

3
DAYS AND
3
NIGHTS



"For as Jonas was **THREE DAYS** and **THREE NIGHTS** in the whale's belly; so shall the son of man be **THREE DAYS** and **THREE NIGHTS** in the heart of the earth."
Matt. 12: 40.

To You

"...Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the Kingdom of God: but to others in parables; that seeing they might not see, and hearing they might not understand" (Luke 8:10).

In order to have a thorough and accurate understanding of the major events in the life of Christ, one should parallel the accounts of the four gospel writers. Not any one of these authors relates the full and complete chronicle of the major events of Jesus' life; but taken together we find that each one contributes an important part to the whole, so that when the entire episode is reconstructed all of the details fall into their proper sequence. An apt illustration of this is the account of the superscription on the cross:

Mark 15:26-

"And the superscription of His accusation was written over,
THE KING OF THE JEWS."

Luke 23:38-

"And a superscription also was written over Him in letters of Greek, and Latin, and Hebrew:
THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS."

Matthew 27:37-

"...and set over his head His accusation written,
THIS IS JESUS THE KING OF THE JEWS,"

John 19:19-

"And Pilate wrote a title and put it on the cross. And the writing was,
JESUS OF NAZARETH THE KING OF THE JEWS,"

No two of the above writers give the same account; yet by their combined testimony we know, that the superscription was:

**"THIS IS JESUS OF NAZARETH
THE KING OF THE JEWS."**

This method of paralleling the Scriptures has been used throughout this article, and the proof of the facts set forth herein is that there is perfect agreement in all of the four gospels.

RESURRECTION TRUTH

Jewish tradition, dogmatic creeds, and the superstitions of the "church" had so biased men in Christ's day that even the apostles and disciples of Christ were not able to grasp all of the truths that He brought unto them.

Nothing concerning the death and resurrection of their long-looked-for Messiah was to be found in any of the doctrines of the "fundamentalists" of Christ's day. Error had succeeded in perfectly blinding the faithless, and only those who walked very close to the Lord were able to hold on in faith to the fact of His Deity.

Seven times JESUS prophesied of His death and resurrection. Seven times He warned His disciples to take hold of truth; yet they failed to grasp the significance of His words, and in the hour of trial they miserably failed to stand the test of faithfulness.

Some denied Him in words; others denied Him in works. Great sorrow fell upon those who failed their Lord because they were "...slow of heart to believe ALL that the prophets have spoken:" (Luke 24:25).

Few men ever believe ALL. They usually believe the things that they want to believe, and make excuses for not believing those things which they do not like.

Most religious people have no real desire for truth that reveals. Therefore as they seek for support that will confirm their own particular ideas of truth, they often become entrenched in many unreasonable dogmas. Religious doctrinal barriers can create an impregnable fortress against any progressive appeal. Jesus Himself said that He was unable to enlighten sectarian churchmen of His own day, declaring that "new wine" was not for "old bottles."

"Mars' Hill" in Athens once was the scene of the worship of many gods; but these gods were nothing to compare with the "gods" of the sectarians of the twentieth century! Even religious creeds and dogmas have been deified in these days, and woe to the poor mortal who attempts to turn the idolaters toward the "UNKNOWN GOD."

Jesus made this statement: "I AM THE WAY, THE TRUTH, and THE LIFE: no man cometh unto the Father, but by Me." He who rejects truth rejects Christ; and in order to be accepted of Christ, one must continue to walk in ALL TRUTH. The acceptance of one or two truths will never save a man.

"...If we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin." (1 John 1:7). Here is THE CONDITION of the New Covenant. Upon this ONE CONDITION rests man's whole structure of faith.

T-R-U-T-H in the hands of the Spirit of God might be compared to a scalpel, used by a master surgeon in removing tumors and cancers from the ailing soul; or to the chisel or the mallet in the hands of a skillful sculptor fashioning a beautiful piece of marble for the temple of God. It is "like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces." It is like a "refiner's fire, and like fullers' soap," which cleanses and perfects the humble saint.

Jesus, in His prayer to His Father, said: "Sanctify them through thy TRUTH:.." (John 17:17). This peculiar element which He calls TRUTH, is, then, an instrument in the hands of the Father's Spirit for the work of setting apart His own elect. Many people will accept some truth, but there are few who will accept ALL. However, this seems to be the Father's way of sifting out those who are saints from those who are merely churchmen.

A certain amount of stubbornness and rebellion are to be found in the nature of every person. Even those who are the most saintly find this horrible and distressing condition within themselves, but by the "sword of the Lord" they become overcomers. In order to accept God's process through this bitter corrective element called TRUTH, one must receive a "love of the truth"; and even this is a gift of God. The way of "life" is the way of death to SELF. To "die daily" is not just a trite saying; it is a Christian calling. God works within saints to develop character, and those who refuse His process soon lose their way in the midst of the hypocrites; then like dead sticks drifting in a river, they float safely down stream between the banks of ecclesiasticism.

The multitudes live and thrive upon the milky froth of vanity and flattery, and few there are who care to be purged by the sanctifying influence of the two-edged sword of truth.

In days of old, the multitudes followed Jesus as long as "His fame went throughout all Syria." But as soon as His doctrine directly opposed the traditions of their elders, their priests, and their church, they began to forsake Him, and soon He walked alone.

Only a small group of disciples and a few faithful women remained steadfast as the barometer of His popularity fell; and even after His death and burial these were in doubt and confusion concerning His Deity, because they did not believe ALL that He had spoken.

Had it not been for the curse of creeds in the denominations, and the erroneous prophetic teachings of their churches, surely they could have understood the following seven warnings:

SEVEN PROPHECIES OF THE RESURRECTION

Jesus to the Pharisees in the presence of His disciples:

Matt. 12:40

40 For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.

· Again to the Pharisees, and in the presence of His disciples:

Matt. 16:4

4 A wicked and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall be no sign given unto it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas. And He left them, and departed.

