

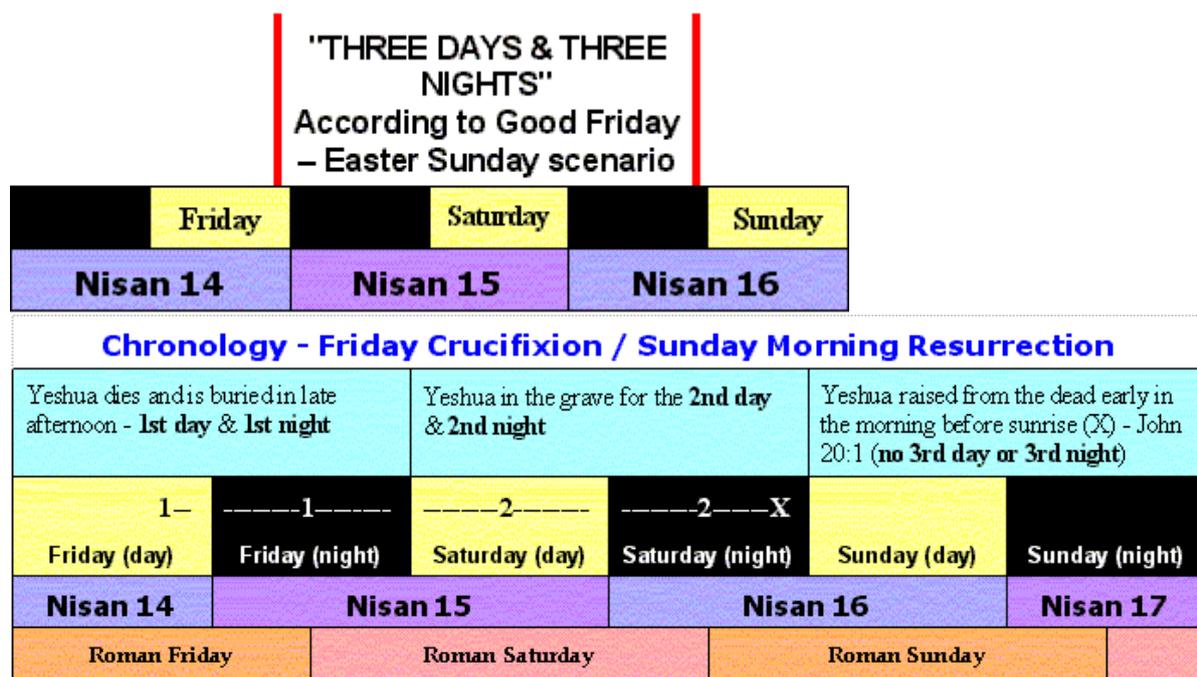
WHEN WAS CHRIST RESURRECTED?

Yeshua gave only ONE sign to prove that he was the Messiah prophesied in the *Tanakh*:

MATTHEW 12:39 But he answered and said to them, "An evil and adulterous generation seeks after a sign, and no sign will be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah. 40 For as Jonah was **THREE DAYS and THREE NIGHTS** in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be **THREE DAYS and THREE NIGHTS** in the heart of the earth. (NKJV)

For numerous centuries, most Christians have held a belief that directly contradicts this unique sign that Messiah said would identify him. Untold generations of Christians have been taught that Jesus died on Good Friday and was resurrected on Easter Sunday. So prevalent is this satanic deception that most never even stop to consider that such a scenario denies that Yeshua is the prophesied Messiah. In this article, we're going to see what God's Word **really** has to say about the death and resurrection of the Messiah, Jesus Christ.

First, let's examine the position of those who claim Yeshua was crucified on Good Friday and raised very early on Easter Sunday morning. Below is a graphic representation of these claims:



As you can see, this scenario only allows for parts of **two** days and **two** nights. So how do those who advocate this perspective get around the obvious lack of a third day and night? Quite ingeniously, the advocates of the Good Friday/Easter Sunday position use the debate over an *onah* (period of time) in the Jewish *Talmud* to substantiate their view.

They use quotes from Rabbi Ismael and Rabbi Eliezar ben Azariah regarding the counting of **THREE DAYS** to supposedly shore up their position. Here is the talmudic discussion of an *onah*, as presented by John B. Lightfoot in defense of the Good Friday/Easter Sunday timeline:

Weigh well that which is disputed in the tract *Schabbath*, concerning the uncleanness of a woman for three days; where many things are discussed by the Gemarists concerning the computation of this space of three days. Among other things, these words occur; "R. Ismael saith, *Sometimes it contains four Onoth*, sometimes five, sometimes six. But how much is the space of an *Onah*? R. Jochanon saith either a day or a night." And so also the Jerusalem Talmud; "R. Akiba fixed a day for an *Onah*, and a night for an *Onah*: but the tradition is, that R. Eliezar Ben Azariah said, *A day and a night make an Onah, and a part of an Onah is as a whole.*" And a little after, *R. Ismael computeth a part of the Onah for the whole.* (p. 210, vol. 2, *Commentary on the New Testament from the Talmud and Hebraica*)

By merging the conflicting opinions of Rabbi Ismael and Rabbi Eliezar, Good Friday/Easter Sunday proponents claim that Friday evening before sunset to Sunday morning before sunrise can be viewed as three days and three nights. If nothing else, the Good Friday/Easter Sunday advocates should certainly get credit for creativity.

However, the talmudic argument they cite as proof deals with the Jewish computation of an idiomatic THREE DAYS as it relates to the rabbinic period of time called an *onah*. The point of contention between the Jewish rabbis was whether an *onah* (a unit of time not mentioned in the Bible) was 12 hours or 24 hours in length. Rabbi Ismael, Rabbi Jochanan, and Rabbi Akiba all agreed that an *onah* was 12 hours long, either a day or a night. Rabbi Eliezar ben Azariah, on the other hand, considered an *onah* to be a 24-hour day. Yet it appears each side of this argument agreed that the count should be inclusive (that is, any portion of an *onah* should be counted as a full *onah*). This talmudic discussion does **not** address how to determine a literal THREE DAYS and THREE NIGHTS (a computation that is fairly self-evident to those without a theological axe to grind).

