

# Companion Bible, Appendix 156

“SIX DAYS BEFORE THE PASSOVER”

(John 12:1)

This is Appendix 156 From The Companion Bible.

We are furnished by Scripture with certain facts and fixed points which, taken together, enable us (1) to determine the events which filled up the days of “the last week” of our Lord’s life on earth; (2) to fix the day of His crucifixion; and (3) to ascertain the duration of the time He remained in the tomb.

The difficulties connected with these three have arisen (1) from not having noted these fixed points; (2) from the fact of Gentiles’ not having been conversant with the law concerning the three great feasts of the LORD; and (3) from not having reckoned the days as commencing (some six hours before our own) and running from sunset to sunset, instead of from midnight to midnight.

To remove these difficulties, we must note:—

**I.** That the first day of each of the three feasts, Passover, Pentecost, and Tabernacles, was “a holy convocation”, a “sabbath” on which no servile work was to be done. See Lev. 23:7, 24, 35. Compare Exodus 12:16.

“That Sabbath” and the “high day” of John 19:31, was the “holy convocation”, the first day of the feast, which quite overshadowed the ordinary weekly sabbath.

It was called by the Jews *Yom tov* (Good day), and this is the greeting on that day throughout Jewry down to the present time.

This *great* sabbath, having been mistaken from the earliest times for the *weekly* sabbath, has led to all the confusion.

**II.** This has naturally caused the further difficulty as to the Lord’s statement that “even as Jonah was in the belly of

the fish three days and three nights, so shall the Son of man be in the heart of the earth three days and three nights" (Matthew 12:40). Now, while it is quite correct to speak according to Hebrew idiom of "three days" or "three years", while they are only parts of three days or three years, yet that idiom does not apply in a case like this, where "three nights" are mentioned *in addition to* "three days". It will be noted that the Lord not only definitely states this, but repeats the full phraseology, so that we may not mistake it. See the subject fully discussed in Appendix 144.

**III.** We have therefore the following facts furnished for our sure guidance:

1. The "high day" of John 19:31 was the first day of the feast.
2. The "first day of the feast" was on the 15th day of Nisan.
3. The 15th day of Nisan, commenced at sunset on what we should call the 14th.
4. "Six days before the passover" (John 12:1) takes us back to the 9th day of Nisan.
5. "After two days is the passover" (Matthew 26:2. Mark 14:1) takes us to the 13th day of Nisan.
6. "The first day of the week", the day of the resurrection (Matthew 28:1, etc.), was from our Saturday sunset to our Sunday sunset. This fixes the days of *the week*, just as the above fix the days of *the month*, for:
7. Reckoning back from this, "three days and three nights" (Matthew 12:40), we arrive at the day of the burial, which must have been before sunset, on the 14th of Nisan; i.e. before our Wednesday sunset.
8. This makes the sixth day before the passover (the 9th day of Nisan) to be our Thursday sunset to Friday sunset.

Therefore Wednesday, Nisan 14th (commencing on the Tuesday at sunset), was "the preparation day", on which the crucifixion

took place : for all four Gospels definitely say that this was the day on which the Lord was buried (before our Wednesday sunset), “because it was the preparation [day]” the bodies should not remain upon the cross on the sabbath day, “for that sabbath day was a high day”, and, therefore, not the ordinary seventh day, or weekly sabbath. See John 19:31.

**IV.** It follows, therefore, that the Lord being crucified on “the preparation day” could not have eaten of the Passover lamb, which was not slain until the evening of the 14th of Nisan (i.e. afternoon). On that day the daily sacrifice was killed at the 6th hour (noon) and offered about the 7th hour (1 p.m.). The killing of the Passover lambs began directly afterwards. Thus it is clear, that if the killing of the Passover lambs did not *commence* until about four hours after our Lord had been hanging upon the Cross, and would not have been concluded at the *ninth* hour (3 p.m.) when “He gave up the ghost;”—no “Passover lamb” could have been eaten at the “last supper” on the previous evening.

**V.** With these facts before us, we are now in a position to fill in the several days of the Lord’s last week with the events recorded in the Gospels. By noting that the Lord returned to Bethany (or to the Mount of Olives) each night of that week, we are able to determine both the several days and the events that took place in them.