To His disciples in confidence:

Mark 8:31

31 And he began to teach them, that the Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected of the elders, and of the chief priests, and scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again.

Before all in the temple:

John 2:19-21

19 Jesus answered and said unto them Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.

20 Then said the Jews, Forty and six years was this temple in building, and wilt thou rear it up in three days?

21 But He spake of the temple of his body.

After the Mount of Transfiguration, to His disciples in confidence:

Mark 9:9,10,30-32

9 And as they came down from the mountain, He charged them that they should tell no man what things they had seen, till the Son of man were risen from the dead.

10 And they kept that saying with themselves, questioning one with another what the rising from the dead should mean.

30 And they departed thence, and passed through Galilee; and He would not that any man should know it

31 For He taught His disciples and said unto them, The Son of man is delivered into the hands of men, and they shall kill Him; and after that He is killed, He shall rise the third day.

32 But they understood not that saying, and were afraid to ask Him.

To His disciples on the way to Jerusalem:

Matt. 20: 17-19

17 And Jesus going, up to Jerusalem, took the twelve disciples apart in the way, and said unto them,

18 Behold, we go up to Jerusalem; and the Son of man shall be betrayed unto the chief priests and unto the scribes, and they shall condemn Him to death,

19 And shall deliver him to the Gentiles to mock, and to scourge, and to crucify Him: and the third day He shall rise again.

To His disciples in the upper room at the last supper:

Mark 14:27,28

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.

Surely the unbiased mind of any ten year old child could have understood the words of the Saviour about His death and resurrection; but the disciples understood not, so great was their blindness.

There are no delusions any more powerful than those given credence by one's "church."

Those who were the enemies of Christ and of truth had a better memory of His statements than His own disciples had, for at His trial the ecclesiastical fathers produced two liars who made the following statement

Matt. 26:61

61 And said, This *fellow* said, I am able to destroy the temple of God, and to build it in three days.

And again while He was on the cross His enemies hurled at Him a reminder of what He had said regarding His resurrection parable:

Matt. 27:39,40

39 And they that passed by reviled him, wagging their heads

40 And saying, Thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest *it* in three days, save thyself.
If thou be the Son of God come down from the cross.

The backslidden rulers of the apostate church also remembered His prophecy and appealed to Pilate for a "watch" to be set to prevent His disciples from doing what they themselves would have done if they had been in the disciples' shoes.

Matt. 27:62-66

62 Now the next day, that following the day of preparation, the chief priests and Pharisees came together unto Pilate,

63 Saying, Sir, we remember that that deceiver said, while he was yet alive, After three days I will rise again.

64 Command therefore that the sepulchre be made sure until the third day, lest His disciples come by night, and steal Him away, and say unto the people, He is risen from the dead; so the last error shall be worse than the first.

65 Pilate said unto them, Ye have a watch: go your way, make it as sure as ye can,

66 So they went, and made the sepulchre sure, sealing the stone and setting a watch.

Through the above Scriptures it is easy enough to understand why it was that the enemies of Christ would not believe in His resurrection; but why His own disciples had so little faith in the truth of His statements is hard to understand.

As we continue in our study of the resurrection, this fact becomes more and more evident; and the magnitude of the gross sin of their unbelief takes on unbelievable proportions. Surely before you are through with this study you will marvel at the great goodness and mercy of God in being "mindful of man."

THE TIME OF HIS CRUCIFIXION

The crucifixion of the Saviour could not have been on Friday, as many believe, and as tradition has it: for if it had occurred on Friday, He could not have fulfilled His own prophecy which declared that He would be three days and three nights in the tomb.

As Christ fulfilled every jot and tittle of all of the prophecies given concerting Himself, why would He have given a prophecy Himself that He did not intend to fulfill?

Did He not plainly say He would rise again "AFTER THREE DAYS ? (Mark 8:31)

His death occurred near the "ninth hour."

Mark 15:34-37

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 Elijah.

36 And one ran and filled a sponge full of vinegar, end put *it* on a reed, and gave him to drink, saying, Let alone; let us see whether Elijah will come to take him down.

37 And Jesus cried with a loud voice, and gave up the ghost.

According to our way of reckoning time, this was about three o'clock in the afternoon, which would still leave about three hours before sunset, or the end of the day.

Now from three o'clock Friday afternoon to three o'clock Saturday afternoon is one day and one night. And adding the time from three o'clock Saturday afternoon to the rising of the sun on Sunday morning makes only TWO nights and ONE day.

If Christ were crucified on Friday He made not less than SEVEN false prophecies concerning His resurrection!

What saith the Scriptures? Let us begin with the hour of His resurrection, and count BACK three days and three nights, taking for the time, three o'clock in the afternoon.

We cannot begin counting from Sunday afternoon at three, for we know the tomb was empty on that day. So we start counting at three o'clock on Saturday afternoon, and count back to three on Friday

afternoon, which gives us one day and one night.

Then counting from three o'clock on Friday afternoon, back to three on Thursday afternoon, we have two days and two nights.

And from three o'clock Thursday afternoon back to three o'clock Wednesday afternoon we have THREE DAYS AND THREE NIGHTS. Therefore we must conclude that He was crucified at approximately three o'clock on Wednesday afternoon. Furthermore, every verse of Scripture from the parallel gospels proves this to be correct.

WEDNESDAY THE DAY OF PREPARATION

John 19:31

31 The Jews therefore, because it was the preparation, that the bodies should not remain on the cross on the Sabbath day, (for that sabbath day was a high day,) besought Pilate that their legs might be broken, and *that* they might be taken away.

Under the New Covenant there is but one day of preparation, which comes every week. That day is Friday: for there is now only one weekly Sabbath day. But under the Old Covenant there were many sabbath days; and the day before each sabbath was a preparation day. It was these Old Testament "feast sabbaths" that "were done away with" in Christ. (Eph.2:15; Col.2:16.)

And this particular day that was so perturbing these pretentiously pious people, lest the Sabbath overtake them with their evil deeds still showing, was the passover Sabbath. In John 11:55 it is called "the Jews' passover."

