

## Chronic Difficulties

Timing of Events of 'Holy Week'

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Tomorrow morning, long before the sun appears over the horizon, millions of professing Christians will wake up and get ready to make their way toward their Easter Sunrise Service to celebrate (they think) the resurrection of Jesus Christ—as they see it. Yesterday, many of these same millions of professing Christians somehow marked His crucifixion, in a "Good Friday" evening service—as they see it—a Friday crucifixion, and an Easter Sunday resurrection. In addition, a week ago, most of these same millions of professing Christians participated in a "Palm Sunday Service" to begin what they call "holy week." So they have this whole time between Palm Sunday to Easter Sunday with Good Friday between them.

Millions of people will be doing this. Actually hundreds of millions! They are sincere professing Christians. Almost all of them believe that the resurrection happened on Easter Sunday, that the crucifixion happened on a Friday, and that Jesus Christ came into Jerusalem on a Sunday.

Professing Christians number about 2 billion worldwide, which is about one-third of the earth's population. All of these people are deceived. Even though they may be sincere, they are sincerely wrong. They are sincerely deceived about the timing of these events, and many other things too. They may sincerely celebrate them, but it is an error.

Most of them, I am sure, would be shocked to hear me say this, or to read my words. They would say that I am the one who is deceived, and in error.

Now, just as most of this world's Christians vehemently defend December 25 to be the day that Jesus Christ was born, they will just as vigorously defend the error of Palm Sunday, Good Friday, and Easter Sunday. For some reason, they believe (and this is NOT how they would see it, though this is the way it comes out when viewed objectively) that if you believe what the Bible says on these subjects, you are denigrating Jesus and Christianity somehow. This is what it comes down to. If you look in the Bible, and compare it to tradition, they do not meet anywhere. The truth of God's Word, and men's traditions, are almost always very far apart.

### **Face the Facts**

Most Christians have not studied what the Bible says about these things. They have not

questioned the traditional teaching of the mainstream Christian churches. They just simply take on blind faith that these things are so, whatever their preacher or priest has told them, or what they learned while growing up in Sunday school. They never really studied the technical details of it. They just simply accepted it.

Those who have gone into the study of it, and then asked questions of their religious superiors, have mostly received the equivalent of a nice pat on the head, and some admonition to trust the church and its centuries of traditions.

"Why, all these Christians can't be wrong, can they?"

"All the popes down through history can't be wrong, can they?"

"All the theologians down through history can't be wrong, can they?"

"Luther cannot be wrong, can he?"

"Wesley cannot be wrong, can he?"

"All the secular scholars who have studied these things also can't be wrong too, can they?"

"It is overwhelming, the evidence is, that Christ died on a Friday," they will say, "and rose on a Sunday."

These people, given these assurances (false as it is), continue going on and believing a lie. However, Bible students who honestly examine these issues, and are willing to go against their priest, pastor, church, tradition, scholars, and all of that, soon realize that tradition and Scripture do not square. If they are going to follow the truth, they must follow what the Scripture says.

Since we are here on the weekly Sabbath between the so-called Good Friday and Easter Sunday, I thought it best that we would cover these seasonal difficulties of chronology so that we can have a bit better handle on them. Perhaps you will then be better able to explain them to others. This will also help to strengthen your faith in these matters. The Bible has the truth. It may take a lot of work sometimes to get it out. We may not be entirely certain about the exact timing of certain years, but we do know the exact timing of the days within the week when these things happened, and they fit what the Bible says.

Now, I know that chronology is not the most exciting topic there is. I will not be going over and over these things because that is where it can get boring and uninteresting. I am going to hit it hard once, and move on. If you like history, and if you like solving puzzles, this will be interesting for you. If you are like me, and like boring things, it is going to be fascinating!

I want to start in Hebrews 11, starting as I often do with principles. We must begin with principles. This first scripture is to help us understand the basic underlying element of faith when it comes to biblical chronology.

**Hebrews 11:3** By faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that the things which are seen were not made of things which are visible.

We have gone over this several times in the past, but the fact remains that this fundamental principle of chronology is hidden within the translation of this verse. It has been translated terribly. This verse is not necessarily about matter. It reads like it is only talking about God creating the world out of nothing. All of the matter is here—the trees, flowers, air, and everything out there because God created it out of nothing. You will get that out of this verse. However, that is not what this verse is about, particularly.

This verse contains the phrase, "the worlds." Now, you would think that if this were really talking about "the worlds," it would be from the Greek word, *kosmos*. Well, it is not *kosmos*. It is the Greek word *aeonos*, meaning "an age of time." It is from where we get our English word "eon." It is talking about a long stretch of time like an epoch.

Paul is trying to get across to us as an element of faith. He is telling us that it is through faith that we understand (if I can paraphrase it) that the ages were constructed, or prepared, or framed, by the Word of God. The ages—time. Today the word that would best fit is "history," or "historic events," or "historic periods."

What we see occurring on earth and what we see that occurred in history has been caused and ordained by invisible forces—spirit forces—meaning by God Himself. God is the One who has been in control of time, history, events, people, and everything else that has happened within these things from the very beginning.

