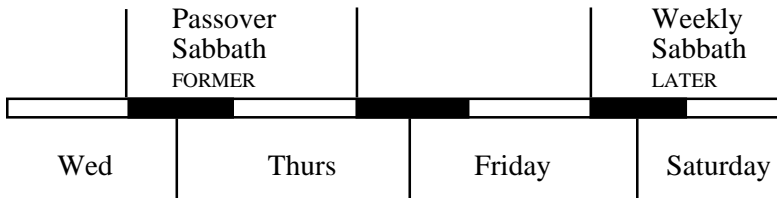


CHAPTER SIX: SUPPRESSED TRUTH IN UNLIKELY PLACES

*The Two Sabbaths of Matthew 28:1*

§246 We have translated Matthew 28:1 as, "The Latter of the Figure 23: The Later of the Sabbaths



Sabbaths, at the dawning on the first of the Sabbaths ...." The first part of the verse, in Greek, is **οψε δε σαββατων**. Literally, we translate it as "Later yet of Sabbaths." The "Later Sabbath" is the second of the two Sabbaths in Passover week.

§247 If this is the case, then why do the translators put "In the end of the Sabbath," or "After the Sabbath"? The answer can only be that they are attempting to harmonize Matthew's statement with their Friday-Sunday chronology. In order to do this, they translate "After the Sabbath".

§248 Translating **οψε** as "After," however, is most strange. This is a meaning that **οψε** does not have according to some sources (cf. Thayer). Normally, the word is translated "late," and like English it might be used in several senses, "the late President Kennedy," or "the style, of late, is to wear long dresses."

§249 Late, though, is not the only meaning given to the word. Scholars cite examples where the word means "later than" (cf. BAG, i.e. **οψε της ωρας**) [*later than the hour*], and thus comes to approximate "after." But we should note, if the word can mean "later than," it can also be a simple "later" [*later of the hour, viz. a later part of the hour*]

§250 It can be a simple "later," because the word "than" in "later than" is not a function of **οψε** at all. Rather "than" is just one of several ways of rendering a genitive. The genitive can also be rendered "of," and it is rendered "of" more often than "than." Hence, the same scholars that argue for "later than," must concede that the word can also mean "later of." Therefore, we are justified in translating "Later of the Sabbaths ...."

§251 The Greek speaks of the "latter rain," i.e. **οψιμος υετος**, but it might also speak of the "late rain" **οψε υετος** and mean the same thing. What **οψε δε των υετων** means is readily apparent to the

reader of Greek, i.e. "Late yet of the rains." The phrase in Matthew 28:1 is to be taken in the same sense, **οψε δε [των] σαββατων**, i.e. "Late yet of the Sabbaths." A good translation into idiomatic English might be:

And on the latter of the Sabbaths (at dawn on the First Sabbath)  
Miryam Magdalene and the other Miryam came to see the tomb  
(Matthew 28:1, my translation).

**§252** If we are willing to recognize it, then, Matthew gives a very precise statement concerning the time of the Resurrection. In order to distinguish the two Sabbaths in Passover week, he calls the weekly Sabbath the "later" (see Fig. 23).

**§253** Another example cited in BAG is **οψε μυστηριον**, i.e. "later [than the] mysteries." Also **οψε τουτων**, "later of these things," or "later [than] these things." Note that the exact sense is dependent on the ambiguity of the genitive case. The genitive is interpreted as a comparative genitive by using "than" to arrive at the sense of "after." However, this has not gone undisputed:

... but an examination of the instances just cited (and others) will show that they fail to sustain the rendering *after* (Thayer's Lexicon).

**§254** Liddell and Scott's Lexicon appends a timid "perh[aps]" to the suggestion that **οψε** means *after* in Matthew 28:1. Moulton, uncertain of himself, says "A Latinism? *Just After*," (*Grammar of New Testament Greek*, Edinburgh: T & T Clark, c. 1963, vol. III., pg. 278). Obviously, someone needs to go through all the claimed usages of this word meaning *after* to see if it is really so in any case.