For example, according to Rabbi Ismael's opinion, an idiomatic THREE DAYS in Jewish thought can contain from **FOUR onahs** . . .

	1st ONAH	2nd ONAH	3rd ONAH	4th ONAH	
Thursday night	Friday day	Friday night	Saturday day	Saturday night	Sunday day
Nisan 14		Nisan 15		Nisan 16	

. . . up to **SIX onahs**:

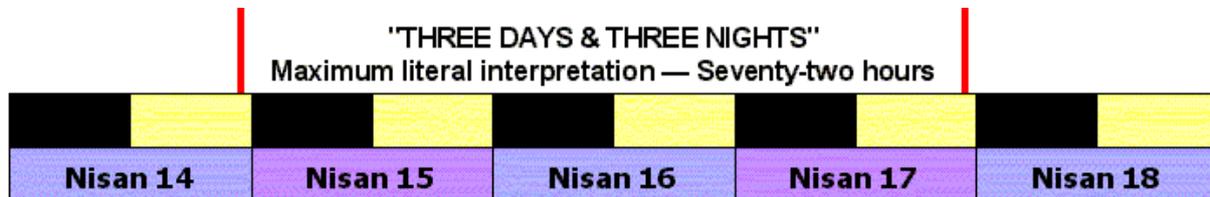
1st ONAH	2nd ONAH	3rd ONAH	4th ONAH	5th ONAH	6th ONAH
Thursday night	Friday day	Friday night	Saturday day	Saturday night	Sunday day
Nisan 14		Nisan 15		Nisan 16	

As the graphic plainly shows, a period of six *onahs* would also be a literal three days and three nights.

HOWEVER, a period of only **four onahs**, while it may be idiomatically considered "three days" in rabbinical Jewish thought, clearly has only TWO days and TWO nights within it. Since the Messiah **explicitly** stated that he was going to be in the grave for **THREE** days and **THREE** nights, he could not have been speaking idiomatically of a period of only four *onahs*. Therefore, the Jewish debate over the length of an *onah* does **not** confirm the Good Friday/Easter Sunday position, as many claim.

Even using the inclusive reckoning employed by Jews when counting days, the Good Friday/Easter Sunday doctrine falls short. In the final analysis, this scenario suffers from several fatal flaws, not the least of which is the fact that **two** days and **two** nights do NOT equal **three** days and **three** nights.

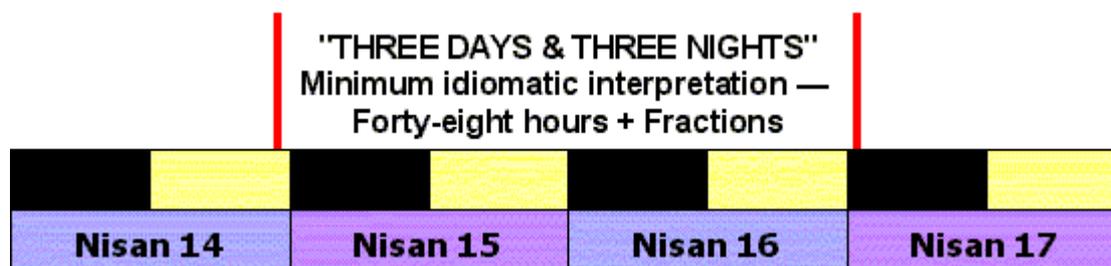
Because of the contradictions in the Good Friday/Easter Sunday theory, a belief arose among some groups that Yeshua was in the grave exactly 72 hours:



	1st night	1st day	2nd night	2nd day	3rd night	3rd day
Mordecai tells the Jews in Shushan to fast with Queen Esther for three days, night and day ; the fast begins on the night which starts the next day	The 1st night and day of fasting by Esther and the Jews in Shushan		The 2nd night and day of fasting by Esther and the Jews in Shushan		After the 3rd night and during the 3rd day of fasting, Esther goes in to King Ahasuerus	

Esther told Mordecai that the Jews of Shushan should fast with her for three nights and days, beginning at night. She then went in to the king **during** the third day of the "three nights and three days" of fasting. Clearly, the sequence shown from the Scriptures indicates that when the Bible says "three days and three nights," the beginning and ending day and/or night need not be totally complete.

According to the Jewish practice of counting parts of a day or night as a whole, "three days and three nights" at a minimum has to include two full days, two full nights, and at least portions of another day and another night. Below is a graph of the minimum amount of time Jews would have considered to be "three days and three nights":



There is a theory that places Yeshua in the grave for three days and three nights per the Jewish method of inclusive counting **and** agrees with the Scriptures which speak of a morning resurrection (a weakness that the Sabbath evening resurrection doctrine cannot overcome). This hypothesis is detailed on the following graphic:

Chronology - Wednesday Crucifixion / Sabbath Morning Resurrection									
Yeshua crucified from 9-3, and buried in late afternoon; 1st day in grave		Yeshua spends 1st night and 2nd day in the grave		Yeshua spends 2nd night and 3rd day in the grave		Yeshua's 3rd night in grave; resurrected before sunrise (X) on Saturday morning			
Tue. night	Wed. day 1-	Wed night ---1---	Thu. day ---2---	Thu. night ---2---	Fri. day ---3---	Fri. night ---3-X	Sat. day	Sat. night	Sun. day
Nisan 14		Nisan 15		Nisan 16		Nisan 17		Nisan 18	
Roman Wednesday		Roman Thursday		Roman Friday		Roman Saturday		Roman Sunday	

As shown above, this doctrine has Yeshua in the grave for three days and three nights in the proper order (day first, and then night). It also concurs with the Scriptures which speak of a morning resurrection, as we will see in the next portion of this article.

Which one of the chronologies presented above has the best scriptural support? The available evidence, when viewed objectively, shows that Yeshua was buried late on Wednesday afternoon (Nisan 14) and resurrected early on the morning of the weekly Sabbath (Nisan 17), before sunrise.

In the remainder of the article, we'll look at the burial and resurrection passages in the Gospels and consult the original Greek language of the New Testament to determine what the Scriptures actually say about this pivotal event in human history. All Greek language citations are from the Byzantine Majority Text published by Robinson-Pierpont in 1995; this compilation represents the standard text of the majority of Greek manuscripts currently in our possession.

