

Two Outstanding Problems of the Passion Week

In a careful examination of the gospel records with a view to the drawing up of a harmony of the Passion Week during which our Lord was crucified two main problems soon obtrude themselves, namely:

1. Did our Lord partake of the correct legal Passover Supper with His disciples on the 15th of Nisan, that is, during the evening which followed the sunset which closed the 14th of that month, the supper which corresponded to Exodus 12:8 and Leviticus 23:6? Or did He partake of an anticipatory Passover Supper on the 14th of that month, that is, during the evening following the sunset which marked the close of the 13th of that month? and
2. On what day of the week was our Lord crucified? These two questions are really independent of one another, and should be considered separately.

Let us take them in order:

Note: it is essential to remember that according to the general usage of the Old Testament and that of the Synoptic Gospels, the Jewish day **ended at sunset**.¹ Unless this is borne in mind the following discussion will be unintelligible. The reader is advised to refer constantly to the suggested chronological order of the Holy Week which appears in the Appendix A, appearing at the end of this paper. For the sake of greater accuracy quotations of scripture are taken from the English Revised Version.)

1. Did our Lord partake of the regular legal Passover Supper with His disciples on the 15th of Nisan in fulfilment of the Passover type?

Before dealing with this question it will first be necessary to consider the Old Testament ceremonial regulations concerning the Passover. There was the original Passover which was instituted in Egypt at the time of the Exodus (**the Pesach Mitzraim**), and there were the commemorative Passovers to be celebrated annually, especially in the Land of Promise. The former Passover is described in Exodus 12:1-13; 21-23; while the commemorative Passovers are spoken of in the same chapter in verses 14-21; 24-27; 43-48 and they are referred to in Leviticus 23:5-8; Numbers 28:16-25 and Deuteronomy 16:1-8.

From an examination of the foregoing passages it will be seen that the original Passover was instituted as follows:

Each family, or group of persons² were told to choose, on the 10th day of the first month (the seventh of the civil year) Abib or Nisan (see Deut 16:1 and Esth 3:7), a lamb without blemish, a male of the first year; this lamb was to be "kept up" (ie kept in custody under inspection against possible blemish appearing in the meantime) "until the fourteenth day" when it was to be killed "between the evenings." (Exod 12:3-6, lit Hebrew)³.

¹ The Apostle John, writing towards the close of the first century to people not well acquainted with Jewish customs, uses the Roman reckoning of time, the day concluding at midnight. (See John 19:14; 20:19.)

² According to Jewish sources a "group" consisted of from 10 to 20 persons.

³ The Pharisees and the Rabbins took the words "between the evenings" to mean between the declining and the setting of the sun; Josephus took this view (Wars 6:9,3; Antiqq. 14:4,3 See Deut 16:6.

It appears that at that time the lamb was sacrificed by the head of the house who acted as the family priest; and it would appear that it was killed on the threshold of the house⁴ and its blood was applied to the lintel and two side posts of the door (V.22). If this was done God promised that He would “*pass over the door*” of that house, and “*not suffer the destroyer to come into smite*” the inmates (V.23).

During the evening (now the 15th of the month, sunset closing the 14th) the Passover Supper was observed, and after being roasted with fire the lamb was eaten with unleavened bread and bitter herbs (V.8) no bone of which was to be broken (V.46; Num 9:12). The people ate this supper with their loins girded, their feet shod and their staffs in their hands ‘in haste’ ready for instant departure (V.11). All remains of the lamb were burnt with fire so that nothing of it remained until the morning (V.10) it was “the Lord’s Passover.” (V.11; Lev 23:5).

The commemorative Passover Suppers were quite similar, though here were a few modifications. The lamb was to be killed on the 14th of Nisan as before; but this was to be done in the presence of the priests and the Levites, presumably at the brazen altar “*in the place which the Lord shall choose to cause His name to dwell.*” (Deut 16:2), the blood of the lamb being sprinkled by the priests at the foot of the altar (Deut 15:1-6; 2 Chron 35:10-12; Ezra 6:20). The supper which followed after sunset (on the 15th) was, however, inseparably connected with a festival lasting from the 15th to the 21st of Nisan called “The Feast of Unleavened Bread,” for all leaven had to be carefully got rid of beforehand from the people’s houses. Of this “Feast of Unleavened Bread” the 15th and the 21st days of the month were to be “Holy Convocations” on which “no servile work” ie “*no manner of worksave that which every man must eat.*” (cf Exod 12:19-24 with Lev 23:6-9) could be done; these two days were therefore of a quasi-sabbatical nature.

During this period of seven days there were, beside the daily burnt offerings laid down the Law, also the special offerings detailed in Numbers 28:19-24, which are referred to in 2 Chron. 35:6-9). But after the Exile there were in addition, as we learn from extra biblical sources, various voluntary peace offerings known as the chagigah, or “Festival Offerings” usually offered and eaten on the 15th of the month, to which we shall refer later in this Paper. Lastly, after the nation had entered the Land of Promise and had been able to reap the harvest of corn growth there, the sheaf of the first fruits of the harvest had to be “waved” before the Lord within the seven day festival, the “waving” taking place “*on the morrow after the Sabbath.*” (Lev 23:10-12); we shall speak more particularly of this later on.

In both of the foregoing Passovers it was laid down that there was to be no leaven at all in the houses of those who partook of the Passover Supper and the ensuing festival, leaven here being a type of evil (I Cor:7,8). To ensure the absence of leaven in the houses the Jews used to cease from labour at or before noon on the 14th of Nisan to enable them to make a strict search for any trace of leaven to ensure its elimination from their dwellings. For this reason this day, the 14th of Nisan, was as it were a day of preparation, and was often called in a popular sense the “*first day of unleavened bread.*” (Matt 27:17, RV; Mark 14:12; Luke 22:7), though strictly speaking the 15th of Nisan was the “first day” of “The Feast of Unleavened Bread.” (Lev 23:6,7). It was for this reason that Josephus sometimes spoke of the Feast of Unleavened Bread as starting on the 14th of Nisan (Wars 3:1) and sometimes on the 15th (Antiqq 3:10, 5)

⁴ In Exod 12:22 we read that hyssop was dipped “*in the blood that is in the basin*” to be struck on the lintel and side posts of the door. But the Egyptian word saph, here rendered “basin” also means a “threshold” (many times so rendered in the O.T.) it is here translated “threshold” in the Latin Vulgate.

But before we deal with the question forming the caption to this section, it will be necessary to try to discover the meanings of the following expressions as used in scripture, eg “the Passover”, “the feast of the Passover”, “The Feast of Unleavened Bread,” for much will depend upon an accurate understanding of those terms. The reader is asked to look up the references which follow before going on to consider what follows.

The noun “Passover” (Heb. pesach, Gr. pascha) applies normally to the Passover lamb which was to be sacrificed year by year in commemoration of the fact that Jehovah had “passed over” the children of Israel who had sheltered under the blood of the lamb slain on the 14th day of the “first month” of their exodus from Egypt. (Exod 12:9; 2 Chron 35:13) and was “eaten” (Exod 12:11; 2 Chron 30:8; John 18:28). Accordingly the term “*Passover*” was applied by the apostle Paul to our Lord. “*Our Passover also hath been sacrificed, even Christ.*” (1 Cor V.7). By metonymy the term “Passover” was also used of the act of sacrificing the lamb on the 14th of Nisan (Lev 23:5, RV, Num 28:16, RV 33:3).

The term “Passover” is also used once in each of the synoptic gospels for the meal which our Lord told His disciples Peter and John to “*make ready*” during which He instituted His now Supper of Remembrance (Matt 26:19; Mark 14:6; Luke 22:13) and the word “Passover” in another connection covered the whole seven day festival from the 15th to the 21st of Nisan which is otherwise called “The Feast of Unleavened Bread” thus we read, “*the feast of unleavened bread, which is called the Passover, drew nigh.*” (Luke 22:1). In this way was derived the phrase “the Feast of the Passover.” (Exod 34:25; Luke 2:41; John 13:1) and the two are combined in the statement, “*now after two days was the feast of the Passover and the unleavened bread.*”(Mark 14:1, RV).

With these preliminary explanations in mind we may now address ourselves to the question whether our Lord partook of the regular commemorative Passover supper as laid down in the law with His disciples on the night when He was betrayed, or whether He partook of an **anticipatory** Passover supper that night. Our Lord said, “*think not that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets: I came not to destroy, but to fulfil.*” (Matt V.17)

Now the sacrifice of the Passover lamb is admittedly one of the most striking and perfect types contained in “the law” foreshadowing the sacrifice of our Lord on the cross as the Lamb of God, and of His redemption of sinners from spiritual slavery into the blessed freedom of the children of God under the Lordship of Jesus Christ, of whom Moses was a type. As we have seen, an unblemished lamb, a male of the first year in the prime of life, was chosen on the 10th day of Nisan, and this lamb was “kept” under scrutiny against any possible flaw manifesting itself up to the 14th day, when it was slain towards the going down of the sun. The blood of this lamb, in the basin on the threshold was then applied to the lintel above and to the two side posts of the door; and all who sheltered “under the blood” were safe. And was not our Lord, the God-man without blemish in the prime of life? And was He not chosen publicly by the people on the day of His triumphant entry into Jerusalem? And was He not subjected to continual scrutiny and examination, first by the religious leaders of the people, who failed to find any fault in Him despite their traps to ensnare Him, and then later by Herod and Pilate, the representatives of the Roman government, who also could “find no fault in Him” and was He not audibly authenticated “from on high” in the presence of the people (John 7:28,29). AND YET He was put to death, and his precious blood flowed from His head, His hands and His feet, prefigured by the blood

of the Passover lamb on the lintel above, the two side posts, and in the basin on the threshold below of the house wherein the inmates took refuge. In fulfilment of all this did not our Lord say, *"I am the door, by Me if any man enter in, he shall be saved."* (John 10:9).

Furthermore, when we read that the soldiers broke the bones of the two malefactors who were crucified with our Lord, but not His bones, was not this a fulfilment of the direction that no bone of the typical Passover lamb was to be broken?

Now it is quite obvious that our Lord, as the Archetypical Lamb of God, could not, in fulfilment of the type in Exodus 12:6 have been crucified on the 14th of Nisan, and yet Himself have partaken of the legal Passover Supper **after His death**, a supper always eaten during the evening commencing the 15th of the month (Exod 12:8). In other words, our Lord, could not, as the Lamb of God, be put to death at the time when, in God's purpose, He ought to die, namely, at the time of the slaying of the typical lambs in the temple area, and also eat of the supper which followed the slaying of these lambs.