There is a distinct difference between the observance of the "Jews' passover" and the Christian's observance of the Passover. Even the symbol employed in the observance of the two are entirely different. For example, the Hebrews used the blood and flesh of an animal as emblems of their feast; Christians use unleavened bread and wine.

The preparation day for the Jewish Passover was called the "Jews' preparation day" (John 19:42) because it was a preparation day for a sabbath under the Old Covenant. But there is no place in Scripture where Friday is called the Jews' preparation day.

According to the above text this Sabbath day was not an ordinary weekly Sabbath, but was "an high day." Nor was the day of preparation an ordinary preparation day, for this was the day upon which every Israelite prepared his passover lamb. In the first month, on the 14th day "in the evening," according to Exodus 12:6, the lamb was to be killed and all made ready for the passover service, for at the setting of the sun every Israelite must remain within his dwelling and eat his passover according to the custom given them in the land of Egypt.

This custom of Passover was a divine appointment to be observed each year, and was to be killed on the fourteenth day, regardless of upon which day of the week it fell.

Just as the fourth of July does not always fall on the same day of the week, so also the passover sabbath did not always fall upon the same day of the week.

"The Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world" was killed according to divine appointment on the day of preparation for the passover. Only a few hours remained until sunset, and loving friends made haste as they sought consent to remove His body from the tree and prepare it for burial.

Luke 23:50-53

50 And, behold, *there was* a man named Joseph, a counsellor; and *he was* a good man, and a just:

51 (The same had not consented to the counsel and deed of them:) *he was of* Arimathae'a, a city of the Jews; who also himself waited for the kingdom of God.

52 This *man* went unto Pilate, and begged the body of Jesus.

53 And he took it down, and wrapped it in linen and laid it in sepulchre that was hewn in stone, wherein never man before was laid.

Nicodemus brought the embalming materials "about an hundred pound weight."

John 19:39,40

39 And there came also Nicodemus, which at the first came to Jesus by night. and brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about an hundred pound *weight*.

40 Then took they the body of Jesus, and wound it in linen clothes with the spices, as the manner of the Jews is to bury.

Many of those who loved the Saviour must have witnessed the embalming, and because of the lack of time, numbers were required to aid in the winding of the linen clothes about that lifeless form. Surely these last hurried rites did not inspire the hearts of the disciples with faith.

Matt. 27:60,61

60 And laid it in his own new tomb; which he had hewn out in the rock: and he rolled a great stone to the door of the sepulcher, and departed.

61 And there was Mary Mag'dalene, and the other Mary, sitting over against the sepulchre.

And thus the preparation of the Lamb of God was complete before the setting of the sun on Wednesday.

Luke 23: 54

54 And that day was the preparation, and the sabbath drew on.

THURSDAY THE PASSOVER SABBATH

The rush of the preparation and the passover feast kept the Pharisees from ordering a "watch" on Wednesday night, but the first thing the next day they besought Pilate for this special guard of the tomb.

Matt. 27:62-66

62 Now the next day, that followed the day of preparation, the chief priests and Pharisees came together unto Pilate,

63 Saying, Sir, we remember that that deceiver said, while he was yet alive, After three days I will rise again.

64 Command therefore that the sepulchre be made sure until the third day, lest his disciples come by night, and steal him away, and say unto the people, He is risen from the dead; so the last error shall be worse than the first.

65 Pilate said unto them. Ye have a watch; go your way, make it as sure as ye can.

66 So they went, and made the sepulcher sure, sealing the stone, and setting a watch.

At 3 P.M., twenty-four hours had passed since Christ had died. He had been in the realm of the dead one day and one night.

FRIDAY THE WEEKLY PREPARATION DAY

The faithful women were not satisfied with the hurried embalming that had been necessary, and so they spent much of this day in the preparation of spices and the ointments.

Luke 23:55,56

55 And the women also, which came with him from Galilee, followed after, and beheld the sepulcher, and how His body was laid.

56 And they returned, and prepared spices and ointments; and rested the sabbath day, according to the commandment.

At 3 P. M., forty-eight hours had passed since Christ had died. He had been in the realm of the dead for two days and two nights.

SATURDAY THE SABBATH ACCORDING TO THE COMMANDMENT

This was the regular Sabbath of the fourth commandment, and differed from that "high day" Sabbath of the passover, for this was the day that the Lord had made for man. Therefore, the women rested on this day.

And at 3 P. M. on this day, seventy-two hours had passed since Christ had died. He had been in the realm of the dead **THREE DAYS AND THREE NIGHTS**.

The "sign of the prophet Jonah" was almost complete. Christ's resurrection at any hour, now, would fulfill this prophecy.

The "...after three days," of Mark 8:31, would also be fulfilled at any hour that He might rise now. But there were two prophecies which must still be fulfilled within the next **THREE HOURS**: or before sunset of this Sabbath day.

This Saturday, or Sabbath day, was the **THIRD** day. Just as three o'clock marked the hour of fulfillment of the "three days and three nights," so also would the setting of the sun mark the end of the **THIRD** day.

Profound truths are hidden from the eyes of triflers, and the casual reader of God's Word fails to catch things hidden from the eyes of those that are merely curious.

We present two prophetic statements that appear contradictory, and yet they offer a key to a great truth:

Mark 9:31

31 "...He shall rise the third day.

Mark 8:31

31 "...after three days (He shall) rise again."

It seems to be a providential accident (?) that these two Scriptures are found in the 31st verse of the two adjoining chapters of the same gospel. This makes what appears to be a striking contradiction.

How could Christ rise AFTER and yet ON the third day? This is the inspired record and it is absolutely correct. He did rise "after" three days in the tomb, and His resurrection was ON the third day. You see, it is like this: The time of his death was about three in the afternoon, and on the third day at three in the afternoon Mark 8:31 would have been completely fulfilled even if He had risen a week later. But for Mark 9:31 to be fulfilled He had but about three hours to the end of the day: from three to the going down of the sun, which was the end of the third day.