God is the Sovereign. He is not only the Sovereign over the spinning of the planets around the sun, the solar system rotating around the galaxy, the galaxy rotating around the universe. He is also Sovereign over every specific instance, and event, especially

those things that relate to His purpose on earth. When we get to the following things—"by faith Abel...", "by faith Enoch...", "by faith Noah...", "by faith Abraham..."—Paul is drawing our attention to the fact that these men, the things they did, the way they moved God's purpose along the line of time, the way they made examples for us to follow—all were ordained under God's purpose. He is controlling events, and certainly, when you come to the life, ministry, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, He was more than "Johnny on the Spot," controlling everything in minute detail.

The underlying principle is that God makes things occur, when He wants them to occur, in the way that He wants them to occur. God is in control of time, history, and events. You can also take from Hebrews 11:3 that the Word of God, the Bible, contains the true record of time, history, and events. These things are spiritually important, including the chronology when it is truly important.

To begin with, we will start with a macro-chronology—a big one.

### **What Year was Jesus Crucified, and Resurrected?**

Over the last fifty years or so in the churches of God, we have always said it was the year AD 31. That is still a very viable date. However, I must tell you, even though we have stated this dogmatically over the years, it truly has been only a best guess. There are only a few years within this period of time when Jesus could have had His ministry where there was a Wednesday Passover. Therefore, it must be one of these Wednesday Passover years. Well, another year has come up lately—AD 30.

I must add right here, that there are calendars by some people who have come up with their own "Hebrew" calendars, where they say that AD 30 Passover was a Friday. If you check them out, and notice their construction, these are strictly astronomical calendars where they take the astronomical new moon, and then figure from that. The Hebrew calendar is not strictly astronomical. It is a calculation. It is usually very close. If you use the calculated Hebrew calendar with all the postponements, and those sorts of things that the Jews normally do, it comes out that Passover AD 30 was also a Wednesday. We have both AD 30 and 31 as possibilities for the year in which Christ was crucified and resurrected.

Lately, there has been a fair amount of research done since about the mid-1990s about when the death of Herod occurred. The death of Herod is necessary to establish when Jesus was born.

Another area of research recently done is, when the fifteenth year of Tiberius Caesar was. This is necessary because Luke uses the fifteenth year of Tiberius Caesar to pinpoint when John the Baptist's ministry began. We know that Jesus' ministry started about six months later. So, if we can pinpoint the fifteenth year of Tiberius, we can pinpoint six months later the beginning of Jesus' ministry and extrapolate from there.

I will tell you right off the bat that I am not going to dogmatically tell you it is AD 30. I am going to tell you it *could* be AD 30. There are enough vagaries still in the chronology that it could be either year. If you are referencing the decree that went out to rebuild Jerusalem, there is a two-year span where it could have taken place. It is either BC 458 or 457. It is actually only about one year, but it spans parts of two of our calendar years. It is very difficult to pinpoint whether the 70 weeks prophecy when drawn forward would be either AD 26 or 27. They are both in the window. When these are used for the beginning of Christ's ministry, you end them in either AD 30 or 31.

What I am doing in this particular section is showing you that it could be either one, and that we are not sure. We cannot be sure. It just has not been revealed. On the other hand, it is not all that important spiritually. However, I wanted to show this to you so you have an idea of what is going on in the scholarship circles.

**Matthew 2:1-3** Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, saying, "Where is He who has been born King of the Jews? For we have seen His star in the East and have come to worship Him." When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him.

What we have here is that Jesus was born, and Herod is still alive when the wise men came, and inquired where they could find this baby, Jesus.

**Matthew 2:13-15** Now when they had departed, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream, saying, "Arise, take the young Child and His mother, flee to Egypt, and stay there until I bring you word; for Herod will seek the young Child to destroy Him." When he arose, he took the young Child and His mother by night and departed for Egypt, and was there until the death of Herod, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying, "Out of Egypt I called My Son."

**Matthew 2:19-22** But when Herod was dead, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, saying, "Arise, take the young Child

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and His mother, and go to the land of Israel, for those who sought the young Child's life are dead." Then he arose, took the young Child and His mother, and came into the land of Israel. But when he heard that Archelaus was reigning over Judea instead of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there. And being warned by God in a dream, he turned aside into the region of Galilee.

Through these passages we have several clues as to the order of the events, the identity of Herod, and various other things. Jesus was born while Herod was still alive. Afterward, the wise men came to Herod. We do not know how long afterward. Herod did not even know how long afterward, so he had killed every male child two years old and younger in Bethlehem. Now, when they came to Herod, they asked him where they could find this Child, and Herod, only after consulting with the priests, told them Bethlehem. Therefore, the wise men went there, worshipped Him, and left. Then Joseph and Mary took Jesus to Egypt for the remainder of Herod's reign. We do not know how long this was. They could flee there in about a 10 days to two weeks, and they could return in about the same amount of time.

The next ruler of Judea is Archelaus. Why is this important? It identifies the correct Herod, since there were several Herods in history. Archelaus is the heir of "Herod the Great," and not some other Herod. This Herod the Great reconstructed the temple that Jesus came to.

