

The High Priest and the Lamb of God

A Passover Lesson in Contrast



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Scriptures quoted from the King James Version of the Bible, unless otherwise noted.

The initial release of this booklet will be timed to coincide with the Easter/Passover season in the spring of the year. It is a time each year when Christians of every stripe will no doubt be bombarded with sermons on the resurrection of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

Scripture calls Him “the first born from the dead” (Colossians 1:18) and “the first born among many brethren” (Romans 8:29). I thank God that due to His resurrection we have the assurance our faith is not in vain. For “If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable. But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept” (Corinthians 15:19-20).

As the majority of mainstream evangelists are gearing up to focus on the resurrection, in this publication we will be concentrating on the Creator's sacrifice which made salvation possible for us. We will look at the office He presently holds in the heavenly sanctuary, compare it to His physical forerunners here on earth, and consider our debt to the One who intercedes for us today. We will see how the first step in God's plan of salvation was worked out on Calvary and how God continues to pour out His mercy on us through the ministry of our Lord.

This booklet contains a lot of Scriptures, and, as always, I encourage you to look them up in your Bible, put them in context, and prove every word to yourself. Ask God through His Spirit to guide you, open your mind and your heart to His Word. Our main text will be the 18th chapter of John's gospel.

DEPARTING LESSONS

The year is 31 AD. Now scholars put the date anywhere between 28 and 32 AD, but the sequence of events in the Savior's earthly ministry support this particular year (ref. Appendix).

Jesus and His disciples have just finished an early Passover meal, the Last Supper, in an upper room some 24 hours before the Jews would begin their observance.



Christ had shown and taught His followers many things this evening. He taught them about leadership in His Kingdom, as He humbled Himself and washed their feet (John 13:12).

This was, at the very least, the third direct lesson Jesus had given His disciples concerning servant leadership. One came after the mother of James and John requested her boys be seated on the left and right hand of Christ (Matthew 20:20). The other was earlier this very night as the disciples took a break from their meal to bicker about who would be greatest in the kingdom of God (Luke 22:24).

Jesus told the sons of Zebedee (James and John), “You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their superiors oppress them, but with you it is different: Whoever among you wants to be great must be your servant and whoever would be first will be your slave, just as the Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many” (Matthew 20:25-28, *New Berkeley Version*).

As we recount this final day of Jesus' earthly ministry, ask yourself if you are ready to make that kind of sacrifice. Is your obedience to Christ comparable to slavery? Do you follow the Lord above and beyond all else, seeking to serve rather than to be served? Could you lay down your life for your friends?

After performing the menial task of washing the disciple's feet, He went on to remind them that “a slave is not superior to his master nor one who is sent to the one who sent him” (John 13:16, *Ibid.*). They had already been warned that if the religionist would call “the Master of the house Beelzebub” or to say that Christ was “lord of the fly” or “the dung-god,” first century names for Satan, “how much more shall they call them of His household?” (Matthew 10:25).

If we really follow Christ, if we teach the truth of God without reservation or restraint, if we stand up and tell deceived individuals the truth like He did, what do you think they will say about us? If they crucified our Lord, what do you think they will do to us? Scriptures say tribulation is the destiny of the Church of God (Matthew 13:21; 24:21; John 16:33; Acts 14:22; Revelation 7:14, etc.) Do we really get what that means?

Christ warned the disciples again this night of His impending death and He instituted new symbols of bread and wine, illustrating His soon-to-be broken body and shed blood. He prophesied about the future, about the persecution His true followers would surely endure and the Comforter they would receive after His final departure, ... He informed them of a traitor in their midst.

Additional Reference Sources:

“FEAST AND FESTIVALS – *Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread.* References to the Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread include Exodus 12:1-13:16; 23:15; 34:18-20, 25; Leviticus 23:4-14; Numbers 28:16-25; Deuteronomy 16:1-8; Joshua 4:19-23; 5:10-12; and 2 Chronicles 30:2, 3, 13, 15.

“The Passover was the first of the three great festivals of the Israelite people. It referred to the sacrifice of a lamb in Egypt when the people of Israel were slaves. They smeared the blood of the lamb on their doorpost as a signal to God that He should “pass over” their houses when He destroyed all the first born of Egypt (Ex. 12:13).

“Passover was observed on the 14th day of the first month, Abib, with the service beginning in the evening (Lev. 23:6). ... Passover commemorated this departure from Egypt in haste. Unleavened bread was used in the celebration because this showed that the people had no time to put leaven in their bread as they ate their final meal as slaves in Egypt. ...

“In New Testament times, large numbers gathered in Jerusalem to observe the annual Passover. Jesus was crucified in the city during one of these Passover celebrations. He and His disciples ate a Passover meal together on the eve of His death.” – *Nelson's New Illustrated Bible Dictionary*

“John 2:13 – *the Jew's passover.* After the revival under Ezra and Nehemiah corruption proceeded apace and the Lord found the nation as described in Malachi. Hence, what were once 'the feast of Jehovah' are spoken of as what they had become 'feast of the Jews' (5:1; 6:4; 7:2; 11:55; 19:42).” – *The Companion Bible*, Bullinger

Yet, despite all Jesus taught His disciples this evening, and the preceding three and a half years of His earthly ministry, it would be another four days and five nights before the fullness of God's plan became apparent to them. It would take still another 40 days of teaching and 10 days of waiting before their conversions would be complete on the day of Pentecost.

