The Darkness at The Crucifixion

A Major Re-Assessment from Astrophysics
Of the Events that Changed
Human History and Religion

Volume I - The Event and The Proof

By

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New Jersey

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Dedication

This book is dedicated to the memory of my parents Anthony and Carmela

--

He walked away from a wheelchair as a young man and she who was barren brought forth.

By their steadfast courage and integrity the author and the work have found expression.

April 22, 2001 / December 8, 2005

Exodus 20: 2-3

2 I am the LORD thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.
3 Thou shalt have no other gods before Me.

"The enemy of Ra [the Egyptian Sun god] was darkness and night" - The Egyptian Book of the Dead, E.A. Wallis Budge

Disclaimers

This book is the direct result of original investigations by the author in the Greek language, Classical history and modern astrophysics, beginning in March of 2001, and continuing until November of 2005, to prove the authenticity of Luke 23:45. Any similarity to any other work is unintentional and coincidental.

In these pages I take issue with the historical accuracy of Good Friday and Easter Sunday. I prove Christ died on a Wednesday and I give an exhaustive explanation for the true origin of Good Friday from both Gnostic literature and the myths of Mesopotamia. In examining these issues, I discuss the hidden theologies of two ancient Church fathers - Clement of Alexandria, and his student, Origen.

While much I say challenges scholars' present-day assessment of these two men, I am NOT in any way discussing here the motives of any institution, nor am I casting aspersions on any living person, or religion. This book is in no way to be construed as a justification for anti-Semitism, or an excuse for prejudice towards any non-Christian faith. Sometimes I speak critically of present-day scholarship. I do so only to offer my point of view. None of what I say must ever be viewed as an attack upon the person or reputation of any scholar or churchman; it is never intended. Anyone who comes away from this text with those conclusions has failed to grasp the transcendent meaning of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

Clement and Origen were recognized as problematic theologians throughout history by their own fellows, and centuries after their deaths they were virtually rejected by the Church for their manipulations of doctrine.

While they were challenged by critics in their lifetimes, the possibility certainly exists that many of their early and later supporters who accepted Good Friday-Easter Sunday as historically correct and scripturally accurate were misled or even deceived by the arguments the two men published. I pass no judgments on those who instituted the tradition of Good Friday.

Some may find my results distasteful; Easter is so very deeply engrained in Western civilization. To them I can only say, If we wish to understand the day Jesus died we cannot avoid the fact that it was not Good Friday. Because Clement and Origen were so influential in promoting and publicizing a three-day "passage" festival, one which ultimately became Good Friday-Easter Sunday, any serious work involving the date of the Crucifixion is obliged to prove conclusively their ideas concerning Good Friday are flatly unhistorical. The evidence is plentiful.

How to Read this Book

The book deals with both wide-ranging ideas and scholarly passages of great detail. I must be authoritative in this book, or I have offered my readers nothing of value; yet I also wish to reach the largest possible audience.

In truth, I know of no strategy that guarantees a simultaneous success in both these objectives. As a compromise solution, I have attempted to write each Chapter, Section and Appendix in a standalone fashion. All the material in these pages can either be read in sequence or as an individual topic.

Jumping from topic to topic is both possible and encouraged, but be advised, the full impact of the work is in its totality. Treat this book as an adventure, with many side stops of interest and take the time to appreciate each stop in whatever order you choose to make them; I believe you will truly find it is a voyage of discovery.

For those who choose to read the book in a sequential fashion, the Table of Contents should be used as a quick guide to the logical flow of the book. The Section Titles are not simply labels; they were deliberately enlarged to give you a quick summary of what each Section contains. Each Title builds on the premise of the Section Title before it in what I feel is a logical fashion. Simply reading through the Table of Contents should give the reader the complete sense of the book.

All scriptures quoted in this book will be taken from the King James Version of the Bible, unless otherwise stated.

Acknowledgments

I would like to thank Mr. Rick Hoot for first introducing me to the concept of a possible Crucifixion Eclipse and the works of Christian apologists on the subject.

I would also like to thank Mr. Henry Penna for essential criticisms and suggestions that have strengthened the quality and breadth of this work.

I pursued original research to prove the Crucifixion Eclipse from modern astrophysics, from ancient Hebrew and Greek astronomy, from the early Church, from the history of the South Pacific and from the life of Tiberius Caesar. In particular, the research to trace the two-thousand-year pre-history of the Easter festival is entirely my own and I hope, in some small way, groundbreaking. The historical development of Easter and Good Friday tradition by Alexandrian theologians is also due solely to my own researches.

Responsibility for any errors or inaccuracies of scholarship contained in these pages is solely my own.

A. Alfieri

Contents - Volume I

Introduction 15

Chapters

The Event

0. The Sun Going Dark at Noon and The Moon Turning to Blood at Night 27

The Proof

1. Was There Truly a Supernatural Eclipse of the Sun at the Crucifixion? What are the Original Words of the Bible? 35

1.1 The Impossibility of a Solar Eclipse Occurring on the Day Christ Died 35

1.2 The Gospel of Luke - The Best Greek Manuscripts Say a Supernatural Eclipse Did Occur 42

1.3 Was Luke Ignorant or Confused When He Wrote Those Words? 83
- 1.3.1 Was Luke Ignorant? Caesar's Proclamation to the Roman World in 45 A.D. Explaining How Eclipses Work 104
- 1.3.2 Was Luke Ignorant? Other Examples of Public Eclipse Knowledge 109
- 1.3.3 Was Luke Mentally Defective? The Evidence From His Writings and Education 116

1.4 But The Commentators are Reluctant to Make God Supernatural 133

1.5 Conclusion - Accept It or Not, Luke Uses the Word "Eclipse" - Now What Do We Do With It? Trivialize It or Prove It? 138

2. When Did Jesus Die? Pinning Down When Everything Happened and Uncovering Secrets of the Ages 141

A. The Time 143

2.1 Internal Evidence from the Gospels Proves Jesus Died on a Wednesday Passover 146

2.2 The Problems Involved with Attempting to Recreate All the Passover Dates in Jesus' Adult Life 171

2.2.1 Misconceptions About the Jewish Calendar Complicate the Quest for the True Date Jesus Died 195
2.2.2 How Accurate Was Gentile Science in Predicting the New Crescent? Good Enough to Get It Right 201

2.3 On Which Passover? History Proves the Crucifixion was on Wednesday, April 25, 31 A.D. 213

2.4 Where Did the Good Friday / Easter Sunday Tradition Come From? "Inanna's Descent into Hell" and the Origin of Christian Gnosticism 231
2.4.1 Good Friday is Missing from Early Christian History 234
2.4.2 Early Church Fathers Admitted the Crucifixion was on a Wednesday - Its in Their Writings 256
2.4.3 Missing Link - Clement of Alexandria, Aphrodite and a Friday Crucifixion Myth 270
2.4.4 The Myth of Inanna / Ishtar's Descent into Hell 288
2.4.5 The Short Answer to the Origin of Good Friday - When Jesus Dies on a Wednesday, Osiris Dies on a Friday 303
2.4.6 How Good Friday was Invented - Fitting the Death of the gods into the Crucifixion Week of 31 A.D. 307
2.4.7 Strange Similarities Between "Ishtar's Descent into Hell" and the Gnostic Document "Christ's Descent into Hell" Prove the Origin of Good Friday 367

B. The Spectacle in the Sky and the Global Witness 375

2.5 The Proof from Astronomy 386

2.5.1 The Candidates - All the Passover Eclipse Pairs During the Reign of Pontius Pilate 393
2.5.2 The Jerusalem Lunar Eclipse of April 25, 31 A.D. was the ONLY Eclipse in Ten Years to be Perfectly Blood-Red in Color 399
2.5.3 The Korean Solar Eclipse of May 10, 31 A.D. was the ONLY Eclipse in Ten Years to Prove the Heavens Were Aligned Over Jerusalem 409
2.5.4 Tracing the Moon's Path - South Pacific Moon Lore Confirms Everything 422
2.5.5 Tracing the Moon's Path Over New Zealand, Japan and Siberia - The Moon Draws Near 427
2.5.6 Tracing the Moon's Path - Han Dynasty Portents 432

3. The Heavenly Signs and the Romans - The Assault Upon the Authority of Tiberius Caesar and The Imperial Cover – Up 434

3.1 Signs, Portents and Political Power in Rome 439

3.2 Tiberius - Victim, Astrologer, Caesar 440
3.2.1 Tiberius' Character - God Prepares the "Perfect" Man to Face the

Crucifixion Eclipses 444
3.2.2 The Collapse of the Heavens and the Plot Against Tiberius in 31 A.D. 450
3.2.3 The Greater Astrology Behind Sejanus' Death 452
3.2.4 Linking Sejanus' Death to Jesus Through the King Sacrifice of Babylon 464

3.3 Tiberius Caesar and His Demons: "The Gods are Destroying Me Every Day" 467

3.4 Tacitus' History of Imperial Rome Was Censored for 31 A.D. Why? 472

3.5 Why Don't Contemporary Roman Writers Mention the Eclipse of 31 A.D? Did Tiberius' Reign of Terror Silence the Elites? 476

Bibliography and Suggested Reading for Volume I 485

Index to Volume I 504

Introduction

Introduction

I have worked long and diligently on this book in order to capture the minds of all that might open its pages. I do not wish to pander, but to educate with solid fact. I am by training a physicist; scandal sheets offend me. Nevertheless, this Story is overwhelmingly astonishing. The devices I use to capture your curiosity and engage your intellect are ancient Greek manuscripts, Babylonian astronomy, the tortured mind of Tiberius Caesar and eclipses drawn from modern astrophysics. I seek to inform, educate and enthrall not only Christ's followers with what truly happened at Golgotha, but also those that have discarded God's love and lessons as irrelevant to the modern world. In the chapters that follow I will immerse my readers in exhaustive scientific proofs of the awesome events that occurred while Jesus Christ died on the Cross. Challenge my claims with your most critical logic, your most demanding intelligence; I believe you will be richly rewarded.

The priests and soldiers that enacted Jesus' execution had no idea of the cataclysmic consequences that would ensue from their deed in a matter of mere minutes. I said minutes. Twelve noon the day Jesus died, light on Earth was extinguished by a three-hour-long Eclipse of the Sun. All natural eclipses last less than eight minutes. Solar eclipses are utterly impossible at the Passover. I will prove from the data of modern astrophysics it happened anyway.

For centuries, Roman Catholic Church Fathers repeatedly spoke of it as "... the largest and most famous eclipse that had ever occurred."[1] Two thousand years ago, that World-Event powerfully dominated men's thinking, but after the Enlightenment, it was

[1] Eusebius, the first Church historian and the confidant of Emperor Constantine the Great, who turned the Roman Empire to Christianity, first used this expression in his book The Chronicles of World History somewhere around 300 A D Jerome, the Catholic theologian who translated the entire Bible into Latin (the Vulgate version), also translated the Chronicles of Eusebius around 400 A D and used the same phrase Archbishop James Ussher, who wrote the famous Annals of World History in 1650, translated this phrase into English in the 1658 version of his Annals They all accepted it as true (See p 822 of the modern reprinting and annotation of Ussher's Annals, by Larry and Marion Pierce)

forgotten and summarily erased from human consciousness. Men informed God they no longer needed to bow before him. A different kind of darkness grew over the Western world yet the Darkness at Jesus' Cross has molded our lives across the centuries in ways we still do not grasp.

It is provable by using the best methods of the "Enlightenment".

A caution to you, reader: To read this book, you will need take a very deep breath and be willing to submerge yourself into a sea of minute details from the ancient world, for all the extraordinary truths of hidden history that will envelope you ahead in these pages. I will test your endurance and stretch your patience as we sift through the records of ancient worlds and the thoughts of men who made Western Civilization.

While the Roman soldiers were goading a struggling Jesus to bring his beaten and scourged body to the place of execution, another event was being enacted halfway across the world. In the warm nighttime heavens of the South Pacific, somewhere over the islands of Samoa, a celestial marvel of extraordinary grandeur was underway. The full and glowing silver Moon abruptly stopped its journey across the canopy of stars and stood still. Smoothly, effortlessly, it reversed its motion. People all over the vast Pacific and Asia saw it leave its appointed place and silently travel backwards, past the horizon. They memorialized the event in ancient tales that survive to this day in all their different cultures. The Earth's satellite relentlessly glided past Japan, Mongolia, India and Saudi Arabia. Finally, in the skies over Jerusalem, it overtook the noonday Middle East Sun and slipped in front of it, halting like a great ship that had finally reached its berth. The Moon had rendezvoused with the raging disk that blazed mercilessly over Jesus' exhausted head.

Day turned into the blackest night that had ever been seen. The universe itself seemingly went black that moment; only the dim light of a fraction of the stars reached the Earth.

In a matter of a few hours, with no ill effect to our Solar system, the Moon had become positioned diametrically opposite from its natural place in the sky. Extra-natural Judgment, stark and terrifyingly threatening, saturated this World-Event. The Moon now stood between the Light of the World and the people of Jerusalem, casting a death shroud of darkness over them. The Creator of the universe was dying; there would be no mistaking Who he was. Like a blackened circle of charcoal overlaying the furnace of our world, the Moon stubbornly stayed in place for three unbearably long hours. As God agonized for men, men agonized in darkness.

Maudlin tripe? High-school Christianity?

This Darkness was not merely experienced by some handful of shepherds in Jerusalem. Its fame reached everywhere, spreading across the vast lands of the Roman Empire, cutting a swath of black fear through the entire society of that world. All men, great and small, slave and Emperor, saw it, or knew of it. The darkness was so profound that men lit lamps so they could see where they were standing. The earth quaked and men died. They wrote about it in their history books for centuries.

This was The Darkness at the Crucifixion.

It literally happened that way; I will prove it all to you from ancient history and modern astrophysics.

Late that afternoon, after Jesus cried his last appeal to his Father and hung his head in triumphant rest, the Moon disengaged from its Death-lock with the Sun and began to move in its natural direction. Now it advanced and accelerated, returning effortlessly back to its proper place in the sky. All this too was done without harm or disruption to our spinning planet, the Sun, or the other planets.

But the Signs were not yet over.

That night in Jerusalem while Jesus' body was in the Garden Tomb, there occurred a natural, blood-red eclipse of the full Moon, now restored to its natural place in the sky. Death, mourning and now blood were proclaimed from the heavens: the Creation witnessed to it and would not permit men to forget.

The people of Palestine saw two signs, two portents the day Jesus died. The terrifying warning from the Supreme God that His Son had indeed been killed was being graven into the collective consciousness of mankind for centuries to come.

Have you ever heard of this? Of course not, yet all of it exists documented in the history of the human race.

Carefully ponder the following words, lest you think me any more irrational.

Surviving historical records admit the whole world, especially Tiberius Caesar, Emperor of Rome, actually experienced this event. It became a direct threat to the power of the Caesars and nearly drove Tiberius Caesar mad. That buried fact of history is documented and its true significance will be proven in great detail these pages.

The documents of history prove the Crucifixion Eclipse was known and reverenced all over Europe for a full 1,700 years. There is evidence the Romans censored it out of their history books, but preserved it in the official State records of the Roman Senate. If this is true, and you will see the references for yourself, then the Roman Senate had to have been debating the political consequences of the Eclipse at the Crucifixion. Therefore I will make the following, seemingly incredible claim: The Crucifixion Eclipse, when fully understood, explains the true origin of Christianity and the evolution of the Roman Empire.

The Eclipse both opened the way for the new creed to flourish among common men and it galvanized Roman prejudice against them. It also formed the backdrop to the Christian education of Constantine the Great, who made Christianity the State Religion

of the Roman Empire in 325 A.D. We will see much later that one of the Church leaders who believed in the Crucifixion Eclipse was also the personal tutor of Constantine. Constantine's great vision of a flaming Cross in the heavens, telling him to convert, bears curious similarity to the Crucifixion Eclipse as a heavenly Omen of the First Rank.