If our Lord partook of the legal Passover supper on the 15th of Nisan after the slaying of the typical lambs in the temple area, and was crucified during the next period of daylight, then He was put to death one day too late, and thus failed to fulfil the Passover type. But if He died on the cross at the very time that the typical lambs were being sacrificed, then the Passover supper at which He presided with His disciples must have been an anticipatory one, and the legal Passover supper was observed during the evening on which He was in the grave.

Now many harmonists urge that our Lord kept the ceremonial law by partaking of the legal Passover supper, but they generally fail to draw attention to the fact that if He did so, He must have been crucified on a day which did not fulfil the type, on a day when, by God's appointment, the typical lambs were not, and ought not, to be sacrificed. But the present writer asks whether it was not far more important for our Lord to have fulfilled the inspired type of Exodus 22:6,8 by being crucified on the day on which the typical lambs were being killed, than for Him to observe the legal Passover supper, a supper which was about to be superseded.

He could not do both and the writer proposes to show that our Lord did accurately fulfil the type by dying at the very time when God appointed that the typical lambs to be slain in the temple area; so that in this way *"our Passover hath been sacrificed, even Christ."* (1Cor V.7) He hopes to show that the legal Passover supper was observed by the unbelieving majority of the Jews with their Sadducee leaders during the evening which followed our Lord's burial. The late Bishop Westcott took this view, though he did not quite satisfactorily explain the reference in Mark 14:12 to *"the first day of unleavened bread"* on which as Luke tells us *"the Passover must be sacrificed."* (Luke 22:7) With the evidence then available he left that matter open.

Now if we possessed the Synoptic Gospels only, most readers would probably conclude from them that our Lord did partake of the legal Passover supper during the evening on which He was betrayed, and which preceded His arrest. For we read:

*"When Jesus had finished all these words (contained in the Olivet discourse) He said unto His disciples, ye know that **after two days the Passover cometh and the Son of Man is delivered up to be crucified.**"* (Matt 26:1, 2)

*"Now after two days was (the feast) of the **Passover and the unleavened bread.**"* (Mark 14:1).

“Now the feast of the unleavened bread drew nigh, which is called the Passover.” (Luke 22:1).

“Now on the first day of unleavened bread the disciples’ came to Jesus saying, where wilt Thou that we make ready for Thee to eat the Passover?” (Matt 26:7)

“And on the first day of unleavened bread, when they sacrificed the Passover, His disciples say unto Him, where wilt Thou that we go and make ready that Thou mayest eat the Passover?” (Mark 14:12).

“And the day of unleavened bread came, on which the Passover must be sacrificed.” (Luke 22:7)

“And He said, go into the city so such a man, and say unto him, the Master saith My time is at hand; I will keep the Passover at thy house with My disciples.” (Math 26:18).

“And He sent Peter and John saying go and make ready for the Passover, that we may eat. And they said unto Him, where wilt Thou that we make ready? And He said unto them, behold when ye are entered into the city there shall meet you a man bearing a pitcher of water; follow him into the house wherein he goeth. And ye shall say unto the Goodman of the house, the Master saith unto thee, where is the guest chamber where I shall eat the Passover with My disciples? And he will show unto you a large upper room furnished; there make ready.” (Luke 22:10-12; cf Mark 14:13-15).

“And the disciples did as Jesus appointed them; and they made ready the Passover.” (Matt 26:19).

“And when the hour was come, He sat down, and the apostles with Him. And He saith unto them, with desire I have desired⁵ to eat this Passover with you before I suffer.” (Luke 22^{14, 15}).

The cumulative force of these passages is considerable. The “supper” to be eaten was without question a “Passover supper”. Moreover there are incidental details which confirm this view. For we read of the drinking of the first of the four cups normally drunk during the supper in Luke 22:17⁶. Also there is a plain reference to the “sop” or “mortar”⁷ used in the regular Passover supper in John 13:26. Lastly we have a reference to the singing of the last part of the Hallel in Matt 26:30. All those details suggest the regular legal Passover supper.

A reading of these passages at first sight would seem to indicate that the 14th of Nisan otherwise popularly known as “the first day of unleavened bread” had arrived and that during the afternoon of this 14th day the disciples were sent by our Lord from Bethany to obtain a Passover lamb from the temple area, in order that they might take it to the Passover chamber already agreed upon and there make ready for the Passover supper with all its accessories, which supper was to be eaten by our Lord with His disciples after sunset, namely on the 15th day according to the ceremonial law. It would seem then that our Lord was crucified a day too late to fulfil the inspired type, namely on the 15th instead of the 14th day of Nisan, a serious matter to those who believe in the inspiration of the types of scripture.

⁵ A Hebraism for “I have desired.”

⁶ See Appendix B

⁷ This “sop” consisted of two pieces of unleavened bread between which bitter herbs had been sandwiched, the whole being then dipped in a dish containing raisins, nuts and spices, the latter being the charoseth. This “mortar” or “sop” was eaten by all present.

But do not the words “*with desire I have desired to eat this supper with you before I suffer*” (Luke 23¹⁵) suggest another view, namely, an anticipatory Passover supper, one held in order that our Lord might be able to fulfil the Passover type in Exodus 12:6 by dying at the very time when the typical Passover lambs were being sacrificed in the temple area? And a more careful reading of the foregoing passages shows that this is very possible.

Bearing in mind that according to the common Jewish usage the day commenced at sunset, these passages may be explained as follows; let us assume that the 13th day of Nisan had just ended by the setting of the sun and that the 14th day had arrived, and that the disciples had then (early that evening, not the next afternoon) come to our Lord with their question, “*where wilt Thou that we make ready for Thee to eat the Passover?*” Let us assume also that it was our Lord’s special desire to have His Passover supper that same evening (not during the evening terminating the next period of daylight) and that with this purpose in view He said to Peter and John, “*go into the city to such a man, and say unto him, the Master saith, **my time is at hand; I will keep the Passover at thy house with my disciples.***” (Matt 26:18); then the directions given by our Lord would indicate that He had a previous engagement with the “Goodman” of that house for they were to go into the city, and there they would meet a man carrying a water-pot⁸ and were to go with him to a certain house where they were to say to the owner, “*the Master saith unto thee, where is the guest chamber where I shall eat the Passover with My disciples?*” and he would show them a large upper room already furnished for the purpose, here they were to make ready. But it may be asked, why this secrecy, and why this delay in despatching Peter and John to make preparations until the very last moment? Surely because the Lord knew that Judas was on the watch for an opportunity to betray Him “*in the absence of the multitude*” (Luke 22:3-6). It was essential that he should not know the location of the Passover chamber until the last possible moment. It was only during this supper that he was able to depart and inform the Jewish authorities which led soon to our Lord’s arrest.

But one difficulty remains. How about the lamb for the Passover supper? It would have been impossible for the two disciples to have obtained a lamb for the purpose after sunset, because the lambs for the Passover were released from the temple area only after being sacrificed during the afternoon preceding the supper, and on the above hypothesis the disciples did not leave Bethany until after sunset. This seemed an insoluble difficulty to the present writer until, early in 1936, he met the late Dr W M Christie in Haifa, Palestine and he was able to remove the difficulty in a complete manner by pointing out that at our Lord’s Passover supper **there was no lamb on the table**; for was not our Lord the Lamb of God, present in Person ready to be sacrificed on the morrow at the very time that the typical Passover lambs were being slain in the temple area? Dr Christie produced evidence from the Talmud to show that for some considerable time before our Lord’s Day there had been a bitter controversy between the Pharisees and the Sadducees concerning the day of the week on which the Passover supper was to be observed. This bitterness was so acute that when the Sadducees were in control of the temple services (as they were in the Lord’s Day, both Annas and Caiaphas being Sadducees) the Pharisees used to have their Passover supper one day earlier than the Sadducees **and without a lamb** while the Sadducees had their supper the following day with lambs.⁹ Some of this evidence will be given later.

⁸ May not this water-pot have been that which was used later for the washing of the disciples; feet?

⁹ This evidence is given in full in Dr Christie’s Palestine Calling; P.139.

But in view of what has just been stated we can now understand how the statements in Mark and Luke about the arrival, after sunset, of the “first day of unleavened bread,” “when they sacrificed the Passover,” or “on which the Passover must be sacrificed,” were strictly accurate, for these statements had in view the sacrificing of the typical lambs by the Sadducean authorities during the next afternoon, at the very time that our Lord died on the cross. It is clear then that he had an anticipatory Passover supper with the disciples during the evening “before He suffered.”

We may now turn to the passages in the gospel of John which seem to show that the legal Passover supper took place after our Lord’s death and burial, passages which have proved such a source of difficulty to harmonists who hold that our Lord partook of the legal Passover supper:

*“Now **before the feast of the Passover**, Jesus knowing that His hour was come that He should depart out of this world unto the Father, having loved His own which were in the world, He loved them unto the end. And during supper the devil having already put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon’s son, to betray Him, Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into His hand, and that He came from God, and went to God, He riseth from supper, and layeth aside His garments; and took a towel and girded Himself” (John 13:1-4).*

“That thou doest, do quickly. Now no man at the table knew for what purpose He spake this unto him. For some thought, because Judas had the bag that Jesus said unto him buy what things we may need of for the feast.” (John 13:27-29)

“They (the Sadducean priests) entered into the palace (of Pilate) that they might not be defiled, but might eat the Passover.” (John 18:28)

“Now (at the conclusion of our Lord’s trial) it was the preparation of the Passover; it was about the sixth hour (according to the Roman reckoning). And he (Pilate) saith unto the Jews, behold your King!” (John 19:4).

In the first of these quotations the words “before the feast of the Passover” indicate that the “feast of the Passover” (which normally began with the legal Passover supper on the 15th of Nisan) was still future to the “supper” then being observed by our Lord. And in the second quotation above the Apostle John tells us that the disciples were imagining that our Lord had dismissed Judas in order that he might “buy” the “things” which they “had need of for the feast”. Obviously the “feast” already mentioned as is shown by the use of the definite article, a “feast” in contrast to the “supper” then being partaken of. We must remember here that “the feast of the Passover” was a festival which lasted from the 15th to the 21st of the month, so the “things” which the disciples had need of in connection with this “feast” would seem to be the chagigah or festival offerings to which reference has been made on page 1 of the paper. (Remember that at this stage the disciples did not believe that our Lord was to be put to death on the morrow).

Furthermore the disciples could not have believed that the “supper” of which they were then partaking was the 15th of Nisan, the opening day of the “feast” because that day was (as will be shown later) a quasi-Sabbath on which all places for the sale of goods were closed and therefore nothing could be bought.