Therefore, the time of Christ's resurrection must be confined to the hours between 3 o'clock in the afternoon and sunset of the same day.

Matt. 28:1 Revised version:

1 Now late on the Sabbath day

Matt. 28:1 King James version:

1 In the end of the Sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first *day* of the week.

It is evident that "In the end of the Sabbath" does not mean AFTER the Sabbath. As a matter of fact, the Greek word "Sabbaton" is here in the genitive case, which positively places this occurrence IN THE SABBATH DAY. (See Thayer's note on the word - "opse," Greek English Lexicon, page 471. This scholar says: "A genitive seems always to be partitive, denoting late in the period specified by the genitive, and consequently still belonging to it.")

James Moffat, who is not a Sabbatarian, but whose translation of the New Testament is commonly accepted, states Matthew 28:1 thus: "At the close of the Sabbath, as the first day of the week was dawning." The confusion caused by the translators is in their use of the word: "DAWN." Notice the contradiction in Dr. Moffat's translation - he says this thing occurred AT THE CLOSE OF THE SABBATH: not AFTER the Sabbath. However, NEAR THE DAWN. If he means the dawn, or break of day, then he had no idea of what he was saying, for the DAWN, or break of day, occurred TWELVE HOURS AFTER THE SABBATH ENDED. Would it not be foolish to say that it was near day-break just after sundown?

An excellent scholar in New Testament Greek was the late Dr. George Ricker Berry. We quote his interlinear on Matthew 28:1, which says: "Now late on Sabbath, as it was getting dusk toward the first

day of the week, came Mary the Magdalene and the other Mary to see the sepulchre." This man translates the word "epifosko" (Greek for "dusk," or "toward dark") as "GETTING DUSK." He has very good reason to do this, for none of the translations of the same word - "epifosko" in Luke 23:54 - imply that this occurred AT THE BREAK OF DAY. Our King James version states that as Jesus was laid in the tomb, "that day was the preparation, and the sabbath DREW ON." (epifosko.) Dr. Moffat says: It was the preparation and the Sabbath was just dawning. The good doctor is correct in this statement if he implies by his use of the word "DAWN" that it is drawing near. We often speak of the "dawn of a new era, but this certainly contains no thought of the break of day: it is an expression that indicates the beginning of something. And that is exactly what is implied by these few words in the Greek New Testament.

Remember that by the time these translations were coming into being the whole Christian world had accepted the Sunday resurrection idea; so the scholars accommodated the people with translations which would confirm the traditions that the people believed.

According to Scripture every day ended at the going down of the sun. The two Marys made their FIRST visit to the burial place late on SABBATH AFTERNOON, near the time of the going down of the sun.

Matt. 28:1

1 ...came Mary Mag'dalene, and the other Mary, to see the sepulchre.

It was still the Sabbath day. They did not bring spices or ointments at this time; they only came to "see the sepulchre." These women, who loved Him so much, may have held the secret hope that He would rise from the dead on that Sabbath afternoon.

Matt. 28:2-6

2 And, behold, there was a great earthquake: for the angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it.

3 His countenance was like lightning his raiment white as snow:

4 And for fear of him the keepers did become as dead *men*.

5 And the angel answered and said unto the women, Fear not ye; for I know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified.

6 He is not here; for He is risen, as He said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay.

Consider the time at which this occurred: late on Sabbath afternoon, just before sunset, the beginning of a new day.

"He is not here." His "three days and three nights" in the tomb were already a thing of the past. He is risen."

Matt. 28:7

7 And go quickly, and tell His disciples that He is risen from the dead; and, behold He goeth before you into Galilee; there shall ye see him: lo, I have told you.

It certainly does seem that this news of the resurrection should have been received with great joy by those disciples; but actually they were so filled with unbelief that not one of them truly believed it until they saw the Lord Himself. And even then, some doubted.

The rebuttal of unbelief that the disciples hurled upon these two poor women was so great that even Mary Magdalene began to doubt the words that the angel had spoken to her, saying, "He is not here; He is risen."

And so, late on that night she returned to the tomb, hoping to find some kind of evidence which might help her to locate His body.

Only a truly desperate woman would go out seeking the dead among the tombs at such an hour as this. Great must have been the pressure upon her mind to drive her forth upon such a mission that night.

John 20:1

1 The first *day* of the week cometh Mary Mag'dalene early, when it was yet dark, unto the sepulchre, and seeth the stone taken away from the sepulcher.

"And seeth the stone taken away from the sepulchre." These words are a poor translation of the text. Taken exactly as translated here, it would appear, that this was the first time Mary Magdalene had come to the tomb that night; but the true rendering of the text brings forth a different thought.

AND LOOKING WITH EXPECTANCY, THE STONE HAVING BEEN TAKEN away from the sepulchre" She had hoped to find something that would indicate to her His whereabouts. This was actually the second time that she had looked in that tomb since His resurrection.

John 20:2-8

2 Then she runneth, and cometh to Simon Peter, and to the other disciples, whom Jesus loved, and saith unto them, They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulchre, and we know not where they have laid Him.

3 Peter therefore went forth, and that other disciple, and came to the sepulchre.

4 So they ran both together: and the other disciple did outrun Peter, and came first to the sepulchre.

5 And he, stooping down, *and looking in* saw the linen clothes lying; yet went he not in.

6 Then cometh Simon Peter following him, and went into the sepulchre, and seeth the linen clothes lie.

7 And the napkin, that was about His head, not lying with the linen clothes, but wrapped together in a place by itself.

8 Then went in also that other disciple, which came first to the sepulcher, and he saw, and believed.

The "linen clothes" were the burial bandage-like wrappings that had encased His body in a cocoon-like casket. Between layers of bandage the embalming spices had been wrapped around the body.

