

Welcome to the Stronghold

Our world is filled with a variety of creeds. People from all walks of life entrench themselves in one or more of these political, intellectual, or religious creeds. Especially in the religious arena do we find what appears to be an eagerness for the battle. People defend to the dying breath their long-held beliefs, right or wrong. But what we believe may not always be in harmony with the written Word of the Almighty. Not until we are willing to rightly divide the Scripture of Truth from human interpretation shall we be riveted to that mighty Rock of Truth; only then shall we be safe in the Stronghold of the Almighty. But alas! It seems that the majority would rather sink in the quicksand of tradition and private *enlightenment* rather than seek refuge in the secret place of the Most High, and under the shadow of El Shaddai.

It is for the benefit of those who sincerely desire to walk in harmony with their Maker that these writings have come forth. We may rest assured, He is not seeking negotiation with us in order to be in harmony; we are the ones who must humble ourselves in His sight that He may lift us up to see things His way. His ways and thoughts are far above ours, and we'll never find that spiritual peace that our soul longs for until we conform to His ways and thoughts. Only for those whose yearning desire to know and walk in the light of His Truth, shall these writings be of any value. All who worship the idolatry of their own opinion, or their leader's views, will only scoff and ridicule such a work as this. We know this in advance and we accept it. In fact we bless them to pursue their own course and glean all the joy they can in this present life, and we have no burden to try to persuade them to change any of the great teachings they so love.

We have thoroughly examined many of these great teachings and our policy has always been to never answer a matter until we have given it an in-depth investigation. In this spirit of fairness to all, we have been equally adamant on putting every doctrine to the test of the Torah and the Tehodah (Isaiah 8:20) witness of the Prophecy writings, or in other words, the Scriptures of Truth. By this we mean the Hebrew Scriptures: the Tanakh. We remind all who are seeking eternal life that the Hebrew Messiah affirmed this solitary criterion as the basis for finding the truth (Matthew 5:17-19). "*Till heaven and earth pass away, not the slightest particle shall in any wise pass from the Law and the prophets till all be fulfilled.*" We must never separate the Messiah from the standard He came to represent. Everything we believe must be supported by this unerring standard.

Some of these philosophical doctrines were so involved in Scriptural manipulation it took us months and sometimes a couple of years to work through them. But we did. And we still are. We kept a very close written account of every discussion with the proponents of these manifold doctrines, and we virtually made a library of their writings as evidence of what they teach. To our bewilderment, without exception, every single one of the teachers openly expressed their resentment of our scrutinizing eyes in putting their statements to the acid test, as though they would teach contrary to the Scriptures. But we can honestly say, we never intended to insult anyone's integrity: we were merely on a quest to survive the hurricane, so to speak. For as it says in Ephesians 4:14, in the latter days, people will be tossed to and fro with every wind of doctrine; and again, in 2 Timothy 4:3, "*...the time will come when they will not be able to endure sound doctrine.*" So if you, dear Reader, have been tossed about in this spiritual storm, and share with us a mutual desire for sound doctrine, and seek the place of refuge,

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The Sign of Jonah

Introduction

The sign of Jonah is one of the most controversial subjects of the Hebrew Messianic community. Much of the debate has to do with assumed interpretations of words as well as the timing of events that have been long accepted traditionally but do not fit the sequence of events scripturally. Some are so convinced in their mind that even the plain mathematics of the written account cannot penetrate through the darkness. Many are so adamant in their traditional or personal opinion that it is well-nigh impossible to engage in a calm and coherent discussion with them. It is like trying to convince an evolutionist that his religious account of creation neither holds up to the fossil record nor to simple science. With the same religious fervor as those of other devout persuasions, they rise up in wrath instead of quiet logic. It is not much different in the Messianic movement when discussing passages of Scripture. A few even resort to yelling and ridiculing the evidence set forth by the faithful student of the Scriptures. It therefore becomes imperative to delineate this matter in writing for the sincere who desire to investigate and find the truth.

Whether or not this issue is salvational will have to be decided by the Judge of every soul. More than merely being the experience of Jonah, it has to do with the evidence of Yahshua being the Messiah. In that sense, should one presume to give an arbitrary definition to His words and set about to manipulate the events or timing of those events, then one can quickly see that this matter is far too vital to be handled carelessly. It says in John 10:35, “...*the Scriptures cannot be broken;*” and further, “*Thy Word is Truth.*” (John 17:17). Yahshua solemnly declares in Matthew 12:37, “*By your words you will be declared innocent, or by your words you will be declared guilty.*” (GW). From these passages, this matter could very well become a salvational issue.

The author has patiently sat through hours of explanation of those who hold traditional views, granting them the utmost respect to hear them out without interruption, and even taking notes on what they believe and why they hold to those variant views. But many of those same individuals often do not afford him the equal opportunity when his time has come to present some insights. They answer a matter before hearing it out. But the truth, whatever it may be, shall ultimately prevail. In this we may rejoice. Truth does not shy away from evidence; it welcomes it with open arms.

The author invites any further discussion to what he believes is the only logical and scriptural solution to the apparent enigma of the sign of Jonah. He only asks that the Reader will do as he has done, whether in hearing or in reading, that all will first read the forthcoming document thoroughly. It is his prayer that for those who are too passionate in defending their cherished opinion to grant him a fair hearing of the matter, they will at least grant him a fair reading of the matter. And when we have exhausted every possibility, that we may come away as brethren, for that is the sign of true discipleship.

All Scriptural quotes throughout the document are from the King James Version unless otherwise noted.

Let us now look into this matter.

The Sign of Jonah

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Concept One

The Sign of Jonah

Matthew 12:38-40 Then certain of the scribes and of the Pharisees answered, saying, Master, we would see a sign from thee. But he answered and said unto them, An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas: 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.

Many are so urgent to promote their view on when the Messiah was crucified and how long He spent in the grave that the remarkable account of a man being swallowed by a great whale and transported through the sea on an exciting three day journey is hardly even mentioned! Even from a historical perspective, this is the very first account of a self-propelled, one-man submarine. It seems that the Jews are first in everything!

Regarding the matter of a man being swallowed by a whale, a first grade teacher was once giving a lesson to her class about whales and she made the comment that even though a whale is the largest creature in the sea, its throat is too small to swallow a man. A little girl on the front row raised her hand and said, *"That cannot be true because a whale swallowed the prophet Jonah."* The teacher smiled and said, *"It is alright Sally for you to believe that story; I'm only telling you the fact about a whale's throat."* Sally responded, *"Well, when I get to heaven I'll ask Jonah."* The teacher said, *"What if Jonah went to hell?"* Sally responded, *"Then you can ask him."*

One thing good about the whale, at least it was on a kosher diet. So as remarkable as the story of a Hebrew man being swallowed by a whale may be (to some), there is a matter of even greater significance. For a Jewish prophet to go to one of the largest heathen cities of antiquity who happened to be at enmity with the Israelite nation, and virtually convert the entire population, then be depressed over his success is seldom brought forth. These amazing events help constitute the sign of Jonah. And Yahshua said that One greater than Jonah was in their presence. What did He mean by that? He meant that the gentile Assyrians of Nineveh would rise up in the judgment and condemn them (the Jews) for rejecting the message of salvation that came through their own Hebrew Messiah. The time Jonah spent in the whale was not the grand focal point of the sign.

The Grand Focal Point

But since it seems to be the grand focal point in the great controversy of believers today, let us address that aspect of the sign. There are three views currently entertained. Many believe that our Saviour was crucified on a Wednesday in the midst of the week, assuming that this fulfills the prophecy of Daniel 9:27. Some, on the other hand, teach that He was crucified on a Thursday; and a few somehow believe that He was crucified on a Friday! Let us put these three views to the acid test of Scripture: both the Torah, and the Berith Qadeshah (New Testament).

John 1:29 says of Yahshua that He is the *"Lamb of Yah that taketh away the sin of the world."* According to the Torah (Shemoth/Exodus 12:3-6) the people of Israel were to designate on the 10th day of the first month (Aviv) the Passover lamb to be sacrificed on the 14th day toward evening around 3:00 PM. This would give the Israelites a five-day period of preparation for the feast of the Passover. It was a type of the redemption of all the first-born, both of the Israelite nation, as well as the Egyptians who placed their faith in יהוה, the Almighty One of the Hebrews. The Passover then, was a feast to commemorate their redemption from slavery. The sacrificial lamb was a type of the coming Messiah, the great Antitype. He was to fulfill the type not only as to the event, but in conformity to the exact timing of the event as well. On the 10th day, He was to present Himself as the Lamb of Yah that would take away the sin of the world, and on the 14th day as the sacrifice; on the 15th as the leaven removed and hidden, and on the 16th as the wave sheaf of the first-fruits. We thus have definite numbers to work with, and the Messiah (the great Antitype of all the types) had to fulfill those types not only in accord with their meaning, but also

their timing. If indeed, He was to fulfill the role of the paschal lamb, then on the 10th day of Aviv, the first month, He had to present Himself as that spotless lamb. And so He did.

Exodus 12:1-6 And ויִשְׁרָאֵל spake unto Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, saying, This month shall be unto you the beginning of months: it shall be the first month of the year to you. Speak ye unto all the congregation of Israel, saying, In the tenth day of this month they shall take to them every man a lamb, according to the house of their fathers, a lamb for an house: And if the household be too little for the lamb, let him and his neighbour next unto his house take it according to the number of the souls; every man according to his eating shall make your count for the lamb. Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year: ye shall take it out from the sheep, or from the goats: And ye shall keep it up until the fourteenth day of the same month: and the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it in the evening.

Matthew 21:1-11 And when they drew nigh unto Jerusalem, and were come to Bethphage, unto the mount of Olives, then sent Yahshua two disciples, Saying unto them, Go into the village over against you, and straightway ye shall find an ass tied, and a colt with her: loose them, and bring them unto me. And if any man say ought unto you, ye shall say, The Master hath need of them; and straightway he will send them. All this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying, Tell ye the daughter of Sion, Behold, thy King cometh unto thee, meek, and sitting upon an ass, and a colt the foal of an ass. And the disciples went, and did as Yahshua commanded them, And brought the ass, and the colt, and put on them their clothes, and they set him thereon. And a very great multitude spread their garments in the way; others cut down branches from the trees, and strawed them in the way. And the multitudes that went before, and that followed, cried, saying, Hosanna to the Son of David: Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord; Hosanna in the highest. And when he was come into Jerusalem, all the city was moved, saying, Who is this? And the multitude said, This is Yahshua the prophet of Nazareth of Galilee.

Without trying to determine right now which day of the week this event occurred, the one thing we may ascertain is that it was upon the 10th day of the first month Aviv. Let us consider a day by day review of all that led up to our Master's condemnation by the Jews and execution by the Romans. As we encounter them, let us examine the phrases that may otherwise obscure the intended meaning of His words and not give a private interpretation to them.

For those who entertain a Wednesday execution corresponding to Aviv 14, five days earlier would have been on the previous Sabbath. From 10 to 14 is five days. The lamb was selected on the 10th day of a 14-day count to the time it was sacrificed. For those who believe Yahshua was put to death on a Thursday corresponding to Aviv 14, five days earlier would have been on a Sunday when He made His ceremonial entry into the holy city Jerusalem in fulfillment of the presentation of the paschal lamb. This is the day traditionally recognized in Christendom as prefiguring that event (Palm Sunday). For Christians who believe in a Friday crucifixion, Palm Sunday, being six days earlier, would fail to meet the five day criterion. The Thursday execution then would become the most plausible model.

