
The Sign of Jonah

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It's Good Friday. Well, what's good about it? You might say that it's good because our Saviour bought our redemption on that day...Did He? We are not allowed to ask but I shall. Was it Friday? How do we know? Did Messiah really die on "Friday" and rise on "Sunday"? Again we are told the inquiry is blasphemy, but ask we must. Our Savior died for our sins and rose from the dead according to the Scriptures....but when and when?

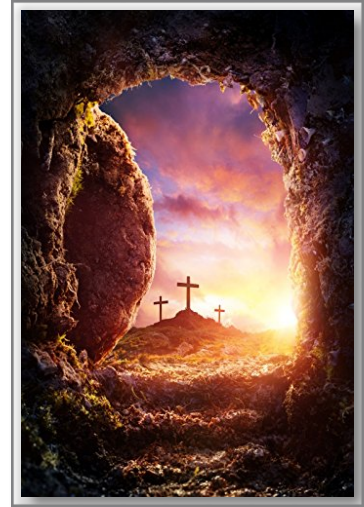
Let us begin to regard the resurrection of our King Messiah, not as 21st century Christian Gentiles but as 1st century Hebrew disciples. Let us begin to regard the facts as those who were there, those who received the testimony in the Gospel's and those who penned it down. Let us not assume we know the tales or the details simply because it is an old story we heard so many times. Let us assume nothing, but read as we never have before, with nothing in our minds to tell us we already know how it goes.

Our study starts where it ends, at the Passover, albeit that is likely some three years prior to the crucifixion, though Scripture does not clarify the time. (Calculating the number of Passovers mentioned during Yeshua's ministry, we can deduce that His ministry probably lasted three years.) In John 2:12-15, we see the account of Messiah cleaning house in the Temple. He drives out all who were buying and selling, and they demanded of Him a miraculous sign to prove His authority to do so. To this He gave them a sign in verse 19, that if they destroyed the Temple, He would rebuild it in three days. We are then told next in verse 21 that the Temple He was talking about was His own body. Keep in mind, this is all in the beginning of His ministry. Nobody knows Who this Guy is, because He has not done anything yet. Yes, He had turned water into wine in a wedding feast, but that was not for all to see. That wedding was in Cana in Galilee and was no place of note. But the first time Yeshua publicly declares anything about Himself, He does so in the Temple, of all places, and does so before all Israel. The Almighty commanded that three times a year all males would go to Jerusalem to keep the feast. These three were Pentecost, Tabernacles, and Passover (Exodus 23:14-17). This was, in fact, the very reason Yeshua was in the city to begin with. So everybody is there when He says, for the first time that the sign of His authority is three days and all that grave time.

Nobody gets it till the end, and He is already gone, but the fact is that He gave the sign in the beginning of His ministry, and it was given again in the middle of His ministry, and at His trial in the end, and while they were crucifying Him. Even after His death, resurrection, and ascension to heaven, they still remembered this one fact about His ministry, His word regarding the Temple. (Granted, they misunderstood it, even then, but they remembered it still.) (Matthew 12:38-40, 16:21, 26:61, 27:40; Mark

9:31, 14:58, 15:29; John 2:19, 21; and as 40, 16:21, 26:61, 27:40; Mark 9:31, 14:58, 15:29; John 2:19, 21; Acts 6:14). Why is it we can not recall all that grave time after 2000 years?

To properly understand when it was that our Saviour died and when He did rise again, we must take into account three things: the Sign of Jonah, the time of burial, and the High Sabbath. In Matthew 12:38-40, we are given the most specific accounting of the Sign of Jonah, the only sign given to a wicked generation that approaches the Son of the Most High demanding one. The Sign of Jonah is three days. To be more exact, however, as here told in Matthew, it is three days *and* three nights, a very specific and significant amount of time, the reason for which we will see later.