The disciples must have been greatly puzzled when they beheld the empty cocoon shaped encasement. He did not unwrap His coverings, but just as He was later to pass through the walls of a house, so in His resurrection did His body pass through the bandages that bound it in the tomb.

The napkin "wrapped together in a place by itself" and the "linen clothes" had quite an effect upon all who saw them; yet even these signs were not convincing proof of His resurrection.

Peter and John "believed" when they saw the empty tomb. That is, they believed what Mary had said about the empty tomb: they did not believe that the Lord had been resurrected.

John 20:9,10

9 For as yet they knew not the scripture, that He must rise again from the dead.

10 Then the disciples went away again unto their own home.

Men seldom stay very long near an empty tomb in the dark hours of the night! The Scripture does not tell us what these two men actually believed when they beheld the linen clothes lying in the sepulchre; but obviously it did not fire their hopes, or their faith in His soon appearing. Unlike the two Marys, who must have spent the entire night endeavoring to awaken faith in the disciples, these two men kept their mouths shut and went back home.

Mary Magdalene, however, was no quitter. Her heart and soul were now set upon finding Him whom she loved. The appalling unbelief of these disciples coupled with the frightening apathy of Peter and John, must have been truly exasperating. Frustrated and brokenhearted, she returned once more to that gloom-enshrouded sepulcher.

John 20:11

11 But Mary stood without at the sepulchre weepin: and as she wept, she stooped down, *and looked* into the sepulchre.

This was the third time that she had looked into that empty cavern.

John 20:12

12 And seeth two angels in white sitting, the one at the head, and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain.

Once again Mary was permitted to see "the ministering spirits." "the ministering spirits." This time it was not "the Angel of the Lord" whose countenance was like lightning: she beheld, instead, two ordinary angels clothed in white.

These angels added no words to those which had already been spoken by the Mighty Angel of the Lord. Nor did they repeat what he had said. They did, however, ask her a most sensible question:

John 20:13

13 And they say unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? ...

Why should she weep? Was not her Lord alive? Had not the very Angel of the Lord, Himself, told her that Christ was risen and would be seen in Galilee?

How slow of heart are men to believe the truth. Surely faith is the "gift of God." And so Mary replied to the angel:

John 20:13

13 ...She saith unto them, Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid Him.

She received no answer. And she did not seem to wait for one: she merely turned away.

John 20:14,15

14 And when she had thus said, she turned herself back and saw Jesus standing, and knew not that it was Jesus.

15 Jesus saith unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? whom seekest thou? ...

Jesus repeated the same question that the angels had asked her: "WOMAN, WHY WEEPEST THOU?" Why had she not believed? Three angels had already declared to Mary that Jesus was risen; yet her heart had failed to grasp the wonderful news.

All visions and revelations of the spirit are of such an ethereal nature that human reasonings can soon destroy the weight of their testimony. Man is so filled with unbelief. It is so easy for the skeptical mind to reason away any revelation in a matter of seconds

Abraham declared to the rich man in hell that man would not believe though one rose from the dead.

Absolute faith is truly a gift of God. If Mary's faith in what she has seen and heard had been complete she would have shouted for joy instead of being engulfed in tears of grief! Man's unbelief must be a profound mystery to the heavenly angels. Is it any wonder that they asked her, "Why weepest thou?"

John 20:15

15 ...She, supposing Him to be the gardener, saith unto him, Sir, if thou have borne Him hence, tell me where thou hast laid Him, and I will take Him away.

"I will take Him away." Even yet she believed that He was dead!

John 20:16

16 Jesus saith unto her, Mary. She turned herself, and saith unto Him, Rabbo'ni; which is to say, Master.

His appearance so startled her that she probably fell at His feet, and would no doubt have clasped them in her hands if He had not warned her not to touch Him. As the high priest of Leviticus 16 had to have "holy" garments before he could go "within the veil," so also was it necessary that Christ go unspotted by the very touch of man and appear before God "once and for all" for the sins of the human race.

This, then, was the reason that she was not yet allowed to touch Him.

John 20:17

17 Jesus saith unto her, Touch me not: for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say to them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God.

What a wonderful privilege it was for this woman to be the first to see Jesus after His resurrection.

Mark 16:9

9 Now when Jesus was risen early the first *day* of the week, he appeared first to Mary Mag'dalene, out of whom he had cast seven devils.

Before the gray dawn had begun to streak the sky on that Sunday morning –

John 20:18

18 Mary Mag'dalene came and told the disciples that she had seen the Lord, and *that* He had spoken these things unto her.

Mary Magdalene's battle with unbelief was over. But there still remained that superhuman task of convincing the sorrowful and doubting disciples that their Lord had actually risen from the tomb.

Down through the ages men of every class and creed have been trying to convince others of this fact.

Follow the futile efforts of this poor woman as she testified to those men of His resurrection.

Not a soul would believe her story! The apostles refused to accept her testimony even after it had been corroborated by two other companies of women who later came to the open tomb.

Mark 16:10,11

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.

Neither the first nor the second company of women had believed Mary Magdalene or the other Mary when they said that He was not in the tomb. They did, not even believe when these two women testified that the angel had rolled the stone away from the door. They still expected to find a sealed tomb!

Whether or not this first company of women brought spices we do not know. We only know that the two Marys had BOUGHT sweet spices, and had prepared them on Friday, Intending later on to anoint His body.

Mark 16:1,2

1 AND when the sabbath was past, Mary Mag'dalene, and Mary the *mother* of James and Salo'me, 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.

Once again Mary Magdalene returned to the tomb of Jesus: this time not to grieve or to anoint His dead body, but to prove to her unbelieving companions that He was not in a sealed tomb.

"At the rising of the sun" as they approached the garden, Mary must have blushed at the affront made to her testimony by this unbelieving company:

Mark 16:3

3 And they said among themselves, who shall roll away the stone from the door of the sepulchre?

Mary probably was not a popular figure with this set, for had she not once had seven devils within her? Man is not quick to forgive the sins of fallen women; nor is he quick to forget.