Finally, for those few in the Messianic Movement whose conviction involves a Friday crucifixion corresponding to Aviv 14, the Messiah's entry five days earlier would have been on a Monday. None of the gospel accounts designate which day of the week it was. Most of the commentators say it was on a Sunday, knowing that it had to be five days prior to His crucifixion on what they believe took place on a Friday. The mathematics of course, doesn't work with that formula. If they insist on a Friday crucifixion they need to accept a Monday entrance into Jerusalem. It is not necessary however to make the day of His entrance into Jerusalem the focal point when it was not part of the sign of Jonah. Whatever day of the week it was on which He was crucified will determine the day of His triumphal entry. Our burden then is to determine the day of His crucifixion. Many deny that He was crucified on a Roman cross, and insist that He was impaled on a torture stake, but that is a discussion for another day.

Since Yahshua is the one who gave the sign of Jonah to be the sign of His messiahship, and it was He who gave the prophecy of the three days and three nights likening them to the time Jonah was in the belly of the whale, we must therefore keep that element of time intact. *It is the*

only consecutive three days and nights in the entire Bible in which those days are called both by number and by name. It is as if יהוה foresaw that it would become a matter of controversy, debate and division, so He went out of His way to provide us with absolute criteria by which we may base our conclusion. But let us pray that when the debate is over regarding the 72 hours in the heart of the earth, we'll all train our eyes to focus on the greatest event of all time; and that is that our Redeemer *arose* from the grave, a Conqueror over death, and He made a way of escape for us all! Oh, bless His wonderful name! May we heed to the message of the One greater than Jonah.

Let us now address that mysterious term, "*The Heart of the Earth.*" Nearly everyone interprets this to mean the grave. If such be the case, we should find some reference to that effect. Was it a common term among the Jews, and well understood as such by all? Let us examine a few places wherein a grave or sepulcher is used and apply that phrase to it. Reading:

Matthew 27:66 So they went, and made the sepulcher sure, sealing the stone, and setting a watch. So they went, and made the heart of the earth sure, sealing the stone, and setting a watch.

John 11:17 Then when Yahshua came, he found that he had *lain* in the grave four days already. Then when Yahshua came, he found that he had *lain* in the heart of the earth four days already.

John 11:38 Yahshua therefore again groaning in himself cometh to the grave. It was a cave, and a stone lay upon it.// Yahshua therefore again groaning in himself cometh to the heart of the earth. It was a cave, and a stone lay upon it.

1st Corinthians 15:55 O death, where *is* thy sting? O grave, where *is* thy victory?
O death, where *is* thy sting? O heart of the earth, where *is* thy victory?

We read of Abraham securing the cave of Machpelah to bury his beloved Sarah in.

Genesis 23:19 And after this, Abraham buried Sarah his wife in the cave of the field of Machpelah before Mamre: the same *is* Hebron in the land of Canaan.

There is no mention of this cave as being the heart of the earth. In fact, not once in all the Scriptures do we find a solitary instance of any grave being referred to as the heart of the earth. Was only Messiah's grave called the heart of the earth? Or is this a private interpretation? The Tanakh (Old Testament Scriptures) does not use the phrase heart of the earth; however it does use a very similar phrase, *the midst of the earth*. Let us note a few places wherein this phrase is used.

Genesis 48:16 The Angel which redeemed me from all evil, bless the lads; and let my name be named on them, and the name of my fathers Abraham and Isaac; and let them grow into a multitude in the midst of the earth.

Exodus 8:22 And I will sever in that day the land of Goshen, in which my people dwell, that no swarms of *flies* shall be there; to the end thou mayest know that I *am* יהוה in the midst of the earth.

Psalms 74:12 For Elohyim *is* my King of old, working salvation in the midst of the earth.

Isaiah 5:8 Woe unto them that join house to house, *that* lay field to field, till *there be* no place, that they may be placed alone in the midst of the earth!

The word *midst* is kereb; one of its definitions is *heart*. But not once do any of the passages above so much as intimate that the heart or midst of the earth means the grave. When we assume something hard enough and long enough, we'll convince ourselves beyond any shadow of a doubt that it can be no other way. Our mind is made up and we do not want to be disturbed by the evidence. Does the evidence really support such a concept? Some believe the

heart of the earth is literally the molten center of our globe wherein wicked people who have long been dead are right now being tortured, as though dead people are somehow alive!

IPeter 3:18-20 For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to יהוה, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit: By which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison; Which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of יהוה waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water.

By the above text, some folks say, “*Yahshua checked into hell just before sundown,*” as though it were a hotel; perhaps The Hoternhell Hotel. Did Yahshua believe in purgatory? Let us take some time to analyze this strange passage using Scripture to interpret Scripture. Doesn’t the Scripture teach that the great judgment day is at the end of age? Beyond doubt, Peter is referring to Messiah’s sacrificial death and His resurrection by the Holy Spirit. It was by the Spirit that He preached that warning message to Noah’s antediluvian world the text says. Could He have given those disobedient rebels a second chance? It says in Romans 6:23 that *the wages of sin is death; but the gift of יהוה is eternal life through Yahshua the Messiah.* In outright opposition to this, some believe that both the righteous and the sinner mutually receive the gift of eternal life: one in the kingdom, the other in the fiery hell. They somehow disbelieve the inspired Word that the wages of sin really is death. When יהוה said in Deuteronomy 30:19, that He sets before us life and death, He presents the two opposite extremes, which are life...and death. Death is not still life in a state of “*separation from God,*” as many would have us believe. יהוה did not tell Adam, “*In the day you eat thereof, you will surely be separated from Me.*” (Genesis 2:17). Wasn’t it the devil who said that sinners won’t surely die? (See Genesis 3:4). Whom do you choose to believe dear Student of the Scriptures? Do you believe the Word of יהוה that says sinners *will* surely die, or do you believe the father of lies who said sinners “shall *not* surely die”? We surely know that we cannot believe them both. They are saying two opposite things!

Some are even under the impression that we all have immortal souls because we were created in the likeness and image of the eternal One. But it says in 1st Timothy 6:16, that יהוה *alone* has immortality; and according to 1st Corinthians 15:53, we find it is only the righteous who receive *the gift of immortality* when Messiah returns. No one has an inherent immortal soul, not even Hasatan and his fallen angels. John 3:16 says all sinners shall *perish*. Perish means to be consumed: not to be continued. How could anyone misunderstand the most famous verse in the entire Bible? Do we teach our children to memorize that verse and then tell them that perish doesn’t really mean perish? Do we teach them that sinners won’t surely die; that they’ll live eternally in a fiery hell in the molten center of the earth, but just call it death? Surely we all know that dead people don’t feel the heat of a fire. For a more in-depth treatise on this serious subject ask for our booklet, “*The Wages of Sin.*” In that study we address more fully the condition of man in death. But for right now, please consider the following text of Scripture.

Matthew 10:28 And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.

Did our Messiah say that *the soul* can be destroyed? Does destroyed really mean destroyed? Will the soul of sinners truly be destroyed, or did He actually mean, tortured for all eternity in the molten center of the earth...but not *surely* destroyed! Let us think it through: if indeed, the soul *can* be destroyed, and יהוה alone has immortality, and the wages of sin really is death, then there is no option left for us to believe otherwise, such as the notion that we all have immortal souls as well: immortal souls that can never be destroyed, nor perish. How easily people can manipulate the Scriptures by inventing a private interpretation for nearly every phrase and word! That is precisely why we are admonished to rightly divide the Word of Truth. And from what must we divide it, if not from man’s erroneous and fantastic ideas that only serve to misrepresent our Father’s character? The very Bible we claim to believe warns us to beware of doctrines of devils (1st Timothy 4:1).

Isaiah 66:24 And they shall go forth, and look upon the carcasses of the men that have transgressed against me: for their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched; and they shall be an abhorring unto all flesh.

What is a carcass? The Hebrew word is *pehger* פֶּגֶר, and it means a corpse: a dead body. This text doesn't say their immortal soul will not die, it says rather that their worms won't die. Do worms have immortal souls? There is no mention of an eternal fire, but rather a fire that cannot be put out, it is unquenchable. Even worms cannot live in the fire; they feed on the remainder of what the fire did not consume. This is a graphic picture of absolute destruction. Though it cannot be put out, or quenched, the fire of annihilation, when it has done its thorough work of consuming the wicked, will burn itself out.

Psalm 68:2 As smoke is driven away, *so drive them away*: as wax melteth before the fire, *so let the wicked perish* at the presence of Elohyim.

Malachi 4:1, 3 For, behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith יְהוָה of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch. And ye shall tread down the wicked; for they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet in the day that I shall do *this*, saith יְהוָה of hosts.

Isaiah 47:14 Behold, they shall be as stubble; the fire shall burn them; they shall not deliver themselves from the power of the flame: *there shall not be* a coal to warm at, *nor* fire to sit before it.

Ecclesiastes 9:5, 6 For the living know that they shall die: but the dead know not anything, neither have they any more a reward; for the memory of them is forgotten. Also their love, and their hatred, and their envy, is now perished; neither have they any more a portion for ever in anything that is done under the sun.

Nahum 1:9 What do ye imagine against יְהוָה? He will make an utter end: affliction shall not rise up the second time.

Not one of the people Messiah raised from the dead said a word about going to heaven or hell. They all evidently believed the Scriptures that say they simply go into a deep state of unconsciousness in death. We have no record that any of them believed in the so-called inherent immortality of the soul. Neither did the Messiah. Was He awake in a state of consciousness in the grave preaching somewhere? Do we not read in the Scriptures that when a person dies, whether good or evil, they are in their deepest state of *unconsciousness*? As we have seen, neither good people nor bad people go *anywhere* at death; they merely sleep in their graves until the resurrection, some at the beginning of the millennium, and many at the end. Just imagine all the good people who supposedly went to their heavenly reward when they died, and then, when they return with Yahshua at His second coming, having to get back into their graves and stage a resurrection! Such a thought is too absurd to even imagine. When Paul said, "*To be absent from the body is to be present with the LORD*," did he mean *instantly*? What if one were wicked? Ask for our study, "*The Wages of Sin*" for an in-depth discussion on Lazarus and the Rich Man.

Let us continue to examine Peter's brief statement of 3:18-20. We find that he gives us the actual time when Yahshua, through the Holy Spirit, went and preached to "the souls in prison." Like the cryptic expression *heart of the earth*, we are not at liberty to consign a private interpretation to this phrase. We must ask, what did Peter mean by *souls in prison*? As is always the case, we'll find the Scriptural definition if we will but apply ourselves and search diligently for it. Take note of the following passages:

Psalm 142:5-7 I cried unto thee, O יְהוָה: I said, Thou *art* my refuge *and* my portion in the land of the living. Attend unto my cry; for I am brought very low: deliver me from my persecutors; for they are stronger than I. Bring my soul out of prison, that I may praise thy name: the righteous shall compass me about; for thou shalt deal bountifully with me.

Isaiah 61:1 The Spirit of Adonay יהוה is upon me; because יהוה hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to *them that are bound*.

In the above passages, David was hiding in a cave from King Saul: he was neither dead nor in the heart of the earth. He used the word *prison* allegorically. Yahshua preached deliverance to the living souls who were bound in the prison house of sin. He did this by the power of the Holy Spirit: the same Holy Spirit through which every prophet, including Noah spoke their messages.

Numbers 11:29 And Moses said unto him, Enviest thou for my sake? would Elohyim that all יהוה'S people were prophets, *and* that יהוה would put His Spirit upon them!

2nd Peter 1:21 For the prophesy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of יהוה spake *as they were moved* by the Holy Spirit.

