 2) 62 weeks (434 years more), at the end of which, Messiah the Prince should come and begin His work in the ministry; and 3) One week (or 7 years more), in which Messiah would “CONFIRM THE COVENANT WITH MANY”, that is, seven years. The Covenant would be confirmed with MANY, but the years of probation would come to an end. The Gospel message would go to the Ten Lost Tribes of Israel (now considered “Gentiles”), and to the rest of the world, as a final witness. (Matt. 15:24)

I say, “in succession,” because there are many religious people who believe that the first two periods are in succession, which is true, but they have chosen to believe that somehow, the last period is not in succession, that it should be catapulted 2,000 years into the future, a yet to be fulfilled final week, and yet there is no biblical evidence for this, and no one agrees when the clock resumes ticking! Also, they have the audacity to apply this final week to anti-Christ and not the true Messiah! (Other prophecies in the book of Daniel deal with an end-time, counterfeit Messiah).

This false theory originated with Jesuits in the 18th century (Bellarmine, Lacunza, Alcazar, Ribera, Vieyra and Canisius) and later through Protestant Bibles footnotes, Dispensationalists promoted the same end-time “Seven-Year Tribulation and Rapture” theory, via men like Scofield and Darby.

But, when did this prophecy begin? From what point in time would the 70 weeks or 490 years commence? Gabriel tells Daniel in the very next verse:

“Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the command to restore and build Jerusalem until Messiah the Prince, there shall be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks; the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublesome times.”

If you study the Book of Ezra you will discover several decrees, which began with the rebuilding of the temple under Cyrus, King of Persia (Ezra 1:1-3). There was much opposition to building the temple, “Then the people of the land tried to discourage the people of Judah. They troubled them in building, and hired counselors against them to frustrate their purpose all the days of Cyrus king of Persia, even until the reign of Darius king of Persia.” (Ezra 4:4, 5).

Later, King Darius made a decree to continue the construction of the temple and the temple was finally completed in the sixth year of his reign on March 12, 515 B.C. (Ezra 6:11-15). However, the decree that we are looking for involves much more than the temple. This decree involves the restoration and re-building of the city of Jerusalem (“*the going forth of the command to restore and build Jerusalem...*”).

Under King Artaxerxes, permission was granted to re-build the wall, but it wasn’t until King Artaxerxes gave a lengthy decree (Ezra 7:12 – 26) to the Jewish scribe Ezra, to not only re-build the wall and put the finishing touches on the temple, but to “set magistrates and judges” and to “execute judgment” on all who disobeyed Yahweh’s laws – in other words, *restoring the civil government and authority to Jerusalem*. Do you see the significance of this decree as it relates to the prophet Daniel’s words?

This decree occurred in 457 B.C., as most Bible margins and scholars indicate for Ezra chapter 7.

So, “from the going forth of the command to restore and build Jerusalem until Messiah the Prince, there shall be seven weeks (49 years) and sixty-two weeks (434 years).” (Dan.9:25).

Simple arithmetic yields $49 + 434 = 483$ years. Therefore, from the time of the decree until the time that Yeshua the Messiah would appear on the scene, would be exactly 483 years later! Adding 483 years to 457 B.C. brings us to 27 A.D.! (we have to add “1” since there is no year “zero”).

This is the very year that Yeshua was “anointed” by the Holy Spirit at his baptism and began his three-year public ministry! (Matt.3:16, 17; Acts 10:38). “Messiah” (Heb.) and “Christ” (Gr.) mean “Anointed One.” (Yeshua also alluded to the duration of his ministry, “*seeking fruit,*” in Luke 13:7)

When Yeshua came to John the Baptizer, John said, “I’m the one who needs to be baptized by you and you are coming to me?” Yeshua’s reply is one of pure humility, the One who *knew no sin* was submitting to the baptism of repentance! “But Jesus answered him, “Let it be so now; for thus it is fitting for us to *fulfill all righteousness*. Then he consented.” The prophet Daniel said that He would “*bring in everlasting righteousness*” and *the everlasting Gospel!* (Dan. 9:24; Rev. 14:6)

Yeshua was born in February, 4 B.C., in early spring when the lambs were born. It was before Passover and before the death of Herod (Matt. 2). He was the Lamb from His beginning to His end!