Mark 16:4,5

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.

This was the third time Mary had seen the messengers of God. This time it was not the angel of the Lord, nor the two angels who had previously spoken to her, but "a young man" clothed in a long white garment.

But Mary was not frightened as were the other women. She had been through far too much that past night. She was no doubt overjoyed that the heavenly witness could shake them from their materialistic thoughts.

Mark 16:6-8

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.

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*; tor they were afraid.

This entire company of women were so amazed after this experience, that they spoke to no one as they hurriedly departed in search of the disciples.

Matt. 28:8-10

8 And they departed quickly from the sepulchre, with fear and great joy, and did run to bring His disciples word.

9 And as they went to tell His disciples, behold, Jesus met them, saying, All hail, And they came and held him by the feet, and worshipped Him.

10 Then said Jesus unto them, Be not afraid: go tell my brethren, that they go into Galilee, and there shall they see me.

On their way they were met by the Lord Jesus Himself. This was the first time that He appeared after presenting His sacrifice to the Father; and now they could touch Him.

After being commanded to tell the others of His resurrection, they left Him, and with great joy sought the disciples. Upon finding Cleopas, and a few others, they testified of these things:

Luke 24:22,23

22 Yea, and certain women also of our company made us astonished, which were early at the sepulcher;

23 And when they found not His body, they came, saying, that they had also seen a vision of angels, which said that He was alive.

They returned again to the tomb; this time accompanied by Cleopas and certain others, who found things to be exactly as the women had said .

Luke 24:24

24 And certain of them which were with us went to the sepulchre, and found it even so as the women had said: but Him they saw not.

On their way to the sepulchre they met another company of "women which came with Him from Galilee," who were taking their spices to the sepulchre:

Luke 24:1-4

1 Now upon the first *day* of the week, very early in the morning, they came unto the sepulchre, bringing the spices which they .had prepared, and certain *others* with them.

2 And they found the stone rolled away from the sepulcher.

3 And they entered in, and found not the body of the Lord Jesus.

4 And it came to pass, as they were much perplexed thereabout, behold, two men stood by them in shining garments:

This time TWO men witnessed to the company of women and certain others."

Luke 24:5-9

5 And as they were afraid, and bowed down *their* faces to the earth, they said unto them, Why seek ye the living among the dead?

6 He is not here, but is risen: remember how he spake unto you when he was yet in Galilee,

7 saying, The Son of man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again.

8 And they remembered His words,

9 And returned from the sepulcher, and told all these things unto the eleven, and to all the rest.

This time the whole company returned to report to the apostles.

Luke 24:10,11

10 It was Mary Mag'dalene and Joanna, and Mary *the mother* of James, and other *women that were* with them, which told these things unto the apostles.

11 And their words seemed to them as idle tales, and they believed them not.

Mary Magdalene was still trying to convince these men of the fact of His resurrection; but even with the added testimony of numbers; they paid no attention to her words.

Luke 24:12

12 Then arose Peter, and ran unto the sepulchre: and stooping down, he beheld the linen clothes laid by themselves, and departed, wondering in himself at that which was come to pass.

Since Peter was alone on this visit to the tomb, it is quite likely that he came this second time to convince himself that he had actually seen the strange, empty cocoon-like shell in the sepulchre.

By noon of this first day of the week the word of these strange things had gotten around, and no doubt there was much discussion and speculation among the disciples.

Luke 24:13-21

13 And behold, two of them went that same day to a village called Emma'us, which was from Jerusalem *about* three-score furlongs.

14 And they talked together of all these things which had happened.

15 And it came to pass, that while they communed *together* and reasoned, Jesus Himself drew near, and went with them.

16 But their eyes were holden, that they should not know Him.

17 And He said unto them. What manner of communications *are* these, that ye have one to another, as ye walk, and are sad?

18 And the one of them, whose name was Cleopas, answering said unto Him, Art thou only a stranger in Jerusalem, and hast not known the things which are come to pass there in these days?

19 And He said unto them, What things? And they said unto Him, Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, which was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people:

20 And how the chief priests and our rulers delivered Him to be condemned to death, and have crucified Him.

21 But we trusted that it had been He which should have redeemed Israel: and beside all this, today is the third day since these things were done.

To the two men on the road to Emmaus, Jesus said: "O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken:" (Luke 24:25). These men did not have faith in the RESURRECTION, they had not expected it, neither had they looked for it. The man they had hoped would "redeem Israel" (verse 21) had died and had been buried; His predictions of His resurrection on the third day had not sunk into their consciousness. They knew that the Pharisees had set a three day watch over the tomb. The Pharisees felt that if they could seal the tomb for three full days (Thursday, Friday, Sabbath) they could successfully defeat the prophecy of Christ. The THIRD day of the watch would be fully complete Sunday morning. No one could touch the body until the "THIRD DAY OF THE WATCH, and in the morning of this THIRD DAY "certain women" had discovered an empty tomb. Another puzzling thing was that these women claimed to have seen a vision of angels.

No one would expect "fools" and those who are "slow of heart" to count the days from His death to that of His resurrection, for the Word plainly states: "For as yet they knew not the Scripture, that He must rise again from the dead" (John 20:9). In the minds of these men a resurrection was not a part of their thinking. The outstanding thing to these men was the three day seal on the tomb. Embalming the body of a friend was a very important event and by an act of law this had been postponed for three days. The termination of this time was an important factor to all of the disciples who considered only the material obligations to the body of their master. Nothing could be done to the body UNTIL THE THIRD DAY that would end the edict. The first day of the week was the third day of this edict, and so it was that the women came with confidence Sunday morning laden with embalming materials for the care of His body.

After the Lord revealed Himself to these two disciples, causing them great surprise and joy, they hastened back to Jerusalem.

Hurriedly they returned to Jerusalem to tell the apostles and friends that they had seen Christ, and had actually conversed with Him.