This same apostle Peter, who evidently understood the ministration of the Holy Spirit upon the prophets of all time, is the one who wrote that the message of the Messiah to the spirits in prison was being preached to those who were *once* alive *while* the ark was being built *in the days of* Noah (3 witnesses). Peter's theme is the destruction of the wicked versus the mercy of יהוה, and he focuses on the days of Noah in both his letters. In 2nd Peter 2:5, he states outright that it was *Noah* who was the preacher of righteousness. This Spirit-filled prophet preached for 120 years to the world whose only response to that preaching was mockery and derision and rejection. Did Yahshua deem them worthy of another chance and go to them from the grave in His deepest state of unconsciousness, contrary to what the Scriptures say?

Just as the three days and nights are a specific element of time, so do we find the specific element of time *explained* by Peter in his first writing (3:18-20). He did not say that Yahshua went to the wicked spirits *while in the grave* with His message of salvation, offering rebels a second chance; but rather that offer was made *in the very days of* Noah, *while* he was building the ark. Millions have misinterpreted Peter's vision (Acts 10) as a pretext for eating unclean meats, even though in that vision he *explained* that he was referring to *people* (10:28-9). In like manner, even though Peter *explained* the time element of his statement regarding Yahshua, in that He was actually preaching by the power of the Holy Spirit through the prophet Noah, so many hold fast to their private interpretation, and make Peter's statement conform to that interpretation rather than *they* conform to *his* explanation.

Thus we find in the religious world, specifically the Messianic, or Hebrew Roots Movement, many endeavor to make Messiah's figurative phrase, *heart of the earth*, conform to their special construction as the grave in order to accommodate a host of other misconceptions. In the air of scholarly authority they proclaim as though it were an established fact, "*Yahshua's only sign of His messiahship was to spend 72 hours in the grave.*" Anyone who steps up to the plate in an effort to demonstrate a few other things for them to contemplate, is shuffled off to the side and told to meditate on only what *they* have had to say. "*Then you shall know the Truth my son...and there'll be no further debate.*" In the same final-word attitude of the evolutionist proclaiming his philosophy to be scientific, and the belief of Creation to be a fairytale, so do we encounter in regard to this matter. Let us be candid in our search for what Yahshua must have meant by that phrase. We have observed the obvious inadequacies of it referring to a grave. Let us now examine another possibility.

Concept Two

The Heart of the Earth: Where Could it Be?

There are equally honest-hearted souls who maintain the idea that the heart of the earth is the city of Jerusalem. They say that the Japhethites settled in the northern hemisphere, the Hamites in the southern hemisphere, and the Shemites (Semites) in the **mid**-east along the eastern shore of the **Mediterranean** Sea. It is worthy of note that Jonah was traveling westward through none other than the Mediterranean Sea in his attempt to run away from יהוה's command. What does that word mean? *Medi*, is "the midst or heart of," and *terrain* is "the earth." Jonah, after being thrown overboard and swallowed by the whale (Matthew 12:40) was geographically in the heart of the seas of the earth now traveling eastward back to the land of Israel from whence he came. What comprised the known world in the distant days of antiquity? It is interesting that Israel happens to be equidistant from England to the west and India to the east; from Russia to the north and Africa to the south. The Far East was virtually unknown and the far west had not yet been discovered. Israel was the heart of the earth in the days of antiquity, and Jerusalem, we find, is in the very heart of the land of Israel: thus geographically, the heart of the earth. From Yahshua's perspective, Jerusalem had now become the most dangerous place on the earth. It was in that holy city that wicked men were conspiring to bring about His death. It is also thought provoking that upon one occasion, Yahshua twice made a profound connection of His last three days and nights directly to the city of Jerusalem. Let us read it:

Luke 13:31-35 The same day there came certain of the Pharisees, saying unto him, Get thee out, and depart hence: for Herod will kill thee. And he said unto them, Go ye, and tell that fox, Behold, I cast out devils, and I do cures today and tomorrow, and the third *day* I shall be perfected. Nevertheless I must walk to day, and tomorrow, and the *day* following; for it cannot be that a prophet perish out of Jerusalem. O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, which killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee; how often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen *doth gather* her brood under *her* wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate: and verily I say unto you, Ye shall not see me, until *the time* come when ye shall say, Blessed *is* he that cometh in the name of יהוה.

Even at the age of twelve, on His first Passover visit to Jerusalem, when the feast had passed, and Mary and Joseph were returning to Nazareth, thinking that Yahshua was in the company of their family members, sometime in that first day's journey, they realized that they had lost track of Him. They returned to Jerusalem and found Him in the temple teaching the rabbis. They had lost track of him for one day, but it took two days to find Him. He was lost to them for three days and three nights, perhaps a portend of His final destiny *in Jerusalem*, His first and last visits to the holy city. (See Luke 2:42-7).

At this stage in the chain of events, the place that had been His main center of teaching had now become His municipal tomb so to speak, into which He knew He must go. When Lazarus fell sick and subsequently died, Yahshua and His disciples were on the east side of the Jordan River in a place called Bethabara where John had first baptized (John 1:28 & 10:39, 40). When He received the message from the sisters of Lazarus that the same had fallen sick (11:1-3), He made plans to go to them. The disciples, knowing that their home was in Bethany just six miles east of Jerusalem, well understood that to return to that place would mean a sure death for Yahshua, and probably for them as well, for it was in the region of Judaea (John 11:7). Let us take note of their willing spirit to share with Him in His death should He return to Jerusalem:

John 11:16 Then said Thomas, which is called Didymus, unto his fellow disciples, Let us also go, that we may die with him.

But some have rightly asked, Surely Messiah preached more than just three days and nights in Jerusalem! Of course he did. In reference *to the last three days* of His natural life however, He did no preaching. Remember, He rode the donkey into town on the 10th of Aviv (Matthew 21:1-11). On that day He cleansed the temple of the moneychangers, and taught the

people. But he returned to Bethany that evening, coming back to Jerusalem the next morning on Aviv 11 (see 21:17, 18). This day constitutes one of the longest teaching tours of His 3½ year ministry, from Matthew 21:19 through 26:1. All this occurred on Aviv 11. Take note of what He tells His disciples at the end of that long dissertation:

Matthew 26:1-2 And it came to pass, when Yahshua had finished all these sayings, he said unto his disciples, Ye know that after two days is *the feast of the Passover*, and the Son of man is betrayed to be crucified.

If this day was Aviv 11, *after two days* would bring us to Aviv 14, the day when the paschal lambs were to be sacrificed. It was on this day of Aviv 11 that He returned to Bethany. If one were looking eastward from Jerusalem, he would see the Mount of Olives about a mile to the east. That would be the western slope. About five miles over its summit on the eastern slope is the town of Bethany where Lazarus, Martha and Mary lived. Yahshua spent much time there. Some would say, that is mighty close to Jerusalem, but on foot over the mountain, it would constitute a two to three hour journey. It was after that last day of His teaching on Aviv 11 that He stayed for the next two days in Bethany. On Aviv 13 in the late afternoon, He came back to Jerusalem to eat His last supper with His disciples. After that memorial supper, He went out to the western slope of the Mount of Olives again, overlooking the city with His disciples. Later in the night after a few hours in agonizing prayer, Judas came with the mob and betrayed Yahshua into their hands. He was subsequently put through three mock trials, scourged and beaten, and finally led away to Golgotha to be crucified. All this took place in the night portion and the day portion of Aviv 14. It was at the evening sacrifice about 3:00 PM that the paschal lamb was sacrificed, and that is the very hour our Saviour expired on the Roman cross. The apostle John gives us a few more details of these last few days of Yahshua's natural life.

John 12:1-3 Then Yahshua six days before the Passover came to Bethany, where Lazarus was which had been dead, whom he raised from the dead. There they made him a supper; and Martha served: but Lazarus was one of them that sat at the table with him. Then took Mary a pound of ointment of spikenard, very costly, and anointed the feet of Yahshua, and wiped his feet with her hair: and the house was filled with the odour of the ointment.

Six days before the feast would be Aviv 9, the day before the paschal lambs were to be selected. This was the day when He arrived in Bethany. In harmony with the other three gospels, John records Him making His triumphal entry into Jerusalem the following day: Aviv 10, as we read in verse 12 of the same chapter. Yahshua spoke of the circumstances surrounding His death and resurrection in Jerusalem 16 times. He referred to His resurrection ten times as, "*upon the third day;*" five times *in or within three days;* and once He used the phrase, "*three days and three nights.*" Let us see if the narrative of the four gospels can provide us a definitive outline of those three days and nights. It is worthy of note that about 16% of the combined four gospel accounts focus on the last 24 hours of Messiah's natural life from the Last Supper to the final moments of His burial. No other day in the entirety of Scripture is dealt with in such detail.

As mentioned before, Yahshua and the disciples arrived in Jerusalem in the late afternoon of Aviv 13, the day before the paschal lambs were slain, but not to preach by any means. He knew what His destiny held. Without His sacrificial death at the right time, we would have no hope of eternal life: He was our only hope. He knew that man's efforts to secure His death would fail, and He actually had to orchestrate the chain of events if there were to be any hope of success in His mission of mercy. As it says of Him in

Isaiah 53:6 & 7 All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and וְהוּא hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth.

At this point, His solitary purpose was to offer up His life a ransom for our soul. It is by His stripes that we are healed from the dreadful disease of sin, and from evil spirits. Far beyond His physical pain, He was to suffer the death of the sinner, as He was to die in our stead and take our sins upon Him. He thus became a sin-offering for us, who knew no sin that we might be made the righteousness of יהיה in Him (2nd Corinthians 5:21). *Amazing grace, how sweet the sound, that saved a wretch like me!*

Matthew 26:17 Now the first *day* of the *feast of unleavened bread* the disciples came to Yahshua, saying unto him, Where wilt thou that we prepare for thee to eat the passover?

The word *first* in the above passage is *protos* (G4413 πρῶτος), which is properly defined as *before*. The disciples, knowing that the lambs that had been previously set apart four days earlier for the upcoming feast of Passover/Unleavened Bread would have to be purchased sometime before noon of the following day, and hence, their question to Yahshua. They were evidently oblivious to all that He had previously taught them about His sacrificial death in Jerusalem, fully expecting Him to be present the following night for the paschal meal, and so in one last attempt, He instituted the Memorial Supper in order to commemorate His death. The Memorial Supper they ate that evening, in the early hours of the 14th was not the paschal meal, for there is no mention of a lamb; and when Judas left early on his evil mission, Yahshua telling him to go quickly (John 13:27), the rest of the disciples mistakenly thought He was sending him forth to make further purchases for the coming feast, something that could not have been done had the holy convocation already begun.

John 13:27-30 And after the sop Satan entered into him. Then said Yahshua unto him, That thou doest, do quickly. Now no man at the table knew for what intent he spake this unto him. For some *of them* thought, because Judas had the bag, that Yahshua had said unto him, Buy *those things* that we have need of against the feast; or, that he should give something to the poor. He then having received the sop went immediately out: and it was night.

John makes it clear that this Memorial Supper being eaten on the night portion of the 14th was not yet the Passover meal. The paschal lambs were to be slain on the afternoon of the 14th and eaten with unleavened bread on the night of the 15th some twenty-four hours after the Memorial Supper. (See Exodus 12:8; 18, 19). When it says in Leviticus 23:5, that the 14th of Aviv is the Passover, it refers to the *slaying* (the sacrifice) of the paschal lamb on that day. We read in 2nd Chronicles 35:1-14, of King Josiah, along with some 30,000 other Jews, killing the sacrificial lambs throughout the afternoon up into the evening. That afternoon could not have been on the 13th. That paschal lamb was the type of the Messiah who was the great Antitype or fulfillment of the type. Every detail of both type and Antitype had to coincide or harmonize—even the timing of their mutual death. Yahshua died at the very moment the paschal lambs were being slain, in the mid-afternoon (3:00 PM) of the 14th day. The paschal lamb pointed forward to Yahshua, and Yahshua points back to the lamb. So John specifies that the Memorial Supper occurred the night prior to the Passover. Note the word *before* in the following passage: it is the same word we find in Matthew 27:16, *protos*.