In Scripture, the word given for “Sign” is “seimeion” meaning “signal”. Yeshua gives the Sign of Jonah as a *signal* to all people of His authority to do *everything* He ever did and to say *everything* He ever said. This was the proof of that right, not the resurrection but the amount of time He would be dead first. This was the proof, the verification, the validation. When Messiah died and resurrected, we would figure that that would be proof enough, but He never offered resurrection as evidence for His identity as the living Messiah. He only offered us those three days. If He had returned in any other timeframe, He would not have been Who He claimed to be, no matter what, because His word would have been nullified. It had to be three, exactly 72 hours, no more, no less, and those hours had to be divided evenly over three days and three nights, as He said they would, or else He would have lied. But we need have no fear of anything like that, because we know from Scripture, it happened just as He said.

Most Christian scholars believe the Savior died on “Friday” and raised on “Sunday”, but it does not fit with the Gospel accounting, nor the promised three days. Therefore, they try to spin it saying that Jewish custom viewed part of a day or night as being the whole entire 24 hours. Yes, however, that does not comply with the biblical understanding of a day, neither with any teaching in the time of Yeshua, nor would it have been one He held. Ultra-orthodox Jews, descended from the Pharisees, generations later, conjured such a corrupted concept of time keeping, and it is a poor excuse for why we keep believing in a “Friday” crucifixion and a “Sunday” resurrection, when not but a day and two nights stand between them. There is, however, a Hebrew custom of beginning a day with evening and following it by morning as found in the Creation account (Genesis 1:5, 8, 13, 19, 23, 31) and practiced by all Israel for all time.

The problem then is not, “How do we believe the Bible when it doesn’t fit with the facts?”, but instead, “How do we believe what we’ve *decided* are the facts when they do not fit with the Bible?” The Bible never claims Yeshua died on a “Friday” or raised on a “Sunday”, but we *assume* it to be so. The

problem then is where it always is... with us and our assumptions. The issue is *how* we read, not *what* we read in the Book. We 21st century people have problems seeing things as they were 2000 years gone from our time, but there was no confusion in the beginning for the 1st century Israelites who heard the story for the first time.

The Scripture says over and again that Yeshua died on *Preparation Day* (which we know to be Friday), but we do not know as we ought to know. While Friday is always Preparation Day, Preparation Day is not always Friday. To understand this, we must know a little something about Sabbaths, a thing the Hebrews of that day would know quite well. Preparation Day always precedes the Sabbath, but biblically speaking, there are three kinds of Sabbaths. The weekly Sabbath begins at sunset on Friday and ends sunset on Saturday. The heptannual Sabbath takes place once every seven years, lasts for one year every time, and is a land Sabbath which allows for the ground to replenish its minerals and nutrients. And the last form of Sabbath is the High Sabbath of which there are seven per year. These are the Feast of Trumpets, the Day of Atonement, the First Day of the Feast of Tabernacles, the Last Great Day, the First Day of Unleavened Bread, as well as the Last Day of Unleavened Bread, and Pentecost.

