

**Alêtheia**  
CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP  
*November 19, 2023*  
*“What is Truth?”*

*SS 9:30, Service at 10:30 with King’s Kids.*

*News:*

★ **Wednesday Evenings at Alêtheia 6:30-8:00** ★

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**JOHN 19:31-37** ~ 31Now then, since it was the day of preparation, to prevent the bodies from remaining on the cross on the Sabbath (for that Sabbath was a high day), the Jews requested of Pilate that their legs be broken, and the bodies be taken away. 32So the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first man, and of the other who was crucified with Him; 33but after they came to Jesus, when they saw that He was already dead, they did not break His legs. 34Yet one of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, and immediately blood and water came out. 35And he who has seen has testified, and his testimony is true; and he knows that he is telling the truth, so that you also may believe. 36For these things took place so that the Scripture would be fulfilled: “Not a bone of Him shall be broken.” 37And again another Scripture says, “They will look at Him whom they pierced.”

A “high day” Sabbath was when...

Jesus was tried, convicted, executed, and hastily buried on...

The irony of the Jewish leaders asking Pilate to remove the bodies...

When they came to Jesus, He was already...

No bone of the lamb could be... (Exodus 12:46, Numbers 9:12, Psalm 34:20 & Zechariah 9-14).

Jew or Gentile, past, present, or future, Jesus the only Lord and Savior given by God (Romans 11:25–27, Acts 4:12, etc.).

*Fill out the other side, detach this part of the page, and place it in the offering plate or the prayer/suggestion box in the lobby or with an Elder or Deacon of the church.*

*God Bless You!*

Blood and water... Baptism and Communion?

The Blood covers sin and the Water gives eternal Life.

**JOHN 19:38–42**, 38Now after these things Joseph of Arimathea, being a disciple of Jesus, but a secret one for fear of the Jews, requested of Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus; and Pilate granted permission. So he came and took away His body. 39Nicodemus, who had first come to Him by night, also came, bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about a hundred litras weight. 40So they took the body of Jesus and bound it in linen wrappings with the spices, as is the burial custom of the Jews. 41Now in the place where He was crucified there was a garden, and in the garden was a new tomb in which no one had yet been laid. 42Therefore because of the Jewish day of preparation, since the tomb was nearby, they laid Jesus there.

Going back to John 19:31...

People who have preconceived ideas, doctrinal positions, or systematic theological schemes either see what they want to see (confirmation bias), or they intentionally twist Scripture to fit their bias (fearful dogmatist).

We have people who identify as Christians who observe the Saturday Sabbath.

Matthew 12:40 and the “Sign of Jonah.” “

John who never uses words without purpose spends 22 of them to make it abundantly clear that Jesus was murdered the day before the Passover and that the Passover that year fell on the Sabbath.

**JOHN 20:1–8**, 1Now on the first day of the week Mary Magdalene came early to the tomb, while it was still dark, and saw the stone already removed from the tomb. 2So she ran and came to Simon Peter and to the other disciple whom Jesus loved, and said to them, “They have taken the Lord from the tomb, and we do not know where they have put Him.” 3So Peter and the other disciple left, and they were going to the tomb. 4The two were running together; and the other disciple ran ahead, faster than Peter, and came to the tomb first; 5and he stooped to look in, and saw the linen wrappings lying there; however he did not go in. 6So Simon Peter also came, following him, and he entered the tomb; and he looked at the linen wrappings lying there, 7and the face-cloth which had been on His head, not lying with the linen wrappings but folded up in a place by itself. 8So the other disciple who had first come to the tomb also entered then, and he saw and believed.

Of course, the “First day of the week” is...

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Write a brief note – detach and place in the offering, or the prayer box, or give it to a Deacon or Elder.

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Name \_\_\_\_\_ Address \_\_\_\_\_  
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# lêtheia

CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP




 **lêtheia**  
CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP

the gospel of  
**JOHN**

ΕΝΑΡΧΗ Η ΝΟΛΟΓΟΣ ΚΑΙ Ο ΛΟΓΟΣ ΗΝ ΠΡΟΣ ΤΟΝ  
 ΘΝ ΚΑΙ ΤΕ ΤΗΝ ΟΛΟΓΟΣ ΕΣΥ ΤΟΣ ΗΝ ΕΝΑΡΧΗ ΠΡΟΣ  
 ΤΟΝ ΘΝ ΠΑΝΤΑ ΔΙΑ ΤΟΥ ΕΓΕΝΕΤΟ ΚΑΙ ΧΩΡΙΣ



We finished last time with Jesus saying, “It is finished.” We continue... John 19:31–37, 31 Now then, since it was the day of preparation, to prevent the bodies from remaining on the cross on the Sabbath (for that Sabbath was a high day), the Jews requested of Pilate that their legs be broken, and the bodies be taken away. 32 So the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first man, and of the other who was crucified with Him; 33 but after they came to Jesus, when they saw that He was already dead, they did not break His legs. 34 Yet one of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, and immediately blood and water came out. 35 And he who has seen has testified, and his testimony is true; and he knows that he is telling the truth, so that you

also may believe. 36For these things took place so that the Scripture would be fulfilled: “Not a bone of Him shall be broken.” 37And again another Scripture says, “They will look at Him whom they pierced.”



