

Christ'S Death, Resurrection, And Ascension

Psalms 22-24

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This past Friday, as we commemorated the Passover, the world was celebrating Good Friday in various ways. The banks and stores were closed and people had the day off from work. Supposedly that day was the anniversary of our Savior's crucifixion. That is what traditional Christianity teaches and believes.

Tomorrow at dawn, which is 6:51 a.m. here in Charlotte, they will celebrate Easter. For the past few days our local meteorologists have been announcing the sunrise time and will continue to do so until tomorrow. This is when they say that Jesus rose from the dead.

Obviously, because we are sitting here today on the first Day of Unleavened Bread, we think that they have it all wrong. Now if our dates are correct, Jesus of Nazareth—the Christ, our Savior, our Redeemer, the Messiah—died 1,964 years ago on the day of the Passover, Nisan 14.

Three days later, at the end of the Sabbath, He was resurrected to eternal life by our Father in heaven. The following morning, on the day of the wavesheaf offering, Jesus ascended to heaven as our High Priest and Savior. He was there accepted before God.

The reason that I have gone through these things so specifically is that it is no mistake—no coincidence, no trick of the calendar—that these events happened on these particular days.

In the booklet that I wrote, *After Three Days*, I piece together the time frame of Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection. I discuss there that He died on the Passover, was resurrected on the Sabbath, and that He ascended to heaven at the time of the waving of the sheaf offering. But I really did not go into why these events happened at that those specific times. Simply stated it is because they perfectly fulfilled the types given in the Old Testament.

But I would like to go into these in a bit more detail. We are going to look at three consecutive Psalms of David as a way to tie together these three fulfillments of Christ's death, burial, and resurrection. These were written nearly 1,000 years before their fulfillment in Christ. I believe they were purposely consecutive in the Bible because they show us the succession of occurrences quite beautifully.

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They foretell tell the death, resurrection, and ascension to glory of our Messiah. And they do it in quite fine detail. When we are finished we will hopefully look at least one of these Psalms in a slightly different manner than you did before.

This takes place two days before Jesus fulfilled the Passover:

Matthew 26:2 "You know that after two days is the Passover, and the Son of Man will be delivered up to be crucified."

We simply used this to show that He was crucified on the Passover. And if you need any further proof of that, John shows that it was preparation day for a High Day, the First Day of Unleavened Bread. And obviously preparation for the first day of Unleavened Bread was the Passover.

John 19:31 Therefore, because it was the Preparation Day, that the bodies should not remain on the cross on the Sabbath (for that Sabbath was a high day), the Jews asked Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away.

So they had to take down the bodies. Without a doubt Jesus was crucified—He died on Passover day, Nisan 14.

I Corinthians 5:7 For indeed Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us.

Here He is named specifically as our Passover.

Revelation 13:8 All who dwell on the earth will worship him, whose names have not been written in the Book of Life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.

John 1:29 The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, "Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!"

We see that Jesus is called the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. John the Baptist, when he first saw Him after he had begun his ministry, saw Him approaching for

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baptism at the River Jordan. And he said, "Behold the Lamb of God which takes away the sins of the world." You could see in these verses, in these three specifically, that there is a very strong connection between Jesus and the lamb that is killed at Passover.

Let us look at Exodus 12 where the account of the lamb being picked and slain at Passover is rehearsed:

