



What We Have Forgotten And What We Have Misunderstood!

When you talk about the political church's philosophies on how to pick a "Holy Day," and why this church chose Sunday as their "sabbath," it brings you to a discussion about how they justify choosing the first day of the week (Sunday) to replace the seventh day, as the Sabbath. The bulk of the Sunday argument rests on the idea that Jesus rose from the dead on Sunday. So, they say the first day of the week is the "Lord's Day." However, many have a very wrong perspective on exactly what Jesus raising on the first day means!

Jesus said, as Jonah was in the belly of the whale for three days and three nights, so must He be in the heart of the earth. (Matt. 12:40) Many take this as meaning Jesus literally needed to be in the grave for three days and nights, but that is not what Jesus was telling us. The three days and nights was a process Jesus was to go through for our redemption. It was illustrative of the fact Jesus would step out of His day by day walk with those who followed Him, to accomplish the ultimate work He came to do. This work would take three days and three nights!

As Jonah was in the whale, Jonah was not in control of his circumstances. He was taking a journey which was strictly controlled by the will of God. Jonah was not in normal contact with the rest of the world, because he was in an unusual place - a place which no one would expect to ever see him come back from! So, too, Jesus would cease His normal everyday walk with those who followed Him. He would do this to take a three day journey, totally yielded to the will and plan the Father sent Him to do. Jesus would not only go through a process no one would expect to see Him come back from, but almost all would agree was impossible to return from! This is why the disciples were scared and fearful of those events. They were truly, sheep without a Shepherd, during these three days. Jesus had told them where He was going they could not go; (John 13:36) and even as the sequence starts in the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus finds Himself praying alone, because sleep had overtaken the disciples.

As we look at the sequence, we need to recognize the Jews start their days at sunset. What we would call the evening or night of Thursday, the Jews would have considered the beginning of Friday. Jesus ate what is commonly known among Christians as "The Last Supper," with His disciples on that Thursday evening. It is at this meal - which was actually an early Passover celebration - (Matt. 26:18) that Jesus tries to tell them many things they would not understand until much later. It's at this meal that Jesus washes the disciples feet, which obviously, from Peter's response, was not a common thing Jesus had done many times before. (John 13:5-9) It's at this meal that Jesus tells Judas, "That thou doest, do quickly," and Judas leaves in haste. (John 13:20-31) The events were beginning to unfold, and as they prepare to leave the house they were in, Jesus is asked if the two swords they had with them would be enough; (Luke 22:38) for this was the first time, since the Jewish leadership had fully intended to kill Jesus, that Jesus had stayed in Jerusalem during the nighttime! (John 11:17-57, Luke 21:37)

After the events of this supper, Jesus went out to pray in the Garden of Gethsemane. It's here the disciples really lose contact with Jesus. For they fall asleep, and Jesus cannot even get them to watch with Him for a short period. The disciples are caught

off-guard as Judas comes with the arresting party from the Sanhedrin, but Jesus was not. The arresting group came out with torches, and Jesus makes note that they came after Him as if He were a thief they had to track down in the middle of the night, when they could have taken Him any day in the temple. The fact they came with torches tells us it was after sunset, and coming to arrest Jesus at night, out of the sight of the crowds, was the whole point of taking this opportunity.

After they arrest Jesus, they take him to their judgment hall, and there He is questioned. They bring false witnesses to declare against Him and try to justify their desire to have Jesus executed. This goes on all night, the Gospels tell us. One particular disciple which had the courage to follow Jesus to this "trial," sat outside. He may have followed Jesus, but he did not step forward in Jesus' defense. Even when he was asked by others, outside the court, to admit he had association with Jesus, he told them he did not even know the man. (Luke 22:54-61, Matt. 26:69-75) Jesus would face this trial alone!

This night was the start of Friday for the Jews, and it was the first night of the three day and three night sequence. As the day dawned on this Friday, the circumstances shifted. The religious leaders took Jesus to Pilot and began to plead their case for Jesus to be executed. (Matt. 27, Mark 15, Luke 23, John 18) Pilot tried to put it off, but ultimately, instead of using his power as ruler to release Jesus, as the innocent man Pilot knew Jesus was, Pilot allowed the resources of the Roman government to crucify Jesus!

