

# The Sign of Jonah Challenge

“An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas; for as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale’s belly, so shall the son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.” Matthew 12:39-40 KJV & Jonah 1:17

Sabbath keepers of various persuasions have a challenge to consider regarding our Messiah's words above. Many Sabbath keepers claim to use the Scriptures, rather than tradition, to support our view of the Crucifixion week. However, among the Sabbath keeping groups who have come out of the Sunday keeping tradition into ‘the true gospel’ there are different views of the timing of our Messiah's crucifixion and resurrection. Some Sabbath keepers make this issue a point of contention and division. The Spirit of the One who gave the sign of Jonah may be lost sight of in the debate to prove one’s own position right.

We would like to make one point very clear before we go any further into this study. When someone has been born of the Spirit and is governed by the Spirit, as shown by the fruit of the life, this is evidence that they have been accepted by our Creator as His son or daughter, regardless of their present understanding of this issue. The Spirit has been promised to guide us into all truth (*John 16:13*). Who are we to judge another man’s servant? Each to his own master stands or falls (*Romans 14:4*). We are all exhorted to sanctify Yah in our hearts and be ready always to give an answer for the hope that lies within us, with meekness and fear (*1 Peter 3:15*).

## Traditional & Newer Views of the Crucifixion & Resurrection

Some Sabbath keepers believe that when we compare scripture with scripture, our Messiah is using 'inclusive reckoning' in the passage above. They teach that the traditional view of the Friday crucifixion/Sunday resurrection is supported through the Scriptures.

### Traditional Crucifixion & Resurrection

<b>Friday Preparation</b>	<b>Saturday Sabbath</b>	<b>Sunday Wavesheaf</b>
Crucifixion	Rest in Tomb	Resurrection

Other Sabbath keepers believe that the Friday crucifixion/Sunday resurrection is a Roman Catholic tradition that doesn't line up with the Scriptures, and that those who accept this tradition are deceived by a false gospel and won't be saved unless they change their minds.

These Sabbath keepers believe that our Saviour's prophecy of 'the sign of Jonah' indicates that He would be three days and three nights in the tomb. Variations include a full 72 hours, or the thought that the ‘three days and three nights’ is partial inclusive reckoning that includes part of the light portion and dark portion of each day and night – so that the time period of

three days and three nights has to be accounted for by a representative portion of light or darkness during each day and each night that our Saviour was recorded as dead or in the tomb. The chart below gives a common explanation of this view.

### **Three Days & Three Nights or 72 Hours in Tomb**

<b>Preparation – Wed. -14<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>Sabbath Thurs. - 15<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>High Day – Fri. -16<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>Wavesheaf Sat. - 17<sup>th</sup></b>
Part of 1 <sup>st</sup> day ? Crucifixion/ Burial in Tomb ? hours	1 <sup>st</sup> night & 1 <sup>st</sup> day Rest in Tomb 24 hours	2 <sup>nd</sup> night & 3 <sup>rd</sup> day Rest in Tomb + 24 hours = 48 hours	3 <sup>rd</sup> night & 3 <sup>rd</sup> day Rest in Tomb/ Resurrection + 24 hours = 72 hours

The interpretation of ‘the sign of Jonah’ seems to revolve around the meaning of the term ‘in the heart of the earth’. Is this a Hebrew idiomatic expression? Did our Messiah mean that He would actually be in the ground during this period of ‘three days and three nights’? Sabbath keepers have different ideas on whether the three days and three nights are inclusive reckoning, parts of three literal days and nights, or parts of three daylight time portions and parts of three dark or night time portions.

Sabbath keepers who espouse these various views may make their understanding and explanation a salvation issue. Proponents of each position may separate from fellowship with others who don’t ‘see the truth’ the same way. We encourage everyone to please take the time to prayerfully reconsider your position as we examine all of the Scriptures on this subject. We do not encourage separating from fellow believers in our Messiah over a difference in understanding of certain traditional ideas.

### **‘The Heart of the Earth’**

Is there a difference between the three days of our Messiah’s body temple being destroyed and raised again, and the “three days and three nights in the heart of the earth?” Does ‘the heart of the earth’ mean that He was buried ‘in the ground?’

There are some who view the ‘heart of the earth’ as a Hebrew idiomatic expression that does not mean ‘in the grave.’ It is understood as beginning when Christ was captured and under the power of darkness of this earth, including those who reigned in ‘the heart of the earth’ or Jerusalem. It is explained that this was the meaning of that term in the minds of the Hebrew people. Some see it as several days and nights with a literal count beginning after our Messiah died. Others understand His time ‘in the heart of the earth’ to begin when our Messiah was praying in the garden of Gethsemane and was captured by ‘the powers that be in the earth’ at night during the 13<sup>th</sup>, throughout the day and night of the 14<sup>th</sup>, and through the day and night of the 15<sup>th</sup>, and perhaps through a bit of the early morning of 16<sup>th</sup> - or through His capture, death, burial, resurrection and perhaps the ascension to the Father on the third day. We will compare scripture with scripture and learn more about what the Scriptures show and our Saviour’s view of this matter.

## **What Do the Scriptures Show?**

In this study, we will compare scripture with scripture to learn if either view of the traditions above is fully supported by the weight of the evidence in the Scriptures. We also will see if the ideas surrounding 'the heart of the earth' are sound. First we will compare our Messiah's prophecies of this time period. They are quoted in the Scriptures in quite a few places. We will examine whether there is a basis for the claim of 'inclusive reckoning.' We will compare the phrases used in the New Testament with similar phrases used in the Old Testament. We will note what they meant to those who heard them.

When we have compared Scripture with Scripture to learn what they mean, the foundation will be set for our understanding of the timing of the Passover during the year of the crucifixion. We will re-examine the Scriptural commands for the Passover so that we may tie them all together. We will note the principles of Scripture that may help us resolve some of the perplexities caused by the apparent contradictions between the synoptic gospels and the gospel of John. We will then look at the time keeping challenge regarding the seventh-day Sabbath, the sign of Jonah, and AD 31. We will see how the modern week is calculated back and superimposed on the Hebrew calendar of that year, and compare it with historical information to see if it is accurate. The challenges of AD 31 will point us to a need to dig deeper into the Scriptures than ever! We will look at more Scriptural precedents for timekeeping to resolve the challenge, rather than reading our cultural background into the Scriptures.

When we have completed this study, we will have learned more of the fundamental timekeeping challenges of Scripture and have a sure foundation and a Scriptural answer for the hope that lies within us. We will also have the foundation for digging deeper into Scriptures and history to learn how the time keeping gems we have discovered will affect our understanding of Scriptural time keeping in ways we might not have considered before. May our Heavenly Father open our eyes in this study to His wonderful timekeeping principles that have been lost sight of for generations.

### **'Three Days' & 'The Third Day'**

The first thing we want to do in this study is to let go of our need to prove the position we may have held in the past. This principle applies even if we 'know' we are right and our true prophet or apostle teaches the position that we understand through the Scriptures. When we let go of our need to 'be right,' we may prayerfully compare scripture with scripture to learn what the passages and terms used actually indicate by what they say. Then we may rightly divide the Word of truth.

Let us begin with the 'three days' and the 'third day' passages of Scripture regarding our Messiah's death and resurrection. We will make a comparison between them to see what they tell us.

## In Three Days & After Three Days:

John 2:19 - Jesus answered and said unto them, 'Destroy this temple and **in three days** I will raise it up.'

Mark 14:58 - We heard him say, I will destroy this temple that is made with hands, and **within three days** I will build another made without hands.

Mark 15:29-30 - And they that passed by railed on him, wagging their heads and saying, 'Ah, thou that destroyest the temple and buildest it **in three days**, save thyself, and come down from the cross.'

Mark 8:31 - And he began to teach them, that 'the Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected of the elders, and of the chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and **after three days** rise again.'

As we carefully compare the Scriptures above, we may learn something about Scriptural timekeeping that we may not have realized before. Let us look at these verses that are all referring to our Saviour's crucifixion and resurrection on a chart to compare them and get a better picture of what is being said.

In Three Days, Within Three Days & After Three Days				
John 2:19	"Destroy this temple..."			in 3 days - I will raise it up"
Mark 14:58	'I will destroy this temple...	'I will build another...	made without hands...	within 3 days'
Mark 15:29-30	'...Save thyself	and come down from the cross	'thou that destroyest the temple	and buildest it in 3 days'
Mark 8:31	"suffer many things	be rejected of elders...	be killed	after 3 days - rise again"

- All of these texts above seem to indicate that our Messiah used the terms '**in three days**' and '**after three days**' interchangeably!

This Scriptural communication style can be very challenging for us. If someone says, '**after three days**,' we think it is a different day than if they were to say, '**in three days**.'