But this night these men couldn't see much further than their own mortality, and after supper they retreated with their Lord over the brook Kidron, to the base of the Mount of Olives and the garden of Gethsemane. Jesus plead there with His Father to spare Him the trial at hand, and after receiving the answer to His prayer one of the 12 disciples who had left the group earlier, returned.

COUNCIL OF CONDEMNATION

John 18, verse 3: “Judas then, having received a band of men and officers from the chief priests and Pharisees, cometh thither with lanterns and torches and weapons. Jesus therefore, knowing all things that should come upon Him, went forth, and said unto them, 'Whom seek ye?' They answered Him, 'Jesus of Nazareth.' Jesus saith unto them, 'I am *He*'” (3-5).

If you are reading in the King James, New King James, American Standard, or various other versions, you will notice that the “*He*” is italicized, being added by the translators. Jesus' response to their question was similar to that which had enraged the Pharisees earlier in His ministry: “Before Abraham was, I AM” (John 8:58). It was a direct reference to His pre-incarnate state as the

One who told Moses “I AM WHO I AM,” and instructed him to tell the Israelites: “I AM has sent me to you” (Exodus 3:14, *New International Version*).

The power of His words quickly became evident. “As soon then as He had said unto them, 'I am,' they went backward, and fell to the ground. Then asked He them again, 'Whom seek ye?' And they said, 'Jesus of Nazareth.' Jesus answered, 'I have told you that I am: if therefore ye seek Me, let these go their way:’” (vv. 6-8, inserted “*He*” omitted twice).

Picking up in verse 12: “Then the band and the captain and officers of the Jews took Jesus, and bound Him, And led Him away to Annas first; for he was father in law to Caiaphas, which was the high priest that same year” (vv. 12-13).

The office of high priest had become largely profane by this point in Jewish history. What God had instituted as an office for life through a hereditary line had become little more than a political appointment. Annas had been high priest between 6-15 AD, before being deposed by the Romans. He had managed to get four of his sons appointed to the office before putting Caiaphas in charge (*circa* 25-36 AD).

We recently saw this same sort of thing with Vladimir Putin in Russia. In 2000 he was “elected” President. When their constitution would not permit another term he became Prime Minister. In 2012 he became President again. But no matter what title he held at any particular time, it was apparent who was in charge.

Annas was the same way – he was the political power behind the priesthood. Officially, he held an office of something like a deputy or co-regent to the high priest [Heb. *sagan*]. You will notice in the text, that he even shares the title of “high priest.” At this point in time Annas is officially the one in charge of the animal dealers and booths of money changers littering the temple court.

The gospels shed light on Jesus' opinion of these religious marketers in His actions to remove them from the temple. God is not big on those who make merchandise of the faithful. Please remember that the next time you see a televangelist hocking his latest video, book, prayer cloth, coin, or whatever other nonsense they are selling these days. If they cannot afford to give you their teaching or stay on the air without “your support,” then their god is either not all powerful or they are doing something outside of His will. Christ said, “freely you have received, freely give.”

Picking up with verse 19: “The high priest (Annas) then asked Jesus about His disciples and His doctrine.

“Jesus answered him, 'I spoke openly to the world. I always taught in synagogues and in the temple, where the Jews always meet, and in secret I have said nothing. Why do you ask Me? Ask those who have heard Me what I said to them. Indeed they know what I said.'

“And when He had said these things, one of the officers who stood by struck Jesus with the palm of his hand, saying, 'Do You answer the high priest like that?'

“Jesus answered him, 'If I have spoken evil, bear witness

Additional Reference Sources:

“According to John ... these events [of the Last Supper] happened 24 hours prior to the Passover (cf. 18:28; 19:14), so that the death of Jesus took place at the time when the Passover lambs were killed (the afternoon of Nisan 14).”

“Apparently the early church continued to celebrate the Passover (see Acts 20:6). ... As we can see from 1 Cor. 5:7-8 and 1 Peter 1:13-19, the early church regarded itself as the people of God redeemed in the eschatological Passover. The baptized are exhorted, as were those involved in the first Passover, to live holy lives in readiness to depart (1:13, 17), redeemed 'with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect' (1:19; cf. also 1 Cor. 5:7, 'Christ, our Passover lamb'). Likewise, the church receives the call to 'keep the Festival' and to cleanse itself from the old yeast, 'that you may be a new batch without yeast' (5:7-8).”

“This form and interpretation of the Passover festival disappeared early in the history of the church. During the 2d cent. The celebration of Easter on a Sunday became general, with its emphasis on remembering the sacrificial death of Jesus, the true Passover lamb.” — *New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology*

eschatology \,es-kə-'täl-ə-jē\ *n. pl -gies* [Gk *eschatos* last, farthest] (1844) 1: a branch of theology concerned with the final events in the history of the world or of mankind 2: a belief concerning death, the end of the world, or the ultimate destiny of mankind; *specif* : any of various Christian doctrines concerning the Second Coming, the resurrection of the dead, or the Last Judgment. — *Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary*

of the evil; but if well why do you strike Me?'