It would take the rest of Friday's daylight hours for Jesus to be mocked, beaten and crucified on a cross outside the city. The end of the first day of the three day and three night cycle was fast coming to a close. Joseph of Arimathaea begged for the rights to Jesus' body. Pilot was amazed that Jesus was already dead, but gave Joseph the authority to take the body. So Joseph laid Jesus' body in Joseph's own new tomb, because it was near by. (Matt. 27:58-60, Mark 15:43-46, Luke 23:50-53, John 19:38-42) Time was of the essence, they needed to get the body of Christ into the tomb before the sun went down. This was due to the fact the next day was the seventh

day of the week, a Saturday - thus, the Sabbath. It was also the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, which is a holy convocation. This made it a truly, high holy day. (John 19:31-34) With the Sabbath beginning at sundown, there would be no work done after sundown. This fact is also why the women who were going to put spices and perfume on the body of Christ did not come until early Sunday morning. Everyone had to wait for the Sabbath Day to pass. (Luke 23:52-56, Mark 16:1-2)

As the sun set on Friday and the stone had been placed over the tomb's opening, we begin the second night of the three day and three night process. The Jews would eat their Passover meal, which they had been preparing while Jesus (the True Lamb) was dying on the cross just outside the city. The followers of Christ would spend their time weeping and fearful!

The day would break on Saturday morning and there would be nothing but silence for those who could only wait. There could not have been a starker contrast between these two days. Friday was a storm of activity and unfolding events, ending in what Jesus' followers thought was the tragic end of it all! Saturday could not have been more quiet and uneventful for them, as they could do nothing but wait!

The only real activity on Saturday, was the Chief priests and the Pharisees went to Pilot to ask for guards. This was to insure that the followers of Jesus did not simply steal Jesus' body, and say He rose from the dead. This could not have been more fortuitous for these events. There would be no doubt that Jesus' body had not been stolen. Further, the guards would be at the tomb to witness the events of the next morning. (Matt. 27:62-66) There would be witnesses to the emptiness of the tomb among those outside of Jesus' followers! (Matt. 28:11-15)

The third night in the process would begin at sundown on Saturday. This would free the women to go to the tomb, but it just was not practical to go at night. The electric light had not been invented yet, and with guards at the tomb to keep someone from stealing the body, there was no way they were going to get in the tomb; thus, the women would wait for the morning light of the first day of the week (Sun-

day). They would not wait long for the daylight. The book of John tells us Mary Magdalene came, "...when it was yet dark." The problem they would face would be the fact they had no idea who would roll away the stone from the tomb. This point is where people get really confused, and many wrong thoughts go through peoples minds. The Bible tells us, God sent an angel to roll away the stone. (Matt. 28:2) The fear of this heavenly presence turned the guards into the likes of dead men. (Matt. 28:1-7) They were so afraid, they, literally, could not move. What we get wrong about this event is the fact the angel did not roll the stone away so Jesus could get out! The stone was rolled away so the followers of Jesus and anyone who cared to see, could get in. Why? So they could see for themselves that Jesus was no longer in the tomb!

The reality is, we do not know at what point Jesus' body left the tomb. We only know that after the Sabbath had passed and the followers of Jesus resumed activities - such as burial rituals - they came to the knowledge that Christ was gone! In almost every play which portrays the resurrection of Jesus, we see the stone being rolled away and Jesus in great glory coming forth from the tomb. The Bible tells us the stone was rolled away by an angel, but never is there mention of Jesus coming out of that opening! The women were amazed and confused at the fact they did not know where Jesus was. If they had seen Him come out of the tomb, they would have followed Him. Some may argue that Jesus went out before the women were close enough to see Him. However, this is not supported in the story. The stone was rolled away for them, and the angel is there to ask them why they seek the living among the dead. (Matt. 28:1-7, Mark 16:1- 7, Luke 24:4-8) Why would Jesus flee the scene? The answer is, He did not. Jesus was already gone!

