

## **Excerpts from *the Evidence of the Divine Hand Text***

### **Proving the Inspiration and Inerrancy of the Bible**

Destructive criticism of scholar skeptics on inspiration and inerrancy of scripture has no foundation and should be ignored. We should consider what the Bible itself says on the matter and should investigate the truthfulness of its claims. We'll find that the Bible claims to be inspired of God, as in 2 Peter 1:21 that says, *For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.* And we'll find it's not difficult to prove the truth of this claim. Indeed in some bible passages, we find simplistic technical evidence that the Bible comes from God so that we can speak of a relative ease in illustrating inspiration and inerrancy of scripture and technically proving its authenticity as God's book.

### **The Bible Reveals Modern Science Knowledge Long before Man Had any Science Knowledge**

God's hand in scripture is seen by the presence of modern technology in ancient Bible books written when man had no knowledge of such technology and couldn't have written such books from his own grasp of reality. God was the only one having such knowledge so early in time and the only one who could have provided the text penned by man.

An example of this is seen in Job 26:7, written as early as 2000 B.C, judging by classical scholarship. This verse shows modern technical knowledge in saying of God that He *...hangeth the earth upon nothing.* Earth is part of a universe that hangs upon nothing. Its position in space relative to other bodies is controlled by interactive gravity and relative motion, so it hangs upon nothing. By contrast, mankind so early in history was entirely ignorant of such facts and thought of the earth as a body of great weight that had to be supported on the backs of giant animals or on giant pillars (no one could say what the animals or the pillars rested on). God was the only source of modern-science knowledge in the book of Job so early in history and thus had to be the ultimate author of the text.

Another example of the knowledge of modern technology in ancient bible books is the evidence for the existence of dinosaurs Evolutionists claim that dinosaurs lived and became extinct millions of years before man existed, and they suggest dinosaurs can't be in the Bible that began to be written no more than about 4000 years ago. Of course the term "dinosaur" isn't found in the Bible because this term wasn't coined until the 19<sup>th</sup> century A.D. But Job 40:15-24 speaks of a giant creature called "Behemoth," and the descriptions it gives of behemoth show that this is the same giant dinosaur reptile that has been reconstructed by modern scientists from old bone fossils. The biblical descriptions speak of a creature of enormous size with huge teeth, and a tail like a cedar tree (no creature other than the largest of dinosaurs had a tail like a cedar). The Bible thus speaks with accuracy and authority about dinosaurs as much as 4000 years ago, while modern scientists knew nothing of them until the 19<sup>th</sup> century A.D. Again we see that God provides science accuracy in the scripture, while evolutionists display ignorance of the facts. The Bible is clearly the authoritative expert source for information about dinosaurs, and no evolutionist speculation can compete with the Bible that tells us dinosaurs co-existed with man in early history.

That dinosaurs have existed within our known history is seen by recent finding of soft flexible tissue and blood vessels in fossilized bones of a Tyrannosaurus Rex dinosaur said by evolutionists<sup>3</sup> to be “68 million years old.” Such organic matter decomposes too rapidly during bone fossilization to endure many thousands, let alone many millions, of years of exposure. Decomposition is slowed greatly by burial in flood sediments, but even then, when most contributing factors can be absent, shorter-term decomposition will occur due to unavoidable natural radioactivity. Preservation had to be the result of rapid burial in sediments of a fairly recent flood, perhaps in the Great Flood ~4400 years ago.

### **The Bible Very Accurately Foretells the Distant Future.**

Men are not too good at predicting the future, as seen in the frequently poor efforts of weathermen to predict weather just several days in advance, using the best modern technology. But scripture accurately predicts details of the future many centuries in advance, and God alone has this ability, again revealing His ultimate authorship of scripture. Many Old Testament prophecies were fulfilled in the New Testament era, and those about Messiah are most interesting. A few of these are discussed below, noting the supernatural intervention necessary for their fulfillment.

