

Foothills Christian Assembly Sermon March 28, 2021

Luke 21:37 - 22:23 "Three Days And Three Nights in the Heart of the Earth"

"And in the daytime He was teaching in the temple, but at night He went out and stayed on the mountain called Olivet. 38 Then early in the morning all the people came to Him in the temple to hear Him.

Now the Feast of Unleavened Bread drew near, which is called Passover. 2 And the chief priests and the scribes sought how they might kill Him, for they feared the people. 3 Then Satan entered Judas, surnamed Iscariot, who was numbered among the twelve. 4 So he went his way and conferred with the chief priests and captains, how he might betray Him to them. 5 And they were glad, and agreed to give him money. 6 So he promised and sought opportunity to betray Him to them in the absence of the multitude.

7 Then came the Day of Unleavened Bread, when the Passover must be killed. 8 And He sent Peter and John, saying, "Go and prepare the Passover for us, that we may eat." 9 So they said to Him, "Where do You want us to prepare?" 10 And He said to them, "Behold, when you have entered the city, a man will meet you carrying a pitcher of water; follow him into the house which he enters. 11 Then you shall say to the master of the house, 'The Teacher says to you, "Where is the guest room where I may eat the Passover with My disciples?" ' 12 Then he will show you a large, furnished upper room; there make ready." 13 So they went and found it just as He had said to them, and they prepared the Passover.

14 When the hour had come, He sat down, and the twelve apostles with Him. 15 Then He said to them, "With fervent desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer; 16 for I say to you, I will no longer eat of it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God." 17 Then He took the cup, and gave thanks, and said, "Take this and divide it among yourselves; 18 for I say to you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes." 19 And He took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, "This is My body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of Me." 20 Likewise He also took the cup after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood, which is shed for you.

21 But behold, the hand of My betrayer is with Me on the table. 22 And truly the Son of Man goes as it has been determined, but woe to that man by whom He is betrayed!" 23 Then they began to question among themselves, which of them it was who would do this thing."

I. Introduction

- a. After arriving in Jerusalem some days before Passover, our Lord has been teaching in the Temple during the daytime and staying on the Mount of Olives during the night. After His triumphal entry on a colt (Lk 19:35-38), Christ first cleansed the Temple. Then, during these days, angry and filled with malice, the Jewish leaders have come against Him in public multiple times with trick question, all of which He has easily answered, eventually silencing them. Christ warns the people multiple times about the hypocrisy of the Jewish leaders, and He teaches them about paying taxes to Caesar, the resurrection and David's Son being David's Lord. Then, He points out a poor, mistreated widow making an offering as an example of faith in the midst of a corrupt system. This note of faith leads into Christ shocking His disciples by predicting the total destruction of the Temple, even though to their eyes it seemed so permanent, so indestructible. Their curiosity triggered, the disciples want to know when the temple will be

destroyed and what signs will show the destruction is about to take place. Christ our Lord then goes through the unfolding 1st century events leading up to the destruction of the temple in AD70, ending with a warning for the disciples to take heed of themselves, be vigilant, and pray at all times lest they drift away with distractions and miss their chance to escape His judgment upon apostate Israel during the Roman-Jewish war. And now in today's text, Judas makes his evil deal to betray Jesus, the day of Unleavened Bread arrives, and Jesus eats a Passover meal with His disciples. So, now, Luke provides Biblical information that helps us begin to sort the timing of the final week of Christ's life.