**§254½** The above approach, of course, was a linguistic one, meaning that the argument is based upon the primary evidence and the rules of linguistic science rather than simple authority. All authority is ultimately based upon some evidence to which reason has to be applied, except divine revelation, which of course some people would like to claim in order to settle all issues. But so that no one will think that we are without authority here see §255 below.

## END NOTES

**§255** See BLASS, section 185, "The genitive of comparison" BLASS (*A Greek Grammar of the New Testament and other Early Christian Literature*, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1961) cites the usage for **οψε** we speak of, "the gen. with **οψε** and **μετολιγον** have become associated in meaning with **υστερον τουτων, προτερον τουτων**" (sec. 164.4). That is, **οψε** (later), is associated with "the latter of these," and the "former of these."

## Some Older Translations

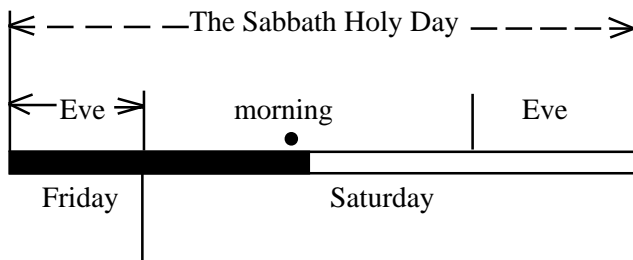
§256 So the skeptical reader will not doubt the literalness of the translation, "first of the Sabbaths," we will quote from some of the early translations of the Bible, made before the King James Version was written.

§257 The *Coverdale Quarto Bible*, 1537, translated Matthew 28:1 more accurately than the *King James Version*. The translators put:

On the evenynge of the Sabbath holy daye, which dawneth the marowe of the first day of the Sabbaths came Mary Magdalene [and] the other Mary to see the sepulchre.

§258 Notice the "evenynge of the Sabbath." Hence, the evening of the Sabbath would be Friday night up to midnight or from noon to the end of the Sabbath. The later evening (see Fig. 24) in the afternoon is the *between the evenings* evening (when the evening sacrifice was made). The words "which dawneth" point to the first evening, viz. the one beginning the Sabbath. As we have said,

Figure 24: The Evening of the Sabbath



the Resurrection was just before dawn on the Sabbath, which was in the morning

§258½ Nevertheless, Coverdale, no doubt, thought that the women went to the tomb on the afternoon of the Sabbath, or that it meant the evening beginning the first day of the week. However, it is not possible to make "evenynge" refer to time after sunset ending the Sabbath, because then it would not be "evenynge of the sabbath," but of the first day of the week. As we have shown, though, the correct translation is "And on the latter of the Sabbaths, at the dawning for the first of the Sabbaths ..." (Matthew 28:1). See §§ 246-255.

§259 The black dot marks the moment of the Resurrection (see Fig. 24). The "day of the Sabbaths," of course, is the Sabbath day. And the "first day of the Sabbaths" is the first Sabbath day following

Passover which the Jews counted of the seven Sabbaths in Leviticus 23:15.

§260 The *Coverdale Quarto Bible* translates the other passages in like manner:

But upon one of the Sabbathes (Luke 24:1).

§261 This text sounds just like saying "a Sabbath," and in fact the Greek word for "one," like the English "one," can function as the indefinite article "a." *Coverdale* translates John 20:1 as "on one day of the Sabbath," John 20:19 as "The same Sabbath at even," (This would be the second evening in the afternoon, see Fig. 24) Acts 20:7 as "Upon one of the Sabbathes," and 1 Cor. 16:2 as "some Sabbath daye."

§262 *Coverdale's* translations are remarkably consistent. He translates the Greek word σαββατων as Sabbathes every time he comes to it. No doubt, he understood the word as referring to the first day of the week, because it was widely believed that Sunday was the new "Sabbath," because the Latin Vulgate, out of which these early translators worked also identified the Resurrection day as "Sabbath."

§263 But the *Coverdale Bible* is not just an anomaly. John Wycliffe also translates literally:

"Therefore whanne euentid was in that day, oon of the sabotis" (John 20:19), and "day of saboth" (Acts 20:7).