Again, when the Apostle John explained that the Sadducean priests “entered not into the palace that they might not be defiled, but might eat the Passover” (appearing in the third quotation) this implies that they at least had not yet eaten of their Passover supper; for if they had entered Pilate’s preventorium they would have been deemed

so defiled that they would have been debarred from entering the temple area in the afternoon to obtain lambs for their Passover suppers which were to be partaken of in the evening after sunset.¹⁰

And when the same Apostle says at the conclusion of his record of our Lord's trial that "it was the preparation of the Passover" (Gr paraskeue tou pascha), does not this mean as Bishop Westcott has urged, "the preparation for the Passover" a "Passover" yet future?¹¹ In other words, do not let the Apostle's words imply that the day of the crucifixion, the 14th of Nisan was a "preparation" for the Passover supper which the Sadducees observed after sunset on the 15th of the month.¹²

The present writer is not unmindful of the probability that this term paraskeue, "preparation" was even then also used as a technical term for the day preceding the regular weekly Sabbath, it is so used in the Didache, a document written about AD 100-105, and it has been so used ever since the Eastern Church. The reason for this latter use of the term was that on the Jewish Sabbath "no manner of work" could be done by the Jews, not even the cooking of food; hence all preparation for meals and other needs on the Sabbath had to be complete on the preceding day.

But the first day of the "feast of unleavened bread", "the feast of the Passover," namely the 15th of Nisan though not a strict Sabbath was of a quasi-sabbatical character in that on it "no service" or "laborious" work could be done, that is, no work "save that which every man must eat" (Exod 12:16; Lev 23:7)¹² and it was the first of seven days during which no leaven was to be found in the dwellings of those who observed this feast.

It was for this double reason that the previous day, the 14th was rightly called "the preparation of the Passover" for on it regular work ceased about midday in order that a careful search was made for the elimination of all leaven from the houses, and any major work might be completed in readiness for the "feast of unleavened bread" which began after sunset. We shall have more to do with this "preparation of the Passover" in the second section of this paper.

Now if the day of our Lord's trial and crucifixion was a "day of preparation" for the legal quasi-sabbatical "feast of the Passover" commencing after sunset, but itself not in the eyes of the Sadducees in charge of the temple services a "Sabbath" we can readily understand how it was possible for our Lord's disciples in the upper room to imagine that our Lord had dismissed Judas so that he might "buy" things for the coming "feast of the Passover" (John 13:29) and how it was possible also for Nicodemus to "buy" a linen cloth before sunset on the day of the crucifixion in which to wrap the body of our Lord for burial, and how also it was possible for the "women of Galilee" after visiting the tomb to "prepare spices and ointments" for embalming

¹⁰ A defilement arising from a Jew's entry into Pilate's praetorian would not, of course, have prevented his partaking of the Passover after sunset, for it was reckoned that such defilement ceased at sunset; but it would have debarred his entry into the temple area on the afternoon to obtain a lamb for the Passover.

¹¹ See Bishop Westcott's Introduction to the Study of the Gospels, p 360.

¹² In the 23rd chapter of Leviticus there are but two "Sabbaths" (Heb Shabbat) mentioned, the weekly Sabbath (Lev 23:3) and the stricter Day of Atonement (Lev 23:27-32) on these "Sabbaths" "no manner of work" could be done, anyone transgressing this rule was liable to be put to death (Exod 31:15, Lev 23:29, 30). But in the same chapter we read of certain "set feasts" on which "no servile work" could be done, being quasi-Sabbaths, namely the 15th and 21st days of Nisan (ie the opening and closing days of the "feast" of unleavened bread); the day of "Pentecost" (50 days after the 21st of Nisan); the 1st day of the seventh month; the 15th and 21st days of the seventh month (the feast of tabernacles) these last three days being called "solemn rests" (Heb Shabbat Hon) see the RV the AV being very misleading.

the body of our Lord and then “rest according to the commandment” after sunset on the quasi-Sabbath of the feast (Luke 23:55,56).¹³

All these things would have been impossible on the legal Passover day. It seems evident then that the Sadducean authorities did not regard the day of the crucifixion as the Passover quasi-Sabbath, but the next day commencing with sunset.

This seeming conflict between the statement of the Synoptic gospels and those of the Apostle John regarding the day of the Passover supper gave rise to the week known **quarto-deciman** (the 14th day) and **quinto-deciman** (the 15th day) controversy, namely the dispute as to which day of Nisan (corresponding roughly to our April) the annual memorial Lord’s supper ought to be observed by the early Church. With respect to this dispute the late Dr Christie has written: “the practice in Asia Minor was that the supper was to be observed on the eve commencing the 14th of Nisan, that is, after the sunset of the 13th at which time the new day began according to the Jewish and OT usage. Polycarp maintained that he had so kept the feast with the Apostle John. Irenaeus, a disciple of Polycarp, followed his teacher. On the other hand the Roman practice was that the celebration should take place one day later, that is, on the evening with which the 15th of Nisan commenced....this disputation went on till the year 325AD after which the Roman practice prevailed throughout the empire.”¹⁴

This dispute is quite understandable. There were two different points of view; one, that the annual celebration of the supper should take place on the 14th of Nisan, on which our Lord instituted it; and the other, that it should correspond to the legal Passover supper observed by the Jews on the 15th of that month. Since the annual celebration was in memory of the new Supper of Remembrance instituted by our Lord rather than in memory of the Jewish Passover supper, now defunct, the Asiatic practice would seem to have been more appropriate than the Roman, which, alas was forced upon many unwilling worshippers

We see then that there is no real conflict between the testimony of the synoptic gospels and that of the Apostle John concerning the Passover supper. But apart from the gospel of John, which, as most admit was written towards the close of the first century as a supplement to the existing gospels, it would have been difficult to see how our Lord could have partaken of the Passover supper and yet fulfil the Passover type by dying when the typical Passover lambs were being sacrificed in the temple area and how the legal Passover supper was observed after His death and burial. Without doubt the Apostle John was acquainted with the synoptic gospels because he wrote long after they were written, so he passes over in silence much which is contained in them. But being a supplement to them he was able to correct certain false deductions which readers, ignorant at that late date of the Jewish ceremonial laws, might be liable to make. That many of his readers were thus ignorant is plain from the various parenthetical “asides” which he makes in his narrative, explaining what would otherwise not be clear to them. And he must ever keep in mind that one of his reasons for writing his gospel was to present the Lord Jesus as “the Lamb of

¹³ During the legal Passover all places for the sale of goods were closed but it has been said that purchases could be made privately that day if the price was not mentioned, nor money taken. But would the disciples have imagined that our Lord was sending Judas out (they did not know yet that he was a traitor) to buy goods in this clandestine manner?

¹⁴ See his book Palestine Calling p 130. Dr Christie was an outstanding missionary to the Jews for many years, and a remarkable student of the Talmud’s. His statement is borne out by Bishop Westcott. “early tradition is nearly unanimous in fixing the crucifixion on the 14th of Nisan, and in distinguishing the last supper from the legal supper. This distinction is expressly made by Appolinarius, clement of Alexandria, Hippolytus, Tertullian, Irenaeus”, Introduction to the Study of the Gospels p 343.

God” who came to “take away the sins of the world” by Himself fulfilling the OT sacrificial types.

It was stated above that there is evidence that in our Lord’s time there were two Passover suppers, one following the other, that of the Pharisees which they observed during the evening commencing the 14th of Nisan and that of the Sadducees which they observed during the evening commencing the 15th of that month. It will be well if we look at this evidence just here.¹⁵

These successive Passover suppers arose in a rather curious way. It appears that for many years after the return of the Jews from their exile there was an acute controversy between the sect of the Pharisees and that of the Sadducees as to which day was meant in the expression “the day after the Sabbath” on which the priests were to wave the sheaf of first fruits unto Jehovah, of which we read in Leviticus 23:11, 15. The Sadducees maintained that these words meant “the morrow after the regular Sabbath whenever it fell during the Passover week,” namely the first day of the week (though this designation for the day is not found in the OT scriptures). But the Pharisees equally firmly insisted that the phrase meant “the morrow after the first day of unleavened bread,” namely the 16th of Nisan, since, as we have seen, the 15th day the first day of unleavened bread was a quasi-Sabbath.

Now the 15th of Nisan, the “first day” of unleavened bread” (Lev 23:6,7) had no fixed relation to the week. It might fall on any day of the week because it was counted from the 1st of Nisan which, since it was fixed by the first visible appearance of the new moon in the spring equinox, also had no fixed relation to the week. If, for example, the new moon should happen to become visible towards sunset on our Sunday, then Monday (beginning after sunset) would be the 1st of Nisan and so the 15th would also be a Monday. If again the new moon appeared just before sunset on a Wednesday, then the 1st of Nisan would be a Thursday, and so also the 15th of Nisan. When the Pharisees were in control of the temple services (as was the case some time after the return of the Jews from the exile) the sheaf of first fruits would be waved on the morrow after the 15th of Nisan irrespective of what day of the week that might be. But this would not at all suit the Sadducees who maintained that the sheaf must be waved on the morrow of the weekly Sabbath whenever that should fall in the Passover week. Now we are told that the Jewish custom was that when the Paschal new moon was first seen the witnesses of its appearance were to kindle without delay a bon-fire on the crest of the mountain from which it was seen, and this would be the signal for bon-fires to be lit from crest to crest until the news reached Jerusalem that same night. The authorities would then arrange the reckoning of Nisan and the temple services accordingly.