Exodus 12:3-14 "Speak to all the congregation of Israel, saying: 'On the tenth *day* of this month every man shall take for himself a lamb, according to the house of *his* father, a lamb for a household. And if the household is too small for the lamb, let him and his neighbor next to his house take *it* according to the number of the persons; according to each man's need you shall make your count for the lamb. Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year. You may take *it* from the sheep or from the goats. Now you shall keep it until the fourteenth day of the same month. Then the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it at twilight. And they shall take *some* of the blood and put *it* on the two doorposts and on the lintel of the houses where they eat it. Then they shall eat the flesh on that night; roasted in fire, with unleavened bread *and* with bitter *herbs* they shall eat it. Do not eat it raw, nor boiled at all with water, but roasted in fire—its head with its legs and its entrails. You shall let none of it remain until morning, and what remains of it until morning you shall burn with fire. And thus you shall eat it: *with* a belt on your waist, your sandals on your feet, and your staff in your hand. So you shall eat it in haste. It *is* the Lord's Passover. For I will pass through the land of Egypt on that night, and will strike all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment: I *am* the Lord. Now the blood shall be a sign for you on the houses where you *are*. And when I see the blood, I will pass over you; and the plague shall not be on you to destroy *you* when I strike the land of Egypt. So this day shall be to you a memorial; and you shall keep it as a feast to the Lord throughout your generations. You shall keep it as a feast by an everlasting ordinance.

Notice in verse 3 that on the tenth day each person was to take a lamb for himself. In verse 5 we see that the lamb was to be without blemish, a male of the first year.

Think of Jesus when you look at these instructions. It could be either from the sheep or the goats. Jesus is a type of both sheep and goat. Remember in the atonement offering that one of the two goats typified Jesus. He was represented as a goat in that

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ceremony.

We are told that the lamb was to be kept until the 14th day of the same month and that it was then to have been killed at twilight. This was done by slitting its throat. They were then to take some of the blood and smear it on the doorposts and lintel of the houses where they would be eating the Passover.

So we see that the innocent lamb actually bled to death. This was how it died. Scripture says that the bones were not to be broken. It was to be roasted whole. Remember that Jesus' bones were not broken either.

We see in all these things that Jesus was the perfect antitype of this lamb that was slain at the Passover service. The blood was put on the lintel and on the doorpost as a sign for the death angel to pass over that house. And he was not to kill the firstborn who were inside. By means of the blood that was smeared on the lintel and the doorposts they were saved from the tenth plague—the plague of the death of the firstborn. It was the blood of the lamb that redeemed them. It bought back the firstborn of Israel. Otherwise, they would have been killed.

Jesus' ghastly death—the terrible scourging He endured—did the same thing for us. It bought us back. It redeemed us. The Protestants say He died of a broken heart. That is not true. Like the Passover lamb, He bled to death. His blood spilled onto the earth and He expired as an innocent and pure Man. He had never sinned—just like that lamb without blemish and without spot.

So we call Him our Savior. And we call Him our Redeemer. Once we accept Him as our Savior—because He was sinless and He died for us—His blood covers our sins. He redeems us from the second death—from that death angel.

We are the firstborn. He is the Firstborn among many brethren and we are called the firstfruits. We are the firstfruits of spiritual Israel that are protected from that death angel—or the second death.

Now as Mr. Armstrong said many times, God often works in dual stages. And that is just what I have shown you here. First we had the type of the lamb slain at Passover, and then we had the antitype or the perfect fulfillment in Jesus Christ.

For the type of the Passover lamb to be fulfilled perfectly and completely in the antitype of Jesus Christ, His crucifixion and death had to occur on Nissan 14. There is no other day in which the type would have been fulfilled because that is the day of the Passover.

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Now let us study those consecutive Psalms to which I was referring. We are going to look at Psalm 22, Psalm 23, and Psalm 24. And we will examine the types and the fulfillments of the death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus Christ.

Psalm 22 begins with the exact words that Jesus said when He was on the cross and all the sins of the world were put upon Him. God forsook Him because He cannot abide sin.

Psalm 22:1 My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me? Why are You so far from helping Me, and from the words of My groaning?

Now this was written, like I said, about 1,000 years before Christ died. If you know anything about the history of the Middle East, you know that crucifixion was not practiced in the region at this time. It was the Romans that brought this form of execution into prominence as a way to dispose of their enemies. They would line the roads with stakes and crosses on which they would hang their enemies as an example for the rest of the world to see.