§264 Wycliffe was not as consistent as *Coverdale*. Most often Wycliffe put the word "week" for the common Greek for Sabbath, but in the two examples above, he translates literally.

§265 Tyndale puts:

"On a Saboth daye" (Acts 20:7), and "In some saboth daye" (1 Cor. 16:2).

§266 Elsewhere, he put the first day of the week. Why? The Greek in the Resurrection passages is the same as in Acts 20:7 and very close to 1 Cor. 16:2. We can only suppose that he allowed tradition to overrule what the texts were really saying.

§267 The *Rheims* version (1582) has "first of the Sabboth[s]" in all of the critical passages, i.e. Matthew 28:1; Mark 16:2, 9; Luke 24:1; John 20:1, 19; Acts 20:7; and 1 Cor. 16:2.

§268 The 1568 *Bishop's Bible* also translates literally, "first day of the Sabbathes," in Mark 16:2, 9; Luke 24:1; John 20:1, 19. In Acts 20:7 they have, "one of the Sabboth," and "some Sabboth" in 1 Cor. 16:2.

§269 These later two translations were official translations. They were not one man works done in a closet. This is not to say one man cannot do a good job. But it does show that the translations were not considered incorrect at the time they circulated.

§270 This sampling of translations should convince the reader of the correct reading, or at least of the literalness of the translation. I say "sampling" because there are many more translations in other languages which put the text down literally. Sad to say, most people manage to interpret their way out of the obvious conclusion in spite of this. It shows that for most Christians, tradition is of greater power than God's written word.

§271 Nevertheless, the texts do say the Resurrection was on the "first of the Sabbaths." According to Leviticus 23:15, the "first Sabbath" is the Sabbath immediately following the Passover rest day. It was the first of seven Sabbaths counted until Passover:

And ye shall count unto you after the [Passover] Sabbath, from the day that ye brought the sheaf of the wave offering: seven Sabbaths complete shall be.

§272 On the basis of this text many of the Jews enumerated the Sabbaths, as well as the days until Pentecost.

§273 It is well worth noting that everywhere the phrase "first of the Sabbaths" occurs in some form in the Scripture, it always occurs in a context which indicates it is just after the Passover in accord with Leviticus 23:15, but before Pentecost.

§274 For example Acts 20:7 reads, "And on one of the Sabbaths," just after a Passover is mentioned in Acts 20:6. Likewise, in 1 Cor. 16:2 the same phrase, "Upon the first of the Sabbaths," occurs just before Pentecost is mentioned in 1 Cor. 16:8. And in the gospels, of course, the phrase occurs just after the Passover. Hence all usages occur in context just after the Passover.

§274.1 Since I don't know much German, I will print these translations from a German Bible as well as I can. Of course, the modern editions have changed "first of the sabbaths," to "first day of the week."

Matthew 28.1, "Am Abend aber des Sabbaths, welcher anbricht am Morgen des ersten feirtages der Sabbathen, ..."

Mark 16:2, "Und sie samen zum Grabe an einem Sabbather sehr fruhe, da die Sonne aufging."

Mark 16:9, "Jesus aber, da er aufserstanden mar fruhe am ersten Tage der Sabbather ..."

Luke 24:1, "Aber an der Sabbather einem sehr fruhe, ..."

John 20:1, "An der Sabbather einem ..."

John 20:19, "Am Abend aber desfelben Sabbaths, ..."

Acts 20:7, "Auf einem Sabbath aber, ..."

I Cor. 16:2, "Auf einen jeglichen Sabbather ...." (*Das Neue Testament unsers Herrn und Heilandes Jesu Christi nach der deutschen Uebersetzung von Dr. Martin Luthers - Coln, gedruckt für die britische und ausland ische Bibelgesellschaft, 1885*).

## *Another Sabbath Day in Acts 20:7*

**§275** Traditionally Acts 20:7 is translated, "And upon the first day of the week ...", and it is used to bolster the Sunday worship argument. However, like all the other "first day" texts, this one also has been mistranslated:

**§276** Acts 20:7 correctly reads:

And on the first of the Sabbaths, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and he continued his speech until midnight.