We may unintentionally read our thought patterns into the timing of the texts and feel confused – as though these Scriptures were contradicting each other. We may also lose the sense intended when these terms were spoken and penned, because we tend to read into them the way our culture thinks of the terms. The chart below shows how we think.

## The Same Scriptural Time Period & How We Think

'In Three Days'	1st day tomorrow	2nd day day after tomorrow	3rd day day after 2 <sup>nd</sup> day	
'After Three Days'	1st day tomorrow	2nd day day after tomorrow	3rd day day after 2 <sup>nd</sup> day	4th day day after 3rd day

To better understand the way our Messiah and those who understood the Scripture meant by 'in three days' and 'after three days', we need to remember that those in the Hebrew culture understand these terms as speaking of the same period of time.

- **Lesson** – What we think a Scriptural phrase says is not always what it means. We will have to compare it with other Scriptures to learn what it means.
- **Application** – When our Messiah said 'in three days' and 'after three days', he was speaking of the same time period.

This is the first part of the lesson in understanding the Scriptures and letting them explain themselves relating to time. What we think they say is not what they mean by what was said or written, or perhaps was lost in the translation. We will continue going through the passages relating to our Messiah's crucifixion and resurrection, letting ourselves get a sense of what is meant by the phrases used. The next section includes all the passages where 'the third day' is used in the gospels and epistles relating to our Messiah's life, death, and resurrection.

### The Third Day

Matthew 16:21 - From that time forth, began Jesus to show unto His disciples, how he must 'go unto Jerusalem and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed and be raised again **the third day.**'

Mark 9:31 - For he taught his disciples and said unto them, 'The Son of man is delivered into the hands of men, and they shall kill him, and **after** he is killed, he shall rise **the third day.**'

Mark 10:34 - 'And they shall mock him, and shall scourge him, and shall spit upon him, and **the third day** he shall rise again.'

Matthew 17:22-23 - And while they abode in Galilee, Jesus said unto them, 'The Son of man shall be betrayed into the hands of men: and they shall kill him, and **on the third day** he shall be raised again.'

Matthew 20:18-19 - 'Behold, we go up to Jerusalem, and the Son of man shall be betrayed unto the chief priests and unto the scribes, and they shall condemn him to death, and shall deliver him to the Gentiles to mock and scourge, and to crucify him at the stake, and **the third day** shall rise again.'

Luke 9:22 - “The Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be slain and be raised **the third day.**”

Luke 18:31-33 - Then he took unto him the twelve and said unto them, ‘Behold, we go up to Jerusalem, and all things that are written by the prophets concerning the Son of man shall be accomplished. For he shall be delivered unto the Gentiles, and shall be mocked, and spitefully insulted, and spitted on: And they shall scourge him and put him to death; and **on the third day** he shall rise again.’

Luke 24:6-7 - And so it came to pass, as they were much perplexed thereabout, behold two men stood by them in shining garments: and as they were afraid and bowed down their faces to the earth, they said unto them, “Why seek ye the living among the dead? He is not here, but is risen: remember how he spake unto you when he was yet in Galilee, saying, The Son of man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and **the third day** rise again.”

Matthew 24:46 - And said unto them, ‘Thus it is written, and thus it behooved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead **the third day.**’

Acts 10:39-40 - ‘And we are witnesses of all things which he did both in the land of the Jews, and in Jerusalem; whom they slew and hanged on a tree: Him God raised up **the third day**, and shewed him openly.’

I Corinthians 15:3-4 - For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures; and that he was buried, and that he rose again **the third day** according to the Scriptures.

As we ponder all the passages above, we can see by our Saviour's own testimony that He would rise from the dead on '**the third day.**' We can also see way the people around Him understood what He said.

Let us ponder what we have seen so far by comparing scripture with scripture.

- Our Messiah Himself used all these terms '**after three days,**' '**in three days,**' '**the third day**' and '**on the third day,**' quoted above in relationship to his death and resurrection.
- Sometimes these terms appear to indicate the length of time from our Messiah's capture until His resurrection. Other times, they appear to indicate the time between our Messiah's death and His resurrection.
- All of these prophetic statements were used describing the events around our Saviour's capture in the garden of Gethsemane, His trial, condemnation, crucifixion and resurrection.

As we ponder the context of our Messiah's saying about 'the sign of Jonah', '**three days and three nights in the heart of the earth,**' it appears that He is speaking of the same

events and the same time period as all the other related phrases above. All of these prophetic passages are related to 'the sign of Jonah.'

## Other Scriptural Timekeeping Comparisons

We will compare Scriptures to learn how the pivotal timekeeping terms in question are used in other passages.

### Crossing the Jordan

Now let us look at Joshua 1:11 and compare it to Joshua 3:2 & 4:1 for the timing of the children of Israel passing over the Jordan River.

Joshua 1:11 - Pass through the host and command the people, saying, 'Prepare you victuals; for **within three days** ye shall pass over this Jordan, to go in to possess the land, which the LORD your God giveth you to possess it.'

Joshua 3:2 & 4:1- And so it came to pass **after three days**, that the officers went through the midst of the camp... And it came to pass when all the people were clean passed over the Jordan...

- Please note that the term '**within three days**' is understood to be interchangeable with '**after three days**' in this passage.

Next we will look at another situation in the Old Testament that is a very good example of the way the people thought and how they referred to the same period of time with various terms.

### Rehoboam's Three Days

This was a situation with Rehoboam, the king of Israel, and the people that Solomon, his father had ruled, after Solomon's death.

I Kings 12:5 - And he said unto them, 'Depart yet **for three days**, and then come again to me.'

II Chronicles 10:5 - 'Return unto me **after three days**.'

I Kings 12:12 - So Jeroboam and all the people came to Rehoboam **the third day**, as the king had appointed, saying, 'Return to me again **the third day**.'

II Chronicles 10:12 - So Jeroboam and all the people came to Rehoboam **on the third day**, as the king had bade saying, 'Come again to me **on the third day**.'

Let us look at a chart that compares all of these texts referring to Rehoboam's three days, which is defined as, for three days, after three days, the third day, and on the third day, below.

Rehoboam's Three Days	
I Kings 12:5	'Depart yet <b>for three days</b> , then come unto me again.'
II Chronicles 10:5	'Return unto me <b>after three days</b> .'
I Kings 12:12	'...the people came... <b>the third day</b> as the king had appointed saying, 'Return to me again <b>the third day</b> .'
II Chronicles 10:12	'...came <b>on the third day</b> , as the king had bade, Come again to me <b>on the third day</b> .'

Please note the differences above. '**After three days**' is clearly speaking of the same time period as '**the third day**' and '**on the third day**'.

Note that although Rehoboam is actually quoted as saying 'Return unto me **after three days**,' in one place, the text says in another place that he bade them saying, 'Come again to me **on the third day**.'

- **Lesson:** In the Scriptures, 'for three days,' 'in three days,' 'the third day,' 'on the third day,' and 'after three days,' all speak of the same period of time!

Let us keep the lesson above in mind as we examine our Messiah's way of counting to the third day.

### Our Saviour's Count to 'the Third Day'

Let us continue comparing Scripture with Scripture. What else may we learn about our Messiah's intent by the terms He used when He said '**in three days**,' '**after three days**,' and '**the third day**' or '**on the third day**?' Let us look at one of the ways He explained '**the third day**'.

Luke 13:32 - "Behold. I cast out devils and do cures today and tomorrow, and **the third day** I shall be perfected."

Let us compare how our Messiah counted to the way we might count in a chart below.

Messiah said: 'The third day'	We might think:
This is how He counted: Today - day 1	We don't count the day we are in because it isn't completed yet.
Tomorrow - day 2	Tomorrow - day 1
The third day - day 3	The next day - day 2

We can note above that the beginning of the count to '**the third day**' was the day that our Messiah was speaking. 'Tomorrow' is the second day of the count. His use of the term '**the third day**' above is an example of what is called 'inclusive reckoning.'



**Let us compare this with His other prophecy, and compare the way He counted.**

Matthew 17:22-23 - And while they abode in Galilee, Jesus said unto them, 'The Son of man shall be betrayed into the hands of men: and they shall kill him, and **on the third day** he shall be raised again.'

- The count began **the day they killed him**. He would be in the **tomb the second day**, and be raised again **on the third day**.

The listeners of that day were familiar with the Scriptural usage of inclusive reckoning that our Heavenly Father has shown in the Torah. Thankfully, we have a record of them, so we may compare Scripture with Scripture and get a good sense of what the people meant when they used these terms. Here is an example in the Torah, or the writings of Moses.