Contrary to what most people think, Yeshua was not born on December 25th, nor was He born in the fall or winter. You can read about the true birth date of Yeshua Messiah in this article posted here: http://www.waoy.org/True_Birthdate_of_Yeshua__Jesus_.pdf

John the Baptizer calls Him the “Lamb of Elohim” (John 1:29, 36). The Apostle Paul refers to Yeshua as our Passover Lamb in 1Cor. 5:7. The Apostle Peter says that we were redeemed with, “the precious blood of Messiah, as of a lamb *without blemish and without spot*.” (1 Pet. 1:18, 19). Messiah is called the “Lamb” repeatedly in the book of Revelation (Rev. 5:5, 6, 8; 7:10, 14; 12:11; 13:8; 14:4; 17:14; 19:9; 22:1).

As an aside, most people do not realize that Yeshua was not only typified by the Passover lamb, but He was also symbolized by the daily ritual sacrifices and holy day sacrifices at the Temple. The Torah commanded a twice-daily offering of a *male lamb without spot or blemish* called in Hebrew, the Tamiyd (Strong’s H8548), which means “continual” or the “constant sacrifice.”

It was offered daily, in the morning and evening. In the morning it was offered at the third hour or 9:00 AM, at the same time our Savior was placed on the torture stake (“And it was the third hour when they crucified him.” Mk. 15:25). In the evening it was offered at the 9th hour or 3:00 PM, at the same time our Savior died (“And at the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice...and breathed his last.” Mk.15:34-37). (Edersheim, *Temple—It’s Ministry and Services*, Ch. 7, p.108; Josephus, *Antiquities*, xiv. 4, 3).

Tamiyd (tä·mēd') is close to the Hebrew word “*tamiym*” (tä·mēm', H8549) meaning, “without spot or blemish,” signifying, “*complete or perfect* (KJV), *whole, entire, sound, having integrity*.” It is such a fitting description of Yeshua (2 Cor. 5:21). The same word is used to describe the character of Noah (Gen. 6:9), Abraham (Gen. 17:1) and the King of Tyre before he fell from grace (Ezek. 28:15).

How Long Was Yeshua’s Ministry?

Now, let’s get back to Yeshua’s ministry. Born in the spring of 4 B.C. and beginning His ministry in 27 A.D. before Passover, Yeshua would have been “about thirty years” of age. Luke corroborates that He began His ministry at that age, “Now Yeshua Himself began *His ministry* at about thirty years of age, being (as was supposed) *the son of Joseph, the son of Heli*,” (Luke 3:23).

“About 30” means, *as if, as it had been, as it were, like as* (see Strong’s G5616, “hōsei”). Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament, says basically the same thing. In other words, Yeshua was thirty years old, He had just passed His 30th birthday, the age necessary in order to be qualified to teach, and as our High Priest, He followed after the order of Melchizedek (Heb.7:15-21). Messiah would have obeyed the Torah in this regard: “From thirty years old and upward even until fifty years old, all that enter into the host, to do the work in the tabernacle of the congregation.” (Num. 4:3,23, 30, 35, 39, 43, 47).

Before He began His powerful ministry, Yeshua was baptized and empowered by the Holy Spirit. He then spent “40 days” in the wilderness, His time of testing and trial, and did not succumb to His

human temptations (Heb. 4:15). He showed us how to rely on the Holy Spirit and internalize the Scripture in order to overcome the *yetzer hara*, the evil impulse or inclination in our flesh, which some simply call our carnal (fallen) human nature.

He returned from the wilderness as Luke writes, “Then Yeshua returned in the power of the Spirit to Galilee, and news of Him went out through all the surrounding region. And he taught in their synagogues, and everyone praised Him.” (Luke 4:14, 15).

Many had witnessed His miracles, He turned water into wine at the marriage in Cana; He healed those with physical and mental problems and all manner of diseases. His reputation was being spread throughout Galilee. At the time of the Passover, the first Passover of His public ministry, Yeshua went up to Jerusalem (John 2:13). He’s on His way to the temple and He sees that the temple court is being used by racketeers, to sell birds and animals for ritual sacrifices at exorbitant prices, complete with greedy currency exchangers, and He is outraged and rightfully so!