**§277** In the Greek the underlined words are **τη μια των σαββατων**. The Greek word **μια** means "one" in Greek. Sometimes it means "first," but usually it means "one," or simply "one" in the sense of our indefinite article "a." Where the context makes it clear that the "first Sabbath" after Passover is meant, then the translation of "first" would be proper. Otherwise "one," or "a" Sabbath day would be the proper translation.

**§278** The the translation "first" is the more probable one in Acts 20:7, where the Greek is **Εν δε τη μια των σαββατων**. It means, "And on the one of the Sabbaths." The presence of the definite article shows that "the first" is the proper rendering.

**§279** That meeting was on the Sabbath Day. There is futher proof of this. The 'first of the Sabbaths,' is the first Sabbath after the Passover, that is the first weekly Sabbath after the Pesach. Furthermore, the likely year for this journey of Paul to Jerusalem was 57 c.e. (see §290), for which we can compute the week day of Passover.

**§280** In that year the 15th of Aviv [Nisan] fell on the Sabbath (see **Fig. 25**), and the 16th of Aviv fell on the first day of the week (following the Sabbath). So the first of the Sabbaths after Passover fell on the 22nd day of Aviv, and it marked the 7th day in the 50 day count to Shavuot (Pentecost). Acts 20:6 spells it out,

‘We sailed away after the days of unleavend bread.’

**§280½** The ‘days of unleavend bread’ were the 14th and 15th of Aviv, being the days of the double seder that year, since there was an Adar II, the pre-ceeding month having 30 days. Hence they sailed on the 16th of Aviv, but Luke implies that the trip took 5 days in vs. 6, viz. 16th, 17th, 18th, 19th, and 20th days of Aviv. On the 21st of Aviv was the last day of Pesach, when they would have rested and had an holy convocation. And on the 22nd day of Aviv was the ‘first of the Sabbaths,’ when they met in Acts 20:7.

**§281** There is a confusing matter at the end of vs. 6 in the English text, ‘where we stayed seven days,’ but which should be rendered with the Majority text, reversing the accents on ‘ου’ as ‘we did not rub through seven days,’ meaning that they did not use up all the seven days of unleavened bread before thay arrived at Troas.

§282 If this explanation is not correct, as I believe it is, then we will be forced to render the passage, 'On one of the Sabbaths,' leaving out the def. article 'the' as being generic in Greek. In that case it could be even the second or third Sabbath after Passover.

§283 Finally, Shavuot that year did land on Sunday, and the Sadducees and Pharisees counting of the Sabbaths and days to Shavuot coincided, but let us not think that the Sadducees were correct in always placing Pentecost on Sunday. For Shavuot was 50 days after the Exodus, and marks the anniversary of the giving of the Law (which was on Sivan 6, the Sabbath day), and the Sadducees would have that period as variable. The count to Shavuot properly begins on the day after the Passover rest day, the Sabbath of Lev. 23:11.

§284 John Calvin, the reformer, agrees with us that Acts 20:7 speaks of the Sabbath day; first he translates it "on one day of the Sabbaths," and then he comments,

[This] means either the first day of the week, the day after the sabbath, or one particular sabbath [emphasis mine], and the latter would seem to me more likely for this reason, that according to custom that day was most suitable for holding a meeting (*Calvin's Commentaries*, Acts 20:7).

§285 Calvin continues,

For to what end is there mentioned of the Sabbath, save only that he may note the opportunity and choice of the time? Also, it is a likely matter that Paul waited for the Sabbath, that the day before his departure he might the more easily gather all the disciples into one place (ibid).