### **Yah's Count to the Third Day**

Exodus 19:10 - And the LORD said unto Moses, 'Go unto the people and sanctify them today, and tomorrow, and let them wash their clothes, And be ready against the third day: for **the third day** the LORD will come down in the sight of all the people upon Mount Sinai.'

Day 1	Day 2	Day 3
Today	Tomorrow	The Third Day

Let us note again that the day beginning the count for '**the third day**' was '**today**,' the day of the communication. The second day was '**tomorrow**,' or **the next day**. Then, **the day after tomorrow**, we find **the third day**. This may seem difficult for us to wrap our minds around because we think differently in our culture; but here we have two witnesses from the Scriptures that show us the way our Creator and His children count days to help us understand the way the people thought and communicated in that culture.

- **Lesson** – All of the Scriptures use the terms '**in three days**,' and '**after three days**,' '**on the third day**,' and '**the third day**' to speak of the same period of time.

**This is the foundation for understanding what is called 'inclusive reckoning.'** A time period in the Scriptures is not necessarily what we naturally think it might be. This is why we must come to our Heavenly Father with hearts that are willing to learn to be taught by Him. Let us now look at several of our Creator's definitions of 'day.'

### **More Timekeeping Comparisons**

#### **Day & Night**

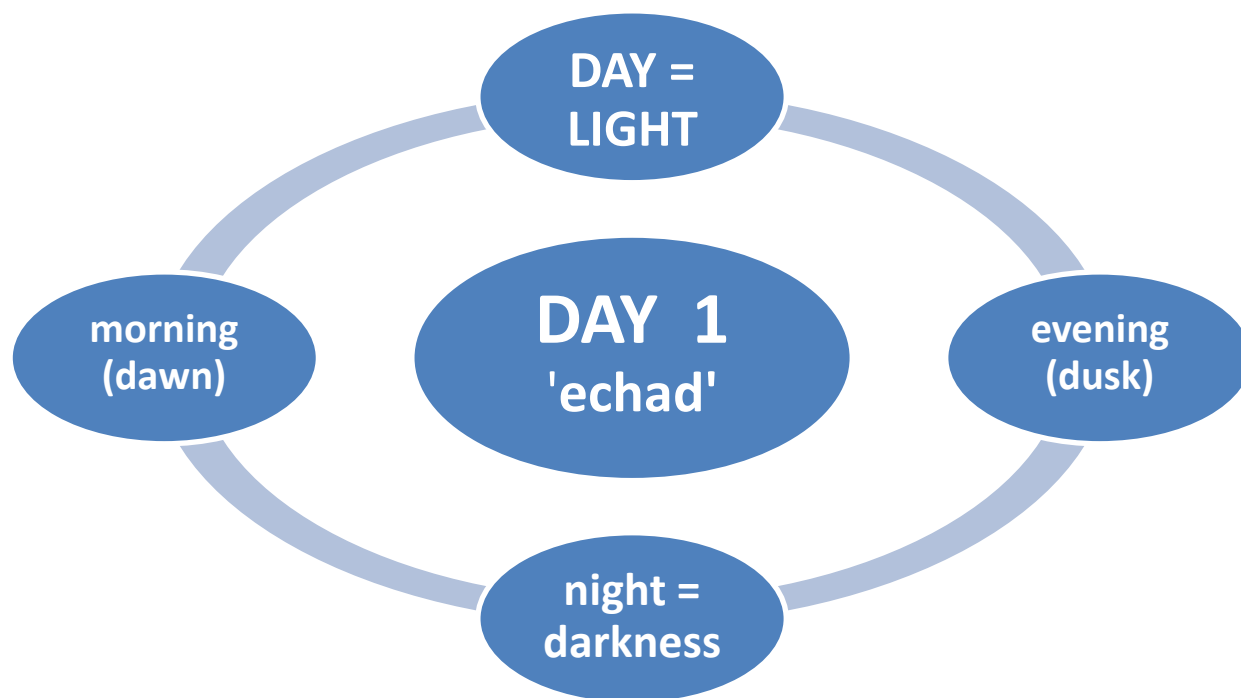
Let us look at the very first literal Scriptural definitions of '**day**' in the Torah, and how they are used to show a period of time.

Genesis 1:3-5 - And God said, 'Let there be light;' and there was light. And God saw the light that it was good. And God divided the light from the darkness. And

God called the **light** '**Day**,' and the **darkness** He called '**night**.' And the evening and the morning were '**the first day**.'

Here we see that Yah's first literal definition of '**day**' is the **light** portion of what we think of as a twenty-four hour day. His second literal definition of a '**day**' includes the **light** portion, the evening (dusk), and the **night** or dark portion, and the morning (dawn). God divided between the light and the darkness with 'evening' or dusk, and 'morning' or dawn.

### Our Creator's First Literal Definitions of DAY



**DAY = LIGHT**  
**DAY = light/dusk/darkness/dawn**

These are the first two literal definitions of DAY our Creator gave us in the Scriptures. We may find secondary meanings of the words in other places in the Scriptures, and we might even read other meanings into them depending on what we have been taught. If you would like to delve into deeper this, our study called 'The Scriptural Day' is available upon request. Letting our Creator define His meanings of words by comparing scripture with scripture will help us tremendously when we are asking Him to teach us what He means for us to understand regarding His method of timekeeping.

Our Creator called the light '**day**' and He called the darkness '**night**'. He divided them with dusk and dawn. He used the Hebrew term **echad** to show us that the day & night together were also defined as '**day**.' This can also be understood as one being the first.

The two can be counted as one in our Creator's mind for a particular purpose. In this case, it is for the number or date – the night follows the day and they are combined together. These are two separate entities – day = light and night = darkness, and are combined together in a unit called 'day 1.' That term **echad** is also used when He called the man and wife 'one flesh.' This Hebrew term can take two apparently different humans or concepts, and bring them together for one purpose. He also used the term to describe Himself as YHWH, the God or Elohim of Israel (Deuteronomy 6:4).

We will see that in the Scriptures, **day and night** together may also referred to as '**day**.' Let us look at some examples of this Scriptural understanding of day.

As we ponder this, let us compare Scripture with Scripture, and look at how day and night together might be understood by those who heard it in that culture. We will look at parallel verses like we did with Rehoboam above, to see how these terms, '**day and night**,' were used and understood in other places.

## Our Messiah's Fast

Mark 1:13 - And He was there in the wilderness **forty days**, tempted of Satan; and was with the wild beasts; and the angels ministered unto Him.

Luke 4:2 - Being **forty days** tempted of the devil. And in those days he did eat nothing: and when they were ended, he afterward hungered.

Matthew 4:2 - And when He had fasted **forty days and forty nights**, he was afterward an hungered.

Scriptural Forty Days = Forty Days & Forty Nights	
Luke 4:2	Being <b>forty days</b> tempted of the devil... he did eat nothing:... he afterward hungered.
Mark 1:13	Messiah was in the wilderness <b>forty days</b> , tempted of Satan...
Matthew 4:2	Messiah fasted <b>forty days and forty nights</b> , and was afterward an hungered

We can see above by comparing parallel accounts of our Saviour's experience that '**forty days**' and '**forty days and forty nights**' are speaking of the same period of time, and are interchangeable in the minds of the writers.

Now let us look at several more examples showing what '**day and night**' meant to the people in the Scriptures.

## Reviving the Servant

I Samuel 30:12 - And they gave him a piece of a cake of figs, and two clusters of raisins; and when he had eaten, his spirit came again to him, for he had eaten no bread, nor drunk any water, **three days and three nights**.

I Samuel 30:13 - 'I am a young man of Egypt, servant to an Amelekite, and my master left me, because **three days** ago I fell sick.'

We can see above that '**three days and three nights**' and '**three days**' ago or ago, are the same amount of time and are used interchangeably.

## Queen Esther's Fast

Esther 4:16 - 'Go and gather together all the Jews that are found in Shushan, and fast ye for me, and neither eat or drink **three days, night or day**; I also and my maidens will fast likewise; and so will I go in unto the king, which is not according to the law: and if I perish, I perish.'

Esther 5:1 - And it came to pass, **on the third day**, that Esther put on her royal apparel, and stood in the inner court of the king's house...

We can see by the account above that the term **three days, night or day** is the same amount of time as '**on the third day**.' This text also indicates that both understandings of day were used in that culture. These terms are used interchangeably. We can also note that in this case - as we noted with our Messiah's explanation - the count of days began when the person spoke, unless otherwise noted. This is why Queen Esther clarified the fast was to include **three days, night or day**. In this context in the count of days, night is included. They weren't just fasting from dawn to dusk. (We need to look at the context to learn whether Yah's first definition of 'day' - 'light', or second definition of 'day' - 'light, dusk, night, and dawn', is being used. Most often in the Scriptures, when numbering days, or when dates are being used, the time begins in the morning.)