But they did not start their murderous rush through the ancient Middle East and Europe until the first century B.C. So we see that, some 900 years before it became common practice, David wrote about crucifixion.

As we go through this Psalm, we will also see a few other things that Jesus fulfilled.

Psalm 22:3 But You are holy, Who inhabit the praises of Israel.

Just think of Christ on the cross, or on the stake, however you want to look at it. He asks, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?" And then He thinks of the God Who is Holy! He is the object of all our praise!

He is not worthy to have God with Him. God is Holy and cannot stand sin. So He says:

Psalm 22:6-8 But I am a worm, and no man; a reproach of men, and despised by the people. All those who see Me ridicule Me; they shoot out the lip, they shake the head, saying, "He trusted in the Lord, let Him rescue Him; let Him deliver Him, since He delights in Him!"

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Do you remember what the mob said when Jesus was on the cross? They mocked and yelled out, "He said He was the Messiah! He said He was the Son of God! Why do you not bring yourself down?" This is exactly the fulfillment of this prophecy.

Psalm 22:14-15 I am poured out like water, and all My bones are out of joint; my heart is like wax; it has melted within Me. My strength is dried up like a potsherd, and My tongue clings to My jaws; You have brought Me to the dust of death.

Christ is still hanging on the stake. Remember that He asked for more water?

Psalm 22:16 For dogs have surrounded Me....

"Dogs" is a common term used by Jews in the first century in reference to Gentiles. And He was surrounded there at the foot of the cross, the foot of the stake, by Roman soldiers.

Psalm 22:16-17 The congregation of the wicked has enclosed Me. They pierced My hands and My feet; I can count all My bones. They look and stare at Me.

He was so badly scourged that His flesh was ripped open! He could actually see His bones! Besides that His arms were pulled over His head so that the whole diaphragm was lifted up. The bones would be very visible even if the skin had not been broken.

Psalm 22:18 They divide My garments among them, and for My clothing they cast lots.

Those who have recorded the gospels frequently quote from this Psalm. In Matthew 26, and in some of the other accounts of His crucifixion, this Psalm is quoted to show that Jesus perfectly fulfilled this type.

In the latter part of the Psalm we have listed for us the blessings and the hopes which are ours—and, yes, Jesus Christ's, too—as the result of His dying on the cross!

Psalms 22:26-27 The poor shall eat and be satisfied; those who seek Him

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will praise the Lord. Let your heart live forever! All the ends of the world shall remember and turn to the Lord, and all the families of the nations shall worship before You.

Can you not see what His death has accomplished—and will accomplish?

Psalm 22:28-31 For the kingdom is the Lord's, and He rules over the nations. All the prosperous of the earth shall eat and worship; all those who go down to the dust shall bow before Him, even he who cannot keep himself alive. A posterity [this is us] shall serve Him. It will be recounted of the Lord to the next generation, they will come and declare His righteousness to a people who will be born, that He has done this.

I am doing that here—recounting the Lord and declaring His righteousness to God's people, the "generations" alive today!

So Jesus fulfilled all of these prophecies as the perfect Lamb of God. He took upon Himself the sins of all humanity and paid the penalty of death for us all. When we accept Him as our personal Savior we are freed from our appointment with that death angel, as it were, the second death. We can then receive God's precious gift of eternal life. This could not have been accomplished, completely and fully, unless it occurred on the Passover Day.

Now let us examine the fulfillment of Christ's resurrection on the Sabbath, when the wavesheaf was cut. In Leviticus 23 we find the scriptures summarizing God's holy days and festivals.

Leviticus 23:10-11 "Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: 'When you come into the land which I give to you, and reap its harvest, then you shall bring a sheaf of the firstfruits of your harvest to the priest. He shall wave the sheaf before the Lord, to be accepted on your behalf; on the day after the Sabbath the priest shall wave it.'

And we will look at one scripture in Deuteronomy.