John 13:1 It was now the day before the Passover Festival. Yahshua knew that the hour had come for him to leave this world and go to the Father. He had always loved those in the world who were his own, and he loved them to the very end. (Good News Bible).

With Jerusalem being the heart of the earth, the opening night and the daylight portion of Aviv 14 would constitute the first 24 hours of Yahshua's final work of redemption. The fact that He had been in Jerusalem many times before is not a factor in the sign of Jonah; Jonah had been in the Mediterranean for days or weeks before his time in the whale just as Yahshua had often been in Jerusalem throughout His 3½ year ministry. The only difference between Him and Jonah was that Jonah ran away from his mission; Yahshua marched fearlessly into it.

Concept Three

Narrowing it Down

No one disagrees that Yahshua laid down His life on Aviv 14, and that He did so in the afternoon of that day. Do the gospel accounts tell us what day of the week this could have been? It does so in two different ways. Let us read the account from all four gospels.

Matthew 27:62 Now the next day, that followed the day of the preparation, the chief priests and Pharisees came together unto Pilate,

Mark 15:42 And now when the even was come, because it was the preparation, that is, the day before the Sabbath,

Luke 23:54 And that day was the preparation, and the Sabbath drew on.

John 19:14 And it was the preparation of the Passover, and about the sixth hour: and he saith unto the Jews, Behold your King!

John 19:31 The Jews therefore, because it was the preparation, that the bodies should not remain upon the cross on the Sabbath day, (for that Sabbath day was an high day,) besought Pilate that their legs might be broken, and *that* they might be taken away.

John 19:42 There laid they Yahshua therefore because of the Jews' preparation day; for the sepulchre was nigh at hand.

Six times we find that Aviv 14 fell that year on the day of preparation, the day before the Sabbath. The great question then is, *what Sabbath* is being referred to? Is it the weekly Sabbath, or is it “the high sabbath” of Passover/Unleavened Bread? An equally important question that must be asked, where in all of Scripture do we find the term “high sabbath”? John 19:31 above doesn’t say that. It doesn’t say, “*for that day was a high sabbath*,” as we so often hear; it says rather, “*for that Sabbath was a high day*.” Let the student of Scripture obtain a Strong’s Concordance and see if the festival of Passover/Unleavened Bread bears the title of Sabbath at all. The Sabbath itself is called a holy convocation, but no other holy convocation except for the Day of Atonement bears that distinctive title (H7676 שַׁבָּת). Only the fall feasts bear the lesser term, *sabbathon* (H7677 שַׁבְּתוֹן). If the Scripture is our mutual final Word as we all claim, and we are mutually committed to the command of Deuteronomy 4:2, to not add to nor diminish aught from the Word of יהוה, then even though Passover bears the distinctive term *holy convocation*, not once is it ever called a Sabbath. All Sabbaths are holy convocations, but not all holy convocations are Sabbaths in the same way that all Texans are Americans, but not all Americans are Texans. If every holy convocation is a high day, then why would John have to emphasize that *that* Sabbath was a high day? “*Of course it was John; every holy convocation is a high day!*” It is comparable to saying, “*...and that Sabbath was the seventh day!*” It would be superfluous to emphasize what is already common knowledge...unless of course it is not so common knowledge.

There are *five* days of preparation for the feast of Passover—from the 10th day of Aviv to the 14th. The lamb was thoroughly examined and selected on the 10th, set apart from the flock and kept penned up to the time of the evening sacrifice at 3:00 PM on Aviv 14. Usually they had to dig a pit in order to roast the sacrificial lamb. They had to search through their house to be sure that all the leaven was removed. They had to go out in search of hyssop and some bitter herbs for the feast before the sun went down at the end of the 14th. The point is, there was never a solitary *day* of preparation for Passover/Unleavened Bread. Only the weekly Sabbath had a singular *day* of preparation: it was the day before the Sabbath.

Exodus 16:22-3 And it came to pass, *that* on the sixth day they gathered twice as much bread, two omers for one *man*; and all the rulers of the congregation came and told Moses. And he said unto them, This *is that* which יהוה hath said, Tomorrow *is* the rest of the holy Sabbath unto יהוה: bake *that* which ye will bake *to day*, and seethe that ye will seethe; and that which remaineth over lay up for you to be kept until the morning.

So in reference to the passages in the gospels that focus in on the preparation day, the weight of evidence leans heavily on the preparation of the weekly Sabbath. But what about the solitary verse that says it was the preparation of the Passover (John 19:14)? We are all aware that there are quite a few who believe the Passover meal should be eaten on the night portion of the 14th when Yahshua and the disciples ate the Memorial Supper, rather than the 15th. For these dear brethren, the preparation of the Passover would be at the close of Aviv 13. They will eat matza, or unleavened bread that *night*, and then eat leavened the following day, in order to not have an eight *day* feast of Unleavened Bread, which they know would be contrary to the commandment of Exodus 12:15. But apart from that, since both the Old and the New Testaments combine Passover with the feast of Unleavened Bread (Ezekiel 45:21 & Luke 22:1), we all know that that feast falls on the 15th day of Aviv, and will sometimes fall on the weekly Sabbath as well. And when it does, *that Sabbath becomes a high day*. And if that clarification is not good enough for those holding fast to the high sabbath doctrine, the Talmudic claim of every festival being a high day is still alright: “*that (weekly) Sabbath was (also) a high day.*” Both explanations apply (this time) and are not problematic. In view of this, that final day of preparation of Passover coincides with the singular day of preparation of the weekly Sabbath. A solar year is 365¼ days; there are 52 weeks in the year, but 52 x 7 (days per week) = 364. This means that 1¼ extra days in the solar year cause the feast days to float around in the week from year to year. Sometimes Passover will occur on a Friday; sometimes on a Thursday and sometimes on the Sabbath, etc. But the wave sheaf must always occur on the day after the weekly Sabbath that falls within the feast. That would be the first day of the week, the day known as Sunday. That day begins the count of the seven Sabbaths unto the day of Shavuot, or Pentecost. For those who claim that the wave sheaf follows the “high sabbath” of the feast, they must consider the next seven *Sabbaths*. Shavuot is the day after the seventh *Sabbath*: which is the day the calendar calls Sunday: the 50th day.

The reason John emphasizes that that particular Sabbath was a high day is because the annual feast day that year coincided with it. Can we prove that? Please consider: had there been a Wednesday crucifixion on Aviv 14, Thursday would have been the “high sabbath” as some have called it. What day follows Thursday? The day the calendar calls Friday. Would that have been the day of the wave sheaf? Please consider again, had there been a Thursday execution that year, with the “high sabbath” occurring on Friday, we must ask, what day follows Friday? The 7th day Sabbath is the answer. Is Sabbath the day of the wave sheaf? Remember, the three days and nights of Jonah cannot be separated. “For *as* Jonah was...” (G5618 ὡσπερ hosper: *exactly like*).

And last but not least; had there been a Friday crucifixion that year on Aviv 14, followed by the weekly high day Sabbath, we ask, what day follows Sabbath? The answer is clear: the day that follows the weekly Sabbath as we all know, is none other than the first day of the week: the day Leviticus 23:9-11 calls the Wave Sheaf! The sheaf being raised represents the resurrection.

Leviticus 23:9-11 And יהוה spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When ye be come into the land which I give unto you, and shall reap the harvest thereof, then ye shall bring a sheaf of the firstfruits of your harvest unto the priest: And he shall wave the sheaf before יהוה, to be accepted for you: on the morrow after the Sabbath the priest shall wave it.

Leviticus 23:15-16 And ye shall count unto you from the morrow after the Sabbath, from the day that ye brought the sheaf of the wave offering; seven Sabbaths shall be complete: Even unto the morrow after the seventh Sabbath shall ye number fifty days; and ye shall offer a new meat offering unto יהוה.

As we have shown, the spring feast is truly a holy convocation (miqra qodesh מִקְרָא קֹדֶשׁ), but neither in the English nor the Hebrew is it *ever* referred to as a Sabbath. Though this may come as a shock to many, we must remember we cannot add to the Word of יהוה. To do so will prove to be fatal to our eternal life. And since it is not a Sabbath, we must reconsider some of our preconceived interpretations...to put it meekly. And we need not despair; יהוה's interpretation is the best one of all anyway. Remember, Aviv 15 is a day when no servile work could be done (working for hire), but food preparation was not prohibited that day as it is on the Sabbath.

Exodus 12:16 And in the first day *there shall be* an holy convocation, and in the seventh day there shall be an holy convocation to you; no manner of work shall be done in them, save *that* which every man must eat, that only may be done of you.

As we have said before, the three days and three nights of the sign of Jonah are the only three *consecutive* days in all of Scripture called both by name and by number: Aviv 14: Passover sacrifice and the *Preparation* of the Sabbath; Aviv 15: the *feast* of the Passover on the 7th day *Sabbath*; Aviv 16, the first day of the new week: the day of *the Wave Sheaf* resurrection, known today as *Sunday*. If we break the consecutive order of those three days and nights, we break the Sign of Jonah. Remember, we are not at liberty to add to the Word of the Almighty by calling a day a Sabbath when He did not call it as such. And we certainly cannot call it a high sabbath, a term not even found in Scripture. We cannot engineer the Scriptures to conform to our traditional doctrines. Age will not make error into truth, and truth can afford to be fair. It will lose nothing by close examination. Let us observe an interesting confirmation of these three consecutive days in the book of Matthew. Please take notice of how another translational error has contributed to the problem, but once corrected, serves to confirm the solution.

Matthew 27:57-66 When the even was come, there came a rich man of Arimathaea, named Joseph, who also himself was Yahshua's disciple: He went to Pilate, requesting the body of Yahshua. Then Pilate commanded the body to be delivered. And when Joseph had taken the body, he wrapped it in a clean linen cloth, 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 sepulchre, and departed. And there was Mary Magdalene, and the other Mary, sitting over against the sepulchre. Now the next day, that followed the day of the preparation, the chief priests and Pharisees came together unto Pilate, Saying, Sir, we remember that that deceiver said, while he was yet alive, After three days I will rise again. 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. Pilate said unto them, Ye have a watch: go your way, make *it* as sure as ye can. So they went, and made the sepulchre sure, sealing the stone, and setting a watch.

This was the close of the 14th day of Aviv when Joseph came to Pilate, and verse 62 indicates it was the preparation day. That verse also carries us into the day following. The chief priests and Pharisees requested of Pilate on the day after the preparation to secure the sepulchre wherein Yahshua was buried by sealing it with a large stone for the remainder of that Sabbath day and the following day as well, which would be the third day from the crucifixion. “*So they went, and made the sepulchre sure, sealing the stone, and setting a watch.*” The question is, on what Sabbath day did they do this? The Wednesday advocates would say that since Wednesday (Aviv 14), was the preparation of *the high sabbath* of Unleavened Bread, then it would have to have been on Thursday (the 15th of Aviv) that they made their two-day request since they were already into the second day: the day that followed the preparation of the feast day “sabbath.” Their concern was that the disciples might come *by night*, and steal Him away. They needed to ensure that the tomb would especially be secured *that night*, and the following day (Friday). Thus the sepulchre would be secure until the third day: Wed. evening/ Thurs. evening/Friday evening. As can be seen, that would not have been quite long enough of a watch for the required 72 hours in the tomb. They were urgent that the tomb be secured that night. The required time however (72 hours), would not have ended until near the end of the weekly Sabbath, another day beyond their request. There was no petition for *two* nights of a military guard. We must recall also that according to all four of the gospel accounts, the day that followed their request was the first day of the week, not Friday, and not the Sabbath: it was the day the calendar calls Sunday.