Below is a chart comparing several Scriptures, each showing in various ways that 'day' can be understood as either 'light' or 'day and night,' depending upon the context.

SCRIPTURAL 'DAY' CAN INCLUDE DAY & NIGHT	
Yah's First Literal Definitions of Day	DAY = LIGHT or DAY One = light/dusk/night/dawn Genesis 1:3-5
Our Messiah's Fast	Scriptural Forty Days = Forty Days & Forty Nights Luke 4:2, Mark 1:13 & Matthew 4:2
Reviving the Servant	Scriptural Three Days & Three Nights = Three Days Ago I Samuel 30:12-13
Queen Esther's Fast	Scriptural Three Days, Night or Day = On the Third Day Esther 4:16 & 5:1

When we take all of the examples above together, we can see that understanding Scriptural timekeeping would help us recognize that our Messiah's prophecy of 'in three days, after three days, and 'on the third day' was saying the same thing as 'three days and three nights.'

## Review

So far, we have seen several Scriptural precedents for way of timekeeping our Messiah used when He was prophesying about His coming crucifixion and resurrection.

- The terms our Messiah used regarding '**after three days**,' '**in three days**,' '**the third day**,' and '**on the third day**,' have a Scriptural precedent indicating that they all describe the same period of time.
- Our Messiah began counting the first day on the day that He spoke, 'tomorrow' was second day, and the day after that was '**the third day**.' This is our Messiah's way of showing '**the third day**.'
- Messiah was counting to 'the third day' the same way Yah counted to 'the third day' at Mount Sinai, when our Creator told Moses to tell the people to prepare, because He would come down and meet them on the third day.
- Our Creator gave us two literal definitions of day in Genesis 1:3-5. His first definition of **day** is **light**. The second definition of **day** includes '**day and night**.'
- The Scriptures show that in the minds of Yah's people, a period of time described by a certain number of **days** may also be described by the same number of '**days and nights**.'

With these understandings of the way our Creator counts time, we will begin to compare Scripture with Scripture to see another passage in the New Testament and the way the children of Israel counted time.

## The Apostle Peter & Cornelius

Let us look at the recorded chronology of the story of Cornelius. The outpouring of the Spirit broke down the traditional barrier in the minds of the Jews against those who didn't honor all of the ideas that their religious leaders had added to and diminished from Yah's Word.

1. The story starts in Acts 10:1 – with Cornelius, of whom it is testified that he was a devout man who feared Yah with all his heart, along with his house. He had a vision about the **ninth hour of the day**. The angel told him to send for Simon Peter, and where he was staying in Joppa.
2. In verse 9, in this sequence –**on the morrow** Cornelius' servants travelled to Joppa. And while they were traveling toward the city, Peter went to the housetop to pray at the sixth hour. He had a vision and was perplexed as to the meaning of this vision. In verse 23 – the servants of Cornelius arrive and are invited in to stay overnight, then

3. In verse 24 – Peter leaves with them **the next morning** and they travel together.
4. In verse 25 – **On the morrow** afterward, they entered into Caesarea and Cornelius was waiting for them. In verse 30 – Cornelius tells the people that he was fasting **four days ago** until this hour...

Let us look at a chart of the pertinent verses in this passage below.

Cornelius' Vision	Cornelius' Servants Travel to Joppa	Peter & Cornelius' Servants Travel	Peter Meets Cornelius
Acts 10:1 -3 – A man in named Cornelius in Ceasarea had a vision about the 9 <sup>th</sup> hour (mid-afternoon)	Acts 10:9 – Cornelius' servants travel 'on the morrow' (the next day) & Peter has vision 6 <sup>th</sup> hour  Vs. 23 – Cornelius' servants arrive in Joppa, stay overnight with Peter	Acts 10:23 – 'on the morrow' Peter went away with Cornelius' servants, and brethren travelled with them.	Acts 10:24 – 'on the morrow after they entered Caesarea. And Cornelius waited for them there....  Acts 10:30 – Cornelius says, 'Four days ago I was fasting until this hour...
Third day	Second day (day before yesterday)	First day (yesterday)	We would say 'three days ago,' and count back like this...
Cornelius' 4 <sup>th</sup> day	Day before yesterday = 3 <sup>rd</sup> day	Yesterday = 2 <sup>nd</sup> day	Cornelius counted back like this - Today = 1 <sup>st</sup> day

Cornelius says that 'four days ago' he had a vision. Let us think about the count of days above. If we were saying it in the English culture, we would say that we had a vision three days ago at this time. However, with the way that Cornelius thought and expressed himself, it was 'four days ago.' So let us look at how 'inclusive reckoning' works. 'The **present day**' is the **first day** of the count back, the **day before** was the **second day** of the count back, the **day before that** was the **third day** of the count back, and the **day before that**, which we would call '**three days ago**,' Cornelius called '**four days ago!**'

- When we put this story together, we can see that four days ago in Cornelius' mind would include the day he was speaking. **Four days ago included 3 nights.**
- When we compare this passage with the earlier passages we looked at, where '**three days ago**' was also written as **three days and three nights**, we might consider that this passage would also have been understood as '**four days and four nights**' in the culture that produced it.

- Let us ponder that **‘three days and three nights’** with a Hebrew count, might easily have been understood among them with **the day and night equals one day** – or **any part of one day**.
- Just like the story of Esther, or the story of the hungry servant, the inclusive reckoning of **three days and three nights** in the speech of our Saviour would include any part of what we think of as a 24-hour period relating to a day and night.

With this Scriptural understanding of inclusive reckoning at the foundation of our understanding, we can see that three days and three nights in the heart of the earth does not mean what we might think it means. We can see that our Messiah’s ‘three days and three nights’ can be understood as talking about the same period of time as ‘in three days’, ‘within three days’, and ‘after three days’. Now we can see that ‘the sign of Jonah’ or ‘three days and three nights in the heart of the earth’ may be covered without our Messiah being in the tomb for 72 hours, or for parts of three days and parts of three nights. With this foundation in the Hebrew understanding of inclusive reckoning, let us continue this study to learn more time keeping gems from the Scriptures that will help us understand them better.

## **The Road to Emmaus**

Wouldn’t you have loved to listen into the conversation our Messiah shared with the disciples on the road to Emmaus? They were sad, and shared their hearts with this stranger about what had happened to ‘Jesus’ of Nazareth, whom they trusted would be the One who would redeem Israel.

“And He said unto them, What manner of communications are these that ye have one to another, as ye walk, and are sad? And one of them, whose name was Cleopas, answering said unto him, Art thou only a stranger in Jerusalem, and has not known the things which come to pass there in these days? And he said unto them, What things? And they said unto him, Concerning Yahshua of Nazareth, which was a prophet mighty in deed and the word before Elohim and all the people: and how the chief priests and our rulers delivered him to be condemned to death, and have impaled him. But we trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel: and beside all this, today is the third day since these things were done. Yea, and certain women also of our company made us astonished, which were early at the sepulcher; and when they found not his body, they came, saying, that they had also seen a vision of angels, which said that he was alive. And certain of them which were with us went to the sepulcher, and found it even so as the women had said: but him they saw not.

“Then He said unto them, ‘O fools, and slow of heart to believe (trust) all that the prophets have spoken: Ought not Messiah to have suffered these things and to enter into glory? And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, He expounded unto them in all the scriptures of the things concerning himself.” *Luke 24:17-27*  
 - *Restoration Study Bible*

Wouldn't you have loved to listen in on our Saviour's explanation of how His experience was prophesied in Moses and the prophets? Where were these sufferings referred to? We know that He probably took them through Isaiah 52-53 and the suffering servant, and perhaps the book of Daniel. How else might our Messiah have shown us the prophecy of His crucifixion and resurrection referred to in the book of Moses and all the prophets? Let us look at other testimony.

The Apostle Paul shared a similar story:

“For I delivered unto you first of all that which I received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures.” (I Corinthians 15:3-4)

When we consider that all of these aspects of Christ's death, burial and resurrection on the third day were 'according to the Scriptures,' we may look back on the Scriptures available to them. These Scriptures are what we refer to as the Old Testament. How do the Scriptures show that He would rise again the third day?

### **The Passover Lamb – The Sabbath Rest of Unleavened Bread – The Wavesheaf**

How might we find from the Scriptures when our Messiah would die for our sins and rise again the third day? One way might be found in the representation of the types pointing forward to His mission on the earth. Let us look at Leviticus 23:5-6 & 10-11.

“In the fourteenth day of the first month at even is the LORD's Passover. And on the fifteenth day of the same month is the feast of unleavened bread unto the LORD... then shall ye bring a sheaf of the firstfruits of your harvest unto the priest, and he shall wave the sheaf before the LORD to be accepted for you on the morrow after the Sabbath the priest shall wave it.”