“...He had made a whip of cords, He drove them all out of the temple, with the sheep and the oxen, and poured out the changers’ money and overturned the tables” (vs. 15). The Jewish merchants and on-lookers are horrified by his actions and “...the Jewish leaders demanded, “What are you doing? If Elohim gave you authority to do this, show us a miraculous sign to prove it” (vs. 18). He put an end to their money flow, no wonder they wanted to kill Him!

His response? At the beginning of this Passover season, Yeshua gives a two-fold or dual prophecy!

“Yeshua answered and said unto them, *Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.*” (vs. 19). John tells us that he spoke of the *temple of His body* (vs. 21).

This is a clear reference to His resurrection in three days after his death, but it is also a prophetic reference to the duration of His ministry using the “day for a year” principle. He undoubtedly implied that *three years* from that time, or three Passovers from now, He would be killed, and raised up or resurrected!

In other words, this statement is further proof that Yeshua’s ministry lasted ***three years, from the spring of 27A.D. to the spring of 30A.D.!***

What was said next by the Jews also provides us with some historical context and confirms when Yeshua began His ministry. The Jews said, “...***Forty and six years*** was this temple in building, and wilt thou rear it up in three days?” (vs. 20)

The number “46” is symbolically, the number of Herod’s Temple, *man (46 chromosomes) without the indwelling holy spirit*. This Temple *did not* have the Ark of the Covenant, nor does the Scripture say that it was ever *glorified* by the presence of Yahweh, as Solomon’s temple was (1Kings 8:11, signifying the future promise of the gift of the in-dwelling holy spirit).

Yah’s presence is everywhere, but *this* Herod temple portrayed the empty shell of man’s body, of post-exile Jews and their (man’s generally) religious systems, (i.e. very beautiful buildings filled with dead men’s bones, that is, corrupt Jewish leadership and corrupt pagan influences). At the time of Yeshua, it had taken Herod 46 years to *deconstruct, reconstruct and expand* the project that Zerubbabel had built in 515 B.C. in the sixth year of King Darius.

Just to digress for a moment, I say “reconstruct” and “expand” because King Herod literally demolished the second temple and built a third temple on top of it! Herod, “took away the old foundations, and laid others, and erected the temple upon them,” (Josephus, *Antiquities*, xv, 11, 3).

But don’t tell the Jews or Messianics that today because they prefer to think that the Herod temple was a *continuation* of what Zerubbabel built and that’s why Messianics, Christians and Jews still call it the “Second Temple.” Herod constructed a lot of buildings in Jericho, Hebron, Masada, Tiberius and Caesarea, acquiring the lofty designation of the “Great Builder.” This Temple was to be his *memorial*, his greatest architectural achievement, his legacy! And we know what Yeshua prophesied vis-à-vis Herod’s Temple. (See Matt. 24:2; Mk. 13:2; and Lk. 21:6)

I have built three homes. Now, if I had taken the second house I built, demolished it and the old foundation, and laid a new foundation, then built another bigger house on that new foundation, would it make sense that I still called it my second house? Of course not! The footnote comment in Josephus regarding Herod’s rebuilding of the temple is admittedly somewhat ironic:

“We may here observe, that the fancy of the modern Jews, in calling this temple, which was really the third of their temples, the second temple, followed so long by later Christians, *seems to be without any solid foundation.*” (Josephus, *Antiquities*, xv, 11, 1a). (Emph. mine)

The Jews and their corrupt leaders (most, not all) always “resisted the Spirit” as the martyr Stephen said (Acts 7:51); they misinterpreted the prophet Haggai’s end-time “spiritual” prophecy (Haggai 2:6 - 9), teaching the people that the real (political) Messiah would come one day to the Zerubbabel temple, (much inferior to the Solomon temple due to Persian constraints). But when Messiah didn’t show up before Herod came along, they continued to call Herod’s temple the “second” temple. Whatever you have heard or read about a “required” THIRD temple is nothing but pure speculation.

And when Yeshua Messiah finally did appear *suddenly*, as the suffering Servant (Isa. 53) instead of the Conquering King, and *cleansed the Herod temple*, they still missed him!

