

Lord of the Sabbath

Program #11

Three Days and Three Nights

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Today is the Sabbath day of the Lord. I pray you are glad, and rejoicing in it!

Last week, we went day by day through the recorded activities of Jesus after He came to Jerusalem for His last Feast of Unleavened Bread, also called the Passover, or Passover feast. At this feast, Jesus would be slain as our Passover Lamb. For, as we showed using the Hebrew calendar (the calendar that Jesus used), Jesus would be crucified, die and be buried on Abib 14. There is no doubt in my mind that this is what our Bible teaches.

We went on to give two reasons straight from the Gospel of John for why that day WAS NOT a Friday. The teaching of a Good Friday death is simply not supported by the Bible. It is a tradition of men and based upon a lack of understanding of the Passover feast of the LORD. Even though it was His last Passover, Jesus kept it flawlessly. This is what helps us understand what day of the week Jesus died, and what day of the week He rose.

Today, we are going to continue a day by day examination of what was happening after Jesus was put in a tomb, late on Abib 14, until the day that that tomb was discovered by Mary Magdalene to be empty. And, we will look briefly at what happened the days AFTER He was resurrected.

Jesus was put in the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea before sunset at the end of Abib 14, just before Abib 15 would have begun. Abib 15 is an annual, high, holy-day Sabbath named the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread by the LORD. It was against the Jewish law to leave a dead body unburied, or hanging on a crucifixion stake, on the Sabbath. If one would handle a dead body on the Sabbath it would defile a person making them impure. Being defiled would prevent a person from eating the Passover lamb that night.

We saw last week in John 18:28 how the chief priests had refused to enter the Roman government court building known as the Praetorium on the Preparation Day of the Passover because it would defile them and it would prevent them from eating the Passover meal on the Biblical "Night to be Much Observed" later that same night.

This tomb was intended for Joseph, a wealthy man and a member of the ruling Jewish Sanhedrin. It was a new tomb hewn out of the rock in which no one had been buried. Joseph was a secret disciple of Jesus because of his fear of the other Jewish religious leaders. The tomb was nearby in a garden in Golgotha, the place of the crucifixion, but was outside the city of Jerusalem where criminals were crucified.

Prior to the crucifixion of Jesus, we kept time day by day by what the Bible records Jesus

did. It was a pretty straightforward analysis. Of course, now with Jesus laid in a tomb, keeping track of the days must be done by what other people were doing until the day that Jesus is resurrected from the dead and reappears in the gospels. This makes for a more confusing and difficult chronology. We see the days pass through the eyes and actions of a number of different people: the apostles, women disciples of Jesus, the Jewish high priests, and even Roman soldiers sent to guard the tomb of Jesus.

But, it is through the eyes, accounts and acts of Mary Magdalene that we get the best picture of the passage of time between the burial and resurrection of Jesus. It is simply amazing! It was shocking to me. This is surprising, but very comforting, especially to women who seemed to take a lesser role in the spiritual life of Israel than the men.

This is quite different in “New Covenant” Christianity where there is neither male nor female in Christ. And, we see the special role of Christian women develop in the role of Mary Magdalene. Are you ready to trace these amazing days and events following the burial of Jesus? Are you willing to look at them through the eyes of an observant Jew who understood and kept the Feast of Unleavened Bread just as Jesus did?

Fine! Let us start with where Mary Magdalene was when Jesus died and was buried on Abib 14 according to John 19: 25:

Now there stood by the cross of Jesus His mother, and His mother’s sister, Mary, the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene.

Mary Magdalene was at the foot of the cross when Jesus asked John, the Apostle He loved, to behold His mother as John’s own mother and to care for her in the future.

Now, notice something else very interesting about Mary Magdalene as found in Mark 15: 47:

And Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Joses observed where He was laid.

In Luke 23: 55, we learn a little more:

And the women who had come with Him from Galilee followed after, and they observed the tomb and how His body was laid. Then they returned and prepared spices and fragrant oils. And they rested on the Sabbath according to the commandment.

We see here, and in Matt: 27: 61, that Mary Magdalene was there sitting opposite the tomb watching as Joseph entombed Jesus and rolled a large stone in front of the door. She observed where He was laid to rest. Best we can tell, no other of the Apostles went to the tomb or knew where Jesus was buried.

Abib 15 (first day of Unleavened Bread)

We also see that Matthew asserts that these women returned and prepared burial spices.