Later, on the day of Pentecost, Peter reminds the crowd of the words of King David, concerning this issue. Beginning in verse 25 of Acts chapter 2, Peter says, "For David speaketh concerning him, I foresaw the Lord always before my face, for he is on my right hand, that I should not be moved: Therefore did my heart rejoice, and my tongue was glad; moreover also my flesh shall rest in hope: Because thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer

thine Holy One to see corruption." This is not the only occasion the apostles quote this scripture in their preaching of the gospel, and that is because it is very important we understand, Jesus' body did not need the spices and the oils the women wanted to put on it. Day one was about what man would do. Man had tried, beaten, mocked and crucified the Messiah. Then man laid Jesus' body in a tomb, as is the custom of men; but the tomb was only a cover for Jesus, because death had no hold on Him. Acts 2:23-24, again, Peter's sermon states, "Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain: Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it." Understand that death is not about our soul and mind. The fact humans do not simply die like an animal (which is only flesh) is the reason we need salvation. It's the loss of our physical forms which cause us to be lost into outer-darkness without God's salvation plan! This condition we call death is about our lack of a physical form. When the Bible tells us it was not possible for death to hold Jesus, it is talking about that fact. Jesus' body was not left in the grave to rot and be eaten by insects for a day or two, waiting for the rest of Jesus to return. Jesus left the tomb to accomplish the work He had suffered death to accomplish in the first place. So, again, I emphasize that the stone of that tomb was not rolled away for Jesus to get out; it was rolled away so man could see that Jesus was no longer there! For us, day three of the sequence was a day of revelation, we had to wait until day three, because it was not until then that Jesus was available to reveal Himself once again on this earth.

The stone over the opening into the grave remained a cover for the fact Jesus was not here with us, but had descended victorious to take the keys of death and hell. (Rev. 1:14-18). This also left no doubt of the fact Jesus had faced death. There would be no mystery as to where man had taken the body of Jesus or what had been done to it. Joseph of Arimathaea had placed Jesus' body in the tomb on Friday night, and guards were sent to make sure no one took it out. The stone would remain in place for over twenty-four hours. Neither physicians, nor any physical hand had anything to do with Jesus living

again. Jesus' death was not a sham, it was a fact; but when the stone was moved, everyone would see that Jesus' body was gone. The grave clothes were left as further evidence that Jesus had, in fact, been placed inside the tomb; and this insured the question was not, if Jesus had died, but where had His body been taken? You see, Jesus' followers, at first, also did not understand the tomb was only opened to show them Jesus was no longer in it. So, on that very day, not long after the first people saw that Jesus was not in the tomb, Jesus began to reveal Himself!

The idea that Jesus physically walked out of the tomb as the angel opened it went out into the garden, or simply disappeared when He knew the women were coming down the path, is a truly odd thought in light of the following events of day three. Not long after the opening of the tomb, we clearly see Jesus willing to talk to Mary Magdalene. If Jesus was trying to physically stay out of sight, why would He have approached her? Not only did Jesus speak to her, but even as she initially thought He was the gardener - Jesus gave her the time and opportunity to recognize who He was. However, when she did recognize who He really was, she was told not to touch Him because He had not yet ascended to His Father! (John 20:17) This was to say, Jesus was still in that three day three night process. He had risen from the dead, but He was not back to an everyday walk with them, as yet.

On this last of the three days, Jesus went on to appear to some of the others. Most prominently, to the disciples on the road to Emmaus. However, when these disciples sat down to eat and they finally recognized the man who had made the journey with them, Jesus disappeared out of their sight. It was mealtime, but Jesus, just as the Feast of Firstfruits prescribes, would not eat until the process of presenting Himself to the Father was complete. The men who had seen Jesus, quickly ran back to the others at Jerusalem to tell them what they had seen. Some believed Jesus was alive and some did not. Jesus had not shown Himself to all of them. He did not approach Peter and the other disciple as they ran to the tomb, nor at the tomb. Jesus did not come to the place where the disciples were gathered, the women were sent to tell them; (Matt. 28:1-7, Mark 16:1-7, Luke 24:1-9, John 20:1-10) but when the sun

had set on that third day and the process was completed, Jesus did come to where the disciples were gathered, He did not disappear, nor did He instruct them not to touch Him. (John 20:19-23,) The process was complete as the sun set on that first day of the week, and Jesus was, once again, fully accessible to them!