Deuteronomy 16:9 You shall count seven weeks for yourself; begin to count the seven weeks from the time you begin to put the sickle to the grain.

If you study these passages together you will see that the waving of the sheaf occurred on the day after the weekly Sabbath that fell during the Days of Unleavened Bread. We are in the Sabbath that occurs during the Days of Unleavened Bread today. Tomorrow would be the wavesheaf offering.

It does not say here, specifically, in the Bible, when the wavesheaf was cut. But it must have happened sometime before it was waved. Otherwise, you would have to be on the ground to try and shake it. You could not bring it to the temple that way.

We have long understood that Jesus fulfilled the waving of the sheaf at His ascension. But it has not been emphasized that He also fulfilled the type of the wave sheaf *cutting* upon being resurrected.

During the second temple period, when Jesus died, the sheaf was reaped from the field as the Sabbath ended and Sunday began. This is according to the Mishna and is called *ben ha arbayim*, I believe. It was the time at dusk when one day was ending and the other was beginning.

The Mishna (a record of all the services and small observances that the Jews did and the directions for doing them) says this: "Rabbi Hananiah, prefect of the priest, says it [meaning the barley] was reaped on the Sabbath. He [that is the priest] says to them, 'Shall I reap on this Sabbath?' And they [it was a kind of chorus that had gathered around: the other priests, the Levites, and other spectators] shall say, 'Yes.' "

He repeated this three times. Shall I reap on this Sabbath? Yes! Shall I reap on this Sabbath? Yes! Shall I reap on this Sabbath? Yes!

With this sickle? Yes! With this sickle? Yes! With this sickle? Yes! And they went on and on and on. At the end of the Sabbath, at dusk, the priests put the sickle to the grain as it says in Deuteronomy 16:9.

Now the reaping of the sheaf symbolizes Israel giving the firstfruits, the very best of their produce, to God. And it is exactly the symbolism that Jesus fulfilled.

I Corinthians 15:20-23 But now Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. For since by man came death, by Man also came the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive. But each one in his own order: Christ the firstfruits...

Remember that! The wavesheaf offering was an offering of the firstfruits of the barley harvest to God.

I Corinthians 15:23 ...afterward those who are Christ's at His coming.

We are also called the firstfruits of God.

So as the weekly Sabbath was ending, exactly seventy-two hours from His burial, God resurrected His Son from the dead. He became the perfect wavesheaf offering that would be waved the next day. He was the perfect Firstfruit. In a very real sense, God reaped the best and the first of His spiritual harvest.

You might wonder why this happened on the Sabbath. What is the significance of this being done on the Sabbath? It is the Sabbath that commemorates God, our Creator. This is the same God who rested on the seventh day of creation. This is Jesus Christ—the Word of God!

The word "sabbath," in Hebrew, even means rest. That is the basic idea of the Sabbath—it is a rest. It looks back on creation. Now to what does this rest, the Sabbath, look *forward to*?

Hebrews 4:1-10 Therefore, since a promise remains of entering His rest, let us fear lest any of you seem to have come short of it. For indeed the gospel was preached to us as well as to them; but the word which they heard did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in those who heard it. For we who have believed [now Paul is talking about us] do enter that rest, as He has said: "So I swore in My wrath, 'They shall not enter My rest,'" although the works were finished from the foundation of the world. For He has spoken in a certain place of the seventh day [that is the Sabbath] in this way: "And God rested on the seventh day from all His works;" and again in this place: "They shall not enter My rest." Since therefore it remains that some must enter it, and those to whom it was first preached did not enter because of disobedience, again He designates a certain day, saying in David, "Today," [meaning the Sabbath] after such a long time, as it has been said: "Today, if you will hear His voice, Do not harden your hearts." For if Joshua had given them rest, then He would not afterward have spoken of another day. There remains therefore a rest for the people of God. For he who has entered His

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rest has himself also ceased from his works as God did from His.