- b. Today is Palm Sunday in the western world. So, by Providence, we arrive at Luke 22 as we enter Holy Week 2021. Once per year, the entire world is taught that Christ was crucified on Friday, 5 days after His triumphal entry into Jerusalem. But, is this true? What if the Bible teaches otherwise?
 - c. Luke 21:37 - 22:23 "Three Days And Three Nights in the Heart of the Earth"
 - i. Why is this important?
 - ii. Why believe in a Friday crucifixion?
 - iii. Why a Friday crucifixion is not a viable Biblical option.
 - iv. Why a Thursday crucifixion is the best Biblical option.
 - v. Christ our Passover Lamb and Holy Week, so glorious
 - vi. Questions to know, love and obey God
 - d. Reference: As It Has Been Determined Luke 22:22 By Phillip G. Kayser at DCC on 4-22-2011
- II. Why is this important?
- a. Timing is very important to God because it relates directly to His glorious power, wisdom and decrees. Multiple Scriptures speak of this.
 - i. Lk 22:22 "And truly the Son of Man goes as it has been determined"
 - ii. Jn 7:30 "Therefore they sought to take Him; but no one laid a hand on Him, because His hour had not yet come."
 - b. A Friday crucifixion introduces great difficulties in harmonizing the Biblical accounts of the last week of Christ's life.
 - c. A Friday crucifixion undoes the glorious synchrony between Christ our Passover and the Passover Lamb, and multiple Divine works of beauty are blurred.
- III. Why believe in a Friday crucifixion?
- a. Main Reason
 - i. Jesus was crucified and buried during the daytime on the day before a Jewish Sabbath. The Jewish Sabbath was the 7th day of the week, which we call Saturday. So, the Crucifixion day would be the 6th day of the week, which we call Friday. (Mk 13:42, Lk 23:54, Mt 27:62, Jn 19:42)
 - b. Secondary
 - i. Tradition. Every major branch of the Christian Church on earth teaches a Friday crucifixion.
- IV. Why a Friday crucifixion is not a viable Biblical or calendric option.
- a. Biblical

- i. Mt 12:38-40 “38 Then some of the scribes and Pharisees answered, saying, "Teacher, we want to see a sign from You." 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.”
 - ii. If Christ was crucified on daytime Friday, and resurrected during the pre-dawn darkness of Sunday, then that is only 2 daytimes (part of Friday day, all of Saturday day) and 2 night-times (overnight Friday/Saturday, part of overnight Saturday/Sunday). So, by no method of counting can a Friday crucifixion answer this prophecy from Mt 12:40.
- b. Calendric
- i. The vast majority of recent scholarship embraces AD30 as the year of Christ’s crucifixion. Both Biblical and historical evidence has led to this conclusion.
 - 1. Kayser “Once computer calculations of lunar cycles began to happen in 1973 and following, everyone knew that Edersheim had miscalculated, and AD 34 would simply not work for the date of Christ’s death. There are a lot of other problems with an AD 33 or 34 date too, so that most scholars have been absolutely convinced that Jesus died in AD 30, no matter what problems that may pose. And I too hold to a AD 30 date. I think that is a pretty solid date.”
 - ii. If Christ was crucified on Friday afternoon AD30, that would be Nisan 15 on the Jewish calendar. (Nisan 15 is always a Holy Convocation Sabbath Day as defined by Scripture. Nisan 15 is always the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, and Nisan 21 is always the seventh and last day of Unleavened Bread.) So, that would mean Christ was crucified on a Jewish Sabbath. Yet, as we saw above, it is beyond dispute that the Scripture teaches Jesus was NOT crucified on a Sabbath Day, but rather on a Preparation Day.
 - 1. Kayser “One of the problems is that Nisan 15, the day that they are now saying he was crucified on, was a high Sabbath – one of the most important Sabbaths in the year. The Pharisees would not be out there crucifying Him on a Sabbath. Turn with me to John 19. In verse 31 it says, “Therefore, because it was the Preparation Day, that the bodies should not remain on the cross on the Sabbath (for that Sabbath was a high day) [He’s explaining that this was not your usual weekly Sabbath; this was a festival sabbath...] the Jews asked Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away.” The key thing to note is that these legalistic Jews didn’t want these three victims on their crosses during the Sabbath. And yet the Friday theory advocates

who have been forced to an AD 30 crucifixion date would have us believe that those Jews were talking about not violating the weekly Sabbath, but that they had no problem with violating the Passover Sabbath. That's not credible. A Sabbath was a Sabbath; you just didn't do the kind of things that they were doing to Jesus on any Sabbath."

V. Why a Thursday crucifixion is the best Biblical option.

a. Mt12:40 fulfilled

- i. If Jesus was crucified during the daylight hours of Thursday, then Mt 12:40 is fulfilled. We have three daytimes (part of Thursday daytime, all of Friday daytime, all of Saturday daytime) and three night-times (all of overnight Thursday/Friday, all of overnight Friday/Saturday, and part of overnight Saturday/Sunday)