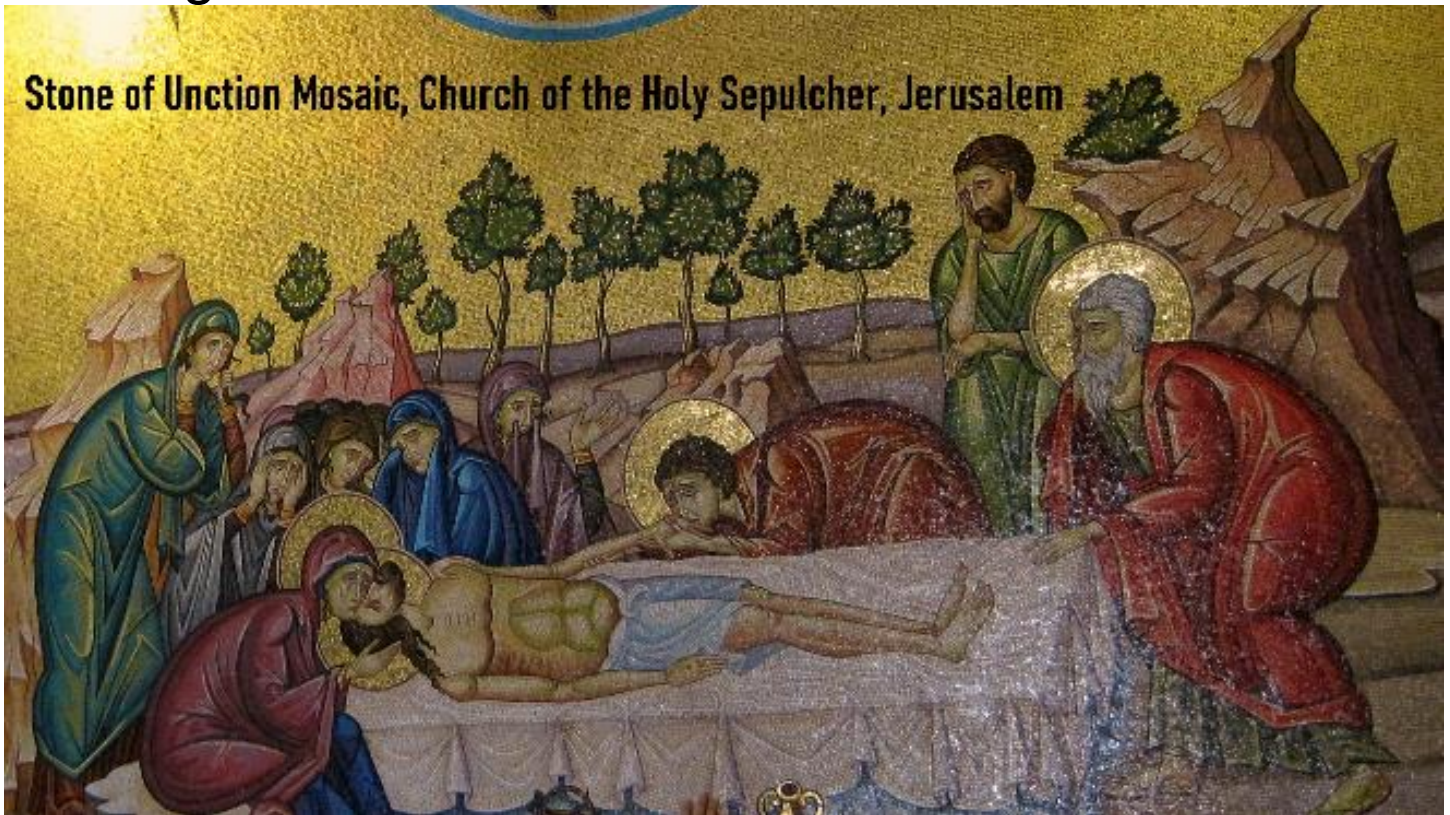
A “high day” Sabbath was when a Holy Festival Day, like Shavuot (that we call Pentecost) or Sukkot (that we call the Festival of Tents) happened to fall on a Saturday – a weekly Sabbath, thus making it a doubly holy day – a “High Day Sabbath.” It would be like Christmas falling on Sunday for us. We make every Easter a Sunday and so each year it is an especially glorious Sunday.



In this case, John was extremely specific that Jesus died on the day before Passover – the Day of Preparation for Passover when all the Passover Lambs were sacrificed and that at roughly 6 pm that day it became Passover Day by Jewish reckoning. Remember their calendar days began in the evening near sunset where ours begin in the middle of the night at 12 am.

