

FRIENDS OF THE NAZARENE©

An on-line Biblical Studies Magazine

“They Follow the Lamb No Matter Where He Goes”

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STATEMENT OF PURPOSE: Nazarene Saints Publishing© is a Bible research group for a better Scriptural understanding. We are dedicated to the preservation and publishing of Christian writings which aid *Friends of the Nazarene*© to "follow the Lamb no matter where he goes." (John 15:14; 3 John 14; Revelation 14:4) The *Friends of the Nazarene*© are a spiritual community of Messianic Christians. We are apologists dedicated to the defense of the truth that "God is One" and not three. The Bible is our creed. We view this "God-breathed" Book as inspired alone, while the thoughts of men about it are not. We wish to show respect for our multitude of Christian brethren. (1 Peter 3:15)

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

- ?? **WE REJOICE** that this issue has been completely devoted to the death of Jesus Christ and its Biblical meaning. This is most apropos as we approach the Memorial or the Lord's Supper. There is an article on the prophecies regarding the suffering and death of the Messiah. Another traces the final week of Jesus Christ leading to his death and resurrection. The subject of the Lord's Supper is discussed in a consideration of Paul's instructions in 1

Corinthians chapters 10 and 11 and the very purpose of the Memorial. The magazine concludes with an article on the sacred benefits of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, as well as one on the New Covenant.

- ?? **BEREAN BIBLE STUDENTS:** will be holding their Western Believers Conference at the Marriott Hotel near the Ontario airport in southern California. The conference runs from Friday April 21 to Monday morning April 23. Many will find this Christian group genuine in their worship of God and possessed of Biblical truths. For more information email David Karavas at djkphil413@aol.com .
- ?? **FIRST CORINTHIANS:** We are happy to announce that work on Paul's first epistle to the Corinthians is reaching a completion as part of *Nazarene Commentary*© soon to be in CD form. Thus far the following books have been presented either in new renderings from the Greek language or in translation comparisons: Matthew, Romans, 1 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1 Thessalonians, 2 Thessalonians, 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon, Hebrews, James, 1 Peter, 2 Peter, 1 John, 2 John, 3 John, Jude, Revelation, and in part Daniel. At present this represents 2,000 pages with over 9000 footnotes.
- ?? **MEMORIAL!** April 18/19 is the first Lord's Supper of the 3rd Millennium! We are fast approaching the 2,000th celebration of the Memorial since Nisan 14, 33 AD. Our hearts go out to those of like-mind in their attitude and celebration of the Lord's death this year. Like Yehowah's 7,000 "who had not bowed the knee to Baal" we know we do not feel alone as Elijah first did. Over 10,000 have visited the *Friends of the Nazarene* web page and downloaded thousands of documents for their Biblical studies. We anticipate that the year 2,000 will prove a milestone for the *Friends of the Nazarene* "movement."
- ?? **SPECIAL THANKS:** I would like to take this opportunity to express special thanks to some who made important contributions in one manner or another this year: Andy Weeks, Jeannie Weeks, Christian Gorney [Wales], John and Anna Karavas, David Karavas, Ralph Slaney and family [Spain], Luis and Annette Padilla, Michael Welhous, Sheila Passenger, Liz Soto, George Kurio, Jason and Linda Williams, Jack, Randy, Henry, Chrys, and others who cannot be named.

==== END ====

THE SUFFERING AND DEATH OF MESSIAH FORETOLD

That Messiah – God's own Son – would suffer and die was a revolting shock to even some of the Nazarene's disciples. When Jesus began to explain to his apostles that he would have to go to Jerusalem and suffer many things at the hands of the Jewish hierarchy and then be put to death, it actually raised a rebuke from Peter. The fisherman said, "That will not happen. Do not think so harshly of yourself. That surely will not happen." Peter's rebuke of Jesus before

the disciples only resulted in a more serious rebuke from Christ himself: “Get behind me, Satan, for your thinking is not of God, but fleshly in origin.” [Matthew 16:21-23]

It was a hard thing to accept by the Jewish disciples. To this days many Jews reject Jesus the Nazarene as the Messiah for the very reason that he did suffer and die. They believe that when the true Messiah comes there will be universal peace. However, it may come as a surprise to many Jews and non-Jews that the Bible predicted the suffering death of the Messiah. When did this part of God's thinking begin to develop?

The Foretold “Bruising”

Immediately following the rebellion in heaven and earth of some of God's own children the first Biblical prophecy, presented in a cryptic verse recorded in Hebrew, was given as part of Yehowah's judgment against these rebels. It is found in Genesis 3:15 and reads according to a literal rendering of the original language –

“And enmity I will set
between you the Woman
and between your seed and her seed.
He will bruise you (to) the head
and you shall bruise him [of] the heel.”

Here Yehowah passes the final judgment upon the serpent – later identified as Satan the Devil [“the original serpent” (Revelation 12:9)] – The Seed of the Woman will “bruise” the Serpent in the head. Paul later actually alludes to Genesis 3:15 and interprets the word “bruise” to mean “crush.” [Romans 16:20] So, it is not a miss interpretation of matters to draw the conclusion that the Serpent's bruising the Woman's Seed in the heal, though painful and crippling, was something curable. Through out ages many scholars have understood Genesis 3:15 to predict something harmful would befall the Messiah. It would be thousands of years before more prophetic details were provided by the developing Holy Scriptures.

The “Piercing” of Messiah

Though hints and allusions regarding the Messiah would be provided throughout the next nearly three millennial, a poetic explosion of inspiration burst forth in a hymn of the beloved David, King of Israel. When Psalm 22 was translated by dedicated Jewish copyists from Hebrew into Greek during the 3rd Century BC, it contained the emotions and words of what appear to be a man executed upon a Tree. This was to be a Jewish man with Hebrews roots in the history of Israel. It would seem he was rejected by God and his own people. Now he was crying out to his God while angry throngs surrounded his impaled hands and feet. He is

dying of thirst and his heart weakens within as his bones and joints become dislocated.

With this brief background we read with the same thrilling interest that the original inspired lyricist had when he comprised his opus. [Psalm 22:1-22, 28-31]

*O God, my God, pay attention to me!
Why have You forsaken me?
Why do You remain far away from saving me,
And the words of my loud lamentation?
My God, I keep crying!
During the day and night – without rest-- and there is no answer!*

Our hearts go out to this disserved person with such genuine cries for God's help. He feels as though God has distanced Himself from his prayers. However, the worshipper of Yehowah praises Him for his past dealings with His People.

*But You are Holy,
Inhabiting the praises of Israel.
In You our fore-fathers trusted.
They trusted and You delivered them.
To You they cried out and they escaped.
In You they trusted, and were never put to shame.*

With this historical background of Yehowah's dealings with the ancient patriarchs and the struggles of Israel, the petitioner must wonder why he is not also delivered. He continues to describe his circumstances and how he is treated by his own people.

*I am but a worm and not a human being –
A reproach to humans and despised by the people [of Israel].
Everyone who looks upon me laughs.
They open their mouths wide – they shake their heads –
“He should trust in Yehowah,
Let [God] deliver him!
Since he took such delight in [God], let [God] rescue him!”*

It is as though there are crowds around him, all making fun of his plight. Despite these face-making, taunting persons, our suffering servant of God remembers his early life, including his mother.

*You are the One who separated me from the womb.
You caused me to trust upon my mother's breasts.
Into Your hands I burst forth from the moment of my birth.
From my mother's womb You have been my God.
Do not remain so distant [now] as distress is so near,
And there is no human help.*

This suffering Son now begins to describe his circumstances as well as his inner physical and emotional feelings as he continues in his agony.

*Many young 'bulls' have surrounded me,
 Strong 'oxen' from Bashan encircle me.
 They have opened their mouths wide,
 A 'lion' roaring and tearing [flesh].
 Like water I am poured out,
 All my bones are dislocated.
 My heart melts like wax,
 It has grown faint deep within.
 My strength is as dried out as potsherd,
 And my tongue is glued in my throat.
 In the dust of death You will lay me down.
 For 'dogs' have surrounded me,
 The Synagogue of Evil Men encircle me.
 They have pierced my hands and feet.
 They can count all my bones.
 They behold me and gawk.
 They separate my garments among themselves,
 And they cast lots for my clothing.*

From such an absolutely hopeless circumstance – having begun with the cry of “Why?” – his agony turns to complete trust and hope in Yehowah his God.

*But, You, O Yehowah, do not remain so distant!
 O my Help, come to my aid in a hurry!
 Rescue my soul from the sword,
 From the power of the 'dog' [rescue] this only-begotten one!
 Save me from the lion's mouth,
 From the horns of wild bulls you will answer me.*

We hear this Suffering One's complete trust in the only One who can come to his aid. At the moment of his death he promises what he will yet do, as well as what will yet occur in the future. He declares that future generations will remember and recount this miraculous rescue.

*I will declare your Name to my brothers!
 In the middle of the Congregation I will sing hymns to You.
 ... All the end of the earth will remember and return to Yehowah.
 Yes, all the families of the nations will prostrate themselves before You.
 For to Yehowah belongs the Kingdom,
 [He is] Sovereign of all nations.
 The 'Great Ones' of earth will be satisfied and bow down.
 All those who turn to dust will kneel before Him,
 Every soul unable to preserve themselves alive.
 [New] offspring will serve Him.
 It will be remembered of Yehowah to a future generation,
 That His justice may be declared to a people yet unborn,
 That He was able to do this successfully.*

Thus David -- in a most heightened state of inspiration [2 Samuel 23:2] – foretold in precise detail in a brilliant palette of emotions, a suffering Jew surrounded by an Evil Synagogue of his own people who have pierced his hands and feet. His death is slow and agonizing, marked by dislocated bones, great thirst, and an ever weakening heart. And another marked feature is most unusual. For some

reason left unexplained his clothing – inferring the Suffering One was nude or near naked – was divided among some gamblers.

Because the description of this Suffering One is so intense, and the details so overwhelming, it may pass without notice that these events – the suffering and death of this person – was going to be “recounted” or remembered in future generations. Something like a memorial by a generation of yet unborn.

Now had this marvelous verse been written years after the actual event it would still be considered something inspired. For many see here a man recounting his own experience while suffering an execution. What is unusual is that the Hebrews executed by stoning and not impalement. So some unusual circumstances will bear upon the actual fulfillment of David’s prophecy.

Those familiar with this startling prediction of Messiah’s suffering, over a thousand years before it happened, know that many of the features fit the actual execution of Jesus the Nazarene. These may be examined by the testimony of several eyewitnesses or researchers into the actual events.

Before we examine these, it must be noted that about five centuries later another prophet also foretells this “piercing.” It is Zechariah the prophet: *“They will gaze upon the One whom they have pierced. .. And there will be bitter lamentation in grief as over a firstborn son.”* [Zechariah 12:10 NSR] This verse would also be referenced in the context of the gospel accounts of these matters.

We briefly note these as recorded by the early Christian researchers. While reading portions of these accounts note the many parallels with Psalm 22: the onlookers, an evil synagogue of Jewish men, the garments, the piercing of his body, the thirst, and a mother’s presence.

Mark 15:1 At earliest dawn, after the High Priests had held a consultation with the Elders and Scribes, they and the entire Sanhedrin **[THE JEWISH SYNAGOGUE OF EVIL MEN AS BULLS AND LIONS]** bound Jesus and took Him away and handed Him over to Pilate. ... Mark 15: 19 Then they began to beat Him on the head with a cane, to spit on Him, and to do Him homage on bended knees. Mark 15:20 At last, having finished their sport, they took the robe off Him, put His own clothes on Him, and led Him out to crucify Him. Mark 15:23 Here they offered Him wine mixed with myrrh; but He refused it. **[PIERCING OF HANDS AND FEET]** Mark 15:24 Then they crucified Him. **[THE LOTS CAST FOR HIS GARMENTS]** This done, they divided His garments among them, drawing lots to decide what each should take. John 19:23 ... including His tunic, and divided them into four parts--one part for each soldier. The tunic was without seam, woven from the top in one piece. John 19:24 So they said to one another, "Do not let us tear it. Let us draw lots for it." This happened that the Scripture might be fulfilled which says, "They shared my garments among them, and drew lots for my clothing."

Mark 15:25 It was nine o'clock in the morning when they crucified Him. Mark 15:26 Over His head was the notice in writing of the charge against Him: THE KING OF THE JEWS. Mark 15:29 **[THE JEERING AND MOCKING CROWDS]** And all the passers-by reviled Him. They shook their heads at Him and said, "Ah! you who were for destroying the Sanctuary and building a new one in three days, Mark 15:30 come down from the cross

and save yourself." Mark 15:31 In the same way the High Priests also, as well as the Scribes, kept on scoffing at Him, saying to one another, "He has saved others: himself he cannot save! Mark 15:32 This Christ, the King of Israel, let him come down now from the cross, that we may see and believe." Even the men who were being crucified with Him heaped insults on Him. Mark 15:33 At noon there came a darkness over the whole land, lasting till three o'clock in the afternoon.

John 19:25 **[THE MOTHER]** Now standing close to the cross of Jesus were His mother and His mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary of Magdala. 26 So Jesus, seeing His mother, and seeing the disciple whom He loved standing near, said to His mother, "Behold, your son!" 27 Then He said to the disciple, "Behold, your mother!" And from that time the disciple received her into his own home. **[THE GREAT THIRST]** 28 After this, Jesus, knowing that everything was now brought to an end, said--that the Scripture might be fulfilled, "I am thirsty." 29 There was a jar of wine standing there. With this wine they filled a sponge, put it on the end of a stalk of hyssop, and lifted it to His mouth.