<u>Aviv 14: Wednesday</u> Passover sacrifice; Placed in tomb in the afternoon; Day of Preparation	<u>Aviv 15: Thursday</u> High day sabbath of Unleavened Bread; Request of priests to seal tomb that night	<u>Aviv 16: Friday</u> Yahshua fast asleep in the tomb;	<u>Aviv 17: Sabbath</u> Yahshua rises in the late afternoon 72 hours from His death on Wednesday	<u>Aviv 18: Sunday</u> Walk to Emmaus in the late afternoon... “...and today is the <i>fifth</i> day since...”
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The Thursday crucifixion theory on the other hand, says also that that day (of the crucifixion) was the preparation of *the high sabbath* of the feast of Unleavened Bread—that following day being a Friday (Aviv 15). In this model, Friday would have been the day they made the sepulchre sure until the third day: Thursday evening/Friday evening/Sabbath evening. Since the request was made on the Friday high day “sabbath” and they wanted to ensure that the tomb would be secured through that night and the following day, which would be the weekly Sabbath, this also would not be quite long enough of a watch. We must bear in mind that on whatever sabbath the request was made, it was followed by the first day of the week, a day also known as Sunday. Had Friday been the high sabbath the request was made, followed by the weekly Sabbath, we have one sabbath too many. In other words, their two-day request was made on the feast day “sabbath,” of Friday, and they wanted it secured during the remainder of that sabbath (Friday), and through the following day of the weekly Sabbath. Their fear of the disciples coming by night (“*Friday night*” by common vernacular—actually the night portion of the Sabbath), would have left the night portion of Sunday wide open, which, as we all know, was the day all four accounts say He arose from the grave. The accounts say nothing of a double Sabbath back to back that year. The day after the Friday high day sabbath would have been the weekly Sabbath. None of the accounts say He rose on Sabbath. No one today can force their perspective on the written account. All three views must ultimately harmonize with the account.

<u>Aviv 14: Thursday</u> Passover sacrifice; Placed in tomb in the late afternoon; Day of Preparation	<u>Aviv 15: Friday</u> High day festival sabbath of Unleavened Bread; Request of priests to seal the tomb that night	<u>Aviv 16: Sabbath</u> Yahshua sound asleep in the tomb; Yahshua rises in the late afternoon	<u>Aviv 18: Sunday</u> Walk to Emmaus in the late afternoon w/disciples. “...and today is the <i>fourth</i> day since...”
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Let us consider now: had the crucifixion occurred on a Friday that year (Aviv 14), that would have been the preparation day of the *weekly* Sabbath. The following day (the day after Friday) would have been the weekly Sabbath when the religious rulers went to Pilate with their two-day request. Had their paradigm of the sign (three days and nights) been from Messiah’s arrest (in Jerusalem), on the night portion of Friday into the day portion when He was crucified (the first night and day), then the night portion of the Sabbath (Aviv 15) would have been the second night, followed by the Sabbath day: (night and day #2). This would have been the day when they would have gone to Pilate with their two-day request. That carries us into the night portion of Sunday followed by the daylight: (night and day #3). They requested a guard to be posted for the final hours of the Sabbath (day two) through Sunday (day three), not expecting Him to arise; they only wanted to prevent any subterfuge from the disciples *that night*. But Matthew 28:1 says that it was in the end of the Sabbath when Messiah arose...doesn’t it?

Matthew 28:1, 2 In the end of the Sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first *day* of the week, came Mary and, behold, there was a great earthquake: for the angel of יהוה descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it.

As we thus know, they found the sepulchre empty. Does the dawn of Sunday occur right at sundown Sabbath? The other three gospel accounts all begin a new chapter when they come to the morning of the resurrection. Only Matthew seems to say otherwise. Are the chapter and verse divisions inspired? There were none of these divisions until the middle of the 14th century! When we take a text out of context, it becomes a pretext. Let us bypass the manmade chapter and verse divisions for a moment and allow *the context* to complete its thought. Let us now carefully reread the account, and observe it in context. Reading from Matthew 27:64-66:

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. Pilate said unto them, Ye have a watch: go your way, make *it* as sure as ye can. So they went, and made the sepulchre sure, sealing the stone, and setting a watch in the end of the Sabbath.

Matthew 28:1 As it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the sepulchre.

Mark 16:1, 2 And when the Sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome, had bought sweet spices, that they might come and anoint him. And very early in the morning the first day of the week, they came unto the sepulchre at the rising of the sun.

Luke 24:1 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.

John 20:1 The first day of the week cometh Mary Magdalene early, when it was yet dark, unto the sepulchre, and seeth the stone taken away from the sepulchre.

Please let us observe that in the Mark 16:1, 2 passage, the women did not come to the tomb until the early morning of Sunday with their spices they had purchased sometime after sundown of the Sabbath: the early evening portion of Sunday. By extracting the first clause from Matthew 28:1, “...in the end of the Sabbath,” and replacing it to where it belongs in the end of Matthew 27:66, we thus restore the context, harmonizing Matthew’s account with the other three gospels, and thereby correct an enormous misconception. It would have been meaningless for the women to have “returned” to the sepulchre with their anointing spices on Sunday morning had they come there at the end of the Sabbath and found the tomb empty just after sundown. Plus, we are able to designate which Sabbath is being referred to in our context of Matthew 27 since it is immediately followed by *the first day of the week*, which of course, is Sunday. The fact that this Sabbath is followed by Sunday establishes beyond any shadow of doubt that the Sabbath being referred to is none other than the weekly Sabbath. We thus establish the three consecutive days and nights of the sign of Jonah: the last 72 hours in the heart of the earth: *Jerusalem*. Counting backwards, we have Sunday, Sabbath, and Friday: Aviv 16, 15, and 14.

<p><u>Aviv 14: Friday</u> Passover sacrifice; meal preparation; Placed in tomb in the late afternoon; Day of Preparation for feast day and the weekly Sabbath: the high day.</p>	<p><u>Aviv 15: Sabbath</u> High day of Unleavened Bread and the weekly Sabbath when both days converge; Request of priests to seal the tomb that night.</p>	<p><u>Aviv 16: Sunday</u> Yahshua asleep in the tomb; He rises in the early morning, before dawn. Walk to Emmaus in late afternoon: “..and today is the third day since...”</p>
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A day does not *dawn* at sundown. That is *the final evening* of the day. A day begins to dawn at the first morning light, *at dawn*. We must rightly divide the Word of Truth from man’s preposterous views; we must divide it correctly. Since the translators failed to complete the context in harmony with the other gospel accounts, we are duty bound to restore the harmony of the Scriptures. Let us not fail in our duty as they obviously did in theirs. And just in case we may not yet fully perceive the gravity of this matter, we remind the reader that this is the solitary sign our Master gave to the religious leaders and to the world for all time, of the proof of His being the Messiah promised by all the prophecies of the Tanakh. We may have been honestly mistaken in our computation of the time He spent in the mysterious heart of the earth, because of a preconceived interpretation of what that term must mean, but we cannot afford to hold on to that which is not the truth. If we do, then it becomes a salvational issue.

As a side note, the Wednesday advocates assure us that according to accurate computer computations, Aviv 14 landed on a Wednesday the year of the crucifixion. The Thursday folks guarantee the same thing for Thursday. The Friday people don’t even resort to a computer for support; they don’t need to.

At this point we need to examine a little closer the account of the purchase of the spices mentioned above. We need to determine if those spices were purchased between the so-called “high day sabbath” of the festival and the weekly Sabbath, or were they purchased immediately after the weekly Sabbath that fell that year on the festival, thus making it the only “high day” ever mentioned in the tenor of Scripture.

Concept Four

The Purchase of the Spices

At first glance, it appears that there must have been two sabbath days in close proximity in the account; but were there? Let us take note of the following two passages:

Mark 16:1 And when the Sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome, had bought sweet spices, that they might come and anoint him.

Luke 23:54-6 And that day was the preparation, and the Sabbath drew on. And the women also, which came with him from Galilee, followed after, and beheld the sepulchre, and how his body was laid. And they returned, and prepared spices and ointments; and rested the Sabbath day according to the commandment.

In the first text, after the Sabbath was past, the women bought the anointing spices; but in the second, it was before the Sabbath that they had prepared the spices which would have had to have been purchased beforehand. Please take note of the following two incidents:

John 12:1-3 Then Yahshua six days before the Passover came to Bethany, where Lazarus was which had been dead, whom he raised from the dead. There they made him a supper; and Martha served: but Lazarus was one of them that sat at the table with him. Then took Mary a pound of ointment of spikenard, very costly, and anointed the feet of Yahshua, and wiped his feet with her hair: and the house was filled with the odour of the ointment.

John 19:39, 40 And there came also Nicodemus, which at the first came to Yahshua by night, and brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about an hundred pound weight. Then took they the body of Yahshua, and wound it in linen clothes with the spices, as the manner of the Jews is to bury.

Why did Mary make this expensive purchase? Please observe Yahshua's words in John 12:7: "*Then said Yahshua, Let her alone: against the day of my burying hath she kept this.*" Evidently the spices had been bought several days before Yahshua's crucifixion. Everyone could see what was coming, and at least Mary and Nicodemus had made preparations for Yahshua's burial. At this point the religious leaders were manifesting openly their hatred for Yahshua, and everyone could see it. They even placed a bounty on Him should He dare come to Jerusalem for the feast. Evidently, at least a few had made preparations for the inevitable well in advance.

John 11:57 Now both the chief priests and the Pharisees had given a commandment, that, if any man knew where he were, he should shew *it*, that they might take him.

The phrase "*had bought*" in Mark 16:1, according to Strong's (G59 ἀγοράζω *agoradzo*) from G58 ἀγορά *agora*; means *to purchase: to redeem*. The Hebrew word for redeem is *pawdaw*, which means to ransom or *preserve*. Had the spices been bought some time before the crucifixion they would have been preserved till the time they were ready to use them. Of course, had there been a Wednesday crucifixion with a Thursday high day "sabbath," then the day between the two "sabbaths" would allow for a purchase of the spices: after the festive "sabbath," and before the weekly Sabbath. All will have to decide if such a thing were possible in view of the evidence that has been presented. The solution to this situation is simply that from the supply of spices already having been purchased a few days before the crucifixion, and those purchased immediately after the weekly Sabbath, the women came to anoint the body early Sunday morning. The second text (Luke 23) says after He was in the tomb they returned home and prepared the spices purchased earlier; it doesn't say they were bought that same day—that is only assumed. The first text says [further] spices were purchased right after sundown on the Sabbath. Aviv 15 is not a sabbath unless it falls on the weekly Sabbath. Jerusalem was filled with Romans and Greeks with shops of their own, and nothing in the Torah forbids even the Jews from opening their shops soon after the Sabbath has ended. But there is yet another valuable piece of evidence we must now consider.