The marvels of that day were not restricted to fostering a new religion. The day Jesus Christ died was also the greatest feast day of the Egyptian Sun gods. Sacred ceremonies, extolling the vast powers of the Sun were being held in Alexandria Egypt and Rome, at precisely the same moment that the Sun grew pitch black over the Roman world. The Supreme God was speaking to all faiths, announcing the Primacy of a new religion and inaugurating a New Age. The One who has all Power was summarily debunking all the Sun gods of antiquity that day.

It happened, it really happened that way.

That, of course, is not how you were taught the history of the Crucifixion. That is not how you were taught the history of Europe or the Church. All these vast claims will be carefully presented and documented for your inspection in these pages.

Christianity did not become a World Religion because the Apostles were good speakers; they were not. Neither were their doctrines unique. Pagans claimed Plato had first expounded virtually every doctrine the Apostles taught. All the ancient religions had their martyred savior gods. Christianity ultimately took over the Roman Empire because God Almighty moved the Moon halfway across the sky the day His Son died and everyone saw it; and for no other reason.

Eventually, under the rise of Western materialism, the Crucifixion Eclipses became reduced to the status of folk-legend; a dead people's superstition. They were relegated to the inner pages of large scholarly volumes on what the New Testament manuscripts actually said. The greatest event of human history became a curiosity of ancient Greek linguists; nothing more. Philosophers

of the so-called Enlightenment dismissed it. The world-famous English historian, Edward Gibbon, a son of the Enlightenment, tried to give the Eclipse story a death-blow of ridicule in his celebrated 1790 work, The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire. Mr. Gibbon gets his answer in this book.

Ludicrous? An irrational flight of fancy by an incompetent dilettante? None of this ever happened in history, even if I claim it did? I fully expect such skepticism, ridicule and rejection.

The skeptic believes nothing, so I will prove everything. I have attempted to be colorful in this Introduction, but do not expect such language to continue for the next 500 pages. My tenor will change to scholar in the rest of this book. I will also tell you when that very deep breath of oxygen is needed.

As I noted at the beginning of this Introduction, I am trained as a physicist and a mathematician. I do much, much better than simply recite ancient Christian tradition, or quote modern authorities on the Bible to prove my claims. All that has been done before with little effect. A tightly crafted case of interlocking facts has been prepared. It is logically proven and is laid out before the reader point-by-point, stroke-by-stroke.

Proof also requires defense.

In this book you will find both the exhaustive proof of history and the full rebuttal of all existing arguments modern scholars make against the Crucifixion Signs. Anticipating rejection by more traditional thinkers, I have chosen to bring all the arguments against my claim into this book and discuss their merits with you. I want my readers to decide firsthand which are more rational, the Crucifixion Eclipses, or the arguments that dismiss them as so much fantasy.

I address all the modern objections to the Crucifixion Darkness that have been made by the very best modern scholars. If you turn to a world-class expert to debunk me, you will probably find I have already studied him and debunked his ideas in these pages.

This is a fairly large book; my facts are accumulated from many, many diverse sources. The works of experts at Oxford, Cambridge, Harvard, Princeton, MIT, the University of Chicago and other respected institutions will be repeatedly used in these pages, but the understanding that ultimately ties it all together is my own. When my case is fully presented, the complete tapestry will be far more astounding than even these initial claims.

I repeat: I invite you to think critically when you read my words. I fear no honest man.

Once proven, this Event conclusively establishes the existence of God and it proves Jesus Christ is the Son of God. No faith is necessary to believe this, only a rational mind and an objective conscience. Evolutionists take note: I leave you no wiggle room for theories that eliminate the Creator from his Creation. You will have to revise your theories yet one more time before your well-reasoned religion fully matches reality.

Today religious scholars quote the ancient stories of an Eclipse at Jesus' death with ambivalence, if they mention it at all. They do not know what to do with such forthright statements of the supernatural in the Bible, except to eviscerate them. Some scholars say Luke, the original author, was confused, some think there was no eclipse; it was a dust storm or rain clouds. They cannot come to terms with a supernatural God of infinite power who intervenes in human affairs.

All this doubting in books you can find in your local bookstore is not new. Modern Biblical scholars have struggled with explaining this Crucifixion Event for over one hundred and fifty years. Perhaps the introduction of evolution into modern reasoning has intimidated them? The proof of the Crucifixion Darkness is what this book offers, in a way that has not been done before.

This book will use Solar eclipse data that was calculated for the day Christ died to prove the Earth, Moon and Sun were in perfect alignment for such an event to have occurred with the minimum

amount of disruption to the Solar system. The Solar system just happened to be ideally positioned for the event.

To my knowledge, this information has never before been applied to the Crucifixion in this fashion.

I will further show from astrophysics that no other date in Christ's lifetime gives such perfect natural conditions for a supernatural eclipse to occur, except the day He died. The heavens were perfectly aligned on that day, and no other, for a miraculous event to occur. You will see the numbers and you will understand the science.

But all this is far more than ancient history that I have prepared for you to buzz about in rapt attention.

If you cannot overthrow my physics, then you must agree this book proves divine intervention does occur at Epochs in human history. Scripture also teaches we are about to enter another such Epoch. By Christ's own words, recorded in the book of Matthew, Chapter 24 and verse 30, this same proof from the heavens will be given again before his Second Coming. Some of us may live to see if God is true to his word.

The Crucifixion Eclipses are one of the lost secrets of the ages, buried by the intellectual vanguards of the modern world. Appreciating this fact removes a veil of ignorance that has covered popular thinking for the last two hundred and fifty years. As King David of Israel wrote in the Psalms three thousand years ago:

"Great is the Lord and most worthy of praise; his greatness no one can fathom.

One generation will commend your works to another; they will tell of your mighty acts.

They will tell of the power of your awesome works, and I will proclaim your great deeds.

All you have made will praise you, O Lord ...

so that all men may know of your mighty acts and the glorious splendor of your kingdom."

(Psalm 145, verses 3-4,6,10,12 - New International Version)

You are about to find out for yourself how truly accurate these words are in human history and how eager men of all ages have been to obscure the Living God.

Please read carefully and reflectively. If you agree that this book presents the truth of history, then you are admitting you need to change your thinking about some of life's greatest issues.

Now that I have totally assaulted your traditional thought patterns, we are ready to meticulously confront the best scholarship on Jesus' death with ancient history and hard science.

The Event

0. The Sun Going Dark at Noon and The Moon Turning to Blood at Night[2]

If you were there in the crowded countryside outside Jerusalem the day Jesus died, what would <u>you</u> hear, see and feel?

The day that Jesus died was a spring day in Palestine; perhaps sunny. There is no indication of bad weather in the Bible accounts. By the time Jesus had been suffering for the sins of mankind for three hours, it changed drastically. He was crucified about nine o'clock in the morning. By noontime a passing parade of curious, the lingering spectators and the elites in their palaces had all engaged Him in His dying process. He had been scoffed and jeered at, ridiculed by every segment of society, from the basest criminals to the greatest and wealthiest; rejection was complete. Literally and symbolically, all the peoples of the region had denigrated and denounced Him. Three and one half years of miraculous works, healings, raising of the dead, speaking like no man had ever spoken, were all gainsaid now. This man was no prophet of God, they gloated, no great power of Anything. His enemies now thought they had the triumph over Him; they saw Him to be a powerless man, one they could safely despise without retribution. But even as they spoke the words of ultimate contempt: "He saved others, let Him come down from the Cross and save Himself", before the words were finished, the Moon slid silently across the face of the noonday Sun and in minutes the entire orb of blazing light became black. The flares of the Sun's flaming furnace, the corona, raged brightly as the entire sky grew ink black. It was as if creation itself were shrinking into a grave. The stars appeared, only faintly and the air temperature around Jerusalem grew colder, very much colder, reviving the exhausted and near-death Savior for three more hours of suffering.

It was the only kindness shown to Him.

As foretold and written by the Hebrew prophets centuries before, the greatest of all Signs from the Jewish God was being given to men: the Sun had literally gone black at noon.

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[2] This expression is derived from Acts 2:20 and Joel 2:28-30 Many others before me have made this connection between Joel's prophecy and the Crucifixion, or, an eclipse and the Crucifixion Some claim a lunar eclipse, some a solar. The list of proposed "natural" eclipses at the Crucifixion in modern non-religious writings goes back to J.J. Scalinger in 1598 and A. Calmer in 1725 (See Raymond E Brown's magisterial work, <u>The Death of The Messiah</u>, vol. ii, p 1040, note 18) J R. Hind in 1872 (Nature, vol 6, and letter to London Times, July 19, 1872) attempted to calculate a shadow track for such an eclipse over Jerusalem, and George F Chambers, <u>The Story of Eclipses</u> (1896) p. 110, also referred to it, although Chambers rejected any eclipse, solar or lunar, as a natural not a supernatural event Most recently, there are Humphreys and Waddington. Two of their works, "Astronomy and the Date of the Crucifixion", appearing in the book <u>Chronos, Kairos, Christo</u>, pps 165-182, (especially pps 172-173, and 175-176) and the earlier December 1983 paper in the British journal *Nature*, connect Acts 2:20 with a dust storm and a rather poor lunar eclipse on Good Friday of 33 A.D., all of which is incorrect Others have even suggested the possibility of a double eclipse occurring on the day Jesus died. None, however, has ever attempted to prove from evidence of the exact placements of the Earth, Sun and Moon, and documented solar eclipse records, that the darkness was a indeed a supernatural eclipse of the Sun by the hand of God, as this book does Nor do any of them reconstruct the tortured reaction of Tiberius Caesar in the days immediately following the event

Instinctively, intuitively, all the people of that world would have grasped the significance of what they were seeing even as the shock and terror was first washing over them. A buzz of commotion assaulted their senses. While they bundled themselves from night-like cold and lit oil lamps to see, the wind picked up, the evening song birds rushed to find their nests, the dogs of the streets the insects and animals of the land all scrambled for protection from the sudden change and the crickets began an unholy nighttime chant.

The Roman soldiers standing by to control the crowd, the Gentiles that were in it and all the empire of the Profane knew that a catastrophe from God had come upon them that very moment. There was a very special reason for this; one we moderns no longer consider. The many Sun gods of the pagan creeds were being worshipped as the great powers of heaven in their temples everywhere, at that very moment, while the darkness played havoc with their glory. Noon time was always considered the time of all the Sun gods' greatest powers. And yet the power of the literal Sun was reduced to nothing and blackness while Jesus was dying. Later theologians would say the creation itself was mourning for its Maker. The dumbfounded priests of the spurious Solar powers would not soon forget the source of the other-worldly event which humiliated them, making them little more than liars caught in the act.

At the foot of the Crucifixion people's arrogance and blood lust paled into alarm, eyes shifted in shock to the drama above and anxiety compounded with open-ended terror swept through the viscera of the contemptuous crowd, uniting them. People halted, then lurched forward involuntarily, squinting for the dim light of faint stars. And of course there were the cries of astonishment and lamentation. Now a hush, next the exclamations of alarm. No answer now, just the silent grinding of the Earth on its massive course. Were they all losing their eyes or witnessing the end of creation; or was it both? The womenfolk reached out for each other's hands and arms and hugged each other, as if to convince themselves they could ward off all slipping into death's darkness. The callous crowd, which just minutes before had thought they ruled over the Messiah, now stood transfixed, staring into the heavens, helplessly witnessing the light of the universe extinguished by a Power they did not understand, a Power they had profoundly offended. Would the world now end? Would another ever begin?

Indeed it would.

What was happening here?

The powers of heaven were being reversed and turned upside down in a fashion not seen since Joshua's long day. But this event was greatest of all. The proof of Who Jesus truly was, was being given by the Only One men would believe. It was a scorching, soul-searing darkness with stern catastrophes surrounding it that educated these scoffers. The earth was struck: earthquakes, always unexpected, caused destruction and death in Judea, in Asia Minor and still other parts of the Roman world. The shaking earth made great rocks slide away from the blackened

face of the powerless Sun. Graves opened and dead men walked among the rubble and through the choking dust.

What was happening here?

That night, after the stunned and bloodless populace returned to their homes to regain their souls, seeking solace in the uneasy peace, another jarring stroke assaulted their wounded psyches. About 10 o'clock, a call went out, "The Moon is losing her light." Households were roused from fragile and heavy sleep to face more terrors; this time men were safely resting in their homes, on rooftops and in the streets and alleyways of Jerusalem, Alexandria, Antioch and Rome. But over Jerusalem the sight would work its most perfect terror. Again, in a matter of minutes, the full Moon was turning color from brilliant white to perlescent pink to salmon to rose and finally, to pure blood-red, the same color of the blood that had gushed from His wounds and side just hours before: Blood on the Moon in the darkness of Night. The blood of the Prophet was being held over all men's heads just when they wanted to forget it and put it all behind; done by a Power that did not wish to go away at this moment. The Intervention could not be rejected. More terrors. "What can this ordeal possibly signify for us?"

Some would conclude, "This is an event that will never leave the memory of men."

Men were being forced to understand that human conceits and illusions of unending permanence are not as supreme as they appear to be during those long times when God stands by in patient forbearance; the death of Jesus Christ was not a thing to be trifled with by the ignorant. Life would not go back to "normal". A fear of the Living God was being wrenched upon men's minds and bodies as creatures and creation shook before the hand of their Maker. It was a fear to prepare profane men for the new spiritual organism and the Gracious Answer that would be given by the fisherman Peter in another public demonstration for them all to witness at Pentecost, 53 days from now.

This, dear reader, is how you change the course of human history.

Anything less is nonsense.

The Gospels, the chief historical accounts of Jesus' life and death, are brief in their description of the Crucifixion in many ways. They do not express the full range of suffering Jesus experienced.

He was scourged, the flesh systematically torn by fragments of bone and metal that were lanced into him at all angles, producing massive blood loss and severe shock. Crucified victims suffer muscle spasms throughout the limbs and torso because they are immobilized. The rib cage cannot expand, breathing stops and acute panic results; taking the breath of life becomes an agony of endurance that is ultimately lost. Heart failure is induced. Thought becomes a struggle through the raging panic and pain. One soldier took a spear and jammed the lance up through His vital organs. As this book shows, far more occurred during the six hours of His ordeal, but all that is excised from the writing of His Crucifixion.

So it was also with the Sun and the Moon the afternoon Jesus suffered and the night He was in the tomb. The Bible briefly, but clearly states the sky grew dark because the Sun was eclipsed while Jesus was on the Cross. Far more occurred. The event was recorded throughout the South Pacific and Japan, halfway around the world from Jerusalem, but the Bible does not trumpet that fact. Nevertheless, it does speak of an eclipse, and when you study it, it is the greatest Eclipse that ever occurred.

What Do We Know Today About All This? Almost Nothing.

Most likely, you had never heard of a supernatural eclipse of the Sun occurring at the Crucifixion of Jesus Christ that turned much of the Mediterranean world into utter blackness for three long hours. You never knew there was a Second eclipse, this time of the Moon, a mere eight hours later that night which cast the Moon over Jerusalem into a deep blood-red reminder of the Sacrifice's shed blood.

But the evidence is there and of the finest quality one could desire, buried in ancient history texts and in the most advanced astronomy books you could ever hope not to read.

You never entered a church building where the Darkness was painted on a wall (although such scenes do exist in Europe), you never heard a sermon where it was preached about in detail, you never read a book where it was explained. Its not on the Sistine Chapel and the Archbishop of Canterbury never talks about it.

More than half of all the English translations of the Bible in print today use vague words to describe the eclipse darkness; they place that literal darkness under a darkness of their own. You have to search out little known Bible translations, or scholarly treatises, or the most ancient Greek Bible manuscripts before the details are revealed but these almost invisible authorities do admit a Crucifixion eclipse was originally recorded. They just refuse to believe it happened. They are not completely sure of the year Jesus died and they never thought to examine solar eclipse records for any number of years surrounding his possible death, so how could they conclusively prove the matter? They could not. It remains a hidden curiosity for which they give no answer.

So this present book is facing two major issues from its very first pages. The first is providing the original facts of the Crucifixion: where does the idea of Crucifixion Eclipses come from, what day in history did it occur, and yes, we need to ask and answer the tough question, what were the conditions in the solar system that day?