From all the research recently completed, it has become fairly conclusive that Herod died in about 4 BC before Passover of that year. This has taken a bit of searching, and some astronomy, because the final straw of where to pinpoint Herod's death was a lunar eclipse. According to Josephus, there was a lunar eclipse, then Herod died, and the Passover season came.

It is interesting here that Josephus does not say how long between the eclipse and Herod's death, and Passover. So there was some reconstruction to be done.

In 5 BC there were two lunar eclipses, one in the spring at the beginning of the Days of Unleavened Bread, and one in the fall on the first day of the Feast of Tabernacles. These were full lunar eclipses. There are very good records for this.

It is very clear about Herod's last days of life that he was becoming very mentally unstable after the eclipse of the 5 BC Feast of Tabernacles. He became so bad, that he went to Jericho hoping to get better. He declined very rapidly while there. He was

actually going mad. He made some horrible orders and declarations. He tried to round up all the leading men in Judea, to have them put in a stadium to be slain as soon as he died. He also ordered the death of his son and heir, because he thought he was conspiring to take over the throne.

Finally, Herod the Great died. We do not know exactly when, but it seems to be maybe mid-February. And, we know that it had to be about this far before Passover because his son, the new king Archelaus, ordered—according to Herod's instructions—a very long period of mourning for him. Herod knew that the people would not mourn him, but rather cheer his death. Therefore, this was a royal decree that Archelaus followed to honor his father. There is also a record that Herod was buried in the midst of the Days of Unleavened Bread in the year 4 BC. The period between the middle of February, and the middle of the Days of Unleavened Bread is about right.

There was a partial eclipse in March 4 BC but it was after Herod's death, and does not fit. The full eclipse that Josephus mentioned was probably the one of the first day of the Feast of Tabernacles 5 BC. Herod died about 4 or 5 months later in February, and then the long period of mourning. The Passover and burial was during the Days of Unleavened Bread in 4 BC.

If this is the case, if it has been reconstructed properly, then Jesus could not have been born in 4 BC, which we in the church of God have always said.

Now, the church of God has always said that Christ was born in the fall. And, with the above scenario, the soonest He could have been born, then, is the autumn of 5 BC which means that when Christ became 30 years old, it would not be 27 AD but 26 AD. This is how 30 AD also becomes a viable candidate for the date of the crucifixion. To me, this is just as good as 31 AD.

This is what scholarship has brought us to at this point in history.

Continuing with the fifteenth year of Tiberius:

**Luke 3:1-2** Now in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judea, Herod being tetrarch of Galilee, his brother Philip tetrarch of Iturea and the region of Trachonitis, and Lysanias tetrarch of Abilene, while Annas and Caiaphas were high priests, the word of God came to John the son of Zacharias in the wilderness.

Luke is an excellent historian. He drops names to give us time markers, and to show what was going on, who was where, who was reigning, and so forth. This gives us a pretty good idea, once we put all these names and dates together, of when it is. Luke probably thought that starting out the fifteenth year of Tiberius would nail it closely. With the passage of 2000 years, and not understanding which counting system he was using, we begin to wonder when this occurred.

It has not been clear to historians whether Luke is using the co-reign of Tiberius with his father, Augustus Caesar which happened in 12 AD, or whether it was the beginning of his sole reign beginning in 14 AD. He was made co-ruler with his father two years before Augustus died. So, is Luke saying that this event took place fifteen years after Tiberius became co-ruler, or fifteen years after his sole rulership started?

Then, there is another problem. Does this fifteen years mean that Luke was counting from Tiberius' ascension year, or non-ascension year? Now, his ascension year is the actual calendar year in which his rule began, while his non-ascension year would be the beginning of the first full year in January following his coronation. They often did not count partial years. So if he became emperor in August, his non-ascension year would begin the following January, and they would not count that portion from August to December.

So, we do not know. This is why there are vagaries to these things. With the above information, including his co-rulership (or not), and his ascension year (or not), there could be four years difference. So, we have to cross-reference this with another passage.

**John 2:13** Now the Passover of the Jews was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.

This is the time marker, and the setting of the Passover in the first year of Jesus' ministry. He has a discussion with the Jews in Jerusalem, and He told them that He is going to tear down the temple in three days, and they say:

**John 2:20** "It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and will You raise it up in three days?"

Now, most scholars believe that what they actually said was, "This temple has been standing 46 years, and you are going to tear it down in 3 days?"

So then, when was the temple rebuilt? Josephus tells us that Herod began construction on the temple in his 18<sup>th</sup> year in Jerusalem, which is different because he was crowned in Rome a few years earlier. There are problems here and there too. However, if we have everything correct, this was the year from the summer of 20 BC to the summer of 19 BC. If you add 46 years to this date, you get AD 26 to AD 27. We are in the ballpark! This passage in John 2 must have been the Passover of AD 27, according to this, because we are talking summer to summer counting. We cannot count the spring of AD 26, because that is too soon. Therefore, the only Passover that falls within this period is the one in the spring of AD 27. If this is the spring of AD 27, and it is Jesus' first Passover, and He began His ministry in the autumn, then that means that His ministry began in the autumn of AD 26, not 27—meaning that adding three and a half years, His crucifixion was in AD 30.