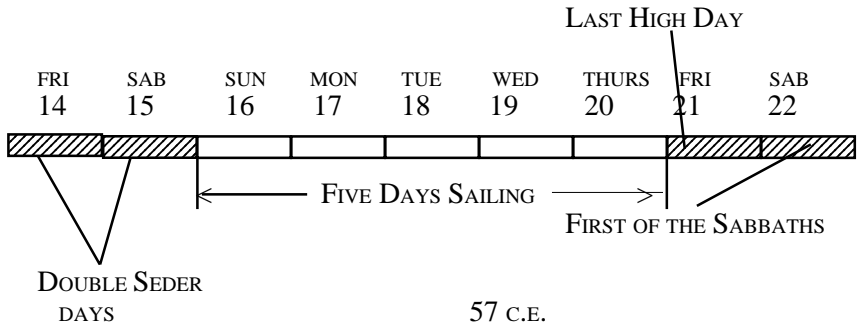
§286 In his commentary on John 20:1, he comments,

*On the first day of the week*; or literally, *on the first day of the Sabbaths*. The Evangelists do not relate when or how Christ rose; for it was enough for them to explain at what time, and to what persons, His Resurrection was made known. John therefore says, that Mary came *on the first day of the Sabbaths*. Literally the words may be rendered, *on one (μία) day of the Sabbaths*; but it is customary with the Hebrews to use the word (ἓν) *one*, instead of *first* because in reckoning we begin with *one*.

§287 Isn't that incredible! The patron saint of half the Protestant world let the cat out of the bag 500 years ago.

§288 So, the much celebrated meeting on Sunday in Acts 20:7, is but an elaborate deception, which does not match the facts of Greek or Astronomy! Not only that, but it is clear that the meeting was begun on the Sabbath day, probably at the regular time, and ran over into the first day of the week only because Paul had so much to say.

Figure 25: Acts 20:7 Chronology



Passover Sabbath = 4/9/57 = 15th day of Aviv (Sabbath)  
 Passover Last High day = 4/15/57 = 21st day of Aviv (Friday)

Adar II new moon = 2/23/57 Wed: 30 days long.  
 Aviv new moon = 3/25/57 Fri: 29 days long. @UT 15h 52m.

Note: The criteria for new moons is based upon a computer's mathematical model of an eyewitness observer of the first reappearance of the lunar crescent in Jerusalem.

§289 The days of unleavened bread (**τας ημερας των αζυμων**) mentioned in the text are the two "first days" of the feast celebrated on account of the then uncertainty in the Jerusalem time of the new moon. They are not the whole of the eight days here (or seven), which explains Luke's comment, "we did not consume seven days" (**ου διετριψαμεν ημερας επτα**), vs. 6, which is mistranslated, "where we stayed seven days," and is a bit too liesurely to accomdate vs. 16, "for he was hastening to be at Jerusalem, if possible, on the day of Pentecost."

#### END NOTES

§290 Christ rose in 34 c.e., to this add 3 years until the conversion of Saul (37 c.e.), and then 3 more in Arabia (to 40 c.e.), plus 14 years to the Jerusalem council. This brings us to 54 c.e. His third journey was after the council (54 c.e. - 57 c.e.). He spent three years in Ephesus (54, 55, 56) and then he went to Macedonia, Achaia, and Corinth, where he stayed three months. Early in 57 (see Fig. 25) he returned through Troas to Jerusalem.



*Yet Another Sabbath 1 Corinthians 16:2*

§291 John Calvin writes:

The clause rendered *on one of the Sabbaths*, (κατα μια σαββατων,) Chrysostom explains to mean - *the first Sabbath*. (Calvin's Commentaries, 1 Cor. 16:2)

Calvin has given the whole argument away right here; he cites Chrysostom, who spoke Greek as his native language, as interpreting **μια σαββατων** to mean "the first Sabbath." (I have been unable to locate Calvin's source on this).

Calvin continues:

In this I do not agree with him; for Paul means rather that they should contribute, one on one Sabbath, and another on another; or even each of them every Sabbath, if they chose (ibid).

§292 Calvin leaves no doubt as to his interpretation: the collection was to be made on the Sabbath, the seventh day of the week. Wherein does Calvin differ with Chrysostom then? Chrysostom limits it to the "first" Sabbath whereas Calvin does not. Calvin translates *one of the Sabbaths* rather than *first of the Sabbaths*.

I agree with Calvin. Paul is instructing believers to lay something aside at home on more than one Sabbath. I should add that the text does not say to put it into an offering plate, but simply to lay it aside. For it was not customary to take public collections on the Sabbath.