“Then Annas sent Him bound to Caiaphas the high priest” (19-24, *New King James Version*).

I want to pause here and bring in an account recorded in both the books of Matthew and Mark of Jesus' appearance before Caiaphas. Mark 14, verse 55 reads: “And the chief priests and all the council sought for witness against Jesus to put Him to death; and found none. For many bare false witness against Him, but their witness agreed not together” (vv. 55-56).

Jesus advocated in Matthew 18:16 the law's proscription “that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word ... be established” – a direct reference to Deuteronomy 17:6; 19:15, and Numbers 35:30. Caiaphas, knowing the law, saw his problem in that “at the mouth of [any] one witness [Jesus should] not be put to death,” or at least not by the law from which he derived *his* authority.

“And there arose certain, and bare false witness against Him, saying, 'We heard Him say, I will destroy this temple that is made with hands, and within three days I will build another made without hands' (vv. 57-58). What Jesus actually said is “Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up” (John 2:19), speaking, of course of the temple of His body. But it is interesting to note the further prophetic details these false witnesses add.

“But neither so did their witness agree together. And the high priest stood up in the midst, and asked Jesus, saying, 'Answerest Thou nothing? what is it which these witness against Thee?' But He held His peace, and answered

nothing. Again the high priest asked Him, and said unto Him, 'Art Thou the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?' And Jesus said, **I am** ... and ye shall see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven.' Then the high priest rent his clothes, and saith, 'What need we any further witnesses? Ye have heard the blasphemy: what think ye?' And they all condemned Him to be guilty of death" (vv. 59-64).

Now Caiaphas had solidified his committee in charging Jesus with the capital crime of blasphemy. Yet this council, the Sanhedrin, which was created in the time between the testaments, was not permitted by the authorities to carry out a death sentence, but was forced to defer their action to Romans.

Besides, this was not an official action of the council. They would have had to been seated at a certain place on the temple mount in the daytime for a formal hearing and a legal verdict. And further still, in his zeal Caiaphas violated the very law he hoped to have the Romans enforce, not only in his blasphemy against Christ, the Son of God, but by transgressing the confines of the office he held.

WHAT IS A HIGH PRIEST?

You see the Jews recognized Joseph Caiaphas as the high priest of Israel, God's chosen people, and that office was dictated by ordinance of the ceremonial law. Notice what Moses cautioned Aaron and his sons in Leviticus 10:6: "Uncover not your heads [don't shave your heads], ***neither rend*** [that is to rip] ***your clothes***; lest ye die, and

lest wrath come upon *all the people...*” In the Middle East, tearing ones clothes is a sign of emotional distress.

The ordinance is repeated in 21:10. *Bullinger’s Companion Bible* reaffirms that “this (act of Caiaphas ripping his clothing) was strictly forbidden.” *The Cornerstone Encyclopedia* points out that “If the high priest sinned, he brought guilt upon the whole people” (note on Leviticus 4:3).

The reason I am going into all this is so that we can get a feel for what a high priest is and is not supposed to be. I have a hard time relating to Jesus Christ as my high priest, because I have never met a Jewish high priest in the flesh. We are two-thousand years removed from worshiping in a temple made of stone, yet the Apostle Peter tells us, “Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ” (1 Peter 2:5).

Though somewhat contested these days, I believe it was Paul who wrote the epistle of Hebrews to the dispersed Jews and relates for them the ministry of Christ in terms they could clearly understand, and they are terms we need to understand as those destined to be “kings and priest” of the Most High God (Revelation 1:6).

Hebrews 2:17-3:1 reads: “Wherefore in all things it behoved [was necessary for] Him to be made like unto His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. For in that He Himself hath suffered being tempted, He is able to

Additional Reference Sources:

“**High priest** The office, dress, and ministration of the high priest were typical of the priesthood of our Lord (Heb. 4:14; 7:25; 9:12, etc.).

“It is supposed that there were in all eighty-three high priests, beginning with Aaron (B.C. 1657) and ending with Phannias (A.D. 70). At its first institution the office of high priest was held for life ... and was hereditary in the family of Aaron (Num. 3:10). The office continued in the line of Eleazar, Aaron's eldest son, for two hundred and ninety-six years, when it passed to Eli, the first of the line of Ithamar, who was the fourth son of Aaron. In this line it continued to Abiathar, whom Solomon deposed, and appointed Zadok, of the family of Eleazar ... (1 Kings 2:35), in which it remained till ... the Captivity. After the Return, Joshua, the son of Josedek, of the family of Eleazar, was appointed to this office. After him the succession was changed from time to time under priestly or political influences.”

“**Caiaphas** the Jewish high priest ... at the beginning of our Lord's public ministry, in the reign of Tiberius (Luke 3:2), and also at the time of his condemnation and crucifixion (Matt. 26:3, 57; John 11:49; 18:13, 14). He held this office during the whole of Pilate's administration. ... He was of the sect of the Sadducees (Acts 5:17), and was a member of the council when he gave his opinion that Jesus should be put to death 'for the people, and that the whole nation perish not' (John 11:50). In these words he unconsciously uttered a prophecy. 'Like Saul, he was a prophet in spite of himself.' Caiaphas had no power to inflict the punishment of death, and therefore Jesus was sent to Pilate At a later period his hostility to the gospel is still manifest (Acts 4:6). – *Easton's Bible Dictionary*

succour [to aid, lend assistance to] them that are tempted. Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus.”

