

THE PASSION SABBATHS

During one of my personal study times, I was studying Luke's account of the Passion Week of Jesus Christ. By Passion Week, I am referring specifically to the time of the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

I was studying Luke's account from the NIV Bible and reading the cross references and footnotes when I came across this NIV footnote of Luke 23:54 – "*Preparation Day – Friday, the day before the Sabbath, when preparation was made for keeping the Sabbath. It could be used for Passover preparation but since in this instance it is followed by the Sabbath, it indicates Friday.*"

This bothered me because it appears to ignore the detailed instructions of Leviticus 23 regarding the four Jewish national holidays of Passion Week: **Passover, Unleavened Bread, Firstfruits, and Pentecost.**

This caused me to wonder how many Christians would read this footnote without examining the details of Lev.23 and become misled concerning the Passion of Jesus Christ.

When I mentioned this to a friend, his response was, "what does it matter? How does it change the fact that Jesus died for our sins, was buried and raised from the dead on the third day for our salvation?"

I will answer my friend's question and explain the importance of the details of Leviticus 23 regarding the Passions Sabbaths in the Passion Week of Jesus Christ.

1. I do understand my friend's argument except that as a pastor-teacher the accuracy and infallibility of the truth of God's word is what I strive for in my study and teaching.

I hold myself to the standard of **2 Timothy 2:15**. "Be diligent (spoudazo / **a.a.impv.2ps**) to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, handling accurately (orthotomeo / p.a.ptc.asm) [to cut straight] the word of truth."

- The danger to avoid is to not read into the Scriptures but rather read out of them. This has motivated me to teach the next five points on the **Passion Sabbaths**.

2. The Passion Week of Jesus Christ occurred during the 8 day Jewish holiday of Passover and Unleavened Bread (Lev.23:4-14).

According to Lev.23:5, Passover always began at twilight on the 14th of Nisan. It was called the Day of Preparation for the feast of Unleavened Bread (Ex.12) in remembrance of the Exodus (Ex.23:14-17; Luke 23:54).

The 15th and 21st of Nisan were the first and last days of Unleavened Bread and were always High Sabbaths no matter what the day (Lev.23:6-8). These two dates account for two High Sabbaths during the Passion Week of Jesus Christ (John 19:31).

3. The third Sabbath that occurred during the Passion Week of Jesus Christ was the weekly Sabbath (Saturday) of Unleavened Bread.

The day following the weekly Sabbath during Unleavened Bread was called the Firstfruits holiday (Lev.23:9-15). From Firstfruits, they counted seven (7) complete Sabbath weeks to the Feast of Weeks or 50 days to Pentecost (Lev.23:15-22).

40 of these 50 days account for eleven post-resurrection appearances of Jesus Christ (Acts 1:3-4).

4. Now let's put together the Passion Week of Jesus Christ using the following dates, days and events.

(See the calendar on the last page)

- **14th of Nisan** (Passover) – Wednesday – crucifixion (taken down for burial before 6pm) (John 19:31, 41-42; 1 Cor.5:7).
- **15th – 17th of Nisan** (Unleavened Bread) [15th-21st] – Thursday (High Sabbath), Friday, and Saturday (Weekly Sabbaths) – burial – (Matt.12:40; Jonah 1:17; John 2:19-21; Rom.6:4-5).
- **18th of Nisan** (Firstfruits) [count 50 days to Pentecost] (High Sabbath) – Resurrection – Sunrise Sunday and First day of week (Luke 24:1; 1 Cor.15:20-23).
- **21st of Nisan** the final high Sabbath and the end of the Passover-Unleavened Bread holidays (Rom.10:4; Heb.10:9).

Because the “Feast of Firstfruits” (resurrection of Jesus) and the “Feast of Weeks” (advent of Holy and Spirit and Church Age) occurred on Sunday or the first day of the week, the early Christian Church chose Sunday as the primary day of worship (Acts 2).

5. This was an important part of shadow Christology fulfillment of First Advent of Jesus Christ.

(Heb.10:1) “For the Law, since it has only a shadow of the good things to come and not the very form of things, can never by the same sacrifice year by year, which they offer continually, make perfect those who draw near.”

(Heb.10:5) “Sacrifice and offering Thou hast not desired, but a body Thou hast prepared for me.”

(Heb.10:12) “But He, having offered one sacrifice for sins for all time, sat down at the right hand of God.”

(Col.2:16-17) “Therefore let no one act as your judge in regard to food or drink or in respect to a festival or new moon or a Sabbath day – things which are a mere shadow of what is to come; but the substance belongs to Christ.”(Rom.14:4-10)

(Rom.10:4) “For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.”

(Mark 2:27-28) “The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath. Consequently, the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath.”

QUESTION: Can you imagine an advertisement that read “Firstfruits Sale” or “Resurrection Sale” instead of “Easter Sale”? You tell me if America has secularized it? Why do you suppose Satan has tried to remove the spiritual meaning from it?

(1Cor.15:14)

“And if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is vain, your faith also is vain.”

(1 Cor.15:17)

“And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is worthless; you are still in your sins.”

“Christ our Passover also has been sacrificed.” (1 Cor.5:7)

Using the Hebrew to Gregorian calendar

April 0030						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1	2	3 (Nisan 14) Crucifixion Day of Prep. Passover	4 (Nisan 15) Burial Unleavened Bread High Sabbath	5 (Nisan 16) Burial Unleavened Bread	6 (Nisan 17) Burial Unleavened Bread Weekly Sabbath
7 (Nisan 18) Unleavened Bread First Fruits (Resurrection) High Sabbath	8 (Nisan 19) Unleavened Bread	9 (Nisan 20) Unleavened Bread	10 (Nisan 21) Unleavened Bread High Sabbath	11	12	13 Weekly Sabbath
14	15	16	17	18	19	20 Weekly Sabbath
21	22	23	24	25	26	27 Weekly Sabbath
28	29	30				

May 0030						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1	2	3	4 Weekly Sabbath
5	6	7	8	9	10	11 Weekly Sabbath
12	13	14	15	16 (Ascension)	17	18 Weekly Sabbath
19	20	21	22	23	24	25 Weekly Sabbath
26 (Pentecost) (50th Day)	27	28	29	30	31	