Further, John made it perfectly clear that this particular Passover coincided with the weekly Sabbath. He used 11 Greek words to convey that fact. He did not write that it was a day of rest because it was Passover, but that it was both Passover and the natural weekly day of

rest. I'll talk about an aspect of this issue later on this morning.



Jesus was tried, convicted, executed, and hastily buried on the day prior, meaning Friday before 6 pm. We have called it “Good Friday” in English for over 800 years in acknowledgment of what Jesus accomplished on our behalf. Prior to that the Christian community has celebrated Friday since the beginning – “Μεγάλη Παρασκευή” in Greek usually with fasting and church services, like vespers, starting at 3 pm.

By the time He was laid to rest the doubly holy day was upon them and no work could be done for the next 24 hours.

Romans normally left the crucified to die slowly, sometimes taking days, and then to deteriorate on their cross as a public reminder, but in this case, due to Jewish religious sentiments they modified their practice to mollify the people.



Remember the entire goal of Roman oppression was to keep the masses under control. Apply too much oppression, especially when unnecessary, and you might end up pushing the people far enough that they would negatively react. Any civil disobedience cost Rome time, effort, and money to quell. Far better to keep the peace than to have to regain the peace.



One scholar pointed out the incredible irony of the Jewish leaders asking Pilate to remove the bodies in order to avoid becoming defiled by them when it was their actions putting Jesus on a Cross that was the true source of their defilement. Further, that their only hope of lasting purification from defilement was out there hanging on His Cross.

Pilate agreed to a quick end to the criminals so that their bodies might be removed from public display during the Passover celebration. Notice that even then the Romans didn't make death instant. The technique was to break the legs of the hanged person – an excruciating abuse in itself – and then let them slowly asphyxiate. Their own body weight prevented them from filling their lungs with enough oxygen – their breaths were less and less productive until they died from suffocation.

When they came to Jesus, He was already dead. Trust me when I tell you that Roman soldiers knew death. “There’s a big difference between mostly dead and all dead. Mostly dead is slightly alive,” and the soldiers knew the difference. The Holy Word of God tells us plainly in verse 30 that Jesus died. He “gave up His spirit,” which Mark and Luke clarify as meaning “He

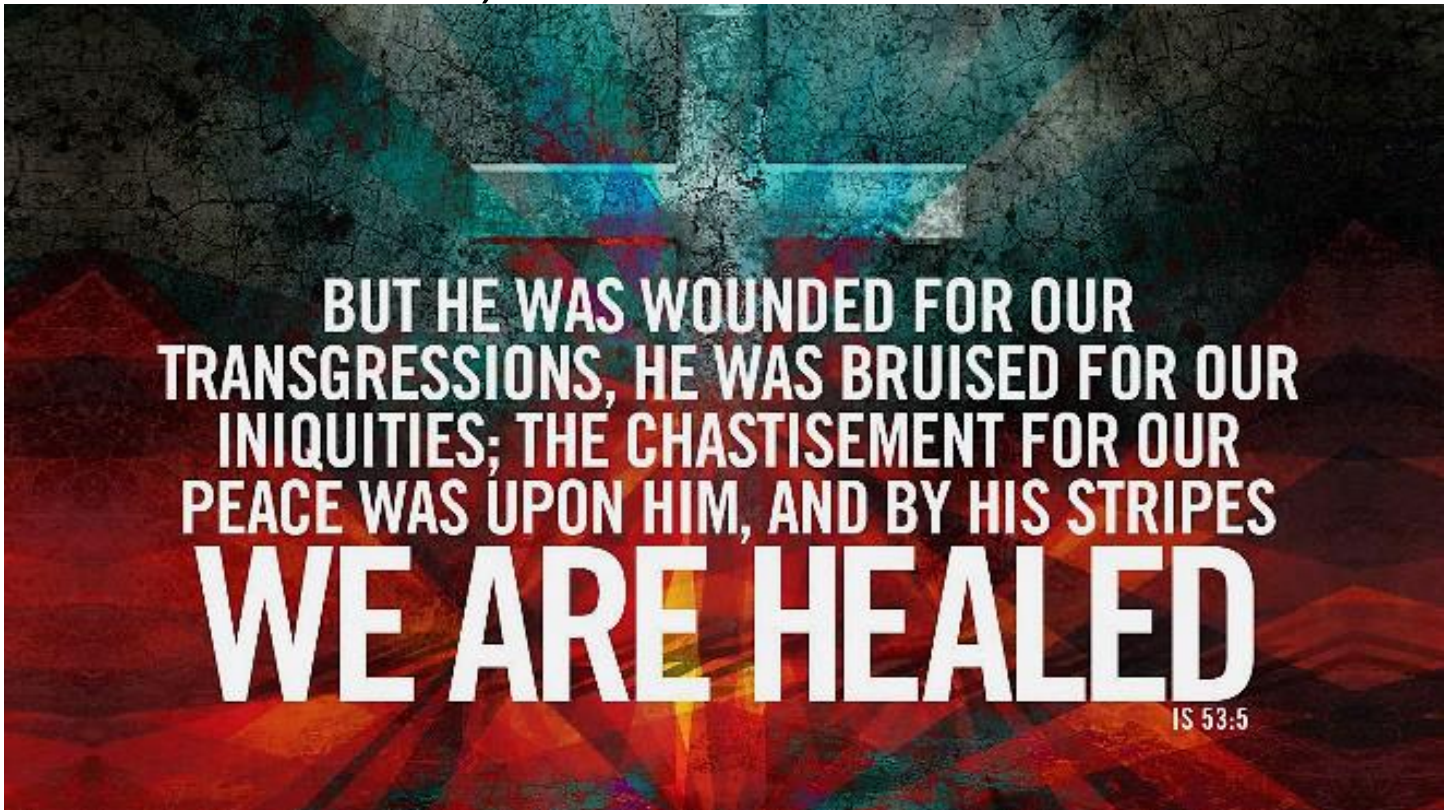
died” (Mark 15:37, Luke 23:46). Then in verse 33 John plainly and explicitly confirmed that Jesus was already dead. The point? There was no reason at all that John should have written verses 34 through 37, except to confirm that further Messianic prophecies were fulfilled.