The reason many people think Jesus had to, literally, be in the tomb for three days and three nights is because we are only thinking about the physical part of Jesus' work, and not the all-around completion He was working for. The events Jesus was going through were really threefold. If you look at the process in its simple light, you see that the first day belonged to the world. This is why, after not taking Jesus day after day in the temple as He walked among them, they were finally able, not only to arrest Jesus, but kill Him on that Friday. The second day Jesus was doing what He described in Luke 14:5-6. We were the ox that had fallen in the ditch, and Jesus went into the ditch of death, hell, and the grave, on the Sabbath Day, to pull us from the mire of sin we had fallen into. God had created the Sabbath but kept it for Himself. Six days are given to us to do with as we please, but the seventh is holy, it belongs to God. On that Sabbath, almost two thousand years ago, Jesus would complete our lives by providing an escape from death!

In defense of those who have trouble only seeing the first day of the week as the day Christ arose and not as part of the three days of the Messiah's work, it should be said that day three is the part of Jesus' work, which for now, we understand the least! (I Cor. 13:12) We think of the idea of "arose" as being arose to this physical world. When, in fact, the third day was not as much about the Messiah's return to this earth, as it was about His return to the Father!

Feast Days

If we would take a look at the feasts God gave to the Jews, through the law of Moses, we would see a clearer picture of what it is we should celebrate and why. The Feast of Trumpets, which comes later in the Jewish year, is the celebration of the return of the Messiah to gather all those who have believed. It's

the celebration of what Paul was speaking of when he said the dead in Christ shall rise first, and we which are alive and remain shall be caught up to meet Him in the air. (I Thess. 4:16-17) However, in our need to understand the three-part process of the Messiah's work the first time He came to earth in the flesh, we need to look at those celebrations which come first on the Jewish calendar. The Passover celebration, coupled with the Feast of Unleavened Bread, coupled with the observance of Firstfruits, gives us that understanding.

Passover is to be held on the fourteenth day of the first month of the Biblical Jewish calendar. (Lev. 23) On this day, the Passover lamb is slain. The Passover meal, which includes the lamb, is eaten that evening; and as the sun sets, it marks the beginning of the fifteenth day of the month. The fifteenth day is the start of the Feast of Unleavened Bread. This feast lasts seven days. The first day of this feast is a Holy Convocation. On this day, there can be no work done, just like on a Sabbath. This means it's not the Sabbath, but it is representative of a Sabbath.

The last day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread is also an Holy Convocation in which no work can be done. The main element of this feast is the fact there can be no leaven in your house, and you can not eat leaven during these seven days. This means the day of Passover is a day of preparing and ensuring the house is clean and free from all leaven. When the sun sets on the fourteenth day, you will be holding the Passover meal. So, all leaven should be gone, and no leaven or anything containing leaven can be eaten until the evening of the twenty-first. This also means the Passover meal contains no leaven.

In the midst of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, comes the Feast of Firstfruits. Firstfruits comes on the sixteenth day of the month, which is the second day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread. On this day, Israel was to bring the first of their harvest to the temple to be presented before the Lord. There was to be no part of the new harvest eaten until the day they brought that first sheaf to the temple on the sixteenth. This day would also be the start of the count for when to hold Pentecost. Which, as many Christians are aware, is the day the Holy Spirit was sent to be our Comforter.

So, starting with Passover, the Jews were to clean their houses, if they had not already done so, and be ready for the start of the first day of Unleavened Bread. The lamb is slain on this fourteenth day, and it is eaten that evening and during that night, which according to God's law is actually the start of the fifteenth day of the month. Exodus 29:34 says, "And if ought of the flesh of the consecrations, or of the bread, remain unto the morning, then thou shalt burn the remainder with fire: it shall not be eaten, because it is holy." This makes it clear, nothing of the lamb or bread is to be left until the morning. If any is left, it should be burned with fire, not as a representing sacrifice, but as a pure means of total disposal. The better solution is to have nothing remaining until morning because it has been consumed by those at the meal. This is why the Jews were instructed to join households together if one household was too small to eat the entire lamb. (Ex. 12:4) The lamb, being gone by the morning, was representative of the silence of that second day, and the fact Jesus was hidden away and unseen on the second day. However, we should note that the unfermented wine of the Passover meal does not have to be disposed of. This is because, unlike Jesus' body which was hidden away in the tomb, the blood of the Messiah would remain on every element it had touched!