The second issue I face in this book is overcoming the reader's inbred and justifiable skepticism against all of this. I know it will be expressed at every point in every page in this story.

We know far more about less important events in ancient history than the Crucifixion eclipse, so the normal first reaction is: How could so many people have missed this singular event in history? Why isn't there all manner of evidence?

Based on what we all currently know of Christ's Crucifixion, the only rational explanation is, they all can't be wrong, no such miracle ever occurred. A Crucifixion eclipse where the Moon moves clear across the heavens is a fabulous fraud brought forth by an amateur. (Let me assure you, if I were an amateur on this subject, the book would have been a lot shorter.) If it were true, it would contradict too many ideas that we all carry around in our minds.

We certainly would not expect to find out that generations of people from all over Europe knew of this event and spoke about it for centuries after Jesus but they did. Look at just a small sampling of evidence to sharpen your appetite for what will come later. These quotes show that belief in a Crucifixion eclipse was common in the ancient world; it was talked about, it was believed. They also prove we have lost this knowledge almost completely. The first account cites the writings of an ancient Greek historian; the second is a composite of several ancient historians' words by a modern author. The third comes from the apocryphal Report of Pilate, probably written in the 500's A.D.

A.

> Phlegon [a Greek historian of 129 A.D.] confirms that darkness came upon the earth at Jesus' crucifixion, and he, too, explains it as the result of a solar eclipse: "During the time of Tiberius Caesar, an eclipse of the sun occurred during the full moon."[3]

This statement, if it is true, is the most straightforward historical admission of an earth-shaking miracle that can be imagined. In Chapter 1, I explain why solar eclipses can NEVER occur under a full moon.

B.

> The [Crucifixion] darkness .... seems to have pervaded the world at this hour. Phlegon wrote that in the fourth year of the two hundred and second Olympiad, there was a great darkness over Europe, surpassing anything that had ever been seen. At midday, he said, the stars could be seen. At the same time, an earthquake caused much damage in Niceae. Tertullian [a Roman theologian] said later that he had found in the records of Rome, a notation of worldwide darkness which the statesmen of the Empire could not explain.[4]

C.

> And when he had been crucified, there was darkness over the whole earth, the sun having been completely hidden, and the heaven appearing dark though it was day, so that the stars appeared, but had at the same time their brightness darkened, ... in all the world they lighted lamps from the sixth hour until evening. And the Moon, being like blood, did not shine the whole

[3] McDowell, J. The New Evidence That Demands a Verdict, pps. 57-58
[4] Bishop, J , The Day Christ Died, p 303

> night, and yet she happened to be at the full.[5] (The Report of Pilate, c. 500 A.D.)

These three examples from history are just the tip of an iceberg of ancient information that is covered throughout this book.

The third excerpt grabs one's interest because it mentions two literal eclipses when Jesus died. Not all of the historical testimony we have today speaks of two eclipses; most only refer to the Solar eclipse. This may be because the Solar eclipse was impossible, unique and terrifying but the second, Lunar eclipse was natural. So the memory of the Solar eclipse would "overshadow" the second eclipse.

The ancient world did not soon forget the Crucifixion eclipse. Only we moderns have committed that trespass.

[5] Roberts, A , and Donaldson, J , Ante-Nicene Fathers, vol viii, pps. 462-463.

The Proof

1. Was There Truly a Supernatural Eclipse of the Sun at the Crucifixion? What are the Original Words of the Bible?

1.1 The Impossibility of a Solar Eclipse Occurring on the Day Christ Died

A. More Preliminaries: How You and I Must Approach This Scholarly Quest

As I promised you in the Introduction, we are going to start our inquiry at the most basic point of all: what the Bible claims happened the day Jesus died. This naturally puts me at a tremendous disadvantage with the secular reader even before I begin marshaling the evidence. The Bible and reality seem poles apart to the modern children of the Enlightenment. But I claim the Enlightenment unjustly dismissed the Crucifixion Eclipse as a means to credential itself. In sum, 250 years ago the Bible was pushed out as a false faith, incapable of attaining to the lofty demands of critical "Reason". Very well, let us redress this process, using some of the very science that the Enlightenment spawned and see where Reason truly lies. By proving the Crucifixion Eclipse via modern astrophysics, I am now cast in the role of doing nothing less than iconoclastically obliterating your grip on reality; may Voltaire, Jean-Jacques Rousseau and Isaac Newton forgive me.

This book was written to prove to the unbelieving mind that a very real God has indeed intervened in human history and been publicly observed by all mankind as doing so. But the man or woman of Reason will not easily yield, nor should they. I must scientifically, rationally, prove everything in these pages to the satisfaction of the most agnostic mind because the agnostic believes nothing of the Supernatural.

We will now begin our trek step-by-step through a bewildering maze of objections, alternate explanations and unknowns that have been invented by men of all religious persuasions over the centuries to invalidate the Crucifixion Eclipse, disarming and reversing each one of them with authoritative scholarship as we systematically prove the greatest event of human history. It will be a long, grueling process for some.

Please take that deep breath of oxygen now.

B. Challenging Some of the Assumptions Surrounding the Birth of Christianity

Would it surprise you to learn that religion was an even more controversial subject 2,000 years ago than it is today? Would it surprise you to realize that Pagan priests and Roman politicians had agendas that drove them to deny, downplay and dismiss the claims of early Christianity? Would it surprise you to read original documents that show the Eclipse was not welcomed with open arms by the sinners of its day; rather it was feared, resented and repressed?

In a real world, truth somehow becomes hidden. Understanding this fully, Jesus remarked that truth is like a treasure hidden in a vast field of dirt, or a pearl of great price that transfixes a man with its beauty and value when he finally finds it. He catches only a glint of it in the superficial world of ambition and greed and must dig deeply, with determination and stamina, to uncover the full scope of what he has chanced upon.

C. The Questions We Must Confront

Let me give you a sense for how big that field of dirt truly is.

What are the original words of the Bible? No one today even seems to know what the Evangelist Luke wrote in the verse that describes the Darkness. There are different versions of the verse that have been circulating for centuries. Eighteen hundred years ago enemies of the Eclipse tried to palm off a secondary wording in place of the original words Luke wrote. They created scores of manuscripts with an alternate wording, but modern scholarship has conclusively proven the papyri are not authentic. We will go back into history, back into the original lines of the original manuscripts, with world-class scholars as our guides and prove Luke wrote the word "eclipse" and no other.

Whatever the Christians originally taught, others criticized them. Who were the first critics of the Crucifixion Eclipse and why did they reject it? How sensible are their reasons? Why did it take almost 200 years for these objections to arise? The list of questions that must be answered only grows.

No modern expert seems to know with certainty what happened in the sky the day Jesus died. A common explanation is that it was a dust storm; modern cinema has turned it into a rainstorm. Further still, no scholar today seems to know for sure the exact date in history Jesus died. Everyone believes the Good Friday tradition goes back to the day Jesus died. It does not. Good Friday does not appear until over 300 years after Jesus. Original documents show the whole Christian community understood that Jesus died on a Wednesday. I will exhaustively prove this from the ancient writings of the original Church fathers. No student of the Eclipse seems to understand that Jesuit scholars today admit Good Friday was invented nearly three hundred and fifty years after Jesus died; it could not possibly be the actual day in history that the Eclipse occurred. Good Friday explanations only lead to "possible", or "probable" dates for the Crucifixion. "Probable" will not be good enough for us. Yes, we will have to objectively examine the true history of the origin of Good Friday in order to completely prove the actual day. (A word to the devout reader: I am not blaspheming your beliefs by doing this; I simply wish to point out the correct day in history on which they actually occurred.)

Good Friday-Easter Sunday is actually the Death and Resurrection service for the Egyptian Sun god Osiris-Ra, cobbled into Christianity by Gnostic priests of the first and second centuries, in order to preserve their own estate from the threat of an upstart, "rival" religion. It has nothing to do with the Crucifixion. These words may give some offense. I am sorry for that reaction but truth be told. You will see the

exhaustive proof for yourself. It involves well-documented history from the ancient city of Alexandria, Egypt.

Yet more questions surround the Crucifixion Eclipse; they too must be answered.

Why didn't the Romans talk about it? No scholar today seems to understand that Tiberius Caesar became mentally deranged due to the Eclipses. His bout with madness is well known but the reason simply does not appear. Modern scholars are mystified, their explanations almost a faint whisper. Yet all agree that Tiberius engaged in an exceptionally brutal period of murder and repression at that time. No one seems to understand why he felt it necessary to act in such an extreme manner. This book will change all that, too.

My friend, perhaps now you can see why I say everything will have to be proved. Everything. We will wrangle over each and every one of these points, split hairs, debate details and prove exactly what really exists hidden deep in that field of dirt. I want my readers to have all the facts I can muster on every facet of this subject. Read some of it or all but be assured, the material has been put in one place for you to sample at will, or gorge upon in passion.

I will lay it all out before you, for you to judge in the quiet of your own thoughts.

That is the price I ask you to pay for a truth that will lift you.

One last warning before we launch from the harbor. From this point on, the book will become increasingly more scholarly in tone, but never, I hope, boring.

D. The Problem at First Glance: "Solar Eclipses at the Passover are Impossible" - Of Course They Are, But is God Supernatural?

Christ Died at The Jewish Passover - A Brief Explanation

The New Testament scriptures state Jesus Christ died on the Passover day.[6] His death was said by Christians to be the divine fulfillment of the ancient Hebrew

[6] This very first sentence is controversial because some scholars have not been able to explain an apparent discrepancy between when the Gospel of John says the Crucifixion occurred and when the other Gospels all say it did. They know John says the Crucifixion was on a Passover, but they think the other three Gospels say it was NOT on a Passover. When we understand the history of how the Jews evolved their observance of the Passover, this discrepancy dissolves

Passover Lamb, ordained by the Hebrew God through the great prophet Moses around 1450 B.C. According to the New Testament writings Christ died on the same day of the Jewish calendar as Moses killed the first Lamb.[7] This day was the 14th of the Hebrew month called Nisan, in the Spring.[8]

But where are the Sun and the Moon in the sky when the Passover occurs?

Nisan, like all the months of the Hebrew calendar, must always begin with a new Moon. This means that a little over 14 days later the Moon will be Full.

The Moon was a few hours away from being Full, completely shining and lit by the Sun, when Jesus died on the Passover afternoon. The only way for the Moon to be completely shining is for it to be opposite from the Sun, with the Sun shining on its face. But a Solar eclipse can only occur when the Moon is on the SAME SIDE of the sky as the Sun, passing directly in front of it and blocking the Sun's disk as it does so. Solar eclipses at the Passover Full Moon are impossible because the Moon is on the wrong side of the heavens for it to pass in front of the Sun. The Moon cannot be in two places at the same time so a Solar eclipse at full Moon is not just

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One or two additional points should be made regarding the approach many modern commentators take towards analyzing apparent discrepancies in scripture. Isaiah 28:9-15 actually claims that scripture is deliberately written as a puzzle that must be assembled from separate pieces of information in order to arrive at objective truth. In other words, the Book was crafted to be assembled. Few moderns appreciate this concept in its fullest sense. They do not attempt to reconcile supposed discrepancies in the different accounts by looking at them as pieces of information that must be integrated into a greater tableau in order to achieve fuller understanding of any subject. But this is what must be done to gain rational, sound, verifiable consistency in the information. If we take the approach that the scriptures complement and mesh with one another like the teeth of massive gears or clues in a rebus puzzle then the seeming discrepancy has a simple explanation. John was writing for Greeks and gentiles who knew only of the public festivals at Jerusalem, while the other Gospels speak of Jesus observing the traditional observance as given by God to Moses and defined in Exodus 12.

[7] See Exodus 12: 5,6, I Cor. 5:7, John 1:29, compare I Cor. 11:23-28 with Luke 22:1, 8-20 and John 13:1-3, Hebrews 9:11-15. As explained in this chapter, the original Passover lamb was killed and eaten on the first part of Nisan 14, which is the evening of the 13th in our Roman way of reckoning the day. Christ ate the Passover at this prescribed time with His disciples; He was crucified and died on the daylight portion of Nisan 14, while the High priest was sacrificing the lamb at the Temple in Jerusalem. See the next note for an explanation of why the Temple Passover lamb was sacrificed in the afternoon of 14 Nisan, instead of the prior evening, as the local people did.

[8] There are some modern scholars who think Christ did not die on the Passover Day so I need to defend this point. Jesus died on the Passover Day as anciently given by Moses but the Jews of Jerusalem 2,000 years ago were keeping the meal one day later. The Rabbis actually acknowledge this fact in their Writings. They referred to "the Egyptian Passover" on Nisan 13-14, which was the one Jesus kept, and the "Permanent Passover on Nisan 14-15, the one the Jews of Jerusalem and the Temple Priests kept. This difference came about because of a revival King Hezekiah made in the original religion. The ritual was modified by King Hezekiah to permit a central observance at the Temple in Jerusalem, instead of in individual homes all over Judea. In order to accommodate the masses attending at Jerusalem the sacrifices of the Lambs were done in the afternoon of the 14th day instead of the night before, when Moses kept it. The Jerusalem Jews of 2,000 years ago sacrificed their physical lambs much later on in 14th of Nisan than Moses originally commanded. They ate the slain Passover lamb at a ritual meal that was held after sundown and on the 15th day. Moses' Passover was slain on sundown of the 14th day and eaten immediately. Jesus followed this practice but the Temple priests and the majority of Jews in Jesus' time ate their meal after sundown of the 15th day so at first blush it is easy for people to think there is a one day difference between when Jesus kept the ceremony and when the Jews did two thousand years ago. Therefore they mistakenly think either Jesus did not die on the Passover, or he did not eat the Passover meal.

impossible, it is a meaningless statement.[9] That is, of course, unless the Moon is moved across the heavens in a matter of a few hours and then returned back to its natural position. That is the only way such an impossible Eclipse could occur.

YET the Bible specifically states that there was an eclipse of the Sun by the Moon for three hours that Passover afternoon. Either these original manuscripts are utterly wrong, or they are forgeries, or their author had no idea of what he was talking about, OR the Greatest Miracle in Human History occurred while Jesus was dying. There are no other logical possibilities. The historical record corroborates this last choice, but no one today accepts it as true. It is merely historical hearsay. As we saw earlier, the Gentile writer Phlegon wrote in approximately 120 A.D. about the Crucifixion Darkness:

> ... darkness came upon the earth at Jesus' crucifixion, and ... [Phlegon] ... explains it as the result of a solar eclipse: "During the time of Tiberius Caesar, an eclipse of the sun occurred during the full moon."[10]

This kind of statement, no matter how many times we find it repeated in ancient histories, is simply insufficient evidence for modern critics to accept.

Neither is it for me.

Here is another problem for us to unravel: Since it takes approximately two weeks for the Moon to move halfway around orbiting the Earth, two weeks is also the time in between all Solar and Lunar eclipses.

But the Bible claims the day Jesus died there was a Solar eclipse in the afternoon and then a blood-red lunar eclipse that same night while the body was in the tomb. Phlegon is simply paroting the impossible. State-of-the-art astronomical data calculated by modern physicists with no knowledge of the date of Christ's death will be extensively used in Chapter 2 to prove both these events occurred. Let me give you a foretaste of that information.

E. How Incredible Was That Day?

There was a natural Solar eclipse at the new Moon that occurred two weeks after the Crucifixion, which proves the Earth and the Sun were in the best possible positions for a supernatural Solar eclipse to occur two weeks earlier, that is, on the day Christ was on the Cross. The alignment of the Earth and Sun that Passover was the best in at least ten years to permit a supernatural eclipse. There was no other such opportunity for it to occur during the time Pontius Pilate was Procurator of Judea.