Concept Five

The Walk to Emmaus

The Messiah entered the death zone of Jerusalem just before the night portion of that 14th day of Aviv. The Memorial Supper He instituted that night was to commemorate His death that would occur the following afternoon of that same day of Aviv 14. The following night and the next day (15th) He lay silently in the tomb in the deep silent slumber of death. Sometime that following night of the first day of the week (Aviv 16), He arose from the dead. Later that afternoon He left Jerusalem and joined two men on an eight mile walk to the nearby town of Emmaus. These men were followers of Yahshua and counted Him to have been the Messiah. In fact, they were sadly discussing their great disappointment in regard to that very issue: the messiahship of Yahshua. In His glorified body, they did not recognize Him; they didn't know that this Stranger was indeed the very Messiah now risen from the dead who had joined them on their walk and their mournful discourse. Why don't we quietly merge in with them as they travel along and listen in on their sad conversation. Reading from:

Luke 24:13-20 And, behold, two of them went that same day to a village called Emmaus, which was from Jerusalem *about* threescore furlongs. And they talked together of all these things which had happened. And it came to pass, that, while they communed *together* and reasoned, Yahshua himself drew near, and went with them. But their eyes were holden that they should not know him. And he said unto them, What manner of communications *are* these that ye have one to another, as ye walk, and are sad? 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? And he said unto them, What things? And they said unto him, Concerning Yahshua of Nazareth, which was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people: And how the chief priests and our rulers delivered him to be condemned to death, and have crucified him.

Strangely enough, these pious men were not discussing how long the Messiah had spent in the tomb. There seemed to have been something of far greater import on their troubled minds. They were bewildered that apparently their hope in Yahshua as the promised Messiah had been in vain. How could the Hebrew Messiah have submitted to such maltreatment by not only the evil religious leaders, but even by the gentile Romans! Please take note of their next statement:

Luke 24:21 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.

The Wednesday proponents say to their Thursday brethren: "You don't have a full 72 hours in the grave with only the last few hours of Thursday, all of Friday and Sabbath, and maybe a few hours into Sunday; at best, that's only about 54 hours; you're about 18 hours shy of the goal!" The Thursday theologians chide the poor Friday folks: "You *certainly* don't have an argument with only the last couple of hours of Friday in the grave, all of Sabbath, and just a few hours into Sunday! You may as well just call it a day; in fact that is what you are trying to do!" The one thing the first two groups avoid is that unyielding verse in Luke 24:21: "*and beside all this, today is the third day since all these things were done.*" But that verse isn't in hiding. Why don't we invite it into this discussion? "*Verse 21, why do you have to go and ruin everything?*"

This was Sunday, late in the afternoon: the day was "*far spent; toward evening*" (24:29). This was the third and final day of the three days and nights (72 hours) Yahshua spent in the heart of the earth. Consider it well: had there been a Wednesday crucifixion, they would have had to say, "and beside all this, today is the **fifth** day since these things were done." Had it been a Thursday crucifixion, they would have had to say, "and beside all this, today is the **fourth** day since these things were done." Only with a Friday crucifixion could they say, "and beside all this, today is the **third** day since these things were done." And lest we overlook what they meant by "*these things*," Yahshua made it clear for us. Notice what He tells them in Luke 24:25, & 26:

Then he said unto them, O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken: Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory?

He didn't say "...to have suffered *this thing*." What *all* did the prophets have to say about the Messiah? Did any of them say He would be in the grave for 72 hours? We need to read the entirety of Isaiah 53 and see that there was much more involved in His work of redemption than merely the time He spent in death. Observe what He later said to His disciples in Luke 24:44-48:

And he said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me. Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures, And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behooved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day, And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And ye are witnesses of these things.

Yahshua thought that the preaching of repentance and remission of sins through His mighty name was even more important than how long He rested unconscious in the grave! As we may recall, He even mentioned that very thing in the sign of Jonah (Matthew 12:41). That is the verse that follows the one about how long Jonah was confined in the belly of the whale. Also, in the above passage, He states that everything written about Him in the entirety of the Tanakh had to be fulfilled...including the three days and nights spent in the heart of the earth. Just as Jonah was three days and nights in the Mediterranean: the heart of the earth, so must He be the same, but not in a disconnected fashion. In that brief period of time He would have to fulfill all the types that pointed to His great work of redemption. Those days had to be connected.

Regarding that final statement of the two disciples on the road to Emmaus, "*today is the third day since these things were done*," let us consider what they meant by the word *since*. From the Webster's 1828 edition, the following is the definition for the word *Since*:

The proper signification of since is after, and its appropriate sense includes the whole period between an event and the present time. I have not seen my brother since January. The LORD hath blessed thee, since my coming. (Genesis 30:30). Holy prophets, who have been since the world began. (Luke 1:70). Since then denotes, during the whole time after an event; or at any particular time during that period.

Since Yahshua said some 16 times that He would rise again on the third day, and these two men, on that Sunday afternoon are declaring that day to be the third day, their testimony is too clear to miss. They were talking about the betrayal of Judas, the subsequent arrest in the garden (where He *began* shedding His blood), the three mock trials through the night and into the morning, the three denials of Peter, Pilate's offer to release Yahshua in place of Barrabas, the scourging, the crucifixion, the burial, and the resurrection. All the prophecies of His resurrection occurring on the third day culminated at precisely the right time, and these two men unknowingly affirmed the fulfillment of those prophecies. Yahshua affirmed their declaration.

And while we're discussing the element of time, please consider how only an omniscient mind could have orchestrated the entire earthly life of Yahshua the Messiah. He was born on the first day of the seventh Hebrew month. Since the festivals float around in the week from year to year, in order for His death to occur 33½ years later at a time when He would be able to represent #1) the paschal lamb; #2) the leaven removed from the house; and #3) the wave sheaf, on the three consecutive days that typified those events in the Messiah's life, is a work of Divine Genius. Had the sacrifice of the Passover (Aviv 14), the feast of Unleavened Bread (15th), and the Wave Sheaf (16th) not all been *together* that very year at the close of His 3½ year ministry, the sign of Jonah could not have been fulfilled. The Wave Sheaf cannot occur on any other day than a Sunday, the day after the weekly Sabbath. If that were not the case then the counting of the omer: the seven consecutive Sabbaths leading up to Shavuot (Pentecost), would not land on the day after the seventh Sabbath—a Sunday. (See Leviticus 23:15, 16). And since the three days and nights

cannot be separated, and the last of those three days and nights has to be Sunday, the sign is thus fulfilled and Yahshua is thus proven to be the long awaited Messiah indeed! Far beyond the time He spent in the tomb, is the time He spent those last three days and nights in the religious capital of the world: the heart of the earth. Because of the solar year, the holy convocations do not always converge in a three-day order. Please consider the following:

Had there been a Wednesday crucifixion that year (Aviv 14), the time when the paschal lamb would have been sacrificed, and then eaten with unleavened bread that following evening (15th) on the night portion of Thursday the “high sabbath,” and His resting in the tomb throughout the remainder of that day into Friday (Aviv 16), and onward through the Sabbath (Aviv 17), the wave sheaf would have been offered on Sunday (Aviv 18). Few people argue that the wave sheaf is offered on the day after the Sabbath. Some do however; those who believe that Pentecost must not necessarily land on a Sunday, an argument that we’ll not take the time to consider in this treatise. We can only point out that the wave sheaf is offered on the day after the Sabbath, which begins the count of seven consecutive Sabbaths reaching unto the day after the seventh Sabbath, also known as *Shavuot*: the 50th day: $7 \times 7 = 49 + 1 = 50$. (Leviticus 23:15, 16). Bear in mind, the only other day of the year that is *Scripturally* called by the name of Sabbath, is the Day of Atonement. Even though the KJV errantly calls the Feast of Trumpets and the first and last days of Tabernacles by the term *Sabbath*, all one needs to do is look them up in Strong’s and he will find that instead of #7676 שַׁבָּת Shabbath, it is # 7677 שַׁבְּתוֹן shabbathon. By the way, one will notice there is no dot in the bosom of the last letter of Shabbath (last letter to the left), which therefore makes it a *thou* ת (soft *th* as in thank) sound and not a *tau* “t” sound: ט. So many folks greet one another with “Shabbat Shalom,” instead of the appropriate “Shabbath Shalom.”

As can be seen, the consecutive order of the three days and nights is impossible with the Wednesday concept. Yahshua could not have fulfilled the wave sheaf risen on Sabbath afternoon 72 hours later while still asleep in the grave. For the Thursday model, all one needs to do is place Thursday at Aviv 14 for that year, and Friday (15th), Sabbath (16th), and finally Sunday (17th), and as can be seen, the consecutive order is still broken. It is imperative that those three days be together and that the day of the wave sheaf be the final day. Let us not forget that the wave sheaf was ceremonially raised. Just as the farmer plants seed in his field, and the elements of nature: the sunshine and the rain, cause them to germinate and rise unto newness of life—the wave sheaf typifies the resurrection, and our blessed Redeemer was the great Antitype. That day, according to Leviticus 23, has to be the day after the seventh-day Sabbath of the week. It is phenomenal that upon the year of our Messiah’s sacrificial death, that very narrow window of opportunity was wide open. As we said before, only Divine Omniscience could have brought it about. This is another classic illustration of Divine Intelligence and Design.

We hope the reader can grasp the incredible revelation of this chain of events in regard to the last three days and nights of Messiah’s natural life here on earth. Passover and Unleavened Bread will always be back to back, but the Wave Sheaf of barley must always occur on the day after the Sabbath. As mentioned earlier, since the feast of Aviv 15 is always a holy convocation but never a sabbath, whenever it happens to coincide with the Sabbath it makes that Sabbath a *high day*. The chance of the annual feast landing on the weekly Sabbath is about one in seven. This means that long before He was even born into this world, in order for the sign of His messiahship to be precisely fulfilled, those three days had to occur one after another in that very narrow window of opportunity, and therefore had to be well planned out long before His entrance into this world. In fact, we could say that it was orchestrated at least 450 years before that grand entry when the lowly manger of Bethlehem was to become the most beautiful and honored place on the earth. When the Pharisees demanded the sign of Yahshua’s messiahship, and He responded (perhaps a couple of years before His death), He could see with prophetic vision that His answer involved more than just three days and nights—it took in several hundred years of prophetic time. Let us now focus our attention on one of the most amazing time prophecies to be found in the Scriptures of Truth. This prophecy is all about the Hebrew Messiah! Not only will this prophecy help to resolve another misconception regarding the sign of Jonah, it will enable us to catch a glimpse of the awesome control that the Almighty יהוה exercises over the affairs of our planet.

Concept Six

In the Midst of the Week

Let us now consider a most illuminating prophecy from the book of Daniel. Did he prophesy that Yahshua the Messiah would be crucified on a Wednesday? Many are of that impression. It would certainly be remarkable if he could have pinpointed the very day of the week the sacrificial death of our Redeemer would have occurred, nearly 500 years before it happened. Maybe though, we shouldn't really count such a thing to be so miraculous. After all, Isaiah prophesied that Cyrus would be the Persian king to liberate the Jews from captivity 300 years before he was even born, and called him by name! (See Isaiah 44:28). So let us now read Daniel's proclamation made to his fellow Jews while in their Persian captivity under the rule of that very King, Cyrus.

Daniel 9:24-27 Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy. Know therefore and understand, *that* from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince *shall be* seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times. And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself: and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof *shall be* with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined. And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make *it* desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate.