THE SIXTH DAY BEFORE THE PASSOVER, THE 9TH DAY OF NISAN. ( <i>Our Thursday sunset to Friday sunset</i> )				
	MATTHEW	MARK	LUKE	JOHN
The Lord approaches Jerusalem from Jericho...		...	19:1-10	
He passes our Thursday night at the house of Zacchaeus. And delivers the Parable of the Pounds...			19:51 9:11-27	

He proceeds toward Jerusalem...			19:28	
He sends two disciples ( <i>apenanti</i> ) for an "ass" and a colt" (two animals)...	21:1-7			
And makes His first entry from Bethphage (not Bethany) ( <a href="#">Appendix 153</a> )...	21:8, 9			
He is unexpected, and they ask "Who is this?"...	21:10, 11			
He cleanses the Temple...	21:12-16			
He returns to Bethany...	21:17			12:1
THE FIFTH DAY BEFORE THE PASSOVER, THE 10TH DAY OF NISAN. ( <i>Our Friday sunset to Saturday sunset.</i> )				
	MATTHEW	MARK	LUKE	JOHN
The Lord passes the Sabbath at Bethany; and after sunset (on our Saturday), the first of three suppers was made, probably at the house of Lazarus, in Bethany ( <a href="#">Appendix 157</a> )...	...	...	...	12:2
At this supper the first of two anointings took place ( <a href="#">Appendix 158</a> )...				12:3-11
THE FOURTH DAY BEFORE THE PASSOVER, THE 11TH DAY OF NISAN. ( <i>Our Saturday sunset to Sunday sunset</i> ), the Gentile "Palm Sunday".)				
	MATTHEW	MARK	LUKE	JOHN
The second, or triumphal entry into Jerusalem. He sends two disciples ( <i>katenanti</i> ) for a colt (one animal). See <a href="#">Appendix 153</a>	...	11:1-7	19:29-35	12:12-

The Lord starts from Bethany (not Bethphage) and is met by multitudes from Jerusalem ( <a href="#">Appendix 153</a> )...		1:8-10	19:36-40	12:12-19
He weeps over the city...			19:41-44	
He enters the Temple, looks around...		11:11-		
And Returns to Bethany...		11:11		
THE THIRD DAY BEFORE THE PASSOVER, THE 12TH DAY OF NISAN (Our Sunday sunset to Monday sunset).				
	MATTHEW	MARK	LUKE	JOHN
In the morning (our Monday a.m.) the Lord returns to Jerusalem...	21:18	11:12		
The Fig-tree cursed...	21:19-22	11:13, 14		
The Temple. Further cleansing...		11:15-17	19:45, 46	
In the Temple. Further teaching. "Certain Greeks"...			19:47-	12:20-50
Opposition of Rulers...		11:18	19:-47, 48	
He goes out of the city (probably to Bethany; see Luke 21:37, 38, below)...		11:19		
THE SECOND DAY BEFORE THE PASSOVER, THE 13TH DAY OF NISAN. (Our Monday sunset to Tuesday sunset).				
	MATTHEW	MARK	LUKE	JOHN
In the morning (our Tuesday a.m.) on the way to Jerusalem, the question of the disciples about the Fig Tree...		11:20-26		...
In Jerusalem again; and in the Temple...	21:23-27	11:27-33	20:1-8	
In Jerusalem teaching in Parables; and questions...	21:28-23:39	12:1-44	20:9-21:4	

The first great prophecy, in the Temple (Appendix 155)...			21:5-36	
(Parenthetical statement as to the Lord's custom during this week)...			21:37, 38	
The second great prophecy, on the Mount of Olives...	24:1-51	13:1-37		
The second great prophecy, continued (Appendix 155)...	25:1-46			
"After two days is the Passover"...	26:1-5	14:1, 2		
He returns to Bethany, and is present at the second supper in the house of Simon the leper. The second Anointing. See Appendix 157 and 158...	26:6-13	14:3-9		
<p>THE DAY BEFORE THE PASSOVER—THE 14TH DAY OF NISAN—"THE PREPARATION DAY"—THE DAY OF THE CRUCIFIXION.  <i>(Our Tuesday sunset to Wednesday sunset).</i></p>				
	MATTHEW	MARK	LUKE	JOHN
The plot of Judas Iscariot to betray the Lord...	26:14-16	14:10, 11	22:1-6	
The "preparation" for the last supper <sup>1</sup> ...	26:17-19	14:12-16	22:7-13	

<p>“The even was come” (our Tuesday after sunset) when the plot for the betrayal was ripe for execution...</p>	26:20	14:17		
<p>The last supper, commencing with the washing of the feet...</p>				13:1-20
<p>The announcement of the betrayal, etc...</p>	26:21-25	14:18-21		13:21-30
<p>The supper eaten, the “New Covenant” made (Jeremiah 31:31). The lamb abolished, bread and wine substituted...</p>	26:26-29	14:22-25	22:14-23	