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[9] By definition the Moon is New when it can block the Sun A new Moon is on the same side of the sky as the Sun. The Moon's face is fully lit when it is opposite from the Sun New Moons can produce Solar eclipses; full Moons can produce Lunar eclipses, IF the Moon is in perfect alignment. So it is a matter of which side of the sky the Moon is presently in compared to the Sun that decides if Eclipses can occur

[10] McDowell, J The New Evidence That Demands a Verdict, pps 57-58

All other years proposed by scholars for the Crucifixion completely fail this test. Only the Wednesday Passover I will prove to you, ALSO happens to have this independent alignment between the Earth and the Sun. How commonplace is that?

There also is scientific data (see Section 2.5) which proves a blood-red lunar eclipse occurred the Wednesday night Jesus' body was in the tomb. Coincidentally, the color that year was the reddest of all the lunar eclipses seen in Jerusalem for ten years. Other eclipses of the Moon occurred, but they were not as red and not as long lasting. Thus on the day Jesus died we just happen to have optimum conditions for both the supernatural Solar eclipse and the natural Lunar eclipse.

How curious.

This literal Wednesday also happens to correspond to a prophecy in the book of Daniel, written centuries earlier, which states when Messiah would be cut off or slain: "in the midst of the week" to quote Daniel, which literally is a Wednesday.

Proof to the sceptic? Of course not. How curious.

Another striking point needs to be made about the "impossible" Solar Eclipse. I stated earlier that all Solar eclipses naturally last less than eight minutes. This total time includes the start, maximum darkness and final separation of the Moon and Sun in the sky. Less than eight minutes. They never last for three hours. But the best Greek manuscripts of the Bible are plain: the Sun was eclipsed, totally blacked out, for three full hours from noon until 3 P.M.

Perhaps the reader can allow himself to dwell upon the immense magnitude of all these statements. For these claims to be true the Moon would have had to have been silently, smoothly, moved backwards across the heavens[11] with pinpoint accuracy to position its shadow directly over Jerusalem. The Earth and the Sun were untouched during this time. No cosmic forces disrupted the rest of the planets, moons, comets or asteroids in our solar system. Saturn didn't lose its rings, Mars and Venus didn't shift their orbits. The Moon's shadow position was held fixed for three hours and then the Moon silently accelerated forward in the sky, returning back to its proper position on the other side of the heavens. Some seven hours later that night, the Earth's shadow would naturally cover the restored Moon in a blood-red eclipse. We have a heavenly body slowing down, reversing its direction, stoping, then tracking with Jerusalem below it, accelerating, traveling at tremendously high speeds and then returning to its normal position and speed. Gravity and the laws of physics had to have been selectively overridden and manipulated with pinpoint accuracy at each step in the process in order to accomplish this. There were other issues at play on planet Earth that had to be addressed. All this had to have been executed without adversely affecting the Earth's tides, the patterns of night and day, the overall motions of the solar system, or disturbing the longterm orbits of the Earth and Moon. Although there were

[11] Technical term, "retrograde"

earthquakes our planet did not shudder and shake on its axis, an dpeople were not thrown off the planet.

All of these complex counterforces have to be in motion when somebody writes the three words, "Passover Solar eclipse". It is the scientific underbelly of the controversy over the Crucifixion Eclipse.

And yet, as you will see in Chapter 4, a good many people and historians talked of the event and debated it for nearly two thousand years. Even if we presume the ancients were a simplistic folk, and they were not, the full magnitude of such an event had to have been impressed upon those who claimed it true. Are we dealing with mass hypnosis, or an incredible Event indelibly stamped upon the Collective Consciousness of the whole world?

Be patient. My science gets better and better as I move forward.

Now that the utter impossibility of a Solar eclipse on the full-Moon Passover has been explained, we are finally ready to prove the very first statement of this book: the original Greek manuscripts of the New Testament truly do say there was an eclipse of the Sun that Passover day, when the Moon was full.

1.2 The Gospel of Luke - The Best Greek Manuscripts Say a Supernatural Eclipse Did Occur

The starting point for proving that a supernatural eclipse of the Sun occurred while Jesus was on the cross has to be the Bible. The New Testament of the Christian Bible is a collection of religious biography, letters and prophecy that was compiled to represent the official beliefs of first generation Christianity. It claims to be the word of God and it also claims to be an historical document; an accurate historical document. But an innate prejudice exists in many, that says the Bible cannot possibly be an accurate historical document. We cannot address every objection made about the Bible's accuracy in this one book, but in the matter of the New Testament and Jesus' death, the verdict is in. Secular history proves He existed, He was crucified and Pagans spoke of the Crucifixion eclipse as early as 52 A.D.

The Gospels quote Jesus as saying, "Thy Word IS Truth." This revelation, precept, or catchall, however you wish to describe it, was an integral part of the original message Christian evangelizers brought to their age--"We have truth for you, The Truth." (Cynics will observe no religious leader ever admitted he had lies for the masses to believe. Fair enough, but propaganda has a knack for developing frayed corners.) If a miraculous Solar eclipse were truly preached to the world by overzealous promoters of the new Christian faith, how could Apostles and evangelizers make such a universal claim, be flat out hallucinating, and still succeed in attracting thousands of men and women from all walks of life to this new faith? Was everyone stupid in that age? The Bible references converts from the Imperial household and other high-ranking elites of Roman society. Such an irrational set of circumstances forces us to pity everyone who took up the faith. And what of their enemies? Why could not the enemies of Christianity stop its juggernaut, when it made such ridiculous claims?

So what, then, was the original Church claim about the darkness? And what did the people in turn, accept as the truth? Exactly what did Christians tell the whole world happened when Jesus died? Whatever it was, vast numbers of people from the greatest to the lowest levels of society believed it including sophisticated members of Caesar's entourage and even his relatives.[12]

Think what you may, at this early juncture in my story, when it comes to the matter of these eclipses, Christianity's reputation hung upon it 2,000 years ago and the Bible's reputation hangs upon the truthfulness of the Eclipse story today. There is no room in this matter for equivocation.

We will have to prove what the ancient manuscripts say.

(Note to the Reader: In the next two sections, I will begin a process that I will use throughout this book. To simplify and move my story along, I will give a broad overview of all the scholarly material before I cover the extended details. The idea here is to allow the reader the option to skip over as much of the more weighty

[12] See Phillipianss 4:22, and 1:13, and F F Bruce, The New Testament Documents - Are They Reliable? pps 114-115, note 1.

material as possible, without losing the gist of my proofs. In the present case, those who want to, should just examine sections A and B, which follow, then move on to Section 1.3. Those who want proof (and my critics), should read as much of Sections A - H as possible. As I said, this kind of pattern will continue throughout the book.)

A. Luke 23:45

Does the Bible say an eclipse of the Sun occurred during the full Moon of the Crucifixion? Plain and simple, yes it does. Case closed? We can now move on to the exciting details of the astronomy of that day? I am afraid not.

Others have traveled this road before us and left behind their debris for us to wade past. Whenever something extraordinary surfaces from the scriptures, it raises an uproar and counter-response of massive proportions from almost every quarter. As soon as I mention the Crucifixion Eclipse, I am engaging a whole set of objections, both historical and linguistic, from scholars and Bible translators. If you were to stop reading this book right now, turn to your bookcase, or dresser, pick up a Bible and try to find some verse in the New Testament that mentions a Crucifixion Eclipse, the chances are, it will not even be there, no matter how hard you look for it. If you were to leave your house and peruse several Bibles in a Bible bookstore, you still might not be able to find mention of an eclipse in the New Testament. Further, if you go to a library and consult all the various and sundry Bible translations that are in print today, you might finally find one that says "eclipse", but you will also quickly discover no consensus can be found among these books on what the heavens were like while Jesus was dying. If you would go further still, and interview the scholars who translated the New Testament words, you would come away convinced we cannot know what the Bible means. There is no universal agreement today by translators that the word "eclipse" should even be allowed to appear in the English New Testament.

It is all a matter of doubtful uncertainty.

You would therefore assume the idea of an eclipse at the Crucifixion is either highly questionable, or totally false. An impenetrable wall of opposition has been raised against even using the word. There are too many variations on what happened.

Before we have even started, we have our first controversy to overcome: How can I write about a miraculous eclipse when the word isn't even in your Bible and most translators won't use it? Because these objections are more opinion than fact, as even the authorities will tell you. With this first controversy comes our first opportunity to dig out the treasures hidden in the dirt.

The starting point for overcoming our first hurdle is the Gospel of Luke, the third of the four Gospel stories that begin the New Testament.

The crucifixion and death of Jesus Christ are described in all four Gospels. But only in the Gospel of Luke will you find recorded the critical words that refer to a supernatural eclipse of the Sun. Maybe.

Three Gospels speak of a darkness in the heavens that afternoon while Jesus was on the cross, but two do not call it an eclipse. Matthew, in the first Gospel, speaks of "a darkness over all the land" [13]. Mark calls it, almost identically, "a darkness over the whole land" [14]. The fourth Gospel, the Gospel of John, does not discuss these events at all, but there is nothing in his account to preclude them from being fitted into what he does report.[15] Luke, the most educated of all the Gospel writers, does add a critical phrase in the ancient Greek to his recounting of Jesus' crucifixion. The phrase in question is written in Chapter 23 and verse 45 of his Gospel. At this point in time, Jesus has already been betrayed, handed over to the Romans, scourged and crucified. The nailing to the cross occurred at 9 A.M. The time of verse 45 is approximately three hours later, at twelve noon.[16]

Exactly what are the words you would find when you began your inquiry into the Crucifixion Eclipse?

The first example comes from the New American Standard version of the Bible, a book that is readily available from any bookseller.

Luke 23:44-45
44 And it was now about the sixth hour, and darkness fell over the whole land until the ninth hour, 45 the sun being obscured; ....

The New Revised Standard Version is an American Bible that could be on your mother's bedroom bureau. It reads:

This hardly sounds like an epochal eclipse upset the order of the solar system. Clouds could just as easily have obscured the Sun, according to this translation; and in fact, that may very well be the translator's purpose, to make the cause as bland, as innocuous, as possible.

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[13] Matthew 27:45 (King James Version)

[14] Mark 15:33 (King James Version)

[15] Various authors and critics have written much discounting the unity of the gospels, and the order of events in the three crucifixion accounts. They claim the Gospels are tremendously inconsistent I disagree They are inconsistent only when you do not lay the accounts side by side and see how well they merge as parts of an inspired whole I would be called a hopeless amateur from the start, if I did not address this point to some extent For an overview of the history and issues, see Bloomberg, The Historical Reliability of the Gospels, pps 2-18, and his references Joseph Fitzmeyer, The Gospel of Luke, vol. I, pps 63-108, gives a fairly complete synopsis of textual differences and similarities between the Gospels The literature of the Synoptic problem (how the literal text of Matthew, Mark, and Luke differ in substance when they should have all come from a common source) is vast It seems to me the Synoptic problem puts all its emphasis on these men as robotic copyists, who failed to copy well, and none on them being inspired oracles who wrote differing but complementary facets of the story as God inspired them As one small example of this, Plummer, op. cit., p. 536, notes that a supposed difference in the time of day Jesus died, can be explained by the different hours used in Roman versus Jewish clock systems

[16] Based upon the different time systems of Roman Palestine 2,000 years ago, some accounts call 12 noon the "sixth hour". It is noon

The next example is taken from a less popular Bible, The Bible, A New Translation, by James Moffat.

Luke 23:44-45:
44 By this time it was about twelve o'clock, and darkness covered the whole land till three o'clock, 45 owing to an eclipse of the sun; ....

Moffat's words are totally at variance with the earlier versions; he does speak of an Eclipse. How are we to explain this discrepancy? An even less popular version of the New Testament, one that might not be at your bookseller, one you might have to special order, is The New Testament in Modern English by J.B. Phillips. He renders this verse almost exactly as Moffat does:

Luke 23:45:
.... 45 for there was an eclipse of the sun. ....

There are other Bible translations that use the word "eclipse" in Luke 23:45, but they are a minority. The list at this writing includes the New American Bible, the Jerusalem Bible, the New English Bible and the Twentieth Century New Testament.[17] There seems to be an unintentional trend that the less popular the translation, the more likely it is to say "eclipse". You will definitely not read "eclipse" in the most popular Bibles sold in America today. Most will say "the sun's light failed", a smaller percentage will say, "the sun was darkened" and the most exotic will say, "the sun was eclipsed". The New International Version of the Bible says, "... the sun stopped shining." The New King James version also obscures any reference to an eclipse.

So this is the present state of affairs in what is available to the general public. But I claim this diversity of opinion over a few simple English words actually hides the greatest event in history. To begin my claim, we need to enter into the private domain of the translators and discover exactly how they have been doing their work over the last four hundred years.

The "no-eclipse" wordings for Luke 23:45 started with the very earliest English translations. In 1611 the respected King James version of the Bible said the eclipse was simply "darkness":

44 And it was about the sixth hour, and there was a darkness over all the earth until the ninth hour. 45 And the sun was darkened, ...

In 1611 the tradition of an Eclipse at Jesus' death was still known in Europe (See Chapter 4 in volume II of this book for the proof of that rather surprising statement.) But the original Greek word in the known manuscripts of that age meant "darkness", not eclipse. The 1611 translators carefully chose their word

[17] Brown, R.E., The Death of the Messiah, note 21, p 1040, and The Word, The Bible From 26 Translations p. 2063. (Note that The New Jerusalem Bible has been changed from the first edition to read ""the sun's light failed", on p 1730)

"darkness", but it was based upon a wrong Greek word: the known Greek manuscripts in Western Europe at that time were not old enough--they did not contain the original word Luke wrote. The translators of 1611 did not have completely accurate Greek texts to work from.

The Bible seemed to be inconclusive in 1611. After some 250 years of ignorance, Greek scholars such as Constantin Tischendorff (1815-1875) clarified the issue by uncovering better, more ancient manuscripts near Mount Sinai in the Egyptian desert, that had been kept for millennia by Greek monks and copyists.[18] Those manuscripts did not say darkness, rather they contained the Greek word "eclipse". For the first time in centuries both the tradition and the official Bible text matched. But in spite of this and other textual research, which began around 1850, not all modern translators have the collective courage to translate the revised Greek word into the correct English word. They hedge their bets and produce compromise translations that appear "balanced and reasonable" and obscure the original Greek meaning to this day. Perhaps they are concerned they would create needless controversy. The question of what the precise English words should be, must revert back to conclusively establishing the original texts of Luke 23 and their ancient meanings. Did Luke write "eclipse" 2000 years ago and did he intend people to understand "eclipse"?

A perplexed reader might conclude that the truth of the verse depends upon the professional judgment of the translators. Since they are all experts and they do not agree one might think there must not be a final answer to this question. Wrong. We are going to discover that around 220 A.D., a renegade theologian challenged the eclipse in Luke and started his own seminaries, which produced New Testaments that said "darkness" instead of "eclipse". It was those ancient manuscripts which the King James translators eventually used for their authority, causing the state of affairs we have today.

I am going to resolve this question and document the full set of facts for you. We are now going to spend a considerable amount of time examining these texts in excruciating detail, from every angle, considering every possible shade of meaning for the word "eclipse". We will delve into all this word-splitting in a few pages, after I have first developed the outlines of this "wrong Greek word" problem more completely. The remnants of that 400 hundred year-old ignorance still exist in your Bible bookstore, or on your bookshelf.

B. The Overview: Are Modern Translations the Final Authority?

Can it really be that the men and women doing the translating from the Greek texts today seek to avoid controversy and put a smooth face on difficult words? The authors of The NET Bible, a Bible devoted to discussing translation problems, candidly admit this is exactly what happened in the case of Luke 23:45. To

[18] I am, of course, speaking of the pioneering travels of Tischendorf, in this and other endeavors to acquire and translate ancient New Testament manuscripts in the years between 1844 and 1869 In the larger sense, we need to add here the manuscript acquisitions by Beatty (Irish), and Bodner (Swiss) in the 20th century

paraphrase their thoughts, if Luke wrote of an impossible eclipse, then in the translator's view, it is unfortunate and Luke's words need to be toned down or neutered as a prudent way of stopping needless controversy.[19] This tendency is not limited to our times; it goes all the way back to the first years after the correct word was certified by Tischendorff (1845), over 150 years ago.