Mark 15:34 **[THE DESPERATE CALL]** But at three o'clock Jesus cried out with a loud voice, "*Elohi, Elohi, lama sabachthani?*" which means, "My God, My God, 35 Some of the bystanders, hearing Him, said, "Listen, he is calling for Elijah!" Mark 15:36 Then a man ran to fill a sponge with sour wine **[COMPARE PSALM 69:21]**, and he put it on the end of a cane and placed it to His lips. Matthew 27:48 **[ANOTHER PIERCING]** Another man took a spear and pierced his side, and blood and water came out. Luke 23:46 and Jesus cried out in a loud voice, and said, "Father, to Thy hands I entrust my spirit." And after uttering these words He yielded up His spirit.

Messiah to Suffer and "Pour Out His Soul Unto Death"

From this alone it seems not only clear but also miraculous that such a thousand-year old Davidic prophecy foretold the suffering and death of Messiah. But, this does not prove to be the only specific prophecy of Messiah's suffering and death. About 400 years after David composed Psalm 22, the great Hebrew prophet Isaiah provided an equally inspired prediction. It is recorded in Isaiah 52:13-53:12 **[Nazarene Saints Paraphrase]** We provide the prophecy with their fulfillments in cross references. Read it now with the background of Psalm 22 in mind.

First Yehowah speaks of His Suffering Servant.

*Behold, my Boy will comprehend.
He will be exalted and tremendously glorified. [Philippians 2:7-11]
The more so because so many were amazed at you. [Mark 1:22; 6:2; 7:37]
So marred was your appearance beyond humankind. [Philippians 2:7]
And [your] form beyond the sons of mankind.
The more so will [my Boy] startle many nations.
Before him kings will cover their mouths.
For to them who heard no such report concerning [my Boy] –
They will see.
And they who have not heard will carefully consider. [Romans 15:21]*

Now the voice changes to that of the collective-Jew who speaks at some future moment – after the "disfigurement" of Yehowah's Boy.

*Who will believe what we have heard?
 To whom has the arm of Yehowah been revealed? [Romans 10:16]
 [Yehowah's Boy] grew up like a sapling before Him,
 as a Sprout out of a dry land. [Luke 2:52]
 He possessed neither beauty or nobility.
 When we [Jews] beheld him there was no particular comeliness
 So that we would desire him.
 He was despised and rejected by humanity – [John 1:10, 11]
 A man meant for suffering and familiar with sickness. [Matthew 8:17]
 Yes, [he was] like someone from whom people turn away –
 Despised -- and we [Jews] esteemed him not.*

Despite this general rejection by the Jews – and their poor appraisal of him – the Jewish “voice” now speaks of the reason for his suffering.

*And yet really he carried the burden of our sicknesses,
 And because of our pains he bore the burden. [1 Peter 2:24]
 But we [Jews] accounted him as cursed,
 Rejected by God and humiliated.
 Yet he was being pierced for our transgressions,
 He was being crushed for our iniquities.
 The just chastisement meant for us [Jews] was upon him,
 And by his stripes and bruises there is healing for us. [1 Peter 2:25]
 All we [Jews] are like lost sheep gone astray,
 Each person to their own way.
 Yehowah has caused all of our guilt to fall upon him.*

Now the Jewish voice moves to that moment of the Suffering Servant’s judgment before his own people.

*Though he was hard pressed he humbled himself. [Philippians 2:7, 8]
 As a lamb led to the slaughter he did not open his mouth, [Matthew 26:63]
 As a sheep before his shearers, he was silent, not opening his mouth.
 During his humiliation justice was removed from him. [Acts 8:32, 33]
 Who will consider his generation –
 That he was cut off from the land of the living?
 Because of the transgressions of my [Jewish] people
 He was led off to death.*

Some of the circumstances of his death are foretold:

*Though he had done no violence
 -- nor had spoken deceptively --
 his grave was appointed with lawless persons, [Matthew 27:38]
 And among the rich his tomb. [Matthew 27:60]
 And yet Yehowah purposed to bruise him. [Genesis 3:15]
 He laid upon him a sickness. [Luke 22:44]*

Now it is here the original speaker Yehowah makes promises based on the suffering and death of His Servant.

*If his soul becomes a sin-offering
 He will experience offspring – [Hebrews 2:10-14]*

*He will prolong his days.
 And in his hand the purpose of Yehowah will succeed.
 He will experience the travail of his soul.
 But because of his travail Yehowah will reveal [His] Light.
 Because of my Righteous Servant's knowledge
 A righteous standing will be given many people.
 He shall bear their sins.
 Therefore, he will inherit a greater portion, [Psalm 2:8]
 And among those strong he will share the inheritance.
 Because he poured out his soul to the very death,
 And among lawless persons he let himself be numbered. [Luke 22:37]
 Yes, he bore the sin of many,
 And for transgressors he interposed.*

Though there were several quotes and allusions to this portion of Isaiah's prophecy with inspired applications to Jesus the Nazarene, there is one particular example found in Acts 8:26-36. There Phillip the missionary witnesses under angel direction to an Ethiopian Jewish proselyte who had been to Jerusalem to worship. Their discussion centers around the identity of the one about whom Isaiah speaks.

“Messiah will be cut off after three and a half years”

Isaiah 53:8 had predicted Yehowah's Servant, or Messiah, would be “cut off.” There is another prophet writing almost two centuries later who also foretells the cutting off of the Messiah. It is the great prophet Daniel who writes from exile in Babylon. The key difference is that the approximate date of Messiah's death is the subject. Though many will disagree with some of these conclusions, we present one startling view of this prophecy.

Daniel 9:24-27 predicts a period of 490 years – called 70 Weeks of Years -- from the word to restore Jerusalem by Cyrus the Great in 455 BC until the appearance of Messiah in the year 29 AD. Doctor Luke records this moment according to the Roman count of years to be the 14th year of Tiberius Caesar, considered by some to be 29 AD. [Luke 3:1ff] This would mean the 70th week of 7 years would begin in the year 29.

However, Daniel writes that Messiah will be “cut off” in the middle of this week of 7 years. Thus, about the year 33 AD Messiah would die.

Seventy weeks of years have been determined upon your people and upon the Holy City – to seal up [Jewish] transgressions -- to blot out sin -- to make atonement for [Jewish] transgressions – to usher in everlasting righteousness – to put a seal on vision and prophet – and to anoint the holiest [person]. ... And for one week of seven years He will establish His covenant with many [Jews]. [And during this period Messiah will be cut off without any justice.] [NSR]

Messianic Prophecies Instill Faith

Those who refuse to believe in prophecy will no doubt find their reasons to reject any kind of inspired predictions. However, for many reasonable minds throughout the ages, there has been enough truth found in these prophecies to instill a solid faith and trust in God and His dynamic purpose. Particularly at this time of year, when the thoughts of many millions of Christians will turn to thoughts regarding the death and resurrection of Jesus the Nazarene. These prophecies are a most appropriate subject for spiritual meditations as the Wheat “keep proclaiming the death of the Lord until he arrives.” [1 Corinthians 11:26]

===== END =====

THE WEEK OF THE LAST SUPPER

(By Elder Ralph Slaney, Almeria, Spain ©2000)

Introduction

After the actual creation of man there is no other week in history that has had such a profound effect as that of the last one in the life of Jesus Christ. No other man has had such a serious impact upon human society. A third of mankind profess some kind of belief in Jesus Christ. Other very prominent men such as Gandhi and Mohammed acknowledge his influence.

This is an account of the events surrounding that special week. It is the hope to have covered most of the events and is as comprehensive as a brief account can be, but not in any respect exhaustive. The dating system used is that of the Jewish calendar. It therefore needs to be remembered that the Jewish day starts around sunset. Some events naturally flow through an afternoon into an evening and thereby move into the next day. There are particular problems when trying to fix the exact day for any of the events. It has to be realized that by the time of Jesus it is thought that some of the Jews tended to use the original Passover date of Nisan 14 to make the preparation for its actual observance. (see John 19:14) It is also thought that many Jews of that time ate the Passover meal on the evening of the Nisan 15. (see John 18:28, Matthew 27:62) This may particularly be the case as the next day was considered as a special Sabbath. Remember that the Jewish day started at evening-time about sundown. So if we imagine that Jesus and his apostles held the meal on the original date and that all the Scriptural references are based on the true date, then the dating used should at least be accurate within one day, two at the most.

The Gospel of Mark using the King James Version of the Bible has been used as a literary catalysis to draw out the developing occurrence. The idea is to give a general overview of the week. However, Nisan 14, 15 & 16 have been given a

more exhaustive compilation. Where an event is missing in the Mark account other Scriptures are quoted. Follow the 'bullet' marks for a time order listing of Nisan 14,15 and 16. As far as possible the article has been arranged in chronological order.

Abbreviations used are: KJV = King James Version, TJB = The Jerusalem Bible, x = Cross reference, inc = Including.

Before Nisan 9

AS THE PASSOVER DRAWS NEAR

“The Jewish Passover drew near, and many of the country people who had gone up to Jerusalem to purify themselves looked out for Jesus, saying to one another as they stood about in the Temple, ‘What do you think? Will he come to the festival or not?’ The chief priests and the Pharisees had by now given their orders: anyone who knew where he was must inform them so that they could arrest him.” (John 11:55-57 TJB)

[Additional Comments: The scene is set for Jesus' final week as a human. Three and a half years of intensive ministry was about to end in a most dramatic way. Jesus realizing the timetable of events and fully aware of what was to happen took his disciples away to the desert town of Ephraim. Jesus waits for the precise time before leaving for the Passover.]

Nisan 9

ANOINTING OF JESUS BY MARY

“3 And being in Bethany in the house of Simon the leper, as he sat at meat, there came a woman having an alabaster box of ointment of spikenard very precious; and she brake the box, and poured it on his head. 4 And there were some that had indignation within themselves, and said, Why was this waste of the ointment made? 5 For it might have been sold for more than three hundred pence, and have been given to the poor. And they murmured against her. 6 And Jesus said, Let her alone; why trouble ye her? she hath wrought a good work on me. 7 For ye have the poor with you always, and whensoever ye will ye may do them good: but me ye have not always. 8 She hath done what she could: she is come aforehand to anoint my body to the burying. 9 Verily I say unto you, Wheresoever this gospel shall be preached throughout the whole world, this also that she hath done shall be spoken of for a memorial of her.” (Mark 14:3-9 KJV = King James Version)

[Additional Comments: John some seventy years later still had in mind that original date when Mary anointed Jesus on Nisan 8. One further problem: if on the other hand the dinner was in the evening, which is very probable then the event happened on Nisan 9.]

[Cross References: Matthew 26:6-13, John 12:2-11.]

JESUS ARRIVES AT JERUSALEM

“1 And when they came nigh to Jerusalem, unto Bethphage and Bethany, at the mount of Olives, he sendeth forth two of his disciples, 2 And saith unto them, Go your way into the village over against you: and as soon as ye be entered into it, ye shall find a colt tied, whereon never man sat; loose him, and bring him. 3 And if any man say unto you, Why do ye this? say ye that the Lord hath need of him; and straightway he will send him hither. 4 And they went their way, and found the colt tied by the door without in a place where two ways met; and they loose him. 5 And certain of them that stood there said unto them, What do ye, loosing the colt? 6 And they said unto them even as Jesus had commanded: and they let them go. 7 And they brought the colt to Jesus, and cast their garments on him; and he sat upon him. 8 And many spread their garments in the way: and others cut down branches off the trees, and strawed them in the way. 9 And they that went before, and they that followed, cried, saying, Hosanna; Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord: 10 Blessed be the kingdom of our father David, that cometh in the name of the Lord: Hosanna in the highest. 11 And Jesus entered into Jerusalem, and into the temple: and when he had looked round about upon all things, and now the eventide was come, he went out unto Bethany with the twelve.” (Mark 11:1-11 KJV)

[Cross References: Matthew 21:1-11, Luke 19:29-44, John 12:12-19.]

[Additional Comments: Both Mark and Matthew place the account of Jesus' anointing by Mary about the same time that Judas arranges the betrayal on Nisan 12 and without further reference it would probably be accepted as the correct chronology. However, John writing much latter places the event six days before the Passover. (see John 12:1) Because John is so precise with his dating it would seem folly not to accept his account as correct. Not only does John exactly place the event but also states that it was the next day that Jesus made his triumphant entry into Jerusalem. (see John 12:12)

Nisan 10

CURSING OF THE BARREN FIG TREE

“12 And on the morrow, when they were come from Bethany, he was hungry: 13 And seeing a fig tree afar off having leaves, he came, if haply he might find any thing thereon: and when he came to it, he found nothing but leaves; for the time of figs was not yet. 14 And Jesus answered and said unto it, No man eat fruit of thee hereafter for ever. And his disciples heard it.” (Mark 11:12-14 KJV)

[Cross References: Matthew 21:18-19.]

[Additional Comments: Matthew lists the cursing of the fig tree after he visits the Temple. Both Mark and Luke list the Temple visit second, which tends to be obvious as the cursing took place early in the morning on his way to Jerusalem.]

AT THE TEMPLE

“15 And they come to Jerusalem: and Jesus went into the temple, and began to cast out them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the moneychangers, and the seats of them that sold doves; 16 And would not suffer that any man should carry any vessel through the temple. 17 And he taught, saying unto them, Is it not written, My house shall be called of all nations the house of prayer? but ye have made it a den of thieves. 18 And the scribes and chief priests heard it, and sought how they might destroy him: for they feared him, because all the people was astonished at his doctrine.” (Mark 11:15-18 KJV) “14 There were also blind and lame people who came to him in the Temple, and he cured them. 15 At the sight of the wonderful things he did and of the children shouting, ‘Hosanna to the Son of David’ in the Temple, the chief priests and the scribes were indignant.” (Matthew 21:14-15 TJB)

[Cross References: Psalms 69:9, Psalms 8:2, Matthew 21:12-17, Luke 19:45-48.]