#### **The birthplace of Christ predicted**

Concerning the birth of Christ in Bethlehem, this location was predicted around 700 years ahead of time in Micah 5:2. This verse says, *But thou Bethlehem Ephrathah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel, whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting.* This ruler having a human birth is said to have everlasting activities without beginning of days and so is revealed as the eternal God in human form. That His birth was in the tiny town of Bethlehem is revealed in the New Testament in Luke 2:1-7, and here we learn that the expectant Mary, great with child, was forced to leave Nazareth and journey to Bethlehem where the birth took place. It is most interesting that the very timely fulfillment of the Micah prophecy was enforced by an idol-worshipping Roman emperor with no interest in Christianity. Caesar Augustus’ very timely edict of taxation imposed on the Roman empire necessitated Joseph and Mary returning to their city of origin and Mary traveling to Bethlehem in time for the birth of Jesus there. God moved a vast empire at His will to fulfill His word of prophecy in an example of supernatural intervention.

#### **The First and Second Advents predicted**

The Bible predicts the far future with detailed accuracy, and this ability rests with God alone, so He is scripture’s ultimate author. Regarding Christ’s First and Second Advents, Numbers 24:17 says, ~1450 years before the First Advent, *there shall come a star out of Jacob, and a sceptre shall rise out of Israel...* The *star* and *sceptre* terms have a dual reference. A sceptre signifies a king, and Christ is the *Morning Star* (Rev.22:16) and the *Day Star* (2 Pet.1:19), so both terms refer to Him. And both refer to the literal Bethlehem star, the sceptre signifying the star’s role in announcing Christ as king. Further, the expressions come out of Jacob and rise out of Israel, land of Jacob’s descendants, relate to the Bethlehem star. In recognition of the fact that Christ came out of, or rose out of,

Jacob's land, the Bethlehem star literally came out of, or rose out of, Jacob's land, fulfilling details of the Numbers prophecy and announcing the Advents of Christ.

The star's nature has been a subject of speculation for centuries. As scripture plainly shows, the notion that it was a natural heavenly body, like an exploding supernova star or a bright comet, is wrong. It appeared to the wise men as they left Herod's court (Mt.2:9, 10) and guided them from Jerusalem to Nazareth until it stood over the house of the Christ child. No natural heavenly body could do such things (Note: Mary and Joseph returned to Nazareth after the birth [Lk.2:39], confounding Herod who knew only of Bethlehem).

The unique star movement is understood if we forget men's ideas and recognize the star as the radiant glory of a band of angels (Heb.1:7). Only a star comprised of angels could lead the wise men from Herod's court and then hover over the Christ Child's house to identify Him to them (Mt.2:9,10). Job 38:7 calls angels stars, saying, *When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy.* The angels are created sons of God, morning stars present at the morning, or dawn, of creation. Matthew calls them a star, their glory giving the appearance of a star in the night sky.

The wise men first saw the star about two years before reaching Herod's court (Mt.2: 16-b), and Luke 2 identifies it at that time as God's glory radiated by angels appearing over Bethlehem to announce Jesus' birth to shepherds. Then, as in the Numbers prophecy, they rose into the night sky out of Bethlehem, and so came out of, and rose out of, Israel into the sky (Lk.2:15 says they went away from the shepherds into heaven, so they rose into the night sky). To wise men far away in the east, the light of angel glory appeared as a star rising out of Israel. The unusual path of travel from earth to heaven, contrary to normal slow apparent motion of stars, told the wise men the prophecy on the true king was fulfilled. The star would seem to reveal contact of heaven with earth, as was the case with Christ come from heaven to earth. The literal star paralleled Christ the divine day star, announcing arrival of deity on earth, the long-awaited Messiah, and its rising to heaven prefigured the return to heaven of the resurrected Christ in the Ascension.

At its first appearance, the star appeared briefly while the wise men were in the east, so contrary to popular belief, it didn't guide them westward. It appeared over Israel, so, being unguided, the men naturally came to the capital, Jerusalem. On their arrival they inquired of the new king's whereabouts, so they weren't guided. Herod asked what time they saw the star (Mt. 2:7), so it appeared at a certain time. They were *from the east* and had *seen his star in the east* (Mt.2:1,2).