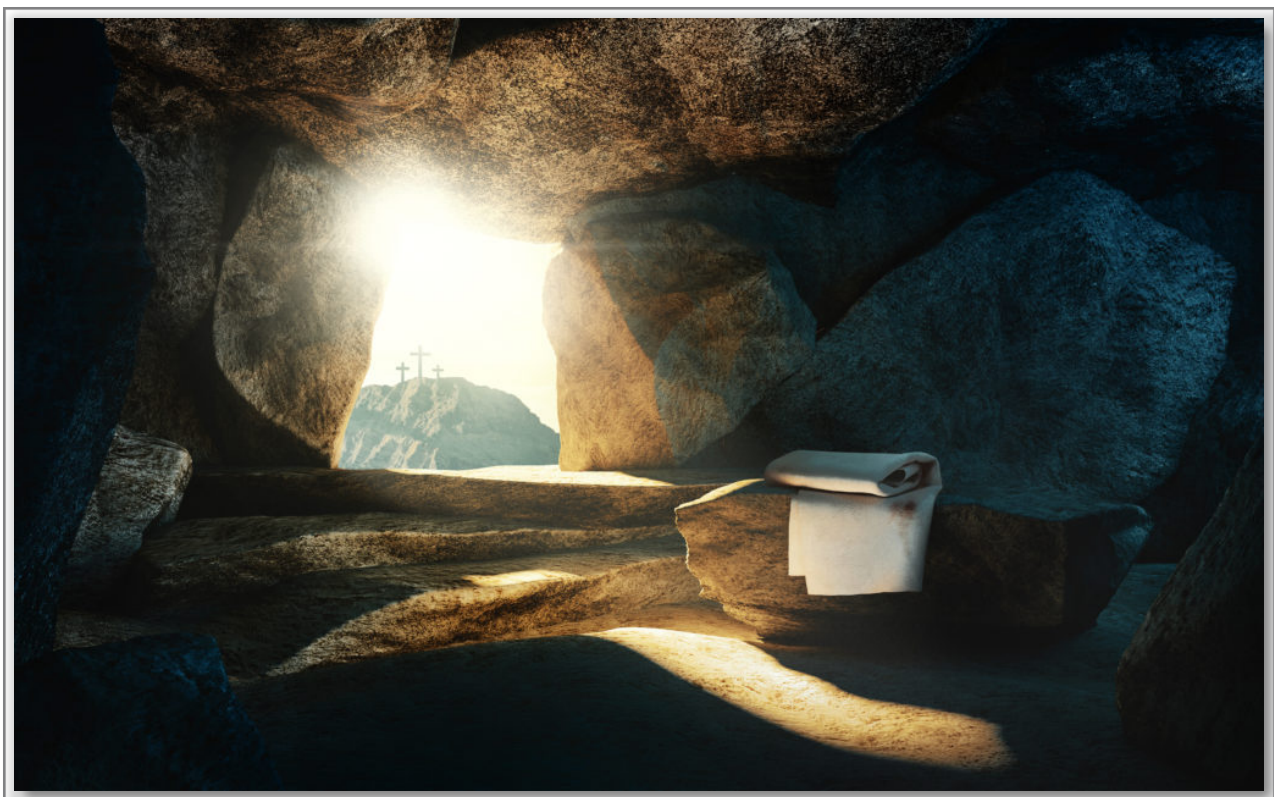
Before each of these Sabbaths, there is a Preparation Day, because every Sabbath is a required Day of rest. Preparation Day allows for time to do all the work required to be ready for the next day. Because the biblical calendar is a lunar not a solar scale, the Sabbaths always fall on different days every year. (Though they can fall on the weekly Sabbath, they more often land on ordinary days throughout the week).

Scripture indicates that Yeshua died on Passover, and Passover itself is never a Sabbath unless it falls on the Seventh week Day. It is instead always a Preparation Day for the High Sabbath of the First Day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread. And we know that the Sabbath being prepared for on the day Yeshua died was no ordinary Sabbath, because in John 19:31 we read that it was a High Sabbath. Though that does not stop the High Sabbath from falling on a weekly Sabbath, knowing what time of day He was buried will tell us this one was not an ordinary Sabbath.

We look to Matthew 27:57-60, Mark 15:42-46, Luke 23:53-54, and John 19:40-42. Remembering that biblically, days begin with evening, and reading these passages also with the Sign of Jonah in mind, we see that Yeshua is laid in the grave in the late afternoon while it is still Preparation Day. And what time is it, if at around 6:00 p.m. (or so) we fast forward three full days? Is it not 6:00 p.m. still, only three days later? Yes. It is exactly 72 hours later. Every gospel records the burial in the afternoon, thus the resurrection must take place in an afternoon three days later. How then can that Preparation Day on which Messiah died have been the day (Friday) before the weekly Sabbath? This would require that Yeshua rise from the dead on Monday afternoon, yet Scripture records the women finding His tomb empty on Sunday morning at sunrise. Combining these facts, we cannot possibly come up with a Friday

crucifixion or a Sunday resurrection unless we assumed as much to be so at the behest of the Pope of Rome. It would be ludicrous. So then... When did Yeshua actually die? And when was the genuine resurrection? This is where it gets really interesting!

The Feasts of YHWH, found in the book of Leviticus chapter 23 and reiterated again in the book of Numbers chapters 28 and 29, and once more in Deuteronomy 16, are themselves Keys to the Gospels. Without understanding these personal possessions of the One and Only Elohim, we will have trouble properly understanding the motives and actions of our Messiah. We will not take the time to delve into all of them here, but it must be understood that each Feast is itself a living Scripture, an active prophecy, shadowing, or rather better put, *foreshadowing* everything that Messiah would do, did, and yet will do upon



His return. Therefore, much of what He did and much of what He did say were movements in keeping with the prophetic requirements of one Feast or another, especially when it came to Passover and Unleavened Bread.