So then, the fifteenth year of Tiberius is AD 26, and Luke's account uses his co-rule, 12 AD.

As I said, there are enough inconsistencies, and need for assumptions that it could still be either date of 30, or 31 AD. It just depends on which assumptions you make. I am still not saying that AD 30 is the year. But, I am not saying that AD 31 is the year either. I am only saying that both are possible. There are good arguments for each. But right now 30 AD is *very* probable, while 31 AD is just probable. The weight of evidence has shifted just a bit toward 30 AD. It is not conclusive, and so we should not be dogmatic about it. Anyway, either way, both years have Wednesday Passovers, which is the important part.

In Luke 3 we see a little thing that people grab on to, and say that this is a conclusive factor.

**Luke 3:2** Now Jesus Himself began His ministry at about thirty years of age.

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Okay! Jesus was thirty! If we can pinpoint His birth to the autumn of 5 BC then it is pretty easy to figure out that He began His ministry—adding 30 years, with no year 'zero'—in the autumn of 26 AD.

However, the word "about" is just vague enough to allow one year's wiggle room. He could have been 29, or 30 years old. That is basically enough to get us between 26 AD and 27 AD, meaning that either He died in 30 AD or 31 AD. I will not be so dogmatic to say which one it is. It looks good that He might have died in 30 AD, but that is what we

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used to say about 31 AD. [Please see the "John 7:37 Examined" series by John W. Ritenbaugh for new information that tips the scales to an AD 31 crucifixion.]

However, chronology is not an exact science. I think you have just seen that. So many factors go into determining these dates. There is astronomy, and there are various different languages. In just what we have gone through so far today, there are Latin, Greek, English, Hebrew, and probably Aramaic just in the languages alone. In addition, believe it or not, some of the records of these things we have were originally in Coptic. You just start adding different factors in, and it is very hard to translate exactly from one language to another. There are, as we have seen, different ways of counting—inclusive, exclusive, ascension year, non-ascension year, etc. There are at least three, and maybe four calendars involved in this. I know that there is a visual Hebrew calendar, the calculated Hebrew calendar, an astronomical calendar, and the Julian calendar. Who knows how many more calendars are involved in these things.

And to add to all this, there are contradictory sources in written works, and the assumptions that people make. Therefore, I will not say either way dogmatically. I can see evidence for either one. I want you to be comfortable with either one or the other, because it is not all that important. It is that the Passover was on a Wednesday that is the important thing. Both years qualify.

### **Jesus Ministry was Three-and-a-Half Years Long**

The Bible nowhere says that it was three-and-a-half years long. It does not say that in so many words. Again, we must put clues together from the Gospels. The best clues to use are to track God's Feasts in the Gospels throughout His ministry.

Now, the most commonly mentioned festival in the Gospels is the Passover. The Feast of Tabernacles is also named. There is "a Feast of the Jews" that is mentioned. There is a Feast of the Dedication that is named, which is not one of God's Festivals, but is a good time marker. The Days of Unleavened Bread is named. Pentecost is alluded to. However, the Passover is the one we need to use.

So the theory goes, that if we can count the Passovers, we can determine the length of His ministry. Now, the synoptic gospels—Matthew, Mark, and Luke, called this because the word 'synoptic' in Greek means that they see things together or similarly—hardly ever mention holy days and festivals. However, the book of John is very careful to tell us when certain things took place within Christ's ministry.

All four gospels obviously name the last Passover. John also mentions two other

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Passovers. So now we have three of them. The book of Luke provides a fourth one—but it does not say outright that it is the Passover season. It is hidden in the wording of the text. Moreover, most students of the Bible, unless they keep God's holy days, miss it. That is where the advantage of being part of the churches of God—and keeping the holy days of God—comes in. You are used to thinking in terms of the holy days, and the timing of the holy days, and the wording and phrasing of certain things that go on regarding the holy days.

Scholars, some of them who do not keep anything, miss it—they do not see it in the text. Moreover, if they do see it, it does not make a big impact on them.

We have already looked at one of them, and we will go back and review it quickly. It is found in John 2. As you know, the book of John begins with "The Word became flesh and dwelt among us," and then he goes into John the Baptist's story very quickly. Then comes the baptism of Jesus by John the Baptist, and then the calling of the first disciples right after that. "Behold the Lamb of God," and then the disciples began to follow Jesus instead of John the Baptist, particularly Peter and Andrew. Then they pull others in. You get the sense that all through John 1 this is happening very quickly, and that after His baptism, things seem to take place in about a day or so.

The way that John 2 is written, we get the idea that the wedding in Cana happens very quickly after the events at the end of chapter 1. Then you drop down to verse 13, after Jesus had gone to Capernaum. They stayed there many days, but it was not months or years, but it was a certain amount of time.

**John 2:13** Now the Passover of the Jews was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.

Therefore, it is very clear to me that this was the first Passover during His ministry. This is the first God's holy day marker we have.