The fact they were instructed to eat it in the evening is illustrative of the fact the Messiah's body was sacrificed on the Passover for the sake of doing the work of the next day. This work was to edify and lift us up. On the first Passover, the consumption of the lamb was originally nourishment for the journey Israel would take as they left Egypt. The fact this lamb and the unleavened bread was representative of Jesus' body, is why Jesus said what He said during that last meal He ate with the disciples before His death. Jesus said of the bread, "...this is my body, which is broken for you:"

The lamb and the unleavened bread is representative of Jesus', corruptible, yet uncorrupted form. The fact Jesus lived among us and never sinned, even though he could have, was a victory which was completed with Jesus' death. He had died without being corrupted, and He would rise incorruptible. (I Cor. 15:52-53) So, for the lamb to represent this, it

would need to be consumed completely or put out of sight by consuming it with fire before the morning of the fifteenth. This is why we know the angel did not roll away the stone for Jesus to come out. Just as the lamb would be gone out of the physical control of this world before the morning of the fifteenth, so too, Jesus' body would be gone before the Sabbath's morning. Thus, Sunday is not the day Jesus' body left the tomb, Saturday is!

Now, in respect to what many Christians simply know as "The Last Supper," Jesus had told the disciples to go and prepare the Passover on the thirteenth day of the month. Even though this was the day before Passover, Jesus had told them to prepare the Passover, nonetheless. This meant there was only so much the disciples could do. First, they could find a proper place to have the meal. This would include the need for all leaven to be removed. Jesus told them they would find a place already prepared in this way. (Luke 22:8-13) Then the disciples could get the traditional food elements of the Passover meal together - save one! They could not get the lamb, because the time for its sacrifice had not yet come. The lamb was to be sacrificed in the afternoon of the fourteenth, and the disciples were preparing this meal on the thirteenth. This meant there would be no lamb, but there would be bitter herbs, unleavened bread and unfermented juice - likely grape juice - to drink. It is important we realize Passover involves no leaven, so the juice could not have been alcoholic or fermented in any way, and the bread would have been flat unraised bread with no leaven. Jews call this unleavened bread, Matzah. It's with these elements of Passover that we see Jesus take the bread and tell them it's His body broken for us, and taking the cup, He says, "This is my blood which is shed for you!"

The fact there was not lamb at the table is one of the arguments people use for saying this was, in no way, a Passover meal. However, while there was no lamb meat on the table and the meal was being eaten the evening before the prescribed evening, they did have the Messiah - which all these elements were meant to represent. So, Jesus tells them, "With desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer: For I say unto you, I will not any more eat thereof, until it be fulfilled in the kingdom

of God." Luke 22:15-16 Jesus would not again eat the Passover until He had done the true work the Passover represented.

Jesus is not starting some new tradition called "communion." Jesus is eating the Passover, and it is the Passover He is referring to when He tells His disciples, "...this do in remembrance of me" and "For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come." Every year when they sat down to eat this Passover meal, they would know who these elements represented. They no longer would live in the knowledge that God would provide a lamb but that God had provided a lamb!