Let's start in the Gospel of Luke to see what events took place from the time of Yeshua's burial to his resurrection:

LUKE 23:50 Now behold, *there was* a man named Joseph, a council member, a good and just man. 51 He had not consented to their decision and deed. *He was* from Arimathea, a city of the Jews, who himself was also waiting for the kingdom of God. 52 This man went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. 53 Then he took it down, wrapped it in linen, and laid it in a tomb that was hewn out of the rock, where no one had ever lain before. 54 **That day was the Preparation, and the Sabbath drew near.** 55 And the women who had come with him from Galilee followed after, and they observed the tomb and how his body was laid. 56 Then they returned and prepared spices and fragrant oils. And they rested on the Sabbath according to the commandment. 24:1 Now on the first *day* of the week, very early in the morning, they, and certain *other women* with them, came to the tomb bringing the spices which they had prepared. (NKJV)

Luke clearly states that the day on which Yeshua was buried was the Preparation, and the Sabbath was fast approaching. The Greek word translated "preparation" here is παρασκευή. The Good Friday/Easter Sunday proponents fervently insist that this word is a Jewish technical term which can ONLY mean the Friday before a weekly Sabbath. However, this position is refuted by many reputable sources, including those cited below:

παρασκευή. . . 3. in the N.T. in a Jewish sense, *the day of preparation*, i.e. the day on which the Jews made the necessary preparation to celebrate a sabbath **or a feast**: (p. 486, *Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, emphasis added)

PREPARATION (Gk. *paraskeue*, a "making ready"). In the Jewish sense, the day of preparation . . . was the day on which the Jews made the necessary preparation to celebrate a *Sabbath . . . or festival . . .* (p. 1028, *The New Unger's Bible Dictionary*, emphasis added)

All the Gospel passages where *paraskeue* occurs identify the Jewish day of Preparation as the day of the crucifixion of Our Lord. But inasmuch as the sabbath mentioned in the narratives of the crucifixion is evidently the Passover sabbath of that year (Mk. 15:42; Lk. 23:54, 56; Jn. 19:31), and the Fourth Gospel expressly calls the preparation day in question "the Preparation of the Passover" (Jn. 19:14), the determination of the exact day for "the Preparation" during which Christ was crucified depends on the time when the Passover was celebrated that year. Passover takes place on the 14th of the Jewish lunar month Nisan (*Ant.* iii.10.5[248]), and is the greatest of the "special sabbaths" in the Jewish year. . . . But as a fixed date in a lunar month, its relation to the days of the week varied. . . . Thus, while Friday is the usual day of preparation for the normal weekly sabbath, the precise dating of the preparation for the Passover sabbath mentioned in the Gospels depends on the dating of the Passover for that year. (p. 953, vol. 3, "Preparation, Day of," *The International Standard Bible Dictionary*)

The Good Friday/Easter Sunday proponents' contention that "the Preparation Day" ONLY refers to Friday is clearly unsupportable. As the Wednesday burial/Sabbath morning

resurrection chronology above shows, this "Preparation Day of the Passover" (John 19:14) would have been Wednesday, Nisan 14 (see the [Jewish calendar for 30 CE](#) to verify this date).

Getting back to the sequence of events of the burial/resurrection recorded by Luke, let's look at *Young's Literal Translation* for another rendering of this passage:

LUKE 23:54 And the day was a preparation, and Sabbath was approaching, 55 and the women also who have come with him out of Galilee having followed after, beheld the tomb, and how his body was placed, 56 and having turned back, they made ready spices and ointments . . . (*YLT*)

Luke tells us that the women followed Joseph to the tomb and watched the burial of Yeshua. Then we are informed that "having returned, they made ready spices and ointments." Since the Passover Sabbath was rapidly approaching while Yeshua was being buried, the women could **not** have obtained and prepared the spices for Yeshua's body that night (Wednesday night) or the next day (Thursday day). Luke tells us here **WHAT** the women did, but he doesn't tell us **WHEN** they did it. To answer the question of **when** the women acquired and made ready the spices, we must go to the Gospel of Mark:

MARK 15:47 And Mary Magdalene and Mary *the mother* of Joses observed where he was laid. 16:1 **Now when the Sabbath was past**, Mary Magdalene, Mary *the mother* of James, and Salome **bought spices**, that they might come and anoint him. (*NKJV*)

We see from Mark's parallel account that Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought the spices **after** "the Sabbath." The Sabbath being referred to here is the same Sabbath mentioned in Leviticus 23:11, 15 — the annual Passover Sabbath of Nisan 15 (which occurred this particular year on Wednesday night/Thursday day). Therefore, the women would have purchased the spices during the day on Friday, Nisan 16.

The next verse in Luke's account confirms Mark's timeline. Let's look at a literal translation of the Greek text of Luke 24:1 for verification of this (the last part of Luke 23:56 should actually be the first part of Luke 24:1):

LUKE 24:1 Και [And] τὸ [on the] μὲν [on the one hand] σάββατον [Sabbath] ἠσύχασαν [they rested] κατὰ [according to] τὴν [the] ἐντολήν [commandment], τῇ [on] δὲ [but on the other hand], μιᾷ [on one] τῶν [of the] σαββάτων [Sabbaths] ὄρθρου [at dawn] βαθέας [deep] ἦλθον [they came] ἐπὶ [to] τὸ [the] μνημα [tomb], φέρουσαι [bearing] ἃ [that which] ἠτοίμασαν [they prepared] ἀρώματα [the spices], καὶ [and] τινες [certain others] σὺν [with] αὐταῖς [them].

Robert Young translates this passage as follows:

LUKE 23:56b . . . And on the Sabbath, indeed, they rested, according to the command. 24:1 And **on the first of the Sabbaths**, at early dawn, they came to the tomb, bearing the spices they made ready, and certain {others} with them, (*YLT*)

The Greek $\mu\epsilon\nu \dots \delta\epsilon$ construction Luke uses here is meant to emphasize **contrast** ($\mu\epsilon\nu$ "indeed, on the one hand" . . . "but, on the other hand"). Let's look at a literal translation of this passage which clearly shows the contrast Luke was portraying.