Calvin adds:

Nor am I more inclined to admit the view taken by Chrysostom - that the term *Sabbath* is employed here to mean the *Lord's day*, for the probability is, that the Apostles, at the beginning, retained the day that was already in use, but that afterwards, constrained by the superstition of the Jews, they set aside that day and substituted another" (ibid).

§293 Both Calvin's view and that of John Chrysostom are clear. Calvin believed that both Acts 20:7 and 1 Cor. 16:2 refer to the Sabbath, not Sunday, while Chrysostom found fault with the text and said it should mean *the Lord's day*, which was Sunday, in his opinion.

§293.5 It is at the point of Calvin's suggestion that the Apostles later changed the day, that I must part ways. For at Pentecost, each person is to bring a free will offering (cf. Deut. 16:10), which Paul appears to be commanding in I Cor. 16:2, which is most literally rendered, "Each one of the Sabbaths, each one of you should set aside a sum of money in keeping with his income, saving it up, so that when I come no collections will have to be made." The money was saved up more than one Sabbath, as Calvin says, but the context here is that

of the seven Sabbaths between Passover and Pentecost. The gift is according to God's blessing on each household, and it is sent to Jerusalem, all in keeping with Deut. 16:10! So they saved it up each of the seven Sabbaths leading up to Pentecost, and then the money was sent. None of it ended up on the local offering plate!

*An Incidental Confirmation to the counting  
of Sabbaths Luke 6:1*

**§294** Luke 6:1, in its own way, confirms the fact that Sabbaths were counted between Passover and Pentecost. It reads:

And it came to pass on the second first Sabbath, that He went through the corn fields; and His disciples plucked the ears of corn, and did eat, rubbing them in their hands.

Scholars have long debated what the phrase "second first Sabbath" might mean. The probable solution lies with the opinions of the Sadducees.

**§295** The Sadducees, unlike the Pharisees, did not regard the Sabbath of Leviticus 23:11 as the Passover Sabbath. They regarded it as the weekly Sabbath. Therefore, if they were going to count the Sabbaths between Passover and Pentecost, they would begin counting one week after the Pharisees. Thus, there came to be two "first Sabbaths" back to back, i.e. the Pharisees' followed by the Sadducees' "first Sabbath."

If some thought it was necessary to distinguish between the two "first Sabbaths," the logical way would be to call one the "first first Sabbath," and the other the "second first Sabbath."

**§296** To this we may add that the Qumran sectaries, who followed the calendar of Jubilees, along with many other people in Israel, calculated Pentecost in the same way that the Sadducees did, causing it to come on a Sunday. Likewise, any counting of seven Sabbaths would lag behind that of the Pharisees by one week giving two different versions of enumerating them.

**§297** Therefore, to distinguish between the enumerations of the two different respective calendars, the Biblical calendar, and the sectarian solar calendar, the term "first" was prefixed to the Pharisees' enumeration, and the word "second" to the sectarians enumeration. The respective series would be, "first first Sabbath," "first second Sabbath," "first third Sabbath," ... "first seventh Sabbath," in contrast to "the second first Sabbath," "the second second Sabbath," ... , and "the second seventh Sabbath."

Obviously, not everyone would want to bother to make this distinction all the time, and in fact Luke 6:1 may or may not be a scribal notation that crept into the text.

So there were two "first Sabbaths" among the Jews, exactly one week apart. Imagine the confusion in a mixed company of Sadducees and Pharisees. One would ask the other which "first Sabbath"? "I mean the second first Sabbath," would be the reply

from a Sadducee, and the Pharisee would say, "I mean the first first Sabbath."

**§298** It is clear, by now, that Luke 6:1 is speaking of the second Sabbath falling between the Passover rest day and Pentecost. There is a note in the *Journal of Biblical Literature* which sheds some interesting light on the matter:

One of these [Ethiopic] terminologies applied to Saturday Sabbath is *Qadam*, literally meaning "the first," hence "the First" Sabbath. Very often the expression is in fact spelled out as *Sanbat Qadamit*, that is, the First Sabbath. It is therefore not uncommon to find in Ethiopic literature such expressions as "the first First Sabbath," "the second First Sabbath," and so on, meaning "the first Saturday," "the second Saturday," etc. At any rate the reading *Qadam* "the First" meaning Saturday Sabbath or the Jewish Sabbath is already attested in the Ethiopic NT (e.g. Acts 1:12) which is probably a fourth century version." (JBL 100, 1981, pg. 96).