So, the Passover is prepared on the fourteenth; the lamb is slain on the fourteenth, and as the sun is setting beginning the fifteenth, the Passover meal is eaten. The preparation for the Passover and its special elements represent the involvement in bringing the Messiah to the cross - Jesus' arrest and trial. All of Jesus' pureness was represented in the removal of leaven from the meal and the household itself. (Ex. 12) This removal of leaven also represented our need to prepare to follow the path Jesus was providing. Jesus' suffering and death was represented in the sacrifice of the lamb; and just as the first Passover, in Jewish history, required the blood of the lamb be placed on the door post of their houses, the Jews told Pilot, in regard to Jesus' crucifixion, "His blood be on us, and on our children." Matthew 27:25

The fifteenth begins the Feast of Unleavened Bread, on the Jewish calendar, which lasts seven days. The first day, (the 15th) is a Holy Convocation which would be a representative Sabbath. All the same principles of the seventh day Sabbath apply to this day, no matter which day of the week it falls on. So, no matter what day of the week Passover came on, the next day, which is the first day of Unleavened Bread, would be a Sabbath, at least, in representation. The last day of this seven day feast (the 21st) is also a representative Sabbath.

In the midst of this feast comes the Feast of Firstfruits. This day is not a representative Sabbath. In this feast, the Jews are to bring a sheaf of the first of their harvest, (this would be of their barley har-

vest because barley matures faster than the other grains) and have the priest wave it before the Lord. (Lev. 23:10-14) This feast was to be held on the sixteenth of the first month, and because of the representative Sabbath of the first day of Unleavened Bread, this day would always be the day after a Sabbath; thus, it represents a fresh start in our relationship with God.

Now, this is why the Feast of Unleavened Bread lasts seven days. It's not the last day of the feast which represents a seventh day Sabbath, it's the first day. This idea is made clearer by backing up and understanding that Jesus' triumphal entrance into Jerusalem was on the tenth day of the first month. For ease of understanding, I will use common Roman/Christian calendar names for the days of the week. The tenth day of the month would represent a Monday. On this day, Jesus would enter Jerusalem and go straight to the temple. In Exodus, Moses was instructed to tell Israel that the Passover lamb was to be brought in, to live with the family, on the tenth day of the first month. (Ex. 12:3) This means the ninth day, which in the sequence would represent a Sunday, would actually start the sequence by being a day of preparing the house for this new guest.

The eleventh day of the month would represent a Tuesday, the twelfth a Wednesday, and the thirteenth a Thursday. Thus, the fourteenth day, which is the Passover, would represent a Friday, and the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, the fifteenth represents a Saturday, which is the Sabbath!

The second day of the feast coincides with the Feast of Firstfruits, and represents the first day of the week, once again. Six days belong to us, and in the scripture, six is the number of a man, because it's on day six of creation man was created. Man is incomplete without God. So the book of Revelation tells us the number of a man is six hundred sixty and six. This is not really the number six hundred sixty and six, it's the repeating of six without the Sabbath or seven.

Some will tell you, seven is God's perfect number. However, that teaching needs some clarification. Seven is God's number of completion for this creation we live in. I say this creation because we do

not know what else God has made in other places which we do not understand. For example, we know there are angels, but we have no idea whether seven means anything to their personal existence. Thus, seven is God's number of completion for us. Six days belong to us. We can keep repeating the number six, but we will never be complete without God and His Word. We will never be complete without the seventh day - the Sabbath!

If you put all this together, you find that Jesus died on the fourteenth day of the first month. This would have been the day of Passover, and the Bible makes it clear it was, in fact, the day of that feast! (John 18:28) Jesus' work was not representative, it was the fulfillment of the representation built into the law. Because that is true, all the days the feast days were representing, would coincide with the actual days of the week on the calendar in that year. So, as the fourteenth represented a Friday and was the Passover, that year the fourteenth actually was a Friday. All this was done to add to the undeniable truth of the events!

Now, because we know the third day of the three day and night process was a Sunday, we know the first day in the process was a Friday. The next day would have been the fifteenth, a Saturday. This was the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, which would have been a Sabbath in representation, no matter what day of the week it landed on. However, the year Jesus died, it would have been a double Sabbath - so to speak - because it also came on the seventh day of the week.