Luke 24:33-35

33 And they rose up the same hour and returned to Jerusalem, and found the eleven gathered together, and them that were with them,

34 Saying, The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon.

35 And they told what things *were done* in the way. and how He was known of them in breaking of bread.

Undoubtedly Cleopas thought that the apostles would shout for joy when they heard this good news; but what saith the Word?

Mark 16:12,13

12 After that He appeared in another form unto two of them, as they walked, and went into the country.

13 And they went and told it unto the residue: neither believed they them.

Unbelief is a devilish thing, and the apostles were well filled with it. So great was their hardness of heart that they had a hard time believing the testimony of their own eyes when Christ did appear.

Luke 24:36,37

36 And as they thus spake, Jesus Himself stood in the midst of them, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you.

37 But they were terrified and affrighted, and supposed that they had seen a spirit.

If these men had loved Christ as He loved them, they would have rejoiced to see Him. If they had loved Him as they should, they would have gone forth long before to investigate any word of hope that He was risen from the dead.

Nor would they have sat in despair "for fear of the Jews" if their hearts had been filled with real affection for Him.

Hard though it may be to admit, the loss of material gain was the real thing that caused the despondency and utter unbelief of the apostles.

Luke 24:21

21 But we trusted that it had been He which should have redeemed Israel:

They had looked for the "restoration" of the glory of national Israel, with themselves seated upon twelve thrones. Often had they wondered who would be the greatest among them. This question had, in fact, been asked even after Jesus had privately told them of His coming death and resurrection triumph (Mk. 9:31-34).

Now the resurrection of a dead stranger would startle almost any of us and give us a creepy feeling; but the resurrection of one we truly loved would overwhelm our hearts with great joy. And so as Mary Magdalene stood by the open sepulchre while it was yet dark, she was not terrified when she saw Jesus. She loved Him, and her joy was full only when He was present. So also should it have been with the apostles.

Luke 24:38,39

38 And He said unto them, Why are ye troubled? and why do thoughts arise in your hearts?

39 Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see Me have.

· Christ knew what was in man, and the guilt of those troubled hearts was known unto Him. We wonder how He must have felt when He asked them, "Why do thoughts arise in your hearts?"

It was as though He were saying, "Why don't you love Me? For in Me alone shall your joy be full."

Many times Christ had come unto His own and His own had received Him not. Truly He was a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief.

After finally convincing them that He was not a spirit who spoke unto them, He rebuked them for their unbelief.

Mark 16:14

14 Afterward He appeared unto the eleven as they sat at meat, and upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they believed not them which had seen Him after He was risen.

Thomas, who was not present when Christ had first appeared to the apostles, did not even believe their testimony, but said that he would have to see and touch the Saviour for himself before he would believe.

Think of the wickedness of this man's statement. He openly said that he did not believe the seven prophecies of Christ, thus making Him out a liar and an impostor. He also made liars of the apostles by refusing to accept their testimony.

"...he that believeth not God hath made Him a liar, because he believeth not the record that God gave of His Son" (1 John 5:10).

In spite of the wickedness of Thomas, Christ in mercy granted his desire, and Thomas saw and felt. But Christ told Thomas that the blessing was not to him, but rather to those who have not seen and yet believe.

After all of this one would think that unbelief would have been banished forever from the minds of the apostles; but not so, for:

Matt. 28:16,17

16 Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, into a mountain where Jesus had appointed them.

17 And when they saw him, they worshipped him: but some doubted.

The doubting and unbelieving followers of the Christian faith have been legion. Before the first century A. D. had closed, the apostle Jude found it necessary to plead with Christians to "earnestly contend for the faith WHICH WAS ONCE delivered unto the saints" (Jude 3).

The writings of the "early fathers" indicate a change was made in many of the doctrines of Christ. It is not surprising that at the beginning of the fourth century even the "LORD'S DAY" (Sabbath) was changed, and the pagan Sun-Day was made a legal substitute. Christians were then told this was done in memorial to Christ's resurrection!

The masses of humanity in these early days were illiterate and very few people had access to the sacred writings; it is easy to see how error could creep in and substitute for "the faith once delivered unto the saints." However, it is difficult to understand how the leaders of the Reformation could be so blind, and their voices be so feeble.

The following quotations from the writings of prominent leaders of the greater denominations of our day testify to the fact that many leaders remain "willingly ignorant" of very important Christian doctrines:

CHURCH OF ENGLAND:--"And where are we told in the Scriptures that we are to keep the first day at all? We are commanded to keep the seventh; but we are nowhere commanded to keep the first day . . . The reason why we keep the first day of the week holy instead of the seventh is for the same reason that we observe many other things, not because of the Bible, but the church has enjoined it." - Rev. Isaac Williams, D.D., Plain Sermons on the Catechism, Vol.1, p.334.

PROTESTANT EPISCOPAL:-- "Is there any command in the New Testament to change the day of weekly rest from Saturday to Sunday? -None. " --Manual of Christian Doctrine, p. 127.

PRESBYTERIAN:--"The observance of the seventh day Sabbath did not cease till it was abolished after the empire became Christian," -American Presbyterian Board of Publication. Tract No. 118.

Dwight's Theology, a Presbyterian work. Vol.IV, page 401, says:
"The Christian Sabbath (Sunday) is not in the Scripture, and was not by the primitive church called the Sabbath."

METHODIST:--"It is true, there is no positive command for infant baptism, nor is there any for keeping holy the first day of the week." -M.E. Theological Compend, p. 103.

CONGREGATIONALIST:-- "Much has been made of the attitude of Christ in speech and deed toward the Sabbath. Some have imagined that by words He uttered and by deeds He did He relaxed the binding nature of the old command. This view, however, is to absolutely misunderstand and misinterpret the doing and the teaching of Jesus." (The Ten Commandments, G. Campbell Morgan, (Congregationalist) p. 50 New York: Fleming H. Revell.)