b. John 19

- i. V14,15 "Now it was the Preparation Day of the Passover, and about the sixth hour. And he said to the Jews, "Behold your King!" 15 But they cried out, "Away with Him, away with Him! Crucify Him!" Pilate said to them, "Shall I crucify your King?" The chief priests answered, "We have no king but Caesar!" 16 Then he delivered Him to them to be crucified. So they took Jesus and led Him away."
- ii. V31 "31 Therefore, because it was the Preparation Day, that the bodies should not remain on the cross on the Sabbath (for that Sabbath was a high day), the Jews asked Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away."
- iii. V41,42 "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."
 1. Jesus was crucified during the daylight hours of the Preparation Day of the Passover, which would always be Nisan 14 on the Jewish calendar. Jesus was crucified the day before the first day of Unleavened Bread. The first day of Unleavened Bread is always Nisan 15, and always begins at sundown. So, here in John 19, Jesus is said to be crucified during the daylight hours of Nisan 14, approaching the beginning of the High Sabbath of Nisan 15 at sunset.
- iv. In AD30, Nisan 14 began at sunset on Wednesday, and Nisan 15 began at sunset on Thursday. So, if the modern scholarship regarding AD30 is correct, Jesus was crucified during the daylight hours of Thursday, Nisan 14. The Passover lambs were to be slain during the daylight hours of Nisan 14. So, Christ would have been sacrificed during the same hours all the Passover lambs were scheduled for slaughter. The Passover meal with the fire-roasted lambs was always eaten during the night-time hours of Nisan 15, which would have been Thursday evening in AD30.

- c. So, what is happening in Luke 22:7-16? “7 Then came the Day of Unleavened Bread, when the Passover must be killed. 8 And He sent Peter and John, saying, "Go and prepare the Passover for us, that we may eat." 9 So they said to Him, "Where do You want us to prepare?" 10 And He said to them, "Behold, when you have entered the city, a man will meet you carrying a pitcher of water; follow him into the house which he enters. 11 Then you shall say to the master of the house, 'The Teacher says to you, "Where is the guest room where I may eat the Passover with My disciples?" ' 12 Then he will show you a large, furnished upper room; there make ready." 13 So they went and found it just as He had said to them, and they prepared the Passover. 14 When the hour had come, He sat down, and the twelve apostles with Him. 15 Then He said to them, "With fervent desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer; 16 for I say to you, I will no longer eat of it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God."
 - i. At a glance, this text appears to teach that Jesus ate the Passover lamb meal as His Last Supper. But, we’ve already shown that the Passover lambs were yet to be slain that year. This truth matches with the fact that no meat is mentioned in this meal. But, in what fashion is this meal a Passover meal?
 - d. Exodus 12:18 “So you shall observe the Feast of Unleavened Bread, for on this same day I will have brought your armies out of the land of Egypt. Therefore you shall observe this day throughout your generations as an everlasting ordinance. 18 In the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month at evening, you shall eat unleavened bread, until the twenty-first day of the month at evening. 19 For seven days no leaven shall be found in your houses, since whoever eats what is leavened, that same person shall be cut off from the congregation of Israel, whether he is a stranger or a native of the land. 20 You shall eat nothing leavened; in all your dwellings you shall eat unleavened bread.' ”
 - i. So, at the very beginning of Nisan 14, during the evening, a meal of unleavened bread was to be eaten. Note this is the evening before the lambs were slain during the daylight hours of Nisan 14. This would be Wednesday evening in AD30.
 - ii. Also, note they were to eat unleavened bread for 8 nights in a row. (14th to 21st inclusively)
 - iii. Note they were to have no leaven in their homes for 7 days, from sunset Nisan 15 to sunset Nisan 21. This means it was acceptable to have leaven in the home on Nisan 14, but it was a huge day of preparation to make sure not a bit of leaven was in the home by sunset.
- VI. Christ our Passover Lamb and Holy Week, so glorious
- a. Let’s now step back and take a look at the full Passover text in Exodus 12: “1 Now the Lord spoke to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, saying, 2 "This month shall be your beginning of months; it shall be the first month of the year to you. 3 Speak to all the congregation of Israel, saying: 'On the tenth day of this month every man shall take for himself a lamb, according to the house of his father, a lamb for a household. 4 And if the household is too small for the lamb,