**John 2:13-17** Now the Passover of the Jews was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. And He found in the temple those who sold oxen and sheep and doves, and the moneychangers doing business. When He had made a whip of cords, He drove them all out of the temple, with the sheep and the oxen, and poured out the changers' money and overturned the tables. And He said to those who sold doves, "Take these things away! Do not make My Father's house a house of merchandise!" Then His disciples remembered that it was written, "Zeal for Your house has eaten Me up."

**John 2:23** Now when He was in Jerusalem at the Passover, during the feast, many believed in His name when they saw the signs which He did.

What we have here are occurrences that happened in His first Passover all the way over into the Days of Unleavened Bread. The reason I went so far down into verse 17 is that it says His disciples marked it—they remembered. It was something that was quite memorable to them. They saw the zeal in His chasing out the moneychangers, and the animals, and doing the other things. It made an impression on them. Nevertheless, even though they marked it, only John mentions it. The goals of the books of the synoptic gospels did not fit with marking time by festivals. They seemed to focus more toward the latter part of His ministry also. John fills in those gaps. [See our sermon series on The Four Views of Christ.]

This, above, is His first cleansing of the temple. He has another at the end of His ministry. In a sense, He bracketed His ministry with temple cleansings. Again, this is the first Passover of His ministry.

In Luke 6 we will see the one that most people miss. This is the second Passover of His ministry. Luke 6 is parallel to Mark 2, and Matthew 12. This is the incident where the disciples are walking through a field plucking heads of grain, rolling them in their hands, and eating the grain on the Sabbath.

**Luke 6:1** Now it happened on the second Sabbath after the first that He went through the grain fields. And His disciples plucked the heads of grain and ate them, rubbing them in their hands.

This is also rather early in His ministry as we get the impression from Mark chapter 2. If we would go through and check out the context of these sections, you will find that John 3 shows Jesus staying in Judea after that first Passover for quite some time. Remember that He speaks to Nicodemus. Then in chapter 4, He talks with the woman at the well having gone up through Samaria before He gets to Galilee. This next Passover happens in Galilee later on. The scene has moved from Jerusalem and Judea to Galilee. Therefore, some period of time has passed. What I mean is that enough time has elapsed for this time marker to have occurred after the first Passover.

Now, the time marker is "the second Sabbath after the first." This is a technical term. In Greek it is the word "deuteroprotos." "Deutero" as in Deuteronomy (the second giving of the law) is "second," and "protos" means the first, or highest rank. In combining these

terms, deuteroptos literally means the second first, or the second of the first rank.

Knowing that it means the second of the first rank, it can mean one of two things. It may be the second of the annual Sabbaths of the first rank, which are the high holy days of God, the big seven. Here it stands for the last Day of Unleavened Bread. That is the second Sabbath of the first rank. The other idea is that it means the second Sabbath to the count toward Pentecost—the end of that second week of seven weeks to Pentecost, which would also put it just after the Days of Unleavened Bread.

But Jesus was noted as staying in Judea after the first Passover, and then going through Samaria on His way to Galilee. This probably takes Him outside the range of the first set of the Days of Unleavened Bread, so this must be the next year. This is probably His second Passover of His ministry. Either way we look at it, it marks another spring festival season, the second in Jesus' ministry.

The third one is found in John 6.

**John 6:1-4** After these things Jesus went over the Sea of Galilee, which is the Sea of Tiberius. Then a great multitude followed Him, because they saw His signs which He performed on those who were diseased. And Jesus went up on the mountain, and there He sat with His disciples. Now the Passover, a feast of the Jews, was near.

This is the third Passover of His ministry. This is the spring festival season where He talks about being the "Bread of Life." Obviously, there is a lot of Passover and Days of Unleavened Bread symbolism included here.

We know that this is not the final one, because the next chapter speaks of the Feast of Tabernacles. Therefore, we know that in the text there is a Feast of Tabernacles between this Passover, and His final Passover. Besides, it is still very early in the book. If you reference the other books with the feeding of the five thousand, you will find that it seems early on still in those books also—Mark 6, Luke 9, and Matthew 14.

Of course, the fourth and final one is the best known of them all.

**Matthew 26:1-2** Now it came to pass, when Jesus had finished all these sayings, that He said to His disciples, "You know that after two days is the Passover, and the Son of Man will be delivered up to be crucified." [That is the fourth one.]

We have four Passover seasons within this three-and-a-half year period. That is the only way that you can get four Passovers in three years and a little more. It must begin on or before a Passover, and end with or shortly after one, so you can get four in there.

If we had gone to Matthew 21:12 Christ cleanses the temple again. Therefore, there is the bracketing of His ministry with cleansings of the temple. So we have four Passovers, it must be three years plus some time.

One more thing before we leave this. This is using Daniel 9, and the 70 weeks prophecy of the Messiah. I do not want to digress into this prophecy more than I have to, so we will read only verse 27:

**Daniel 9:27** Then he shall confirm a covenant with many for one week; but in the middle of the week He shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering.

Now we in the churches of God have a great contention with Protestants on this particular verse. They say this is the Beast making a covenant with the Jews for a week, and in the middle of that week, after three and a half years, they will not allow the Jews to make sacrifices again. Well that is poppycock. This verse is talking about Messiah.