[Additional Comments: This is the second time that Jesus enters the Temple and cleanses it. (First Temple cleansing John 2:13-25) The money changers provided Temple currency. It has to be remembered that those attending the festival came from a variety of places and would need the appropriate currency so as to purchase the needed sacrifices. The Temple was for actual worship and not to be polluted by the money changers and sellers of animals and birds, often at extortionate rates. Jesus words: “a robber’s den.” (Matthew 21:13 TJB) x Jeremiah 7:11.]

?

Nisan 11

RETURN TO BETHANY

“19 And when even was come, he went out of the city.” (Mark 11:19 KJV)

[Cross References: Luke 21:37-38.]

THE FIG TREE WITHERED

“20 And in the morning, as they passed by, they saw the fig tree dried up from the roots. 21 And Peter calling to remembrance saith unto him, Master, behold, the fig tree which thou cursedst is withered away.” (Mark 11:20-21 KJV)

[Cross References: Matthew 21:20.]

LESSON ON FAITH

“22 And Jesus answering saith unto them, Have faith in God. 23 For verily I say unto you, That whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass; he shall have whatsoever he saith. 24 Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them.” (Mark 11:22-24 KJV)

[Cross References: Matthew 21:21-22.]

LESSON ON FORGIVENESS

“25 And when ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have ought against any: that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses. 26 But if ye do not forgive, neither will your Father which is in heaven forgive your trespasses.” (Mark 11:25-26 KJV)

JESUS AUTHORITY QUESTIONED

“27 And they come again to Jerusalem: and as he was walking in the temple, there come to him the chief priests, and the scribes, and the elders, 28 And say unto him, By what authority doest thou these things? and who gave thee this authority to do these things? 29 And Jesus answered and said unto them, I will also ask of you one question, and answer me, and I will tell you by what authority I do these things. 30 The baptism of John, was it from heaven, or of men? answer me. 31 And they reasoned with themselves, saying, If we shall say, From heaven; he will say, Why then did ye not believe him? 32 But if we shall say, Of men; they feared the people: for all men counted John, that he was a prophet indeed. 33 And they answered and said unto Jesus, We cannot tell. And Jesus answering saith unto them, Neither do I tell you by what authority I do these things.” (Mark 11:27-33 KJV)

[Cross References: Matthew 21:23-27, Luke 20:1-8.]

PARABLE OF THE CULTIVATORS

“1 And he began to speak unto them by parables. A certain man planted a vineyard, and set an hedge about it, and digged a place for the winefat, and built a tower, and let it out to husbandmen, and went into a far country. 2 And at the season he sent to the husbandmen a servant, that he might receive from the husbandmen of the fruit of the vineyard. 3 And they caught him, and beat him, and sent him away empty. 4 And again he sent unto them another servant; and at him they cast stones, and wounded him in the head, and sent him away shamefully handled. 5 And again he sent another; and him they killed, and many others; beating some, and killing some. 6 Having yet therefore one son, his wellbeloved, he sent him also last unto them, saying, They will reverence my son. 7 But those husbandmen said among themselves, This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and the inheritance shall be our's. 8 And they took him, and killed him, and cast him out of the vineyard. 9 What shall therefore the lord of the vineyard do? he will come and destroy the husbandmen, and will give the vineyard unto others. 10 And have ye not read this scripture; The stone which the builders rejected is become the head of the corner: 11 This was the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes?” (Mark 12:1-11 KJV)

[Cross References: Matthew 21:33-44, Luke 20:9-18.]

FEAR PREVENTS JESUS' CAPTURE

“12 And they sought to lay hold on him, but feared the people: for they

knew that he had spoken the parable against them: and they left him, and went their way.” (Mark 12:12 KJV)

[Cross References: Matthew 21:45-46, Luke 20:19.]

A QUESTION: IS IT LAWFUL TO GIVE TRIBUTE TO CAESAR?

“13 And they send unto him certain of the Pharisees and of the Herodians, to catch him in his words. 14 And when they were come, they say unto him, Master, we know that thou art true, and carest for no man: for thou regardest not the person of men, but teachest the way of God in truth: Is it lawful to give tribute to Caesar, or not? 15 Shall we give, or shall we not give? But he, knowing their hypocrisy, said unto them, Why tempt ye me? bring me a penny, that I may see it. 16 And they brought it. And he saith unto them, Whose is this image and superscription? And they said unto him, Caesar's. 17 And Jesus answering said unto them, Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's. And they marvelled at him.” (Mark 12:13-17 KJV)

[Cross References: Matthew 22:15-22, Luke 20:20-26.]

A QUESTION: WHAT HAPPENS IN THE RESURRECTION?

“18 Then come unto him the Sadducees, which say there is no resurrection; and they asked him, saying, 19 Master, Moses wrote unto us, If a man's brother die, and leave his wife behind him, and leave no children, that his brother should take his wife, and raise up seed unto his brother. 20 Now there were seven brethren: and the first took a wife, and dying left no seed. 21 And the second took her, and died, neither left he any seed: and the third likewise. 22 And the seven had her, and left no seed: last of all the woman died also. 23 In the resurrection therefore, when they shall rise, whose wife shall she be of them? for the seven had her to wife. 24 And Jesus answering said unto them, Do ye not therefore err, because ye know not the scriptures, neither the power of God? 25 For when they shall rise from the dead, they neither marry, nor are given in marriage; but are as the angels which are in heaven. 26 And as touching the dead, that they rise: have ye not read in the book of Moses, how in the bush God spake unto him, saying, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? 27 He is not the God of the dead, but the God of the living: ye therefore do greatly err.” (Mark 12:18-27 KJV)

[Cross References: Matthew 22:23-33, Luke 20:27-40.]

A QUESTION: WHICH IS THE FIRST COMMANDMENT?

“28 And one of the scribes came, and having heard them reasoning together, and perceiving that he had answered them well, asked him, Which is the first commandment of all? 29 And Jesus answered him, The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord: 30 And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment. 31 And the second is like, namely this, Thou shalt love thy

neighbour as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these. 32 And the scribe said unto him, Well, Master, thou hast said the truth: for there is one God; and there is none other but he: 33 And to love him with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the soul, and with all the strength, and to love his neighbour as himself, is more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices. 34 And when Jesus saw that he answered discreetly, he said unto him, Thou art not far from the kingdom of God. And no man after that durst ask him any question.” (Mark 12:28-34 KJV)

[Cross References: Matthew 22:34-40.]

A QUESTION BY JESUS: HOW IS CHRIST THE SON OF DAVID?

“35 And Jesus answered and said, while he taught in the temple, How say the scribes that Christ is the son of David? 36 For David himself said by the Holy Ghost, The LORD said to my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool. 37 David therefore himself calleth him Lord; and whence is he then his son? And the common people heard him gladly.” (Mark 12:35-37 KJV)

[Cross References: Matthew 22:41-46, Luke 20:41-44.]

JESUS DENOUNCES THE SCRIBES

“38 And he said unto them in his doctrine, Beware of the scribes, which love to go in long clothing, and love salutations in the marketplaces, 39 And the chief seats in the synagogues, and the uppermost rooms at feasts: 40 Which devour widows' houses, and for a pretence make long prayers: these shall receive greater damnation.” (Mark 12:38-40 KJV)

[Cross References: Matthew 23:1-36, Luke 20:45-47.]

THE POOR WIDOW

“41 And Jesus sat over against the treasury, and beheld how the people cast money into the treasury: and many that were rich cast in much. 42 And there came a certain poor widow, and she threw in two mites, which make a farthing. 43 And he called unto him his disciples, and saith unto them, Verily I say unto you, That this poor widow hath cast more in, than all they which have cast into the treasury: 44 For all they did cast in of their abundance; but she of her want did cast in all that she had, even all her living.” (Mark 12:41-44 KJV)

[Cross References: Luke 21:1-4.]

THE DISCIPLES ASK JESUS ABOUT THE TEMPLE

“1 And as he went out of the temple, one of his disciples saith unto him, Master, see what manner of stones and what buildings are here! 2 And Jesus answering said unto him, Seest thou these great buildings? there shall not be left one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down. 3 And as he sat upon the mount of Olives over against the temple, Peter and James and John and Andrew asked him privately, 4 Tell us, when

shall these things be? and what shall be the sign when all these things shall be fulfilled?" (Mark 13:1-4)

[Cross References: Matthew 24:1-3, Luke 21:5-7.]

THE EVENTS LEADING TO THE DESTRUCTION OF THE TEMPLE

"5 And Jesus answering them began to say, Take heed lest any man deceive you: 6 For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many. 7 And when ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars, be ye not troubled: for such things must needs be; but the end shall not be yet. 8 For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be earthquakes in divers places, and there shall be famines and troubles: these are the beginnings of sorrows. 9 But take heed to yourselves: for they shall deliver you up to councils; and in the synagogues ye shall be beaten: and ye shall be brought before rulers and kings for my sake, for a testimony against them. 10 And the gospel must first be published among all nations. 11 But when they shall lead you, and deliver you up, take no thought beforehand what ye shall speak, neither do ye premeditate: but whatsoever shall be given you in that hour, that speak ye: for it is not ye that speak, but the Holy Ghost. 12 Now the brother shall betray the brother to death, and the father the son; and children shall rise up against their parents, and shall cause them to be put to death. 13 And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake: but he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved. 14 But when ye shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing where it ought not, (let him that readeth understand,) then let them that be in Judaea flee to the mountains: 15 And let him that is on the housetop not go down into the house, neither enter therein, to take any thing out of his house: 16 And let him that is in the field not turn back again for to take up his garment. 17 But woe to them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days! 18 And pray ye that your flight be not in the winter. 19 For in those days shall be affliction, such as was not from the beginning of the creation which God created unto this time, neither shall be. 20 And except that the Lord had shortened those days, no flesh should be saved: but for the elect's sake, whom he hath chosen, he hath shortened the days." (Mark 13:5-20 KJV)

[Cross References: Matthew 24:4-22, Luke 21:8-24.]

THE EVENTS LEADING TO CHRIST'S SECOND COMING

"21 And then if any man shall say to you, Lo, here is Christ; or, lo, he is there; believe him not: 22 For false Christs and false prophets shall rise, and shall shew signs and wonders, to seduce, if it were possible, even the elect. 23 But take ye heed: behold, I have foretold you all things. 24 But in those days, after that tribulation, the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, 25 And the stars of heaven shall fall, and the powers that are in heaven shall be shaken. 26 And then shall they see the Son of man coming in the clouds with great power and glory. 27 And then

shall he send his angels, and shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from the uttermost part of the earth to the uttermost part of heaven. 28 Now learn a parable of the fig tree; When her branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is near: 29 So ye in like manner, when ye shall see these things come to pass, know that it is nigh, even at the doors. 30 Verily I say unto you, that this generation shall not pass, till all these things be done. 31 Heaven and earth shall pass away: but my words shall not pass away. 32 But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father. 33 Take ye heed, watch and pray: for ye know not when the time is. 34 For the Son of Man is as a man taking a far journey, who left his house, and gave authority to his servants, and to every man his work, and commanded the porter to watch. 35 Watch ye therefore: for ye know not when the master of the house cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at the cockcrowing, or in the morning: 36 Lest coming suddenly he find you sleeping. 37 And what I say unto you I say unto all, Watch.” (Mark 13:21-36 KJV)

[Cross References: Matthew 24:23-44 , Luke21:25-36]

Nisan 12

[[Additional Comments: It appears that during the whole of the daytime period of Nisan 12 and running through into Nisan 13 Jesus remained in retirement at Bethany. Jesus would be most conscious of the timing of events, avoiding arrest until after he had celebrated the Passover and instituted the New Covenant with his disciples.]

PLOT AGAINST JESUS

“1 After two days was the feast of the passover, and of unleavened bread: and the chief priests and the scribes sought how they might take him by craft, and put him to death. 2 But they said, Not on the feast day, lest there be an uproar of the people.” (Mark 14:1-2 KJV)

[Additional Comments: Some may wish to place this event in Nisan 11 as it follows immediately a period of extensive teaching. What is probable however; is that Jesus taught through the afternoon into the evening. Hence running through from Nisan 11 to Nisan 12.]

[Cross References: Matthew 26:1-2, Luke 22:1-2.]

JUDAS ARRANGES THE BETRAYAL

“10 And Judas Iscariot, one of the twelve, went unto the chief priests, to betray him unto them. 11 And when they heard it, they were glad, and promised to give him money. And he sought how he might conveniently betray him.” (Mark 14:10-11 KJV)

[Cross References: Matthew 26:14-15, Luke22:3-6.]

Nisan 13

(First day of Unleavened Bread)

PREPARATION FOR THE PASSOVER

“12 And the first day of unleavened bread, when they killed the passover, his disciples said unto him, Where wilt thou that we go and prepare that thou mayest eat the passover? 13 And he sendeth forth two of his disciples, and saith unto them, Go ye into the city, and there shall meet you a man bearing a pitcher of water: follow him. 14 And wheresoever he shall go in, say ye to the goodman of the house, The Master saith, Where is the guestchamber, where I shall eat the passover with my disciples? 15 And he will shew you a large upper room furnished and prepared: there make ready for us. 16 And his disciples went forth, and came into the city, and found as he had said unto them: and they made ready the passover.”
(Mark 14:12-16 KJV)

[Cross References: Matthew 26: 17-19, Luke 22:7-13.]