**§299** Now, we are not suggesting that the Sadducees were able to control the temple calendar, because the Pharisees had total and absolute control of the temple. From Solomon Zeitlin "we learn that when the Sadducees became magistrates, 'they addicted themselves to the notions of the Pharisees, because the multitude would not otherwise bear them.'" (Josephus *Ant.* XVIII, 1,4). But the sectarians, outside of Jerusalem, would have counted differently in their own homes and synagogues.

## *A Wider Confirmation - The Chronology of Yeshua's Ministry*

**§300** Other historical evidence leads to the conclusion that Yeshua's death and Resurrection were in 34 A.D. We will begin by establishing the beginning of His ministry. Then we will know that He could not have died in any year before He began His ministry, and for several years afterward.

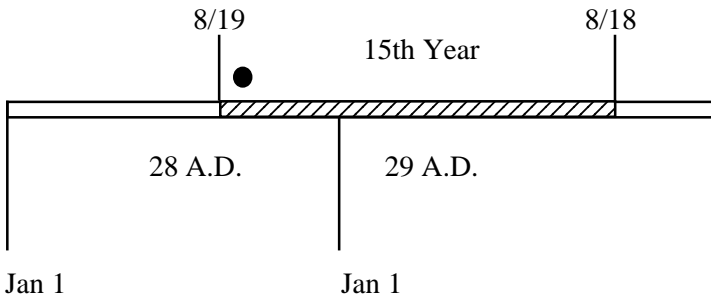
A key text for the beginning of Christ's ministry is Luke 3:1-2:

Now in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judea, and Herod being tetrarch of Galilee, and his brother Philip tetrarch of Ituraea and of the region of Trachonitis, and Lysanias the tetrarch of Abilene, Annas and Caiaphas being the high priests, the word of God came unto John the son of Zacharias in the wilderness.

This fixes the beginning of the ministry of John the Baptist "in the fifteenth year" of "Tiberius Caesar" (see Fig. 26)

**§301** The 15th year ran from August 19, 28 A.D. to August 18, 29 A.D.<sup>§305</sup> according to the normal Roman method of reckoning. This

Figure 26: Tiberius' 15th Year



means John's ministry begins, at the earliest, in the fall of A.D. 28. It is marked by the large black dot in the diagram. If a Jewish method was used, the 15th year would be Tishri 1, 28 to Tishri 1 29, which is 9/9 A.D. 28 to 9/28 A.D. 29. The Tishri method, without counting the accession month as a whole year, is the most likely Jewish method since it most closely matches the normal Roman method.

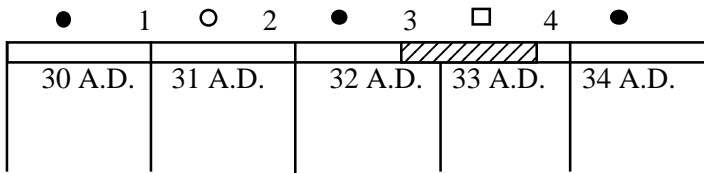
**§302** The above computation rules out the years A.D. 26, 27, and 28 for the first Passover of Yeshua mentioned in John 2:13. He could not have begun His ministry before John!

In light of the above, it is not an unreasonable delay to assume that the first Passover of Yeshua's ministry, in John 2:13, was that of A.D. 30.<sup>§306</sup> From this point the chronology looks like this:

**§303** (See Fig. 27) The black dots mark John's three Passovers, i.e. that of John 2:13, John 6:4, and John 11:55. The open circle marks the Passover connected with the "second first Sabbath" in Luke 6:1.