Who actually brought about an end of sacrifice and offering for all time? Jesus Christ. Who confirmed the New Covenant? Jesus Christ in His ministry, obviously at His death. His whole life was a life of service and sacrifice in bringing all that to pass.

The whole thing about the 70 weeks prophecy is that it is 70 weeks long. Weeks are 7 days long. If we apply the year-for-a-day principle, we come out with 490 years. However, the final year is split in half, so you get not 490, but 487 plus the half-year. This means that Jesus began His ministry in 483<sup>rd</sup> year, and then three and a half years later, He was cut off. This is where we have to go back to BC 457, add 483 years, get AD 26, and then add 3½ years gives you AD 30.

This tells us that He is cut off in the middle of His week. If He had a seven-year ministry going in, and God wanted Him cut off halfway through, the middle day would be after 3½ years. (This is all explained elsewhere. You can find it easily.)

This shows that His ministry equaled 3½ years, which fits what is shown in the gospels as having happened; having four Passovers shows that it was more than three years long.

## **Holy Week? Four points regarding "Good Friday to Easter Sunday."**

**Point one:** The crucifixion took place in the middle of a literal week, just as the prophecy said. It works out at both levels. He was crucified on a Wednesday and died at the end of the Passover day Nisan 14. Joseph of Arimathea placed him in the tomb just before sunset, before the onset of a holy day Sabbath, the annual Sabbath, which was the first Day of Unleavened Bread. This is my first assumption.

**Point two:** Jesus was in the tomb a full three days, and three nights—a full 72 hours. No more, no less, according to Jesus' own prophecy in Matthew 12:40. There He said regarding Jonah that as he was in the belly of the great fish for three days and three nights, so would He be in the belly of the earth three days and three nights. This period is stated in the gospels as "in three days," "the third day," "after three days," and others. If you put them together, there is only one way that can satisfy them all, and that is exactly 72 hours.

**Point three:** Because He was in the tomb three days and three nights exactly, this means that Jesus was not resurrected on a Sunday, but at the end of the weekly Sabbath. If you count three full days from late Wednesday near sunset, you come out at the end of the Sabbath near sunset.

In addition, there were two preparation days that week—one for the holy day, and one for the weekly Sabbath. I want to visit this one just a little bit.

**Luke 23:49-54** But all His acquaintances, and the women who followed Him from Galilee, stood at a distance, watching these things. Now behold, there was a man named Joseph, a council member, a good and just man. He had not consented to their decision and deed. He was from Arimathea, a city of the Jews, who himself was also waiting for the kingdom of God. This man went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Then he took it down, wrapped it in linen, and laid it in a tomb that was hewn out of the rock, where no one had ever lain before. That day was the Preparation, and the Sabbath drew near.

Most people who do not belong to the church of God do not understand that the Passover is *always* a day of preparation. It is always the day of preparation for the first Day of Unleavened Bread. Passover itself is not a holy day. You can do work on this and any preparation day. So, being it is a preparation day for a high holy day, in this

case the 15<sup>th</sup> of Nisan, it is not always a Friday. Therefore, here is the possibility that a preparation day could be a Wednesday—the Passover.

**Luke 23:55** And the women who had come with Him from Galilee followed after, and they observed the tomb and how His body was laid.

Now remember what time this was. This was just before the Sabbath high day. They observed Joseph of Arimathea go through all that he needed to do, putting the body of Jesus into the tomb, while they watched. Then, "Oh, the Sabbath day is about to begin, we need to go home. We know where He is. We can come back."

**Luke 23:56** Then, they returned, and prepared spices and fragrant oils.

Now, as observant Jews, would they have returned and prepared spices and fragrant oils on the First Day of Unleavened Bread? I do not think so! They would have been ostracized! That would have been a terrible, blatant breaking of the Sabbath day.

This must mean that they returned after the holy day, and prepared spices and such.

**Luke 23:56** And then they rested on the Sabbath according to the commandment.

This Sabbath mentioned here is the weekly Sabbath. Why else would they be coming to the tomb on Sunday morning? They came because they were going to complete what they had prepared for on Friday. What they were doing just could not be thrown together, and be done with it. They had to purchase and prepare yards of cloth to wrap Him in, and a large quantity of spices, and other preparations they had to do. I imagine that this took place all day Friday. Just the purchasing and preparations would have certainly taken all day Friday. So then, they stopped again for the weekly Sabbath. This is why they were rushing to the tomb early Sunday morning because they wanted to get this job done before the body began to stink and become unbearable. However, when they got there, the tomb was open, and already empty.

There are two Sabbaths in this particular week—a high holy day Sabbath, and the regular weekly Sabbath. And remember, preparation day in scripture does not always mean Friday. It can mean other days occasionally.

**Point four:** On Sunday morning, Nisan 18, the tomb is discovered to be empty. None of the gospel accounts say that He was resurrected on that morning—just that the people came to the tomb at that time early in the morning before dawn, and the tomb was already empty.

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

**Matthew 28:6** He is not here; for He is risen, as He said.

It is very clear that the angel said that this happened before hand.