"It is quite clear that however rigidly or devoutly we spend Sunday, we are not keeping the Sabbath ... The Sabbath was founded on a specific, divine command. We can plead no such command for the observance of Sunday ... There is not a single sentence in the New Testament to suggest that we incur any penalty by violating the supposed sanctity of Sunday." ("The Ten Commandments, R. W. Dale, D.D. (Congregationalist) pp. 106,107. London: Dohier and Stoughton.)

BAPTIST: Dr. Hiscox's Solemn Question and Declaration: "There was and is a commandment to keep the Sabbath day, but that Sabbath day was not Sunday. It will be said, however, and with some show of triumph, that the Sabbath was transferred from the seventh to the first day of the week, with all its duties, privileges and sanctions. Earnestly desiring information on this subject, which I have studied for many years, I ask, Where can the record of such a transaction be found? Not in the New Testament, absolutely not. There is no Scriptural evidence of the change of the Sabbath institution from the seventh to the first day of the week ... Of course, I quite well know that Sunday did come into use in early Christian history as a religious day, as we learn from the Christian Fathers and other sources. But what a pity that it comes branded with the mark of paganism, and christened with the name of the sun god, when adopted and sanctioned by the papal apostasy, and bequeathed as a sacred legacy to Protestantism!" (Dr. Edward T. Hiscox, author of the Baptist Manual.)

TAKE NOTE

The ecclesiastical celebrities with one accord are agreed that Sunday is not the Sabbath of the Lord. They also confess that "THE ORDINANCE" (the observance of the Sabbath) was changed without Scriptural authority, and as the author of the "Baptist Manual has stated, a day was chosen that was "branded with the mark of paganism."

The Creator selected the seventh day as the Sabbath; He "hallowed it" (Ex.20:11), and He blessed and "sanctified it" (Gen.2:3). These hallowing, sanctifying and blessed touches were definite acts of the Almighty. He made the seventh day a SPECIAL DAY. Then He GAVE IT TO THE WHO HUMAN RACE: "The Sabbath was made for man" (Mark 2:27). This occurred two thousand years before there was a Jew!

There is also positive evidence that the Master perpetuated HIS HALLOWED DAY ("My holy day" Isa.58:13, and "The Lord's day" Rev.1:10). The Bible, the oldest history on earth, makes no mention of a change of the holy day. And the words of Christ actually take us over into the new heavens and the new earth where the same day is observed: Jesus warned His disciples to pray that their flight from Jerusalem (which occurred in A.D. 70) would not be on the Sabbath day: "Pray that your flight be not ... on the Sabbath day" (Matt. 24:20). Apparently He had no question in His mind concerning the exact day, and He further knew that they were aware of the correct day. From A.D. 70 we now pass down through the centuries of time to the very end of the world when God shall judge men for these sins: "They have transgressed the laws, CHANGED THE ORDINANCE, broken the everlasting covenant" (Isa. 24:5).

It is because of these sins that the earth is finally destroyed. There is only one ORDINANCE in the decalogue: THE FOURTH COMMANDMENT - "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy." But let us move on further in the point of time and go on over into eternity where we can view conditions in the new heavens and the new earth: "And it shall come to pass ... from one Sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before Me, saith the Lord" (Isa. 66:23). Think of it - THE SABBATH shall be observed in eternity! It certainly appears to be perpetual!

The honor of the Almighty was set before the merciless public eye when He unveiled to the human race the sanctity of the day He had blessed and hallowed. From that time to the end, this day became a thing of reverence or a thing of scorn. The Father's gift to man has been honored by those who love Him, but others have despised His goodness. In the day of Judgment, when the secrets of all men's hearts shall be made manifest, the faithfulness of God shall be made known and His name shall be vindicated.

God has not left men without plenty of witnesses who constantly testify to the perpetuity of His Day: The Jew, the custodian of the oldest traditions among men, has always observed the seventh day. Our calendar plainly shows which day is the seventh, and astronomers of all nations have always used the seven day week as their "yard-stick" for computing time. But the greatest of witnesses is the Holy Spirit, of whom it is written: "...ye (saints) have an unction (an anointing) from the Holy One, and ye know all things." (1 John 2:20). This is knowledge through the Spirit. It is a gift to those who "abide in the secret place of the Most High." And again He states: "...the anointing which ye have received of Him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you (Ye need not TAKE ANY MAN'S WORD for evidence): but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie,..." (1 John 2:27). The saint has been given a private teacher, "I will put My laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts ... And they shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know Me, from the least to the greatest" (Heb. 8:10,11). To this agree the words of Jesus: "...the Comforter, *which is* the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in My name, He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance,..." (John 14:26).

Take note that in the above verses of Scripture taken from the book of Hebrews, the Lord has made His laws (commandments) the basis for the "new covenant." They who "KNOW THE LORD" are commandment keepers, and since the fourth commandment is one of those which are to be kept "Till heaven and earth pass" (Matt.5:18), man is under divine ORDER to observe the Lord's day: "He that hath My commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth Me..." (John 14:21). "If ye keep My commandments ye shall abide in My love;..." (John 15:10). "So ordain I in all churches... the keeping of the commandments of God" (1 Cor. 7:17,19). "The remnant ... which keep the commandments of God" (Rev.12:17). "Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God" (Rev.14:12). "Blessed are they that do His commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city" (Rev.22:14). "Hereby we do know that we know Him, If we keep His commandments. He that saith, I know Him, and keepeth not His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him" (1 John 2:3,4).

From the above it is very evident that professing Christians are obligated to keep the commandments, and if they would be given any reason for not obeying any one of "these least commandments," heaven could not hold them responsible. Consider this: "The invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse" (Rom. 1:20). If God has so plainly revealed "the Invisible things," how much more has He made plain the day He blessed, hallowed, and sanctified and gave to man.

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Published by:
People Of The Living God
Non-Sectarian
Back to the Bible Movement

This edition with minor editorial changes by
John Symonds and Clyde M. Senger 2020
Reprinted by Apostolic Church Of God 7th Day
24497 Fraser Highway,
Langley, B. C. Canada,
V2Z 2L2