The first prophecy of Peter's denials (Appendix 160)...				13:31-38
The strife; who should be the greatest, etc...			22:24-30	
The second prophecy of Peter's denials (Appendix 160)...			22:31-34	
The final appeal to His first commission (Luke 9:3)...			22:35-38	
The last discourse to the eleven, followed by His prayer...				14:1-17:26
They go to Gethsemane...	26:30-35	14:26-29	22:39	18:1
The third prophecy of Peter's denials (Appendix 160)...		14:30, 31		



The agony in the garden...	26:36-46	14:32-42	22:40-46	
The apprehension of the Lord (Appendix 165)...	26:47-56	14:43-50	22:47-54	18:2-11
The escape of Lazarus (see notes on Mark 14:51, 52)...		14:51, 52		
The trials: continued throughout our Tuesday night...	26:57-27:31	14:53-15:19	22:54-23:25	18:12-19:13
About the sixth hour (our Tuesday midnight) Pilate said "Behold your King"...				19:14, 15
Led away to be crucified.	27:31-34	15:20-23	23:26-31	19:16, 17
And "led with Him" two "malefactors" ( <i>kakourgoi</i> ) (Appendix 164)...			23:32, 33	19:18

Discussion with Pilate about the Inscriptions (Appendix 168)...				19:19-22
The dividing of the garments...	27:35-37	15:24	23:34	19:23, 24
“It was the third hour, and they crucified Him” (our 9 a.m. Wednesday)...		15:25, 26		
“Then were there two robbers” ( <i>lestai</i> ) crucified with Him” (Appendix 164)...	27:38	15:27, 28		
The revilings of the rulers, both “robbers”, and one “malefactor”...	27:39-44	15:29-32	23:35-43	
The Lord’s mother and John...				19:25, 27

<p>“The sixth hour” (our Wednesday noon) and the darkness (Appendix 165)...</p>	27:45-49	15:33	23:44, 45	
<p>“The ninth hour” (our Wednesday 3 p.m.) and the expiring cry (Appendix 165)...</p>	27:50	15:34-37	23:46	19:28-30
<p>Subsequent events...</p>	27:51-56	15:38-41	23:47-49	19:31-37
<p>Buried in haste before sunset (our Wednesday about 6 p.m.), before the “high day” (the first day of the Feast began), our Wednesday sunset...</p>	27:57-66	15:42-47	23:50-56	19:38-42
<p>“THE FIRST DAY OF THE FEAST”-“THE HIGH DAY” <i>Yom tov</i>-THE 15TH DAY OF NISAN.  <i>(Our Wednesday sunset to Thursday sunset.)</i></p>				

THE FIRST NIGHT AND FIRST DAY IN THE TOMB. THE SECOND DAY OF THE FEAST – THE 16TH DAY OF NISAN.

*(Our Thursday sunset to Friday sunset.)*

THE SECOND NIGHT AND SECOND DAY IN THE TOMB.

THE THIRD DAY OF THE FEAST-“THE (WEEKLY) SABBATH”-THE 17TH DAY OF NISAN

*(Our Friday sunset to Saturday sunset.)*

THE THIRD NIGHT AND THIRD DAY IN THE TOMB. “THE FIRST DAY OF THE WEEK” – THE 18TH DAY OF NISAN

*(Our Saturday sunset: “the third day” of Matthew 16:21, etc; not the third day of the Feast.)*

	MATTHEW	MARK	LUKE	JOHN
Thus the Resurrection of the Lord took place at our Saturday sunset or thereabouts on “the third day”; compare “after three days” (Matthew 27:63. Mark 8:31.)...	28:1-10	16:1-18	24:1-49	20:1-23

[For the sequence of events connected with and following the Resurrection, see Appendix 166.]

It will be seen from the above that we have neither power nor authority to alter or shift any day or date; or to change the order or position of any of the events recorded in the Holy Writ.

Each day is marked by a return to Bethany during the last week (up to the Preparation Day); and each day is filled with the recorded events.

It follows, therefore, that the Lord was crucified on our Wednesday; was buried on that day before sunset; and remained “three days and three nights” in the tomb, as foretold by Him in Matthew 12:40; rising from the dead on “the third day”, “the first day of the week”.

The fixed days and dates, at either end, hold the whole period as in a vice, and place the whole subject on a sure foundation.

---

<sup>1</sup> The words in Mark 14:12 and Luke 22:7 refer to “the first day of unleavened bread”, which was the 14th day of Nisan, and therefore “the preparation day”. That is why the Lord goes on to tell the two disciples to go and make preparation for the Passover.