As they left Herod and the star appeared again and led them, its unique motion told them that this was the same star. They rejoiced to see it again, knowing now they hadn't traveled so long in vain, and seeing God leading them by the star. Guidance by the star was needed now as they sought the King's location (Herod sent them south to Bethlehem, but the Child was taken north to Nazareth shortly after the birth - Lk.2:3-9). The Child is now about two years old (Mt.2:16-b - in Mt.2:9,11 He's a young child, not a babe, signifying the two-year interval). The star would've been selectively visible to the wise men to exclude others, especially Herod, which is why the star's nature was never established, only the wise men, and possibly the shepherds, ever having seen it.

For any curious about the number of angels in the Bethlehem star, this is seen in Hebrews 1:6 that says...*when he bringeth in the first begotten into the world, he saith,*

*And let all the angels of God worship him.* The day the Father brought Christ to earth was the day angels in the night sky spoke to shepherds. Every holy angel that God created was in that band that praised God in worship of Christ and rose into the night sky to produce a great light of fiery glory seen selectively and briefly by wise men far away in the east. Some angels returned about two years later to guide the wise men.

Israel was troubled at news of Messiah's star (Mt.2:3). Herod, fearing loss of his kingdom, wanted Him dead. Pharisees, scribes and priests feared consequences for their long misuse of God's religion for personal gain and control of the people, and knowing the time of birth, they'd be looking for Him to appear as an adult. The age of John the Baptist was about right, and they sent agents to ask if he were the Messiah (Jn.1:19). When Jesus appeared soon after, doing miracles, drawing great crowds and attacking their religious practice, they wanted Him dead (Mt.21:38 shows they knew He was the Messiah).

As noted, the sceptre in the Numbers prophecy signified a king as ruler, indicating Christ the king would rise out of Israel. But in rising into heaven, the literal star revealed that Christ would return to heaven and not remain on earth as the king at the First Advent. Thus, in its role as signifying a sceptre, the star is indicative of the Second Advent, the time when Christ will rule Israel and all the world in the Millennium, something still in the future at present. And the smiting of Moab and the destruction of children of Sheth (Sheth likely referring to those allied with Moab against Israel) noted in the Numbers prophecy was first fulfilled centuries after the prophecy by David's conquests in his reign. These earlier events serve as a prelude to, a forerunner of, similar future events to be associated with conquests of Christ, the Son of David, in His millennial reign.

***Some Details of the Crucifixion predicted:*** The reader should see in Psalm 22:16 the note about the piercing of Christ's hands and feet over 1000 years before the Crucifixion, a form of punishment applied by the Roman conquerors of Judah several centuries after the writing of Psalm 22. Who but God could have foreseen the Roman conquest of Judah and the cross to come at so early a point in time?

And the reader should consider Isaiah 50:6 written about 700 years prior to the Crucifixion that says, *I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair: I hid not my face from shame and spitting.* This was fulfilled at the Cross by Roman soldiers who had no interest in Christianity, deciding the manner of Jesus' treatment quite apart from any input by the Savior Himself. Some of the fulfillment is recorded in John 19:1,3 and Matthew 27:30.

Then there is the matter of Psalm 69:21 that reveals details of the Roman soldiers' dealings with Jesus in His final hours on the Cross. This Psalm, written about 1000 years before the Crucifixion, reveals gall and vinegar to be offered to the Savior saying, *They gave me also gall for my meat; and in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink.* The fulfillment of this is recorded in Matthew 27:34.

And there is the matter of Judas' betrayal of Christ for 30 pieces of silver, money that he returned to the priests and cast down in the temple, and the priests used it for a potter's field in which to bury strangers (Mt.27:3-6). These details about Judas were predicted over 400 years earlier in Zechariah 11:12,13 which says, *And I said unto them, If ye think good, give me my price; and if not forbear. So they weighed for my price thirty pieces of silver. And the LORD said unto me, Cast it unto the potter: a goodly price that I was*

*prised at of them. And I took the thirty pieces of silver, and cast them to the potter in the house of the Lord.* Here the speaker can only be the preincarnate Christ speaking through the Old Testament prophet. His price of considered worth by His own people, the price of betrayal, was “thirty pieces of silver,” the price for a bond-servant. When Judas repented of the bitterness of his deed, disgusted with himself for selling his soul for money, he cast down the money in *the house of the Lord*, the temple. It’s the Lord Himself who directed the thoughts of Judas over returning the money. And the priests, normally covetous men, were directed by the Lord in their thoughts over the potter’s field as a proper use of blood money. Thus the Lord Himself directed the whole matter, figuratively casting down the pieces of silver in the temple and figuratively casting them to the potter. He rejected the lowly price as Israel’s poor valuation of its own Messiah and properly designated it as an appropriate price for burying strangers. The price was *goodly* in that it motivated the Cross of salvation.