Again, John, who is usually very miserly with his words goes to well beyond his normal practice to make it abundantly clear that Jesus, while brutalized beyond recognition, did not have a single broken bone and that He was pierced through His side.



The Passover Lamb had to be “spotless and without blemish” and once sacrificed had to be taken into oneself. In that case, physically eaten entirely – no

leftovers – no half measures – no partial commitment to the meal provided. The caveat was that no bone of the lamb could be broken (Exodus 12:46, Numbers 9:12, Psalm 34:20).



Jesus was dead so there was no reason to break His legs, and there was no reason to stab His corpse in the side, but a soldier did so, nevertheless. John tells us that he unwittingly did so in order to fulfill Old Testament Messianic prophecy. Of course, we remember Isaiah 53:5, "He was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed." Or, more famously, "By His stripes we are healed." I hope you can see that

the healing spoken of has nothing at all to do with the Pentecostal interpretation of physical healing.

This Messianic Prophecy fulfilled is specifically Zechariah 12:10b, “they will look at Me whom they pierced.” Even though the wording is the same, the context of the quotation in Zechariah does not match the context of the scene in John’s Gospel. This causes naysayers to dismiss the relevance and can cause the faithful to be confused.

Never fear, it's quite simple really, when we understand the Jewish practice of quoting a portion of Scripture in order to apply far more of the Scriptural passage around it. Until fairly recently the Bible had no divisions within books – no chapters, no verses, just text. You couldn’t say Zechariah 12:10, you simply quoted a familiar bit to refer people to the passage. In this case, we need to expand the context to incorporate a larger passage than one lone verse taken out of context as we tend to do.

Zechariah was conveying a prophecy concerning Israel roughly 500 years before Jesus was pierced. This was the time when the Temple was being rebuilt and the people were returning from their exile in Babylon,

modern-day Iraq, but ruled over by the Persia, modern-day Iran.



In chapter 9 we have the incredible verse associated with Jesus' Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem earlier in the week, "Rejoice greatly, daughter of Zion! Shout in triumph, daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your king is coming to you; He is righteous and endowed with salvation, Humble, and mounted on a donkey, Even on a colt, the foal of a donkey" (Zechariah 9:9).

Then in chapter 12, verse 3, we see that all the nations of the earth will attack Israel, but that God Himself will fight for Israel. In verses 8&9 God proclaims, "on that

day I will protect the inhabitants of Jerusalem... and... destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem.”

Then something quite amazing happens in the midst of God protecting Israel from the whole world arrayed against her, verse 10, God speaking, “And I will pour out on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem the Spirit of grace and of pleading, so that they will look at Me whom they pierced; and they will mourn for Him, like one mourning for an only son, and they will weep bitterly over Him like the bitter weeping over a firstborn.” In chapter 13 and 14 God reveals more about the piercing of Himself in the form of a man and concludes by saying that the remnant of Israel who truly repent will be Saved “And the Lord will be King over all the earth.”



The full context is that Jerusalem pierced God in the form of man – their promised Messiah, but that a remnant of them would repent and be Saved by the very One Whom they pierced.

There are two ways to take that. The repentant remnant was the early Christian church made up almost entirely of repentant Jews. That would mean that modern-day Israel is not the Israel of the Bible any longer, but the Christian church is Israel. The other way to take it is a future repentant remnant of Israel. That would make the current Jewish people and their descendants the Israel from whom a remnant will repent at some future date. Possibly both are true.

Either way, what it means for Jewish people is the only way that they will ever be Saved is through the Blood of Jesus that they themselves shed by piercing God made Man – the Messiah – the Christ – Jesus the only Lord and Savior given by God.

