



March 25, 2022

Which Sabbath? And, what was the “Preparation Day”?

Warm hellos friends, brethren, co-workers, spiritual family, and scattered children of God, from here on the Gulf Coast. My wife and I pray and hope this finds you all doing well, and that your week has been blessed.

We’ve just returned from a visit with brethren and family in southeast Texas and Mississippi. Driving home in the heavy, constant and gusty wind and rain was a challenge! I’m reminded what it must have been like years ago before we had automobiles, and traveling in inclement conditions must have been even a greater challenge.

We’ve been examining the rationale (or rather the lack of such) for observing what is termed “Easter” as opposed to “Passover”. Interestingly, the same rationale is used for setting aside Sunday as a day of worship as opposed to observing the biblical seventh day Sabbath.

The claim is, that Jesus rose from the dead on Sunday morning, and because of that the day of worship should be changed. Of course there’s no statement that can be found in Scripture that states the day of worship was changed to Sunday!

Let's continue with the description of the events that took place on Abib 14 Passover, termed the "Preparation Day" following the death of Jesus.

"Now when evening had come, because it was the Preparation Day, that is, the day before the Sabbath, Joseph of Arimathea, a prominent council member, who was himself waiting for the kingdom of God, coming and taking courage, went in to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Then he bought fine linen, took Him down, and wrapped Him in the linen. And he laid Him in a tomb which had been hewn out of the rock, and rolled a stone against the door of the tomb." (Mark 15:42-43, 46)

Clearly, it was still during the daylight portion of Passover, late in the day, when the body of Jesus was placed in the tomb.

The Gospel of Luke also records Joseph of Arimathea placing the body of Jesus in the tomb and then adds "*That day was the Preparation, and the Sabbath drew near.*" (Luke 23:54) Here's another very important detail that is incorrectly interpreted by many. Most in the "Christian community" claim that it was Friday when Jesus was crucified, and the next day was the weekly Sabbath.

Luke then comments about the women who had witnessed the resurrection (Matthew 27:55-56) and that "*they observed the tomb and how His body was laid.*" (Luke 23:55) Again, it is late in the day and the Sabbath was drawing near. The question needs to be asked, "What Sabbath?" We read last time about the day that followed the Preparation Day "*that Sabbath was a high day.*" (John 19:31)

Returning to the events recorded in Luke 23, "*Then they [the women] returned and prepared spices and fragrant oils. And they rested on the Sabbath according to the commandment.*" (v.56)

The women did not have time before sunset of Preparation Day to procure and prepare spices. They would have to wait until after the Sabbath that was about to begin. There had to be a regular work day after the high day Sabbath and before the Sabbath that followed in which they rested according to the commandment.

What Sabbath is defined by a commandment? Of course it is the weekly Sabbath defined by the Fourth Commandment of the Ten. It doesn't take a complicated analysis to see that the Passover Preparation Day that year had to be on a Wednesday.

The high day Sabbath that followed had to be the First Day of Unleavened Bread and took place on a Thursday. The next day, Friday, was a work day during which the women bought and prepared spices. "*Now when the Sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices, that they*

might come and anoint Him." (Mark 16:1) The next day following the buying of the spices was the weekly Sabbath when the women rested.

Next time we will continue examining the revealing text that shows there were two Sabbaths during that week!

Arms up friends! Our prayers and thoughts are with you daily. Please do pray for us as well.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S. Hoefker', with a circular scribble to the right.

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