***A Modern-day Prophecy Fulfillment:*** The prophecy of Ezekiel 37:21-26 says...*Thus saith the Lord God; Behold, I will take the children of Israel from among the heathen, whither they be gone, and will gather them on every side, and bring them into their own land: And I will make them one nation in the land upon the mountains of Israel; and one king shall be king to them all: and they shall be no more two nations, neither shall they be divided into two kingdoms any more at all: Neither shall they defile themselves any more with their idols...and David my servant shall be king over them...Moreover I will make a covenant of peace with them; it shall be an everlasting covenant with them...* The prophecy, made after the death of David, was first fulfilled early in a preliminary partial way in the return of Jews to remnant Israel, Judah, after the Babylonian Captivity. Christ the Son of David representing him, and the rightful ruler of Israel, was soon to appear and could have been received by the people as their king, but they crucified Him. Now there is a final latter-day fulfillment of the same prophecy underway that began in 1948 A.D. with the return of Jews from all over the world to the new nation Israel. The Jeremiah prophecy indicates that a resurrected David will one day be restored as king over Israel when Jews are regathered from dispersion in the nations of the world. Other scripture tells us Christ will rule from Jerusalem, so David will be a lesser sub-ruler, and this will be after regathering of the Jews in Israel during the millennial kingdom, a time of great earthly peace. Thus the final fulfillment of the Jeremiah prophecy began in 1948 A.D., over 2500 years after it was written.

***A Human Attempt to Interfere with Prophecy Fulfillment:*** A.T. Pierson <sup>6</sup> recounts the record of an 18<sup>th</sup> century English historian and skeptic, Edward Gibbon, writing about an incident involving Julian the Apostate. Julian was a Roman emperor who ruled in the 4<sup>th</sup> century after Constantine. He had been reared with a degree of Christian influence but turned pagan on becoming emperor. He tried to undo the prophecy of Christ made around 30 A.D. concerning the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple and the dispersion of the Jews that first came to pass through the conquest of the Roman general Titus in 70 A.D. and continued in a second wave in 135 A.D.

In His prophecy, recorded in Luke 21:24, Christ said...*Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.* Such prophecy was to be finalized in end-time events nowhere in sight in the 4<sup>th</sup> century. This indicated the city could not be reclaimed by the Jews and the temple could not be rebuilt until the times of

the Gentiles' domination ended, which was then many centuries in the future. The end of Gentile domination of Jerusalem and rebuilding of the temple still has not occurred as of the early 21<sup>st</sup> century, but the possibility has presented itself ever since the return of the Jews to Palestine as a nation in 1948 A.D. Julian was determined to rebuild the temple and plant a Jewish colony in Jerusalem in the 4<sup>th</sup> century to defeat the prophecy and overthrow faith in Christ, and Gibbon the skeptic recounts how Julian's effort was defeated. Julian had Jewish and Roman backing, and he brought many Jews back to the region to make a new settlement, many of whom contributed financially to the project. As temple restoration work began, Christians, who saw no possibility of near-future fulfillment of the prophecy, anticipated that a natural disaster would interfere, in accord with their faith in Christ. What happened, as confirmed by Christians and secular authorities of the time, was that in laying the new temple foundations, an obstacle in the form of fireballs interfered with construction, closing down all effort to restore the temple. A Roman soldier, Ammianus Marcellinus, reported the matter, saying in a letter, "horrible balls of fire, breaking out near the foundations, with frequent and reiterated attacks, rendered the place from time to time inaccessible to these scorched and blasted workmen; and the victorious element, continuing in this manner obstinately and absolutely bent, as it were, to drive them always to a distance, the undertaking was abandoned." Gibbon the skeptic, in reporting this matter, felt it should satisfy Christians with their faith, but he attributed the fireballs to natural pockets of flammable gas trapped in underground spaces at the temple. Whatever the cause, Julian's effort to defeat Christ's prophecy did not succeed, and all who believe in the prophetic Word of God are not surprised.