We also find this sequence in Joshua 5:10-12, when the children of Israel kept the Passover on the 14<sup>th</sup> day of the month, ate the old corn of the land on the 15<sup>th</sup>, and the new harvest on the 16<sup>th</sup>, the day of the wavesheaf.

### **New Testament Types Attributed to our Messiah**

Let us compare the type of the Passover, the Sabbath of the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, and the Wavesheaf as a prophecy of our Messiah. We find the apostles referring to these types as representing our Messiah in the New Testament.

“Purge out therefore the old leaven (sin) that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even **Messiah our passover is sacrificed for us**. Therefore **let us keep the feast**, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with **the unleavened bread** of sincerity and truth.” *I Corinthians 5:6-7*

Here we see the Messiah as our Passover Lamb who is sacrificed for us, and are exhorted purge out the old lump of leaven, and to keep the Passover feast with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth. The timing of the death of the Passover lamb is between the evenings.



Our Messiah died between the evenings, or about the 9<sup>th</sup> hour of the 14<sup>th</sup> day of the first month. (Josephus noted that Passover lambs were slain between the 9<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> hours on the day of the Passover.)

Our Messiah was buried, and rested in the tomb on the Sabbath, which was also the first day of the feast of unleavened bread on the 15<sup>th</sup> - ("who did no sin" *Isaiah 53* & *1 Peter 2* – the Sabbath is also a type of resting from our own work and dying to self in obedience to Yah) - and the 'morrow after the Sabbath' or the first day of the week, was the 16<sup>th</sup> day of the first month when the wavesheaf was offered. Our Messiah was 'waved' before Yah as the firstfruits offering (*1 Corinthians 15:23*). The 16<sup>th</sup> is also verified by Josephus as the date of the wavesheaf offering during the first century before the destruction of Jerusalem.

We believe that the spring feast days are 'types' of our Messiah's Passover sacrifice, His rest over the Sabbath, and His resurrection. We believe that this is part of the way He explained the prophecies of His experience of how He was to suffer and be raised again on the third day to the disciples on the road to Emmaus. He fulfilled the types of the feasts, or appointed times, with His representation of the spotless Passover lamb slain between the evenings on the 14<sup>th</sup>, His representation of the Unleavened Bread of Life resting in the tomb on the Sabbath of the 15<sup>th</sup>, and His representation of the wavesheaf or firstfruits offering waved before the Father after He arose on the 16<sup>th</sup>. This will set the foundation for understanding the sequence of events in the synoptic gospels and the apparent discrepancies in the gospel of John.

### ***The Passover***

Let us first look at the recorded commands regarding Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread. We know that our Saviour, who was our example in all things and lived by every word that proceeded from the mouth of Yah, would have honored these directions as long as it was in His power to do so, and would have taught his disciples to do the same.

Leviticus 23:5-11 - "On the **fourteenth day** of the first month, **at even**, is the **LORD's passover**. And on the **fifteenth day** of the same month is the **feast of unleavened bread** unto the LORD; seven days ye must eat unleavened bread. On the first day ye shall have a holy convocation: ye shall do no servile work therein... And ye shall bring a **sheaf of the firstfruits** of your harvest... and wave the sheaf before the LORD: on **the morrow after the Sabbath** thou shalt wave it."

We can see here that:

- the **14<sup>th</sup> day** of the first month, at evening, is the LORD's passover.
- the **15<sup>th</sup> day** is the **first day** of the feast of unleavened bread. On that first day is a holy convocation on which no servile work is to be done, so it is clearly a Sabbath or rest day.
- On **the morrow** after the Sabbath is **the wave sheaf** offering.

Let us look at the directions for the first commanded Passover before the children of Israel left Egypt.

Exodus 12:3- “In **the tenth day** of this month they shall take to them every man a lamb according to the house of their fathers, a lamb for an house: and if the household be too little for the lamb, let him and his neighbor next to his take it according to his eating shall ye make your count for the lamb. Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year: ye shall take it out from the sheep or from the goats: and ye shall keep it up until **the fourteenth day** of the month: and the whole congregation of Israel shall **kill it in the evening**. And they shall take of the blood, and strike it on the two side posts and on the upper door post of the houses, wherein they shall eat it. And they shall eat the flesh in **that night**... and ye shall leave nothing of it remain until the morning; and that which remaineth until morning ye shall burn with fire... And the blood shall be to you for a token upon the houses where ye are; and when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you, when I smite the land of Egypt... **And this day** shall be a memorial; and ye shall keep it a feast unto the LORD throughout all your generations; ye shall keep it a feast by an ordinance forever...”

- **Note above** - On the **fourteenth day of the month at evening** the lamb is to be slain, and the children of Israel were to eat it with their families **that night** - (and **this day** in context is the 14<sup>th</sup> day of the month).

If we were to read this passage above without the traditional idea that the day begins in the evening, the flow of the passage would show that the night of the 14<sup>th</sup> followed the day of the 14<sup>th</sup>, and any of the lamb remaining until morning was to be burnt with fire. ‘**This day** shall be a memorial’, indicates that ‘**the day of the 14<sup>th</sup>**’ includes the **evening** and the **night** – and any leftovers remaining **in the morning (the next day)** are to be burned with fire; is commanded to be kept as an ordinance forever.

We have been doing our best to prayerfully consider all that is written regarding the exodus from Egypt. We see the Torah as the foundation for understanding all the passages that help explain what is written regarding the exodus from Egypt. This is an illustration of what we are seeing.

### Preparation for Passover & Leaving Egypt

14 <sup>th</sup> day		15 <sup>th</sup> day		16 <sup>th</sup> day	
Slay & Prepare Passover Eat family Passover together that night		Burn Leftover Lamb Rest/Convocation Day Travel to Sukkoth		Left Sukkoth Pitched at Ethan at edge of the wilderness	
Day	Night	Day	Night	Day	Night

If you are interested, we have a study on the Scriptural day, which is available upon request. The most comprehensive Scriptural and historical studies we have seen on this issue can be found at this internet address: <http://www.2besaved.com/2BSDayStart.html>

At the present time, we will simply note that we have found the Torah precedent indicates the dates of the Scriptures begin with the morning. This practice ties in the chronology of the sign of Jonah challenge as it relates to our Saviour's 'three days and three nights' in the heart of the earth. This will also make it easier for us to tie together the types and the chronology of the weeks of the Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread.

### **Our Messiah's Torah Precedent**

*"Think not that I am come to destroy the law (torah – the Decalogue or the Pentateuch depending upon the context) or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill. For verily I say unto you, till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled. So whosoever therefore shall break (release) one of these least commandments and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven. But whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. For I say unto you, that except your righteousness exceed that of the scribes and Pharisees, you shall in no case enter the kingdom of heaven."* Matthew 5:17-20

This is our Messiah's Torah precedent. He tells us that those who do and teach the least of the commandments of the law or Torah will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. With this testimony, we can realize that He would not encourage His disciples to disobey Yah's commands recorded in the Torah, or to teach others to do so.

We recognize that the Torah precedent is followed by our Messiah. We may use this as the key to understand His method of observing His Father's appointed times. When we take His own precedent to explain His actions, we find that there is no confusion about the Passover that our Messiah observed, which John called 'the supper.' As we saw earlier, Yah's command was for each family to set aside a qualified lamb on the 10<sup>th</sup>. If the household was too small to eat a whole lamb, they were to share it with another family. They were to slay the lamb between the evenings of the 14<sup>th</sup> and to eat it that night. Our Messiah's attitude toward the Torah, shown above, indicates that He would have honored the Father's command for the men to eat the Passover meal with their families on the night of the 14<sup>th</sup>. We venture to say that if our Messiah had been alive, He would have honored the Passover with His family, as commanded.

John makes it very clear that before the feast of the Passover, our Messiah Yahshua had a special supper with His disciples (*John 13:1*). In their culture, this would have been understood as part of the period of the Passover season – after the lamb had been selected on the 10<sup>th</sup> and before it had been slain on the 14<sup>th</sup>. This 'last supper' appears to be a Passover teaching meal where He gathered with His disciples – which was apparently a common practice among Torah teachers, called rabbis, and their disciples. This Passover gathering, which John describes as a supper before the Passover, was not a substitute for the commanded family gathering to observe the Passover on the 14<sup>th</sup> day of the first month of the Hebrew year. (*See Matthew 26:17, Mark 14:14, & Luke 22:11.*) There appear to be

discrepancies in some details between the synoptic gospels and the gospel of John. Perhaps something has been lost in the translation.