The Apostle Paul sheds some light in Romans 11:25–27, 25For I do not want you, brothers and sisters, to be uninformed of this mystery—so that you will not be wise in your own estimation—that a partial hardening has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in; 26and so all Israel will be saved; just as it is written: “The Deliverer will come from Zion, He will remove ungodliness from Jacob.” 27“*This is My covenant with them, When I take away their sins.*”

Contrary to Dispensationalism there is only one way that any person will ever dwell in the House of the Lord and that is through entire dependence upon His Chosen and Anointed One, the Lord Jesus Christ. Acts 4:12, “There is salvation in no one else! God has given no other name under heaven by which we must be saved.”





That brings us to the actual piercing performed by the Roman soldier. He stabbed Jesus in the side with an upward thrust under His ribcage and into His heart. The weapon was a Roman lance or javelin. It was generally a wooden pole 2 to 3 feet long with a metal point of 6 to 12 inches in length. It was a popular weapon that was a little longer than a sword, but shorter and easier to wield than a spear.

In stabbing the way that He did the javelin cut through His diaphragm, His lung, His pericardium, and His heart. A mixture of blood and water flowed from the wound which would have served as absolute proof that Jesus was, in fact, dead. No one is coming back from

that... Well, we'll see, but certainly no human by natural means is coming back from that.

That brings up the issue of both blood and water flowing and the spiritual implication of that information. John did not provide us that as a casual addition, he clearly had a significant theological reason for giving that detail of the story. Because it isn't explicit, people have come up with all kinds of theories over the centuries. The most popular have to do with Baptism and Communion.

The answer lies in the context of John's Gospel, not looking at Christian Sacraments or John's other books. In the Gospel water is used as a metaphor for the Life only Christ can give – He is the Font of Living Water and the only way the Living Water can be given to people is through the Sacrificial shedding of Christ's Blood to cover their sins. The Blood covers sin and the Water gives eternal Life.



John 19:38–42, 38Now after these things Joseph of Arimathea, being a disciple of Jesus, but a secret one for fear of the Jews, requested of Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus; and Pilate granted permission. So he came and took away His body. 39Nicodemus, who had first come to Him by night, also came, bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about a hundred litras weight. 40So they took the body of Jesus and bound it in linen wrappings with the spices, as is the burial custom of the Jews. 41Now in the place where He was crucified there was a garden, and in the garden was a new tomb in which no one had yet been laid. 42Therefore because of the Jewish day of

preparation, since the tomb was nearby, they laid Jesus there.

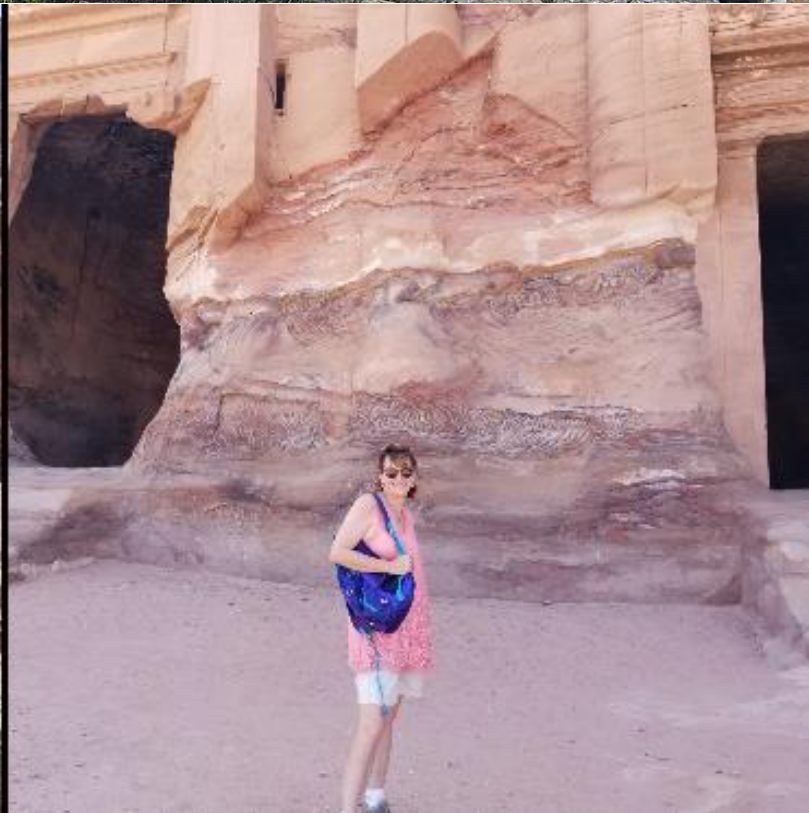
Joseph was a wealthy man from the nearby town of Arimathea. As a member of the Jewish High Council or Sanhedrin, he likely maintained a residence in Jerusalem as well, and had a new, very expensive, rock-cut tomb for himself in the garden just beyond the site of Jesus' Crucifixion.

Joe and his fellow Sanhedrin member Nicodemus took a bold stance here. Their action of taking care of Jesus' body could be defended to the Jews as merely doing the right thing for a fallen adversary, but I doubt their cohorts in the Sanhedrin would have seen it that way. I'm sure that this marked the end of Nick and Joe as prominent Council members. We can surmise as much when we see in the Book of Acts that it is Gamaliel opposing the more rabid members of the Council and neither Joseph nor Nicodemus are mentioned.

