

*Quiz*

1. Where was Arimathea probably located in Palestine?
2. Name four things about the character of Joseph of Arimathea which are related to us by the gospel writers.
3. Since Joseph was a member of the Sanhedrin how could he have kept from voting at the sentencing of Jesus?
4. Why was Joseph, formerly a secret disciple of Jesus, now so bold as to ask for His body for burial?
5. What did Nicodemus contribute to the burial?
6. Why would the usual customs of Jewish burial be foregone?
7. What are two important points of emphasis connected with the burial of Jesus?

SPECIAL STUDY NO. THREE  
WAS JESUS CRUCIFIED ON FRIDAY?

by SETH WILSON

When the question, Was Jesus crucified on Friday? is raised, it may be hard for you to find a clear and definite statement about it in the Bible. Good Christians may think He had to be in the tomb longer than the time from Friday afternoon to Sunday morning because of the expression "three days and three nights" in Matthew 12:40.

It doesn't matter too much on what day Jesus was crucified; but it does matter much how people use the Scriptures and how they trouble the church over such questions. Any view that denies that Jesus ate the Passover meal at the regular time is in direct conflict with plain statements of fact in three inspired books of the New Testament. Yet such a view is often taken by people who think that they are upholding the strict accuracy of Jesus' words against centuries of false tradition.

This is merely a question of historic fact, not affecting our obedience to the commands of the Lord, and not essential to our reverent appreciation of Him. It should not be made a "test of fellowship" or source of contention. But as a matter of fact it makes all the better example for a study of how to get the truth of God's Word by considering all the facts and letting the passages which are definite and clear in meaning determine the interpretation of those which are not so sure.

What Does The Bible Say?

This is a Bible study. Get your Bible and read the passages cited. Space will not permit quoting them.

All the Gospels say that Jesus was crucified and buried on the day called the *Preparation*. Read Mark 15:42; Luke 23:54; John 19:14, 31, 42; and Matthew 27:60-62. The word translated *Preparation* was used as a name for the day which we call *Friday* in modern Greek.

John 19:14 says, "It was the preparation of the passover." Some have thought that this means the day on which the Passover lamb was prepared; but it can mean simply "Friday of Passover week." Comparison with all the facts will show that this is what it does mean. Beginning with the Passover sacrifice and supper, seven days of unleavened bread were observed; and the entire week was called the Passover (See Luke 22:1; John 2:23; 18:39). Mark 15:42 explicitly states, "It was the preparation, that is, the day before the sabbath." The same meaning is shown in John 19:31. The regular weekly Sabbath was Saturday.

#### But Which Sabbath?

The first day of unleavened bread might be called a Sabbath, because it was a day of rest according to the law (Leviticus 23:7, 8), and so was the seventh, or last, day. Some suggest that the Sabbath immediately following Jesus' death was not Saturday, but the first day of unleavened bread, which could fall on any day of the week.

In the law (Leviticus 23:4, 6), the seven days of unleavened bread were counted after the Passover meal, beginning Nisan 15. But all leaven was put out on the day the Passover was prepared, Nisan 14; so the day that the lamb was killed came in time to be called the first day of unleavened bread. (See Mark 14:12 and Luke 22:7.)

But if either of these days—the one just preceding the supper, or the one following it—was actually called a Sabbath, still *neither of them could be the Sabbath day that followed the burial of Jesus. For Matthew 26:17-20; Mark 14:12-17 and Luke 22:7-16 all state with absolutely unmistakable clarity that Jesus was alive and eating the Passover supper in the evening following the first day of unleavened bread when the lamb was sacrificed. If the day following the supper was the day of rest (or special Sabbath) it was still not the day after Jesus was buried, because it was the day of crucifixion.*

Therefore, we see that, if there was in that week any day called a Sabbath other than Saturday, it had to be one that was past by the time Jesus was buried, and not the day following His burial. The day of preparation, then, on which He was crucified, could not be any day other than the day before the regular weekly Sabbath which we call Saturday.

One good brother has suggested that the *seventh* day of unleavened bread was the Sabbath which "drew on" as Jesus was buried. That would mean that Jesus was subjected to six or seven days of trials, mockings, and delays between the time He was arrested and the day of crucifixion. The Gospels do not show any intention of indicating that. The trials before the priests and the Sanhedrin were at night and

dawn (Luke 22:66); that before Pilate was early (John 18:28); all happened in quick succession.