The subheading in one of my Bibles for chapter three reads: “Christ superior to Moses.” If you really want to be blessed by this booklet, when you are done with it read from here through chapter 10 in Hebrews. It is all about the current ministry of Jesus Christ.

THE ORIGINAL HIGH PRIEST

Moses is identified in Scripture as a prophet, and after speaking to the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the One who identified Himself as “I AM” sent Moses to call the children of Israel out of Egyptian bondage – just as Christ calls us today out of the bondage of sin.

Now Moses, though capable of speaking to God, considered himself *incapable of speaking for God*. So our Lord, through Moses, drafted Aaron the Levite into service. God tells His prophet in Exodus 4:16: “And (Aaron) shall be thy spokesman unto the people: and he shall be, even he shall be to thee instead of a mouth, and thou shalt be to him instead of God.”

This is an interesting dynamic. Aaron the high priest is to be, through Moses, God’s spokesman to the people. The book of Hebrews opens with, “God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son, whom He hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also He made the worlds” (Hebrews 1:1-2).

The book of John opens with “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by Him; and without Him was not anything made that was made” (John 1:1-3). The “Word” here is translated from the Greek *Logos* – we recognize that root in the English word “logo” – it is a representative of something else. Strong’s says “the Divine Expression.”

Christ told His followers He came to *reveal* the Father (Matthew 11:27). He was thereby fulfilling the same role He always had as the Divine Spokesman for the Family of God. He is the mouthpiece of God. He is the One who spoke the worlds into existence. He is the One who speaks to you, who speaks for you, and who speaks through you – if you indeed have the Spirit of God dwelling in you!

Now, being made “like unto his brethren,” He has become our Spokesman as well, our Representative to the Father, our High Priest. Hebrews 4:15: “For we have not a High Priest which cannot be touched with the feelings of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like we are, yet without sin.”

The book of Hebrews goes on to explain how Jesus' priesthood predates that of the Levites in the order of Melchisedec, to whom Abraham paid tithes. You see we are partakers of a New Covenant, but the Contract Writer is the same. We get all wrapped up in our theologies about the law and the covenants and dispensations, but the priesthood of Christ predates all that. It is older than

Israel, it predates Judah, Moses, Noah, Seth ... “In the beginning was the Word ...”

THE END OF A LINE

Now getting back to Caiaphas and the Levitical priesthood in 31 AD. In this span of time Joseph Caiaphas is the formal authority in this system of worshiping the true God. Though this method had been corrupted, Jesus taught His followers during His earthly ministry to be subject to the scribes and the Pharisees, because they sat “in Moses' seat” (Matthew 23:2). In his official capacity, Caiaphas speaks for the children of Israel.

By extension this nation of Jews is represented in the embodiment of the high priest, and in his act of blasphemy and the polluting of his office, Caiaphas disqualifies himself and brings his sin on the people and the temple.

What we are witnessing is the beginning of the end of the Old Covenant system of worship – a system that was developed for the Israelites, but only *after* they first violated their agreement with God. The ceremonial law provided them a means of escaping destruction, as Ezekiel says, “the soul that sinneth, it shall die” (Ezekiel 18:4, 20).

Originally the Covenant God of Israel told the people, “ye shall be unto Me a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation” (Exodus 19:6). But the people feared the manifestation of God – the thundering, the lightening, the smoke ... the voice from heaven. So they sent Moses up Sinai: “*you go*

Additional Reference Sources:

“Passover ... A detailed account of the institution of this feast is given in Ex. 12 and 13. It was afterwards incorporated in the ceremonial law (Lev. 23:4-8) ...

“... It was primarily a commemorative ordinance, reminding the children of Israel of their deliverance out of Egypt; but it was, no doubt, also a type of the great deliverance wrought by the Messiah for all his people from the doom of death on account of sin, and from the bondage of sin itself, a worse than Egyptian bondage (1 Cor. 5:7; John 1:29; 19:32-36; 1 Pet. 1:19; Gal. 4:4, 5). The appearance of Jerusalem on the occasion of the Passover in the time of our Lord is thus fittingly described: 'The city itself and the neighbourhood became more and more crowded as the feast approached, the narrow streets and dark arched bazaars showing the same throng of men of all nations as when Jesus had first visited Jerusalem as a boy. Even the temple offered a strange sight at this season, for in parts of the outer courts a wide space was covered with pens for sheep, goats, and cattle to be used for offerings. Sellers shouted the merits of their beasts, sheep bleated, oxen lowed. Sellers of doves also had a place set apart for them. Potters offered a choice from huge stacks of clay dishes and ovens for roasting and eating the Passover lamb. Booths for wine, oil, salt, and all else needed for sacrifices invited customers. Persons going to and from the city shortened their journey by crossing the temple grounds, often carrying burdens ... Stalls to change foreign money into the shekel of the temple, which alone could be paid to the priests, were numerous, the whole confusion making the sanctuary like a noisy market ' (Geikie's Life of Christ).”