### **Demonstrating Inerrancy in Passages Attacked by Scholars**

From published opinions of skeptical modern scholars, one can get the impression scripture contains much textual error. The reader is well-advised to ignore such comments, for those scholars ignore God's requirement for both faith and careful study of His Word to get the proper meaning of difficult passages. Many scholars have little or no faith in anything but their own opinions, and they make pronouncements of supposed error on the basis of superficial examination. We've been demonstrating inerrancy in scripture passages previously presented, but now we will examine a few famous ones attacked by critics to show that supposed errors are really just cases requiring a little extra study.

#### **1. Christ's Crucifixion on the 3rd hour or the 6th?**

Scholars say the hour of Christ's Crucifixion in John's Gospel contradicts the other gospel accounts. And they think the gospels show confusion on the timing of Passover in its association with the Crucifixion. But the scholars aren't men of faith and don't discern scriptural subtleties that are evident only to those who trust in God's sovereignty.

##### ***Mark***

15:25 *And it was the third hour, and they crucified him.*

##### ***John***

19:14 *And it was the preparation of the passover, and about the sixth hour: and he saith unto the Jews, Behold your king!*

19:15 *But they cried out, Away with him, away with him, crucify him...*

19:16 *Then delivered he him therefore unto them to be crucified.*

Solar-day hours were reckoned from 6:00 AM, so the 3<sup>rd</sup> hour ended at 9:00 AM, and the 6<sup>th</sup> at 12 noon. The 3<sup>rd</sup> hour is when the Crucifixion began. This is the hour given in Mark's gospel, and the other synoptic gospels support this. Matthew 27:45 and Luke 23:44 tell us the 6<sup>th</sup> hour is when the darkening of the sun occurred, and this was well after the Crucifixion began. And Crucifixion events occurring before the 6<sup>th</sup> hour are noted, such as soldiers offering to Christ vinegar to drink at Luke 23: 36, and the crucified thieves railing on the Lord at Luke 23:39 and Matthew 27:44. Why then does John 19:14 indicate the Crucifixion began around the 6<sup>th</sup> hour? Actually the 6<sup>th</sup> hour figure agrees with the 3<sup>rd</sup> hour one in a unique way. As we'll see, the 6<sup>th</sup> hour figure is a symbolic one with a higher meaning revealing Jesus as God's ultimate Passover lamb.

First we must see what John 19:14 tells us when it says, *And it (Crucifixion day) was the preparation of the passover...* This tells us Crucifixion day was a Jewish preparation day when the sacrificial lamb for Passover is slain, which is the day before the Passover day. And Luke 23:54, Mark 15:42 and Matthew 27:62 all likewise tell us the day of Crucifixion was the Passover preparation day. Thus all four gospels show us Christ was crucified on a Passover preparation day, which was the day the sacrificial lamb was normally killed. In this Christ replaced and superseded the normal passover lamb sacrifice and became the ultimate sacrifice to fully establish the New Testament order

But He also had to observe a prior Passover to identify Himself with Passover and establish a basis for superseding the old sacrifice. He did this in an observance with His disciples the day before the Crucifixion. This was the last valid old Passover, being followed shortly by the first New Testament Passover observance superseding the old. Successive old and new Passovers tie Christ to both, designating Him as the ultimate Passover (1 Cor.5:7). The fact of two old Passover observances and the cause of this unusual circumstance must now be established.

The gospels reveal two separate old passover supper observances. As noted, all four gospels tell us Christ was crucified on the day before a Passover supper day, and Matthew 26:17-29, Luke 22:7-20 and Mark 14:12-25 speak of another passover supper Christ partook of with his disciples on the day before the Crucifixion. This latter was a supper with His disciples on a first day of unleavened bread. A first day of unleavened bread is the first day of Passover week, and it begins in the evening after a lamb-slaying preparation time in the preceding daylight hours. The day continues until evening of the next day, so Christ observed the first Passover day supper with His disciples and was crucified the following morning near 9:00 AM on the same Passover day. Thus a latter part of the first Passover day was Crucifixion Day and was also lamb- slaying preparation day for a second Passover day about to begin that evening (Jn.19:31), tying Christ and his Cross to both passover observances. In His prior identification with old Passover and His Crucifixion on the preparation day for the second Passover day, He became the superseding ultimate Passover. His body was removed from the cross about the ninth hour (~3:00 PM) toward the end of the first Passover day (Mk.15:34-37) so it wouldn't remain there at the start of the second one.