It came about therefore that when the Pharisees were in control, as was the case in Maccabean times, the Sadducees, not wishing the waving of the sheaf to take place on any other day than the morrow after the weekly Sabbath, used to suborn witnesses to give false evidence as to the first appearance of the moon at the spring equinox so as to ensure that the 15th of Nisan should coincide with the weekly Sabbath; then of course the waving of the sheaf would take place on the morrow after the Sabbath, as well as on the 16th of Nisan, as they desired. Relative to this Dr Christie has written: “we learn that this party (who are called Minim, Boothusians and Tzadukim, all designations of the Sadducean sect) sought to introduce confusion in the reckoning (M.Rosh 2.1) and that this was for the purpose of deceiving the Chachamim, Rabbis of the Pharisaic party. The whole matter is made very clear in

¹⁵ This evidence is given fully in Dr Christie’s “Palestine Calling” pp 134-140.

the Tosephta parallel to the Mishna as also in the Gemara comments in both Talmud's (Mishnah, Rosh 2.1; Bab Rosh 22b; Jer Rosh 2.1 or 10b in Shit. Edition)

All three passages give a full account of the bribing of two witnesses to give false testimony regarding the new moon for this purpose, and the payment of 200 zuz or denars to each of them. One of those belonging to the Pharisee sect revealed the whole matter and gave details concerning his evidence of having seen the new moon from the neighbourhood of the Good Samaritan Inn (Ma'ale Adummim).¹⁶

In the same connection he wrote: "The Jerusalem Talmud tells us that the deception in the reckoning 'was known to the rabbis' and the result was that 'these were sitting down (reclining) today, and those were sitting down on the morrow'" (Jer Rosh 10b).¹⁶

Here is positive evidence of the keeping of two successive Passover suppers, and there is no reason to question the possibility of such a state in our Lord's time which would explain the apparent disagreement between the evidence concerning the supper in the synoptic gospels and that in the gospel of John in a very satisfactory manner, the first Passover supper being that of the Pharisees (without lambs) to which our Lord's Passover supper corresponded, the second that of the Sadducees observed after our Lord's death and burial.

This explains how there would be no bar to the servants of the High Priest carrying weapons on the 14th of Nisan, the day of His arrest, trial and crucifixion (John 18:3) which was forbidden on any kind of Sabbath (M Shab 6:1) and how that there would be nothing irregular in holding a court of law for our Lord's trial on that day, which was forbidden on any kind of Sabbath (M Betzah V2; B Sanhed 63a) and that all the acts connected with the crucifixion were possible that day, which were forbidden on a Sabbath (Sanhed 39a). Certainly then the day of our Lord's crucifixion was not the quasi-Sabbath or "first day" of the "feast of unleavened bread."

Now in the dispute concerning the phrase "the morrow after the Sabbath" (Lev 23:11,15) Dr Christie inclined to the view that the Pharisees were right and the Sadducees wrong. The present writer questions this. But let us examine the evidence before making up our minds. Through Moses, God said to the children of Israel, *"when ye be come into the land which I give unto you, and shall reap the harvest thereof, then ye shall bring the sheaf of the first fruits of your harvest unto the priest; and he shall wave the sheaf before the Lord, to be accepted for you; on the morrow after the Sabbath the priest shall wave it. And in the day when ye wave the sheaf, ye shall offer a he-lamb of the first year for a burnt offering unto the Lordand ye shall eat neither bread, nor parched (roasted) corn, nor fresh ears, until this selfsame day, until ye have brought the oblation of your God: it is a statute for ever throughout your generations in all your dwellings."* (Lev 23:10-14, RV).

"And ye shall count unto you from the morrow after the Sabbath, from the day that ye brought the sheaf of the wave offering; seven Sabbaths shall there be complete: even unto the morrow of the seventh Sabbath shall ye number fifty days; and ye shall offer a new meal offering unto the Lord. Ye shall bring out of your habitations two wave loavesthey shall be baken with leaven, for first fruits unto the Lord." (Lev 23:15-17 RV).

In fulfilment of the direction given by God in the first of these passages we read that after Joshua had brought the children of Israel into the land they *"did eat of the old*

¹⁶ Palestine Calling p 136.

corn of the land on the morrow after the Passover, unleavened cakes and parched (roasted) corn, in the selfsame day” (Josh 5:11). And if we carefully compare this statement in the book of Joshua with the first of the passages from Leviticus above it seems that the eating of the “old corn of the land” followed the waving of the sheaf of first fruits earlier in the day. In this case then it appears that “the morrow after the Sabbath” was based on their interpretation of the words “the morrow after the Sabbath.” But the conclusion that “the morrow after the Sabbath” always corresponded to “the morrow after the Passover” does not necessarily follow, for it may well be that in this particular instance the appearance of the new moon was such that it caused the day of the Passover supper to coincide with the weekly Sabbath.

But let us look at the second quotation from Leviticus 23 above and we shall discover evidence which will show that the words “the morrow after the Sabbath” do mean “the morrow after the (weekly) Sabbath.” In this passage note the words “seven Sabbaths shall there be complete: even unto the morrow of the seventh Sabbath shall ye number fifty days. Of what nature can these intervening “seven Sabbaths” be? They can only be the weekly Sabbaths, no other Sabbaths are recurrent in this way.¹⁷ The following diagram will make the matter quite clear.

1	8	15	22	29	36	43	50 days
Datum Sabbath	1 st	2 nd	3 rd	4 th	5 th	6 th	7 th Sabbath

The numbering of the “fifty days” of Leviticus 23:16 is obviously inclusive, and the “seventh Sabbath” is plainly of the same nature as the intervening “Sabbaths” that is it is a weekly Sabbath, then so is also the first of the “Sabbaths” it is not the quasi-Sabbath of the 15th of Nisan on which the legal Passover supper was observed.

Moreover we have a clue to the meaning of the words “the morrow after the Sabbath” which the Jewish authorities of our Lord’s Day did not possess. For we know that the Passover lambs, the waving of the sheaf of first fruits and the presentation of the “two wave loaves” (Lev 23:17) were types which found their fulfilment in our Lord’s time. For

1. “Our Passover also hath been sacrificed, even Christ” (1Cor V.7 RV)
2. Then on “the morrow after the Sabbath” on the very day when the Jewish priest waved the sheaf of first fruits our Lord was raised from the dead, and as “the first fruits of them that are asleep” (1 Cor 25:20) was metaphorically “waved” in resurrection “acceptance” before the Father. This “Sabbath” was certainly the weekly Sabbath.
3. Furthermore counting “fifty days” from this “morrow after the Sabbath” onwards to “the morrow after the seventh Sabbath” we are told that “two wave loaves” which had been baked from the grain of separate stalks of wheat were “waved with the bread of the first fruits for a wave offering before the Lord” (Lev 23:20). The fulfilment of this was without doubt the descent of the Holy Spirit “fifty days” after

¹⁷ Referring to these “seven Sabbaths” Gasenius says that the word “Sabbath” here is “nearly the same as ...week” in meaning as is seen when we compare this passage with Deut 16:9, “seven weeks shalt thou number unto thee: from the time thou beginnest to put the sickle to the standing corn shalt thou begin to number seven weeks.” But in Lev 23:15 the word in the Hebrew is Sabbath, not shabua “week”, but the correspondence is quite natural, for each “week” would close with its “Sabbath”. The LXX has most inaccurately rendered Lev 23:15 by “hepta hebdomadas holokleros” “seven full weeks.”

the Lord's resurrection so as to fuse, as it were, the separate disciples into one organism, the church. There are "two loaves" signifying that the church was to be formed of both Jews and Gentiles and these two loaves were "baked with leaven" signifying that in the Church there is, alas, both evil and good. These "two loaves" were to be "waved" by the priest 'with the bread of the first fruits for a wave offering before the Lord. (Lev 23:20) accordingly James tells us, *"of His own will He brought us forth by the word of truth, that we should be a kind of first fruits of His creatures."* (Jas 1:18).

Without doubt then, the Sadducees were right in interpreting the work "the morrow after the Sabbath" as being "the morrow after the (weekly) Sabbath" which fell in the Passion week. This conclusion is important. For if they were right in their interpretation of this "Sabbath" they were equally right in their choice of the day for the sacrificing of the Passover lambs in the temple area at the very time that our Lord died on the cross, and in keeping the legal Passover supper after His death and burial.

Our first question is now answered – our Lord and His disciples partook of an anticipatory Passover supper by special desire "before He suffered" a supper which coincided with that held by the Pharisees and a supper which was eaten during the evening which was the commencement of the 14th of Nisan on which same day He was put to death the next afternoon.

PART 2

2. On What Day of the Week was our Lord Crucified?

Western Tradition is practically unanimous in the view that our Lord was crucified on the Friday of the Passion Week. Those who hold to any other day for the crucifixion are in the great minority, though some weighty names may be quoted in favour of the crucifixion having taken place on the Thursday of that week. Indeed in some of the Eastern Churches they have a representation of our Lord's body in a coffin on Thursday evening, this may indicate an older tradition.

But what does scripture say about the question? The answer to this question is of some importance, because it has a bearing upon the extreme reverence which some give to what we know as "Good Friday" which they call the holiest day of the year.

Among those who have questioned Friday as being the day of our Lord's crucifixion may be numbered such a scholar as the late Bishop Westcott, and he has been followed by a few scholars since. Bishop Westcott laid great stress upon our Lord's words. *"As Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the whale; so shall the son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth."* (Matt 12:40), as being proof to the contrary. He has written as follows:

"admitting that parts of the days of the burial, and the resurrection are to be counted as days, yet even thus the period from Friday to Sunday is only three days and two nights. Are we then to conclude that the separate enumeration of days and nights is without special force and strictly speaking inaccurate?"¹⁸

Accordingly he held that our Lord was crucified on the Thursday. The present writer must admit that for a long time this statement of our Lord made him doubt the Friday date for our Lord's crucifixion and the usual explanation of our Lord's words made in

¹⁸ Introduction to the Study of the gospels. Pp 344, 345.

the effort to make them conform to the Friday date seemed to him precarious and unconvincing. After a careful examination of the arguments on both sides of the problem has convinced him of the great probability of the Thursday date for the crucifixion. It is with some satisfaction that he discovered that the same arrangement of the Passion Week as is suggested in Appendix A of the paper, supporting the Thursday date, appears in the article under the caption of "dates" written by Mr F R Montgomery Hitchcock in Hastings' Dictionary of Christ and the Gospels, though he only became aware of this article long after he had come to his own conclusions on the subject.

(The reader will find it even more advisable to refer continually to the suggested chronological order of the Passion Week which appears in Appendix A).

The Probability of the Thursday Date

An important reason for the Thursday date for the crucifixion is that it seems to fit in so wonderfully with the details of the type appearing in Exodus 12:3-8, for in this passage we read:

"Speak ye unto all the congregation of Israel, saying in the tenth day of this month (Nisan) they shall take to them every man a lamba lamb for an householdyour lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first yearand ye shall keep it up until the fourteenth day of the same month: and the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it at even (Heb 'between the two evenings;')and they shall eat the flesh in the night, roast with fire, and unleavened bread; with bitter herbs they shall eat it." (Exod 12:3-5 RV).

In fulfilment of this type our Lord as the archetype, was chosen by popular acclamation on what is called 'Palm Sunday' the 10th of Nisan, when the people cried; *"Hosanna Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord, even the King of Israel"* (John 12:11, 12).