**Mark 16:1-2** Now when the Sabbath [high holy day] was past, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices, that they might come and anoint Him. Then, very early in the morning on the first day of the week, they came to the tomb when the sun had risen.

**Mark 16:6** But he said to them, "Do not be alarmed. You seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He is risen! He is not here. See the place where they laid Him." [He was already gone by this point.]

**Luke 24:1-2** Now on the first day of the week, very early in the morning, they, and certain other women with them, came to the tomb bringing the spices which they had prepared. But they found the stone rolled away from the tomb.

**Luke 24:6** "He is not here, but is risen!"

**John 20:1-2** Now on the first day of the week Mary Magdalene went to the tomb early, while it was still dark, and saw that the stone had been taken away from the tomb. Then she ran and came to Simon Peter.

In every case, it shows that they came while it was dawning, and they discovered that the tomb was already empty. He was already gone. In fact, He had been raised about 12 hours or a little more.

In these four points above, we have taken care of "Good Friday," and "Easter Sunday."

## What about "Palm Sunday?"

To begin getting the chronology of this portion of the week, turn to John 12.

**John 12:1-3** Then, six days before the Passover, Jesus came to Bethany, where Lazarus was who had been dead, whom He had raised from the dead. There they made Him a supper; and Martha served, but Lazarus was one of those who sat at the table with Him. Then Mary took a pound of very costly oil of spikenard, anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped His feet with her hair. And the house was filled with the fragrance of the oil.

**John 12:12-13** The next day a great multitude that had come to the feast, when they heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem, took branches of palm trees and went out to meet Him, and cried out: "Hosanna! 'Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LOORD!' The King of Israel!"

Here, John gives us a couple of time markers. First he tells us that this is six days before the Passover. Passover is Nisan 14. If we count back six days, we come to Nisan 8. Also, six days before a Wednesday is the previous Thursday. Therefore, this day, according to the way we think, is mostly likely the beginning of Nisan 8. (Right at sundown at the end of the 7<sup>th</sup>.)

Jesus has supper and Mary anoints His feet.

Then, the next day, as John says in verse 12, is the "Triumphal Entry," which is celebrated by the world as "Palm Sunday." However, if we have done our calculations correctly, it should be "Palm Thursday!" The day after a Wednesday evening is a Thursday.

Now, even if they wanted to do the Friday-Sunday thing, it causes problems for their "holy week." It just does not work out quite right. It is very difficult to make it fit properly.

However, if we count inclusively, like the Hebrews did, it means that we should count Wednesday as day one, rather than day zero. If we do that, this brings the "Triumphal Entry" to Friday, six days before the Passover inclusive counting.

However, this presents a problem if it is on a Friday, Nisan 9. In Mark 11, the "Triumphal Entry" has just occurred.

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**Mark 11:9-11** Then those who went before and those who followed cried out, saying: "Hosanna! 'Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD!' Blessed is the kingdom of our father David that comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest!" And Jesus went into Jerusalem and into the temple. So when He had looked around at all things, as the hour was already late [in the day], He went out to Bethany with the twelve.

He comes into Jerusalem, and is acclaimed Messiah. Then He goes in, looks around in the temple, seeing how things are, and He leaves to return to Bethany for dinner.

The next day, they are coming back into Jerusalem. When they leave Bethany, He is hungry, finds the fig tree, and curses it.

**Mark 11:15** So they came to Jerusalem. Then Jesus went into the temple and began to drive out those who bought and sold in the temple, and overturned the tables of the moneychangers and the seats of those who sold doves.

Is anyone with me as to why there is a problem?

Here is the sequence of events. Jesus enters Jerusalem. "Here is our King!" And, when the hubbub dies down, He goes into the temple, He looks around, and then He returns to Bethany for the evening. The next morning He returns to Jerusalem, cursing the fig tree on the way, and when He gets there, He goes right in, makes Himself a whip of cords, and cleanses the temple for the second time.

Sounds good does it not? Well, no. If He made His triumphal entry on Friday, this means that He cleanses the temple on the weekly Sabbath.

Now, this makes no sense. Since the Jews being strict observers of the Sabbath, they would not have allowed moneychangers and the buying and selling of animals on the Sabbath, especially in the temple. Therefore, there would have been nothing to clean up.

Jesus probably would not have cleansed anything on the Sabbath, Himself. Now, I can understand that there might be a spiritual reason for doing so. However, He probably would not have done that. The Jews would have made an uproar. But of course, it was not there to clean up if they were keeping the Sabbath as rigidly as we believe that they

did. This could not have happened on the Sabbath.

There is another thing. People like to say that the triumphal entry was on the Sabbath. However, this is impossible to do unless you take some extreme measures to make it a Friday evening entry. That is the best you can do. But really, you find out that it is in the afternoon, and not the evening. It actually would have been Friday, and not the Sabbath.

This also gets into some areas where if you try to force the triumphal entry on the Sabbath, with people breaking branches down, and so forth, we have Sabbath problems again. Moreover, the Jews do not say anything to Him or His disciples about breaking the Sabbath. They are more concerned that He is being proclaimed "Messiah" and the hubbub in Jerusalem, than that He and His disciples are breaking the Sabbath.