John's gospel, like the synoptics, speaks of both old Passover suppers, but in subtle fashion. John 13:2 notes a supper not specifically called passover supper. But it is the first Passover supper, for the next chronological event, after an extended discourse by Christ to his disciples (Jn.14-17), is the betrayal by Judas in the garden (Jn.18) that

directly precedes the Crucifixion and the second Passover day. The subtlety in identifying the first supper is likely for emphasis on the second Passover day with its preparation day as Crucifixion Day; this is the one that directly establishes Jesus as the divine ultimate Passover. The synoptic gospels all emphasize the first supper.

Some scholars think the two passover accounts are discordant narratives of one passover observance, but they miss the logic of events requiring two separate observances, a logic that we will now deduce. As Matthew 27:62, Luke 23:54, Mark 15:42 and John 19:31 all tell us, the next day after Crucifixion day was a Sabbath day. The Saturday after Crucifixion on Friday would've been both a regular Sabbath and also a special Sabbath decreed for the first Passover day. But the special first day of Passover after the Crucifixion was a Sabbath day that began in the evening at sundown at about the 12th hour (~6 PM) on Friday the solar day. This latter is what John 19:31 refers to in speaking of the Sabbath day soon to begin that Friday evening as, *an high day*. This contrasts with the normal Sabbath day that would've begun the following morning at the 1st hour at about 6:00 AM, as we see from Matthew 28:1. This verse says Mary came to the tomb... *in the end of the Sabbath as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week* (Sunday). This plainly tells us normal Sabbath day (Saturday) ended in the morning when Sunday began, so the normal Sabbath day had to begin in the morning just as Sunday did. (note: Berry's Interlinear incorrectly renders *dusk*, when *dawn* is the normal sense of the Greek and the proper one in this context, and even popular modern versions have *dawn*). While the Jews utilized a Passover time frame with a day beginning in the evening, the gospels commonly utilize the solar time frame, as we see concerning the Crucifixion/Resurrection accounts. Likely, this difference reflects the Jews retaining a classic pass-over time frame in matters of faith, while adjusting daily business to daylight hours to relate to a different Roman time-keeping system.

Thus at the subject Passover time, there would have been two overlapping Sabbath days that produced an extended Sabbath observance beginning on Friday evening and ending on Sunday morning. There is a problem that arises with an extended Sabbath observance beginning on the Friday evening of the Passover preparation day, with regard to Sabbath prohibition of work by the people. The people were required to do work in association with the preparation day (Crucifixion Friday), but that regular solar day included part of the Passover Sabbath-day observance. With the regular Sabbath beginning in the morning, confusion about when to begin Sabbath prohibition of work during Passover could easily have existed at the time of the Crucifixion. Thus at some point in history, perhaps not long before the Crucifixion, the priests could have viewed the preparation day as a problem violating Sabbath work prohibition when the regular Sabbath and Passover Sabbath overlapped.

The logical way to resolve the problem was to institute two separate passover-supper observances, one a day early for the people in general and one on the normal day for the priests. In this fashion the people would avoid any suggestion of Sabbath-day work. Priests and priestly Levites would have no problem observing Passover on the normal first day since they did their work regarding animal sacrifice on the regular Sabbath as part of normal worship procedure. The earlier observance for the people in general would have included a separate first day of unleavened bread and would be the one Christ observed with His disciples the evening before the Crucifixion. Pertinent wording in Matthew 26, Mark 14 and Luke 22 regarding Passover participation deals only with the

people, mainly the disciples, while that of John 18:28 appears to deal only with priests and their priestly associates.

All this accords with the extreme zeal of priests and Pharisees over Sabbath work prohibition so evident at the time of Christ. And the extra step in creating an earlier special Passover for the people would've been favored by the Pharisees who were well known for this sort of thing. Their famous "fence around the law" was an elaborate system of their own rules designed to ensure that the law itself could not be violated.

