

February Devotional: The Passover Holy Week by Jerry Furniss

Referring back to the experience of the prophet Jonah, Jesus predicted his death and resurrection and indicated that he would be in the heart of the earth for three days and three nights (Matthew 12:39-40). Some scholars believe that the phrase, "three days and three nights" was a common general reckoning of Jewish time that could involve parts of days. With that understanding, Jesus was crucified on the Passover, on a Friday, then buried later that Friday afternoon or evening before the Sabbath (Saturday) began, and then rose from the dead the first day of the week (Sunday).

Others believe that the Bible refers to two kinds of Sabbath days... (1) the normal weekly Sabbath day that falls on the seventh day of the week (Saturday), (2) and seven annual Sabbath (Holy) days, listed in Leviticus 23 and mentioned in various passages throughout the Bible. So, the Holy Week had the Passover Sabbath and then the normal Shabbat or weekly Sabbath day! With such an understanding of the Sabbath the sequence of events surrounding Jesus' passion would be as follows:

Wednesday (Passover)(Preparation day)

Jesus ate the Passover and instituted a new covenant

Arrested on Mt. of Olives

Beaten

Crucified, placed in the tomb just before sundown (see Mark 15: 42-44 and John 19: 31)

Thursday (1st day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread was a "high" or Holy day)

1st night and day in the earth

Friday (Feast of Unleavened Bread)

2nd night and day in the earth, bought oil and spices for Jesus (see Mark 16:1)

Saturday (Feast of Unleavened Bread)(Weekly Sabbath - no shopping)

3rd night and day in the earth

Resurrected at the end of the day; after sundown

Sunday (Saturday night)(1st day of the week) Matthew 28:1-2 and Mark 16:2

The two Mary's visit the tomb after the Sabbaths and before sunrise

This may be an issue that scholars will debate for generations to come. Regardless, Jesus was our Passover sacrifice that removed the need to offer continual sacrifices for the forgiveness of sin (Hebrews 9:12, 26). During the 40 days of Lent, as we remember Jesus' sacrifice on the cross and anticipate the triumph of His resurrection, let us sacrificially offer ourselves so that we can share His victory with more children, youth and adults in our community and world.

* Previous monthly devotionals can be found at <http://crosskeyschurch.org> under the heading Ministries, then Prayer Devotionals.

* If you wish to place a prayer request on the e-mail prayer chain, please use the following e-mail address: prayerlist@crosskeyschurch.org.