Mark tells us that Joseph had to gather his courage in order to ask Pilate for Jesus' body. This guy, an influential and wealthy Jewish Councilman, wasn't afraid of the Governor, he was afraid of his fellow Jewish leaders (Mark 15:43).



Litra is Latin and was a measurement of about 11.5 ounces and constituted a Roman pound. One hundred litras is equivalent to 9 gallons. Nine gallons of myrrh and aloes, likely mixed with water, which was used to wash and anoint Jesus' body. That's a lot, it was extravagant, and it was expensive. After that they wrapped his body in linen and placed Him on a bench inside the tomb freshly hewn into the bedrock cliff in the garden.







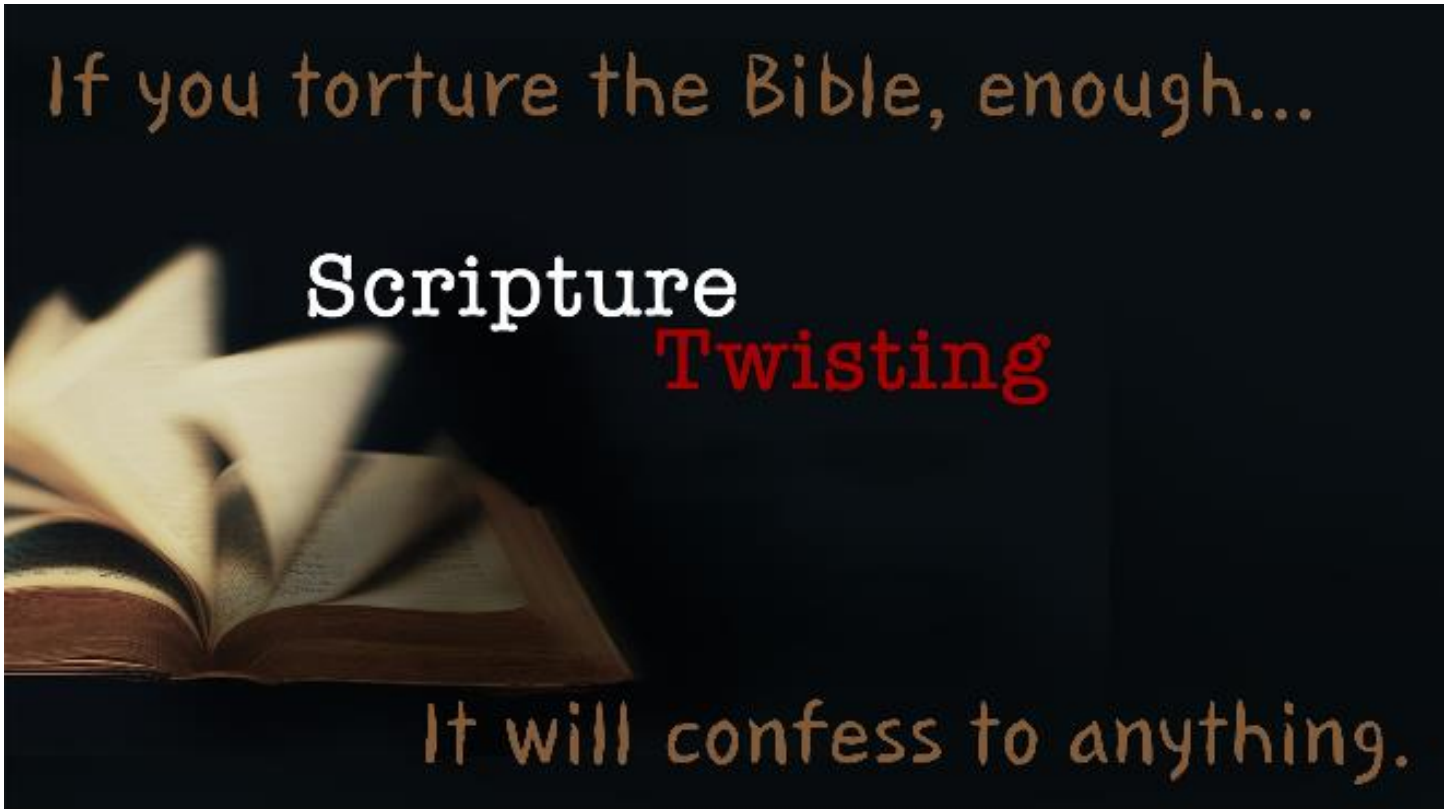




Then they rolled a cover stone over the tomb entrance just as the High Holy Sabbath began. The entire process was very hastily accomplished to finish in time. As a rhetorical technique, people, including the Apostle John, often speak of the person or persons who are ultimately responsible for a thing actually doing that thing.