– *Easton's Bible Dictionary*

“speak to God, come back and tell us what He said.” But before Moses could even get back down the mount with God’s law codified in tablets stone, the people had transgressed the covenant they had just made and were found dancing naked in the sand around a golden calf – an idol their earthly high priest had made.

After a cleansing of the camp the covenant was renewed, but rather than becoming a kingdom of priest, they became a nation *subject to priest*. And a system of animal sacrifices was setup that culminated each year at the Day of Atonement – when the high priest, as the people’s representative, would enter the holy of holies and offer atonement for his sins and the sins of the nation.

Caiaphas being disqualified and the ceremonial system ended at the cross, this year the Atonement would have to be made at God’s actual throne, by our true High Priest – One whose office and authority predates that of the Levitical priesthood. One who has never defiled His office, whose clothing is flawless and dipped in blood – One whose dominion is over a new nation, one called out of this present evil world, out of sin, out of bondage – a spiritual family, “a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation” (1 Peter 2:9).

THE AUTHORITY OF ROME

Picking up again in John, chapter 18, verse 28: “Then led they Jesus from Caiaphas unto the hall of judgment: and it was early; and they themselves went not into the judgment hall, lest they should be defiled; but that they might eat the passover. Pilate then went out unto them,

and said, 'What accusation bring ye against this Man?' They answered and said unto him, 'If He were not a malefactor [a criminal, an evil-doer], we would not have delivered Him up unto thee.' Then said Pilate unto them, 'Take ye Him, and judge Him according to your law.' The Jews therefore said unto him, 'It is not lawful for us to put any man to death:' That the saying of Jesus might be fulfilled, which He spake, signifying what death He should die" (vv. 28-32).

Jesus told His followers repeatedly of His coming crucifixion at the hands of the Romans, but they seemed not to understand. What He said to them did not fit into their doctrine of the conquering Messiah. Like so many today, they just overlooked Jesus' words when they differed from their theology.

The physician and historian Luke tells us of Jesus' trip to see Herod Antipas, the puppet-king the Romans installed over the region of Galilee after the death of his father, Herod the great. Luke tells us how Antipas dressed our Lord in a gorgeous robe, mocking His kingship.

“Then Pilate entered into the judgment hall again, and called Jesus, and said unto Him, 'Art thou the King of the Jews?.'” Jesus answered him, “Are you speaking for yourself about this, or did others tell you this concerning Me?"

“Pilate answered, 'Am I a Jew? Your own nation and the chief priests have delivered You to me. What have you done?"

“Jesus answered, 'My kingdom is not of this world. If My

kingdom were of this world, My servants would fight, so that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now My kingdom is not from here.'

“Pilate therefore said to Him, 'Are You a king then?'

“Jesus answered, 'You say rightly that I am a king. For this cause I was born, and for this cause I have come into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth.

Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice.'

“Pilate said to Him, 'What is truth?' And when he had said this, he went out again to the Jews, and said to them, 'I find no fault in Him at all.'

“But you have a custom that I should release someone to you at the Passover. Do you therefore want me to release to you the King of the Jews?' Then they cried again, saying, 'Not this Man, but Barabbas!' Now Barabbas was a robber.

“So then Pilate took Jesus and scourged Him. And the soldiers twisted a crown of thorns and put it on His head, and they put on Him a purple robe” (John 18:33-19:2, *NKJV*). Perhaps the same robe He received from Herod.

And verse 6: “... when the chief priests and officers saw Him, they cried out, saying, 'Crucify Him, crucify Him!'

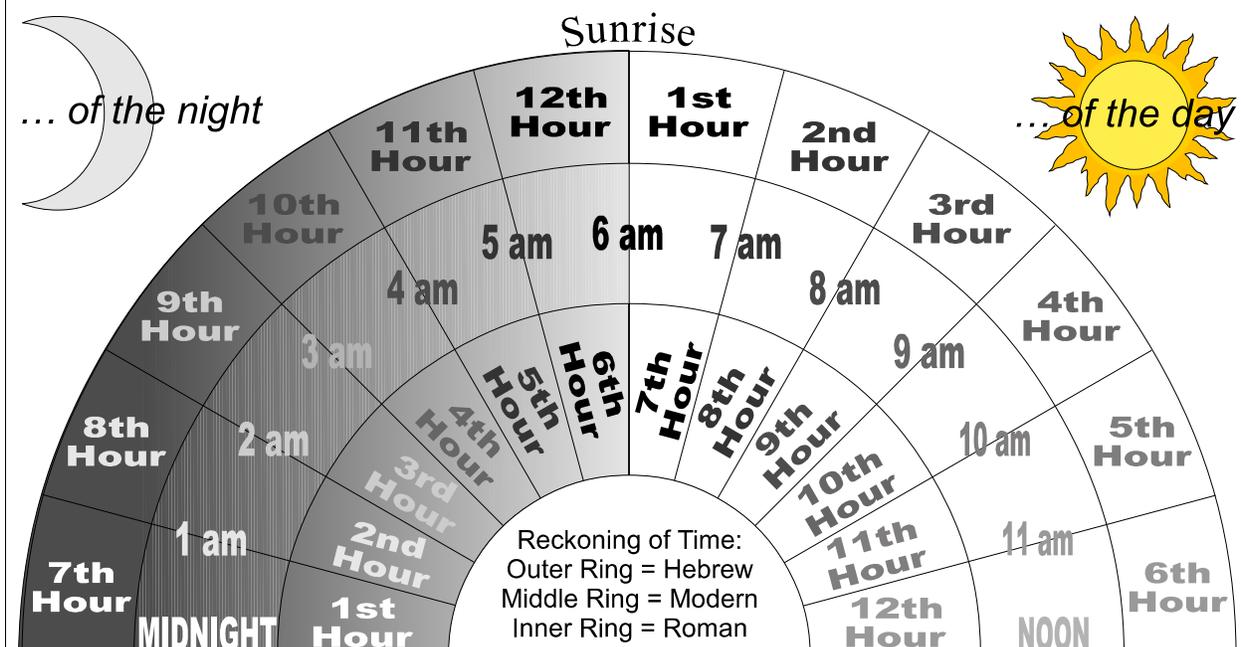
“Pilate said to them, 'You take Him and crucify Him, for I find no fault in Him.'