Matthew gives us the impression that they prepared the spices that same day before sunset, and THEN rested on the Sabbath starting after sunset. Now, we know that it was late in the day time of Abib 14 when Jesus was entombed. When Jesus died at 3:00 PM, a number of things had to happen BEFORE Jesus could be buried:

- Joseph had to go back into Jerusalem to ask Pilate for permission to remove the body of Jesus from the cross
- Pilate had to summon the centurion to confirm that Jesus was dead
- After Pilate gave his permission, Joseph had to return to the cross and remove the dead body of Jesus from the cross
- On the way back, Joseph had to buy linen to wrap the body of Jesus for burial
- Joseph and Nicodemus had to transport the body of Jesus from the cross to Joseph's tomb in the garden which was nearby
- Joseph and Nicodemus had to wrap the body of Jesus in clean linen
- Joseph and Nicodemus had to apply the hundred pounds of myrrh and aloes which Nicodemus had brought
- Joseph had to roll the large stone in front of the door of the tomb

All this had to be done BEFORE sunset (about 6:00 PM) because the high Sabbath drew near. Was three hours enough time for all this? It certainly was possible but I suspect it was very near sunset when that stone was put in its place in front of the tomb's opening.

So, while we understand that the women would rest from work from sunset to the next sunset of Abib 15 for the high Sabbath of the first Day of Unleavened Bread, it is difficult to understand how they would have had time before the sunset to return to their abode and prepare burial spices if they stayed by the tomb as long as Joseph was there.

In fact, we find in another Gospel where these women first BOUGHT spices AFTER the Sabbath. We will address this apparent discrepancy a bit more later in this program.

That night, the start of Abib 15, is when Jews from the entire nation of Israel and beyond would gather in homes or special rooms to eat their own Passover lamb feast sacrificed at the temple the previous afternoon. No mention is made of this night to be much observed in Scripture that year.

We can only guess that even the apostles kept the Passover that same night which Jesus had yearned to keep with them at the last supper before He suffered and died. Their Passover was probably kept in the very upper room where the apostles had made ready the Passover they expected to observe with Jesus.

Since Abib 15 is a high Sabbath day, the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, there is not very much recorded to have happened during the daylight of that first day that Jesus was in the tomb. People would have been resting and possibly holding private holy convocations. The apostles would have done so probably in secret in fear of the Jewish leaders who had sought to kill both Lazarus and then Jesus.

However, there is one event given which has great significance concerning the

resurrection of Jesus. We find it in Matt. 27: 62:

On the NEXT DAY, which followed the Day of Preparation, the chief priests and Pharisees gathered together to Pilate, saying, "Sir, we remember, while He was still alive, how that deceiver said, 'After three days I will rise.' Therefore command that the tomb be made secure until the third day, lest His disciples come by night and steal Him away, and say to the people, 'He has risen from the dead.' So the last deception will be worse than the first." Pilate said to them, "You have a guard; go your way, make it as secure as you know how." So they went and made the tomb secure, sealing the stone and setting the guard.

What is vital here for our understanding of future events is that if the guard was requested during the daylight of Abib 15 and the guard was put in place that same day, they would have planned to remain there until sunset on Abib 17. If Jesus was still in that tomb by the end of Abib 17, there would be no way His prophecy of rising AFTER three days could have come true. The first day would end on Abib 15 and the third day on Abib 17. So, if the body of Jesus is still in that tomb when as Abib 18 begins, He was a phony and the chief priests could heave a loud sigh of relief.

Abib 16 (second day of Unleavened Bread)

The day after Abib 15, after the annual, high Sabbath is held by the Pharisees to be the day for the wave sheaf offering of the firstfruits of the barley harvest by the priests at the temple. It is clear from Lev. 23 that Israel was not to eat any of the new grain until bringing this wave offering before the LORD.

The Sadducees however believed that the wave sheaf offering was to be offered one day after the weekly Sabbath during the Feast of Unleavened Bread. While I have an opinion about that, and will cover it when describing the Feast in a later program, for now in the context of time, we are not given any clues in the gospels of anyone actually participating in the wave sheaf offering either on Abib 16, nor after the weekly Sabbath.