Our Lord was in the prime of life. He was without blemish in any way, moral or physical. In the passage quoted from Exodus the words *"ye shall keep it up"* mean that the people were to keep the lamb "in custody"¹⁹ under constant scrutiny against any possible blemish developing in the meantime. In fulfilment of this, our Lord was under constant scrutiny from 'Palm Sunday' right up to the time when He was delivered up to be crucified; during which period 'no fault' could be found in Him. On the Sunday He made His triumphant entry into Jerusalem and *"all the city was stirred saying Who is this? And the multitude said, this is the Prophet Jesus from Nazareth of Galilee."* (Matt 21:10,11); and after showing Himself publicly in the temple He returned to Bethany.

On Monday he again entered the temple and cleansed it, healing the blind and lame and so vindicated Himself again; whereupon the children cried, *"Hosanna to the Son of David"* and the religious leaders were unable to gainsay Him.

On Tuesday He had His great day of controversy with the Jewish leaders, who were unable to *"ensnare Him in His talk"* or to *"answer Him a word when He questioned them, for He was without fault"*.

¹⁹ Dr G Rawlinson in Ellicott's Bible Commentary. Vol 1, Pp 228.

On Wednesday the Lord again entered Jerusalem and certain Greeks asked after Him²⁰ and a “*voice out of heaven*” vindicated Him in the presence of the multitude; and after answering further criticism our Lord “*departed and hid Himself*” to avoid premature arrest by the priests who were that day plotting His death. (John 12:28-36).

That evening, now the 14th of Nisan, our Lord instituted His new Supper of Remembrance, was betrayed, arrested, tried before the religious leaders of the people, who were unable to substantiate any valid charge against Him, tried by Pilate, then by Herod and again by Pilate and repeatedly pronounced not guilty. But in spite of His proved innocence He was finally condemned to death by the almost unanimous clamour of the Jews who cried, “*Let Him be crucified.*” All this was on the 14th of Nisan.

If on the other hand, our Lord was crucified on Friday the 15th of Nisan, then the type was falsified in a most important particular, a serious matter to those who believe in its inspiration.

Furthermore, those who believe that our Lord was crucified on Friday, and yet believe that He made His triumphant entry into Jerusalem on ‘Palm Sunday’ are forced to predicate that He spent two days, Wednesday and Thursday in retirement at Bethany, not under public scrutiny, that is, two days out of the five required by the type, another serious failure in the fulfilment of the type. Indeed some harmonists have urged that our Lord had His interview with the Greeks on Tuesday afternoon and then departed and hid Himself.

But this is impossible. It is true however that when the Synoptic gospels come to speak of “*the first day of unleavened bread on which the Passover must be killed*” there does seem a break in the continuity of their narratives, allowing for a new beginning in subject (see Matt 26:17, Mark 14:12, Luke 22:7) and this break might allow for a period of retirement at that point, a retirement passed over in silence. But the context, before and after this break, certainly gives no impression of a two day period of inactivity on our Lord’s part as is so often assumed. Indeed such a period of retirement seems to be expressly contradicted by Luke’s summing up of our Lord’s ministry at this period, when, just before his account of the Passover supper, he says:

“Every day He was teaching in the temple, and every night He went out and lodged in the mount that is called the Mount of Olives; and all the people came early in the morning to Him in the temple, to hear Him.” (Luke 21: 37,38).

It seems certain then, in view of this testimony of Luke, that our Lord’s interview with the Greeks, and His subsequent departure from Jerusalem to avoid premature arrest, took place during Wednesday, probably in the morning. And it was in the ensuing evening, after sunset, that our Lord kept His Passover Supper with His disciples in the “upper room” when He instituted His new Supper of Remembrance.

It appears then that our Lord did accurately fulfil the type in Exodus 12 by being chosen publicly on the 10th of Nisan, and by being under constant scrutiny (with the exception of a few hours on Wednesday) until the 14th day of that month commencing after sunset, and that He was crucified during the next period of daylight, this being Thursday and He died “*between the evenings*” (ie between the going down of the sun

²⁰ See pp 4, 5

and sunset) after being publicly condemned to death “by the whole assembly of the congregation” of the Jews.

Is this conclusion consistent with the other references to His death in the Gospel records? Yes, abundantly so. Firstly we have a definite time note in John 12:1 which seems to fit in exactly with the Thursday date for the crucifixion. We read, “Jesus therefore six days before the Passover came to Bethany.”

What does the Apostle John mean here by “The Passover? In some contexts this term seems to refer to the sacrificing of the Passover lambs during the afternoon of the 14th of Nisan. But here it more probably refers to the Passover Supper with its following seven day festival, the Supper which commenced on the 15th of the month after sunset, the close of the 14th (for John, as we have already seen²¹ speaks of the legal Passover Supper by this title, a supper held after our Lord’s death).

Now let us assume that this legal Passover Supper commenced on Thursday evening after our Lord’s burial; then one day before this supper would be Wednesday evening; two days before the Passover Tuesday evening; three days, Monday evening; four days, Sunday evening; five days, Saturday evening; and six days before the Passover, Friday evening (which was the commencement of the weekly Sabbath). It seems then that our Lord undertook the long and tiring ascent from Jericho to Bethany on Friday, arriving just after sunset; and he apparently had a supper with Martha, Mary and Lazarus in Simon’s house during Saturday evening. On the above assumption the chronology fits perfectly. But if our Lord’s crucifixion took place on Friday, then working back in this way would bring our Lord’s arrival at Bethany from Jericho on Saturday evening; but this is most improbably because the long ascent from Jericho to Bethany is far greater than a Sabbath day’s journey and Saturday was the Sabbath.²²

Secondly, the Thursday date for the crucifixion, as urged by Bishop Westcott, exactly fulfils our Lord’s prediction that He would be “three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.” (Matt 12:40). For the short period between our Lord’s burial and sunset on Thursday may be reckoned for one day²³ the night following, one night; Friday, a second day; Friday night, a second night; Saturday, a third day; and Saturday night, a third night; and our Lord rose from the dead before daybreak on Sunday morning.

But against all this a scholar such as Professor Turner, speaking of the day of the resurrection as being “the third day” from the day of the crucifixion has urged:

“the most common New Testament phrase for the day of the resurrection in comparison with the crucifixion is ‘te trito’ (on the third day) which occurs in the gospels eight times, besides 1 Cor 15:4, which in Greek never did or could mean anything but ‘on the second day’, whether ‘the day after tomorrow’ or ‘the day before yesterday’ cf Luke 13:32; Acts 27:18,19; Exod 14:10,11; 1 Macc 9:44. Even the apparently stronger phrases ‘after three days’ (Mark 8:31; Matt 27:63,64) and ‘three days and three nights’ (Matt 7:40) mean the same thing; cf Gen 13:17,18; Esth 4:16)²⁴

²¹ See pp 4, 5.

²² The steep ascent from Jericho to Bethany is about 15 miles and would take foot-travellers at least six hours.

²³ Our Lord’s burial (and descent into Hades ‘the heart of the earth’ (took place before sunset in fulfilment of Exod 12:6; Hebrew ‘between two evenings’) the ‘evening’ (gr opsia) when Joseph of Arimathea came to beg the body of Jesus from Pilate of which we read in Matt 27:57 was according to the Thayer-Grimm Lexicon the period between 3 pm and 6 pm.

²⁴ Art “chronology of the New Testament” Hastings’ dictionary of the Bible.

According to this writer, then, all the above phrases are to be reckoned inclusively. This dogmatic assertion by Professor Turner sounds most formidable; and if it is indeed a fact that the words *te trito* (lie. 'on the third day') when referring to the future always correspond in meaning to our English phrase "on the day after tomorrow" then this is most damaging to the view that the crucifixion took place on Thursday. For this reason Professor Turner rejected the view of Bishop Westcott and insisted that our Lord was crucified on the Friday. On the other hand it may be noted that Dr F R Hitchcock writing at a later date, and aware of Professor Turner's article, and fully conversant with the latter's argument based on the view that "on the third day" (Gr *te trito*) really means "the day after tomorrow" has taken the same view as Bishop Westcott and places the crucifixion on the Thursday.²⁵ Now when authorities disagree what are we to do? Let us examine the evidence afresh.

Take the passages cited by Professor Turner to support his contention.

"Behold I cast out devils and perform cures today and tomorrow, and the third day I am perfected." (Luke 13:32).

"As we laboured exceedingly with the storm, the next day they began to throw the freight overboard and the third day they cast out the tackling of the ship" (Acts 27:18,19).

"Fast for me, and eat not and drink not for three days, night and dayand it came to pass on the third day &c. (Esth 4:16 LXX)

"And he put them in prison three days; and he said to them on the third day &c." (Gen 42:17, 18 LXX)

"Sanctify them today and tomorrow and let them wash their garments. And let them be ready against the third day." (Exod 19:10, 11 LXX)

In these passages "the third day" undoubtedly means "the day after the morrow" but it is important to note that each of these examples has a set of three days in view, to which "the third day" is related; in these cases the reckoning is plainly inclusive. By the same mode of reckoning "on the second day" ought to mean "on the morrow" but does it? Consider the following passage:

"Wearrived at Rhegium: and after one day a south wind sprang up, and on the second we came to Puteoli." (Acts 28:13).

Here the arrival of the vessel at Puteoli "on the second day" from Rhegium was plainly on the day after the morrow after the arrival at Rhegium, the reckoning being exclusive, not inclusive. This is in direct disagreement with the principle laid down by Professor Turner above. Evidently there are both methods of reckoning in the New Testament, inclusive and exclusive, depending upon the context.

In English we have the same thing. When we say, "on the third day from now" we mean, not the day after the morrow, but the next day after that, the reckoning being exclusive. But if we have a set of three periods commencing with today in view, "on the third day" of such a set would be "the day after the morrow" for example: "we remained here three days and on the third day we departed" in which the day of departure was the day after the morrow of the first mentioned day, the reckoning being inclusive.

²⁵ "Datos" Hastings dictionary of Christ and the Gospels.