let him and his neighbor next to his house take it according to the number of the persons; according to each man's need you shall make your count for the lamb. 5 Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year. You may take it from the sheep or from the goats. 6 Now you shall keep it until the fourteenth day of the same month. Then the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it at twilight. 7 And they shall take some of the blood and put it on the two doorposts and on the lintel of the houses where they eat it. 8 Then they shall eat the flesh on that night; roasted in fire, with unleavened bread and with bitter herbs they shall eat it. 9 Do not eat it raw, nor boiled at all with water, but roasted in fire--its head with its legs and its entrails. 10 You shall let none of it remain until morning, and what remains of it until morning you shall burn with fire. 11 And thus you shall eat it: with a belt on your waist, your sandals on your feet, and your staff in your hand. So you shall eat it in haste. It is the Lord's Passover. 12 For I will pass through the land of Egypt on that night, and will strike all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment: I am the Lord. 13 Now the blood shall be a sign for you on the houses where you are. And when I see the blood, I will pass over you; and the plague shall not be on you to destroy you when I strike the land of Egypt. 14 So this day shall be to you a memorial; and you shall keep it as a feast to the Lord throughout your generations. You shall keep it as a feast by an everlasting ordinance. 15 Seven days you shall eat unleavened bread. On the first day you shall remove leaven from your houses. For whoever eats leavened bread from the first day until the seventh day, that person shall be cut off from Israel. 16 On the first day there shall be a holy convocation, and on the seventh day there shall be a holy convocation for you. No manner of work shall be done on them; but that which everyone must eat--that only may be prepared by you. 17 So you shall observe the Feast of Unleavened Bread, for on this same day I will have brought your armies out of the land of Egypt. Therefore you shall observe this day throughout your generations as an everlasting ordinance. 18 In the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month at evening, you shall eat unleavened bread, until the twenty-first day of the month at evening. 19 For seven days no leaven shall be found in your houses, since whoever eats what is leavened, that same person shall be cut off from the congregation of Israel, whether he is a stranger or a native of the land. 20 You shall eat nothing leavened; in all your dwellings you shall eat unleavened bread.' ""

b. The triumphal entry

i. John 12:1 "Then, six days before the Passover, Jesus came to Bethany, where Lazarus was who had been dead, whom He had raised from the dead."

1. By the AD30 calendar, using this time clue from John, and looking at other events in John before the John 12 triumphal entry, we can count the days back from Passover and know that Jesus would have entered Jerusalem during the daylight hours of Sunday, Nisan 10. Remember from Exodus 12:3 that this is the same day

the spotless lambs were selected and inspected for the next 4 days before sacrifice.

- c. Christ anointed on Nisan 10, the day the lambs were chosen out
 - i. John 12:3-8 "Then Mary took a pound of very costly oil of spikenard, anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped His feet with her hair. And the house was filled with the fragrance of the oil. 4 Then one of His disciples, Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, who would betray Him, said, 5 "Why was this fragrant oil not sold for three hundred denarii and given to the poor?" 6 This he said, not that he cared for the poor, but because he was a thief, and had the money box; and he used to take what was put in it. 7 But Jesus said, "Let her alone; she has kept this for the day of My burial. 8 For the poor you have with you always, but Me you do not have always."
- d. Christ walks into Jerusalem the same day the priestly shepherd led in hundreds of thousands of lambs to the Temple for inspection prior to slaughter.
 - i. Kayser "Then there is the triumphal entry on Nisan 10. Why does Jesus walk to the temple? That was the day in which the lambs were herded to the temple. Josephus says that there were over 250,000 lambs led to the temple – crowding the streets as Jesus walked in the midst of those lambs toward the priests who would examine the lambs. And interestingly, far from finding blemish in Jesus, Jesus finds blemish in them and cleanses them out of His temple. No longer will Jesus allow these priests to legitimately perform their ceremonies. He is the last Lamb. But anyway, when you picture the Lamb of God walking in the midst of those 250,000 lambs, it gives added meaning to the depth of emotion in Christ's words when he talks about his impending death in John 12 while walking there. This was all very self-conscious. He was fulfilling prophecy in perfect synchronization with the festival rituals."
 - 1. Jn 12: 23-25 "But Jesus answered them, saying, "The hour has come that the Son of Man should be glorified. 24 Most assuredly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it produces much grain. 25 He who loves his life will lose it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life."
- e. Christ is before the Jewish and Roman leaders and the people 4 days before His sacrifice. He is found perfect, without blemish, no fault, even at His trial.
 - i. Kayser "Those lambs had to be seen and examined every day to make sure that no blemishes occurred. And of course, every day ...is accounted for on a Thursday interpretation. Jesus was seen, He was examined, and though He was accused, they could find no wrong in Him. In contrast, there is one missing day and some people say two missing days on the Friday interpretation, but this was to be a public display to all that the lambs were without blemish. Christ was on public display as the final Lamb without blemish every day."
- f. Christ is sacrificed and dies during the same hours as the Passover lambs