There is only one event mentioned in the Bible that seems to have taken place on Abib 16. We find it described in Mark 16: 1-5:

Now when the Sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices, that they might come and anoint Him. Very early in the morning, on the first day of the week, they came to the tomb when the sun had risen. And they said among themselves, "Who will roll away the stone from the door of the tomb for us?" But when they looked up, they saw that the stone had been rolled away---for it was very large. And, entering the tomb, they saw a young man clothed in a long white robe sitting on the right side; and they were alarmed.

Here we see a Scriptural dilemma. I have read that verse many times seeing the word BOUGHT but reading in my mind the word "brought." It sounds like the account of the

women coming to the tomb after the Sabbath on Sunday morning. But, is it?

Or, was it really early on Abib 16? In addition, we have some confusion with the previously cited scripture from Luke 23: 55 where it seems Mary Magdalene left the tomb the evening Jesus was buried and returned to prepare spices and oils BEFORE resting on the Sabbath day. So, do you see the dilemma? If Mary first BOUGHT the spices to anoint Jesus AFTER the Sabbath, how could they be preparing the spices BEFORE the Sabbath?

Well, this dilemma is easily resolved by understanding the Feasts of the LORD. Like John has already made clear, there were two Sabbaths in the seven-day Feast of Unleavened Bread. One was on the first day, and the other on the weekly Sabbath during the Feast. There is actually a third annual Sabbath on the last day of the Feast but this is clearly AFTER Jesus rose from the dead.

The Sabbath AFTER which Mary bought the spices was the high Sabbath of Abib 15. The day they prepared the spices was probably Abib 16. The day they come to the tomb with the spices to anoint Jesus is AFTER the weekly Sabbath.

Okay, you are probably confused by all these timing issues brought about by events not included in all the gospel accounts and by the fact that events are not mentioned necessarily in the strict order of a time chronology. It is truly like a puzzle to identify exactly what took place during this Feast of Unleavened Bread, also called the Passover, and on what day of the month or week, especially on our modern Gregorian calendar.

To help you sort it through, I have prepared a booklet titled "Resurrection Week--the True Days Jesus Died and Rose!" I will send it to you without charge although a donation of \$10 would be much appreciated. Your check must be made payable to Kenneth Kitzke for LawstSheep Ministries. Send it to LSM, PO Box 203, Delmont, PA 15626.

I must warn you that the conclusions will shake your prior understanding of what many call Passion week in our Christian Churches. If you have a thirst for knowledge and understanding of our Lord, you will want to go through this booklet, day by day and verse by verse. Let your own Bible show you why many of our American understandings of the days of the death and resurrection of our Savior have been incorrectly garnered from inaccurate translations of Scripture in our English Bibles, and from a lack of understanding of the Feasts of the LORD which Jesus obediently observed without error.

Abib 17 (the third day of Unleavened Bread)

Well, the next event that every gospel writer mentions is Mary Magdalene finding the tomb empty. Indeed, Jesus repeatedly states that He will rise on or after the third day. Has anyone ever explained to you that Jesus was talking about the third day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread? Or, is this a revelation to you? Is this a new understanding? My friends, I believe it was Abib 17 when Jesus rose from the dead! If you want better and

more detailed proof, ask for the Booklet. It is comprehensive.

However, I have not yet addressed which day of our modern Gregorian week that Jesus died, or the day that He rose from the dead. Looking at the time left in this Program, I will cover that in detail on the next Program. You might say that this is one program you dare not miss. It changed how I worship God, and it might convince you to change too. I advise you to have an audio tape ready next Sabbath. You will want to capture every word and then compare them to your own understanding of the key Bible verses.

With the time remaining today, I will give you one of the keys to understanding which day of the week Jesus died and was raised from the dead. It has to do with Mary Magdalene and her visits to the tomb of Jesus. You probably think she came to the tomb on Sunday morning. If you were listening closely this week, you know she also went to the tomb when Jesus was entombed by Joseph and Nicodemus.

But, you may not realize there were two other visits. Yes, you heard me right! Mary Magdalene made four visits to the tomb of Jesus! Knowing when they occurred is the key to knowing what days of the week they were on. With that knowledge we can easily discern all the other days of the week, starting with Abib 9 and going to Abib 18 and even later as the risen Jesus met with His disciples, including “Doubting Thomas.”