Nisan 14
(Preparation day)

AT THE LAST SUPPER

“17 And in the evening he cometh with the twelve. 18 And as they sat and did eat, Jesus said, Verily I say unto you, One of you which eateth with me shall betray me. 19 And they began to be sorrowful, and to say unto him one by one, Is it I? and another said, Is it I? 20 And he answered and said unto them, It is one of the twelve, that dippeth with me in the dish. 21 The Son of man indeed goeth, as it is written of him: but woe to that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed! good were it for that man if he had never been born. 22 And as they did eat, Jesus took bread, and blessed, and brake it, and gave to them, and said, Take, eat: this is my body. 23 And he took the cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them: and they all drank of it. 24 And he said unto them, This is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many. 25 Verily I say unto you, I will drink no more of the fruit of the vine, until that day that I drink it new in the kingdom of God. 26 And when they had sung an hymn, they went out into the mount of Olives. 27 And Jesus saith unto them, All ye shall be offended because of me this night: for it is written, I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered. 28 But after that I am risen, I will go before you into Galilee. 29 But Peter said unto him, Although all shall be offended, yet will not I. 30 And Jesus saith unto him, Verily I say unto thee, That this day, even in this night, before the cock crow twice, thou shalt deny me thrice. 31 But he spake the more vehemently, If I should die with thee, I will not deny thee in any wise. Likewise also said they all.” (Mark 14:17-31 KJV)

[Additional Comments: John’s account has Judas Iscariot leaving before the institution of the New Covenant. Although he was in line to become one of the foundation stones of the Church and his name would have been on one of the

gates, his greed blinded him to all but the present. What a warning for Christians today!]

[Cross References: Matthew 26:20-35, Luke 22:14-34, John 13:1 to John 17:26, 1 Corinthians 11:23-25.]

AT GETHSEMANE

“32 And they came to a place which was named Gethsemane: and he saith to his disciples, Sit ye here, while I shall pray. 33 And he taketh with him Peter and James and John, and began to be sore amazed, and to be very heavy; 34 And saith unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful unto death: tarry ye here, and watch. 35 And he went forward a little, and fell on the ground, and prayed that, if it were possible, the hour might pass from him. 36 And he said, Abba, Father, all things are possible unto thee; take away this cup from me: nevertheless not what I will, but what thou wilt. 37 And he cometh, and findeth them sleeping, and saith unto Peter, Simon, sleepest thou? couldest not thou watch one hour? 38 Watch ye and pray, lest ye enter into temptation. The spirit truly is ready, but the flesh is weak. 39 And again he went away, and prayed, and spake the same words. 40 And when he returned, he found them asleep again, (for their eyes were heavy,) neither wist they what to answer him. 41 And he cometh the third time, and saith unto them, Sleep on now, and take your rest: it is enough, the hour is come; behold, the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. 42 Rise up, let us go; lo, he that betrayeth me is at hand. 43 And immediately, while he yet spake, cometh Judas, one of the twelve, and with him a great multitude with swords and staves, from the chief priests and the scribes and the elders. 44 And he that betrayed him had given them a token, saying, Whomsoever I shall kiss, that same is he; take him, and lead him away safely. 45 And as soon as he was come, he goeth straightway to him, and saith, Master, master; and kissed him. 46 And they laid their hands on him, and took him. 47 And one of them that stood by drew a sword, and smote a servant of the high priest, and cut off his ear. 48 And Jesus answered and said unto them, Are ye come out, as against a thief, with swords and with staves to take me? 49 I was daily with you in the temple teaching, and ye took me not: but the scriptures must be fulfilled. 50 And they all forsook him, and fled. 51 And there followed him a certain young man, having a linen cloth cast about his naked body; and the young men laid hold on him: 52 And he left the linen cloth, and fled from them naked.” (Mark 14:32-52 KJV)

[Cross References: Matthew 26:30, 36-56, Luke 22:39-53, John 18:1-12.]

AT THE PALACE OF THE HIGH PRIEST

“53 And they led Jesus away to the high priest: and with him were assembled all the chief priests and the elders and the scribes. 54 And Peter followed him afar off, even into the palace of the high priest: and he sat with the servants, and warmed himself at the fire. 55 And the chief priests and all the council sought for witness against Jesus to put him to

death; and found none. 56 For many bare false witness against him, but their witness agreed not together. 57 And there arose certain, and bare false witness against him, saying, 58 We heard him say, I will destroy this temple that is made with hands, and within three days I will build another made without hands. 59 But neither so did their witness agree together. 60 And the high priest stood up in the midst, and asked Jesus, saying, Answerest thou nothing? what is it which these witness against thee? 61 But he held his peace, and answered nothing. Again the high priest asked him, and said unto him, Art thou the Christ, the Son of the Blessed? 62 And Jesus said, I am: and ye shall see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven. 63 Then the high priest rent his clothes, and saith, What need we any further witnesses? 64 Ye have heard the blasphemy: what think ye? And they all condemned him to be guilty of death. 65 And some began to spit on him, and to cover his face, and to buffet him, and to say unto him, Prophecy: and the servants did strike him with the palms of their hands. 66 And as Peter was beneath in the palace, there cometh one of the maids of the high priest: 67 And when she saw Peter warming himself, she looked upon him, and said, And thou also wast with Jesus of Nazareth. 68 But he denied, saying, I know not, neither understand I what thou sayest. And he went out into the porch; and the cock crew. 69 And a maid saw him again, and began to say to them that stood by, This is one of them. 70 And he denied it again. And a little after, they that stood by said again to Peter, Surely thou art one of them: for thou art a Galilaeen, and thy speech agreeth thereto. 71 But he began to curse and to swear, saying, I know not this man of whom ye speak. 72 And the second time the cock crew. And Peter called to mind the word that Jesus said unto him, Before the cock crew twice, thou shalt deny me thrice. And when he thought thereon, he wept.”
(Mark 14:53-72 KJV)

[Cross References: Matthew 26:57 to 27:1, Luke 22:54-71, John 18:13-27.]

[Additional Comments: Mark 14:68 KJV “and the cock crew” Does not appear in the Vatican 1209 manuscript.]

AT THE GOVERNOR’S PALACE

“1 And straightway in the morning the chief priests held a consultation with the elders and scribes and the whole council, and bound Jesus, and carried him away, and delivered him to Pilate. 2 And Pilate asked him, Art thou the King of the Jews? And he answering said unto them, Thou sayest it. 3 And the chief priests accused him of many things: but he answered nothing. 4 And Pilate asked him again, saying, Answerest thou nothing? behold how many things they witness against thee. 5 But Jesus yet answered nothing; so that Pilate marvelled. 6 Now at that feast he released unto them one prisoner, whomsoever they desired. 7 And there was one named Barabbas, which lay bound with them that had made insurrection with him, who had committed murder in the insurrection. 8 And the multitude crying aloud began to desire him to do as he had ever

done unto them. 9 But Pilate answered them, saying, Will ye that I release unto you the King of the Jews? 10 For he knew that the chief priests had delivered him for envy. 11 But the chief priests moved the people, that he should rather release Barabbas unto them. 12 And Pilate answered and said again unto them, What will ye then that I shall do unto him whom ye call the King of the Jews? 13 And they cried out again, Crucify him. 14 Then Pilate said unto them, Why, what evil hath he done? And they cried out the more exceedingly, Crucify him. 15 And so Pilate, willing to content the people, released Barabbas unto them, and delivered Jesus, when he had scourged him, to be crucified. 16 And the soldiers led him away into the hall, called Praetorium; and they call together the whole band. 17 And they clothed him with purple, and platted a crown of thorns, and put it about his head, 18 And began to salute him, Hail, King of the Jews! 19 And they smote him on the head with a reed, and did spit upon him, and bowing their knees worshipped him. 20 And when they had mocked him, they took off the purple from him, and put his own clothes on him, and led him out to crucify him.” (Mark 15:1-20 KJV)

[Cross References: Matthew 27:2, 11-14, 27-31, Luke 23:1-25, John 18:28 to 19-16.]

AT GOLGOTHA

“21 And they compel one Simon a Cyrenian, who passed by, coming out of the country, the father of Alexander and Rufus, to bear his cross. 22 And they bring him unto the place Golgotha, which is, being interpreted, The place of a skull. 23 And they gave him to drink wine mingled with myrrh: but he received it not. 24 And when they had crucified him, they parted his garments, casting lots upon them, what every man should take. 25 And it was the third hour, and they crucified him. 26 And the superscription of his accusation was written over, THE KING OF THE JEWS. 27 And with him they crucify two thieves; the one on his right hand, and the other on his left. 28 And the scripture was fulfilled, which saith, And he was numbered with the transgressors. 29 And they that passed by railed on him, wagging their heads, and saying, Ah, thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days, 30 Save thyself, and come down from the cross. 31 Likewise also the chief priests mocking said among themselves with the scribes, He saved others; himself he cannot save. 32 Let Christ the King of Israel descend now from the cross, that we may see and believe. And they that were crucified with him reviled him. 33 And when the sixth hour was come, there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour. 34 And at the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani? which is, being interpreted, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? 35 And some of them that stood by, when they heard it, said, Behold, he calleth Elias. 36 And one ran and filled a sponge full of vinegar, and put it on a reed, and gave him to drink, saying, Let alone; let us see whether Elias will come to take him down. 37 And Jesus cried with a loud voice, and gave up the ghost. 38 And the veil

of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom. 39 And when the centurion, which stood over against him, saw that he so cried out, and gave up the ghost, he said, Truly this man was the Son of God. 40 There were also women looking on afar off: among whom was Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James the less and of Joses, and Salome; 41 (Who also, when he was in Galilee, followed him, and ministered unto him;) and many other women which came up with him unto Jerusalem. 42 And now when the even was come, because it was the preparation, that is, the day before the sabbath, 43 Joseph of Arimathaea, an honourable counsellor, which also waited for the kingdom of God, came, and went in boldly unto Pilate, and craved the body of Jesus. 44 And Pilate marvelled if he were already dead: and calling unto him the centurion, he asked him whether he had been any while dead. 45 And when he knew it of the centurion, he gave the body to Joseph. 46 And he bought fine linen, and took him down, and wrapped him in the linen, and laid him in a sepulchre which was hewn out of a rock, and rolled a stone unto the door of the sepulchre. 47 And Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Joses beheld where he was laid.” (Mark 15:21-47 KJV)

[Cross References: Matthew 27:32-66, Luke 23:26-56, John 19:17-42.]

[Additional Comments: Mark states at verse 25 that it was the third hour that Jesus was impaled, John however, 19:14 states it was the sixth hour.]

Events of Nisan 14

- ?? The eating of the Passover. (Luke 22:14-18) Luke’s account itemizes the events at the Last Supper and the succeeding developments in a different order to the other accounts. They have been listed below in what appears to be their most likely order.
- ?? ? Jesus washes the feet of his disciples. (John 13:4-16)
- ?? ? Prophecy of betrayal. (Matthew 26:20-25, Mark 14:17-21, Luke 22:21-23, John 13:17-26 x Psalms 41:9)
- ?? ? Judas leaves the company. (John 13:27-30)
- ?? ? Institution of the New Covenant. (Matthew 26:26-29, Mark 14:22-25, Luke 22:19-20, 1 Corinthians 10:16, 11:23-26) Luke places this event before Jesus prophesies his betrayal and Judas’ departure. The other accounts lend a greater weight to suggest that he left before the institution of the New Covenant.
- ?? ? More teachings by Jesus. Luke 22:24-30
- ?? ? Jesus foretells Peter’s denial. (Matthew 26:30-35, Mark 14:26-31, Luke 22:31-34)
- ?? ? The farewell discourses. (John 13:31 to 16:33 — inc ‘Many rooms,’ ‘I am the way,’ ‘To see me is to have seen the Father,’ ‘Anything in my name,’ ‘To love me is to keep my commandments,’ ‘I will send you the Holy Spirit,’ ‘The true vine,’ ‘Hated by the world’ x Psalms 35:19, ‘You will see me again.’)
- ?? ? Jesus foretells his arrest. (Luke 22:35-38)
- ?? ? Jesus prays for his disciples. (John 17:1-26)

- ?? Jesus and his disciples move to the Garden of Gethsemane. (Matthew 26:36, Mark 14:32, Luke 22:39, John 18:1-3)
- ?? ? Jesus prays while the disciples sleep. (Matthew 26:37-46, Mark 14:32-42, Luke 22:40-46)
- ?? ? Jesus is betrayed. (Matthew 26:47-50, Mark 14:43-45, Luke 22:47-48, John 18:4-9 x John 6:39)
- ?? ? Jesus is arrested. (Matthew 26:50, Mark 14:46, 48-49, Luke 22:52-54a, John 18:12)
- ?? ? Peter wounds the high priest's servant, (Matthew 26:51-55, Mark 14:47, Luke 22:49-51, John 18:10-11)
- ?? ? The disciples desert Jesus. (Matthew 26:56, Mark 14:50-52)
- ?? Peter and another disciple follow Jesus. (Matthew 26:58, Mark 14:54, Luke 22:54, John 18:15-18) Although each of the Bible writers record this event in slightly different orders it seems logical to place it here.
- ?? Jesus is taken before Annas. (John 18:13-14, 19-23)
- ?? Jesus is sent to Caiaphas. (Matthew 26:57, Mark 14:53, Luke 22:54, John 18:24)
- ?? ? Jesus Falsely Accused but gives no answer. (Matthew 26:59-63a, Mark 14:55-61a)
- ?? ? The Most Remarkable Statement of All Time. (Matthew 26:63-66, Mark 14:61-64, Luke 22:66-71) *"Art thou the Christ, the Son of the Blessed? And Jesus said, I am: and ye shall see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven."* (KJV) Although privately he indicated that he was the Christ, this is the first and only public statement Jesus ever made to that effect. His oratory and control of this situation must have made it the most outstanding 'punch line' ever.
- ?? ? Jesus is abused. (Matthew 26:67-68, Mark 14:65, Luke 22:63-65)
- ?? Peter denies Jesus. (Matthew 26:69-75, Mark 14:66-72, Luke 22:55-62, John 18:17, 25-27)
- ?? Judas hangs himself: (Matthew 27:3-10, Acts 1:16-20) This probably happened while Jesus was before Pilate.
- ?? Jesus taken before Pilate. (Matthew 27:1-2, 11-26 inc Pilate's wife's dream, Mark 15:1, Luke 23:1, John 18:28-32)
- ?? ? Pilate declares Jesus innocent. (Matthew 27:22-25, Mark 15:14, Luke 23:3-4, John 18:33-38)
- ?? ? Jesus sent to Herod and back to Pilate. (Luke 23:5-12)
- ?? ? Barabbas is released. (Matthew 27:26, Luke 23:13-25, Mark 15:15, John 18:39-40)
- ?? ? Jesus is abused. (Matthew 27:27-31, Mark 15:16-20, John 19:1-3)
- ?? ? Pilate yet again declares Jesus innocent. (John 19:4) the sixth hour.
- ?? Jesus at Golgotha. (John 19:17-37)
- ?? ? Simon enlisted to carry the [stauros]. (Matthew 27:32, Mark 15:21-22, Luke 23:26, John 19:17) John states Jesus was the carrier. Possibly he was too exhausted to continue.
- ?? ? A large number of people including women follow. (Luke 23:27-31)