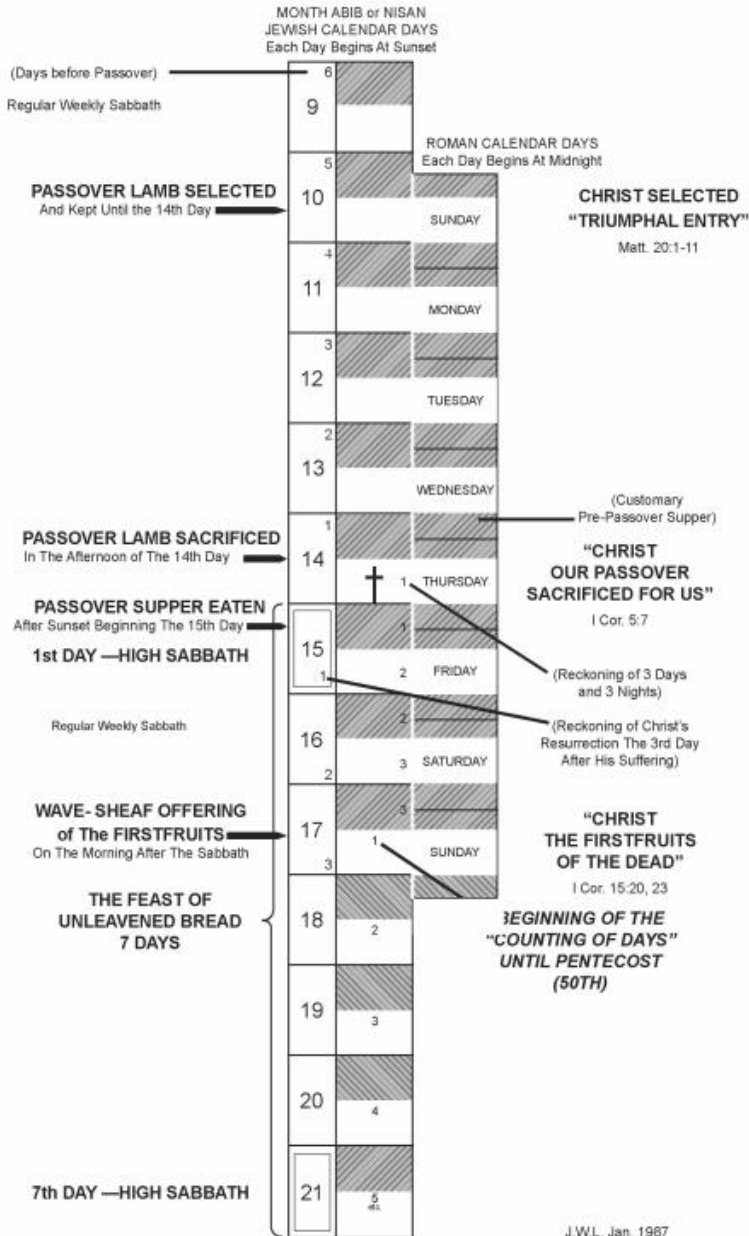
- i. Kayser “Those were the precise hours when preparations would have been made in the temple between 12:00 and 3:00 o'clock so that they would be ready to efficiently sacrifice the over 250,000 lambs that would have had to be slain between three o'clock and five o'clock. And they had to end at five to give enough time to go to their homes and not break the Sabbath which started at 6 pm. Now that's a lot of lambs to get prepared from noon to three and to be slain from three to five. And Josephus indicates that on a typical Passover, almost three million people traveled to Jerusalem from around the world.⁹ Of course, not all of them would have to be present at the temple. Since ten people could eat a lamb, Josephus said that there were usually 250,000 men who would be waiting for a lamb at the temple standing in line down the streets leading up to the temple. God wants to make sure that there is a spectacle that the nation of Israel will not be able to deny.”
- g. Christ dies and the darkness ends. What would all those men at the temple have seen and experienced?
 - i. Kayser “And then when they are relieved to finally have the power turned back on at 3pm, here's what they would have witnessed (putting all the different sources together – which Ernest Martin does a nice job of). According to Josephus, a Roman historian, and the Talmud, they would have seen the outside doors open up on their own, they would have heard a loud voice saying, “We are leaving this place,” (that would be freaky – but that was the glory cloud leaving), they would have then felt an earthquake, they would have seen a several ton lintel holding up the outer curtain fall to the ground (the outer curtain going down with it), then they would have seen the inner curtain being torn from top to bottom. It was obviously God who was ripping that curtain from top to bottom. That was the moment of Christ's death, and it was also supposed to be the moment in which lambs would have been slain. But panic ensued, and they could not do what they were scheduled to do. God did not want any competition with His final Lamb. (All of this symbolism is totally messed up on a Friday theory.) Well, what captures the vision of the people the moment the lights are turned back on is the holy of holies. They can see right down the corridor. Their eyes have unwittingly seen what not a one of them ever dreamed as being possible. Thousands of priests witnessed it, and perhaps tens of thousands of Jews would have been perfectly positioned to have seen all the way down into the Holy of holies. What was done was not done in a corner. And the significance of this could not have been lost on the priests. It's no wonder that so many priests became Christians in Acts 6. Christ with one sweep of His hands was wiping away the sacrificial system to anyone who had eyes to see.”
- h. The Feast of Firstfruits fulfilled in Christ
 - i. Kayser “But there was also preparation for the Festival of Firstfruits. Firstfruits was on Sunday, but the preparation for it began the evening