We say George Bush Sr. liberated Kuwait. Well, not hardly, but he was the Commander-in-Chief during Desert Storm. John previously said in 19:19 that “Pilate wrote an inscription and put it on the cross.” Pilate didn’t personally write the charges on a sign, and he certainly didn’t “Put it on the cross.” The same here. Joe and Nick very likely stayed well away from Jesus’ body in order to avoid being ceremonially defiled and therefore unable to participate in the Passover. They probably had several slaves, or perhaps hired men, do the actual work.



As promised, I want to go back to our first verse today and talk about a principle. I could use nearly any verse in the Bible to make the same point, but I chose John 19:31, which says, “Now then, since it was the day of preparation, to prevent the bodies from remaining on the cross on the Sabbath (for that Sabbath was a high day), the Jews requested of Pilate that their legs be broken, and the bodies be taken away.

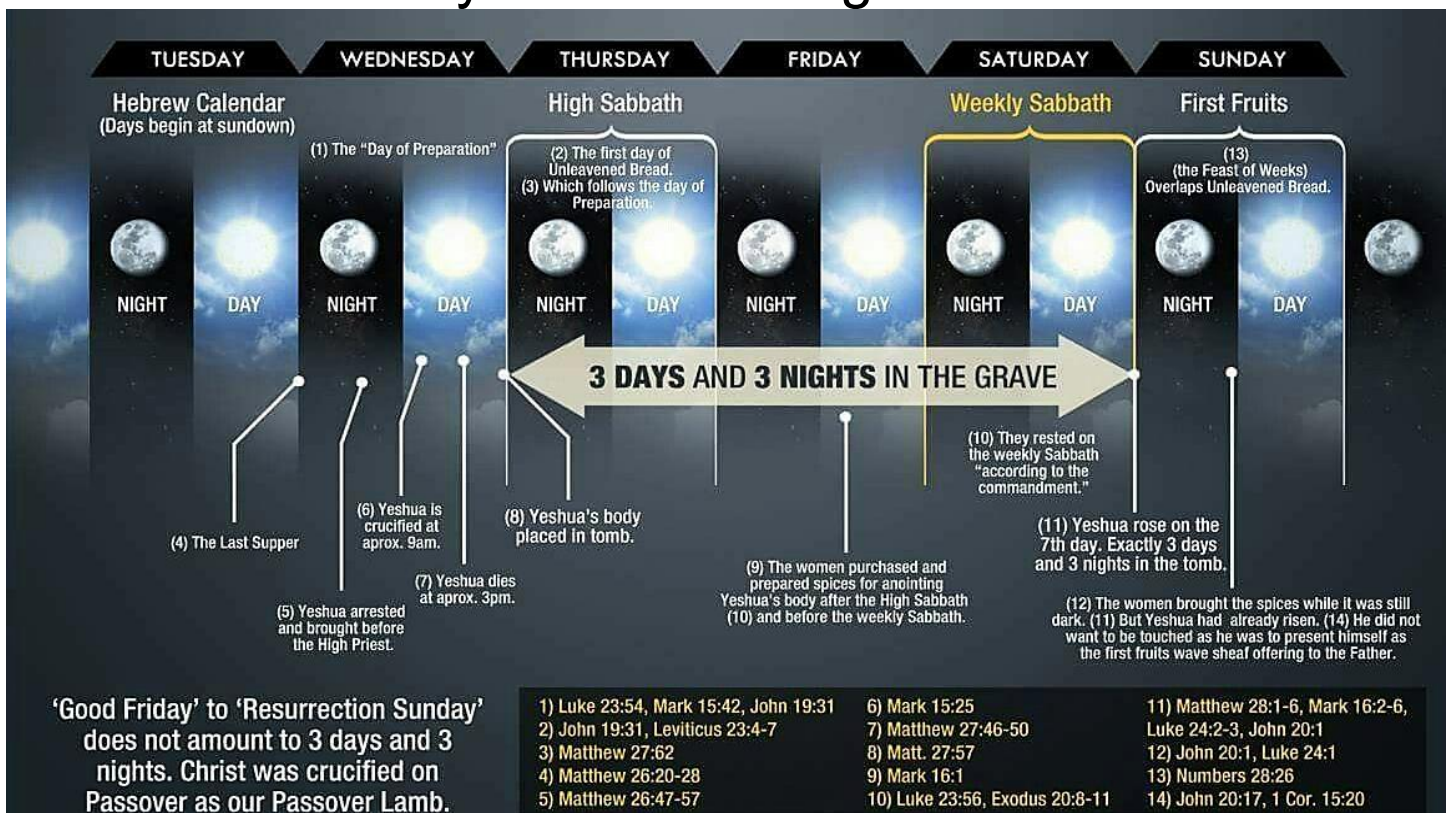
People who have preconceived ideas, doctrinal positions, or systematic theological schemes either see what they want to see, or intentionally twist Scripture to fit their bias.