- ?? ? Jesus refuses wine mixed with gall or myrrh. (Matthew 27:33-34, Mark 15:23)
- ?? ? Jesus is impaled. (Matthew 27:36a, Mark 15:24-25 the third hour, Luke 23:32-33, John 19:18)
- ?? ? Soldiers cast lots over Jesus clothing. (Matthew 27:35-36, Mark 15:24, Luke 23:34, John 19:23-24, Psalms 22:18)
- ?? ? Pilate has a sign 'King of the Jews' placed above Jesus head. (Matthew 27:37, Mark 15:26, Luke 23:38, John 19:19-22)
- ?? ? Two robbers are also impaled. (Matthew 27:38, Mark 15:27, John 19:18)
- ?? ? The crowds mock Jesus. (Matthew 27:39-44, Mark 15:29-32, Luke 23:35-37)
- ?? ? Jesus speaks to one of the robbers. (Luke 23:39-43)
- ?? ? Jesus places his mother in John's charge. (John 19:25-27)
- ?? ? Darkness falls over all the land. (Matthew 27:45, Mark 15:33 the sixth to the ninth hour, Luke 23:44 the sixth to the ninth hour)
- ?? ? Jesus dies. (Matthew 27:46-50, Mark 15:34-37 the ninth hour, Luke 23:46, John 19:28-30)
- ?? ? The Temple curtain is torn in two. (Matthew 27:51, Mark 15:38, Luke 23:45)
- ?? ? An earthquake occurs. (Matthew 27:52-53)
- ?? ? The army officer and others exclaim, "This was the Son of God". (Matthew 27:54, Mark 15:39, Luke 23:47-48)
- ?? ? Jesus is pierced. (John 19:31-37 x Psalms 34:20 / Exodus 12:46, Zechariah 12:10)
- ?? ? The women observe from a distance. (Matthew 27:55-56, Mark 15:40-41, Luke 23:49)
- ?? Jesus body is removed to the sepulchre. (Matthew 27:57-61, Mark 15:42-47, Luke 23:50-56, John 19:38-42) The use of a new tomb was providential to allay accusations that it was not Jesus that was raised.

Nisan 15 ***(Sabbath)***

Events of Nisan 15

- ?? The sepulchre is secured. (Matthew 27:62-66)

Nisan 16 ***(First day of the week)***

THE WOMEN ARRIVE AT THE SEPULCHRE

"1 And when the sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome, had bought sweet spices, that they might come and anoint him. 2 And very early in the morning the first day of the week, they came unto the sepulchre at the rising of the sun. 3 And they said among themselves, Who shall roll us away the stone from the door of

the sepulchre? 4 And when they looked, they saw that the stone was rolled away: for it was very great. 5 And entering into the sepulchre, they saw a young man sitting on the right side, clothed in a long white garment; and they were affrighted. 6 And he saith unto them, Be not affrighted: Ye seek Jesus of Nazareth, which was crucified: he is risen; he is not here: behold the place where they laid him. 7 But go your way, tell his disciples and Peter that he goeth before you into Galilee: there shall ye see him, as he said unto you.” (Mark 16:1-7 KJV)

[Cross References: Matthew 28:1-8, Luke 24:1-8, John 20:1-2.]

THE WOMEN REPORT TO THE DISCIPLES

“8 And they went out quickly, and fled from the sepulchre; for they trembled and were amazed: neither said they any thing to any man; for they were afraid. 9 Now when Jesus was risen early the first day of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom he had cast seven devils. 10 And she went and told them that had been with him, as they mourned and wept. 11 And they, when they had heard that he was alive, and had been seen of her, believed not.” (Mark 16:8-11 KJV)

[Cross References: John 20:11-18]

Events of Nisan 16

- ?? An earthquake occurs and an angel appears. (Matthew 28:2-4)
- ?? The women visit the sepulchre. (Matthew 28:1, 5-8, Mark 16:1-11, Luke 24:1-11, John 20:1-2)
- ?? Jesus speaks to Mary. (Matthew 28:9-10, John 20:11-18)
- ?? The soldier guard is bribed. (Matthew 28:15)
- ?? Peter and another disciple visit the sepulchre. (Luke 24:12, John 20:3-10)
- ?? Jesus appears to some of his disciples. (Mark 16:12-13, Luke 24:13-49, John 20:19-25)
- ?? Jesus departs. (Luke 24:50-53)

After Nisan 16

JESUS APPEARS TO HIS DISCIPLES

Events of after Nisan 16

- ?? Jesus appears at various times. (John 20:26-25)
- ?? Jesus gives his eleven disciples a commission. (Matthew 28:16-20)

==== END ====

FAITH PERSPECTIVES

Words of Encouragement

I have studied the Bible for the past 21 years with Jehovah's Witnesses and I can truly say that I appreciate the exposure they have given me to many Bible truths.

Though this has been my past experience I have never really learned to appreciate studying the Bible from a truly unbiased point of view until I came in contact with the "*Friends of the Nazarene*". I have learned to take a more analytical approach to Bible passages. Though I have been exposed to the Bible for many years my relationship with our Gracious Father and his wonderful Son has truly been augmented in the past 2 years since coming in contact with the "*Friends*". I would like to thank all those who have chosen to associate with this sincere group of people, particularly Mark Miller and Luis Padilla. I can sincerely say that thanks to the efforts of all those associated at this site I have learned to become a better Christian.

I would truly like to thank these two godly men for their contributions, their patience and sincere interest in relaying truth to others.

May our Gracious Father continue to bless the efforts of the "*Friends of the Nazarene*" as they continue to spread Bible truth.

God Bless in Christ...

George Kurio [JW elder and pioneer]

I would also like to thank the *Friends of the Nazarene* (which I am proud to be apart of). The *Friends* have helped me to light the fire of zeal in my heart! The Word of God is I believe with the *Friends of the Nazarene*! Why do I say this? Because who else on the world-wide Internet breaks down and explains with Scriptures? The Bible from the original Hebrew and Greek to give the readers a taste of the wonderful languages of the Prophets and Apostles! I can say from

experience that I have challenged the doctrine of the *Friends* only to find that every thing that I have come to accept is grounded in the Scriptures! Bless you, Brothers, (YOU NO WHO YOU ARE), for the hard work and study to help us like-minded people to understand the Word of God better. One brother is like a spiritual father to me! I must call him 5 times a week to ask him different questions about the Scriptures which he kindly and patiently answers and helps me to understand. I am really convicted of my beliefs and only pray that you brothers and sisters out there feel the same? I can only speak for myself but I can honestly say that I wasn't a Christian until I became associated with the *Friends of the Nazarenes*! It was only then when I started to see the True Gospel of Christ! The real Good News! And I can't express how good I feel words just cant describe it.

Peace In the name of our Lord Yeshua
Jason Williams and family [xJW, Southern California]

I very much appreciate all the hard work that has gone into your publications. It is astonishing to find that the truth is really out there and it is in the Bible. Thank you so much for your efforts, your publications have provided an avenue to get to know God and his Son better.

From LB when ordering *Nazarene Apocalypse*

I enjoy this site very much. It has a lot of very refreshing spiritual material. No pressure to conform nor any bias towards a particular theology. The reader is left to make his mind up on things without, indirectly, being made to feel the "wrath of God" if he does not agree and whilst I do not agree with all that is said I certainly agree with the spirit shown.

Keep it going

Christian love
FD

I am writing this to let you know how much the Friends of the Nazarene web site (<http://www.nazarene-friends.org/>) has helped me. My son found the site and shared with me Mark Miller's bio titled, Messianic Confessions that is found there. At this time, my son and I were having a hard time adjusting to our exit from the WBTS Organization. The shock

of discovering that there are errors in their teachings was quite dismaying to us, because as Jehovah's Witnesses, we were never allowed to question what that organization's Governing Body teaches because they claim that they are being used by God to put His food (spiritual food) on His "table" at the "proper time". They claim to represent God and Christ and if we question them then it is (to them) the same as questioning God. We discovered that there is no freedom of speech nor freedom of religion in that organization, unfortunately. Now we found ourselves in a predicament; shunned by friends and called an apostate by our family. We needed fellowship with others who also were like us who still love God, our Lord Jesus and still have faith in the Bible as God's Word but were free from a controlling organization. The "Friends" web site really helped us with reaching others like us and it was wonderful to see how much the Bible is discussed in there. This was so very encouraging to me. I also enjoyed seeing Christ's commandments listed together for easy reference and study. The monthly magazines were also very encouraging for us as well as the Bible Commentaries that Mark Miller has provided and is working so diligently on to help us to get a clearer understanding of the Christian Greek Scriptures. All of the work at that site has been a great help in my Bible study. I feel that our Heavenly Father answered my prayers when I asked Him for help in gaining Bible knowledge and in finding others who also truly love Truth, (over unity) righteousness and who enjoy freedom of speech, religion and the freedom to exercise control over their own personal conscience.

It is my hope and prayer that our Heavenly Father and our Lord Jesus continue to bless the good efforts being put forth at this site to direct people to Christ and to learn His commandments that God gave Him to enable them to be approved by God to become His children. Our praise and thanks goes to God and Christ first of all, and to the dear brothers who donated their time and efforts working on it.

Your sister in Christ,
Sheila~

Annual Report from Mark Miller

April 18, 2000 represents my 49th year celebrating the Lord's Supper. This first Memorial of the 3rd Millenium is also the 5th as a *Friend of the Nazarene*. The first I celebrated with a good Christian friend alone in the California desert. The second with another Christian sister in the southern California mountains. The

third with a group of 24 in Hemet, California, and the fourth with a combined group of over 40. This year will make a lovely milestone of our time in the Temple quarry, as we are prepared by His chisel and hammer.

An enormous amount of work has been accomplished this year with the Nazarene Commentary© drawing to something of a conclusion. It is our firm expectation that within a few months we will have 85% of the work available on CD. The donations for this effort will be used to prepare hard published tracts, booklets, and books for those who cannot afford a computer. We hope some of this will be in Spanish and German. These will be made available just for the cost of printing and mailing and free where appropriate.

This Memorial year of 1999/2000 has seen continued interest with a large number of men showing keen interest in Bible studies using the materials on the *Friends of the Nazarene* web site. One brother in San Francisco called recently to express his thanks for the work on Romans. We have also seen elders and pastors of other church groups download much of the information from the web site. Each week there are new acquaintances from the Internet who are expressing their appreciation for all the hard work. More and more families are beginning to hold regular Wednesday evening Bible Discussion and Devotion chat groups. Many of these expect to invite friends, relatives and neighbors to share in the godly conversation on the current weekly Bible reading.

In a humble respect we become truly international this month as two groups will hold Memorial and then the same public talk on Sunday: "*Follow the Lamb --- Who Will Lead Mankind in the 3^d Millenium?*" A tract has been prepared to give to interested persons. There are, of course, individuals and families scattered around the globe who identify themselves as *Friends of the Nazarene*. The God of our Lord Jesus the Nazarene bless all like-minded persons everywhere as they grow in a greater understand of the Bible.

Our own Friends group here in southern California – with our God's blessing – will possibly become a true congregation this year. It is likely our "sister congregation" in Spain will likewise take form. We are blessed in both areas with godly elders and young men who show a true zeal. We also have mature Christian sisters who show the same genuine interest. Our children are outstanding in their example as they share right along with the adults in the same program. Several sub-teen and teenage boys share each week in Bible readings that are sheer perfection.

We are beginning to encourage local groups or families to each have a donation box titled *Keep the Poor in Mind* [based on Galatians 2:10] as our Lord did. [John 12:5; 13:29] God will bless their use of such funds to aid those in need no matter who they are. In this way we may become spiritually perfect. [Luke 6:30-35]

It appears we may soon be blessed with the use of a special library of many hundreds of volumes – many collector's items. There are at least 100 versions of the New Testament. Also, one of our elders will be updating his computers to the latest versions with all the extras including a burner. It is hoped we can produce the Nazarene Commentary© CDs ourselves and save great cost. Please pray for this work as it will be an outstanding Bible study aid of nearly 2 million words in 3000 pages and over 10,000 footnotes. We feel the work covers about 85% of all Christian teachings.

Let us all pray for one another with “many upturned faces.” [2 Corinthians 1:11] that our remaining time in the flesh – as we eagerly anticipate the Return of our Lord – that we all diligently use our “talent” doing the Lord's business. Let us pray that Christ will continue to grow in our hearts and minds and the public will see in us the righteous walk of the Nazarene. Let us pray that all of us can continue “to follow the Lamb no matter where he goes.” [Revelation 14:4]

==== END ====

OBSERVING THE LORD'S SUPPER IN A WORTHY MANNER

[This article is based on the footnote commentary
of the Nazarene Commentary© on First Corinthians.]

The first mention of matters pertaining to the Lord's Supper begins with 1 Corinthians 10:15. Here we present the *Nazarene Saints Rendering* of First Corinthians with footnotes of interest regarding the primitive celebration which as an emblematic meal has come to be called Memorial, Communion, Eucharist, or simply the Lord's Supper.