Now all expositors admit, as Professor Turner has done above, that the phrases “on the third day”, “after three days” and the “three days and three nights” correspond, all denoting the period between our Lord’s death and His resurrection. This being so, those who believe that our Lord was put to death on Friday afternoon seek by various expedients to shorten or compress, the apparently longer phrases to agree with the meaning which they assign to the phrase, “on the third day” making them all to mean “on the day after tomorrow”. Thus the Talmud is quoted to show that a night and a day are the equivalent of the Hebrew word onah (a period of 24 hours answering to the Greek nuchthemeron a “night-day”) and it is said further that any part of an onah was reckoned by the Jews as one onah. This being so, the remainder of the Friday between our Lord’s burial and sunset was reckoned by the Jews as one onah, from sunset Friday to sunset Saturday as a second onah and from sunset Saturday to early Sunday morning as a third onah, making three onah altogether. In this way, they urge our Lord’s prediction that He was to be “*three days and three nights in the heart of the earth*” was fulfilled. This is a possible explanation but it has always seemed to the present writer a very laboured one. If such were our Lord’s meaning why did not Matthew report our Lord’s words as follows, “*as Jonah was three nuchthemera (night-days) in the belly of the whale, so shall the Son of Man be three nuchthemera in the heart of the earth?*”

But reversing the usual Jewish order of night then day (appearing in this word nuchthemeron), according to Matthew our Lord said that He would be “three daylights and three nights in the heart of the earth.”²⁶ Which was precisely the case if He was crucified on the Thursday.

Let us now examine the remaining equivalent of the words “on the third day” namely “after three days” this last phrase occurs in the statement of the chief priests, “*that deceiver said while He was yet alive. After three days I rise again.*” (<Matt 27:63; see also Mark 8:31; 1x31 RV; x34 RV). First let us assume that our Lord was crucified on the Friday, and see how this last phrase works out. If “after three dys” from the crucifixion reaches to Sunday, meaning in modern parlance “after the morrow” after the crucifixion, then “after two days” ought to mean “on the morrow” and “after one day” ought to mean “today” but this latter is absurd. Look again at Acts 27:13 “*Wearrived at Rhegium: and after one day a south wind sprang up and on the second day we came to Puteoli*” here without question “after one day” means on the morrow; therefore “after two days” must mean “on the day after the morrow.”

Can this last result be confirmed elsewhere in connection with the chronological data of the Passion Week? Yes it can. For it so happens that our Lord (as quoted by both Matthew and Mark) used these very words “after two days” (see Matt 26:1,2 and Mark 14:1) early in the Passion week and His use of them sheds clear light on their meaning.

It is generally admitted that our Lord had His great day of controversy with the religious leaders of the Jews in the precincts of the temple on Tuesday. When this controversy came to an end our Lord departed from the temple and the city. On His way up the Mount of Olives, His disciples pointed out to Him the beauty of the temple buildings which were in plain view from the road to Bethany. This implies that it was still daylight. But our Lord replied that the time was coming when not one stone of these same buildings would be left standing on another, and he sat down on the mountain and spoke of His second advent and of the apocalyptic judgments connected with it. The delivery of our Lord’s discourse would not take more than a

²⁶ The Greek word hemera, used here for “day” often is used of a period of daylight as contrasted with night.

quarter of an hour (the longer record appearing in Matt 24:4-25:46 may be read through audibly in the English translation in about twelve minutes).

“When Jesus had finished all these words He said unto His disciples, ye know that after two days the Passover cometh and the Son of Man is delivered up to be crucified.” (Matt 25:1,2 RV)

“Now after two days was (the feast of) the Passover and the unleavened bread” (Mark 14:1 RV).

It appears then that these words were spoken by our Lord quite late on Tuesday afternoon. Then the party went onto Bethany. Very well, if “after two days” means “on the morrow” (as demanded by Professor Turner’s explanation of the longer phrase “after three days” meaning “the day after the morrow”) then this would imply that during the evening after sunset our Lord kept His Passover with His disciples and He was crucified on Wednesday, but this was certainly not so.²⁷ By this method of reckoning of Professor Turner’s the Thursday would be ‘after three days’ and Friday “after four days” which would contradict Professor Turner’s placing the Crucifixion on the Friday and contradict our Lord’s own words.²⁸ It is plain then that this inclusive reckoning of the phrases “after two days” and “after three days” leads to an impasse and something must be wrong.

Now let us assume that the crucifixion took place on the Thursday and see how these phrases work out. Reckoning exclusively from late Thursday afternoon “after one day” brings us to Friday, “after two days” to Saturday and “after three days” to Sunday morning. By the same mode of reckoning and starting from before sunset on Tuesday afternoon “after one day” brings us to Wednesday and “after two days” to Thursday on which our Lord was put to death; and the feast of the Passover according to the Pharisees’ reckoning started that same day (the Sadducees’ Passover was held the next day).²⁹ This method of reckoning of the forgoing phrases leads to a consistent result and the chronology fits perfectly.

The present writer is not unmindful of the fact that the Apostle John, when speaking of our Lord’s second manifestation of Himself to His disciples after His resurrection, said, *“and after eight days again His disciples were within and Thomas with them, Jesus cometh.”* (John 20:26), in which the words “after eight days again” plainly mean “a week later” an inclusive reckoning. But as has been already pointed out earlier in this paper the Jews were accustomed, when speaking of a set of periods, to reckon inclusively; and without doubt the week was one of the most conspicuous examples of such a set of periods in their religious observance. Idiom is a peculiar thing in every language; compare this French “dans huit jours” (lit. in eight days) or “in a week’s time.” But this particular Jewish use of “after eight days” for “in a week’s time” does not prove that all similar expressions must be reckoned inclusively each reckoning depends upon the context.

Another example (in addition to the passage of Acts 28:13) of an exclusive reckoning of the phrase “after a period of days” appears when we compare Matthew 17:1 with Luke 9:28; in the former passage we read; *“and after six days Jesus taketh with Him Peter and James and John and bringeth them into a high mountain apart”* while Luke speaking of the same incident says more loosely *“and it came to pass*

²⁷ See Appendix F.

²⁸ It is just possible, though unlikely, that our Lord spoke the words “after two days the Passover cometh, and the Son of Man is delivered up to be crucified” after sunset on Tuesday. But even then, according to the inclusive mode of reckoning, Friday would be “after three days” not “after two days” as foretold by our Lord.

²⁹ The Synoptics refer to the ‘passover’ of the Pharisees but John to the legal passover of the Sadducees.

about eight days after these sayings, He took with Him Peter and James and John and went up into the mountain to pray" here the words 'after six days' cannot be an inclusive phrase meaning "after five days" in common parlance, for it corresponds to Luke's looser expression "about eight days after" the latter meaning "about a week after these sayings." It is quite clear then that in the New Testament we have both inclusive and exclusive reckonings of days according to the context; and the context certainly favours an exclusive reckoning of the phrases "after two days" and "after three days" as used in the narratives of the Passion Week.

Professor Turner's strongly worded statement quoted on page 13 of this paper is not in accordance with the evidence.

The "Preparation" and the Sabbath

The last problem to be considered is what bearing, if any, have the various references to "the preparation" and to the "Sabbath" which are used in connection with the account of the crucifixion. If we possessed the Synoptic Gospels only it must be admitted that most readers would conclude that the day of the crucifixion was followed immediately by the weekly Sabbath, and this, if true, would mean that our Lord was crucified on the Friday. It has been urged also that the various references to "the preparation" in the narratives lead to the same conclusion. Consider for example the following passages from the Synoptic Gospels.

"And when even was come, because it was the preparation that is the day before the Sabbath, there came Joseph of Arimathea.....unto Pilate, and asked for the body of Jesus" (Mark 15:42,43).

"This man went to Pilate, and asked for the body of Jesus. He took it down and wrapped it in a linen cloth and laid Him in a tomb that was hewn in stone, where never man had lain. And it was the day of the preparation and the Sabbath drew on" (Luke 23:52-54).

"And the women, which had come with Him out of Galilee, followed after, and beheld the tomb, and how the body was laid. And they returned and prepared spices and ointments. And on the Sabbath day they rested according to the commandment" (Luke 23:55, 56 RV).

"Now on the morrow which is the day after the preparation, the chief priests and the Pharisees were gathered together unto Pilate saying, Sir, we remember that that deceiver said, while He was yet alive, after three days I rise again. Command therefore that the sepulchre be made sure until the third dayso they went and made the sepulchre sure, sealing the stone, the guard being with them." (Matt 27:62-66 RV).

"And when the Sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Jesus, and Salome, bought spices, that they might come and anoint Him." (Mark 16:1).

At first sight the "Sabbath" in these passages does seem to speak of the weekly Sabbath as following the day of the crucifixion. Also the term "the preparation" was, as has already been remarked, a technical term for the day before the weekly Sabbath; it was certainly so used in the Didache written about the close of the first century and it may have had this meaning about the time of the Crucifixion. But the Apostle John, well acquainted with the Synoptic Gospels, seems to suggest another meaning, namely that the "Sabbath" in question was not the weekly Sabbath, but a "high day" Sabbath, the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, a quasi-Sabbath.

Also he seems to speak of “the preparation:” not as the “preparation” for the weekly Sabbath, but for the Passover supper which was the commencement of the Feast of Unleavened Bread. For in reference to the time of the crucifixion he wrote:

“Now it was the preparation of the passover” (John 16:14).

“The Jews, therefore, because it was the preparation, that the bodies should not remain on the cross upon the Sabbath (for the day of that Sabbath was a high day) asked Pilate that their legs might be broken” (John 19:31).

“There then because of the Jews’ preparation (for the tomb was night at hand) they laid Jesus” (John 19:41).

In the second of these passages we have one of the Apostle John’s explanatory “asides” which so often appear in his Gospel. How is this explanatory parenthetical statement to be understood? Not a few expositors take the Apostle to mean that this particular “Sabbath” was “a high day” because it coincided with the opening day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread. But if this is so, exactly what is the point of the Apostle’s parenthesis? What does it explain? The answer to these questions is not clear. But if, on the other hand, John means that the “day” or nature of that “Sabbath” was not the weekly Sabbath, but a “high day” quasi-Sabbath, namely the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread – the passover Sabbath, then the parenthesis has an important bearing upon the whole statement. From John’s words we may gather that there were then two: “Sabbaths” following one another, the quasi-Sabbath of the Passover Feast and the strict weekly Sabbath on the next day. So Thursday would be the day of the crucifixion, Friday the Passover quasi-Sabbath, Saturday the weekly Sabbath and our Lord rose early on the first day of the week.

And as for the term “the preparation” also called “the Jews’ preparation” when the Apostle John wrote his Gospel towards the end of the first century he must have been aware that the day before the weekly Sabbath was often called “the preparation” and knowing this, he was careful to call the day of the crucifixion “the preparation of the Passover” which as Bishop Westcott has observed, “cannot mean anything but preparation for the Passover” not the weekly Sabbath.³⁰ Does not the Apostle John, then, correct the impression that readers of the synoptic gospels, in their ignorance of the Jewish ceremonial of the Passover, might falsely draw concerning the words *“the preparation, that is the day before the Sabbath”* (Mark 15:42), the “Sabbath” here being the quasi-Sabbath of the Passover Festival?