LUKE 23:56b And on the one hand, they rested on the Sabbath according to the commandment; but on the other hand, on one of the Sabbaths, at deep dawn, they came to the tomb, bearing the spices which they prepared, and certain others with them, (*literal translation*)

The contrast Luke wanted to point out to his readers with the use of the $\mu\epsilon\nu \dots \delta\epsilon$ pairing is between the Passover Sabbath (on which the women rested according to the commandment recorded in Lev. 23:6-7) and "one of the Sabbaths" (on which the women came to the tomb before sunrise to anoint Yeshua's body with spices).

LEVITICUS 23:6 "On the fifteenth day of that month the LORD's Feast of Unleavened Bread begins; for seven days you must eat bread made without yeast. 7 **On the first day hold a sacred assembly and do no regular work.**" (NIV)

Understood properly, Luke 23:56b-24:1 tells us that there were two Sabbaths that week: the annual Passover Sabbath on Nisan 15 and "one of the [weekly] Sabbaths" (the first one) in the count from Passover to Pentecost:

LEVITICUS 23:15 "And you shall count for yourselves from the day after the Sabbath, from the day that you brought the sheaf of the wave offering: **seven Sabbaths shall be completed.** 16 Count fifty days to the day after the seventh Sabbath; then you shall offer a new grain offering to the LORD." (NKJV)

The *Concordant Literal New Testament* renders Luke 24:1 this way:

LUKE 24:1 Now in the early depths of **one of the Sabbaths**, they, and certain others together with them, came to the tomb, bringing the spices which they make ready. (CLNT)

The Greek phrase $\mu\epsilon\lambda\acute{\epsilon}\tau\omega\nu \sigma\alpha\beta\beta\acute{\alpha}\tau\omega\nu$ literally means "one of the Sabbaths." The Greek word $\mu\epsilon\lambda\acute{\epsilon}$ is "one," NOT "first." Additionally, the Greek word $\sigma\alpha\beta\beta\acute{\alpha}\tau\omega\nu$ is plural. Grammatically, it doesn't make sense to translate this phrase as the "first *day* of the week," an alleged reference to Sunday. However, most English translators render the cardinal "one" as the ordinal "first," the plural "sabbaths" as the singular "week" and insert the missing word "day" into the phrase in order to try and make it fit the traditionally accepted Sunday resurrection scenario.

In his translation, Young renders the phrase as "first of the sabbaths." What would "First of the Sabbaths" have meant to a 1st-century Jew? Is there such a thing that would have been understood by those living at that time in Judea?

Absolutely! In fact, Luke 6:1 gives us a clue regarding this phrase:

LUKE 6:1 Now it happened **on the SECOND Sabbath after the FIRST** that he went through the grainfields. And his disciples plucked the heads of grain and ate *them*, rubbing *them* in *their* hands. (**NKJV**)

What is "the Second Sabbath after the First," and how does it tie in to "one of the sabbaths" mentioned in the Gospels in relation to Yeshua's resurrection? We can find the answer to both questions in Johnston Cheney's discussion of this verse:

Seven sabbaths were to be counted from the Feast of First-fruits or Passover. Consequently, these came to be known as "First Sabbath," "Second Sabbath" etc., down to the seventh. And according to Julian Morgenstern, former President of Hebrew University, this practice continued in Galilee till the time of Christ or the Common Era. It is still observed by some groups in Palestine today. Thus, there was an annual date known as "First Sabbath," just after Passover. (p. 230, *The Life of Christ in Stereo*)

According to Leviticus 23:15, there were seven weekly Sabbaths between Passover and Pentecost that were to be counted. When referring to any of these seven Sabbaths, the Jews would simply call them "one of the Sabbaths." There was an annual date just after Passover at the time of Yeshua known as the "First Sabbath"; this was the first weekly Sabbath after the Passover high Sabbath. "One of the Sabbaths," mentioned by all of the Gospel writers (Matt. 28:1; Mark 16:2; Luke 24:1; John 20:1, 19), refers to this very "First Sabbath"! When English translators render the Greek text μὴ τῶν σαββάτων as "first *day* of the week," they do so because of tradition. The most logical translation would be the most literal: "One of the Sabbaths."

Some raise the objection that the women could not have gone to anoint Yeshua's body on the weekly Sabbath because it would have been against the Law (Exo. 20:8-11; Deu. 5:12-15). The Jewish *Mishnah* (which records the oral law as it most likely would have been observed in Yeshua's day) addresses the legality of anointing a dead body on a weekly Sabbath. Let's see what the *Mishnah* says would have been allowed:

- A. They prepare all that is needed for a corpse.
- B. **They anoint** and rinse it,
- C. on condition that they not move any limb of the corpse.
- D. They remove the mattress from under it.
- E. And they put on [cool] sand so that it will keep.
- F. They tie the chin,
- G. not so that it will go up, but so that it will not droop [further].
- H. And so in the case of a beam which broke —
- I. they support it with a bench or the seams of a bed,
- J. not so that it will go up, but so that it will not droop [further].
- K. They do not close the eyes of a corpse on the Sabbath,
- L. nor on an ordinary day at the moment the soul goes forth.
- M. And he who closes the eyes of a corpse at the moment the soul goes forth, lo, this one sheds blood. (p. 207, *The Mishnah, A New Translation*, Shabbat 23:5)

The women rested according to the Law on the Passover Sabbath (Lev. 23:6-7), but they had legal justification to go to the tomb on the weekly Sabbath. It was the Jewish custom (in fact, an obligation) for grieving friends and relatives to go to a grave on the third day to pay last respects. It was at this point in time that death was considered permanent. So a Sabbath

morning visit to Yeshua's tomb by the women for the purpose of anointing his body would have been in accord with the Jewish oral law and would **not** have broken the Sabbath commandment (Exo. 20:8-11).