Moreover, no account gives any hint of more than one Sabbath between the burial of Christ and His resurrection on the first day of the week. Just turn and read how clearly Friday, Saturday, and Sunday are recorded in Luke 23:54 to 24:1. "And that day was the preparation, and the sabbath drew on. And the women also . . . beheld the sepulchre, and how his body was laid. And they returned, and prepared spices and ointments; and rested the sabbath day according to the commandment. Now upon the first day of the week, very early in the morning, they came unto the sepulchre." The word Sabbath here is singular.

#### Properly Read, John Agrees

John's account agrees completely with these statements. John 13:1 does not say that the last supper was before the Passover, but that Jesus knew before the Passover that He must depart at this time. John 13:29 does not prove that the Passover meal was to come later. The disciples who supposed that Judas was sent to buy something for the feast may have had in mind the seven-day festival. Or if it was possible at that hour to buy provisions they might have been for the meal now beginning. (In John 13:2 the Greek does not say "supper being ended," but "supper being come.")

John 18:28 does not prove that the Pharisees had not eaten the Passover meal, because they called all seven days connected with it "the Passover." Anyway, the Passover meal was eaten at night, and such defilement as they feared in Pilate's hall would end at sunset.

John 19:31 shows plainly that the preparation was the day before the Sabbath. Calling that Sabbath "a high day" does not make it other than a Saturday Sabbath. It only means that it was considered especially sacred because it came in Passover week.

#### "Three Days And Three Nights"

Since the history states so plainly the fact that Jesus was crucified on Friday, it is necessary to take the prophetic figure of speech about the sign of Jonah (Matthew 12:40) as an *inexact* expression intended to agree with the statement which is made a dozen times, that Jesus arose "on the third day." (See Matthew 16:21; 17:23; 20:19; 27:63, 64; Luke 9:22; 18:33; 24:7, 21, 46; Acts 10:40; I Corinthians 15:4; and Mark 9:31; 10:34 in K. J. V.) "After three days" is used in Mark 8:31 (9:31 and 10:34 in A.S.V.) to mean the same as "on the third day." While those do not seem the same to us, it is evident that they did mean the same to the Jews. (See also 2 Chronicles 10:5 and 12;

Esther 4:16 and 5:1; Matthew 27:63, 64.) "Three days and three nights" is just a fuller form for saying "after three days"; and both could mean in popular speech the same as "on the third day." Any expression means just what it is used to mean. The facts of the record show with what meaning the expression was used by Jesus. We must not put into it a meaning that will deny or disregard the facts; but the facts must control our interpretation.

SERMON NO. EIGHTEEN  
BEHOLDING THE CRUCIFIED ONE

Luke 23:33-35a

*Introduction*

I. SPECTACLE OF THE CRUCIFIXION OF CHRIST. After the betrayal and arrest come the trials. He was shamed by His own (high priest). Herod plays with Him like a cat would a mouse. He mocks Him and allows Him to be smitten in the mouth. Then Jesus is returned to Pilate a second time. Pilate has Him scourged with a whip made of leather and bone until His back is a bleeding mass of raw flesh. Pilate wants to release Him. But the Jews cry "Crucify Him, his blood be upon us and upon our children . . ." Release unto us Barabbas the murderer. And, for political reasons, Pilate releases Him to be crucified.

And so the humiliated, tortured, betrayed, exhausted Son of God goes out bearing a 300 pound cross of wood. Through the streets of the city He goes, stumbling, dragging this cross along as the throngs cast stones and spit upon him. Up the long hill of Golgotha. There He is grabbed roughly by the soldiers and laid down upon the cross, BUT HE OFFERS NO RESISTANCE. The steel spikes are brutally driven into the quivering flesh of His hands and then His feet. The excruciating pain is relayed from the nerves to His brain. And what comes from his mouth? Agony and screams? NO! Hate and curses? NO! Wonder of wonders, His lips part to speak a blessing—"Father forgive them, for they know not what they do."

II. "AND THE PEOPLE STOOD BEHOLDING . . ." What did they behold in the crucified One? What did those around the cross see? They saw much the same thing as men and women see in the Crucifixion today. THE CRUCIFIXION WAS NECESSARY. IT WAS IN GOD'S PLAN FOR JESUS CONTINUALLY TAUGHT "I MUST DIE . . ." IT WAS A SPECTACLE OF LOVE FOR MAN TO BEHOLD. IT WAS A PLANNED SPECTACLE FOR IT WAS PROPHECIED. Lk. 2.

*Discussion*

I. THE ROMANS. They beheld Him through eyes of *Indifference*.