

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT JESUS CHRIST

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With minor editorial changes by
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CRUCIFIXION AND RESURRECTION OF JESUS CHRIST

Divine inspiration directed men to write the Bible in which the plan of salvation is told and retold. The many methods used to communicate it to us, and to make it understandable, are examples and illustrations; by allegories and symbols; by direct teaching; all of which are skillfully blended together to clearly reveal GOD'S will, and way of life, that prepares men and women for the glorious Kingdom of the heavenly Father and His Son.

CHRIST AND THE SIGN OF JONAH Matt.12:38-40

This is a story of great importance, and a lesson of obedience. However, it is more than that. It is also an illustration, or type of Christ, not in his refusal to do what God asked, but in the experience of being swallowed by the great fish which the Lord prepared.

If Christ had not compared Himself to Jonah the preacher who had been commissioned to go to Nineveh and cry against it, it is unlikely that anyone would have imagined that there was any connection between the work and life of Christ, and Jonah's experience of being cast out of a storm tossed ship into the sea, there to be caught and swallowed by "a great fish" which the Lord had prepared for that purpose. But Christ could not have failed to make use of the story in His preaching, for it was not an incident that just accidentally happened. God planned it, and it was to be a vitally important factor in substantiating the plan of salvation.

Without the record of this unusual incident, there would be grave doubt as to whether there is any salvation for man. Unless the Man Who is declared to be the heart of the plan of salvation, Who gave His life on the cross of Calvary, was really the Divine Son of God without sin, there can be no assurance of salvation for anyone.

Without the account of the story of Jonah and his fish captor, there would be no positive proof with which to claim that the Christ of the Bible was the Messiah. Jesus Himself told some doubting and skeptical Scribes and Pharisees, who had doubt about His true identity, even though they had seen Him perform miracles, that no sign other than the sign of the miracle of Jonah would be given by which to prove His claim to Messiahship. The account of this is found in Matt.12:38-40.

Thus, the Plan of Salvation is involved in this story. Unless Christ was in the grave the exact time specified in the record of

Jonah, He was not the Messiah. Therefore, the time element in the Scriptural teaching concerning the Crucifixion and Resurrection of CHRIST is most vital, as we shall endeavour to show.

As we begin a Scriptural investigation of this subject, we will point out that Jesus referred to the story of Jonah as something that really happened. It is also important to note that Matthew's record of Jesus' statement teaches that after His death, Jesus would be in the Tomb three days and three nights, or a total of 72 hours - exactly the same length of time that Jonah was entombed inside the fish. Thus Jonah, (in the whale's belly), was a type of Jesus in the earthly tomb.

A PUZZLING QUESTION:

This teaching of Jesus introduces us to a very puzzling question. How can this type be true of Jesus? If Jesus was crucified on "Good Friday" and placed in the tomb just before sundown that day, and rose on Sunday morning, as it might appear from a casual reading of some Scriptures, then He was not in the tomb three days and three nights, and thus could not have been the true Messiah. Yet, He clearly stated (as is clearly recorded in Matthew 12:38-40) that the only sign that would be given to show that He was the Messiah would be three days and three nights entombment in the heart of the earth, the same time that Jonah was inside the whale.

Is this a contradiction or is there a way to harmonize the statement of Jesus with the recorded facts of what happened?

A careful examination of Scriptures will reveal that there is complete harmony. A positive clarification is to be found which reveals that Jesus was not only telling the truth, but that He was truly the Lamb of God which taketh away the sins of the world. (John 1:29). Besides this, a study of the subject will disclose additional evidence of Divine inspiration of the Bible and that God is very exacting in everything He does.

IN JONAH 1:17 WE READ:

"Now the Lord had prepared a great fish to swallow up Jonah. And Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights."

This makes it clear that Jonah was actually inside, or entombed in the fish, (whale), a full three days and three nights, which is equal to 72 hours. Previous to this Jonah was on a ship fleeing from his duty. But the time he was on the ship is not to be included in the three days and three nights he was inside the fish. To make the type true, neither can we count the time that Christ was in the hands of the Jews and the Romans as some people contend. Only the time He was actually in the tomb is to be considered. To fulfil His own word, He

must have been in the tomb exactly three days and three nights: No more, no less. Making it more or less, is a lie. See John 8:44.

WHEN WAS CHRIST PLACED IN THE TOMB?

MARK:15:42; LUKE 23:53

It should now be helpful as we continue the study of the time element of the crucifixion, and resurrection of CHRIST, to determine when Jesus was placed in the tomb. He was placed there on the same day He was crucified, in the evening of that day, near sundown. Concerning this, we quote the record of His burial as recorded in Mark 15:42, "And now when the even was come, because it was the preparation, that is, the day before the Sabbath••" The same record is to be found in Luke 23:54. These verses pose the question: Which day of the week was the preparation day, and which day was the Sabbath? According to the fourth commandment of the Decalogue, as found in Exod.20:8-11, the seventh day of the week is designated as the Sabbath, which today is called "Saturday". Therefore if the Sabbath mentioned in Luke 23:54 was the seventh day of the week, or the Sabbath according to the fourth commandment, it might well be concluded that Friday, (the day immediately preceding the Sabbath), was the "preparation" day mentioned in the same verse. Thus it would appear that Jesus was crucified and buried on Friday, just before sundown.

This is the commonly accepted belief, and it would seem to have Biblical foundation. However, if this is indeed true, Christ did not fulfil the prophecy He uttered concerning Himself, for, if He rose on Sunday morning, as is generally believed, He was in the tomb only two nights and one day i.e. Sabbath night= 1 night; Sabbath day= 1 day; Sunday night= 2 nights. Now even if we were to count the short period between the time He was placed in the tomb and sundown as another day, for which there is no basis for doing, the count would only be increased to two days and two nights, which is 1 day and 1 night short of the time Christ Himself said He would be in the grave. And if He was not in the grave the full time He said He would be, He was an imposter, for He said this was the only sign of His Messiahship. To count any part of daylight of Sunday as time Christ spent in the tomb is inadmissible because John 20:1 Says when Mary Magdalene came; to the tomb "while it was yet dark" on Sunday, Jesus had already risen.

THE PUZZLE UNRAVELED

The puzzle is solved when we can see that there were two "Sabbaths" in the week in which Jesus was crucified. One was the "PASSOVER SABBATH", which occurred on Thursday; the other the weekly Sabbath on Saturday. The "PREPARATION DAY" was a "Jews' preparation day, (John 19:42) prior to "an high day" Sabbath, (John 19:31) on Thursday. Therefore, Christ was crucified on Wednesday, the middle of the week (Dan.9:27), was in the grave the full three days and three nights (Thursday, Friday and Saturday) rising from the grave "In the

end of the, (weekly), Sabbath". (Matt.28:1). Please note carefully that when the women bought the spices that they might anoint the body of Jesus, one "Sabbath" "was passed", (Mark 16:1), and that after they had prepared the spices and ointments, they rested the SABBATH ACCORDING TO THE COMMANDMENT, (Luke 23:56). Friday was the day they bought and prepared the spices. If Friday was the crucifixion day, the women could not have bought and prepared the spices because Jesus was not crucified and taken from the cross until late in the afternoon the women being present. See Matt.27: 45-61. (PRAISE THE LORD FOR THE TRUTH).

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