Lastly we have some indirect evidence about the meaning of the term “the preparation” in Matthew 27:62,63 often overlooked, which bears out what has just been said, where we read: *“Now on the morrow, which is the day after the preparation. The chief priests and the Pharisees were gathered together unto Pilate, saying, Sir, that deceiver saidafter three days I rise again.”*³¹

If Matthew had been referring to the weekly Sabbath in the phrase here emphasised, why did he not write plainly, “now on the morrow, which is the Sabbath, the chief priests and the Pharisees were gathered unto Pilate, &c?” Bishop Westcott, referring to this phrase, has marked, “such a circumlocution seems most unnatural if the weekly Sabbath were intended: but if it were the first day of unleavened bread, then,

³⁰ Introduction to the Study of the gospels P.340

³¹ See Appendix C

as the proper title of that day had been already used to describe the commencement of the preparation day, no characteristic term remained for it.”³²

To appreciate Dr Westcott’s comment we need to remember that, strictly speaking, the 15th of Nisan, the day of the Passover supper was “*the first day of (the feast of) unleavened bread*” (Lev 23:6,7), because unleavened bread alone could be eaten from the 15th to the 21st days of that month. Nevertheless, following the popular usage, both Matthew and Mark had already called the 14th day of that month “*the first day of unleavened bread*” (Matt 26:17, Mark 14:2)³³ for it was the day when a careful search for leaven had to be made for its removal from the dwellings of the Jews. Accordingly Matthew could not very well use the same phrase “the first day of unleavened bread” for the next day, the 15th of Nisan. It was for this reason that he was forced to use the round about phrase “the day after the preparation” to speak of the day after the crucifixion on which the chief priests and the Pharisees asked Pilate to secure the sepulchre “until the third day” ie the “third day” from our Lord’s burial.

With regard to the two day interval between the day of the crucifixion and the day of the resurrection, Bishop Westcott observed: “the whole sabbatic period extending from the beginning of the 15th of Nisan to the dawn of the first day of the week might perhaps without violence be called a Sabbath or at least the rest of the 15th might be implied in the statement of the rest observed on the Sabbath.”³⁴ For the word “Sabbath” simply means a “cessation” here a cessation from ordinary secular activity on the Friday and Saturday.

It therefore appears that there are good grounds for accepting Thursday as the day of our Lord’s crucifixion as against the western tradition of Friday. This conclusion seems to harmonise the apparently conflicting accounts of the Passion Week appearing in the Synoptic gospels and that in the Gospel of John respectively, which have long troubled expositors. It is a relief to those who have had difficulties regarding the accuracy of our Lord’s statement that He was to be “*three days and three nights in the heart of the earth*” which seems inconsistent with Friday as the day of the crucifixion.

³² Ibid P.345

³³ See appendix C

³⁴ Ibid P.345

APPENDIX A

A Suggested Chronological Order of the Passion Week

Nisan		
8	Friday	Ascent by our Lord from Jericho to Bethany
9	Friday evening to	<u>Our Lord arrives at Bethany</u> “six days before the Passover” Weekly Sabbath
9 10	Sat sunset Sat evening to Sun sunset to Sun evening to	Supper at Bethany, Lazarus present <u>Triumphant Entry</u> into Jerusalem “Palm Sunday”
11	Mon sunset to Mon evening to	Purification of the Temple
12	Tues sunset to Tues evening To	Our Lord’s controversy with the Jewish leaders, “ <i>after two daysthe Son of Man.....crucified.</i> ”
13	Tues evening to Wed sunset	Greeks ask to see our Lord. “ <i>He departed and hid Himself.</i> ”
14	Wed evening to Thur sunset	Anticipatory Passover Supper. The Lord’s Supper. Betrayal Trial. Crucifixion (from 9 am to 3 pm) Lambs slain. Burial. (1 st daylight)
15	Thur evening To Fri sunset	Legal Passover supper of the Sadducees. (1 st night) Passover quasi-Sabbath (2 nd daylight)
16	Fri evening To Sat evening	(2 nd night) Weekly Sabbath (3 rd daylight)
17	Sat evening To Sun sunset	(3 rd night) Resurrection (before daylight) Sheaf of First fruits waved in Temple.

“As Jonah was three days and three nights in the whale’s belly, so shall the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.” (Matt 12:40).

“After three days I will rise again” (Matt 27:63)

APPENDIX B

The Passover Supper in the Time of Our Lord

According to Dr Alfred Edersheim, a recognised authority on Jewish customs in our Lord's time, the observance of the Passover Supper in the time of our Lord was substantially as follows:

1. Each particular family, or company, wishing to keep the Passover, obtained their Passover lambs from the temple area after they had been sacrificed there. They gathered in the evening in a room set apart for the purpose, a room in which every trace of leaven had been got rid of. They took their places at a table, reclining upon a couch surrounding it. The head of the company began the ceremony by taking the **first cup** in his hands, a cup filled with wine mixed with water. Then he 'gave thanks' according to a formula beginning with the words, "Blessed art thou our Lord God, who hath created the fruit of the vine." After this "blessing" of the cup was passed round that each might drink from it.
2. The whole company then rose, and after prayer to Jehovah, washed their hands.
3. They then resumed their places at the table. The head then dipped bitter herbs in vinegar and having pronounced a "blessing" partook, then all partook of the bitter herbs.
4. The head then broke in half one of the unleavened cakes, and put aside one half for the "after-dish" (called the **aphiqomen**) and elevated the dish in which the first half was contained, said, "This is the bread of affliction which our forefathers ate in the land of Egypt; all who are hungry come and eat, all who are needy come and keep the Passover."
5. The **second cup** was now filled and the youngest member of the company made a formal enquiry as to the meaning of the ceremony. The cup was elevated and after the singing of the first part of the Hallel was drunk by those present.
6. The company again rose and washed their hands. After resuming their places at the table, the "sop" (consisting of pieces of unleavened bread between which bitter herbs had been sandwiched, the whole being dipped into a mixture of raisins, nuts and spices, called the **charoseth**) was passed round that each might partake of it.
7. The **Passover lamb** was then eaten.
8. At this point, especially in after days, the "after-dish" the **aphiqomen** was eaten.
9. The **third cup**, the "cup of blessing" was then filled and after a thanksgiving was drunk by those present.
10. Last of all the ceremony concluded by the drinking of the **fourth cup** with a singing of the rest of the Hallel. After prayer all departed.

APPENDIX C

Scripture Dealing with the Period between the 14th and the 17th of Nisan.

14th of Nisan: (Wednesday evening to Thursday sunset)

*“Now on the first day of unleavened bread the disciples came to Jesus, saying, where wilt thou that we make ready for Thee **to eat the Passover**” (Matt 26:17).*

*“And on the first day of unleavened bread, **when they sacrificed the Passover**, His disciples say unto Him, where wilt Thou that we go and make ready that thou mayest **eat the Passover?**” (Mark 14:12).*

*“And the day of unleavened bread came, **on which the Passover must be sacrificed**” (Luke 22:7).*

*“Go into the city**I will keep the Passover at thy house with My disciples**” (Matt 26:18).*

*“Go and **make ready for us the Passover**the Master saith unto thee, where is the guest chamber where **I shall eat the Passover with My disciples?**” (Luke 22:10-12; Mark 14:13-15).*

*“With desire I have desired to **eat this Passover with you before I suffer.**” (Luke 22:15)*

*“Now it was **the preparation of the Passover**: it was about the sixth hour (roman reckoning)behold your King! Away with Him**crucify Him.**” (John 19:14,15)*

*“And it was the third hour (Jewish reckoning) and they crucified Him” (Mark 15:25).
“The Jews therefore, because **it was the preparation** that the bodies should not remain on the cross on **the Sabbath** (for the day of that Sabbath was a **high day** asked of Pilatethat He might be taken away” (John 19:31).*

*“And when even (here a period just before sunset) was now come, because it was the **preparation that is the day before the Sabbath** there came Joseph of Arimathea unto Pilate, and asked for the body of Jesus ,,,,he **bought** a linen cloth and taking Him down, wound Him in the linen cloth, and laid Him in a tomb. And Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Jesus, behold where He was laid” (Mark 15:42-47).*

*“There then because of **the Jews preparation** (for the tomb was nigh at hand) they laid Jesus.” (John 19:42).*

*“And it was **the preparation** and (the) Sabbath drew on ³⁵a certain woman which had come with Him from Galilee followed after, and beheld the tomb, and how His body was laid. And they prepared spices and ointments.” (Luke 23:7).*

³⁵ Gr **epiphosken** lit 'began to dawn'. "It was sundown not sunrise when the Jewish Sabbath (twenty four hour day) began. The confusion is to us, not to the Jews, or the readers of the Greek New Testament." Prof. AT Robertson, **Word Pictures in the New Testament** Vol 2, p 289. the so called "Gospel of Peter" has this verb **epiphosko** in this sense of "drew on" as does a late papyrus, see again Prof. Robertson, *Ibid*, Vol I, p 240.

15th of Nisan (Thursday evening to Friday sunset)

“And on the Sabbath day they rested according to the commandment” (Luke 23:56; for this “commandment” see Exod 12:16 and Lev 23:7).

*“Now on the morrow, which is **the day after the preparation**, the chief priestsgathered together unto Pilate, saying Sir, that deceiver said**after three days I rise again**. Command therefore the sepulchre be made sure **until the third day** ... so they went, and made the sepulchre sure”* (Matt 27:62-66).

16th of Nisan (Friday evening to Saturday sunset)

The Weekly Sabbath (no scriptures)

17th of Nisan (Saturday evening to Sunday sunset)

*“And **when the Sabbath was past**, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and Salome, **bought spices**, that they might come and anoint Him.”* (Mark 16:1). NB: This party of women differed from the party of women *“which had come with Him from Galilee”* of which we read in Luke 23:54-56 above.

(Just before sunrise)

*“Now late on (better ‘after’)³⁶ the Sabbath day **as it began to dawn** towards the first day of the week, came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the sepulchre”* (Matt 28:1).

*“Now when He was risen **early on the first day of the week**, He appeared first to Mary Magdalene”* (Mark 16:9).

³⁶ “**Opse sabbaton** (Matt 28:1) may either be ‘late on the Sabbath’ or ‘after the Sabbath.’ Either has good support,” Prof AT Robertson, **Grammer of the New Testament in the Light of Historical Research** p.646.