The square marks the Passover which Yeshua did not attend because He was traveling in Syria. The lined region represents the 69th Sabbatical year. From the numbers, it can be seen that

Figure 27: Yeshua's Ministry



His ministry lasted four years.

**§304** The best evidence for a four year ministry is found in Luke 13:6-9:

He spake also this parable; A certain man had a fig tree planted in his vinyard; and he came and sought fruit thereon, and found none. Then said he unto the dresser of his vinyard, Behold, these three years I come seeking fruit on this fig tree, and find none: cut it down; why cumbereth it the ground? And he answering said unto him, Lord, let it alone this year also, till I shall dig about it, and dung it. And if it bear fruit, well: and if not, then after that thou shalt cut it down.

The parable indicates that Yeshua had ministered to Israel for three years with little result. But it will be given one more year of grace, making a total of four years. Johnston M. Cheney, in his harmony of the Gospel's, *The Life of Christ in Stereo*, shows how the events of Christ's life fit into four years.

**END NOTES**

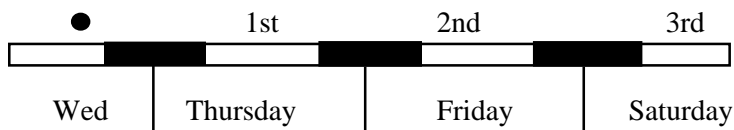
**§305** Some scholars (Catholics in particular) attempt to move the beginning of Christ's ministry back to 27/28 A.D. by supposing a coregency between Tiberius and Augustus. Reckoning a coregency between Augustus and Tiberius would depart from all accepted chronological norms, both Roman and Jewish.

**§306** This year is selected by many scholars as the first Passover of Yeshua's Ministry.

## *A Sabbath Afternoon Resurrection?*

- §307 Some groups teach that Christ rose on the afternoon of the Sabbath day. This view contains four days and three nights. The added day is from sunrise on Sabbath till the moment they place the Resurrection, the object being to obtain an exact 72 hours from Christ's death to His Resurrection. We have already pointed out that it is both a Hebrew and an English idiom to count the part of a day with a whole number ("In three days" means "any time on the third day," not the end of the third day).
- §308 But there is another objection which renders a Sabbath afternoon Resurrection impossible. Luke 24:20-21 states, "Our chief priests and leaders handed Him over to be condemned to death and hanged Him. But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel. But besides all these things, this third day is passing from which these things occurred" (my translation).
- §309 It is best to take "from which" as meaning "after," or "since." The third day "from" Yeshua's condemnation (located at the black dot) is the Sabbath day (Saturday in figure 28). The walk to

**Figure 28: Luke 24:20-21**



Emmaus took place on the Sabbath after Yeshua's Resurrection before dawn. However, if the Resurrection was in the afternoon, then the Emmaus walk would have to be placed on the fourth day after Yeshua's condemnation putting it at variance with Luke 24:21.

- §310 Those who put the Resurrection on Sabbath afternoon need to realize two things. A strict reckoning of Matthew 12:40 must end before sunrise on the Sabbath, and the Resurrection passages read, "first of the Sabbaths," not "first day of the week."
- §311 It might be considered an objection by some that the walk to Emmaus took place on the Sabbath day. Obviously, it was more than a Sabbath day's journey. But we must also realize that the disciples were in fear of the authorities, and Jerusalem was not a good place to stay any longer than necessary. So, as soon as the third day expired at sunrise on the Sabbath, and Yeshua had not appeared two disciples "fled" to Emmaus, no doubt thinking that since Yeshua's prediction had failed, the authorities would begin

to prosecute His followers.

**§312** After His Resurrection, Yeshua Himself joins them along the way to convert them back to the truth, and this redemptive activity was permitted on the Sabbath. Furthermore, no one really knows where Emmaus is yet. It could be a mere four miles from Jerusalem (60 stadia round trip).

**§313** Luke 24:21 also prevents the Resurrection from being placed earlier in the week. For example, the Resurrection could not have been before dawn on Friday morning. If that was the case, it would have been discovered on the First Sabbath, but this would have been the fourth day after His death, which would contradict Luke 24:21, where it says it was only three days since His death.