“The Jews answered him, 'We have a law, and according to our law He ought to die, because He made Himself the Son of God.'

Additional Reference Sources:

“**TIME, DIVISIONS OF ... Day** (Heb. *yôm*; Gk. *hēmera*). ... From an early period the time of reckoning the day was from sunset to sunset, and this became the Jewish method (Lev. 23:32; cf. Exo. 12:18). The Phoenicians, Numidians, and other nations of the East are said to have followed the same custom, if it was not indeed the custom generally followed in remote antiquity. 'The ancient Germans (Tacitus, ch. xi) compute not the number of days, but of nights; the night appears to draw on the day.' And Caesar says (Bell. Gal. 6.18) of the Gauls, 'They measure time not by the number of days, but of nights; and accordingly observe their birthdays, and the beginning, of months and years, so as to make the day follow the night.' Of this custom we have a memorial in our 'sennight,' 'fortnight,' to express the period of seven and fourteen days respectively.” – *New Unger's Bible Dictionary*

Scripture references: Genesis 1:5; ; Matthew 20:3-6; 27:45-46; John 11:9; Acts 2:15; 3:1; 10:3



“Therefore, when Pilate heard the saying, he was the more afraid and went again into the Praetorium [Judgment Hall] and said to Jesus, 'Where are You from?' But Jesus gave him no answer.

“Then Pilate said to Him, 'Are You not speaking to me? Do You not know that I have power to crucify You, and power to release You?'

“Jesus answered, 'You could have no power at all against Me unless it had been given you from above. Therefore the one who delivered Me to you has the greater sin.'

“From then on Pilate sought to release Him, but the Jews cried out, saying, 'If you let this Man go, you are not Caesar's friend. Whosoever makes himself a king speaks against Caesar.'

“When Pilate therefore heard that saying, he brought Jesus out and sat down in the judgment seat in a place that is called the Pavement, but in Hebrew, Gabbatha. Now it was the Preparation Day of the Passover, and about the sixth hour: and he said to the Jews, 'Behold your King!' (vv. 6-14, *NKJV*).

This was between 5 and 6 am the day before a yearly Sabbath. The Bible calls that day a “high day” Sabbath. This was the preparation day for the first day of Unleavened Bread, the 7-day observance, which the Jew's by this time simply referred to as “Passover.”

John is the only gospel writer to use the Roman reckoning of time, similar to what we use today, with the days ending at midnight. The other three gospels use Jewish

reckoning, which starts from the rising and setting of the sun. If that had been the case with John, it would have been around noon (or midnight), but that would be inconsistent with the other three gospels. The Jews also reckoned days from sunset to sunset, and months by the cycle of the new moon.

THE LAMB OF GOD

Now the date of this day, by the Biblical calendar, was the 14th of the first month of the year: “And the Lord spake unto Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, saying, this month shall be unto you the beginning of months: it shall be the first month of the year to you. Speak ye unto all the congregation of Israel, saying, 'In the tenth day of this month they shall take to them every man a lamb, according to the house of their fathers, a lamb for a house'” (Exodus 12:1-3).

It is held by some to have been the 10th of the month when Judas made his deal with the chief priest to sell-out Jesus, the same day the Passover lambs were being marketed in Jerusalem and sold in the temple court.

“Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year: ye shall take it out from the sheep or from the goats: And ye shall keep it up until the fourteenth day of the same month: and the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it in the evening” (vv. 5-6).

We have already seen how Caiaphas was representative of the Jewish people. Now what I want you to see is the astonishing typology that is taking place at this Passover sacrifice in 31 AD.

Jesus was nailed to the Roman stake, Mark tells us, between 8 and 9 am. Matthew and Luke account the sky going dark from the sixth hour, between 11 am and noon, until the ninth hour, between 2 and 3 pm. This is the last hourly time reference the gospel writers give us. To get a better relation to our day, you can move everything up an hour to account for “daylight savings” (between 3 and 4 pm).