When we study the accounts of Mary Magdalene’s visits to the tomb by the different gospel writers, we get two very different pictures of what took place and when. I wish I had a nickel for every time I heard a preacher try to mitigate the differences to maintain that it was all the same visit, usually claimed to be one on Sunday morning before dawn while it was still dark. It was NOT. Don’t believe me; believe the accounts of your Bible!

The reason for the differences isn’t because the gospel writers were careless or confused in their accounts. It was because our Bibles show that Mary Magdalene visited the tomb of Jesus on two separate occasions. I feel sure enough about this that anyone who can explain how what I am going to point out fits with one visit, I’ll send you \$100. And, I’ll gladly eat some crow besides and apologize for teaching wrongly.

So, are you ready for the differences in the visits of Mary Magdalene to the tomb of Jesus? Get a pen and paper or a tape recorder now to have them available to check them out yourself carefully or do a Bible study with your brethren before the next celebration of the death and resurrection of our Savior and Lord, Jesus, the Christ.

Here is an itemization, not necessarily in the order of time or importance, to our beliefs:

1. One visit is with other women, the other is with Peter and John.
2. One visit finds a single angel, the other has two angels.
3. One visit has a violent earthquake, the other is calm.
4. One visit mentions guards being afraid and becoming as dead men, the other never mentions any guards even being there.

5. One visit shows an encounter with a risen Jesus, the other has no Jesus present.
6. After the one visit, the disciples ignore her report, after the other visit Peter and John run to the tomb.

Can you believe that these dramatic and significant differences are all part of the same visit? Well, what we see from the Bible is a leaving and a return to the tomb by Mary Magdalene. As we probe, we can learn why there were two visits and when they might have occurred.

Let's start with John's account. Since the account describes what John did, we must give it acute attention. We find it in John 20: 1-18:

Now, the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene went to the tomb early, while it was still dark, and saw that the stone had been taken away from the tomb. Then she ran and came to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple, whom Jesus loved, and said to them, "They have taken away the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid Him."

Peter therefore went out, and the other disciple, and were going to the tomb. So they both ran together, and the other disciple outran Peter and came to the tomb first.

The younger John outruns Peter but John defers to Peter to look into the tomb. This is when they find the burial clothes in the tomb with the handkerchief that had been around the head of Jesus folded together by itself. Is this an event you would EVER forget? Now, note what the disciple did after this experience as recorded in John 20: 10-13:

Then the disciples went away again to their own homes. But Mary stood outside the tomb weeping, and as she wept she stooped down and looked into the tomb. And she saw two angels in white sitting, one at the head and the other at the feet where the body of Jesus had lain. Then they said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping? She said to them, "Because they have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid Him. "

It is right after this statement that she turns around and sees the risen Jesus thinking Him to be the gardener. Jesus speaks with her and tells Mary to go tell His brethren that He is ascending to His Father. And, in Verse 18, John claims Mary Magdalene came and told the disciples that she had seen the Lord, and that He had spoken these things to her.

Now, if you do not yet have some questions, I surely do! For in the account in Matt. 28: 1-9, we get an entirely different picture of this supposedly first day of the week, Sunday morning visit of Mary, to the tomb:

Now, after the Sabbath, as the first day of the week began to dawn, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came to the tomb. And behold, there was a great earthquake; for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and

rolled back the stone from the door and sat on it. His countenance was like lightening, and his clothing as white as snow. And the guards shook for the fear of him, and became like dead men.

Now, does this sound like the same visit to the tomb on Sunday morning by Mary Magdalene that John who was there described? Consider that Matthew was one of the apostles who would have been present in and around the crucifixion along with John. He surely would have known what had happened that morning just like John. So, why are the accounts so different?

We do know that the resurrection accounts of Mark and Luke were NOT from first-hand experiences. They were not apostles or with Jesus in the flesh during His ministry. They probably received their input from Peter and Paul respectively, although not even Paul was present at the resurrection so far as we know.

So, Mark and Luke understandably include some helpful events not recorded by either Matthew or John. However, it is hard to even imagine why the accounts of Matthew and John differ from each other so much. Can they both be true? How can they be explained? The clock on the wall says that answers will have to await our Program next week. Or, in the mean time, contact LawstSheep Ministries for a copy of the booklet, "Resurrection Week---the True Days Jesus Died and Rose!" It will fill in some details I just cannot include in this radio Program.

Until next Sabbath, this is Brother Kenny praying that your week will be filled with blessings from our Savior and Lord of the Sabbath, Jesus. Amen!