This is a time prophecy regarding the Jewish people. It has to do with their return to their homeland from the Persian captivity, and their ultimate demise as a nation for their supreme sin of rejecting their Messiah. It has nothing to do with literal 7-day weeks, but rather weeks of years. None of the events mentioned in the prophecies met their fulfillment in literal days and weeks. Seventy prophetic weeks then signify 490 years (70 x 7). We find over and over that in prophecy, a day stands for a year. Note the following examples:

Numbers 14:32-4 But *as for* you, your carcasses, they shall fall in this wilderness. And your children shall wander in the wilderness forty years, and bear your whoredoms, until your carcasses be wasted in the wilderness. After the number of the days in which ye searched the land, *even* forty days, each day for a year, shall ye bear your iniquities, *even* forty years, and ye shall know my breach of promise.

Ezekiel 4:6 And when thou hast accomplished them, lie again on thy right side, and thou shalt bear the iniquity of the house of Judah forty days: I have appointed thee each day for a year.

Genesis 29:27-8 Fulfil her week, and we will give thee this also for the service which thou shalt serve with me yet seven other years. And Jacob did so, and fulfilled her week: and he gave him Rachel his daughter to wife also.

Daniel's prophecy is in regard to the southern kingdom of Judah. The northern kingdom of Israel had gone into Assyrian captivity about a century before the Jews went into Babylonian captivity. They were now approaching the end of their seventy *years* of exile. Then came this marvelous messianic prophecy unto Daniel. It was revealed to him that from a certain point, the royal commandment to restore and rebuild the ruins of Jerusalem, the prophecy would begin. The first seven weeks (49 years) was for the construction of the temple and the wall. When the Jews asked Messiah for a sign, He told them, "*Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.*"

John 2:20 Then said the Jews, Forty and six years was this temple in building, and wilt thou rear it up in three days?

Mention is made only of the construction of the temple in this passage. The wall was only torn down in certain places, and needed to be repaired hurriedly because of the Samaritans that were trying to impede their progress. Apparently, that initial project occupied only three of the 49 years leaving the last 46 years for the construction of the temple.

Daniel's prayer concerned the prophecy of Jeremiah (25:11, 12; 29:10) in that the Jews' time of captivity would last seventy years, of which, that time was nearing the end. Daniel was a prophet of יהיה, and well understood the day for a year prophecies of the Tanakh. Now he was given a time prophecy that extended far beyond their seventy year captivity. He sought for an understanding, and the angel Gabriel came to make it clear to him. It had to do with far more than their return from captivity. It had to do not only with the restoration of Jerusalem in the near future, but with its ultimate destruction in the later future, and their final rejection for the utmost sin of denying their Messiah. Too many prophetic signs were fulfilled in Yahshua to excuse the Jewish nation for their rejection of Him. On one occasion they had even gone so far as to commit the unpardonable sin of attributing to hasatan the work of the Holy Spirit as wrought in Yahshua. They did this just moments before asking for the sign of Him being the Messiah (Matthew 12:22-24; vss. 31-2; v. 38). Thus we have the famous sign of Jonah of which this document is all about.

The prophecy is divided into three time elements: 7 weeks; 62 weeks, and one week. We have already discussed the first part; the seven weeks are the first 49 years. The second part, 62 weeks, equals 434 years. When we add this latter figure with the former we arrive at 483 years from the starting point to the Messiah's anointing by the Holy Spirit at His baptism at the age of 30 when He began His ministry. That event marked the beginning of the last prophetic week of seven years, a total of 490 years in the 70 week prophecy, or seventy sabbaticals. It is worthy of note that this amazing and wonderful prophecy came to Daniel on the Day of Atonement when he was in a state of fasting, sackcloth, and ashes (9:3). According to Leviticus 25:9,10, the trumpet was to sound every 50th year on the Day of Atonement, announcing the Jubilee when the captives were to be set free, and return to their homeland. This was about to happen in the life of Daniel and all his fellow captives including Ezra and Nehemiah the Levitical priests. A jubilee consisted of seven sabbaticals, or 49 years. Every 50th year was the jubilee, but also it was the first year of the next set of 49. So 490 years would equal ten jubilees. Let us see what happened on that last prophetic week (of seven years) of the 70-week prophecy of 490 years. If the time prophecy works out on every point, then we may not only recognize that it indeed is a true interpretation of the messianic prophecy itself, but also we may recognize that the midst of the week involves a week of years, and not days after all. What we now need is the starting point. But before our finding of that starting point, let us consider what the prophecy said about the Messiah. We'll make use of the Strong's Concordance to examine some of the key words. The first one to study is the word *determined*.

Daniel 9:24 Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy.

H2852 קָטַף *khaw-thak* A primitive root; properly to *cut* off, that is, (figuratively) to *decree*:-

In other words, using the day for a year principle, 490 years are *decreed* upon the Jewish nation and specifically upon Jerusalem. Six things were signified, all of which the Messiah would accomplish. Let us examine them one by one.

*1) The first thing He did was *finish the transgression*. The word finish (H3607 כָּלַף *kaw-law'*) means to restrain, or *to break the power of...sin*. Yahshua stripped hasatan of his power through His sacrificial death on the cross. He bruised the head of the serpent, and brought his kingdom of darkness to an end for all who would respond to His great work of redemption in their behalf. It says in 1st John 3:8 that He came to destroy the works of the devil. He cast demons out of people, and He commissions His servants to do the same (Matthew 10:7, 8).

*2) The second thing Yahshua accomplished was *to make an end of sins*. Since it is evident that sin has certainly not come to an end, and if anything, has escalated in the last 2,000 years since the cross, then there must be something else meant by the phrase, “...*to make an end of sins*.” Let us examine this phrase.

H2856 חָתַם *khaw-tham'* A primitive root; to *close up*; especially to *seal*: - make an end, mark, seal (up), stop. H2403 חַטָּאת *khat-tawth'* From H2398; an *offence* (sometimes habitual *sinfulness*), and its penalty, occasion, sacrifice, or expiation; also (concretely) an *offender*: - punishment (of sin), purifying (-fication for sin), sin (-ner, offering).

He sealed up, or made an end of the *sin-offerings* under the Levitical priesthood by His own great and final sacrifice for sins. Because the religious leaders refused to recognize the significance of His death, they continued their meaningless round of ceremonies in the temple. Even though the veil of the temple was rent in twain, opening the way into the most holy place, thus revealing the haunting absence of the Ark of the Covenant, still they carried on the pretense, but the truth was, and still is, the Messiah's perfect sacrifice brought the sin-offerings to an end.

*3) *Thirdly, to make reconciliation for iniquity*. Again, He did this through His sacrifice; it was the only way He could have met the justice of יהוה and thus make peace (*reconciliation*), bringing יהוה and man together once more. “*For without the shedding of His blood there is no remission of our sins*” (Hebrews 9:22).

*4) *And to bring in everlasting righteousness*. Yahshua very clearly said in Matthew 5:19, unless our righteousness exceeded the righteousness of the Pharisees, we would not enter the kingdom of heaven. Their holiness existed in mechanical obedience to a set of rules. Yahshua came to magnify the Torah and make it honorable (Isaiah 42:21). He explained the spiritual nature of the Law, bringing forth the deep holiness of it. He did this through the preaching of the gospel and His parables. He also gave us the fullness of His Holy Spirit, breaking every yoke of sin so fully that righteousness becomes our very nature.

*5) He came to *seal up the vision and prophecy*: all the prophetic visions of the Tanakh, which had reference to the Messiah, He accomplished. All things that were written in the Law, the Prophets, and the Psalms, concerning the Messiah, were fulfilled in Him. Let us consider what all this involves: some of those prophecies relate to His person; others to His coming into the world: the time, place, and manner of it; still others to the great work of salvation for which He came; and yet others to His miracles, sufferings, and death, and the glory that should follow; all of which have been fulfilled in Yahshua. But specifically, He brought these prophecies of Daniel to their fulfillment. As we shall soon discover, these amazing time prophecies, and the events they describe connect with the sign of Jonah, and they verify Him alone to be the long awaited Hebrew Messiah. He alone sealed up all the prophetic visions.

*6) “...*and to anoint the most Holy*.” Upon the high priest's golden crown were engraved קֹדֶשׁ לַיהוָה *Qodesh LaYahweh*: (Exodus 39:30) “And they made the plate of the holy crown of pure gold, and wrote upon it a writing, *like to the engravings of a signet, HOLINESS TO יהוה*.” Upon his inauguration, the prophet Moshe anointed his brother Aaron to become the high priest of Israel. Yahshua, at His baptism by John, the Levitical priest, received His anointing into the Melchizedek priesthood. Yahshua was the sinless One, and He alone embodied the holiness of יהוה. Truly His priesthood bore the fruits of holiness, the holiness of the Almighty.

Exodus 29:6, 7 And thou shalt put the mitre upon his head, and put the holy crown upon the mitre. Then shalt thou take the anointing oil, and pour *it* upon his head, and anoint him.

So, as we can see, Yahshua fulfilled these six qualifications of Daniel's prophecy; He did so to the letter. Remember He said, "*Not one yod nor keriah shall in any wise pass from the Law or the prophets till all be fulfilled.*" (Matthew 5:18). When we consider how each and every one of the numerous prophecies concerning the Hebrew Messiah was fulfilled in Yahshua, we can only marvel at their uncanny precision. He was the most phenomenal person to have ever walked upon the face of the earth. Those who reject Him do so in the face of unerring evidence and will have to face Him and give account for that rejection on the great Judgment Day.

But for our purposes, we can see how so many of the statements regarding the solitary sign proving Him to be the long awaited Messiah, have been misunderstood and misapplied. To assume that the heart of the earth is the grave is not only unsupported by Scripture, but that assumption sets in motion the scenario for a host of other misconceptions. It creates a hypnotic spell wherein other things begin to contradict each other but we're not aware of it. The two day request of the chief priests, and their belief that the day before their request was the day Yahshua was placed in the tomb constituting the first day, and the day after their request would naturally be the third day. That day, according to the account was the first day of the new week, Sunday. That was the same day Yahshua arose from the dead and walked with the two witnesses who proclaimed to the world that that day was indeed the third day. That statement has been there for 2,000 years, but somehow, sincere souls have overlooked it. It didn't conform to their unique story, and so it paled into insignificance. And that is why we use the term "*a hypnotic spell.*" One of the greatest pieces of evidence is thrown to the wind. However, with the acceptance of the evidence, the request of the chief priests and the testimony of the two disciples on the road to Emmaus, come into perfect harmony. The harmony of course, was there all the time, but so many don't seem to mind the *disharmony* if it poses a threat to their private interpretation.

Now we shall address the element of *time* to see how He alone fulfills that factor as well. What we are about to discover is perhaps the most remarkable exhibit of evidence yet. Not only does it settle the matter of Yahshua fulfilling all the requirements of being the Hebrew Messiah; it confirms the authenticity of the Scriptures as the only Treatise on earth to be inspired by the living Elohim, the Almighty יהוה. We may all rejoice to see how our belief in Yahshua and the Scriptures is a sound belief, a solid faith, and we're right on track. Let us pursue our course.

Concept Seven

The Starting Point

Daniel 9:25 Know therefore and understand, *that* from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince *shall be* seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times.