These two are the Feasts we are concerned with particularly, because each of which played a vital role in our Master's death and subsequent resurrection. During His last days leading up to Calvary, Yeshua followed a precise pattern set down ages before His advent into human flesh. These feasts were and are the blueprint He followed to the cross, the grave, and the sky.

In the biblical calendar, the year begins on the evening of the first New Moon after the barley in Israel turns green. This first month is called Abib, meaning, “green ears.” On the 14th day of this month YHWH commanded for His people the keeping of Passover. He further commanded a week for eating unleavened bread from the 15th until the 21st, the First and Last days of which are High Sabbaths. During this particular week on the Sunday that falls in these days is the day of the Wave Offering, which also begins the Count to Pentecost, 50 days from then. This is the set up and the order of events from 1000 years BC till the coming of Messiah, Yeshua and His fulfillment of each...right on down till today. (And according to the Prophets, it will be the reality of the hereafter as well in the Kingdom of Heaven: Ezekiel 45:13-46:1-15 and Zachariah 14).

Every year at this time, every family was required to kill a lamb and eat it as the Lamb of Passover. And the requirements were very specific, because it was a representation of the Messiah, though they did not yet know that much. The Lamb was required to be killed about the ninth hour and to be “put in the oven” before sunset. The Lamb had to die by bloodshed. None of its bones could be broken. It had to be cooked by fire and was originally traditionally roasted upright on a stake of pomegranate wood with the lambs intestines curled around the head. This was called a “crowning sacrifice”. Sounds familiar, right? Yeshua died about the ninth hour and was buried (put in the tomb) before sunset. He died by blood shed, but none of His bones were broken. He endured the fire of His Father’s wrath, was crucified upright on what (tradition says) was wood from a pomegranate tree, and He died crowned as well. The parallels are uncanny and only go on the more we study. The sacrifice of this Lamb was made by all Israel but in Jerusalem, a more specific sacrifice was offered.

Every year one Lamb was chosen as a symbolic offering for all people, and it was killed on Passover. Ever find the “triumphal entry” just a bit weird? Why is the whole city cheering and in uproar yet the people asking who this man was who was entering? Doesn’t make much sense unless we were residents of that day and are familiar with the traditions. It is said, that that year was not the first time the “triumphal entry” ever took place. The Hebrews knew that this had been a tradition going back 1000 years and happened annually.

Every lamb sacrificed as *the* Passover lamb had to be a perfect male sheep from... of all places... Bethlehem! Every one of them was born, and everyone chosen from that tiny town near Jerusalem. On the 10th day of the first month, the high priest would travel from Jerusalem to Bethlehem to select the Passover Lamb. He would leave behind priests at the gateway to the city and the gateway to the Temple who would stand ready to take up the cry upon his return with the Lamb. When they saw him coming they would shout, “Hosanna in the Highest. Blessed is He Who comes in the Name of YHWH.” At which time all Jerusalem would rush out into the streets celebrating, laying their coats on the ground and waving palm branches.

On that specific 10th day, Yeshua arrived before the high priest...with His own disciples sounding the call. In a domino effect, there was no stopping the crowd. What had been practiced for 1000 years was



happening as it was meant to all along. Yeshua went to the Temple cleansing it at the end of His ministry as He had before in the beginning. Then, as tradition held it, the Passover Lamb was to be penned up in the Temple courts for inspection by all the people, and so we read of Messiah Yeshua that He remained in the Temple courts teaching the people every day with them questioning Him all the while looking for any flaw. Tradition was to keep the sheep in the Temple court for four

days till Passover, and so also Yeshua spent these four days there. (Luke 19:47)

The night before Passover is supposed to be held, Yeshua celebrated the Feast with His disciples. He celebrates it early so that He can interpret the age old meaning of the Feast as being reflective of Himself and yet still die in accordance with the prophetic meaning of the Feast and in its proper time. Without getting too specific about the Passover meal and all the symbology and meaning throughout, one very important prophecy Yeshua fulfilled was what has become known to us as “Eucharist“ or “Communion“. The special significance to breaking bread and drinking wine was not something started by Yeshua. Before the “Last Supper” this practice was called a “kiddush”, and it was done since the time of Abraham.