We may trust that the Spirit who inspired the writings and preservation of these texts will teach us how to understand the principles necessary to partake of the divine nature – which is the point of all these gospels. We also trust that He will teach us to harmonize the witnesses' testimonies.

Let us look at the apparent discrepancies with the Greek meanings of words between John and Matthew, Mark, and Luke, called the synoptic gospels, and attempt to tie the records together in such a way that accounts for all of them. Sadly, the translations into English have caused a lot of confusion – perhaps because of the translators' unfamiliarity with the feasts. It seems because of this, John's testimony of our Messiah's experience with the 'Last Supper' is overlooked or discounted. Let us look at what John says, and then see if there is a way the synoptic gospels can compliment his story, rather than contradict it.

Now before the feast of the Passover, Jesus ... And the supper being ended...  
John 13:1-2

This word 'before' is from the Greek word **pro**, which means 'in front of', or 'prior to'. John's testimony is often overlooked in favor of the synoptic gospels. Is there a way to read the synoptic gospels that doesn't contradict John's testimony?

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

Please note that 'day' and 'feast of' are supplied. The word translated 'first' is derived from the Greek **protos**, and may mean 'before in time' in this context. This passage would be better rendered '***now before the time of unleavened bread***' to fit into the chronology that is shown in the gospel of John.

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

The Greek word **protos** means 'foremost' or 'before in time'. This passage would have been better rendered '***before the day of unleavened bread.***' This was written to those who weren't as familiar with the Hebrew practices, so Mark explains 'Before the day of unleavened bread when they killed the Passover...' We don't necessarily need the comma between bread and when – and it isn't there in the Greek. The day the Hebrews killed the Passover and began eating unleavened bread is the 14<sup>th</sup> day of the first month. They kill the Passover between the evenings, and that night they eat the Passover lamb with unleavened bread (*Exodus 12:6, 18 & Leviticus 23:5-6*).

Then came the day of unleavened bread when the Passover must be killed.  
Luke 22:7

'Day' is derived from the Greek **hemera**. This word is literally defined as

- “‘the time space between dawn and dark’, or
- ‘the whole 24 hours’ or figuratively, and in this context,
- ‘a period’ (always defined more or less clearly by the context)”. In this context, ‘day’ refers to the period or season of the Passover.

We understand the season of the Passover to include the period of time between when the Passover lamb was set aside on the 10<sup>th</sup> day of the month (as commanded in Exodus 12:6), through the 14<sup>th</sup> day of the first month when the Passover lamb was killed and eaten with unleavened bread; and in some contexts, to extend through the whole Feast of Unleavened Bread from the 15<sup>th</sup> day through the 21<sup>st</sup> day of the first month.

<b>Comparing the Gospels - The Passover, Unleavened Bread &amp; The Last Supper</b>	
John 13:1-2 <b>pro</b> = before, in front of, prior to	Now <b>before</b> the feast of the Passover, Jesus ... And the supper being ended...
Matthew 26:1  <b>protos</b> = first or before in time	Now the first <i>day of the feast of</i> unleavened bread the disciples came to Jesus, saying unto him, Where wilt thou that we prepare for thee to eat the Passover? (day & feast are italicized and not in the original text) Better translated: <b><i>'now before the time of unleavened bread'</i></b>
Mark 14:14  <b>protos</b> = first or before in time	And the first day of unleavened bread, when they killed the Passover, his disciples said unto him, Where wilt thou that we go and prepare that thou mayest eat the Passover? Better translated: <b><i>'before the day of unleavened bread when they killed the Passover'</i></b>
Luke 22:11  <b>Hemera</b> = day or a period (defined by context)	Then came the day of unleavened bread when the Passover must be killed.  Better translated: <b><i>'then came the period of unleavened bread when the Passover must be killed'</i></b>

The simple adjustments to understand the texts above to be complimentary, rather than contradictory stories are all well within the meanings of the Greek words used in each verse. We can see that John's testimony of the Last Supper, before our Messiah was killed on the day of the feast of Passover, ties all the passages together perfectly.

The meal referred to as the Passover in the synoptic gospels that Christ ate with His disciples was called ‘the supper’ by John. This differentiated it from the Passover meal on the 14<sup>th</sup> that the disciples were commanded to eat with their families, according to Yah’s commandment in the Torah.

With this understanding in place, we have a better foundation for reconstructing the timing of the Last Supper and the Passover.

- Our Messiah’s Last Supper mentioned in John would be on the evening of the 13<sup>th</sup>. He was captured in the Garden of Gethsemane the night of the 13<sup>th</sup>. He was taken to Annas first (*John 18:12-13*), then taken to Caiphas (*John 18:24*).
- In the early morning, the Sanhedrin led Him to the judgment hall of Pilate but wouldn’t go in themselves because they would be observing the Passover that day (*John 18:28; Matthew 27:1, Mark 15:1; Luke 22:66 & 23:1*). John tells us that our Saviour was condemned about the sixth hour, (which was either Roman time about 6 am in the morning, or approximately 11:30 am -12:30 pm, the way we think of time) on the preparation of the Passover (*John 19:14*).
- It would be difficult for our Saviour to be on the cross before He was condemned at the sixth hour. Perhaps there was a copyist’s error in Mark with the third hour, since no other gospel writer uses that time to identify anything special happening.

Below is a chart comparing the scriptures.

13 <sup>th</sup> - Last Supper	Preparation for Passover - 14 <sup>th</sup>	High Sabbath 15 <sup>th</sup>	The Wavesheaf 16 <sup>th</sup>
<b>Evening</b> - John 13:1 Last Supper  <b>Night</b> - Garden of Gethsemane  <b>Capture-</b>  <b>Annas</b> - John 18:12-13  <b>Caiphas</b> - John 8:24	<b>Early Morning</b> <b>John 19:14</b> Pilate’s Hall - Sanhedrin stays out- Passover day <b>John 18:28</b> <b>Matthew 27:1</b> <b>Mark 15:1</b> <b>Luke 22:66 &amp; 23:1</b>  <b>About 6<sup>th</sup> hour</b> - condemned (John) then hung on the cross  <b>Noon Eclipse</b>	Our Messiah rested in the tomb on the Sabbath day  Still in tomb that night	Our Messiah was risen when Mary arrived  He said He must ascend to the Father  On the road to Emmaus with disciples in the afternoon on <b>the</b> <b>first day</b> of the week  He explains to them through

	<p><b>It is finished -</b>  9<sup>th</sup> hour -  Passover lambs  slain -  evening sacrifice</p> <p>Messiah -Passover  Lamb - &amp; the  evening sacrifice</p> <p>Put into tomb</p>		Scriptures how He fulfilled prophecy
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Regardless of the apparent discrepancy regarding our Messiah's time on the cross, we can be secure that what we need for understanding and walking in the joy of our salvation is included in these gospels. We learn the nature of our Heavenly Father's heart toward us - walked out in human flesh. We learn that our Messiah gave us this time on earth and the Scriptural record so that we may be One with Him and with one another - just as He and the Father are One! His heart's prayer included this request:

*"I in them, and Thou in Me, that they may be made perfect in One – that the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me, and hath loved them as Thou hast loved Me."* John 17:21-23

We believe that the Messianic types of the Passover – the slain Lamb on the 14<sup>th</sup> day of the first month, the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, the 15<sup>th</sup> – which is a Sabbath day according to the Scriptures – and the Wavesheaf offering on the day after the Sabbath, also recorded as the first day of the week – were fulfilled in Yahshua's life, death and resurrection. Yah does everything on time, and we may learn timekeeping gems by noting the way He fulfilled these appointed times.

For those who are thinking about what you read, please ponder how our Messiah could have eaten the Passover lamb with His disciples on the evening of the 14<sup>th</sup>, and then be slain between the evenings with the Passover lambs the next afternoon?

With these first three annual feasts, or appointed times, finding their fulfillment in our Messiah 'on time' according to Old Testament types in prophecy, we understand that the disciples were preparing a chamber in Jerusalem for the Passover/Feast of Unleavened Bread where they could gather together during the whole period of the high holy days.

Our Saviour cried 'It is finished' about the time of the slaying of the Passover lambs – which was between the ninth and eleventh hours of the day on the 14<sup>th</sup> day of the first month according to Josephus. This is the type. He was taken off the cross and put into the tomb,

because the Torah commands that someone may not be left overnight on a tree (*Deuteronomy 21:22-23*). Yahshua was in the tomb on the night of the 14<sup>th</sup>, through the day of the 15<sup>th</sup> and night of the 15<sup>th</sup>. Then on the morning of the 16<sup>th</sup> the tomb was empty. He was apparently raised around dawn on the day of the wavesheaf offering. So here we have the fulfillment of our Saviour's prophecy – *"Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up"* (John 2:14). Just as Cornelius' four days counted back and included three nights, so our Saviour's count of three days included two nights. As we saw, with inclusive reckoning, this way of counting fulfills the Saviour's prophesy of His experience.