This decree is found in the seventh chapter of Ezra. It states that the decree was granted to Ezra “*in the seventh year of Artaxerxes the king.*” (See Ezra 7:1, 7). The remainder of this chapter delineates some of the details of the sovereign decree. Let us remember that the first segment of the 70 week (490 year) prophecy had to do with the reconstruction of the temple:

Ezra 7:27 Blessed *be* יהוה Elohyim of our fathers, which hath put *such a thing* as this in the king's heart, to beautify the house of יהוה which *is* in Jerusalem:

Let us bear in mind, this is not merely a Scriptural reference that we read about in the Bible; it is a legal and historical document that can be verified as such apart from theologians. Archeologists and those who study Paleography (the study of ancient writings and inscriptions) are in full agreement with Bible Commentators that this decree was signed in the fall of 457 BCE.* In like manner, according to historians, Yahshua was born in 3 BCE, and was baptized in the fall of 27 C.E. (A.D.) at the age of 30 (Luke 3:23). Let us recall that Daniel's prophecy is segmented into three parts: the 7 weeks; the 62 weeks, and the final one week. From the king's decree to the Messiah's anointing at His baptism comprised the first two segments $7 + 62 = 69$ weeks: $69 \times 7 = 483$ years. From 457 BCE to 27 CE, is 483 years. This astonishing prophecy verifies the accuracy of Messiah's birth, and His anointing.

Remember, in computing these two dates, the decree was *signed* in the fall of 457 BCE, so the first full year of it being in effect (going forth) would be 456, as we count backwards. When we add 456 with 27, we get 483. When we divide 483 by 7 we get our 69 weeks of years. BCE, by the way, means *Before Common Era*. CE, on the other hand, means *Common Era*. Chronology throughout history was based on the reign of kings. For instance, “*in the 7th year of Artaxerxes the king.*” Messiah was born right at the close of the BCE, about three years before the death of Herod. That is why He was 30 years old in 27 CE. This is the more ancient Jewish reckoning of time, as opposed to B.C. (*Before Christ*), and A.D. (*Anno Domini: the Year of our Lord*). For those not familiar with counting backwards BCE, it is like counting forward in CE. When a baby is born, we do not say he is one year old on the day of his birth; not until he has completed his first year do we say he is one year old, and it is from that date that we compute his future birthdays. It is the same with BCE in counting backwards, hence, from 457 to 456 etc.

The prophecy says further that Messiah would confirm the covenant with many for one week (Daniel 9:27). This would be the final week of the 70: 483 plus 7 equals the 490 years of our prophecy. But it says He would be cut off in the midst of that final week of seven years. The midst of the final seven years would therefore be $3\frac{1}{2}$ years, which is exactly the duration of our Master's ministry. He was anointed in the fall of CE 27, and crucified in the spring of CE 31, which is $3\frac{1}{2}$ years. The last *three days and nights* of His ministry had to occur in the very place of the Levitical sacrificial system in order for the type to meet the Antitype. Yahshua had to be in the Heart of the Earth right on time. To not be in Jerusalem at that particular Passover would have set in motion a chain of events that would have resulted in chaos. He was the lamb of יהוה, who alone could atone for the sins of all the repentant of the world. He was slain from the foundation of the world (Revelation 13:8), and by His stripes we are healed (Isaiah 53:5). The timing of that event had to be absolutely precise. As well, a divine transfer had to take place on that 14th day of Aviv: only then could the transfer from the Levitical to the Melchizedek priesthood transpire. The temporary was to pass away, that the eternal may resume its place.

*E. G. Kraeling, *The Brooklyn Museum Aramaic Papyri*; New Haven or London, 1953, pp. 191-193.

Matthew 26:65, 66 Then the high priest rent his clothes, saying, He hath spoken blasphemy; what further need have we of witnesses? behold, now ye have heard his blasphemy. What think ye? They answered and said, He is guilty of death.

The “blasphemy” that Yahshua spoke was His acknowledgment that He certainly was the Messiah...and further, that he, Caiaphas, would one day acknowledge it as well, when He would return in the clouds of glory, not as a suffering sacrificial lamb, but as King of kings and Lord of lords. This was the only time in the history of the world when the Levitical high priest stood face to face with the Melchizedek high priest...and he tore his high priestly garment. That act constituted blasphemy. And not only did it constitute blasphemy; it disqualified him as the high priest and merited the death penalty.

Leviticus 21:10 And *he that is* the high priest among his brethren, upon whose head the anointing oil was poured, and that is consecrated to put on the garments, shall not uncover his head, nor rend his clothes;
Leviticus 10:6 And Moses said unto Aaron, and unto Eleazar and unto Ithamar, his sons, Uncover not your heads, neither rend your clothes; lest ye die, and lest wrath come upon all the people...

It is worthy of note on the other hand, how another phenomenon in the life of Yahshua occurred even as He was dying on the cross. His robe was in the hands of the heathen Roman soldiers who initially wanted to tear it in four sections, but because it was all of one woven work, they decided to cast lots for it in order not to tear it. He, being the Melchizedek high priest, ordained by His mighty power even from the cross, that His priestly garment not be torn. And all this was done right on time...in the midst of the last prophetic week of the prophecy.

John 19:23, 24 Then the soldiers, when they had crucified Jesus, took his garments, and made four parts, to every soldier a part; and also *his* coat: now the coat was without seam, woven from the top throughout. They said therefore among themselves, Let us not rend it, but cast lots for it, whose it shall be: that the scripture might be fulfilled, which saith, They parted my raiment among them, and for my vesture they did cast lots.

We hope the student of Scripture can now see that Daniel was not referring to a literal week of days as some have imagined, in which the Messiah would be cut off in the midst thereof, that is on a Wednesday. The message of the prophet had to do with *a prophetic week of years*. But what happened at the end of that last week of years? Three and a half years after Yahshua’s crucifixion, in the fall of 34 CE, Stephen, became the first Messianic believer to be martyred, stoned to death, and the gospel went to the Gentiles. (See Acts 6:9 through 8:4). The 70 weeks, or 490 years allocated to the Jewish nation came to their end at that moment. And so has it been to the present time.

Daniel 9:24 Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city,

Matthew 23:37-9 O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, *thou* that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under *her* wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate. For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, “Blessed *is* he that cometh in the name of יהוה.” “Barukh habaw b’shem יהוה.”

John 4:20-3 Our fathers worshipped in this mountain; and ye say, that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship. Yahshua saith unto her, Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father. Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship: for salvation is of the Jews. But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship Him.

Matthew 24:1, 2 And Yahshua went out, and departed from the temple: and his disciples came to *him* for to shew him the buildings of the temple. And Yahshua said unto them, See ye not all these things? verily I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down.

We thus behold the grand picture of Yahshua not only accurately fulfilling the role of the Messiah, but the inevitable consequences of the Jewish nation in their rejection of Him as well. When He spoke of the destruction of Jerusalem, He referred to “*the abomination of desolation spoken of by Daniel the prophet.*” (See Matthew 24:15). What could He have meant by this?

Daniel 9:27 And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make *it* desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate.

As we have mentioned before, in the midst of that last prophetic week, Yahshua brought an end to the Levitical sacrificial system. It mattered not that the religious leaders failed to see the subsequent emptiness of their pretentious worship. Yahshua declared them to be of “*their father the devil*” (John 8:44), and now it was just a matter of time before they would meet with the vengeance of the Almighty for their murderous designs against His only begotten Son. In less than 40 years the Roman armies would overspread the nation of Israel with their pagan idolatry, the abomination, and ultimately leave it desolate. This occurred in CE 70.

Daniel 9:26 And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself: and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof *shall be* with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined.

The Messiah was cut off from the land of the living, but it was for our benefit. He made the way of escape for all who will recognize their sinful condition and repent of it, and accept His work of redemption in their behalf: we must be born again. The people of the prince that came were none other than the Roman armies. Consider Yahshua’s parable of Matthew 22:1-7:

And Yahshua answered and spake unto them again by parables, and said, The kingdom of heaven is like unto a certain king, which made a marriage for his son, And sent forth his servants to call them that were bidden to the wedding: and they would not come. Again, he sent forth other servants, saying, Tell them which are bidden, Behold, I have prepared my dinner: my oxen and *my* fatlings *are* killed, and all things *are* ready: come unto the marriage. But they made light of *it*, and went their ways, one to his farm, another to his merchandise: And the remnant took his servants, and entreated *them* spitefully, and slew *them*. But when the king heard *thereof*, he was wroth: and he sent forth his armies, and destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city.

יהוה has always used the heathen to punish His people. They become *the people of the Prince* to carry out His work of retribution. And so, as we can see, this dual prophecy of the Messiah and the Jewish nation has surely met its fulfillment. These two aspects of the prophecy: the true Messiah of the world and His rejection by His own nation constitute what is known in a court of law as *an adverse witness*. Their very rejection of Him is part of the prophecy that is the supportive evidence of His authenticity. This, of course, constitutes just another demonstration of the omniscient mind of יהוה. Only He could orchestrate such a chain of events wherein an opposing party serves to verify the validity of the truth. And so it is in the case of the sign of Jonah. As we all know, there can be only one explanation that is the truth, but it is the very opposition to that singular truth that inspires such an in-depth investigation as we have done herein. So we are grateful for the opposing views. Since most will not hear the matter out, we can only pray they will at least read it out. But of course, our ultimate hope is that all will see, and act upon the evidence set forth, and that there shall be sweet harmony. That is our ultimate hope. Upon leaving Babylon, many of us ran to the borders of Judaism in the form of the Messianic, or Hebrew roots movements. Did we trade one set of errors for another?

In the Final Analysis

I have many good friends who sincerely believe that the heart of the earth is the grave, and that Yahshua spent 72 hours there as the solitary proof of His messiahship. I hope our friendship will long endure after they have (hopefully) read my thesis. I have written it from the sincerity of my heart; but the greater part of sincerity is honesty, and that is surely the best policy.

We came out of the conventional churches because of their many spurious doctrines, but it is naïve for us to think that the adversary is banned from entering our Messianic doors. Though tens of thousands have fallen on the right hand, thousands are falling on the left (Psalm 91:7). May we all be thorough and relentless in our pursuit of the Truth. It certainly requires much time and energy, but it is the Truth, we must remember, that will set us free. (John 8:32). Let us not think that we have reached the safe Haven of Rest in the so-called Messianic, or Hebrew Roots Movement. Let it be another stepping stone to the Hebrew Messiah of the Narrow Path. He is our ultimate goal. He paid the ransom for our soul, and it is to Him that we shall give answer at the close of the day. He is the great Melchitzadik, the King of Righteousness; and we are the subjects of His great kingdom. Whether we call ourselves Messianic, or Hebrew Roots, or the Kingdom of Melchitzadik, let us prove our loyalty to Him through our obedience to His righteous commandments. Let us not cling to the Levitical priesthood that has long since passed away by their rejection of Yahshua. Let His messiahship be forever established in our heart and soul.

Jeremiah 33:15-18 In those days, and at that time, will I cause the Branch of righteousness to grow up unto David; and he shall execute judgment and righteousness in the land. In those days shall Judah be saved, and Jerusalem shall dwell safely: and this *is the name* wherewith she shall be called, יְהוֹיָכִים our righteousness. For thus saith יְהוָה; David shall never want a man to sit upon the throne of the house of Israel; Neither shall the priests the Levites want a man before me to offer burnt offerings, and to kindle meat offerings, and to do sacrifice continually.

Yahshua is that Branch of Righteousness; He is the man to sit upon the throne of David, and He is the High Priest whose eternal sacrifice and priesthood fulfills the prophecy of Jeremiah, as we read above. Though Levi corrupted the priesthood, Yahshua is perfect in all His ways.

It is the prayer of this humble author, that you, the Student of Scripture, have perhaps been stimulated in your mind to consider the seven concepts set forth in this writing, which seems to me, to be the chain of evidence to resolve another enigma in this mysterious world of ideas. Every pursuit of Truth is like another step up Jacob's stairway to heaven. The higher we go, the more expanded becomes our vision. Everything becomes clearer, and that is the great blessing.

May the good Father of Lights bless you fellow Student of Scripture. That is my prayer.

In Messiah's never ending love, Shalom.

שלום