We have people who identify as Christians who observe the Saturday Sabbath. As such they have deviated or diverged from orthodoxy and so they must defend their heterodoxy. They have an agenda to prove that their relatively recent alteration is superior to the historical position. In this case, they must not only show that their position is better, but that it was in fact original. They must prove that the church went off the rails early on and is still off the rails. Success in doing that then means that the orthodox church is wrong and if wrong about that, then possibly wrong about a lot of things.

It isn't just the SDA, there are a host of different Messianic groups, the Seventh Day Baptists, Church of God, Seventh Day, United Church of God, etc. Their Saturday observance becomes for them a distinctive that makes them right and all Sunday observing Christians wrong and typically fatally so. The primary issue for them is stated well by the SDA President, "We believe that the fourth commandment requires observance of the seventh-day Sabbath as God originally established."

I could talk about many different aspects of this, but I want to focus on the misuse of God's Word. We start

with the fact that Sabbath people assume that the Sabbath Commandment applies to Christians – that’s one of the aspects that I could spend some time on but won’t. Since they think that they must explain why Sunday observers are wrong. The main way they do that is to appeal to the Matthew 12:40 where Jesus said the only sign that He would give the naysayers was the “Sign of Jonah.” “For just as Jonah was in the stomach of the sea monster for three days and three nights, so will the Son of Man be in the heart of the earth for three days and three nights.”



They take that single reference literally and simultaneously take figuratively the other dozen statements where the Bible declares that Jesus would

rise on the “third day.” Three days and three nights means that the rising would be on the fourth day.

They teach that Jesus was executed on Wednesday evening. That Thursday was Passover so no work could be done for 24 hours. Then on Friday the women spent the entire day shopping and preparing supplies to care for Jesus’ body more thoroughly. Then Saturday, the normal Sabbath, arrived and once again no work could be done. They waited another day. Finally, on Sunday morning they went to the tomb to care for Jesus and He was not there. They conclude that He was actually resurrected on Saturday just before 6 pm – thus confirming the holiness of the Sabbath.

There are many problems with this reconstruction of events. The women, given an entire day to care for Jesus’ body chose to wait two more days before going to His tomb? The body was not embalmed or refrigerated, and their plan was to show up on the fifth day to remove His linens and reanoint His body. Remember Martha’s warning to Jesus concerning her brother Lazarus, John 11:39, Jesus said, “Remove the stone.” Martha, the sister of the deceased, said to Him,

“Lord, by this time there will be a stench, for he has been dead four days.”

He was raised early on Saturday evening and then just chilled in the garden for more than 12 hours, hanging out, waiting for someone to come by? After being spectacularly Raised from the dead, Jesus simply sat there until the next morning before revealing Himself in His Resurrected state to anyone and before ascending into Heaven to confer with the Father (John 20:17)?

The ancient saying “Three days and three nights,” never meant an exact and literal timeframe. The sign has to do with the impossibility of returning once a fish eats you. The tomb was already opened when the women arrived on Sunday morning, and Matthew tells us why. That morning “a severe earthquake had occurred, for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven and came and rolled away the stone and sat upon it” (Matthew 28:2).

The entire early history of the Christian community from both the Bible itself, from early Christian documents, from Jewish documents and from secular documents clearly show that from the very beginning the Christians gathered together for commemorative

services on Sunday morning. They gathered in remembrance of the Resurrection which is the single most important event in human history, they sang songs of praise and worship, they heard from a teaching Elder explaining Christianity and they had a communal meal together remembering what Jesus instituted at the Last Supper.

John 2:19 recorded Jesus telling the Jews, “Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.” In reference to His Resurrection from the dead. Again, if you die on Friday that’s day one, Saturday is day two, Sunday is day three – the third day.

But we don’t need any of that. We have John’s testimony right here. John who never uses words without purpose spends 13 of them to make it abundantly clear that Jesus was murdered the day before the Passover and that the Passover that year fell on the Sabbath.





John 20:1–18, 1Now on the first day of the week Mary Magdalene came early to the tomb, while it was still dark, and saw the stone already removed from the tomb. 2So she ran and came to Simon Peter and to the other disciple whom Jesus loved, and said to them, “They have taken the Lord from the tomb, and we do not know where they have put Him.” 3So Peter and the other disciple left, and they were going to the tomb. 4The two were running together; and the other disciple ran ahead, faster than Peter, and came to the tomb first; 5and he stooped to look in, and saw the linen wrappings lying there; however he did not go in. 6So Simon Peter also came, following him, and he entered the tomb; and he looked at the linen wrappings lying

there, 7and the face-cloth which had been on His head, not lying with the linen wrappings but folded up in a place by itself. 8So the other disciple who had first come to the tomb also entered then, and he saw and believed.

Of course, the “First day of the week” is Sunday and it is the reason that Christians have always celebrated the Lord on that day of the week. We’re not Jews under the Old Covenant – we’re Christians under the New Covenant.

Mary Magdalene came to the tomb with other women, but evidently was the one they sent back to tell the Apostles about the empty tomb. She was a runner, I guess. So were John and Peter, well John anyway.

VIDEO