before Jesus was crucified (Wednesday evening). The elders went out and marked the spot that was to be harvested by binding together the standing grain with a rope. That was the night that Jesus was bound by the elders of Israel. Guess where the grain was bound? Outside old Jerusalem over the brook Kidron in the new section of the city. Guess where Jesus was bound? Outside old Jerusalem over the brook Kidron in a Garden called Gethsemane, which would have bordered that field. So the grain was bound on the evening that Jesus was bound. Guess when the grain was cut down? It was the next afternoon just before the Passover Sabbath began, and announcing the start of the Passover Sabbath. And that was when Christ was taken off the cross. It was almost Sabbath which was why they had to find a nearby tomb. Now let me read you part of the description of the Firstfruits harvest given by the Jewish writer, Alfred Edersheim: *“When the time for cutting the sheaf had arrived ... just as the sun went down, three men, each with a sickle and basket, set to work. Clearly to bring out what was distinctive in the ceremony, they first asked of the bystanders three times each of these questions: ‘Has the sun gone down?’ ‘With this sickle?’ ‘Into this basket?’ ‘On this Sabbath? (or first Passover day)’ – and lastly, ‘Shall I reap?’ Having each time been answered in the affirmative, they cut down barley to the amount of one ephah, or about three pecks and three pints of our English measure.”* When you think about these details, again, God’s superintending providence can be clearly seen. It foreshadows the fact that the elders cut off Christ from the land of the living. They agreed to do it on the Passover timing. And they asked the people if they should apply the sickle and the people agreed. Well, what they agreed to on the grain, they also agreed to on Christ. They cried out, “Crucify Him.” The whole people were applying that sickle to Jesus. Edersheim comments on the irony of the moment as the throng carried that basket of grain away at the very time when Nicodemus and Joseph carried the body of Jesus to a nearby tomb. *“... a noisy throng followed delegates from the Sanhedrin outside the city and across the brook Kedron. It was a very different procession, and for a different purpose, from the small band of mourners which, just about the same time, carried the body of the dead Savior from the cross to the rock-hewn tomb wherein no man had yet been laid. While the one turned into ‘the garden,’ perhaps to one side, the other emerged, amidst loud demonstrations, in a field across Kedron, which had been marked out for that purpose. They were to be engaged in a service most important to them. It was probably to this circumstance that Joseph of Arimathea owed their non-interference with his request for the body of Jesus, and Nicodemus and the women, that they could go undisturbed about the last sad offices of loving mourners.”* The heavy basket containing the sheaves of grain was carried to the temple and the grain stayed in the basket for three days and three nights just as Christ was in

the tomb for three days and three nights. Always on the first Sunday after Passover, the grain was taken out of the basket, beaten, ground, and purified. And then it was offered up to the Lord as a wave offering. The grain is a symbol Jesus and of all saints united to Him in His death, burial, and resurrection. And just as the grain was ground together and so united that it could not be separated, we are so united to Jesus that we cannot be separated. Our participation in His resurrection guarantees our own.”

VII. Questions to know, love and obey God

CHRIST'S DEATH AT THE PASSOVER
As It Took Place In A.D. 30 -- A CHRONOLOGY



J.W.L. Jan. 1967