Yahweh had another Architectural Grand Wonder in the works, MUCH, MUCH, GREATER, MUCH MORE SPECTACULAR than Herod’s or Solomon’s Temple! Yeshua would be *glorified* in His Church, His *ekklesia*, His called out Ones! Yeshua Himself, being the Chief Cornerstone, for NO OTHER FOUNDATION (spiritually speaking) can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Yeshua Messiah.” (1Cor. 3:11; see also 1Peter 2:5 – 9). *This was the Temple Lesson!*

Now, let’s get back to the date King Herod started his project. If we subtract 46 years from 27 A.D. we come to the year 19 B.C., but remember that we have to add a year since there is no year “0” and this brings us to 20 B.C. Is there some historical evidence to support that Herod began his temple reconstruction project in 19 to 20 B.C.?

William Dankenbring in his article entitled, “How Long Was Jesus *Really* in the Grave?” provides much evidence for this date. He writes:

“Says *The NIV Harmony of the Gospels*, “According to secular history, Herod initiated the work sometime in 20 B.C. or 19 B.C. This statement was addressed to Jesus at the *first passover* after he begins his public ministry. The ‘forty six years’ therefore furnishes *another means for identifying the year when his ministry began*” (p.317). The authors continue, “Hence the first passover of Jesus’

ministry must have been in the *spring of A.D. 27*” (*ibid.*). Emil Schurer in *A History of the Jewish People in the Time of Christ* adds, “The rebuilding was begun in the eighteenth year of Herod, corresponding to B.C. 20-19 . . .” (vol.1, p.438).”

He continues, “The *Unger's Bible Dictionary* concurs, saying, “. . . though Herod began the rebuilding B.C. 20, as a whole it was literally true that the temple was ‘built in forty and six years,’ when the Jews so asserted to Jesus (John 2:20). But the end was not yet, for the work was really continued until A.D. 64, just six years before the final destruction of the temple by the Roman soldiers of Titus” (“Herod,” p.471).” (Prophecy Flash, March – April 2002, p.19).

Now, working in the reverse and adding 46 years to 20 B.C. brings us to 27 A.D. and since Yeshua began His ministry just prior to Passover in 27 A.D. and died before Passover in 30 A.D. we should be able to see references to these *four* Passovers in the Scriptures.

We have already read the verses in John’s gospel that show that Yeshua’s public ministry began just prior to Passover in 27 A.D. – John 2:13, 23.

The second Passover of His ministry could be recorded in John 5:1, “After this there was a feast of the Jews; (Judean Festival) and Yeshua went up to Jerusalem.” Most scholars agree that this was Pesach (Passover). The three pilgrimage festivals are Pesach (Passover), Shavuot (Pentecost) and Sukkot (Tabernacles).

In the *Jamieson, Fausset and Brown, Critical And Explanatory Commentary*, we read, “In our Judgment the evidence is in favor of its being a *Passover*, but the reasons cannot be stated here.” (John v, 1, p. 135).

For a more detailed analysis of this verse please see David Stern’s *Jewish New Testament Commentary*, specifically, his note at John 1:19 (p. 157 – 161). In his comment at John 5:1, he notes that the Apostle John uses this phrase “*Ioudaios*” (Judean festival) at 6:4 and 11:55 (and a similar phrase at 2:13) in connection with *Pesach* (Passover)...” (p. 168).

This could very well have been the *second* Passover, the Passover of 28 A.D., that Yeshua Messiah celebrated during His ministry!

Reading further into John’s Gospel we come to a passage at 6:4 that reads, “Now the Passover, a feast of the Jews, (Judean festival) was near.” This would be the *third* Passover of Yeshua’s ministry in 29 A.D.

The *fourth* Passover during Yeshua’s ministry occurred in 30A.D. and this was the one that He could not attend, because, as I have already explained, He was crucified. YESHUA IS OUR PASSOVER LAMB in 30 A.D. (1Cor. 5:7). John provides greater detail for Yeshua’s last Passover. The verses are as follows:

“And the Jews' passover (Judean festival of *Pesach*) was nigh at hand: and many went out of the country up to Jerusalem before the passover, to purify themselves.” (John 11:55).