You determine what I tell you: 1Co10:16 The Cup of the blessing that we are blessing, is it not the blood of the Christ? The Loaf which we are breaking, is it not a sharing of the body of the Christ? 1Co10:17 Because [there is] one Loaf, we many are one Body, for all of us are partaking from the one Loaf. [NSR]

ONE CUP AND ONE LOAF. The fact that Paul can mention “the Cup” and the “Loaf” without a preface is proof that three decades after the death of Jesus the “Memorial” was well established among non-Jewish Christians. [Matthew 26:27; Luke 22:17] Paul does not force a Jewish Passover on these Gentiles, but, almost in passing, uses the “Cup” and the “Loaf” as a lesson in fleeing idolatry.

The original Jewish Passover had no “cup” of wine. [Exodus 12:3-11] It was the Paschal lamb that had pointed the way to the sacrifice of Messiah on behalf of the Jewish peoples. When Christ celebrated his desired last Passover, it was

following such a traditional Jewish meal – somewhat altered by his generation – that Jesus introduced something completely new, with fresh symbolisms alien to past Jewish tradition. The later four cups used during the Passover meals were never symbols of blood for the very thought of drinking blood was something abhorrent to the Jew. However, the drinking of this blessed Christian “Cup” is called by Paul a sharing or communion in “the blood of the Christ.”

Such language will remind serious Bible readers of the Nazarene’s own words at John 6:53-58:

"Truly, truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink his blood, you have no life in you; 54 he who eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. 55 For my flesh is food indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. 56 He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me, and I in him. 57 As the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father, so he who eats me will live because of me. 58 This is the bread which came down from heaven, not such as the fathers ate and died; he who eats this bread will live for ever." [Revised Standard Version]

Though some think Jesus speaks of the Lord’s Supper, it is more likely the Nazarene is drawing an analogy with that ancient angelic food that fed the Israelites during their wilderness trek. Both cannibalism and drinking blood were anathema to the Jews and at such a thought they must have shuddered. [John 6:41, 52, 60] The illustration does draw a distinction between Christ’s fleshly body and his blood filled with that perfect human soul.

Like the Cup of Blessing, the unleavened Loaf of the “Table of the Lord” was also unlike the Paschal lamb of the Passover. Though the Jewish household was to be free of leaven during the Passover week, at no time does the unleavened bread of the Passover table ever picture the Body of the Messiah. It was first so used by the Nazarene following his last Passover meal. [Luke 26:26; Luke 22:19]

Evidently, at the Lord’s own table there was “one loaf” which he broke and passed among his eleven disciples. Paul compares the unity of the Church to the communion of all with this “one loaf” at the time of the Eucharist. This emblematic meal was not a family affair as is the Passover. It was a congregational or church-wide meeting where all could partake as one Body of this one Loaf. [Romans 12:5; 1 Corinthians 12:25; Ephesians 4:4]

Later, after the spread of Christianity and the formation of many hundreds of little home churches, these individually would meet. Though each partook of one loaf in their own locality, their common share was taking place at the same time as the entire spiritual fellowship of the Nazarene community. Such was an outstanding demonstration of unity in a true communal meal. [For details see below regarding 1 Corinthians 11:20ff.]

A COMMUNION WITH THE LORD. Paul continues by drawing on the example of those Jewish priests who still served at the Temple in Jerusalem. He writes:

1Co10:18 Consider fleshly Israel: Are not those who are eating the sacrifices sharers with the Altar? 1Co10:19 What, then, am I saying? That the thing sacrificed to an idol is anything? Or, that an idol is anything? [What I am saying is] that **what the non-Jews are sacrificing they are sacrificing to demons and not to God.** [Deuteronomy 32:17] But, I do not want you to become sharers with the demons. 1Co10:21 It is not possible for you to be drinking ? ? ? 's Cup and also a cup of demons. It is not possible for you to be partaking of ? ? ? 's **Table** [Malachi 1:7] and also a table of demons. Or, **“are we inciting the LORD to jealousy?”** [Deuteronomy 32:21] Are we stronger than Him? [NSR]

Paul argues first that partakers of a table have communion with the Altar, or God. His concern is that no Christian share, or have communion with, the Greek demons or gods – some of them triads. Also one cannot drink of both a Cup of God and a demonic cup. Or, the demonic table as well as the “Table of Yehowah.” [Malachi 1:7] Thus, he calls the Memorial table, the “table of Yehowah.”

In Israel when a Jew went to the Temple with his sin-offering as a “communion sacrifice” the priest would accept it and then divide it according to Levitical law --- a portion burnt up to God on the Altar, a portion served to the priests themselves, and the third portion to the Jewish worshipper. At the Temple of Herod there were eating booths around the courtyard. So one may see the true communion taking place as the smoke rose on the Altar to God, the priests sharing the meal, and the Jewish families eating in their private booths.

By comparison, Greek pagans who worshipped gods in trinities, also had sacrificial meals. Paul has already written on this matter of eating food offered to idols, and though the Christian is free to “eat anything sold in a meat market” [1 Corinthians 10:23], he cautions that they never “become sharers with the [Greek] demons.”

Never should the Christian “table of the Lord” -- with its Cup of Blessing and One Loaf – become tainted by those Greek triune demons. The Memorial, or Lord’s Supper, is a communion with the God of the Lord Jesus. Thus, all those tables throughout the earth are really one “Table of Jehovah.”

INSTRUCTIONS REGARDING THE LORD’S SUPPER. Paul begins to “set in order” [1 Corinthians 11:34] other disunifying matters which included the observance of the Lord’s Supper. Directly prior to this he has told the Corinthians that it is actually for the worse that they meet together. In other words it would almost be better if they had no Christian meetings. His reason has to do with heresies and the resulting schisms. In the process of this caution Paul explains the reason God permits such sectarianism: *“However, in giving you the following instructions I do not praise you. Because it is actually not for the better, but for the worse, that you meet together. For first of all when you assemble for meeting I hear that schisms exist in your midst. In part I believe this. Now there is a*

necessity that opinionated heresies exist in your midst that those approved may also become manifest among you." [1 Corinthians 11:17-19 NSR] With this prologue Paul turns to the Lord's Supper.

1Co11:20 Therefore, when you assemble together to the very same place, it is not appropriate for you to eat the Lord's Supper. **1Co11:21** For some persons take their own supper beforehand. So, one person is really hungry, while another has had too much to drink. **1Co11:22** Do you not have houses in which to eat and drink? Or, do you despise the assembly of the God, and shame those who have nothing? What should I tell you? Shall I praise you? In this matter I cannot praise you. [NSR]

Paul turns his attention to a problem among the Corinthians regarding the "Lord's Supper." In this phrase he refers to a congregational meeting of the whole ecclesia in one community. He will go on in chapter 14 to set in order other details regarding meetings in particular. There are several views on this meeting of the Lord's Supper in general: a] some view it as a regular meeting held weekly; others, view it is an annual meeting of special note to observe the Lord's death.

At present times there are four approaches to the Lord's Supper or Communion: a] the daily mass of the Catholic Church, usually in the morning; b] the weekly Sunday morning meeting of some Protestant churches; c] a service on the first Sunday of the month, often again in the morning; and, d] an annual observance generally held on Nisan 14. The later is almost always held in the evening of the full Spring moon.

First, Paul calls this assembly "the Lord's Supper" and so this is not a morning meeting but one held in the evening. [Note 1 Corinthians 11:23] History confirms that the early Church observed the Lord's Supper only once a year on the Hebrew date of Nisan 14 and thus these disciples were called "Fourteeners." No where does Paul describe the Lord's Supper as the Passover, that is, that traditional Jewish meal of lamb, unleavened bread and bitter herbs. Indeed, he later directs that church members should eat their meals at home. [1 Corinthians 11:22]

Paul writes that when they do gather for the Lord's Supper it is not proper for them to eat. Paul is to go on to provide two more reasons: a] shaming the poor; and, b] failure to see the Body of Christ in the emblems. [See articles on the Lord's Supper in Nazarene Commentary© *Biblical Articles.*]

Paul speaks of what has happened "before" they gather for the Lord's Supper. Since the affair is held in the evening, and is not a full meal like the Passover, the well-to-do have already eaten and drunk enough with the result that some are intoxicated. Paul's question whether they had homes for eating would confirm that the Lord's Supper is not a full meal like the Passover. Some Corinthians were either gathering for big meals of their own. Some believe these members of the Church arrived early and ate a full meal before the poor among them. Cliques

often form around economic distinctions as well as doctrine and personality preferences.

Surely the Corinthians as an urban congregation had “class distinctions” among themselves as well as doctrinal problems. [Compare notes on James 2:5.] Often the rich are oblivious to the need of the poor. If someone rich arrives at the Lord’s Supper fully fed and carrying the odor of wine, it has the affect of shaming those who are poor and unable to fed so well.

INSTRUCTIONS FROM THE LORD. Paul now gives precise instructions regarding the Lord’s Supper. He states that he has received these from the Lord and has already passed them along to the Corinthians. He now sees the need to repeat these.

1Co11:23 For I received from the Lord that which I also passed along to you: that the Lord Jesus, in the night in which he was to be handed over, took a loaf **1Co11:24** and after giving thanks he broke it and said: **“This is my body over you. Continue doing this in my remembrance.”** **1Co11:25** And just the same with the Cup, after having [the Passover] supper, saying, **“This is the Cup of the New Covenant in my blood. Continue doing this, as often as you ever may drink it, in my remembrance.”** **1Co11:26** For as often as you may ever be eating the Loaf and be drinking the Cup you continue to announce the death of the Lord until he should arrive. [NSR]

This is not Paul’s opinion, but something he has received by either special revelation, or through circumstances which reveal the Lord’s direction. The format that Paul provides is almost identical to that of Luke’s Gospel. This comes as no surprise as Luke was a regular traveling companion of Paul. [Note the sudden occurrence of “we” at Acts 16:10-13.] It is very likely that Luke was preparing his Gospel contemporary with Paul’s journeys. It is interesting that the Gospel of Matthew, known to have been written before 50 AD, had not reached Corinth with its unique description of the Lord’s Supper.

Paul is the one to call this celebration as the “Lord’s Supper.” Whenever this observance is held it is at night. Jesus ate the Jewish Passover on Nisan 14 just as the Hebrews had done since Egypt. [Exodus chapter 12] This tradition has largely changed to Sunday morning, rather than the irregular date of Nisan 14 which may fall on any day of the week. [See Eusebius’ *History of the Christian Church*.]

The “Loaf” was unleavened bread made only of flour and water during the week of the Passover. It was torn into a piece used to dipped into a sauce or part of the communal bowl. [Note John 13:26-30] This is still a common practice at meal time in much of the world.

The accounts of Matthew 26:26 and Mark 14:22 use the term “a blessing” while Luke 22:19 uses “gave thanks.” It is the Greek for “gave thanks” which has led to the name Eucharist for the Lord’s Supper. This wording likely confirms either Luke as the source, or a matter common to both Paul and Luke. It is also

possible Paul receives a direct revelation from the Lord that is also used by Luke. In the case of the first Lord's Supper Jesus broke the bread evidently into eleven pieces and distributed these to his faithful apostles.

Matthew's Greek version of his own Hebrew has TOUTOU [*this*] ESTIN [is] TO [the] SOMA [body] MOU [of me]. [Compare the same at Mark 14:22.] Paul's words [or those of Luke] are likely a paraphrase: TOUTO [this] MOU [of me] ESTIN [is] TO [the] SOMA [body] TO [the] HYPER [over] HUMON [you all]. The meaning of HYPER may be "cover" – "This is my body (which) covers all of you." Paul has already referred to this "Body" at 1 Corinthians 10:16. He will do so again at 1 Corinthians 11:27, 29. The use of SOMA specifically for the fleshly body of the Savior occurs only at Romans 7:4, Colossians 1:22; Hebrews 10:5, 10 and 1 Peter 2:24.

Neither Matthew nor Mark include TOUTO [this] POIEITE [be you doing] EIS [unto] TEN [the] EMEN [my] ANAMNESIN [memory again]. Some later manuscripts of Luke also omit the phrase. [Bezae Codices, 5th and 6th Centuries; Old Latin versions of the 2nd and 4th Centuries] Paul states he received this by Christ's revelation and though it is possible Matthew, Mark and Luke all omit it, it seems the intent of Jesus' words or manner was to institute something to be repeated or rememorialized.

Some argue that the Lord's Supper is missing from Acts, while others see it in a few places. It should be noted that there is no description of any early Church meeting in the book of Acts. The order of Christian meetings is first precisely laid out in 1 Corinthians chapter 14. It is worthy of note that in this process neither the Passover nor the Memorial is mentioned as part of a regular church meeting.

The early Christians did not celebrate Passover and such a description is completely lacking from Acts. Though Paul is seen in Jerusalem during Passover week, it is likely this was not to celebrate it, but to take advantage of the hundreds of thousands of Jews and non-Jews who gathered for the festival. [Acts 12:3; 20:6] So, Jesus does not suggest a repetition of the whole Passover meal, but only the new emblematic Eucharist which Paul now outlines.

This precise phrase, "this is the Cup of the New Covenant in my blood," is unique to Luke 22:20 and Paul. Both Matthew and Mark use the Lord's paraphrase of Exodus 24:8, "my blood of the covenant." Though it is possible the Lord might have used both phrases, it is more likely this is an inspired interpretative paraphrase by both Paul and Luke. Matthew and Mark add: "*which is poured out in behalf of many.*" Matthew adds, "*for forgiveness of sins.*" Some manuscripts of Luke add, "*which is to be poured out in your behalf.*"

The term "New Covenant" occurs first in Jeremiah 31:31 which is fully explained by Paul in Hebrews 8:8 and Hebrews 9:15. [See notes on Hebrews in Nazarene Commentary©.] The New Covenant is a fresh contractual agreement between

the God Yehowah and the New Israel of God composed of True Jews. [Romans 2:28, 29; 9:6; Galatians 3:29; 6:16; 1 Peter 2:5, 9; Revelation 7:4] This covenant was ratified on the basis of the poured out blood of Jesus Christ. Paul will mention the New Covenant again in 2 Corinthians 3:6.