The Story of the Commentators' Doubts

To be blunt, when the German critic, Bruno Bauer, in 1840, and other Europeans began to dispute the historical accuracy of the scriptures and the very existence of Jesus, everything supernatural became fair game for challenge. Very exhausting standards were set up by this camp to critique the scriptures. They became hurdles for any text in the Bible to have to exceed. One of them was the presumption that the Bible was fanciful, illogical, and unfactual. It spoke of fantastic things like Noah's flood, and the Crucifixion Eclipse. This was the beginning of what is known today as Higher Criticism.[20] Part of the reason why Constantin Tischendorf tracked down the original manuscripts at Mount Sinai, was in order to objectively deal with such criticism. There is nothing wrong with such an approach, and Bible scholarship continues to vindicate the accuracy of the verses,[21] but in the case of Luke's eclipse, it was explained away as local darkness of unknown origin, probably a dust storm. The justification behind this was the controversy that raged between two Greek wordings that appeared in two separate sets of manuscripts--"the sun was darkened", versus "the sun was eclipsed".

After scholars demonstrated that "eclipse" was indeed the original word, the doubt and uncertainty over an actual Eclipse was not eliminated; rather, it was transferred onto the "eclipse" word. It was now translated into an alternate meaning--"failed", a term that modern scholars thought does not mean eclipse at all, merely darkness of unknown origin. But, to complicate matters, they are wrong. Their alternate meaning for the "eclipse" word, actually does mean eclipse, although they do not admit this oddity. This peculiar choice of "fail" was made by the moderns even though the evidence shows when the Greeks used the original eclipse word 2,000 years ago with the Sun and Moon as its subjects, they always meant a physical Eclipse.[22] Change the English text in Luke 23 to a weaker definition that does not mean eclipse and the possible facts of history are more easily ignored. The true Greek word is buried in Greek-language New Testaments for scholars to ponder, but the public reads of it only as a footnote in their English Bibles, if at all. Hence we have our conflicting modern translations and our dust storm.

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[19] NET Bible, p. 1882, note 8SN

[20] See Durant, W , Caesar and Christ, p 554 for a good, brief overview of the German, French, English and other scholars involved in this effort.

[21] As an entry into the field of proving Bible authenticity, Josh McDowell's text, The New Evidence that Demands a Verdict, is very helpful, covering a substantial number of issues in both Old and New Testaments, with a sizable bibliography for further research F.F Bruce's book, The New Testament Documents - Are They Reliable, is also a gem of pinpoint facts and sound reasoning, and Torrey's slim work, Discrepancies in the Bible, has a sane, factual approach to resolving issues which cuts through much modern confusion Also see Jesus Outside the New Testament, by Van Voorst, for a whole series of texts and proofs that Jesus actually existed. An Internet search on "historical Jesus" will also prove helpful.

[22] The evidence for this will be given from well-known Greek authors later on in this same section

So there have been two doctorings or shadings of the Luke 23:45 text in history. The first was done anciently (ca. 220 A.D.) by copyists who altered the Greek text to the word which later inspired the King James translation, "darkness". The second was done in the last century in English translations, by scholars modifying the correct Greek word into a more neutral English meaning.

But the Bible was originally written as "Eclipse" and even the modern scholars admit all this in their academic studies.

Is this too much for you to believe?

The ancient doctoring of Luke 23:45 by substituting a weaker Greek word for the original is an extremely well known fact of modern scholarship[23], but it has not trickled down to all the various Bible translations on the market today. Supporters of the spurious Greek wording were still chiming its reasonableness at least at late as the 1930's.

The debate over which shade of the correct Greek word to translate, still continues in Bible texts written in the last twenty-five years. You have already seen examples of this, first-hand.

Now for the intricate details of all this.

C. The Details: Ancient Greek Words and The Manuscript Evidence for the One Luke Actually Wrote

Lets turn the clock back 2,000 years to the time New Testament scrolls were being copied and used by congregations across the Roman Empire, especially in Palestine, Asia Minor and Egypt. Originally, Luke wrote one Greek word in the very first copy of his Gospel, which was repeatedly recopied and read in local churches, hidden from the eyes of persecuting Romans. The copies proliferated with the increasing number of Churches, as Christianity spread farther and farther away from its epicenter in Jerusalem. Somewhere along the line, the manuscripts stop being identical. A second, different, word appears in Luke 23:45 which competes with the original word. What are the two words and why was a distinction made? Simple mistake, or hidden agenda?

"Eskotos" versus "Ekleipo" - Two Greek Words With Three Shades of Meaning and Proving Which One Was Originally Intended

The standard Greek word for an eclipse of the Sun or Moon is "ekleipo". We derive the modern word eclipse directly from it. Modern critics admit this basic fact; well, sort of. They claim the Greek word "eklipontos", which is a form of the verb

[23] NET Bible, Ibid; Metzger, B. A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament, p. 155; Plummer, A., op. cit., p. 537, middle of paragraph 1 on verse 45; Marshall, I.H., op. cit., p. 875, calls this ancient substitution a possible "easing of the text" Creed says very vaguely, the alternative reading "perhaps originated in the difficulty" of the Passover eclipse (op. cit., p. 288, note on verse 45.)

"ekleipo"[24], was anciently used to mean either "eclipse of the Sun", or something broader, such as "the sun's light failed to shine". This second, problematic definition, is cited by many present-day Bible commentaries as an out for not supporting an eclipse in the sky at the Crucifixion. But as we will see, their escape clause is a damaged parachute.

There is a second Greek word, totally different from "eklipontos" and its two supposed meanings, which suddenly appears in the surviving manuscripts, starting about 350 A.D. This is centuries after Luke died and centuries after the "ekklipontos" manuscripts were written. It is a variant of the verb "skotizo", which means, "to darken or deprive of light, to make [totally] dark",[25] for any reason. We don't have to be speaking of the Sun and Moon when we use "skotizo" or its variants. "Skotizo" applies to darkened rooms, moral darkness, the night sky, the countryside, whatever. In the case of Luke 23, "skotizo" would permit an afternoon darkening such as thick clouds, a rainstorm, or a dust storm.

We now have three definitions, which the scholars have applied at one time or another from 1611 down to the present, to Luke's battered verse. Notice that the order of appearance in the English Bibles is reversed. Skotizo, the newer word, appears in the first English translations, while ekleipo, the older Greek word, does not appear until much later in time:

1. "became dark" - from "eskotisthe" or "skotizo". (appears in the 1611 King James Version to the present day)

2. "the sun's light failed - from "eklipontos" (used Bibles in the 1890's down to the present)

3. "eclipse" - from "ekliponotos" (authenticated in 1845, discussed the 1880's, translated into scripture in the 1930's, down to the present)

Which meaning did Luke intend? We must accumulate and weigh the evidence for the two Greek words, "skotizo" and "eklipontos" ourselves. After we can prove "eklipontos" is correct, we will still need to prove which of its two possible meanings Luke intended. But first, let me give you an indication of how pervasive the problem is, even today.

The problem of the original Greek word propagates beyond poorly translated Bibles to the popular reference books you might consult when trying to research Luke 23:45 for yourself. It is possible that if you read the wrong Bibles and check the wrong reference books, you will never discover a word about the Eclipse; the information is hidden that well. Try to check up on what Luke 23:45 says in the Greek and English and you may still be misled. Two examples of this deeper

[24] See Metzger, A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament, p. 155, the NET Bible, p. 1882, note 8TC, Nestle and Aland, Greek-English New Testament, note to Luke 23:45 on p 241(Nestle and Aland gives the most complete list of the different manuscripts and fragments)

[25] Strong, J. The New Expanded Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, Greek Dictionary entry number 4654, p 229 For examples of skotizo referring to complete blackness in the Bible, note Acts 2:20 and Acts 13:11

silence are Greek and English concordances. Concordances are books which cross-reference individual words against the scriptures that contain them. If you have a word in mind, a concordance will list out for you every verse in the Bible that contains the word. The Englishman's Greek Concordance does this for the original Greek words and Strong's Concordance of the Bible can be used to list out verses for words in the English translation. What do we find when we look up "ekleipo" in The Englishman's Concordance and "eclipse" in Strong's? Will either book list out Luke 23:45 as a verse that contains the respective word? Will either book mention that two different wordings have been attributed to Luke 23:45 over the years? Afraid not. Both books deny "ekleipo" belongs in Luke 23:45 at all and both books use "skotizo".[26] Further, each book was revised well after most scholars acknowledged "ekleipo" as the correct word, yet the revisions do not reflect the change in understanding.

It appears The Englishman's Concordance simply missed the point. It was first published in 1839, some six years before Tischendorff, but never changed, not even in 1982 when it was updated.[27] The story why Strong's is in error is a little bit more complex.

In addition to being a verse locator for English words, Strong's also contains a dictionary that gives the meanings for the original Hebrew and Greek words behind each English word in the 1611 King James Bible. The original Strong's was completed in 1890, 45 years after Tischendorff and others claimed "eklipontos" was the correct word. This was also well before 1930, when additional manuscripts were discovered containing the word "eclipse".[28] The problem is, Strong's was not intended to give its reader the definitions of the original words Luke wrote in the Greek; Strong's simply gave you what the King James English contained in 1611, right or wrong; as I will show, it was wrong. In 1890, scholars were indeed saying "skotizo" was an inaccurate word, yet Strong's never even made this fact a footnote. Like The Englishman's Concordance, Strong's gives "skotizo"[29] as the proper Greek word for "darkness" in Luke 23:45. Yet Strong's is technically correct when it does this. Technically, skotizo is the word you find in the King James, but the true word Luke wrote 2000 years ago was not known by the King James translators. Strong's is right, as far as the King James version is concerned, but it is nevertheless referring to the wrong Greek word. A loophole has concealed the true meaning of the verse from the casual student of the Bible.

A 2001 edition of Strong's, published by Thomas Nelson, has not changed this word in 111 years, even though New Testament scholars have examined, debated and passed judgment on the matter. Since it still gives the King James definitions, even when the words have been proven to be mistranslations, the editors of The

[26] See pps. 233 and 65 of the NT Dictionary in Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible and p 228 of The Englishman's Greek Concordance of the Greek Testament.

[27] See entry 1587 on p. 254 of The New Englishman's Greek Concordance and Lexicon for this error I do not know if any later editions after 1982 have corrected the mistake.

[28] An Irishman, Chester Beatty, located, purchased and made available to British scholars a trove of ancient Greek New Testament manuscripts in 1930-31. See Aland and Aland, The Text of the New Testament, p 57, and Metzger, B., The Text of the New Testament, p. 36.

[29] See pages 233 of the main concordance, and p. 65 of the Greek Dictionary in the second part of the book.

New Strong's must keep to the old, incorrect word, in order to fulfill their claim of explaining the 1611 words. Strong's is still both right and wrong, but the public would have no reason to suspect. The Englishman's Concordance is simply incorrect, but again, the amateur scholar would have no reason to suspect this. Whether you look up the Greek word or the English word, the Eclipse is not there in Luke. It is this kind of discrepancy between modern scholarship and popular works that causes so much doubt and debate among non-scholars over what Luke actually wrote, To dispel any such confusion or challenges by my readers, I insist upon providing as many scholarly details as possible in this book.

The Original Manuscripts of Luke's Gospel

What is the evidence "eklipontos / eclipse" is the original wording of Luke? The field of Biblical scholarship that addresses such issues is called Textual Criticism. It encompasses the study and categorization of all the original Greek manuscripts and exhaustively reviews every word, tense and spelling in every manuscript in order to decide precisely what the original New Testament authors actually wrote. The leaders in this field following after Tischendorff have developed a mass of opinion that resoundingly confirms "eclipse" was the original word. I lay some of it out for the doubting reader to examine.

1) The NET Bible (New English Translation Bible), in its 2003 edition, flatly says "eklipontos is a reading found in the earliest and best"[30] manuscripts.

2) Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament says eklipontos is "without doubt the true .... reading"[31]

3) John Martin Creed was a scholar of New Testament Greek at Cambridge University, who published the complete Greek text of Luke with notes in 1930. He gives the original Greek text of the darkness phrase as, "tou helios eklipontos", "for the sun was eclipsed" and he lists the original Greek source manuscripts for this wording. He also admitted "skotizo" (blackness) was substituted for it in the third century A.D., due to the intrigue I mentioned.[32]

4) I. Howard Marshall, is another scholar of New Testament Greek, who was also educated at Cambridge University. Writing in his Greek commentary on Luke in 1978, he too says "eklipontos" is the original word and he too provides the list of original texts that contain it. He discusses the case for "skotos", or "darkness", but like all the others, he concludes "eklipontos" is the original word in the original manuscripts.[33]

5) Joseph A Fitzmeyer, a respected Jesuit scholar, produced a combined translation and commentary on Luke for the Anchor Bible Series in 1983.

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[30] NET Bible, ibid, note 8TC (for original Greek text comment)

[31] Thayer, J., Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament, p. 197, word number 1587, subparagraph 2

[32] See p. 288 and note on verse 45 of his commentary, The Gospel According to St. Luke.

[33] Marshall, I.H., The Gospel of Luke, p. 875.

On page 1517 in the second volume of his work, Fitzmeyer describes the different tenses and words for Luke 23:45 which are found in the known Greek manuscripts. He discusses "eklipontos" versus "skotizo" and gives the different conjugations of these two verbs. After reviewing the different wordings, he says, ... "[eklipontos] is found in the best mss. [manuscripts]" He then gives the list of best original Greek manuscripts as: P^{75}, B, N, C^{*}. What are these strange symbols? Merely labels given by various scholars over the centuries to identify the various old texts.[34]

6) Another highly respected Jesuit scholar is Raymond Brown[35]. Writing in 1994, he too analyzes the verbs and tenses used in the various known manuscripts of Luke 23:45 and arrives at the same conclusion as Fitzmeyer. He writes the list a little differently, but his conclusion is the same - the word "eklipontos" or "ekleipontos" is used in the best manuscripts we have today. Brown uses English titles for the above symbols. He lists them as: "P^{75}, Codexes Vaticanus and Sinaiticus, Ephraem scriptures, some Sanidic [texts] ...."[36], this list is virtually identical to Fitzmeyer's.

7) Yet another leading authority on the Greek of the New Testament is Bruce M. Metzger. Along with Kurt Aland, he participated in the United Bible Society's international project to produce the authoritative Greek New Testament for our generation. This document is intended to be the complete merging of all known Greek manuscripts and fragments into one full, authoritative text for the entire New Testament. Out of the thousands of pieces, one complete synthesis. It is also intended to be the official Greek text that any committee or scholar would use as the basis for translating the Greek New Testament into English. Metzger has written several authoritative books on the original New Testament text. Two are of interest to us. In the first, The Text of the New Testament, he writes,

> "P^{75}" [the first manuscript which Fitzmeyer mentioned above] .... is ...the earliest known copy of the Gospel according to Luke. .... The textual significance of this newly acquired [manuscript] [it was newly purchased in 1955-1956] .... is hard to overestimate.[37] (comments and emphasis mine)

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[34] See Nestle-Aland, Greek-English New Testament, pages 684-720 for a complete list of the manuscripts, their symbolic names, and where they are kept, such as the Vatican, the Leningrad Museum, Switzerland, the Ashmolean Museum in England, and elsewhere. Alfred Plummer gives the English explanations for most of these odd symbols in his commentary on Luke, on pages lxxi-lxxii (71-72) He wrote in 1906, so his list is not current The NET Bible, pps 2324-23267 gives a good explanation of the different types of documents - are they fragments or whole, books or parchments, written on papyrus or velum, etc Westcott and Hort (1881) traces the general history of the study of each of the early major finds, plus discusses the discipline of textual criticism as it was developing Aland and Aland, The Text of the New Testament, pps 72-73, gives general New Testament background on the formation of these documents It is the transformation of Westcott and Hort It is also insightful to compare these two works.

[35] The New York Times has said of Raymond Brown-- "[he] has a strong claim to be the most distinguished of American New Testament scholars, and he has few competitors worldwide", see back cover of The Death of the Messiah, vol ii.