For those who see the "three days and three nights in the heart of the earth" as an idiomatic expression, this time may have begun when our Saviour was captured on the night of the 13<sup>th</sup>, then the day of the 14<sup>th</sup>, the night of the 14<sup>th</sup>, the day of the 15<sup>th</sup>, and the night of the 15<sup>th</sup> are included in the three days and three nights. We have seen that any part of a day and night period is considered as 'day and night' in inclusive reckoning. This Passover 14<sup>th</sup> – Sabbath/Feast of Unleavened Bread 15<sup>th</sup> – Wavesheaf 16<sup>th</sup> may be seen as a fulfillment of the sign of Jonah as well as our Saviour's prophecy to *'Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.'*

We have found no indication in the early church writings that there was a stretch of three literal twelve hour days and three literal twelve hour nights or 72 hours during the time our Saviour was in the grave.

### **Reasons for the Variations**

With all the evidence that we have seen for inclusive reckoning in the Scriptures, as shown in this study, we might wonder why anyone might emphasize a literal three days and three nights for our Messiah's time in the grave. This seems to be a relatively new idea, historically speaking. Let us look at some recent history to answer this question.

The Millerites in the early Advent movement taught that Daniel's 490 year prophecy of 70 weeks began in 457 BC (*Daniel 9:24*). This put the year that our Messiah was 'cut off' in the midst of the 69<sup>th</sup> week of years in AD 31. This year has been taught and accepted in various Sabbath keeping churches for generations. The Seventh-day Adventist [SDA] church and the Worldwide Church of God [WCG] have both taught that in history, the year of our Messiah's death and resurrection was AD 31.

The challenge comes in for those of the SDA persuasion when we realize that the tradition of the Friday crucifixion, Saturday Sabbath, and Sunday resurrection doesn't seem to work for the year AD 31. When we use the moon calculator to find the moon phases for the spring months of AD 31 and calculate back an uninterrupted seven-day cycle like our modern week, the time of the full moon for the Passover-14<sup>th</sup>/FUB-15<sup>th</sup>/Wavesheaf-16<sup>th</sup> is often considered to have been a Wednesday or Thursday crucifixion. Sir Isaac Newton originally thought the year AD 31 would be the right year for the crucifixion because of Daniel's prophecy. He calculated the moon's cycle back to AD 31 and realized that it wouldn't support the traditional Friday-Saturday-Sunday crucifixion/resurrection sequence, so he selected a different year that seemed to allow for it.

Although it appears that the big picture of the Scriptures supports the view of a 14<sup>th</sup>/15<sup>th</sup>/16<sup>th</sup>



time period – when we assume that the ‘Christian planetary week’, with Saturday as the seventh day, was operating during that time, it simply doesn’t work. We find a serious discrepancy when we try to superimpose the modern week over the moon cycles for the first couple of months of the Hebrew calendar in AD 31.

The Worldwide Church of God and other Saturday Sabbatarians have recognized that AD 31 doesn’t work for a Friday-Saturday-Sunday crucifixion/resurrection scenario. The ‘sign of Jonah’ doctrine is taught as an indication of the true gospel, and the Friday crucifixion and Sunday resurrection is seen as a pagan teaching of those who have accepted a false gospel.

The most common understanding among those who know about the above challenge and believe that AD 31 is the year of our Messiah’s crucifixion, is a Wednesday crucifixion and Saturday night resurrection to make up the three days and three nights or 72 hours ‘in the heart of the earth’ or the grave.

What will those of us who believe that AD 31 was the year of the crucifixion do with this timekeeping challenge? As we saw in the first section of this study, our Messiah used inclusive reckoning for the third day and the Scriptures give clear evidence for it in many examples. The prophetic timing of the Passover - 14<sup>th</sup>, Sabbath of Unleavened Bread - 15<sup>th</sup>, and Wavesheaf - 16<sup>th</sup>, doesn’t work when we superimpose the modern week back on AD 31. Let dig in further to learn more about AD 31 and how the calendars work together.

### **The Moon is a Faithful Witness (Psalm 89:37 & Proverbs 14:5)**

The moon has cycled predictably back to the time of our Messiah. Calendar calculations may superimpose the Julian ‘Christian’ planetary week back on AD 31. Whether the new moon calculation of the conjunction method or the first visible crescent method is used to begin the month makes little difference in the outcome. The full moon of the crucifixion lines up for the middle of that superimposed Christian planetary week. This would be a Tuesday, Wednesday, or Thursday that year, depending upon the new moon calculation (conjunction or first visible crescent) and whether the first or second month around the time of the equinox is selected. This would indicate that the Friday/Saturday/Sunday crucifixion and resurrection doesn’t work for AD 31!

The Scriptures clearly show us that our Messiah used inclusive reckoning to count days, to prophesy, and to explain His crucifixion and resurrection. The ‘Last Supper’ of John was on the 13<sup>th</sup>, preparation day/Passover was on the 14<sup>th</sup>, the high Sabbath of the Feast of Unleavened Bread was on the 15<sup>th</sup>, and our Saviour was raised around dawn on the first day of the week – the 16<sup>th</sup>, or the wavesheaf, which was the day after the Sabbath. His explanation and method of counting would preclude adding the 17<sup>th</sup> to cover ‘three days & three nights.’ So the other alternative offered also doesn’t work.

How can we deal with this cognitive dissonance? We may not have had any reason to question and search out this issue before, because we didn’t realize there was a problem.

Is there any Scriptural way that this apparent conflict between the calendar record and nature may be resolved? Yes!

Everything is not as it appears to be on the surface. Something is missing from this picture! Please bear with us as we examine more of the timekeeping practices of the Romans and the children of Israel during the time of our Messiah. We will dig deeper into Scriptures and history to learn more about the timekeeping practices that this apparent discrepancy reveals.

### **Examining Timekeeping Gems**

We would like to offer a solution that uncovers another timekeeping gem. All seventh-day Sabbatarians who have a little bit of understanding of the modern weekly cycle with its Sunday/first day thru Saturday/seventh day sequence will tell you that the change from the Julian calendar to the Gregorian calendar in the 1500's did not make a difference in the days of the week. This is historically accurate.

We tend to assume that the modern Roman week has gone back to the time of our Messiah, and the seventh day we observe today is the same one that He observed. However, there are several historical bits of information that have been overlooked in this assumption.

*["The early Romans observed an eight-day market week... The planetary week was at first preeminent, and made the use of planetary names, based on names of pagan deities, and continued even after Constantine made the Christian week, beginning on Sunday, official in the civil calendar." The Columbia Encyclopedia, 2001, art. Week.](#)*

### **The Roman Civil Calendar in Messiah's Time**

What is being said above regarding the calendars in Christ's time that we may have overlooked and not have realized before?

- The Romans observed an eight-day market week (not the modern 'Christian week' we observe today). This was officially noted on their civil calendar.
- The 'Christian' week we observe today (with Sunday as the first day of the week) became official on Constantine's calendar. (This wasn't until AD 321.)
- The 'planetary week' based on the names of pagan deities was in use by the early Romans, and continued to be used by the Romans after Constantine made the 'Christian week' official on the civil calendar.
- This indicates that 'the planetary week' was in use during the time that the eight-day market week was in use, but was not official on the Roman calendar.

We will note the distinction made between the planetary week and the Christian week above, and see what the planetary week looked like before Constantine brought in the modern 'Christian' week that started with Sunday.

Please prayerfully consider that there is a distinction between the modern Christian week we

are familiar with today, and the planetary week with the names of pagan deities that was in use before Constantine. Many folks mingle them both in their minds, and assume that the 'Christian planetary week' that we use today, which begins with Sunday and has Saturday as the seventh day, is the same as the 'pagan planetary week' during the time of Christ.

### ***The Roman Republic & Imperial Rome***

Let us familiarize ourselves with the timekeeping methods of the Romans during the time of our Messiah. Below, we will look at a reconstruction of the Roman fasti (calendar) that was being used before the Julian calendar. It was found in Nero's Atrium and dated about 60 BC. Julius Caesar changed the calendar in 46 BC.

The picture of the fasti below (pg. 27) shows the Roman months, and the days of the months indicated by the letters A thru H. These letters followed continuously throughout the lunar year, so the Roman week was essentially an eight-day uninterrupted cycle. The months had to be intercalated every so often to keep the Roman lunar-solar calendar on track with the seasons, but for various reasons, that wasn't always done in a timely fashion. That may be one of the reasons that Julius Caesar decided to change the Roman calendar in 46 BC.