Now let's move on to Matthew's chronicle of these same events:

MATTHEW 27:57 Now when evening had come, there came a rich man from Arimathea, named Joseph, who himself had also become a disciple of Jesus. 58 This man went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Then Pilate commanded the body to be given to him. 59 When Joseph had taken the body, he wrapped it in a clean linen cloth, 60 and laid it in his new tomb which he had hewn out of the rock; and he rolled a large stone against the door of the tomb, and departed. 61 And Mary Magdalene was there, and the other Mary, sitting opposite the tomb. 62 **On the next day, which followed the Day of Preparation**, the chief priests and Pharisees gathered together to Pilate, 63 saying, "Sir, we remember, while he was still alive, how that deceiver said, '**After three days I will rise.**' 64 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." 65 Pilate said to them, "You have a guard; go your way, make it as secure as you know how." 66 So they went and made the tomb secure, sealing the stone and setting the guard. 28:1 Now after the Sabbath, as the first *day* of the week began to dawn, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came to see the tomb. (*NKJV*)

Matthew gives us some additional pieces of the story in his account. He tells us of the "evening" (just before sunset) burial by Joseph with the women watching. But he adds details about the visit of the Sadducees and Pharisees to Pilate to request a guard be established at the tomb of Yeshua. These rulers appeared before Pilate on the day following the Preparation Day, which would have been the Passover Sabbath (Nisan 15). Since they would have eaten the Passover meal the night before, they no longer had to be concerned with making themselves unclean by entering the Praetorium (John 18:28). They were afraid that Yeshua's disciples would steal his body from the tomb "after three days" and make it appear that he had risen from the dead. Their plea to make the tomb "secure until the third day" should be understood to mean "until the third day had ended," or until the time frame for Yeshua's prophesied resurrection had passed. Pilate agreed and assigned some soldiers to guard the tomb.

The pivotal verse of this passage is the first verse of chapter 28:

MATTHEW 28:1 And on the eve of the Sabbaths, at the dawn, toward the **first of the Sabbaths**, came Mary the Magdalene, and the other Mary, to see the sepulchre, (*YLT*)

MATTHEW 28:1 Now it is the evening of the Sabbaths. At the lighting up into **one of the Sabbaths** came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to behold the sepulcher. (*CLNT*)

MATTHEW 28:1 Ὅψε̅ [the later of] δὲ [And on] σαββάτων [the Sabbaths], τῇ [at the] ἐπιφωσκούσῃ [dawn] εἰς [to] μίαν [one of] σαββάτων [the Sabbaths], ἦλθε [came] Μαριάμ [Mary] ἡ [the] Μαγδαληνῆ [Magdalene] καὶ [and] ἡ [the] ἄλλη [other] Μαριάμ [Mary] θεωρῆσαι [to see] τὸν [the] τάφον [tomb].

The Greek word Ὅψε̅ is generally translated "after" in this particular verse. However, it primarily means "late," in reference to time. Depending on context, it can also be translated "eve," "even," or "evening." A *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other*

Early Christian Literature (BAGD) shows that the use of this word in "Polyaenus 5, 2, 5 ὄψε τῆς ὥρας = later than the hour [decided upon]" (p. 601). Regarding translating ὄψε as "after" in Matthew 28:1 and elsewhere, Thayer states: ". . . an examination of the instances just cited (and others) will show that they fail to sustain the rendering *after* . . ." (p. 471).

As Thayer asserts, translating ὄψε as "after" is not valid in Matthew 28:1. While Young translates it as "eve of," the best rendering of ὄψε in this verse is "later of." Using that translation, Matthew 28:1 confirms that there were indeed TWO Sabbaths during the week of the crucifixion, as the following literal translation shows:

MATTHEW 28:1 And **on the later of the Sabbaths**, at the dawn to **one of the Sabbaths**, came Mary the Magdalene, and the other Mary, to see the tomb, (*literal translation*)

Matthew very specifically tells us WHEN the women went to the tomb. It was on the later of the two Sabbaths that occurred that week, on "one of the [weekly] Sabbaths" of the seven counted to Pentecost. Just before dawn on this weekly Sabbath, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary brought spices to anoint Yeshua's body.

Now let's look at the record of Yeshua's burial and resurrection in Mark's Gospel:

MARK 15:45b . . . He granted the body to Joseph. 46 Then he bought fine linen, took him down, and wrapped him in the linen. And he laid him in a tomb which had been hewn out of the rock, and rolled a stone against the door of the tomb. 47 And Mary Magdalene and Mary *the mother* of James observed where he was laid. 16:1 Now **when the Sabbath was past**, Mary Magdalene, Mary *the mother* of James, and Salome bought spices, that they might come and anoint him. 2 Very early in the morning, on the first *day* of the week, they came to the tomb when the sun had risen. (*NKJV*)

This passage establishes the same series of events we have previously seen in the other Gospel accounts. Mark 16:1 shows that the women went and bought spices after the Passover Sabbath. As pointed out earlier, this would have taken place during the day on Friday, Nisan 16. Mark 16:2 tells us exactly when the women went to the tomb to anoint Yeshua's body with these spices:

MARK 16:2 And **early in the morning of the first of the Sabbaths**, they come unto the sepulchre, **at the rising of the sun**, (*YLT*)

MARK 16:2 And, **very early in the morning on one of the Sabbaths**, they are coming to the tomb **at the rising of the sun**. (*CLNT*)

MARK 16:2 καὶ [And] λίαν [very] πρωτ̄ [early] τῆς [the] μιᾶς [on one] σαββάτων [of Sabbaths] ἔρχονται [they came] ἐπὶ [to] τὸ [the] μνημεῖον [tomb] ἀνατείλαντος [at the rising] τοῦ [of the] ἡλίου [sun].