[36] Brown, R.E., op cit., p. 1039.

[37] Metzger, B , The Text of the New Testament, p. 41, and p 36 for the reference to 1955-1956

Some authorities believe P^{75} is as old as 175 or 190 A.D. They cite similarities between the style in which it is written and documents from Alexandria Egypt that were written between 140 and 190 A.D. Others say it was later, between 200 and 225 A.D.[38]

There are no New Testament Greek authorities in the last 70 years who claim "eskotos" is correct. They all admit Luke wrote "eclipse", not "darkness". So why does the "eskotos" version of Luke 23:45 even exist in the manuscripts?

Substituting "Darkness" in Place of "Eclipse" - The Easy Way Out of Controversy

In its comment on Luke 23:45, the NET Bible explains the rival verb problem more candidly than any other scholarly source this author has examined. It says most manuscripts that have survived to this day do indeed use "eskotos" or "eskotisthe" for "darkness" and now I am quoting: "a reading that avoids the problem of implying a solar eclipse."[39] Using the word "eklipontos" in the original texts creates the problem of flatly stating a solar eclipse did occur at the Passover full moon.[40] In short, either that one single word created too big a problem for the ancient scribes to handle, or they wanted to be rid of it, so they switched the word and altered Luke's Gospel to suit their purpose.

Like the NET Bible, Joseph Fitzmeyer admits the real reason for modern reluctance to print the word "eclipse" in most Bibles. After he discusses the two competing Greek words and their resultant English translations in his commentary, he states why the second, more vague meaning of "eklipontos" occurs in so many of the translations we have today. The better Greek texts, which say the darkness is due to an eclipse, are really saying something impossible must have happened, so the Greek must not be translated into its natural English meaning of "eclipse".[41] In other words, many modern translators refuse to give the public the supernatural translation of the text, although it is textually justified. When the Bible, admittedly purporting to be the message of a Divine Being to mankind, speaks of supernatural things, it makes more sense to the translator to edit God down to the human level. For the sake of emphasis allow me to present this candid admission from Fitzmeyer:

> Some commentators ... have tried to translate *eklipontos* as "was in eclipse." The v[er]b *ekleipein* when used with the Sun, can sometimes have that meaning. But it is usually considered an impossible meaning here, because it would imply an eclipse at Passover (full-moon time); .... It is this difficulty that probably led to the variant reading mentioned above [eskotisthe]...."[42] (emphasis added.)

[38] See Comfort, The Text of the Earliest Greek New Testament Manuscripts, p 501, and his references Aland, K., and Aland, B., op. cit., gives 225 as the probable date – pps. 51,57.
[39] See notes 8TC and 8SN, p. 1882 of the NET Bible.
[40] Ibid
[41] Fitzmeyer, J.A., op. cit., p. 1517
[42] Ibid, pps. 1517-1518

I would confront the modern translators and ask, More sense to whom? To a Higher Critic? I submit this is not a sufficient reason to alter or "enhance" Luke's text. If we don't believe what Luke wrote, label it fantasy. Dismiss it, but report the words as they were written down and translate them as the passage demands. Please do not censor it so it fits within your concepts of what a religious book should or should not say.

So Fitzmeyer plainly says the difficulty of having a full Moon Passover eclipse led to variant, i.e. CHANGED, wording in the text of the actual Greek manuscripts and in today's mass-market Bibles.

There is additional evidence for this blanket cover-up of the facts. A second book by Metzger is a supplemental handbook to Nestle and Aland's Greek-English New Testament, in which he explains difficult original texts and the minutia behind why the translations were rendered the way they were. This second volume is called A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament. Discussing the two versions of Luke 23:45 - "eskotos" (darkened) versus "eklipontos" (eclipsed), he makes a world class judgment call on which is more correct. He writes on p. 155:

> The [Greek] words *kai eskotisthe o helios* ("the sun was darkened") appear to be the easier reading, substituted by copyists for *tou heliou eklipontos* .... which may mean either "the sun's light failed" or "the sun was eclipsed." (emphasis added, I have added here the vowels in the Greek which Metzger omits.)

Notice carefully what Metzger is saying here, because his authoritative opinion corroborates everything. Once more, a highly respected authority is stating copyists over the course of time changed the wording of the verse in the later manuscripts of Luke from "eclipse" to "darkness", because it was EASIER TO BELIEVE. According to Metzger, who has carefully studied and come to know the original texts and their variants, the original wording was "eklipontos". Metzger is suggesting the copyists did something that was fairly common in their age, they made their own judgment call on what Luke was writing. They independently editorialized Luke 23:45 and substituted a more neutral verb for "eclipse" in order to tone down a verb that had miraculous and troubling implications. With this clarification, the reader may want to re-read Metzger's words.

Because the human mind balks at an unlimited, supernatural God, we must reduce a scripture to our terms. Truly, in this case, man is making God after his image. It is a polite form of blasphemy; little else.

We now have looked at the literal words of many world-class scholars that confirm the Greek word for "eclipse" is original, authentic and correct, and that copyists substituted "darkness" centuries later, but we are not finished. The matter is so convoluted and controversial, that there are yet other arguments against "eclipse" which need confronting.

Fraud by Numbers?

As late as 1983 some authors who definitely were not Greek scholars, tried to argue that "eskotos / darkness" was indeed the correct word. According to them, "eclipse" was the invented word!

In the December 1983 issue of "Nature", the British science journal, an article appeared, entitled, "Dating the Crucifixion". In it, the authors admit five important[43] original Greek manuscripts for Luke do use the term eclipse, yet the authors appear to belittle the fact that so few manuscripts use "eklipontos". They think that only five manuscripts prove an error was made; "eskotos" is the correct verb because it is in so many more of the existing texts; somehow ekleipo was later substituted for it. A scribe must have been daydreaming (they were known to do this) and thought of an eclipse, inadvertently inserting the word into the text. In short, today's large number of skotizo texts make for the truth. All the above authorities I just quoted are wrong.

But is quantity quality? Should you the reader, be concerned that only a few ancient manuscripts use what I claim is the "true" word, while the majority use the "false" word?

The term "best" or "major" has a precise meaning in the world of textual criticism. It implies texts of the greatest quality, usually with the highest accuracy and consistency.[44] (Do not confuse "major" with "majority". "Major" has to do with quality, "majority" with the greatest number of copies.) "Best" also implies much for how the texts were originally used 1,900 years ago. Those "best" texts were prized by Christians for generations as faithful documents of their beliefs.

Darrell Bock, who, like Fitzmeyer, has written a multi-volume work on Luke's Gospel, speaks for many other commentators when he says, "For .... historical reasons I prefer to weigh [that is, judge the integrity of individual] manuscripts, not count them."[45] The number of manuscripts we have today which contain a particular version of a verse is not the deciding factor on whether the verse was forged, or genuine, 1,900 years ago.

We do not have a comprehensive library today of every manuscript of Luke ever written throughout the ages. What manuscripts we do have represent different works from different church areas all over the Mediterranean world--Egypt, Palestine and Syria, Rome and Byzantium, that were penned by scribes in different centuries following original Christianity. We have today a corrupted, scattershot image of all the texts that actually existed in the early days of Christianity.

It is possible that in 165 A.D. 300 manuscripts existed all over the Roman Empire which spoke of a supernatural "ekilpontos" Eclipse, but those politically provocative manuscripts were destroyed by the Roman authorities, or others. The manuscripts that survived to our day are the ones no one wanted to destroy, the

[43] In fact, it is probably four important and one marginal manuscript
[44] Nestle-Aland, Greek-English New Testament, p. 12*
[45] Bock, D.L., Luke 1:1 - 9:50 pps. 19-20

ones no one was able to destroy, or, whatever escaped by Providence, luck, or human protection. They are the ones which survived "manuscript genocide".

Bock provides additional details.

> .... the .... text today [that occurs in the greatest numbers] may not have necessarily been the majority in the earliest period. [He then explains that since Christianity first started in Palestine, we might expect the greatest number of early texts to be found today in Israel, but they are not there. He then explains why.] ....: (1) Severe Roman persecution caused vast destruction of the earliest manuscripts in the late first to early fourth centuries; (2) later Muslim persecutions .... after the seventh century did the same; and (3) only the Byzantine region of Christendom continued to use Greek as their religious language, while most of Christendom turned to Latin after the fourth century. [46] (comment and emphasis added)

What Bock leaves out, is the matter of Christians from Asia Minor who believed in a Nisan 14 Passover, separating themselves from those who believed in keeping a Sunday Passover after 165 A.D. and taking "eclipse" manuscripts with them into their "exile".[47] For all these reasons the ranks of "eclipse" New Testaments were thinned.

Under the persecutions of the Roman Emperor Diocletian, New Testaments were systematically hunted down and publicly burned, even at the point of executing the owner. Many Church pastors succumbed to this and yielded up their texts. The Roman persecutions of 303-313 A.D. effectively did two things. They thinned out the number of original New Testament manuscripts and they left a vacuum that was filled by newer texts from partisan seminaries, which had slightly different wordings from the ones that had been lost. Many of the new texts that proliferated under a benevolent Emperor Constantine, (315-340 A.D), had the word "darkness" in them. But not all of them. A few of the "eclipse" texts survived. Enough to enable thinking scholars to piece together what had happened in history and arrive at the original word. Nevertheless, the "darkness" manuscripts now became the standard wording that was used in 1611 by the King James translators.[48]

Apparently the authors of the 1983 Nature article did not consider how this destruction of manuscripts by Rome and Islam applies especially to the Eclipse verse. As I show in Chapter 3, there was a very real basis for Roman destruction of the Eclipse manuscripts. Tiberius Caesar and his successors would have had severe political reasons to hunt down and destroy reports of a great supernatural Eclipse worked by the Christian God: survival of their Order.

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[46] Ibid, p. 19.

[47] It was called the Quartodeciman Controversy. See Eusebius, The History of the Church, for a full description

[48] Aland, K , and Aland, B , The Text of the New Testament, p. 65, for all the facts cited in this paragraph See also Westcott, B , and Hort, F , Introduction to the New Testament in the Original Greek, p 139 of the main text for much the same comments

The number of manuscripts we have today that say "eklipontos" or "eskotos" are not in the same proportion as they were 1,800 or 1,900 years ago.

To give the reader a more complete appreciation of this, I have prepared a table that gives the age and quality of most of the known manuscripts of Luke's Gospel.[49] Your first-hand impressions will be far more meaningful than anything that has been thus far said. Some of these writings are partial, little more than fragments, they do not even contain Luke 23:45. Examine the facts and decide for yourself as to the quality, importance and legitimacy of the five "eclipse" texts, compared with all the known manuscripts of Luke. The key point here is that the five eclipse manuscripts stand head and shoulders above all others, they truly are not a scribe's invention.

When you look at the table, notice the lead position of the manuscript called "P^{75}" in all this. Also notice how much newer all the other works are, compared to P^{75}. Finally, notice column 3, which gives the overall quality of each text. See where the quality lies. A little reflection on these points will graphically demonstrate that P^{75} is not simply one of the five best manuscripts for original Luke text, it is indeed the premier text for Luke known in the world today.

[49] Aland, K., and Aland, B., The Text of the New Testament, Charts 5A and 6F in the Appendix, purports to give the full list

All the Earliest Known Manuscripts of Luke's Gospel - Are the Five Eclipse Manuscripts Fraud or Authoritative?

Date Manuscript was Written (Rounded to nearest 50 years)	Manuscript Identifier	Quality of Text; 1 = Best, 5 = Worst[50]	Contains "Eklipontos" (E), "skotizo" (S) or Neither (-)
Manuscripts Containing Luke 23:45 and "eklipontos"[51]			
175-225 A.D.	P^{75}	1	E
350 A.D.	B	1	E
350 A.D.	aleph	1	E
450 A.D.	C*	2	E
1250 A.D.	597	5	E
Manuscripts Containing Luke 23:45 and "Eskotisthe"[52]			
450 A.D.	A	3-5	S
450 A.D.	D^{ae}	4	S
450 A.D.	Q	5	S
450 A.D.	W	3	S
550 A.D.	R	5	S
800 A.D.	Psi	2/3	S
850 A.D.	C^3	2	S
850 A.D.	Gamma	5	S
850 A.D.	Delta	3	S
850 A.D.	Theta	2	S
850 A.D.	117	4	S
950 A.D.	X	5	S
1150 A.D.	f^1	3	S
1250 A.D.	f^{13}	3	S

[50] After Aland and Aland, The Text of the New Testament, pps. 107-139.

[51] The list of these five "eklipontos" mss. was compiled from Fitzmeyer, op. cit., p. 1517 (P^{75}, B, aleph, C*), Plummer, op. cit., p. 537 (B, aleph, C*), and Marshall, op. cit., p. 875 (P^{75}, B, 597). Marshall also adds aleph, C*,L, 0124, and 579. I cannot confirm all of these latter citations in Aland and Aland, and have therefore chosen to omit them.

[52] The "eskotisthe" list was compiled from Fitzmeyer, loc. cit. (C^3, A, D, R, Gamma, Theta, Psi, 117, f^1, f^{13}), Plummer, loc. cit. (C^3, A, D, R, Q, X, Gamma), Marshall, loc. cit. (A, D, W, Gamma, Delta, Theta, f^1, f^{13},) and Brown, The Death of the Messiah, vol. ii, p. 1039.

All Other Known Manuscripts of Luke			
350 A.D.	Itala (first Latin texts)	-[53]	-
350 A.D.	Syriac^{S}	-	-
350 A.D.	Syriac^{C}	-	-
350 A.D.	Byz	-	-
450 A.D.	T	2	-
550 A.D.	Eta	5	-
550 A.D.	N	5	-
550 A.D.	P^{e}	5	-
550 A.D.	D^{e}	4	-
550 A.D.	Phi (6th),	5	-
650 A.D.	0211	5	-
750 A.D.	L^{e}	2	-
750 A.D.	047	5	-
750 A.D.	E^{e}	5	-
850 A.D.	F^{e}	5	-
850 A.D.	G^{e}	5	-
850 A.D.	H^{e}	5	-
850 A.D.	33	2	-
850 A.D.	892	2	-
850A.D.	K	5	-
850 A.D.	M	5	-
850 A.D.	U	5	-
850 A.D.	V	5	-
950 A.D.	X	5	-
850 A.D.	Ypsilon		-
850 A.D.	Lambda	5	-
850 A.D.	Pi	5	-
850 A.D.	Omega	5	-
950 A.D.	S	5	-

[53] These four documents are not graded with the Greek by quality because of their diverse origins. See Aland and Aland, op. cit., pps. 186-194, for a discussion and bibliographies on the Itala, and two Syriac documents. It should be noted, part of the Itala collection includes references by the theologian Tertullian to the Gospels. He does in fact refer to the eclipse, probably from his own translation of the Greek. Tertullian is therefore a witness from 200 A.D. that the Greek word should indeed be translated as "eclipse" into another language. (In his case, it was Latin.) I will return to this point in the main body of the book.

It may be surprising to see how much younger the majority of manuscripts are compared to the "eklipontos" manuscripts. These are the replacement manuscripts that were copied from texts in Antioch and elsewhere, after the persecutions of 303-313 A.D. (The earliest we have today are usually from 350 A.D. This is the time after Christianity was adopted by Emperor Constantine as the state religion of the Empire.) This fact is usually downplayed or overlooked in the commentaries that reject "eclipse" as a mistake. It is important. It shows how the earliest manuscripts were indeed thinned out by persecution and loss and what remains of the manuscripts in our civilization are only the more vague ones. Note also the consistently inferior quality of the "darkness" manuscripts compared to the "Eclipse" ones. Question: how is it that the Eclipse tradition, which was first documented in 52 A.D., continued for centuries thereafter, while the manuscripts were being changed from "eclipse" to "darkness"? Was no one ever able to stamp out this false tradition? Religions do change their doctrines over time. After "skotizo" became the most common reading, churchmen would have had to have held the eclipse tradition against their own scriptures. (Can't you hear the monks saying in their monasteries, "We read "darkness" in our Bible, but we really know it was a great eclipse of the Sun by God the Father"? That is probably what they said. The word changed, but the understanding stayed fixed for well over 1,800 years. See Chapter 4 for the documented proof.) Or was it a tradition based upon fact, with original true texts that were lost and later texts that were doctored?