Now notice: we have Jesus on the cross, in the late afternoon, at the very time the people would begin bringing their Passover lambs to the priest for slaughter. John 19, verse 28: “After this Jesus, knowing that all things are now finished, that the scripture might be accomplished, saith, 'I thirst.' There was set there a vessel full of vinegar: so they put a sponge full of the vinegar upon hyssop, and brought it to His mouth. When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, He said, 'It is finished:' and He bowed His head, and gave up His spirit.” (vv. 28-30, *American Standard Version*).

Mark tells us at the moment of Jesus’ death, “the vail of the temple was rent in twain from top to the bottom” (v. 15:38). This 4-inch-thick, 60-foot-tall veil had hid the holy of holies from the people of God, but now Christ, by His sacrifice, has made access to the Father open to mankind. Peter tells us we are redeemed “with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot...” The writer of Hebrews says, “by His own blood He entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us” (v. 9:12) and “Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we

Additional Reference Sources:

Exodus 12:2 *This month is ... the first month.* The inauguration of the religious calendar in Israel. In the ancient Near East, new year festivals normally coincided with the new season of life in nature. The designation of this month as Israel's religious New Year reminded Israel that her life as the people of God was grounded in God's redemptive act in the exodus. The Canaanite name for this month was Abib (see 13:4; 23:15; 34:18; Dt 16:1), which means "young head of grain." Later the Babylonian name Nisan was used (see Ne 2:1; Est 3:7). — *The NIV Study Bible, © 1995, Zondervan, 10th Anniversary Edition*

EXODUS 12-15:21 While all around the destroyer laid waste every Egyptian household, each company within the blood-sprinkled houses of Israel was engaged in the sacrificial meal. This consisted of the Paschal lamb, and "unleavened bread with," or rather "upon, bitter herbs," as if in that solemn hour of judgment and deliverance they were to have set before them as their proper meal the symbol of all the bitterness of Egypt, and upon it the sacrificial lamb and unleavened bread to sweeten and to make of it a festive supper. For everything here was full of deepest meaning. The sacrificial lamb, whose sprinkled blood protected Israel, pointed to Him whose precious blood is the only safety of God's people; the hyssop (as in the cleansing of the leper, and of those polluted by death, and in <195107>Psalm 51:7) was the symbol of purification; and the unleavened bread that "of sincerity and truth," in the removal of the "old leaven" which, as the symbol of corruption, pointed to "the leaven of malice and wickedness." (<460507>1 Corinthians 5:7, 8) – *Bible History, Old Testament vol. 2, Edersheim*

may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need” (v. 4:16).

John 19:31: “The Jews therefore, because it was the preparation, that the bodies should not remain upon the cross on the sabbath day, (for that sabbath day was an high day,) besought Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away. Then came the soldiers, and brake the legs of the first, and of the other which was crucified with Him. But when they came to Jesus, and saw that He was dead already, they brake not His legs: But one of the soldiers with a spear pierced His side, and forthwith came there out blood and water. And he that saw it bare record, and his record is true: and he knoweth that he saith true, that ye might believe. For these things were done, that the scripture should be fulfilled, 'A bone of Him shall not be broken.'” (vv. 31-36).

The prophecy John refers to is recorded in Psalms 34:20, Exodus 12:46, and Numbers 9:12: “They shall leave none of it unto the morning, nor break any bone of it: according to all the ordinances of the passover they shall keep it,” and “He keepeth all His bones: not one of them is broken.”

The redemption of the first-born Israelite sons before the Exodus came at the cost of a precious lamb. God also equipped Israel's ceremonial system that followed with the same built-in audiovisual aids: the head of the family would have to put his hand on the top of the head of the offering, transferring his and his family's sin to the

sacrifice. And as he cut the throat of the victim, he was able to see, in real time, the cost of his sins.

Now Jesus Christ has paid that price once and for all by His own blood. Salvation is freely offered to the repentant sinner – but that salvation was definitely not free, it cost God the Father His only begotten Son. How much more precious is that sacrifice? How much more valuable the blood of God's Lamb? How much more painful the cost of our sins?

The prophet, John the Baptist, introduced his half-cousin, the Christ, to his own disciples saying, “Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sins of the world” (John 1:29). In the Revelation given to the apostle John, Christ is referred to 28 times by the title of the “Lamb.” Jesus' role as our Passover sacrifice is unmistakable.

ONE LAWGIVER

Compare, if you will, the Old and New Testament Passover accounts. Consider how each initiates a covenant that is ratified 50 days later – the Old Covenant with the law written in stone by the finger of God on Mt. Sinai, and the New Covenant with the same law written on our hearts by the Spirit poured out from Jerusalem at Pentecost.

Look at the prophecy and type contained in the Passover lamb and fulfilled by the true Lamb of God. Look at the symbolism of the bread and the wine: the broken body of Christ, with the unbroken bones of the lamb – the shed blood that brings *spiritual* Israel salvation, with the shed blood that brought *physical* Israel salvation.

It is His sacrifice Christ commanded us to remember in acts of communion. “For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till He come,” (1 Corinthians 11:26).

The Lamb of God now serves as High Priest to spiritual Israel, the Church of God (Galatians 6:16; Romans 2:28, 29; Philippians 3:3). It is His ministry that saves the Church today. “For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life” (Romans 5:10).