APPENDIX D

The Supper at which our Lord was present in Simon's house

One of the minor problems in connection with the Passion Week is the relation between the supper spoken of in John 12:1-8 and that described in Matthew 26:6-13 and Mark 14:-9. These "suppers" have so much in common that most harmonists look upon them as being one and the same. The present writer is very much inclined to take the same view.

It is true that in the Supper described by the Apostle John we read that the ointment was poured upon the **feet** of our Lord, while in the Supper spoken of by Matthew and Mark the ointment was poured upon our Lord's **head**.

But may it not be true that it was poured (by Mary the sister of Lazarus, cf John 11:2 with 12:3) upon both the head and feet of our Lord? The house in which the Supper was held was, according to Matthew and Mark that of Simon the leper (now healed) and John does not contradict this, but merely says that Lazarus was present, and that Martha served; he does not say that the house belonged to Lazarus, as some have assumed.

Matthew and Mark indicate that some of the disciples were indignant at the apparent waste of valuable ointment, and John singles out Judas as the probable source of this murmuring, infecting the others. Both Matthew and Mark mention the ground of the objection, namely that the ointment might have been sold for three hundred pence, to be given to the poor: and all three gospels reply to this objection. It seems most probable that the two suppers were identical.

But if we have to do with but one supper, how is it that John seems to place the supper at the end of the Sabbath which preceded our Lord's triumphant entry into Jerusalem. Whereas both Matthew and Mark seem to place it during the evening which followed the day of controversy between the Jewish leaders and our Lord on Tuesday? Before deciding the matter, let us first examine the setting of the supper as given by John:

*"Jesus therefore six days before the Passover came to Bethany, where Lazarus was, whom Jesus raised from the dead. So they made Him a supper therethe common people **therefore** of the Jews learned that He was there: and they came, not for Jesus' sake only, but that they might see Lazarus alsobut the chief priests took counsel that they might put Lazarus also to death; because by reason of him many of the Jews went away and believed on Jesus. **On the morrow** a great multitude**when they heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem**, took branches off the palm tree, and went forth to meet Him and cried out Hosanna; blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord, even the King of Israel". (John 12:1-13).*

Our Lord came up from Jericho to Bethany on the afternoon of Friday, arriving probably after sunset (the evening being "six days before the Passover:), this was the commencement of the Sabbath. The multitude of pilgrims which accompanied Him on the road went on before to Jerusalem. It was plainly they who brought the news of our Lord's arrival to the people of Jerusalem. For we read the "*the common people **therefore**learned that*" at Bethany. And they came out after daybreak on the Sabbath to see him and many of them seeing Him at supper. This supper then could not have been heldFriday evening, because in that case the news of our Lord's arrival could notthe people of Jerusalem in time for them to go out and see Him before thissupper was in all probability held in the evening which

followed the close and it was **on the morrow** that the multitude hearing of our Lord's entering Jerusalem took palm branches to strew on the road as He approached

But when we examine the records of the supper which appear in Matthew and Mark, it seems plain that in both these Gospels the account of the supper comes in parenthetically. Note Matthew's account: "*Now when Jesus was in Bethany in the house of Simon the leper &c..*" in which statement "now" is what is called by Greek grammarians "**do** resumptive" so often used to mark a new beginning in a narrative, without a strict chronological sequence with that which precedes.

But do we not read, it may be asked, that at the close of Matthew's account, "*then (Gr tote) one of the twelve, who was called Judas Iscariot, went to the chief priests and said What are ye willing to give me, and I will deliver Him unto you?*" Yes, we do. But this word "then" may just as well refer to the council of the chief priests and elders of the Jews in which they were plotting to "*take Jesus by subtlety, and kill Him*" mentioned in verses 3-5, which precede Matthew's account of the supper (cf. Matt 26:3-6 with 6-13).

It may be asked however, why then did both Matthew and Mark interpose their account of the supper between this Jewish council of the chief priests, and the action of Judas in seeking them out to betray the Lord Jesus? May it not well be that the insertion of the supper (which had already been held during the Saturday evening) here was to explain Judas' action; for. Being a thief, he had been indignant that so much money had been from his point of view, wasted in the anointing of our Lord by Mary; a point of view which was illustrated by his request for money to be earned by his betrayal of his Master. The insertion of Matthew's and Mark's account of the supper here had a moral rather than a chronological reason.

APPENDIX E

The Day of our Lord's Triumphant entry into Jerusalem.

In his book, **Palestine Calling**, Dr WM Christie, holding that our Lord was crucified on the Friday, and believing that he accurately fulfilled the type in Exodus 12, in that He was publicly chosen on the 10th of Nisan, is forced to conclude that our Lord's triumphant entry into Jerusalem took place on the Monday of the Passion Week, not on the Sunday. Reckoning then from Monday, the 10th, he held that our Lord was put to death on Friday, the 14th of the month.

But this arrangement of the Passion Week involves two difficulties. In the first place it seems to conflict with the definite time not given by the Apostle John that "*six days before the Passover*" our Lord arrived at Bethany from Jericho (John 12:1); for he is compelled to place the ascent to Bethany on the Sunday (it could not have taken place on the Sabbath, as the distance from Jericho to Bethany was far greater than a "Sabbath day's journey), and "six days" from Sunday would place the Passover on the next Saturday evening, the crucifixion having taken place that day, though apparently Dr Christie overlooked this fact.

Secondly, in bringing our Lord up from Jericho on the Sunday, with the supper in Simon's house that evening, Dr Christie created another difficulty.

The long and tiring ascent to Bethany would take our Lord and His disciples (and the women accompanying Him) at least six hours, probably more. Supposing then that our Lord left Jericho in the morning of Sunday, His arrival at Bethany could not well have been before 2.00 pm or possibly later. In this case there would not have been time for the news of our Lord's arrival at Bethany to reach Jerusalem in time to enable the "common people" there to learn of it that they might go out the same day to see Him and Lazarus, and for the chief priests to hear of their visit for this purpose, and "take counsel" that night "that they might put Lazarus also to death." Also this would have taken considerable time.

But if, as suggested by the present writer, our Lord arrived at Bethany just after sunset on Friday, and the subsequent supper in Simon's house was held during Saturday evening, there would have been ample time for all this to happen, and John's comment became luminous, "*Jesus therefore six days before the passover came to Bethanythey made Him a supper therethe common people **therefore** learned that he was there: and they came not for Jesus' sake only, but that they might see Lazarus alsobut the chief priests took counsel that they might put Lazarus also to death; because that by reason of him many of the Jews went away, and believed on Jesus.*"

APPENDIX F

Could our Lord have been Crucified on Wednesday?

In the March issue of **the Evangelical Christian** for 1923, the late Editor, Dr Bingham, defended the view held by a few students of Scripture that our Lord was crucified on the Wednesday of the Passion Week. In his article Dr Bingham urged that only on this hypothesis can our Lord's words "*so shall the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth*" be literally fulfilled. In support of this contention urged:

"In the so called 'Holy Week' there must have been two Sabbaths with a secular between, which necessitates the placing of the Crucifixion on the Wednesday, and burial that evening (which would be the beginning of the Thursday of the Jews, Passover Sabbath or first day of unleavened bread). Then between this and the Sabbath was a clear secular day, Friday, and at the close of the weekly Sabbath when He arose."

In this way, Dr Bingham urged, were the "*three days and three nights*" fulfilled – thus, Wednesday night, Thursday; Thursday night, Friday; Friday night, Saturday; and Christ rose at the end of the Sabbath (Matt 28:1). In support of this view, Dr Bingham insisted that there are two passages in Mark and Luke, having to do with the visit of the women to the tomb, "that absolutely demand this arrangement to reconcile them, viz, Mark says that the women, who had watched Joseph and Nicodemus make a hasty embalment of the body of Jesus, and beheld where He was laid (John 19: 39,34; Mark 15:47), bought spices 'when the Sabbath was **past**' that they might come and anoint Him (Mark 16:1) that 'they prepared spices and ointments, and **on the Sabbath day they rested** according to the commandment' (Luke 23:56). Dr Bingham urged therefore that it is "utterly impossible to reconcile these two divergent accounts on the basis of the popular theory that Christ was only in the grave during the Jewish Sabbath." He held therefore that "there were two Sabbaths that week with a secular day between, and it was on this latter day that the women made their great preparation for the permanent embalment of the body."

While the present writer is in agreement with Dr Bingham in questioning the view that our Lord was crucified on the Friday, nevertheless he submits that Dr Bingham's argument in favour of the Wednesday date for the crucifixion is based upon a misunderstanding of the evidence. In the first place, our Lord's descent into "the heart of the earth" surely refers to His descent in His spirit to Hades at the point of death during the afternoon of the day of the crucifixion, rather than to the mere burial of His body (which in all probability also took place before sunset, [see note 5, page](#)) There is therefore a short period of time on Wednesday (on Dr Bingham's hypothesis) which must be reckoned in the counting of the 'three days and three nights.'

Furthermore, most harmonists agree that our Lord rose from the dead early on Sunday morning, not at sunset on Saturday (at the end of the Sabbath) as Dr Bingham would have us believe; for Mark says expressly "Now when Jesus was risen **early on the first day of the week**, He appeared first to Mary Magdalene." (Mark 16:9) in which the word "early" night, ie from 3 o'clock in the morning till 6, according to our reckoning." Dr Bingham seems to have been led astray by the AV rendering of Matthew 28:1, which says, "*In the end of the Sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, came Mary magdaleneto see the sepulchre,*" which had puzzled many' but, as Dr AT Robertson has pointed out, the

Greek **opse sabbaton**, used here, may well be translated “after the Sabbath” which makes the meaning quite clear.

Then if, as argued by Dr Bingham, our Lord was crucified on the Wednesday, He would have been **four** days and **four** nights in the “heart of the earth”, thus part of Wednesday afternoon, and Wednesday night; Thursday and Thursday night; Friday and Friday night’ Saturday and Saturday night.”

Indeed Dr Bingham’s argument for two Sabbaths with the secular day in between is based upon his failure to distinguish between the two different parties of women who visited the sepulchre. One party consisted of Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James and Joses, and Salome, who bought spices on the Saturday evening, “when the Sabbath was past”, the other party consisted of Joanna and “*the women that followed with Him from Galilee*” (Luke 23:49) who had “prepared spices and ointments” on the Thursday before sunset (Luke 23:59; 24: 1,2). The former party arrived first at the tomb on Sunday morning, and they were followed by the second party soon after. Apparently Mary Magdalene and the other two women of the first party saw our Lord first that morning, but not the women of the second party.

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