The literal facts in the above chart give us several irrefutable conclusions. First, P^{75} is the earliest (and most authoritative) manuscript we have of Luke. Second, it also contains Luke 23:45, and it uses "ekilpontos". Finally, three of the other manuscripts that contain "eklipontos" exceed or match the "majority" manuscripts in their quality and authoritativeness.

In sum, then, the fact that we have today only five manuscripts which use the word "eklipontos" or "eclipse", for the darkness in Luke 23:45, is not a reason for discounting them. Most of the good manuscripts were destroyed; today's landscape is what remains after the carnage of persecution and war and must be understood in that light. In the matter of the two readings for Luke 23:45, "eclipse" is the original, "darkness" cannot be justified.

D. More Insights on P^{75} - Examining the Superiority of the Premier Luke Manuscript Firsthand

"Textual scholars have a high regard for P^{75}'s textual reliability."[54] Kurt and Barbara Aland, "two of Germany's pre-eminent textual scholars"[55], stated that P^{75} was written with "meticulous care",[56] both in the purity of its text and the precision of its calligraphy and layout. Using a term first invented by Westcott, they call the contents a "strict", or highly accurate text.[57] Actually, The Aland's praise for P^{75} is

[54] Comfort, P W., and Barrett, D P., Ibid.
[55] This comment was extracted from the journal Religious Studies Review, and appears on the rear cover of the Aland's book, The Text of the New Testament.
[56] Aland, K., and Aland, B., op cit., pps. 64,57
[57] Ibid, pps. 64, 101. See Westcott and Hort, Introduction to the New Testament in the Original Greek, p. 6 for a robust definition of "strict"

much more enthusiastic than just "strict text". They believe that P^{75} is a likely prototype for, or a more authoritative text than, the famous Codex Vaticanus, one of the most respected New Testament texts in the world, housed in the Vatican library in Rome.[58] The Alands believe three manuscripts: "aleph", the Codex Vaticanus and P^{75}, define the original Greek text for the early Christian community of Alexandria Egypt, which by some counts was the largest city in the Roman Empire.[59] In effect, the Alands are saying that combined as one, these three documents give the original beliefs of the primitive Christian Church. Again, P^{75} stands at the head of all known texts on Luke 23:45.

> In the final analysis it must be declared that P^{75} is an extremely accurate copy. Concerning the scribe who made P^{75}, ... "his impulse to improve style is for the most part defeated by the obligation to make an exact copy." ....
>
> In P^{75} the text .... can be explained .... as the result of a single force, namely the disciplined scribe who writes with the intention of being careful and accurate. There is no evidence of revision of his work by anyone else, or in fact of any real revision, or check. .... The control had been drilled into the scribe before he started writing.[60] (emphasis mine)

We can discover other evidence which demonstrates how the Christians of 200 A.D., 300 A.D. and later viewed P^{75} and other "eclipse" manuscripts.

E. P^{75} and Early Christian Beliefs

P^{75} is an elite document. It was written "late second or possibly early third century"[61]. The flow of events proves P^{75} was revered by generations of Christians for hundreds of years after it was written. It is the only manuscript we have today which still has its original cover and binding intact.[62] Chance or care protected it through the ages; probably chance assisted care in preserving this very special document. It contains marginal notes that were written centuries later in its life by Egyptian Christians (known as Coptics). Since their Church did not begin until 451 A.D.[63] and P^{75} was written somewhere around 200 A.D., we see a long tradition of respect and value for the text from 200 A.D. to 451 A.D. on down to the present day.

This document had passed from one culture to another, from Alexandrian Christians to Coptic breakaways from the Catholic Church, yet each for centuries held the text as sacred and authoritative.[64] Since P^{75} changed hands from Greek Christians to Egyptian Coptics, different sects used the manuscript with different opinions on various doctrines. There are indeed marginal notes, written by later

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[58] Akand, K , and Alannd, B , p 57
[59] Aland K , and Aland, B , op cit., p. 107
[60] Comfort, P W., and Barrett, D P , Ibid
[61] Comfort, P W., and Barrett, D P , The Text of the Earliest New Testament Greek Manuscripts, p 501
[62] Aland, K., and Aland, B., op cit., p 76
[63] See Egyptian Christianity, pps. vii, 208-210 and bibliography, especially p 209, by C Wilfred Griggs
[64] Comfort, P W., and Barrett, D P , op cit , p. 504

Coptics on P^{75}, but as the above quote states, none of the text has been altered, amended, or edited, to support the beliefs of the Coptics.

Manuscripts were the property of the bishops and priests, the monks and churchmen, and possibly a few wealthy. They were mostly the ones who taught doctrines directly to the people. Alexandria was the place where the Crucifixion Eclipse was first challenged; it was the place where the "darkness" manuscripts were first produced.[65] Yet no Church elder or monk in Alexandria ever felt the need to revise the eclipse doctrine in the "old" manuscript of P75. This tells us there were two or more Christian congregations, existing side by side in Alexandria, as elsewhere in the Empire, using two differing texts that were based upon their separate beliefs. The "eclipse" congregations held fast to their traditions. No one in 500 A.D. ever inked out "eklipontos" in P^{75}, and replaced it with another word, even though other verses have their little notes, and even though P^{75}'s owners would have known of the difference from the opposing congregations.[66]

One verse in P^{75}, Luke 17:14, does have a marginal note added by a Coptic monk, which was taken from Matthew 8:2-3. It is interesting to see what the ancient Coptics would and would not annotate in P^{75}. The margin note involves a miracle of Jesus, in which he heals 10 lepers of their disease, by commanding them to present themselves to the priests at the Temple in Jerusalem, for a ritual purification. Some monk thought it important to add Matthew's words, "make us clean", to Luke's account, in order to show the leper's personal desire to be healed more clearly to the lay members. Which needs more clarification, a miracle involving lepers, or one involving the whole solar system? Yet Luke 23:45, a far more controversial text, remains untouched.

There had to be a tradition of imputing great value to the text, which kept P^{75} so highly prized.

It was the original words of the Evangelist Luke.

> ... the large typeface [of the letters in P^{75}] indicates that the manuscript was composed <u>to be read aloud to a Christian congregation</u>. The scribe even added a system of section divisions to aid any would-be lector. Thus we have a manuscript <u>written by a Christian for other Christians</u>.[67] (comments mine)

It is fair to say P^{75} was planned and transcribed as an exact copy of what men in 200 A.D believed was Luke's original words, for the express purpose of preaching the word of God to the Christian people. It was treated as such for centuries.

F. Peeling Away the Layers of Meaning - And How Should the Word "Eklipontos" Be Translated Today? . (Casual readers may wish to bypass this discussion.)

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[65] Bock, D , op. cit , p 19.
[66] Comfort, P W , op. cit , p 504.
[67] Ibid, p 503

The last area of uncertainty surrounding the word "eclipse" is the most mesmerizing to modern critics. How should they translate "eklipontos" into modern English? They seem to be transfixed upon their own invention, unable to break free from the excuse they have invented for themselves. Given we now have the correct word for Luke 23:45, we still have to address the fact that many New Testament Greek authorities, such as Plummer, Aland, Metzger and Fitzmeyer, leave the issue of the correct translation of "eklipontos" open-ended.[68] They do not translate it into "eclipse". Rather, they use its second, more common meaning, "the sun's light failed" and relegate the phrase "the sun was eclipsed" to a footnote at the bottom of the page[69].

Can we rightly determine the sense of how the word was used 2,000 years ago by Luke, even though it has several meanings? Are these meanings as different from one another as the moderns would have us think? How expert are they in choosing among the different meanings? My research shows they are not as expert as one might hope. Once more, scholarship is intermingled with, braided with, strands of confusion. Each thin line has to be identified and separated out to get to the resolution of this new problem.

If you survey the modern opinions on how to translate "eklipontos" into English, you will be confronted with the following opinions and objections.

1) In the ancient Greek, "fail" is a more vague meaning of eklipontos than "eclipse".

2) "Eklipontos" only sometimes means "eclipse" when used with the Sun, but even then, only under certain special conditions.[70]

3) We cannot tell, from reading Luke 23:45, how he intended to use the word "eklipontos". Since there is no compelling reason in the verse, we must assume the more general meaning "fail" was the one he had in mind.

I am contradicting many respected authorities when I say these ideas are not as correct as they appear. Yet I will prove it to you.

Alfred Plummer is probably the greatest offender, and one of the early sources for the "vagary" prejudice.[71] He wrote in 1906:

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[68] I am not now speaking of Bibles that can be purchased, but rather Commentaries and scholarly translations that Bible translators might consult when they prepare their own text of the Bible in English. We can add to the above list. Green, in The Gospel of Luke, p 823, translates, "while the sun's light failed", while Daryl Bock, in p. 1869 of his commentary, favors the "failed" translation of Aland

[69] See p. 241 of Nestle-Aland's authoritative Greek-English New Testament

[70] See Fitzmeyer, J., op cit., vol ii, p. 1517, note on verse 45 for this statement. Creed, op cit., p 288, note to verse 45 in bottom of page. Plummer, inset note in small type in middle of page 537. J. Nolland translates the phrase as "the sun['s light] had failed" (p. 1154 of his commentary, Luke 18:35-24:53) In each of these cases, whether literally or not, the impression is one of a secondary matter, confined to a side excursion and rapidly dismissed.

[71] A case might be made that Plummer follows after Westcott and Hort (1881), but Plummer articulates his belief in the "fail" definition better than they do, at least to my ears

> "the sun failing" or "the sun having failed" is the meaning [of eklipontos] : and we must leave it doubtful whether Luke supposes there was an *eclipse* .... or uses ekleipein in its originally vague sense of fail. The latter is probable.[72] (my emphasis)

Doubt upon doubt. Vagary mixed with doubt. Plummer seems to have sealed Luke's coffin with unbreakable mortar. The last part of Plummer's statement is simply inaccurate and misleading. It is obscure for two reasons. First, as Fred Danker wrote, "Luke employs the normal [Greek] language to describe an eclipse .... despite the fact that an eclipse is impossible at the time of the full moon."[73] I will prove Luke's very standard usage of "ekleipo" from ancient Greek examples shortly. Second, if you research both "fail" and "eclipse" in a dictionary for either Classical Greek or modern English, "fail" is not a vague definition of "eclipse" at all. As I explain in detail next, The Oxford English Dictionary, whose entry for "eclipse" was published in 1889, approximately seventeen years before Plummer wrote[74], gives a very precise meaning for eclipse--"to fail".[75] One of its definitions for "fail" is almost the same as "eclipse".[76]

Did Plummer bother to look the two words up in the new Dictionary in 1906? I presume so. I do know, as we shall also see, that other New Testament Greek scholars in 1893, such as Thayer, were well aware the meaning of "eclipse / fail" was very precise when used with the sun. What we also see, is other New Testament scholars of later generations agreeing with Plummer's words, completely adopting them and ignoring Thayer. In 1983, Joseph Fitzmeyer parrots Plummer, and to a lesser extent, Creed.[77]

In my estimate, Plummer and Fitzmeyer are providing ambiguous, even misleading information on this point. If we go back to the original meanings in both the Greek and English, eclipse is derived from the idea of "failing" in both these languages. Conversely, "fail" means "eclipse" in both these languages as well. The loophole that the scholars exploit is: "fail" can mean eclipse and "fail" can mean something other than eclipse. To modern ears, the Sun failing is an obscure term, but to those of 100 years ago, it meant an occultation or blocking of the Sun's disk. When the disk was blocked, the Sun "failed". It may turn out that our modern authorities do not appreciate there is little or no difference between "eclipse" and "fail" in either of these "ancient" languages. Let me prove it to you.

F.1. The Roots of the Word "Eklipontos" Help to Clarify Its Usage in Ancient Greek

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[72] Plummer, loc cit.

[73] Danker, F., Jesus and the New Age, p. 240.

[74] See p. viii of the Historical Introduction to the Compact OED, vol I that lists "E" as being published 1888-1893, and "F" in the years between 1893 and 1897

[75] Compact OED, vol I, p. 831. uses the words "fail to appear". It then immediately describes a celestial eclipse of the sun, moon, or other body.

[76]

[77] Other examples of this are Daryl Bock, op, cit (1996), vol ii, p. 1859, Frank J Matera, The Catholic Biblical Quarterly (1985), p. 472

"Ekleipo" is the root verb from which "ekleipontos" is derived. It means to abruptly end something or some process that would normally continue on and on. It is used in the Bible to describe the ending of a man's life (Luke 16:9), or the shipwreck of his faith (Luke 22:32). If we apply it to the Sun, ekleipo refers to the abrupt stopping of the Sun's rays by a blockage, such as the Moon. This is the exact essence of the English word, "to eclipse".

"Ekleipo" was coined by joining two other words--"ek" and "leipo" together. Each of these smaller words also has a precise meaning which in turn clarifies the meaning of "eklipontos." The true, sharp meaning and intent of the word practically leaps off the page at us.

"Ek" has many shades of meaning, but the general sense is "to exit out from a source".[78] Thayer gives one example as demons coming out of a body they had formerly possessed.[79] It describes the process of transmitting something out from its source or host. In our case, "ek' would refer to the light coming out of the Sun.

"Leipo" means to be destitute, of, totally lacking in something one would normally have. To be in a position of wanting what one would normally have, to fail. [80]

If we combine the two definitions, we get "to be wanting something, due to failure, or lack of supply, at the source, or out of the source."

F.2. Is the Word "Fail" a Vague English Word That Has Nothing to Do with Eclipses?

There is an additional hair to split when we look at the word "fail". Fail has a simple meaning in 2005 American English, but it has a much wider set of meanings in British English, or even the English of 1893 or 1611. Today, "fail" actually has perhaps 10 or 13 different ways of being used, each of them precise.[81] The same is true of the Greek equivalent for "fail" 2000 years ago[82]. We can't impose the common American definition of "fail" upon Luke without getting our hands burned. Lets see if we can sort through this tangle as well.

Scholars zero in on a 2,000 year-old word in verse 45, attach an imprecise modern meaning to it and then attempt to decide what Luke was reporting about the Crucifixion by staring into their open-ended word. "Fail" has 13 definitions in the Oxford English Dictionary, one of which means to become exhausted or cease. When applied to the light of the sun, this definition of fail means the solar disk in the sky became exhausted of light, the disk ceased to shine. There is a subtle difference between the Sun ceasing to shine and the Sun's light stopping. In the first case we are speaking of the Solar disk becoming dark; in the second case, we

[78] The New Strong's - New Testament Dictionary, p 79, number 1537.

[79] He gives other definitions as "coming out of the supply out of which a thing is taken " (op bit , p 191) and "derived from the power on which anyone depends".

[80] Ibid, p. 150, number 3007

[81] See the Oxford English Dictionary, where all 12 definitions are given from their earliest usage

[82] I have discovered some six different Greek words that have been translated as "fail" in the 1611 King James Bible They are: ekleipo, epileipo, katargeo, leipo, pipto, and hustereo

are saying nothing about the Sun itself, we are only saying the light failed to reach the people on Earth, for whatever reason. This misapplication of "failed" from the Solar disk, to its light, is how vagary becomes introduced into Luke's verse.