Mark tells us that the women came to the tomb "at the rising of the sun." This would have been just before the sun rose, while it was still somewhat dark (John 20:1). Mark begins his summation of these events in verse 9, where he tells us specifically when Yeshua was resurrected:

MARK 16:9 And **he, having risen in the morning of the first of the sabbaths**, did appear first to Mary the Magdalene, out of whom he had cast seven demons; (*YLT*)

Young's use of the plural "sabbaths" in verse 9 is grammatically inaccurate; the Greek noun σαββάτου is singular. A better translation of σαββάτου would be "Sabbath." Additionally, unlike the other passages where forms of the Greek word μί (the cardinal "one") are used, here the Greek word is πρώτη (the ordinal "first"). Again, the *Concordant Literal New Testament* renders this verse more accurately:

MARK 16:9 Now, **rising in the morning in the first Sabbath**, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, from whom He had cast out seven demons. (*CLNT*)

MARK 16:9 Ἄναστας [having arisen] δὲ [Now] πρῶτ̃ [early] πρώτη [on the first] σαββάτου [Sabbath], ἐφάνη [he appeared] πρῶτον [first] Μαρία [to Mary] τῇ [the] Μαγδαληνῇ [Magdalene], ἀφ' [from] ἧς [whom] ἐκβεβλήκει [He had cast out] ἑπτὰ [seven] δαίμονια [demons].

MARK 16:9 Now **having arisen in the morning on the First Sabbath**, he appeared first to Mary the Magdalene, from whom he had cast out seven demons; (*literal translation*)

Mark tells us clearly that Yeshua rose from the dead **in the morning** on the First Sabbath. "In the morning" comes from the Greek adverb πρῶτ̃, which literally means "early." According to Friberg's *Analytical Lexicon to the Greek New Testament* (*ALGNT*), πρῶτ̃ is, "in Jewish time reckoning, the fourth watch of the night, from three to six a.m." So we have recorded here by Mark a clear time frame for the resurrection: 3-6 AM on the first weekly Sabbath of the seven enumerated between Passover and Pentecost.

Now let's examine the final Gospel account of the burial/resurrection from the apostle John:

JOHN 19:38 After this, Joseph of Arimathea, being a disciple of Jesus, but secretly, for fear of the Jews, asked Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus; and Pilate gave *him* permission. So he came and took the body of Jesus. 39 And Nicodemus, who at first came to Jesus by night, also came, bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about a hundred pounds. 40 Then they took the body of Jesus, and bound it in strips of linen with the spices, as the custom of the Jews is to bury. 41 Now in the place where he was crucified there was a garden, and in the garden a new tomb in which no one had yet been laid. 42 So there they laid Jesus, because of the Jews' Preparation Day, for the tomb was nearby. 20:1 Now on the first day of the week Mary Magdalene went to the tomb early, while it was still dark, and saw *that* the stone had been taken away from the tomb. (*NKJV*)

John adds to our knowledge of the burial by including the fact that Nicodemus the Pharisee (John 3:1) brought a hundred pounds of spices to the sepulcher to prepare Yeshua's body for entombment. We get the sense from John's comment about the garden tomb being nearby that the Preparation Day for the Passover Sabbath was about to end soon, requiring Joseph and Nicodemus to hurry their burial of Messiah.

Let's look at John 20:1 a little closer:

JOHN 20:1 Τῇ [on the] δὲ [And] μιᾷ [one] τῶν [of the] σαββάτων [Sabbaths] Μαρία [Mary] ἡ [the] Μαγδαληνὴ [Magdalene] ἔρχεται [came] πρῶτῃ [early] σκοτίας [dark] ἔτι [yet] οὐσης [being], εἰς [to] τὸ [the] μνημεῖον [tomb], καὶ [and] βλέπει [seeing] τὸν [the] λίθον [stone] ἠρμένον [having been taken away] ἐκ [from] τοῦ [the] μνημείου [tomb].

Here are two literal translations of this verse:

JOHN 20:1 And **on the first of the Sabbaths**, Mary the Magdalene doth come early (there being yet darkness) to the tomb, and she seeth the stone having been taken away out of the tomb, (*YLT*)

JOHN 20:1 Now, **on one of the Sabbaths**, Miriam Magdalene is coming to the tomb in the morning, there being still darkness, and is observing the stone taken away from the door of the tomb. (*CLNT*)

Once again, we see that John's resurrection account matches that of the Synoptists. He adds the fact that the sun had not yet risen on the morning of the First Sabbath when Mary Magdalene arrived at the tomb.

Having now covered all the Gospel accounts of the burial and resurrection, it is clear that the Greek text does not support a SUNDAY morning resurrection at all. In fact, the overwhelming evidence is that Messiah Yeshua rose from the dead early on the morning of the weekly Sabbath, "one of the Sabbaths" in the seven week count toward *Shavuot* (Pentecost).

There are some additional pieces to this story that the Scriptures give us. Let's go back to Luke's Gospel for a moment and look at an event that occurred a little later that same Sabbath day:

LUKE 24:12 But Peter arose and ran to the tomb; and stooping down, he saw the linen cloths lying by themselves; and he departed, marveling to himself at what had happened. 13 Now behold, two of them were traveling **that same day** to a village called Emmaus, which was seven miles from Jerusalem. 14 And they talked together of all these things which had happened. 15 So it was, while they conversed and reasoned, that Jesus himself drew near and went with them. 16 But their eyes were restrained, so that they did not know him. 17 And he said to them, "What kind of conversation *is* this that you have with one another as you walk and are sad?" 18 Then the one whose name was Cleopas answered and said to him, "Are you the only stranger in Jerusalem, and have you not known the things which happened there in these days?" 19 And he said to them, "What things?" So they said to him, "The things concerning Jesus of Nazareth, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, 20 and how the chief priests and our rulers delivered him to be condemned to death, and crucified him. 21 But we were hoping that it was he who was going to redeem Israel. Indeed, besides all this, TODAY is the THIRD DAY SINCE these things happened. 22 Yes, and certain women of our company, who arrived at the tomb early, astonished us. 23 When they did not find his body, they came saying that they had also seen a vision of angels who said he was alive. 24 And certain of those *who were* with us went to the tomb and found *it* just as the women had said; but him they did not see." 25 Then he said to them, "O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! 26 Ought not the Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into his glory?" 27 And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, he expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself. 28 Then they drew near to the village where they were going, and he indicated that

he would have gone farther. 29 But they constrained him, saying, "Abide with us, for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent." And he went in to stay with them. 30 Now it came to pass, as he sat at the table with them, that he took bread, blessed and broke *it*, and gave it to them. 31 Then their eyes were opened and they knew him; and he vanished from their sight. 32 And they said to one another, "Did not our heart burn within us while he talked with us on the road, and while he opened the Scriptures to us?" 33 So they rose up that very hour and returned to Jerusalem, and found the eleven and those *who were* with them gathered together, 34 saying, "The Lord is risen indeed, and has appeared to Simon!" 35 And they told about the things *that had happened* on the road, and how he was known to them in the breaking of bread. 36 Now as they said these things, Jesus himself stood in the midst of them, and said to them, "Peace to you." (*NKJV*)