Matthew, Mark and Luke omit the “continue doing this” in relation to the Cup but the intent seems clear from those words regarding the Loaf. Paul clearly has in mind a repetitive observance when he states, “as often as you ever may drink” the Cup. The early Church understood this to be an annual observance on Nisan 14. [See notes regarding Eusebias in Nazarene Commentary©.] Paul says, “in my remembrance.” Or , as the New English Bible has it, “Do this as a memorial to me.” The Greek is ANA-MNESIN [or “memory over again”] as opposed to AMNESIA. Thus, the Lord’s Supper is a commemoration, memorial, or anniversary.

When Paul writes, *“For as often as you may ever be eating the Loaf and be drinking the Cup,”* Paul only includes the elements from the original model. He does not include the entire Passover meal. He declares the reason for the observance of the Lord’s Supper when he states, *“You continue to announce the death of the Lord until he should arrive.”* That is, proclaim, herald, announce or tell about that death. Lamsa’s version from the Syriac renders this, *“You commemorate our Lord’s death until he comes.”*

The annual celebration of the Lord’s Supper by the Church was to proclaim the Lord’s death until his Parousia, or Arrival. [Matthew 24:29-31] At that time the living end-time Saints -- still celebrating the Memorial -- would be caught away in the Rapture to actually meet their Lord. [1 Thessalonians 4:15-17] It is clear had the Lord already arrived the Memorial would have ceased.

A SELF-EXAMINATION BEFORE OBSERVING THE LORD’S SUPPER. What was mainly wrong with the Corinthians and their observance of the Lord’s Supper was their attitude. This attitude was in danger of removing their focus from the purpose of the meeting. Paul now writes about the danger of partaking of the Memorial emblems in an unworthy manner and thus bringing judgment upon themselves.

1Co11:27 And so whoever may be eating the Loaf and drinking the Cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be held responsible regarding the Body and the Blood of the Lord.

1Co11:28 Let a person approve oneself individually, and then from the Loaf be eating and from the Cup be drinking. **1Co11:29** For the one eating and drinking is eating and drinking judgment if not discriminating the Body. [NSR]

Paul warns that they must not eat and drink of the emblematic meal “in an unworthy manner.” That is, unworthily, or in the wrong spirit, in an unworthy way. Up to this point this “unworthy manner” has been either the making of a whole meal out of the affair or the shaming of the poor in the process. Also, some were coming intoxicated to the meeting and that was clearly “unworthy” for one could

not focus on the Body of Christ in the emblems with a clear head and heart. Paul will go on to declare a more subtle “unworthiness” and that is a lack of a true discernment of the Body of Christ in the emblematic meal.

Those who partake unworthily “*will be held responsible regarding the Body and the Blood of the Lord.*” That is “guilty” as the King James Version puts it. [NEB: guilty of desecrating; GDS: profaning; MON: answer for a sin against.] The Greek is ENOKHOS, which according to *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance* [#1777] means to be held liable to a [religious] condition, or in danger of some spiritual violation. The warning is simple and yet filled with a heavy threat.

To miss the true value of Christ's sacrifice is a danger of the most serious kind for the Christian. Paul warns in frightful words in Hebrews 10:26-31:

HE10:26 For our sinning willingly after we receive the heightened knowledge of the Truth leaves no sacrifice regarding sins. **HE10:27** But rather some fearful expectation of condemnation, *‘a fiery zeal’* [Isaiah 26:11 LXX] *‘ready to consume the rebellious.’* [Deuteronomy 17:6] **HE10:28** Any person who disregards the Law of Moses dies without compassion upon *‘the testimony of two or three.’* [Deuteronomy 19:15] **HE10:29** How much worse do you think the punishment will be upon the person who has trampled underfoot the Son of the God? Who has esteemed the *‘blood of the covenant’* [Exodus 24:8] -- in which he was sanctified -- as something common, [and thus] outrageously scorned the pneuma of unmerited favor? **HE10:30** For we realize the One who said: *“Vengeance is mine. I will repay.”* [Deuteronomy 32:35] And, again: *“? ? ? ? will judge His People.”* [Deuteronomy 32:26] **HE10:31** It is a dreadful matter to fall into the hands of a Living God. [NSR]

Here Paul uses the same phrase the Nazarene used in his model presentation of the Lord's Supper, “blood of the covenant.” What puts a Christian in great danger of a judgmental condemnation is to “esteem [the Son's blood] as something common.” So, the “unworthy” attitude is one not rightly focused on the true appraisal of the Body of Christ. The worthy attitude would be to view the Loaf and the Cup and what they represent as “precious.” Compare this correct disposition at 1 Peter 1:18, 19, *“Realizing that you were liberated from a futile [form of] conduct handed down from your forefathers -- by means of a ransom -- not with the corruptible gold or silver --but rather with the precious blood of an unblemished and spotless Lamb – Christ's.”* [NSR; compare also 1 Peter 2:4, 6, 7]

Thus, Paul calls for self-examination, or a personal scrutiny. His words mean to test the inner self, or look into one's own heart. An inner look of self-examination must be made regarding the Loaf and the Cup and what they symbolize. The Christian must be doing this at all times anyway. Paul writes in 2 Corinthians 13:5, *“Continue to examine yourselves whether you still remain in the Faith. Prove what you really are!”* [NSR] However, the annual celebration of Memorial is a special case for insight – looking in the mirror of reality without flinching.

As James also warns about a certain type of Christian: *“But prove yourselves obedient to the Message, and do not be mere hearers of it, imposing a delusion upon yourselves. 23 For if any one listens but does not obey, he is like a man who carefully looks at his own face in a mirror. 24 Although he has looked carefully at himself, he goes away, and has immediately forgotten the sort of man he is.”* [James 1:22-24 Weymouth Translation]

At this time of year the words of the Psalmist are most appropriate:

*Vindicate me, O LORD, for I have walked in my integrity, and I have trusted in the LORD without wavering. 2 **Prove me, O LORD, and try me; test my heart and my mind.** 3 For thy steadfast love is before my eyes, and I walk in faithfulness to thee. 4 I do not sit with false men, nor do I consort with dissemblers; 5 I hate the company of evildoers, and I will not sit with the wicked. 6 I wash my hands in innocence, and go about thy altar, O LORD, 7 singing aloud a song of thanksgiving, and telling all thy wondrous deeds. 8 O LORD, I love the habitation of thy house, and the place where thy glory dwells. 9 Sweep me not away with sinners, nor my life with bloodthirsty men, 10 men in whose hands are evil devices, and whose right hands are full of bribes. 11 But as for me, I walk in my integrity; redeem me, and be gracious to me. 12 My foot stands on level ground; in the great congregation I will bless the LORD.* [Psalm 26 Revised Standard Version]

This is not a matter to ignore with impunity for the very Sacrifice – and therefore God – is the most serious of matters. [Romans 2:2] The idea of drinking judgment is very much out of Isaiah and Jeremiah. [Isaiah 51:17, 22; Jeremiah 25:15, 17, 28]

Paul hits the kernel of the problem in a failure “not to discriminate the Body” of Christ in the Memorial emblems. In other words one must use discernment, proper judgment, or a sense of propriety. The Greek word is DIA-KRINON [Strong's Exhaustive Concordance #1252] and means to separate thoroughly, and thus to make something quite different from another. The Body is that of Christ and how one appraises its value in God's redeeming purpose affects one's own sanctified condition. One cannot, as it were, cause Christ to offer himself all over again in one's behalf.

Compare the impossibility of restoring those that have rejected the Lord's Sacrifice, or treated it as something common or ordinary:

For it is impossible to restore to repentance those who have fallen away because they have been illuminated once for all time, have tasted the heavenly free gift, have become partakers of holy Pneuma, have tasted God's excellent message as well as the powers of the New Age to come. Because they impale the Son of The God all over again for themselves and as a result expose him again to public reproach. [Hebrews 6:4-6 NSR]

Thus, the Lord's Supper should be approached in a most worthy manner: a focused discernment on the sanctity of Christ's one sacrifice symbolized in the Loaf and the Cup. Such can only be attained by deep and earnest prayer accompanied by a meditative heart which has faced the Father squarely in the

spirit of Psalm 26, 'Examine and test me! Look into my most hidden motives and find a blameless soul.'

No doubt the genuine wheat-Christian who approaches God's Altar at the "table of the Lord" [1 Corinthians 10:18, 21; Hebrews 13:10] will also examine the past year to see if there has been an ongoing "perfecting of holiness in the fear of God." [2 Corinthians 7:1] Has faith in and appreciation for the work of God in Christ continued to grow? [Colossians 1:9, 10] Has this become more and more manifest in one's loving concern and charity for others? [1 John 3:23] Has our attitude, character and conduct truly become reflective of Christ's own image? [2 Corinthians 3:17, 18] Has our love for His Word as found in the teachings of the Nazarene [Hebrews 1:1] become fuller and fuller?

THE CONDITION IN CHRIST'S CHURCH TODAY. The global Church of Christ today – that is all of Christendom including every single sect or religious organization – is very much in the same condition as the Corinthian congregation – spiritually weak, spiritually sick, and spiritually asleep in death. Paul gives such a caution to the Corinthians and gives them the clue to recovery.

1Co11:30 Because of this many among you are weak and sick, and a sufficient number of you are asleep. 1Co11:31 But, if we approve ourselves it is not likely that we will be condemned. 1Co11:32 However, if being judged we are disciplined by the Lord, so that we should not be condemned together with the social order of humanity. 1Co11:33 And so, my brothers, when you do assembly together [to partake of the Lord's Supper] wait for one another. 1Co11:34 If anyone is hungry, let them eat at home, so that you do not all gather together for judgment. Now the remaining matters I shall set in order likely when I arrive. [NSR]

As in Corinth, so at the beginning of the 3rd Millinnium, too many Christians are ill, feeble, without strength, and sadly, sleeping in a spiritual unconsciousness. Though Paul warns of condemnation, he points to the way of recovery – the Lord's discipline. Paul writes of such discipline at Hebrews 12:4-10:

HE12:4 In your own struggle against that sin as yet you have not resisted until [you have shed] blood. HE12:5 You have forgotten the encouragement which speaks to you as sons: **"My son, do not belittle the LORD'S discipline, nor give up when you are being reprovved by Him.** HE12:6 **For whom ? ? ? ? loves He disciplines. He scourges every person He accepts as a son."** [Proverbs 3:11, 12 LXX]

HE12:7 It is through discipline that you will continue to endure. You approach The God as though you were sons. For what son is not disciplined by a father? HE12:8 However, if you are without this discipline we all share, really, you are bastards and not sons. HE12:9 Indeed, we had our fathers who disciplined us and we submitted to them with respect. How much more should we be in subjection to the Spiritual Father and live? HE12:10 For, indeed, these [human fathers] disciplined us for a few day according to what seemed [right] to them. However, [the Spiritual Father] does so for our benefit that we may partake of His holiness. [NSR]

What will result from this discipline? How does it take form?

HE12:11 Of course, at the moment any discipline is not joyful but causes grief. However, afterward [discipline] produces peace to those who have been trained by it with a righteous reward. **HE12:12** Therefore, ***raise those hands that droop, and straighten out those weak knees*** [Isaiah 35:3]. **HE12:13** Continue to ***make straight tracks with your feet*** [Proverbs 4:26], so that which is lame may not become disjointed, but rather that it should be healed. **HE12:14** ***Pursue peace*** [Psalm 34:14] with everyone, and also that sanctification without which no person will see the Lord. **HE12:15** Carefully watch that no one fall short of God's undeserved favor, nor ***any root of bitterness sprout up*** [Deuteronomy 29:18 LXX] causing trouble and the defilement of many. [NSR]

That discipline has done its work will be manifest in: a) "peace" – both an inner tranquility and a harmony within the Nazarene spiritual community; b) "righteousness" that results from faith with the accompanying works of love and charity; and, finally, c) "sanctification," or the state of spiritual purity and holiness that results not only from faith in the Body and Blood of Christ, but also that which results from "perfecting holiness in the fear of God." [2 Corinthians 7:1; Philippians 2:12; 1 Thessalonians 4:3-8]

Though one may be spiritually weak, ill, or even asleep, Paul sings the hymn that will cause recovery: *"Awake, O sleeper, and rise from the dead then Christ will enlighten you!"* [Ephesians 5:14 NSR Paraphrase] James encourages seeking out spiritual help from godly elders: *"Is any one ill? Let him send for the Elders of the Church, and let them pray over him, after anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. 15 And the prayer of faith will restore the sick man, and the Lord will raise him up to health; and if he has committed sins, they shall be forgiven."* [James 5:14, 15 Weymouth Translation]

The beloved apostle John writes to those sinning:

I write you, my little children, so you will not sin. But when we do sin we have a Helper in the Father's presence, a truly righteous one, Jesus Christ. He is the atonement not only for our sins, but also for the sins of the whole world. Now every time we keep obeying his commandments we will come to realize we have an intimate relationship with him. The individual who claims, "I have an intimate relationship with him," and yet fails to observe his commandments, this person is a liar and there is not a shred of truth in such one. However, the love of God is made complete in anyone who observes His Word. Because of such obedience we realize we remain in union with Him. Therefore, the person who says, "I remain in harmony with him," has the responsibility to live just as Jesus lived." [1 John 2:1-6 NSR Paraphrase]

REJOICE IN "THE DAY YEHOWAH HAS MADE"! When Jesus had finished his model of the communal Eucharist he is reported to have sung hymns with his apostles. Traditionally these were based on Psalms 111-118. Though all of these inspired hymns are worthy meditations for the Memorial season, there is one refrain that moves our hearts like no other. Listen to it now – hear the Saviour's singing voice backed by those harmonious apostolic throats – as we hear it once again with the same original joy [Psalm 118:22-29 NSR Paraphrase] --

*The Stone rejected by the builders
 Has become the head of the corner!
 From Yehowah this has occurred!
 Our eyes behold in wondrous awe!
 This is the Day Yehowah has made!
 We will be glad and rejoice in it!
 Ah now, Yehowah, we beg You to save!
 Ah now, Yehowah, we beg you to grant success!
 Blessed is he who comes in the Name of Yehowah!
 We have blessed all of you people
 From the House of Yehowah!
 Yehowah is The Divinity!
 Upon us He has shed His Light!
 Bind the Sacrificial Offering with ropes!
 All the way to the horns of the Altar!
 You are my Divinity and I will thank You!
 My God, I will exalt You!
 All of you people give thanks to Yehowah,
 For He is Good and
 His Covenant-Loyalty is endless!*

==== END ====

CHRIST – THE DAY OF HIS DEATH BETTER THAN THE DAY OF HIS BIRTH

On April 23rd nearly two billion Christians throughout the international globe called Earth will celebrate the resurrection of Christ in the Easter festival. Untold millions of colored eggs, supposedly laid by rabbits, will be eagerly searched for by brightly dressed children. Hundreds of millions of Christians who seldom attend church will make their yearly pilgrimage dressed in Easter finery. Billions of dollars will be spent and made on Easter related things – from special candies to new bonnets.