The third day of Jesus' three day process, was the first day of the week - Sunday. "In the end of the sabbath, as it began to dawn, toward the first day of the week, came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the sepulchre." Matthew 28:1 This would have been the sixteenth day of the month, which means it was the day of Firstfruits. Jesus would go before the Father, in heaven, to make a way for us to go as well! In the Feast of Firstfruits, you were to eat nothing of the new crops until you took your offering to the temple and had the priest present it before the Lord. The Lord was to come first in your day! So, too, Jesus would not let Mary touch Him before He had "ascended" to His Father. Jesus said to Mary,

“Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God.” Thus, Jesus was, that Firstfruit, being presented before God the Father. Jesus’ sinlessness would mean he would be accepted before the Father as tried and true! This would give Jesus the power to bring us all home with Him. We could not go where Jesus went, until He had gone there first. For only He had the ability, but now we too can boldly approach the throne of God. (Heb. 4:15-16) If we die with Christ, we must believe we will also rise with Him! (Rom. 6:3-9)

So, Jesus arose on the first day of the week, the day of Firstfruits - which, as the law dictates, was always representative of the first day. However, this is the second day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread. Unleavened Bread only last seven days total. The first day is a Sabbath, and the last day is a Sabbath. Remember what I said earlier about man’s number being six, and man would never be complete without God. Well, that is why Unleavened Bread only lasts seven days instead of eight.

The first day of Unleavened Bread is representative of a seventh day Sabbath, but leaven would not be allowed the entire seven days. The second day of the feast would represent the first day, and a new beginning of man’s days. Jesus would ascend on this day and present Himself to the Father as the firstfruits of many. From this representative first day of men to the end of the Feast of Unleavened Bread is only six, meaning the last day of Unleavened Bread represents day six or a Friday. So why is this last day a representative Sabbath? The answer is simple: Jesus told His disciples in Matthew 16:24- 27, “Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it. For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul? For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works.”

The sixth day is man’s day, and just as Jesus

lived as a man and gave his life on the sixth day, so must we give our lives to the will of God. If we understand what the Sabbath means, we should understand what this sixth day Sabbath in the Feast of Unleavened Bread means. The Messiah has done His work, and it’s our turn to give to God more than just what He has commanded. It is time for us to give Him our lives!

So, Sunday was the third day of the three day and night cycle Jesus told us about. It’s on this third day we see Jesus’ transition back to the Father. Jesus had cried on the cross, “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” Matthew 27:46 Jesus would suffer separation from the Father. The physical form He had been sent to this earth with, was facing death. Jesus would enter that realm which we do not fully understand, where all humans go upon death. Then Jesus would do something no man had ever been able to do, Jesus would break the power of that place and leave. In spite of the death of His physical form - Jesus would return!

The victory over sin would be complete and a new beginning was created. However, it was not Jesus’ intent to simply save Himself, nor was it Jesus’ intent to simply return us to this planet. So, He would present Himself to the Father just as the firstfruits’ sheaf at the temple represented - and Jesus was without sin; so He, through this process, was able to provide for us a new form to replace our corruptible flesh, as well. So, on this third day, just as none of the harvest was to be eaten before that first sheaf was presented at the temple, Jesus would not fully partake in fellowship with those who had followed Him, until the third day was complete. This is why Jesus would be seen on that third day of the process, but not fully, or at least immediately, recognized. He did not want His followers to be scared and worried, so he would take time to speak with some of them and let them know He was victorious over death. However, Jesus had not gained all he wanted for us. This is what Jesus meant when He told Mary, He had not yet “ascended.”

It was the ultimate work of Christ to return us to the Father. That return had to start with Jesus so we would have the availability of a path to follow! That was the work of the third day, and this is the process

we must all go through. We must give this life in order to find eternal life. (Matt. 10:39) We must take up our cross and follow Jesus! (Matt. 16:24) Because Jesus did it, He has provided a way for us all, and this is exactly what Paul was trying to explain to us in I Corinthians 15! Beginning in the thirty-fourth verse, Paul says, "Awake to righteousness, and sin not; for some have not the knowledge of God: I speak this to your shame. But some man will say, How are the dead raised up? and with what body do they come? Thou fool, that which thou sowest is not quickened, except it die: And that which thou sowest, thou sowest not that body that shall be, but bare grain, it may chance of wheat, or of some other grain: But God giveth it a body as it hath pleased him, and to every seed his own body. All flesh is not the same flesh: but there is one kind of flesh of men, another flesh of beasts, another of fishes, and another of birds. There are also celestial bodies, and bodies terrestrial: but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another. There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars: for one star differeth from another star in glory. So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption: It is sown in dishonour; it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power: It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body. And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit. Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual. The first man is of the earth, earthy: the second man is the Lord from heaven. As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy: and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly. And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly. Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption. Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this

mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord."