Luke records the Sabbath flight of two of Yeshua's disciples out of Jerusalem to Emmaus. This account is sometimes used by Good Friday/Easter Sunday proponents to "prove" that this day, the "same day" (Luke 24:13) as the resurrection, was a Sunday. They use Luke 24:21b ("**today is the third day SINCE these things happened**") to try and support their position. However, the Greek text of this verse confirms that this day was the weekly Sabbath, NOT Easter Sunday! Here is the literal translation of that phrase in the Greek:

LUKE 24:21b τρίτην [third] ταύτην [this] ἡμέραν [day] ἄγει [brings] σήμερον [today], ἀφ' [from] οὗ [which] ταῦτα [these *things*] ἐγένετο [happened].

The Greek words translated "since" in the *NKJV* are ἀφ' οὗ. A literal translation of Luke 24:21b is ". . . Today brings this third day **from which** these things happened." The use of the Greek preposition/pronoun pair ἀφ' οὗ indicates that these men were NOT using the customary inclusive counting here, but rather were counting FROM Yeshua's crucifixion and burial on Wednesday, as the following graphic shows:

	X		1st day since		2nd day since		3rd day since		
Tue. night	Wed. day	Wed night	Thu. day	Thu. night	Fri. day	Fri. night	Sat. day	Sat. night	Sun. day
Nisan 14		Nisan 15		Nisan 16		Nisan 17		Nisan 18	

The daylight portion of the weekly Sabbath (the "First Sabbath" of the seven counted to Pentecost) was the "third day FROM WHICH" the crucifixion and burial had happened. The two men were referencing Yeshua's prophecy that he would rise again AFTER three days (Mark 8:31).

As Cleopas and Simon (not Peter) traveled toward Emmaus, they were sad (Luke 24:17). They had expected **something** to happen, but that Sabbath morning when news reached them that the tomb was found empty and Yeshua was not seen, they apparently did **not** believe that he had risen from the dead. Instead, they likely assumed that someone had stolen the body and they (Yeshua's disciples) were going to receive the blame for it. In fear they left Jerusalem so they wouldn't be arrested by the Jewish leaders for this supposed crime.

Some claim that Cleopas and Simon could not have been traveling to Emmaus if this day were indeed the Sabbath due to the restriction on traveling more than a "Sabbath day's journey" (slightly less than a mile). However, two points negate this objection. First, these

disciples were probably uneducated Galileans who did not observe all points of the oral law of the Pharisees (cf. Matt. 15:1-2; Mark 7:1-5). And even if they did normally observe this oral statute regarding walking, it was permissible to break the law if a life were at stake. These two disciples may very well have thought that their lives would be at risk if they stayed in Jerusalem. After all, their leader had just been executed at the behest of the Jewish authorities, and now his body was missing.

Yeshua appeared to Cleopas and Simon sometime during their trip, but they did not recognize him. He spoke to them about the Scriptures that told of him, amazing them with the things he said. They reached Emmaus probably sometime in mid-afternoon, within a few hours of sunset, as the day was winding down. A literal translation of Luke 24:29 shows the time-frame of their arrival:

LUKE 24:29 And they constrained him, saying, "Stay with us, because toward evening it is, and the day has declined. And he went in to stay with them. (*literal translation*)

It was sometime "toward evening," when the sun had started to set in the mid-afternoon sky. Having traveled out of Jerusalem and walked about seven miles during the middle of the day, the two disciples were tired and hungry. Since they had enjoyed hearing the Scriptures expounded to them during their trip, they implored the unknown traveler to stay with them. However, as they were eating, their eyes were opened and they recognized Yeshua. When they did, he vanished from before them.

Cleopas and Simon were so excited that they immediately headed back late that Sabbath afternoon to Jerusalem to tell the rest of the disciples that Yeshua was indeed alive. One would certainly imagine that they were motivated to get back to Jerusalem as fast as possible. The two men went to where the rest of the disciples were meeting and told them what had happened. Just as they were recounting the day's events, Yeshua appeared in the midst of the group.

The apostle John also tells us of this event in his account of that Sabbath day:

JOHN 20:19 **It being, therefore, evening, on that day, the first of the Sabbaths**, and the doors having been shut where the disciples were assembled, through fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in the midst, and saith to them, 'Peace to you;' (*YLT*)

JOHN 20:19 **It being, then, the evening of that day, one of the Sabbaths**, and the doors having been locked where the disciples were gathered together, because of fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in the midst and is saying to them, "Peace to you!" (*CLNT*)

JOHN20:19 Οἷστος [it being] οὖν [Then] ὀψίας [evening] τῆ [the] ἡμέρα [on day] ἐκεῖνη [that] τῆ [the] μιᾷ [one] τῶν [of the] σαββάτων [Sabbaths], καὶ [and] τῶν [the] θυρῶν [doors] κεκλεισμένων [having been closed] ὅπου [where] ἦσαν [were] οἱ [the] μαθηταὶ [disciples] συνηγμένοι [assembled] διὰ [because of] τὸν [the] φόβον [fear] τῶν [of the] Ἰουδαίων [Jews], ἦλθεν [came] ὁ [-] Ἰησοῦς [Yeshua] καὶ [and] ἔστη [stood] εἰς [in] τὸ [the] μέσον [midst], καὶ [and] λέγει [said] αὐτοῖς [to them], Εἰρήνη [Peace] ὑμῖν [to you].

John shows us that it was evening (late afternoon) on the First Sabbath when Yeshua appeared to the fearful disciples, who were gathered together in a closed room. Combined with Luke's account, we see that just as Cleopas and Simon had arrived to tell of their

encounter on the road to Emmaus, Yeshua himself appeared to confirm their testimony and prove his resurrection.