As you prepare this year to acknowledge the sacrifice made to atone for your sins and the sins of the world, do not forget Paul’s admonition recorded in 1 Corinthians – that we continue in removing sin from our lives and doing what is right in honor of the Mediator of the New Covenant, the One who sealed the deal in His own blood and forgave our former lives of lawlessness:

“Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us: Therefore lets us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth” (1 Corinthians 5:7-8).

May God bless you this Passover season, and throughout the spring feast of God.

Appendix 1

Matthew 28:1 In the end of the sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the sepulcher.

"The Hebrews did not give individual names to the seven days of their week. They merely counted the position of each after the [weekly] Sabbath calling Wednesday, for instance, 'the third day,' and Thursday 'the fourth.'

"The Egyptians introduced the practice of calling days by particular names. They chose for them the names of the seven planets, in which they included the sun and the moon.

"The Romans followed the Egyptian example and, when they invaded and occupied northern Europe, they introduced their names of the days. The Roman system was never abandoned, although the Anglo-Saxons soon replaced most of the Roman divinities with the names of equivalent Norse gods.

"The days of the week thus have their origins in ancient myth and astronomy. Like the names of the months, they have remained unchanged over many centuries and no day passes by without modern man paying unconscious tribute to a figure or power in which he no longer believes." – *Webster's World Encyclopedia* © 2002.

"The seven-day week itself originated at creation (Genesis 1) and the knowledge of the correct weekly cycle was preserved by the Jews. However, in ancient Babylon each of the seven days of the week became associated with what the ancients called the seven planets: Sun, Moon, Mars, Mercury, Jupiter, Venus and Saturn." – *The Beast of Revelation*, Living Church of God

Appendix 2

Matthew 12:40 “For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.” KJV

Jonah 1:17 “.... And Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights.” KJV

“The fact that 'three days' is used by Hebrew idiom for any part of three days and three nights is not disputed; because that was the common way of reckoning, just as it was when used of years. ...

“But, when the number of 'nights' is stated as well as the number of 'days', then the expression ceases to be an idiom, and becomes a literal statement of fact.

“Moreover, as the Hebrew day began at sunset the day was reckoned from one sunset to another, the 'twelve hours in the day' (John 11:9) being reckoned from sunrise, and the twelve hours of the night from sunset. An evening-morning was thus used for a whole day of twenty-four hours, as in the first chapter of Genesis. Hence the expression 'a night and a day' in 2 Cor. 11:25 denotes a complete day (Gr. *nuchtkēmeron*).

“When Esther says (Est. 4:16) 'fast ye for me, and neither eat nor drink three days,' she defines her meaning as being three complete days, because she adds (being a Jewess) 'night or day.' And when it is written that the fast ended on 'the third day' (5:1), 'the third day' must have succeeded and included the third night. ...

“Hence, when it says that 'Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights' (Jonah 1:17) it means exactly what it says, and that this can be the only meaning of the expression in Matt. 12:40; 16:4. ...” – *The Companion Bible*, Bullinger, Appendix 144

Appendix 3

RESURRECTION WEEK, 31 AD

Tuesday – Jesus Christ ate an early-evening Passover meal with His disciples (at the beginning of Nisan 14, Jewish reckoning) and instituted the New Covenant symbols (Matthew 26:26-28). Jesus was then betrayed by Judas, arrested and during the night brought before the high priest.

Wednesday – Jesus was crucified and died around 3 p.m. (Matthew 27:46-50). This was the preparation day for the annual (not weekly) Sabbath, which began that evening (Mark 15:42; Luke 23:54; John 19:31). Jesus' body was placed in the tomb at twilight (Matthew 27:57-60).

Thursday – This was the high-day Sabbath, the first day of Unleavened Bread (John 19:31; Leviticus 23:4-7). It is described as the day after the Day of Preparation (Matthew 27:62).

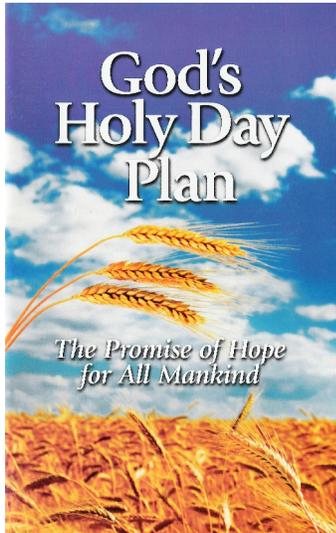
Friday – The high-day Sabbath now past, the women bought and prepared spices for anointing Jesus' body before resting on the weekly Sabbath day, which began at sunset (Mark 16:1; Luke 23:56).

Saturday – The women rested on the weekly Sabbath, according to the Forth Commandment (Luke 23:56; Exodus 20:8-11). Jesus rose around sunset, exactly three days and three nights (72 hours) after burial, fulfilling the sign of Jonah and authenticating Jesus' Messiahship.

Sunday – The woman brought the prepared spices early in the morning while it was still dark (Luke 24:1; John 20:1). Jesus had already risen (Matthew 28:1-6; Mark 16:2-6; Luke 24:2-3; John 20:1). He did not rise on Sunday morning, but at sunset the day before.”

– *Holidays or Holy Days*, United Church of God

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