A dual passover observance was providentially ordained in honor of our Savior, and we reiterate the primary circumstances for emphasis. As noted, He identified with Passover by conducting the last legitimate Old Testament observance with His disciples and ended the old observance forever by superseding and fulfilling it with His own sacrifice on the normal Passover preparation day. His communion supper of bread and wine (unfermented) that followed the regular Old Testament passover meal with His disciples (Lk.22:19-20) would have been the first New Testament Passover observance of His death superseding the old Passover. The two successive suppers tie Christ to the Old and New Passovers to designate Him as the superseding ultimate Passover. Afterward, He was known as the Passover of Christians, as noted in 1 Corinthians 5:7.

A change in normal Passover supper day to make it one for priests fits with teaching of scripture about the exclusive high-priest status of Christ in the New Testament era. In being the preparation-day sacrifice for the priest's Passover, Christ was identified as the ultimate high priest who provided the sacrifice for the priests. In this He assumed their function as mediator and placed them as one with the people in their relationship to God. Previously the high priest alone represented the body of God's people once a year behind the veil of the Holy of Holies in the temple where God the Father could be approached for intervention in the affairs of all His people. And the entire levitical priesthood represented various groups of the people before God. Christ officially ended the entire levitical priesthood when the veil of the Holy of Holies in the temple was rent in two at the point of His death as the sacrificial lamb of all mankind. At this point the way unto God the Father was made accessible to all believers, and the ministry of the levitical high priest as the representative of the entire body of God's people before the Father transferred to Christ. The legitimacy of the entire levitical priesthood ceased at this point since New Testament authorization of individual access to the Father through Christ ended the need for human priestly mediation. In the New Testament era, believers are their own priests in a spiritual sense as seen in Hebrews 13:15-16 and 1 Timothy 2:5. History affirms the end of the levitical priesthood in that, by God's sovereignty, the temple was destroyed in 70 A.D. At that time levitical practice ceased and rabbinical Judaism developing since Babylonian Captivity became the one alternative for Jews who rejected Christ.

Now we can see why John would speak symbolically of the Crucifixion as beginning at the 6th hour. With two consecutive Passover days, the total Passover-day time frame extended from 6 P.M. on Thursday evening to 6 P.M. on Saturday evening and thus was 48 hours long rather than the normal 24 hours. Each hour of the second 24-hour day in this 48-hour period would be assigned twice its regular value to make the ending of the day coincide numerically with that of the 48-hour period. John applies this concept to the

second regular solar day dealt with in the text, Friday (the next day after the first Passover supper on Thursday), doubling a regular solar-day hour to reflect the 48-hour double Passover. Thus he confirms the truth of two consecutive Passover days. He shows the last legitimate old passover sacrifice fulfilled with finality by representing the Crucifixion at the 3<sup>rd</sup> hour of the second preparation day as being at a symbolic 6<sup>th</sup> hour that signifies the 48-hour Passover. John deals with one combined Passover day that must be 48 hours long in order to include both the people and the priests in an observance in which Christ becomes the Passover for them all.

As the disciple closest to Christ's heart, John is chosen to give the most emphatic revelation of Christ as the divine Son of God. A crucial part of his purpose was to show us Christ's role as God's ultimate Passover, so his gospel is where we expect to find the symbolic 6<sup>th</sup>-hour figure. We understand such things if we believe the Word of God and reject scholar skepticism. We either believe God or scholars, for we cannot do both.

## **2. How many days did Jesus lie in the tomb?**

Jesus' Crucifixion early Friday and His Resurrection early Sunday cover part of Friday, all of Saturday and a small part of Sunday. Some say this contradicts scripture that says He was in the grave three days. In Matthew 12:40 Jesus says, *For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.* Some would resolve the "problem" with the notion that Jesus was crucified on Wednesday<sup>10</sup> to justify the idea that He lay in the tomb for three entire days. But a Friday Crucifixion day is essential since Jesus had to be crucified on the preparation day of the Passover Sabbath beginning the evening before the regular Saturday Sabbath. Friday was the necessary day if Jesus were to fulfill His role as the Lamb of God superseding the old Passover, as explained above.