There are people who try to shoehorn the triumphal entry into a Nisan 10 event for obvious reasons—they want to try and fulfill the selection of the Passover lamb. Now, Nisan 10 would be a Sabbath.

Notice something interesting about what it says in Exodus 12 about selecting the lamb.

**Exodus 12:1-3** Now the LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, saying, "This month shall be your beginning of months; it shall be the first month of the year to you. 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.'"

Who selected the lamb?

Now, our text in English says "every man." If you notice in your Bible it is italicized. But in Hebrew it only says, "man," or "the man." What this means is that the head of the house—the man—chose the lamb.

So, who selected the Lamb of God? The people?

**Ephesians 3:14-15** For this reason I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, from whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named.

This is a memory verse. Who is the head of household of the Family of God? God the

Father! He is the One who selects the Lamb of God.

Now, just as a negative proof, these same people who had acclaimed Him "Hosanna in the Highest," a few days later on that Wednesday chose Barabas.

What does that say about the judgment of the people, and their ability to choose the Lamb of God? It means that they have no basis whatsoever for making a judgment of that sort. The people's proclaiming Him as the Messiah does not equal being chosen as the Passover Lamb of God.

There is another occasion where this happens. In addition, we will see some more chronology.

**Mark 11:19-20** When evening had come, He went out of the city. [This, then, is Friday evening.] Now in the morning, as they passed by, they saw the fig tree dried up from the roots.

This is the Sabbath morning. They come in, it says in verse 27, into Jerusalem. They come back in to Jerusalem on the Sabbath morning.

This is the timeline. The triumphal entry takes place on Thursday Nisan 8. The cleansing of the temple takes place on Friday, Nisan 9. Jesus leaves the city late that afternoon as the Sabbath, Nisan 10 is drawing on. He returns to Jerusalem the next morning—still the Sabbath, Nisan 10—and the disciples see the withered fig tree. Then, He comes into Jerusalem.

Now, what does Jesus Christ do then? Obviously, He is going to teach. That is what He had always done on the Sabbath day.

The next place we pick up the time line is in John 12. When you first see this in John 12, you get the idea that it is immediately after the triumphal entry, but actually there is a whole day between them. John 12:20 happens on the Sabbath after He has gone to Bethany and come back to Jerusalem. This is the Sabbath, Nisan 10.

**John 12:20-23** Now there were certain Greeks among those who came up to worship at the feast. Then they came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida of Galilee, and asked him, saying, "Sir, we wish to see Jesus." Philip came and told Andrew, and in turn Andrew and Philip told Jesus. But Jesus answered them, saying, "The hour has come that the Son of Man should be glorified."

Jesus is giving you an indication of how things are going here. This is Nisan 10.

**John 12:24** "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it produces much grain."

What is He talking about? He is talking about His death and resurrection.

**John 12:25-28** "He who loves his life will lose it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. If anyone serves Me, let him follow Me; and where I am, there My servant will be also. If anyone serves Me, him My Father will honor. Now My soul is troubled, and what shall I say? 'Father, save Me from this hour'? But for this purpose I came to this hour. Father, glorify Your name." Then a voice came from heaven, saying, "I have both glorified it and will glorify it again."

On the tenth of Nisan, while He is in the temple, surrounded by His disciples and others He was teaching, God declares, "He is the One."

**John 12:29-32** Therefore the people who stood by and heard it said that it had thundered. Others said, "An angel has spoken to Him." Jesus answered and said, "This voice did not come because of Me, but for your sake. Now is the judgment of this world; now the ruler of this world will be cast out. And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all peoples to Myself."

He might as well have said, "It is finished!" The die had been cast; everything was going to go from there. God had chosen the Lamb, marked it as well as it could be marked.

Jesus was selected by the Father as His Passover Lamb on Nisan 10 according to the scriptures.

Now, most of the remainder of the passages that belong to this time period take place on the next day, Sunday, Nisan 11. This would include His confrontations with the scribes and Pharisees where they ask Him all kinds of questions, and He just rattles off answers that just confound them. It also includes the Olivet Prophecy.

Now, at the end of that day, He says to His disciples in Matthew 26:2, "You know that in

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two days is the Passover, and the Son of Man will be lifted up."

It is evident, therefore, from what the Bible declares that He spent those two days, Monday and Tuesday, Nisan 12 and 13, quietly and privately. He was preparing Himself. He was probably among His disciples, which is also a fulfillment of the Passover Lamb scenario. Then, of course, came Nisan 14, the Passover meal with His disciples.

Well, there you have it. The chronology of the "Holy Week."

I want to end in Ecclesiastes 3 because there is a vital principle here that we need to understand. If you know your chapters, this is the "a time for every season" chapter. Then, at the end of that, it seems like Solomon goes into a whole different subject. However, he really is not. He is still thinking about time.

**Ecclesiastes 3:11** He has made everything beautiful in its time.

This is one of those scriptures where it is poorly translated. Moreover, the way I understand that Solomon meant here was, "God times everything beautifully."

And so He really does.