Found in Genesis 14, the practice was commissioned by none other than Melchizedek, in whose priesthood Yeshua Himself came as High Priest. After defeating the kings who had kidnapped his nephew, Lot, Abraham was met by the King of Salem, Melkizedek, who brought him bread and wine. Out of gratitude for the gesture, Abraham gave 1/10 of everything to this high priest of the Almighty. (This instituted the tithe as well.) For this reason we also call communion “Eucharist“ from the Greek word meaning “gratitude“.

Scripture says that Yeshua blessed the bread and wine before declaring them the sign of His own body and blood. The blessing was the same as the words Melchizedek supposedly spoke over the bread and wine in His time and ever after. And that blessing was as follows: “Blessed are you YHWH Eloheinu, King of the Universe Who brings forth bread from the earth... Blessed are You, YHWH Eloheinu, King of the Universe, Creator of the fruit of the vine.” And of the 4 cups of wine drunk during the Passover (sanctification, judgment, redemption, and praise) which symbolize for us four Passovers: 1. When death passed over Adam in Eden, 2. When death passed over Israel in Egypt, 3. When death passed over all of

us through Messiah on Calvary, and 4. When death will passover all of us in the the Kingdom resurrection; Of these 4 cups, Yeshua selected the cup of redemption to declare the symbol of His body and blood and the new covenant therein.

I say all this only to illustrate the eternity of all that was happening. Not only was it significant in that time, but it remains so today and will be so relevant unto to the ending of the world and the rising of Messiah's Kingdom thereafter. I say all this to show that nothing began with Yeshua when He walked the earth as one of us. Everything He did was following a pattern set down for Him by His own self long before He was born. None of His actions were random, but each and everyone was meant to teach us something about what the Torah stated or what the Prophets taught or what was promised to take place. Everything He did or said, it

was to explain the reasons for one tradition or another, or it was simply to fulfill that reason. And based off this knowledge, as we approach the facts about the crucifixion and the resurrection, we can know that these too had to follow the pattern that He already laid down, specifically for Himself to follow.



We know that after the Passover meal, Yeshua then went to the Garden, was betrayed by Judas, arrested by the Jewish leaders, denied by Peter, and abandoned by all. Keep in mind throughout the rest of this study the plurality of roles Yeshua assumes in His movements to the cross and all the while during the crucifixion, even after. Yeshua is King, priest, prophet, sacrifice and more, but the most important to note here are His roles as high priest and sacrificial lamb.

At the beginning of His ministry, Yeshua was declared to be the Passover Lamb by none other than John the Baptist, who was himself a Levite and the son of a priest; and had he not been a Nazarite, he would have been a priest in the Temple. However, it happened to be, Yeshua was selected in exactly the same way as the lambs were chosen for Passover by the high priest in Bethlehem. The high priest would speak over the sheep, "Behold, the Lamb of Elohim". John specified further though that this Lamb would be *the* Lamb not one of symbolism, and he did so by adding to the declarative the words, "...Who takes away the sin of the world."

Now, at the end of Messiah's ministry, the declaration is completed, only this time it is by the pagan authority, Pontius Pilate. After the four day examination, the Passover Lamb, being penned in the Temple court for all to behold and inspect, the high priest would say over that sheep, "I find no fault in him." And this is precisely what Pilate told the crowd after his own examination, "I find no fault in this Man." Furthering the allusion of Yeshua as the sacrificial Lamb, the crowd cried out, "Let His blood be on us and on our children."... Little did they know...

Ever wonder why Yeshua said from the cross, "my God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" Ever find it funny how the people standing around thought He was calling Elijah? Theology makes much of this ambiguous statement, but here we will make only one point, noting that the term "God" is an extremely late addition to Christendom and in the early days the Almighty was referred to in Hebrew as El or Elohim and in Aramaic as Eloy, an easy misheard word thought by many to be Elijah (Elijah); These words are an exact quotation of Psalm 22:1, which Psalm later goes into how dogs have surrounded Him, pierced His hands and feet like Lions, divided His garments, and gambled for His clothes. This Psalm was a long known reference to the "Suffering Servant" and in recitation in the moment of realization, Messiah revealed that Servant to be none other than Himself. By quoting this, Yeshua again claimed Himself to be the Passover sacrifice.