Any thinking about an earlier crucifixion day presumes that the Matthew 12:40 verse speaks of three complete 24-hour periods, or something close to that, when that is not likely the meaning. Among Jews whom Christ spoke to in this Matthew passage, it was commonly understood that the term "a day and a night" referred to the daylight and dark portions of one 24-hour day, and any portion of a day was to be counted as a day with regard to a period of days. Thus a brief daylight portion and the complete dark part of Friday constituted one day and one night, or one day in a period of days during which Jesus lay in the tomb. Of course Saturday was one complete day and night. And the brief dark period on Sunday that Jesus lay in the grave after 6 AM (see Jn.20:1, Mk.16:1,2) constituted a brief early night portion of that day and thus was a night within a day, or a day and a night, in a period of days.\* One cannot ignore even a very brief period in one day when referring to the period of days Jesus lay in the tomb. And another sense in which 3 days and 3 nights were involved is the fact that Jonah's 3 days in the whale's belly and Christ's 3 days in the heart of the earth were days spent in complete darkness and thus were three days of night.

\*Matthew 14:25 speaks of the *fourth watch of the night*, which spans the time from 3:00 AM to 6:00AM, so hours of night were tracked in some fashion, perhaps by a water clock. Thus the indication of Jn.20:1 & Mk.16:1,2 that Jesus lay in the grave a brief dark period after 6AM early Sunday morning is justified technically.

This accords with Luke 24:21 in which the two disciples meet the newly resurrected Jesus without recognizing Him and say...*the chief priests and our rulers delivered him to be condemned to death, and have crucified him. But we trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel: and beside all this, to day is the third day since these things were done.* Deliverance of Christ to Pilate was *done*, or accomplished, early crucifixion morning (Jn.18:28), and He was crucified about 9 AM that morning (Mk.15:25), six hours before He died (Mt.27:46). Luke 24:21 refers to His deliverance to Pilate and His Crucifixion, both being *done* or accomplished by 9 AM on Crucifixion day, so counting of days relating to *the third day* begins at that time. When we speak of a period of days, the initial day in the period is the 1<sup>st</sup> day, as when speaking of Sunday as the 1<sup>st</sup> day of the 7-day period of one week. Thus Sunday as the 3<sup>rd</sup> day in a 3-day period necessarily makes Friday the 1<sup>st</sup> day. And we can't say, "the 1<sup>st</sup> day since these things were done," for the day of the event was the first day, and most of that day occurred after or since these things were done. To ensure clarity of meaning, we say the same day, 2<sup>nd</sup> day since, 3<sup>rd</sup> day since, etc. A Crucifixion beginning Wednesday makes Sunday the 5<sup>th</sup> day *since these things were done*.

John 18:28 and Mark 15:25 reveal a Crucifixion done by the 3<sup>rd</sup> hour, contrary to Wednesday advocates who presume it was done only by the 12<sup>th</sup> hour, or 9 hours later. They neglect the 6 hours required for Jesus to die and then neglect another 3 hours, just to get to the beginning of Thursday in the Passover time frame. Then, instead of starting the count of the 3 days at the 12<sup>th</sup> hour, they neglect another 24 hours before starting in order to try improperly to make Friday the 1<sup>st</sup> day "*since these things were done*" in a passover time frame. This is contrary to English-language usage, so Wednesday advocates can't skip all that time before starting to number the days in a period of days.

Furthermore the passover time frame can't apply to the 3-day period of Luke 24:21. A Wednesday Crucifixion and use of the Passover time frame in which Thursday begins in the evening after Wednesday after-noon would mean the time frame somehow mysteriously changed from the Jewish-passover one on Thursday to a normal solar one on Saturday and Sunday. The synoptic gospels plainly stick to the solar time frame in relating the Crucifixion (Mt.27:45,46 & Mk.15:33,34 & Lk.23:44). And Matthew 28:1 says Mary came to the tomb...*in the end of the Sabbath as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week (Sunday)*, and this is supported by Mark 16:2, Luke 24:1 and John 20:1. The gospels don't apply a Passover time frame in this matter, and in the gospels, Resurrection Sunday and the preceding Saturday, Friday, Thursday and Wednesday all began in the morning near sunrise, not in the evening. Use of a time frame must be consistent if "the third day" is to have any meaning.