An examination of each of the Gospels proves that all resurrection events took place on the first weekly Sabbath between Passover and Pentecost, not Sunday. There is no justification, other than tradition, for believing in a Good Friday/Easter Sunday resurrection scenario.

In fact, a strong case can be made from the Greek text that Sunday, the first day of the week, is **never** mentioned in the New Testament. Let's look at the remaining two Scriptures where "first *day* of the week" normally appears in the English translations to see the evidence for this claim.

We'll start with the account of Paul's trip from Philippi to Troas. First, let's look at the text as it's normally translated, followed by a literal translation:

ACTS 20:6 But we sailed away from Philippi **after the Days of Unleavened Bread**, and in five days joined them at Troas, where we stayed seven days. 7 Now on the first *day* of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul, ready to depart the next day, spoke to them and continued his message until midnight. (NKJV)

Verse 6 tells us that these events took place immediately after the Feast of Unleavened Bread. A literal translation of verse 7 is somewhat different than what most English versions record:

ACTS 20:7 Now on **one of the Sabbaths**, at our having gathered to break bread, Paul argued with them, being about to be off on the morrow. Besides, he prolonged the word unto midnight. (CLNT)

ACTS 20:7 Ἐν [on] δὲ [And] τῇ [the] μιᾷ [one] τῶν [of the] σαββάτων [Sabbaths] συνηγμένων [being assembled] τῶν [of the] μαθητῶν [disciples] κλάσαι [to break] ἄρτου [bread], ὁ [-] Παῦλος [Paul] διελέγετο [was discussing] αὐτοῖς [with them], μέλλων [being about to] ἐξίέναι [depart] τῇ [the] ἐπαύριον [next day], παρέτεινέ [he extended] τε [and] τὸν [the] λόγον [message] μέχρι [until] μεσονυκτίου [midnight].

When we examine verse 7 in the Greek, we see that the text again literally says "one of the Sabbaths," not "first *day* of the week."

Luke tells us that Paul and his colleagues arrived in Troas at least five days after the Feast of Unleavened Bread, and that they stayed in Troas for seven days. Paul was on his way to Jerusalem to observe the feast of Pentecost (Acts 20:16). With an understanding of the Sabbath count to Pentecost (Lev. 23:15-16), it's clear that μιᾷ τῶν σαββάτων here indicates that Paul spent one of the seven weekly Sabbaths between Passover and Pentecost with the brethren in Troas. Once again, there is no significance to be found for Sunday in this passage.

Now let's examine the final instance where the "first *day* of the week" is mentioned in most English Bibles. It is found in the 16th chapter of Paul's first letter to the Corinthians:

I CORINTHIANS 16:1 Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given orders to the churches of Galatia, so you must do also: 2 **On the first day of the week** let each one

of you lay something aside, storing up as he may prosper, that there be no collections when I come. (*NKJV*)

Is Paul speaking of a weekly collection to be set aside by the Corinthians every Sunday so a sufficient amount would be available when he arrived? Or is it possible that Paul had something else in mind?

The key to understanding this whole passage is the Greek word **κατὰ** which begins verse 2. Thayer says **κατὰ** is: "a preposition denoting motion or diffusion or direction from the higher to the lower . . ."

This word is frequently rendered "after" by Greek translators ("down from" = "after"). Let's look at the difference it would make to translate this word as "after" instead of "on" in this verse, as well as rendering **μὴ τῶν σαββάτων** as "one of the Sabbaths":

"On the first *day* of the week" → *becomes* → "After one of the Sabbaths"

Here is a literal rendering of the first two verses of I Corinthians 16:

I CORINTHIANS 16:1 Now concerning the collection that is for the saints, as I directed to the churches of Galatia, so also you do. 2 **After one of the Sabbaths**, let each one of you beside himself put something aside, storing up whatever he may have prospered, in order that when I come then collections may not be made; (*literal translation*)

1 CORINTHIANS 16:1 Περὶ [concerning] δὲ [Now] τῆς [the] λογίας [collection] τῆς [the *one*] εἰς [for] τοὺς [the] ἁγίους [saints], ὡς περ [as] διέταξα [I directed] ταῖς [to the] ἐκκλησίαις [churches] τῆς [the *ones*] Γαλατίας [of Galatia], οὕτω [so] καὶ [also] ὑμεῖς [you] ποιήσατε [do].
2 κατὰ [After] μίαν [one of] σαββάτων [*the* Sabbaths] ἕκαστος [each] ὑμῶν [of you] παρ' [beside] ἑαυτῷ [himself] τιθέτω [let put *something*] θησαυρίζων [storing up] ὃ [what] τι [something] ἂν [-] εὐδοῦται [he may prosper], ἵνα [in order that] μὴ [not] ὅταν [when] ἔλθω [I came], τότε [then] λογίαι [collections] γίνωνται [*there* may be].

We know that Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread were important to the context of Paul's instructions to the Corinthians (I Cor. 5:7-8). It is likely that Paul wrote this epistle during this spring festival. If that was indeed the time frame of the letter, then Paul's encouragement to begin gathering a collection "after one of the Sabbaths" would have been intended to clearly tell the Corinthians WHEN to begin their offering so they would have it completed by the time Paul arrived. Once again, the most logical view of this Scripture does **not** include a recognition of Sunday.

CONCLUSION

Almost the entire Christian world celebrates Sunday as their day of worship in place of the 7th-day Sabbath God instituted at creation (Gen. 2:2-3). They justify doing this because they believe that Jesus Christ was raised from the dead on this day. However, as our study of the burial and resurrection has shown, the Greek text overwhelmingly supports another set of facts.

Yeshua was buried late on a Wednesday afternoon, just before the Passover high Sabbath, and he was resurrected very early on the morning of the weekly Sabbath. This particular weekly Sabbath was one of the seven Sabbaths counted to Pentecost. It was known to the Jews as the "First Sabbath" because it was the first weekly Sabbath between Passover and Pentecost. Furthermore, it's likely that the "first day of the week," Sunday, is NEVER even mentioned in the Greek New Testament. May God help us to put away the traditions of men and obey His *Torah!*

Bryan T. Huie
May 10, 1999

Revised: April 11, 2009