“Then Yeshua six days before the passover (Pesach) came to Bethany, where Lazarus was who had been dead, whom he raised from the dead.” (John 12:1)

“Now before the feast of the passover, (festival of *Pesach*) when Yeshua knew that his hour was come that he should depart out of this world unto the Father, having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end.” (John 13:1)

I set out to prove that Yeshua’s ministry lasted for THREE YEARS, not four years or three and a half years. It began just before Passover season in 27 A.D. and ended at Passover in 30 A.D. And as mentioned previously, the number “three” is Yah’s number for *divine perfection, completion, decision, witness, and finality*. The number “30” is the number for the *blood of Messiah, Dedication and spiritual maturity*. Three and a half years (“42” mo.) is the number of *man’s opposition to Yah*.

But wait! In this age of computers, software and increased knowledge of science, astronomy and Yahweh’s sacred calendar, is there further proof? If Yeshua Messiah was really crucified on Thursday, April 6, 30 A.D. is there another way that we can prove this date once and for all? Yes, there is incredible astronomical evidence available today, that does settle this matter for all time!

Astronomical Evidence Refutes a Wednesday or Good Friday Crucifixion

There is a website devoted to the Phases of the Moon, called *Obliquity*. You can go on their website at www.obliquity.com and click on the Interactive Astronomy Pages on the left or just paste this link into your web browser: <http://www.obliquity.com/cgi-bin/lunar.cgi?Year=30&Month=3>

This brings you to the New Moon conjunction data – time and date for the New Moons for the year 30 A.D., for the third Roman month, March (this New Moon corresponds with the Hebrew month Abib/Nisan). You can see that the conjunction of the Abib New Moon was on March 22, at 17:29 GMT or 5:29 PM. This would have been 19:29 or 7:29 PM Jerusalem time (the Jerusalem time zone is two hours before GMT). Remember, you can’t *see* the moon when it’s in conjunction.

On which day did this conjunction occur? You can go to a week day calculator site, like *time and date* (<http://www.timeanddate.com/date/weekday.html>) to find the day of the week. Just plug in 03/22/0030 and hit “show” and voila – March 22, 30 A.D. is a Wednesday evening!

Since Hebrew days begin at sunset, this would have been the beginning of the next day by Hebrew reckoning. Thus the first *sighting of the faint new crescent*, the way it was done in biblical times, would’ve most likely been Thursday evening, around sunset, about 22 ½ hours later (6:00pm).

If you try different years with the software, you will find that they don’t fit the Biblical timetable.

This means that Friday, March 24th (beginning Thursday evening) would’ve been the New Moon of the first biblical month of Abib/Nisan. Now, the 14th day of Abib, the day the Passover lambs are slain, would’ve been THURSDAY, April 6, NOT Wednesday, and at sunset was the annual holy day of the First Day of Unleavened Bread, on FRIDAY, APRIL 7, 30 A.D.!

My conclusion is that Yeshua Messiah was crucified on THURSDAY, APRIL 6, 30 A.D., HE SPENT “THREE DAYS AND THREE NIGHTS” (*or portions in succession*) in the tomb, and was resurrected Sunday morning before sunrise, (while it was yet dark) on Abib 17, April 9, 30 A.D.

May Almighty Yah help us all to see this wonderful truth and rejoice in Him and the truth always!

How Long Was Yeshua Messiah in the Tomb?

TABLE OF CONTENTS

<i>Introduction</i>	p. 1
<i>The Hebrew Language Idiom</i>	P. 2
<i>NT Passages Regarding The Third Day</i>	P. 6
<i>The Misunderstood Sign of Jonah</i>	P. 7
<i>Two Plus Two Equals Five</i>	P. 10
<i>Myths Leave Too Many Unanswered Questions</i>	P. 11
<i>The Mystery of The Two Sabbaths</i>	P. 14
<i>The Burial of Yeshua Messiah</i>	P. 17
<i>The Gospel Accounts of the Resurrection</i>	P. 19
<i>The Moment of the Resurrection</i>	P. 22
<i>When Did Messiah's Ministry Begin?</i>	P. 24
<i>How Long Was Yeshua's Ministry?</i>	P. 27
<i>Astronomical Evidence Refutes a Wednesday or Good Friday Crucifixion</i>	P. 31
<i>Table of Contents</i>	P. 32