The pivotal things to note with this calendar are that there is an intercalary month included in this year, and that the letters A, B, C, D, E, F, G, & H do not reset with every month. They continue from one month to the next during the twelve months. Although the Roman numerals at the bottom seem to indicate the number of days in the month, when you count the letters A-H, they don't always represent the number at the bottom of the column. The letter beside the letter of the week day in the left side of the column tells what was and was not being done that day.

Other fasti are not as easy to read as the one above. Julius Caesar continued the practice of the eight-day market week, so all Roman civil calendars had an eight-day market week

during the time of our Messiah. Let us look at another explanation of the calendar.

*“The Roman Republic, like the Etruscans, used a "market week" of eight days, marked as A to H in the calendar. A market was held on the eighth day. For the Romans, who counted inclusively, this was every ninth day, hence the market became called "nundinae".*

*“The modern seven-day week came into use during the early imperial period, after the Julian calendar came into effect, apparently stimulated by immigration from the Roman East. For a while it coexisted alongside the old 8-day nundinal cycle, and fasti are known which show both cycles. It was finally given official status by Constantine in 321.”* <http://www.crystalinks.com/romecalendar.html>

Let us note some of the claims made above that are confirmed in what we have seen earlier.

- The Roman Republic used an eight-day market week, marked A to H on the calendar.
- The eight-day market week continued during the early imperial period after the Julian calendar came into effect.

Let us note a widespread assumption in this text that leads to our use of the modern week to learn when our Messiah was crucified.

- It appears that the ‘modern’ seven-day week was in use during the early Julian calendar – according to this source.
- The idea that the ‘modern’ week was in use during the time of Imperial Rome is supported with the claim that fasti are known to show both cycles.
- This quote above verifies that the ‘modern’ seven-day week was not actually part of the official Roman calendar until Constantine introduced it in AD 321. This is a long time after our Messiah walked the earth.

This is why we have had a problem making the year AD 31 work as the year of our Messiah’s crucifixion with all the available evidence. We have assumed that the ‘modern’ week, also called the ‘Christian planetary week’, is the same as the earlier pagan planetary week, although another source quote on pg. 26 indicates that there is a difference between them. We will look at the ‘planetary week’ and see how it is different from the ‘modern week’.

Note the claim above that the modern week existed alongside the old 8-day nundinal cycle, and fasti are known which show both cycles. We have been searching and asking for years to find a copy of the fasti that actually support the claim to show the ‘modern week’ alongside the market week, but have yet to find one. If the reader has found a copy, please share it!

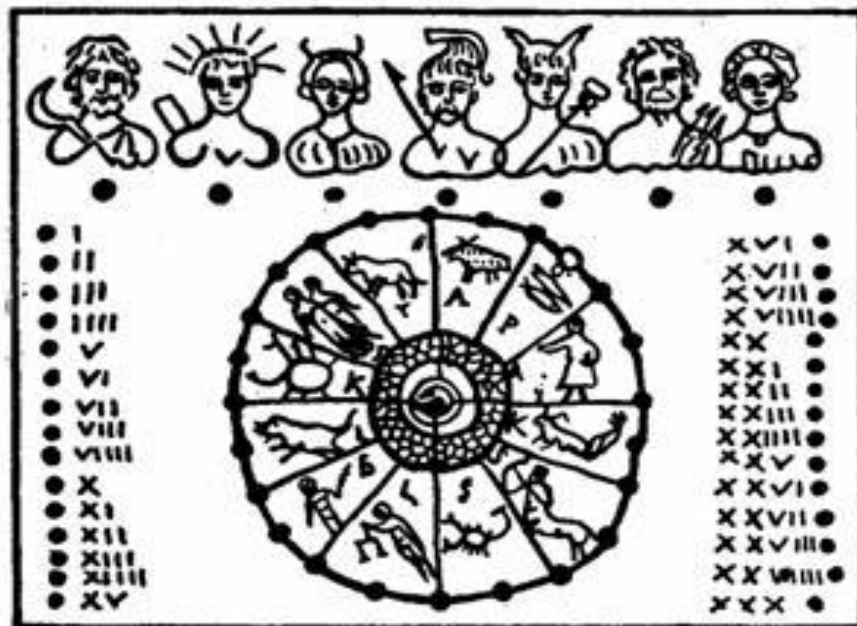
## Fasti Discovered at the Baths of Titus

Fasti are known to show that the Roman Empire used both the civil eight-day market week and the 'modern' Christian planetary week, according to the quotation on page 27.

The fasti that was found in the Baths of Titus, and is dated AD 79-81, is used to support the claim that the modern week or Christian planetary week was in use before Constantine made it official on the Roman calendar. We may make assumptions about what this fasti indicates because of what is claimed for it. However, let us look at a drawing of this fasti to see what it is indicating.

The diagram below (on page 29) is a drawing of a stick calendar that looks like the fasti found in the Baths of Titus. Note all the black dots underneath the pictures at the top, beside the Roman numerals on each side, and bordering each section of the zodiac in the center. The person using the calendar would put a stick in the appropriate holes to note how the several ways of keeping track of time coincided. These are the questions answered by the 'keeper' of the calendar.

What month of the year or section of the zodiac is the sun in? What day of the lunar month does the moon indicate we are in? What day of the planetary week are we in?



At the top of this reproduction of the fasti found in the Baths of Titus, we see representations of the pagan planetary gods. The first picture on the left is Saturn – who is represented with the sickle, and was honored on the first day of the pagan planetary week. The second picture represents the sun, with rays emanating from his head. The third is the moon with horns representing the crescent, then come Mars, Jupiter, Mercury, and Venus, as the fourth, fifth, sixth and seventh days of the week, respectively. This is a representation of the 'pagan planetary week,' which is referred to as separate and distinct from the modern Christian week that begins on Sunday, in the earlier quotations on page 26 of this article.



In the center of the fasti, we see a circle with the twelve signs of the zodiac. A stick is inserted in the holes of each section telling which is the appropriate day, date of the month, and zodiac sign. There are thirty days in Roman numerals recorded here as belonging to each month in each sign of the zodiac. Please note that there are not thirty-one Roman numerals, as one might expect if the Roman calendar was being noted. This causes one to wonder how this fasti might be used to show the Roman calendar alongside it.

The representative Roman fasti illustrated in the section above also uses letters A – H on an uninterrupted cycle to show the market days. We don't see any evidence of that here. This fasti looks like a simple way for the people who observed the lights in the heavens to keep track of time. Regardless of the claims for it by various sources, we do not see how the Roman calendar and the modern week could both be represented on this fasti.

At the top of this fasti are drawings of the gods of the pagan planetary week. On the surface, this might cause a person to suspect that the Christian planetary week we have today was being used by folks in the Roman Empire after the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70. Let us dig deeper into history to see what else is said about the planetary week that might amend the assumptions claimed for the modern or Christian planetary week during the early centuries of this era.

### **The Roman Saturn's Day & The Hebrew Sabbath**

Roman historians referring to battles with the Jews, both before and after Julius Caesar changed the calendar in 46 BC, claim that the Jews were not fighting offensively on Saturn's day, and that is why they were defeated in battle. Jewish records of history indicate that the Jews wouldn't fight offensively on the Sabbath. It appears that in history, the Romans were aware of the pagan planetary week. They observed that the Judeans (translated 'Jews' today) were honoring the Sabbath on day that the Romans recognized as Saturn's day.

Another perplexity that challenges our understanding of history and the modern week comes up when we recognize what Dio Cassius, the Roman historian who lived around AD 150-220, wrote about the pagan planetary week. He said that Saturn's day (Saturday) was the first day of the week, and that Venus' day (Friday) was the seventh day of the week. This testimony coincides with what we noted on the fasti that was found in the baths of Titus. We saw there that Saturn was the first drawing in the line of seven, representing the days of the planetary week.

How might this understanding of the Roman timekeeping practices work with our idea that the children of Israel have always kept Saturday – the seventh day of the week? How could they have been honoring the modern week with the seventh-day Sabbath when Saturn's day was the first day of the pagan planetary week? We explore this concept more completely with documentation you can trace back for yourself in the article [\*'The Sabbath in History – Taking up the Sabbath Challenge'\*](#) which available upon request.

### **A Different Way of Reckoning Time**

We have been given a timekeeping challenge through the Scriptures and history to encourage us to study and dig deeper. The Hebrew timekeeping practices of Sabbath-

keeping during the first century confirm a three day period from our Messiah's death to His resurrection, as He prophesied. If you would like to see how the Romans looked at the Jews and said that they honored Saturn's day on the first day of the week – but Josephus said it was the seventh day or Sabbath – that perplexity may be cleared up for you in the article mentioned above.

If you have any questions or comments, or would like to read more about 'The Original Timepiece,' our contact information is below.

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