On December 25th, 2000 nearly two billion persons in every nation on country on earth will celebrate the birth of Jesus the Nazarene. Virtually the entire earth will light up with Christmas colors and religious pageants. Billions of dollars will be spent and earned by Christians and non-Christians alike. Indeed, for many merchants the Christmas season is “make up break” for their financial profits for the year.

Few of these two billion Christians will realize that neither of these two festivals were ever encouraged or sanctioned by the original Church founded by Jesus

Christ. Indeed, the only memoriam he enjoins upon his disciples is the annual observance of his death, called the Lord's Supper. [See the article above.]

Why is it that the birth and resurrection of Christ were not among early Christian observances? There are several reasons, but here we focus on one and the Biblical meanings behind this principle. Consider what one of the wisest inspired men to ever live wrote a thousand years before Christ:

*Better a good name than costly oil,
The day of death than the day of birth.
Better to go to the house of mourning
Than to the house of feasting,
For to this end everyone comes,
Let the living take this to heart.
[Ecclesiastes 7:1, 2 New Jerusalem Bible]*

According to this inspired principle it would be the day of Jesus' death which should be "taken to heart" rather than the day of his birth.

Why the Death of Messiah?

There are very good reasons why the death of Jesus Christ ought to be celebrated. His death was foretold as well as the fundamental reason for it. [Compare the article above] Isaiah 53:5, 1012 foretold the suffering and death of the Messiah and what that death would accomplish:

*Yet ours were the sufferings [Messiah] was bearing,
Ours the sorrows he was carrying,
While we [Jews] thought of him as someone being punished
And struck with affliction by God;
Whereas he was being wounded for our rebellions,
Crushed because of our guilt;
The punishment reconciling us fell on him.
It was Yahweh's good pleasure to crush [Messiah] with pain;
If he gives his life as a sin offering,
He will see his offspring and prolong his life,
And through him Yahweh's good pleasure will be done.
Afer the ordeal [Messiah] has endured,
He will see the light and be content.
By his knowledge, the upright one, my servant will justify many
By taking their guilt on himself.
Hence I [Yahweh] shall give [Messiah] a portion with the many,
And he will share the booty with the mighty,
For having exposed himself to death
And for being counted as one of the rebellious,
Whereas he was bearing the sin of many
And interceding for the rebellious.
[New Jerusalem Bible]*

According to Isaiah's prophecy the death of Messiah would result in the "bearing the sins of many." We note the prophet did not say "all" but "many." Indeed, the Messiah himself gave the same reason for his death at Matthew 20:28: **"The Son of Humankind came, not to be served but to serve, and offer his soul as a ransom in exchange for many."** [NSR Paraphrase] Thus, Messiah's death would serve as a "ransom" – or a sin-offering – for "many."

Jesus was aware that all humankind had inherited a defective DNA from Adam and Eve resulting in their ongoing deaths. The Spirit-Helper sent by the Risen Lord pressured Paul to write: *"Through one man sin came into the social order of humanity -- and death because of sin – and so death spread to all humans because they all had sinned."* [Romans 5:12 NSR Paraphrase] This death-principle had been understood by the ancient servants of God. [Job 14:4; Psalm 51:5; Ecclesiastes 7:29]

The sins of humankind sent every human into unconscious death and there they would remain unless God had provided the means for returning them to life. That all the dead would be raised to stand before God's Judgment was taught by Jesus the Nazarene: **"But I tell you that every fruitless word human's speak will be held to account on Judgment Day. For by your words you will be declared righteous and by your words you will be accursed."** [Matthew 12:36, 37 NSR] The Nazarene taught this Judgment Day would have two outcomes: **"All those in the memoriums will hear the voice [of the Son of Humankind] – those having done good things unto a resurrection of life, [and] those who habitually did vile things unto a resurrection of condemnation."** [John 5:28, 29 NSR Paraphrase; compare Isaiah 26:19; Daniel 12:2]

The Resurrection of All Humanity

Paul taught both the Jews and the Greeks that there would be a resurrection of all humanity to a judgment. To a Greek court of philosophers, Paul expressed his belief: *"Indeed, the God has overlooked these times of ignorance, but now He is declaring to all humankind everywhere that they should repent. Because He has appointed a day in which He is to judge the inhabited earth in justice by a Man He has appointed. He has furnished something in which all may trust by resurrecting him from among the dead."* [Acts 17:30, 31 NSR] To a Roman court he defended himself when he said: *"I have a hope in the God – a hope these men also share – that there is going to be a resurrection of both the righteous and the unrighteous."* [Acts 24:15 NSR]

The very possibility of this resurrection of all humanity from the unconscious condition of the dead [Psalm 146:3, 4; Ecclesiastes 9:5, 10] was based on the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Paul wrote about this declaring two primary things: a] all, everyone, would be resurrected; and, b] there would be two orders to this resurrection. Consider his words:

However, now Christ has been raised up from the dead -- a firstfruits of those have lain themselves down to sleep. For since death is through a human, also through a human [is] the resurrection of the dead. For just as in the Adam all are dying, just so also, in the Christ all will be made alive. However, each person in an individual order: Christ, a firstfruits; thereafter those of the Christ at his Arrival; and, then, the End ... [when] the Last Enemy is rendered completely ineffective.” [1 Corinthians 15:20-24, 26 NSR; compare notes in Nazarene Commentary©

All humanity is divided into two major “orders”: First, those of the Christ at his Parousia [presence; arrival]. This “first resurrection” will include every person who professed to be a Christian and claimed Jesus Christ as Lord. The early resurrection will have two outcomes: a) everlasting immortality to those who conquer; and, b) everlasting extinction to those who were habitually “vile.” This was the Nazarene’s own teaching as we have read above in John 5:28, 29.

Both Paul and John borrow some of Jesus’ words in John 5:28, 29 – which is a Christine paraphrase of Daniel 12:2 – when they write about these two outcomes to the resurrection of the Church. Paul writes: *“For it is a necessity that all of us must appear in front of the judgment-seat of the Christ, so that each person might receive due payment for the things done while in the flesh – whether he performed good or vile things.”* [2 Corinthians 5:10 NSR Paraphrase] With this John agrees, using similar language: *“Now, little children, continue to abide in (Jesus) so when the time comes for him to be made visible we all might speak openly and freely at his Arrival and not experience embarrassment while standing before him ... in the day of judgment.”* [1 John 2:28; 4:17 NSR Paraphrase]

Some call this the *parousia*-judgment and it is the subject of several of the Nazarene’s parable. At your leisure read Matthew 24:45-25:46 and note the illustrations regarding the judgment upon the House of the Master. [Compare also Luke 12:32-48.] Jesus compared this judgment to a field filled with wheat and weeds – sons of the Kingdom and sons of the Wicked One – and what the Sower would do upon the Harvest. Note the two outcomes: ***“The Son of Humankind will send forth his angels and they will cull out of his Realm everything that causes scandal and those doing lawlessness. The angels will cast out the sons of the Evil One into a furnace of fire. There will be lamentation and grinding of teeth. Then the righteous will shine for like the sun in the Realm of their Father. Let the one with ears, hear.”*** [Matthew 13:41-43 NSR; compare also Matthew 7:21-23]

Thus the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ results in the immortal glorification of his True Church. But, what of the rest of mankind, how does the death and resurrection of Jesus affect them in their billions and billions?

As Paul has shown above “all” [everyone] will be raised in a resurrection to a judgment. [Hebrews 9:27] Paul says this will occur at “the End” [1 Corinthians 15:24] and just so the Revelation of Jesus Christ puts the general resurrection of all humanity at the end of Messiah millennial reign:

“The rest of the Dead did not come to life until the 1,000 years ended. ... Then I saw a great White Throne. Heaven and earth fled from before the face of the One sitting upon the Throne no place was found for them. Then I saw the Dead, the great and the small, standing in the sight of the white Throne. Little books were opened and nother little Book was opened, the Book of Life. The Dead were judged out of the things written in the Little Books, according to their works. The Sea gave up its dead and The Death and the Hades gave up their dead. They were judged according to their works.” [Revelation 20:5, 12, 13 NSR; compare details in *Nazarene Apocalypse*©]

O, the Depths of God’s Riches!

Thus, all humankind will be resurrected based on the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Had Jesus not died and been resurrected all humanity would remain in non-existence. There would never have been the opportunity for a fair and just judgment before the Throne of the “Judge of all the Earth.” [Genesis 18:25] How God’s righteous judgment will be declared to all the universal cosmos: each person will be judged based on their words and conduct and then have opportunity to hear that judgment. Every vile Christian, Jew, and pagan will hear the decree of “Guilty” and all the righteous universe will know that God is Just. Every righteous Christian, Jew, and pagan will have an everlasting opportunity to bed the knee to God’s Son Jesus Christ. [Romans 2:5-16; Philippians 2:9-11; Revelation 5:13] We rejoice that the day of Christ’s death has become exceedingly better than the day of his birth!

*O, the depths of God’s riches, knowledge and wisdom!
Unsearchable are His judgments
And untraceable His ways!
Because everything originated from Him and by Him.
And to Him be the glory unto the ages. Amen!*
[Romans 11:33-35 NSR]

==== END ====

Christians and the New Covenant

[by Elder Luis Padilla ©2000, Los Angeles, California]

As we approach the celebration or Memorial of the death of our Lord Jesus Christ we can reflect on the significance of the New Covenant and it’s effect on us as Christians.

The word covenant means an agreement or contract that usually binds two parties. Under the Law covenant Jehovah brought the nation of Israel into a special possession with the prospect of making out of it a 'kingdom of priests.' The Jews as fleshly descendants of Abraham were admonished time and again by God's prophets to turn away from their evil ways. The apostle Paul quotes from the prophet Jeremiah saying, *"But God found fault with the people and said: 'The time is coming, declares the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah. It will not be like the covenant I made with their forefathers when I took them by the hand to lead them out of Egypt, because they did not remain faithful to my covenant, and I turned away from them, declares the Lord.'"* (Hebrews 8:8, 9, NIV)

The unfaithfulness of Israel as a whole to the Law covenant not only resulted in declaring the coming of a new covenant, but the Law covenant with its animal sacrifices could not perpetually cleanse sin in order to put man in a righteous position before God. *"If it could, would they not have stopped being offered? For the worshipers would have been cleansed once and for all, and would no longer have felt guilty for their sins. But those sacrifices are an annual reminder of sins, because it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins."* (Hebrews 10:2-4)

In chapter 8 of the letter to the Hebrews, the words "new," "superior" and "better" are associated with this other covenant that Jehovah has promised through Jeremiah. The night before our Lord's execution, he instituted what came to be known as the "Lord's Supper." The bread represents Christ's flesh while the wine represents his blood. (Matthew 26:26-28) After passing the bread to his apostles, *"he took the cup, saying, 'This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you.'"* (Luke 22:20) The relationship between the covenant and the blood is that the covenant is inaugurated by the sprinkling of sacrificial blood. (Hebrews 9:16-18) In turn, the "new covenant" is inaugurated by the shedding of Jesus' blood.

Why is the new covenant "better" and "superior"? The prophet Jeremiah goes on to say, *"I will put my laws in their minds and write them on their hearts. I will be their God and they will be my people...For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more."* (Hebrews 8:10, 12) Forgiveness of sins results in declaring righteous all who exercise faith in Christ. This "new covenant" is between Christians and our heavenly Father, with Christ as our mediator. *"For this reason Christ is the mediator of a new covenant, that those who are called may receive the promised inheritance — now that he has died as a ransom to set them free from the sins committed under the first covenant."* (Hebrews 9:15) Not only the Jews who exercised faith in Christ, but all others who do the same. (1John 2:2)

Christians become part of the “new covenant” that makes possible the forgiveness of our sins. Forgiveness of sins for Christians is only possible through the “new covenant.” *“Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy place by the blood of Jesus...let us draw near to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith...Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful.”* (Hebrews 10:19-23)

“The hope we profess,” the “one hope” (Ephesians 4:4-6), is to inherit the heavenly kingdom (2 Timothy 3:8) where God through Jesus’ blood has made Christians to “be a kingdom and priests to serve our God” (Revelation 5:10). The Law covenant separated the nation of Israel into two groups, the priestly and non-priestly tribes. On the basis of Jesus’ blood, through the new covenant Christ has abolished the separation of two groups among Christians, joining them as “one body” (Ephesians 2:11-18).

Christians show appreciation for this “new covenant” by closely adhering to the two greatest commandments, that is, love of God and love of neighbor. *“This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.”* (1John 4:9-11)

Therefore, in this Memorial *“whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes.”* (1 Corinthians 11:26)

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