In the middle of offering to Passover Lamb, it was customary for the priest to stop and drink. In the middle of the ministry, he wouldn't say, "I thirst," and a drink would be brought to him. This too Yeshua did on the cross for no other apparent reason than to identify Himself as high priest, offering Himself to save everyone else. And finally, in the words of the high priest at the conclusion of the sacrificial offering, when Yeshua was about to die, He declared of His own offering and sacrifice, "It is finished."

The moment Yeshua died is the exact time of the killing of the Passover Lamb, and the moment He was laid in the tomb is the very time the Lamb is "put in the oven" (begun to be cooked). Now as a sacrifice, Yeshua's role had ended (though He is an eternal sacrifice), but as a high priest, His duties went on, and this returns us again to the Sign of Jonah, something people were jeering at Him about as He was dying, not even knowing it was being done before their very eyes. The Sign of Jonah was always Yeshua's reference to the high priestly requirement to remain in total isolation for three days. Not three days after Passover, which could have begun any day and ended on any other, depending on when the Feast was held during the week. Instead, the high priest is required to be isolated for three days before the Wave Offering. The high priest was then obligated to present the offering before YHWH, on the morning of the first day of the week which falls during the days of Unleavened Bread. This was very specifically an obligation which could not happen at any other time.

When Yeshua said He would be dead for three days and three nights, He was talking about Himself in the high priestly role, and this was not a reference to the days following the Passover but rather

Therefore, because of this and His willful presentation of Himself to His disciples that evening, and the following week, ordering Thomas to touch His wounds, we may know that the ascension 40 days after His resurrection was in fact His second, not His first. “But what,” you might ask, “does all this have to do with the day of Messiah’s death or the day of His resurrection?” Everything and more.

The Sign of Jonah began being counted out from the day Yeshua died and from the moment He was put in the grave. We are trying to figure out what day that was, however, so we can not count forward. Thus we must count backwards from the day of the wave offering, knowing that Yeshua, our high priest, had to be in seclusion three days before that offering. Keeping in mind all that we now know about the High Sabbath, the Wave Offering, the Sign of Jonah, and the time of burial, we can deduce the time and day exactly. Sunday is out completely, because Yeshua had to offer the Wave Offering in the morning. And we have the recording in the Scripture of Him not being in the grave when His female disciples came looking for Him. We know we must count three days and three nights but not from Sunday since we know He was buried in an afternoon. And again He was gone long before Sunday afternoon. So we begin counting back from Saturday afternoon: Saturday day - one, Friday night - one, Friday day - two, Thursday night - two, Thursday day - three, Wednesday night - three. Three days and three nights from one afternoon lands us on another afternoon.

Therefore, Passover, that year, fell midweek on Wednesday and with it the death of our King, Yeshua, therefore, died on a Wednesday, was buried just before sunset on the same day, and following the only sign He left us, the sign of all His authority, we count three days and three nights to arrive at the resurrection of Yeshua Messiah, not Sunday morning like the Vatican told us, but on the afternoon of Saturday at the end of the Sabbath. Matthew 12, is where Yeshua gives us the Sign of Jonah; prior to that, in the same exact chapter, He tells us all that He Himself is Master of the Sabbath. How befitting then, that the Master of the Sabbath should also be raised to life on the Sabbath.

Even though it was the Byzantine Emperor, Theodosius, who made Christianity the empire’s official religion, it was Emperor Constantine the great who came up with the concept of a Friday crucifixion and a Sunday resurrection. Mindful that his motives were positive, we cannot judge him too harshly, especially because his efforts did effectively stamp out the power of pagan worship. The method Constantine came up with is called “hijacking” or “syncretism”. He saw that most of the pagans were not as opposed to Yeshua as they were to giving up their way of life which could not be removed from the pagan feasts, temples, and all the obligations. Since everything in the empire centered around the temples, even banking, national holidays, and social identity, Constantine saw that nothing could remove the paganism from the culture. And so, very carefully, he began changing things, little by little, so that nothing was noticed, until ultimately pagan rites though not removed were replaced. Before people knew it, the temple became the church, the priest of the one god or another was replaced with a priest who preached Iesous,

the feast of Brumalia, Saturnalia, and Dies Natalis Sol Invictus became the feast of the nativity, eventually, the mass of Christ (Christmas). The celebration of the vernal equinox in honor of the dawn goddess, Eoster, became Resurrection Sunday (Easter). And the weekly holy day of obligation in the pagan cults of Sol Invictis, Helios, and Mithra, the day of the sun, became “the Lord’s day.”