Sunday (the first day of the week) may have been a very special day for those who had seen Christ. They knew Jesus was alive, but others would have to wait, only having the opportunity to see the tomb was empty. It would not be until the night of the first day - which was actually the beginning of Monday - they would truly get to be back in the arms of their Lord. (John 20:19-20) Jesus had presented Himself as the King of the Jews, on Monday, by entering Jerusalem. By the next Monday, Jesus would be back with the power and authority to be the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords! (Rev. 19:11-16)

One of the disciples, who was not there when Jesus came to them that first night, was a doubter. His name was Thomas, and he said he would not believe until he could touch the nail prints in Jesus' hands and put his hand in the place where the sword had pierced Jesus' side. When Jesus came to Thomas, He told Thomas to do just those things; but it turned out, all Thomas needed was to see Jesus and Thomas was convinced! Jesus told Thomas, "...because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed." John 20:29 There are many centuries which have passed since Christ ascended into heaven - almost two millennia in fact - and none, since the time of the disciples, have believed because they have seen Jesus in the flesh. We know the tomb is empty, but we still await Jesus' return.

Paul tries to explain this to us in the sixth chapter of the book of Romans. Beginning in verse 8, he says, " Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him: Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him. For in that he died, he

died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God.” Jesus has completed His work. Those of us who believe and remain alive are in those last days represented in the Feast of Unleavened Bread. We are all headed for that last day of our lives in this flesh. The last day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread is also a Sabbath, because we must believe that if we will give our lives to God, He has already done the work to save us! Those who died in Christ have entered their Sabbath of rest. This is why Paul tells us in Philippians 1:21, “For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.” So both dead or alive, those in Christ Jesus wait for that last trump when we will enter a true new beginning. “Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.” Revelation 20:6

To recognize the Sabbath is to recognize the last day in the cycle. This would be a day we could commune with God about what we have done, and give God a chance to show us where we have missed the path of righteousness. (Heb. 12:14-17) The Sabbath fits well into living in a place of repentance. We should never believe that the first day of the week could replace the last.

Sunday fits nicely into fleshly man’s philosophy. Sunday is the first day of the week. While we live in this corruptible flesh, the first day is about the future in this corruptible flesh. It’s not about what we have done right or wrong; it’s not about getting the leaven (sin) out of our lives. In the carnal mind, it’s about what we will do and what we will accomplish in this life! Its basis is in the idea that we are good and we will prevail; we don’t need the path Jesus prepared for us, we can do it on our own! For the believer in Christ, the first day is not a day of rest, but a day to get back to the work Jesus has asked us to do. It’s a time to take up our cross in recognition that we strive to ultimately give what we have in this life to God. This is humbling indeed, because even at our best, all we have to offer is a broken life of falling short of the glory of God. (Rom. 3:23) Only through the work of the Messiah can we enter into the rest which the Sabbath provides, and begin a new life before God the Father!

So, just as Jonah was in the belly of the whale for three days and three nights, so Jesus went through a three day process. The first day the world did its worst; and on the third day Christ returned to His Father. The world had awaited its chance to have its day. As Christ told His disciples, it was a necessity for Him to die. (John 12:24) It was after the work of the world, Christ had the opportunity to do His work. After Christ had completed His work, the third day was a foregone conclusion! (Acts 13:28-37) The real victory over death, hell, and the grave, was won on the second day of the process - on the Sabbath! Thus, if any day is the “Lord’s day,” it’s still the seventh day, just as it has been from the beginning!

The preceding article is two segments from Part 3 of the book entitled *A Sabbath By Design*. If you would like to receive a FREE copy of this entire book, please visit www.livingspringsinstitute.org and click on “[Resource Shop](#),” or you may write to us at Living Springs Institute P.O. Box 271, Loveland, CO 80539. Please be sure to give us your name and physical mailing address when you order!

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