Now what happened when Jesus Christ was raised from the dead? He entered His rest! And guess when Christ was resurrected? On the Sabbath, when the wavesheaf was cut!

They all tie together. So by a resurrection from the dead, we inherit and fully enter the Kingdom of God. We could call it the World Tomorrow, or maybe a few other terms may come to mind.

Let us look at Psalm 23. This is the Psalm that you may end up looking at in a different sense. Many of us know this one by heart. Have you ever considered this to be a Sabbath Psalm? Or a Psalm of God's Kingdom or a Psalm of Christ's life, death, and resurrection into His rest?

This Psalm is written from the standpoint of a sheep:

Psalms 23:1-3 The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. He makes me to lie down in green pastures; He leads me beside the still waters. He restores my soul; He leads me in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake.

"The Lord is My Shepherd." Could we not also say from this standpoint, that it was written for the Lamb of God? The Lord was His Shepherd, too. For what did Jesus say He did all those things? He did them for all righteousness—for God's Name's sake; for His glory!

Think of Christ's work, His life, in these first three verses. And in verse 4, let us think of His death:

Psalm 23:4 Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me.

He knew He had the hope of the resurrection of the dead, so He could go through that terrible death knowing that God would be with Him. He knew that God would forsake Him, but He knew ultimately that He would raise Him from the dead.

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Then, in the closing verses of the Psalm, we may think of Christ's work now. We can meditate on the fact that He is already at the right hand of God the Father in His Kingdom.

Psalm 23:5-6 You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; You anoint my head with oil; my cup runs over. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life; and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

What is He doing now for us? He is working out salvation for us in the presence of His enemies. Guess what He has now? Everything—all of the universe has been put under His feet—His cup runs over! Only God the Father is not in His authority.

And look at this last phrase, "And I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever." He won! He has eternal life! And that is what we have staring us straight in the face!

Scripture says, in Romans 10:4, that Christ was the end of the law. He was the object towards which all the Old Testament types pointed. Galatians 3:24 says that the Old Testament was our school master to bring us to Christ. He fulfilled all the sacrifices and offerings. He was the perfect antitype for all the animals in those sacrifices.

He was the perfect Adam. He was the perfect Noah. He was the perfect Moses. He was the perfect Aaron. He was the perfect Joshua. He was the perfect David. He was the perfect Solomon. He was the perfect Jonah. He was the perfect Hosea—who married an adulteress woman. And on and on it goes. Christ was the perfect antitype of the cutting of the wavesheaf.

We are now going to look at how He was the perfect type of the *waving* of the wavesheaf. Histories of the time show that the sheaf was waved about the same time as the daily morning sacrifice. This occurred about the third hour of the day or 9 a.m. by our reckoning. And this particular day was Sunday morning. It was the day after the Sabbath that fell during the Days of Unleavened Bread.

The priests of the temple would have been conducting the wave sheaf ceremony on the day of Christ resurrection. It is quite evident that Christ ascended about the same time as the wavesheaf was being waved before God.

John 20:17 Jesus said to her [Mary Magdalene], "Do not cling to Me, for I have not yet ascended to My Father; but go to My brethren and say to them,

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'I am ascending to My Father and your Father, and to My God and your God.' "

This was very early in the morning. Just after sunrise. We do not know exactly what time after sunrise, but they came to the tomb while it was still dark. And He was already gone at that point. So He could not have risen at sunrise. It was sometime after sunrise when Jesus stopped her and told her to tell His disciples these things. So, shortly after Mary returned to the disciples—however long it took her to get back to where they were all staying—Jesus ascended to His Father's throne in heaven to be accepted as our Redeemer and our High Priest.

Hebrews 2:9 But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, that He, by the grace of God, might taste death for everyone.

Hebrews 2:17 Therefore, in all things He had to be made like His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people.

Our sinless Savior qualified to be our High Priest and our Mediator before God. That is what He is now doing as the Head of the Church. It is one of His jobs as High Priest.