From there the idea grew that Sunday was the day of resurrection, because it was made into a day to replace the Sabbath that the Most High made. Nothing can be found in Scripture, however, to support the keeping of this day. Yeshua did

not observe it, and neither did His disciples, nor the members of the early assemblies who met in the synagogues which only opened on Friday evening and Saturday. Only one of the true holy days falls on a Sunday every year, and that is Pentecost. Pentecost is calculated 50 days from the Wave Offering which is always on a Sunday. Meaning 50 days from



then is always a Sunday also. It was then on the first Pentecost, that the Most High gave His people the 10 Commandments, and it was that same day after Messiah’s ascension that He also gave us His Holy Spirit. For this reason many count Pentecost as the “birthday of the church”, thus finding Sunday to be once again, “the Lord’s day.”

While it is true that Constantine’s “hostile takeover” was likely necessary in it’s time to drive out paganism and to make room for believers to move into the assemblies and away from there heathen ways, and while it is also true that every day is “the Lords day”, it is moreover true and much more important to us and our spiritual growth and maturity in Messiah Yeshua that we do not continue to use any such arguments to justify why we do what is not done by our Master. If we are speaking of one day He set aside, one day that the Creator set apart from all others, blessed and made sacred for no other reason than that of His own resting thereon, then we find in the Scripture only the Seventh Day of which Yeshua Himself said He is Master. If He is Master of the Sabbath, then should it not be obvious then that the Sabbath is “His day”? (Genesis 2:2-3) And no one can claim the Sabbath as a Jewish possession either, because the Almighty made it in the Creation before ever there was such a thing as a Hebrew. The Seventh Day is the Master’s day, and Sunday has become an old god to us, that which we are hard pressed to get rid of.

What I have said here is nothing but Scripture, supported by historical facts, anyone of which may be investigated for verification. What we have been missing all these years in our reading of the Book is the absence of our bias, the perspective put upon us by our ancestors, by our traditions, opinions, imaginations, and interests. We have been taught to “interpret“ the Scripture, and that is dead wrong. Because to do so is to filter it through our own ideas and times, through our own understanding and our own experience. Though it is hard for us to see things as they are when we have always been taught to perceive them differently and though it is only natural for us to perceive all things a certain way depending upon what we are looking for, still we must begin to see things differently, biblically, no interpretation whatsoever.

Our King told us that His authority was in the Sign of Jonah, and that sign is three days and three nights. No matter how we add it, there is no possibility of a Sunday resurrection. The Bible never claimed there was; neither did it claim a Friday crucifixion. And in fact Scripture does not even record the actual resurrection itself, but by all accounts only the *aftermath* is written - the finding of an empty tomb. Did Yeshua teleport out? Did He walk through the wall to get free? And what was He doing all night long between rising from the dead Saturday afternoon and His encountering Mary in the garden Sunday morning? There are so many questions, but who can say? On all of them, the Bible is silent. Only the apocryphal “Gospel of Peter” records an actual resurrection in progress, including among it’s craziness a giant walking/talking cross following Messiah out of the tomb and proclaiming Yeshua’s resurrection as it follows Him. Very weird! Basically we need to ask ourselves one question regarding this and all other Biblical issues; “How do I know this is so? Did the Scripture say so, or did I acquire it some other way?” When we stop judging by mere appearances only and make a right judgment in all matters both Christian and supposedly Christian, we will be amazed by the truth that has been alluding us and awaiting us all the while. When we allow Scripture to speak for itself and stop trying to tell it what it says or means based upon our western perspective, we will find that no human means of explaining is needed to make the pieces fit. They will come supernaturally together to portray the glories of our Heavenly Father.



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