Something else was also accomplished with His death, resurrection, and ascension.

Revelation 19:11-16 Now I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war. His eyes were like a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns. He had a name written that no one knew except Himself. He was clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God. And the armies in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, followed Him on white horses. Now out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He should strike the nations. And He Himself will rule them with a rod of iron. He Himself treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And He has on *His* robe and on His thigh a name written: King of kings and Lord of lords.

Because He lived a perfect life and then died as our Redeemer and Savior—because

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He did not sin, because He did not succumb to Satan—He qualified to be our King. He now awaits the Father's signal to return to this earth as its very Lord and King. He will have the power and authority to conquer the evil on this earth and to rule with a rod of iron.

Now for the third of the consecutive Psalms we are studying. Psalm 24 is a great Psalm! It often tends to be overshadowed by Psalm 23. The words from the chorus in Handel's "*Messiah*"—"Lift up your heads, O ye gates"—are taken from this Psalm.

Notice the wording of this Psalm of praise and put Jesus in all these things. He is perfect as Priest, as King, as our Mediator, and as Head of the Church.

Psalm 24:1 The earth is the Lord's, and all its fullness, the world and those who dwell therein.

Let us remember in Hebrews 2 where it says that all things have been given to Him and that all things were put under His feet!

Psalm 24:2 For He has founded it upon the seas, and established it upon the waters.

Here it shows that He was the Creator and this verse looks back to that. It shows that our Creator went through all these things for us.

Psalm 24:3 Who may ascend into the hill of the Lord? Or who may stand in His holy place?

It is very telling that the word, "ascend," is in this verse—especially when we compare it with Hebrews 1:1-3. Hebrews describes Jesus sitting at the right hand of the Majesty on high. Here, in Psalm 24:3, He is standing in the holy place.

Let us see what the answers are to the queries of verse 3. Guess Who fulfilled this?

Psalm 24:4 He who has clean hands and a pure heart, who has not lifted up his soul to an idol, nor sworn deceitfully.

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This One may ascend to His Holy Hill—may stand in the Holy Place! And did Jesus not do that? Verse 4 describes Christ's purity, His sinlessness, and now His holiness!

Psalm 24:5 He shall receive blessing from the Lord, and righteousness from the God of his salvation.

We see Jesus' reward for His righteousness and the works that He did. He has qualified to be our King.

Psalm 24:6 This is Jacob, the generation of those who seek Him, who seek Your face. Selah.

Verse 6 tells us that Jesus Christ is the head of the Church! It may not appear so at first glance. But, remember that the Church is the Israel of God. (That is in Galatians 6:16.) Remember, too, that another name for Israel is Jacob.

The word, "generation," in this verse is poorly translated. It should read, "congregation." This verse could read, "This is the Israel of God, the congregation of those who seek Him, who seek Your face." This is telling us that because Jesus died, rose, and ascended to heaven, it is now possible for there to be a congregation of those who seek His face—the Israel of God!

Psalm 24:7-10 Lift up your heads, O you gates! And be lifted up, you everlasting doors! And the King of glory shall come in. Who is this King of glory? The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle. Lift up your heads, O you gates! Lift up, you everlasting doors! And the King of glory shall come in. Who is this King of glory? The Lord of hosts, He is the King of glory. Selah

"Think about this!" That is what Selah means! Pause; meditate on just Who is this King of glory! So we see and know that Jesus fulfilled all these types perfectly. He was—and is—a witness of God's power, timing, and absolute perfection.

Everything in those three days was done at exactly the right time. They perfectly followed the symbolism and types in the Old Testament. These things were written for our instruction. It all compounds over and over like the compound interest that you get on your credit card statement. It compounds the proof that Jesus is, indeed, our Creator

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and our Messiah.

God would not have done this for anybody. It had to be for Jesus Christ that these things were perfectly fulfilled. Let us remember these things and thank God for them!
Selah