Allow me to do an autopsy on the history of this confusion, as seen though the writings of a hypothetical Plummer and an imaginary Fitzmeyer. Our 1906 scholar defines "eklipontos" in English as "fail" in its 1906 dual meaning of "fail / eclipse" without ever making this distinction clear for his generation in his book. They already understand the duality of the word. A second and a third scholar in 1930, or 1983, referring back to what was written in 1906, continues to use the word "fail" from the earlier expert, but the more modern readers interpret "fail", not as eclipse, but in the more general sense of "stop". The usage of "fail" has changed in the popular culture of 1930 or 1983 from what it originally was in 1611 or 1893 or 1906, but the original Bible text is a product of earlier ages. So by using the same word over 100 years later, while its most popular definition has changed, we innocently create confusion in the mind of the modern generation. The word still does mean "eclipse" (its still in the OED), but the eclipse meaning has been lost on the newer readers. We have here the right word (eclipse), the right definition (fail), but a mistaken understanding by later generations. "Fail" now becomes a vague word that does not mean eclipse. If we return to the original usage of "fail", if we return to the original usage of "eklipontos", this trail of vagueness can be dispelled and the confusion cut through.

Thayer's Lexicon, which was written in 1890, shows how "fail" was intended in ancient Greek to be synonymous with "eclipse". Whether they realize it or not, according to Thayer, when modern translators use "fail", it is not a vague word at all and they are not eliminating the concept of an eclipse from Luke 23:45, rather they are actually using the original Greek definition for eclipse--"to fail". Thayer, 1890:

> 1. to leave out, omit, pass by .... 2. to fail, to leave off, cease, stop .... often in classical Greek, from Thucidydes down, it [ek-leipo] is used of the failing or ECLIPSE of the sun and the moon. .... [as in Luke 23:45:] .... the sun having failed.[83] (emphasis mine)

Two observations on Thayer's definition: First, notice "ekleipo" has two basic meanings:

1. to pass by, leave out, or leave behind, and,

2. to fail, fall short, or stop functioning.

It can indeed, as Fitzmeyer noted, mean, "fail". BUT, and this is key, when "ekleipo" is used in a sentence with the Sun or Moon, it always means failure of the Sun's disk, the source of light. The options for translators are not, either fail or eclipse, but, if "sun" is in the sentence, "ekleipo" must mean eclipse in English. However, if sunlight, or light were also used in the sentence, then a vague meaning

[83] Thayer, J.H., Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament, p 197.

is appropriate for what caused the light to stop illuminating things. The Greek for Sun is "helios", the word for light in the sky, or ray, is "hele".[84] "Helios" the disk, is the source of "hele", the rays. When helios fails, the hele stop propagating from it and we have darkness.

The claim that "ekleipo" can mean a failing of sunlight for any reason, probably comes from Westcott and Hort, two Cambridge scholars who wrote a landmark book on the original New Testament text in 1881.[85] They claimed that "ekleipo" was used in very many casual ways by Greek-Jewish scholars in an Old Testament that was translated from Hebrew into Greek in 280 B.C., called "The Septuagint". Therefore, Luke must have picked up on this fast and loose manner of using "ekleipo" with the Sun and imitated it in his Gospel passage on the Eclipse. But they offered none of those many examples for their readers to examine and they forgot that Luke was not a Greek-Jew, he was a Greek Gentile who referred to the Septuagint out of ignorance, usually copying phrases verbatim from that book into his Gospel.

Westcott and Hort are wrong.

In a few pages, we are going to review exactly how Luke used the Greek words of the Septuagint Old Testament and we are going to find that in the case of Luke 23:45 he did the exact opposite of what Westcott and Hort suggest: he was precise. There are scriptures in the Old Testament that can be viewed as prophecies of the darkness at the Crucifixion and of Jesus' sacrifice. Luke knew of them and referenced one of them in the Book of Acts. He should have also copied this same verse into Luke 23:45, but he did not. The older Hebrew words in this verse are already vague; they do in fact just mean "darkness". It was the ancient Hebrew idiom for eclipse. BUT, Luke did not mimic how eclipses were vaguely described in the prophecies when he wrote Luke 23:45. Instead, he uses "ekleipo" as a more precise word than the Greek of the Septuagint. There is even a passage in the book of Isaiah in the Old Testament, which has the same basic usage of "skotos" and "ekleipo" that we find in Luke Chapter 23. What we will see is an intelligent, deliberate, usage of Greek-Jewish terms, not a fast and loose borrowing of imprecise words.

Thayer's definition stands and "the sun's light failed" truly was the equivalent of "the sun was eclipsed", both in 1890 English and when Luke wrote. Fitzmeyer, however, makes a point of stating he cannot translate "eklipontos" as eclipse, rather he opts for a more vague rendering, "the sunlight had failed".[86] He thinks he is avoiding the issue of an eclipse, but as I said, he is not. He has merely diverted his readers into thinking he has and clouded the issue for others who follow. The Greek Jews may or may not have bandied about "ekleipo" any which way they wanted when they wrote the Septuagint, but "fail" means "eclipse" to the Greeks and to Luke, and we cannot escape it.

[84] See Strong's Concordance, New Testament Greek Dictionary, p 111, number 2246.
[85] Westcott, B., and Hort, F Introduction to the New Testament in the Original Greek, Appendix, p 71
[86] Fitzmeyer, J , op cit , p. 1517

It appears the equivalence of these two meanings has completely escaped Fitzmeyer as much as Plummer, or other translators. Westcott's original argument may never have been analyzed and disproved. But other highly respected translators, such as Raymond Brown, Morgan, James Moffat and J.B. Phillips, were not affected by Westcott's argument, they did recognize that "fail" and "eclipse" are equivalent translations of "eklipontos" and they realized the more precise English word of "eclipse" more properly conveyed Luke's intent.[87]

Second, notice Thayer says "ekleipo" was used "often in classical Greek". To translate "eklipontos" as "eclipse", was not unusual in classical Greek, according to Thayer. It was a normal mode of expression for over 500 years. Regardless of how Westcott pretends the word was misused in the Septuagint, and he never proves it, the rest of the Greek world was consistent. Fitzmeyer, writing nearly 100 years after Thayer, disagrees, he says it was unusual to do so. Has the last hundred years dulled the reality of how ancient Greek words were used? Thayer was quoting an earlier statement written in 1872 by Constantin Tischendorff, from Tischendorf's Greek New Testament, Editio Octavio Critica Major. Which opinion is based upon facts we can examine, Thayer / Tischendorff or Fitzmeyer / Westcott? I will answer it for you.

When one observes an eclipse, the light normally coming from the Sun or Moon, fails at the source. We see no rays, there is no spreading illumination of the surrounding sky as is usual; the luminary is extinguished. Contrast this with darkness due to a rain storm or dust storm. This darkness is a massive condition of the atmosphere or sky. You might not be able to see your hand in front of your face under such circumstances. There is no issue of light failing at a source, because everything has been obscured in the darkness that has fallen, even the Sun! But "eklipontos" does not refer to scattered shadows. It refers to a blockage at the source. When "fail" is understood in this way, there is no vagary. The word "fail" fits harmoniously into this definition of eclipse. It is only when men like Plummer or Fitzmeyer miscast the word "fail", divorce it from "eclipse" and leave us to wonder in a vacuum what it might possibly mean, that there is confusion.

F3. How Did the Greeks Use the Word Eklipontos 2,000 Years Ago When Luke was Writing? And How Did Luke Use the Greek Language? By Copying the Septuagint? Getting the Facts

The Greeks, Eklipontos and Luke

One Luke commentator, Fred Danker, said that Luke used the language of ancient Greek historians, when he reported the Crucifixion eclipse; he did not copy eclipse wordings from the Septuagint for his description in Chapter 23.[88] Joseph Fitzmeyer wrote that Luke was modeling his Gospel after the style of the "Greco-Roman literary tradition".[89] Greek historians had been reporting great eclipses, using the word "eklipontos" or some variant, for al least 400 years before Luke. All this

[87] Ibid
[88] Danker, F , loc. cit.
[89] Fitzmeyer, J , op. cit., vol I, p. 58

suggests Luke was using a standard way of expression that was known among Greek literists for centuries. Modern scholars have recognized this fact. Colin Humphreys wrote: "all the major manuscripts of Luke's Gospel [i.e. oldest] ... contain what appears to be the standard technical description of a solar eclipse"[90] (emphasis added). When we look for ourselves at how ancient Greek historians used "ekleipo" before and after Luke, we remove even more doubt over what Luke meant in the "eclipse" verse.

They, like Luke, were claiming to report historical facts of earlier generations. Their manner of writing was more like a modern newspaper reporter, than anything else. A simple cataloging of one fact after another, peppered with speeches, is how they crafted their history. None of them intended their words to be viewed as poetry or allegory. They, with Luke, are all pretty much unanimous in their descriptions. There is no flowery language, no abstract references to "creeping darkness", or unknown causes, when they write "ekleipo".[91]

The ancient Greeks write expressions such as, "when the Sun was eclipsed", or "on the eve of battle, there was an eclipse of the Moon."

Taking Thayer's advice, I have accumulated a list of some 10 examples of "ekleipo's" usage in ancient Greek histories and religious tracts, starting with Thucydides. Their usage of the word is almost idiomatic. Luke does the same. The Greek quotes I collected were translated into English by eight different translators. There was no confusion on the part of any of these men when they translated "ekleipo" into English; they all agree it must be rendered as "eclipse". So why is there confusion over the correct English word when others translate "ekleipo" in Luke 23? Is Luke's usage of "eclipse" is vague, while the others' is precise? Did someone meddle with Luke's original words? We already saw that this is not the case. We are asked to believe that somehow Luke intends something far different than the other Greek writers, even though he uses the same exact words. Such reasoning about what Luke meant, but did not write, would not stand up in a court of law.

My list of ancient Greek historians and religious writers starts with Herodotus and includes Thucydides (471-404 B.C.), Diogenes Laertes, Polybius (208-126 B.C.) Diodorus Siculus (80-20 B.C.) and Plutarch (45-120 A.D). All of these men are major contributors to the cavalcade of Greek culture, solid examples of the standard usage of Greek in their respective ages. Note that Plutarch wrote about 100 A.D., which was after Luke wrote. So the examples fix the Greek language before and immediately after Luke wrote; any changes in usage ought to be apparent in this collection. Decide if you see any vagary, or alternate meanings in these simple statements compared with Luke. I do not.

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[90] Humphreys, C J , and Waddington, W G , "Astronomy and the Date of the Crucifixion", p 179, in Vardaman, J , and Yamamuchi, E , Chronos, Kairos, Christo

[91] Although some today claim that Luke's Gospel is poetry of the spirit, poor history that cannot be taken literally, I see that characterization as a sweeping generality that ignores Luke's repeated attention to historical detail Such arguments are as poetic to me as their claims for Luke. See Robert Morghenthaler's description of Luke as an "artist" with the gift of "divine poetry" in Luke the Historian in Recent Study, by C K Barrett, pps. 36-40, especially pages 39-40

Ancient Greek Usage of "Ekleipo" and "Eclipse"

Author	English Translation	Greek Word
Thucydides (420 B.C.)	when .... [the Athenians] were about to make their departure, the moon, which happened to be at the full, was eclipsed.[92]	ekleipei[93]
	During the same summer at the beginning of a lunar month ... the sun was eclipsed after midday ...[94]	exelipe[95]
Polybius (150 B.C.)	but on an eclipse of the moon taking place he was struck with superstitious terror[96]	ekleipontise[97]
Diodorus Siculus (30 B.C.)	On the next day there occurred such an eclipse of the sun that utter darkness set in and the stars were seen everywhere[98]	ekleiphin[99]
Plutarch (100 A.D.)	for the Moon suffers eclipse only when she is full[100]	ekleipei[101]
	.... some ... give the name Typhon to the Earth's shadow, into which they believe the moon slips when it suffers eclipse.[102]	ekleipein[103]
	[speaking of the Moon] .... by .... crippling .... [Egyptians] refer to its eclipse.[104]	ekleiphin[105]
	.... but when the ships were already manned, ... it chanced that the sun was eclipsed and darkness came on, and all were thoroughly frightened[106]	eklipein[107] skotos
	But just as everything was prepared ... there came an eclipse of the moon by night[108]	exelipen[109]
Diogenes Laertius	[Thales] seems to have been .... the first to predict eclipses of the sun ...[110]	ekleipheis[111]

[92] Thucydides, History of the Peloponnesian War iv, p 101
[93] Ibid, p. 100.
[94] Thucydides, History of the Peloponnesian War I , pps. 309, 311
[95] Ibid, p 310
[96] Polybius The Histories, vol iv, p. 45
[97] Ibid, p. 44.
[98] Diodorus Siculus, The Library of History, X, p 155, 157
[99] Ibid, p p 154.
[100] Plutarch, Moralia, vol v, p 107
[101] Ibid, p. 106
[102] Plutarch Moralia, vol. v., p 109
[103] Ibid, p 108.
[104] Plutarch Moralia, vol v , p. 135
[105] Ibid, p 134
[106] Plutarch, Lives III, p. 101.
[107] Ibid, p. 100.
[108] Plutarch, Lives III, p 289
[109] Ibid, p 288

(225 A.D. ?)		

Now compare all this with Luke 23:45:

44 ... and darkness covered the whole land till three o'clock, 45 owing to an eclipse of the sun;...

No mention in any of these examples of the sun's rays being weakened; no appeal to poetry, just a subject and a verb. All these sentences are as unambiguous as the old report, "Man bites dog." All use "ekleipo" or some variation of it in a very direct fashion. Luke truly is using the standard language of his culture for describing a solar eclipse.

There is, however, a very different example in the Bible of the Sun becoming darkened due to an atmospheric condition that is very similar to a dust storm. What Greek word is used there? "Ekleipo"? It is important to note, because in this instance the writer very clearly stipulates the cause as being smoke in the atmosphere and the Greek word used to describe this darkening is not "ekleipo" at all, but rather "skotizo". Notice Revelation chapter 9, verse 2:

... and smoke arose out of the pit like the smoke of a great furnace. So the sun and the air were darkened [skotos] because of the smoke of the pit.
(New King James version)

When we compare Rev. 9:2 with Luke 23:45 and all the other Greek examples, we see the Bible does indeed speak of darkening of the Sun, but it does not use "ekleipo" to do so. The Bible writers definitely differentiate between general darkness and eclipses. Why then do the translators and commentators attempt to force Luke 23 to refer to some vague darkness, when we have a clear example of such and the word used under those circumstances is "skotizo"?

Where is there any difference between Luke's words and the Greek historians'? Why then speculate and insert unknown, almost mystical causes for the darkness into his sentence when none are called for? Luke's usage is simply the standard Greek grammar of his age. Any more complex explanation must be justified by the written words. The translators give us none. They appeal to the "what if" or "could be" frailties of vacuous human reasoning. That is not good enough to pin a murder on an innocent man, no matter how accomplished the lawyer. We are obliged to accept the simpler explanation: Luke meant what he wrote--"eclipse".

Luke may have been Greek, or a Gentile of other nationality.[112] A trained doctor, he was required by his teachers to read Hippocrates, the great Greek physician and he certainly was proficient in the language and culture of Greece. Since he opens his

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[110] Diogenes Laertius, I, p. 25.

[111] Ibid, p. 24.

[112] See Fitzmeyer, op cit., vol i, pps 41-47 and his rather thorough discussion of all the possibilities, as well as his rather substantial bibliography. Finnegan, Handbook of Biblical Chronology, p 37, offers evidence that Luke was probably a Syrian from Antioch.

Gospel with a formal Greek dedication to a patron, he was familiar with the Greek literary custom of opening a history or philosophy book according to this method. Presumably he read more than one book in his life and he therefore read several Greek works which opened in this way. If Luke could borrow from the Septuagint, he was certainly trained in the language usage of his own culture and his own age. The words we see at the opening of Luke's Gospel match the culture and usage of his age. The words we see in Luke 23 match the culture and usage of his age. This is a most unlikely coincidence for a "fast and loose" writer. Again I ask, where is there any room for an exceptional interpretation of the standard Greek words of Luke 23:45? There isn't. Luke's statement is as direct and clear as those made by half a dozen Greek historians and writers.

Should we therefore conclude that "ekleipo" can only sometimes mean "eclipse" and that Luke is speaking of obscure lighting conditions? It may be true in other writings, but not in this case. The following point is key:

Whenever the three words, Sun, Moon and ekleipo appear in one sentence in a simple subject and verb format, a literal eclipse of the Sun or Moon is always meant. This is true for at least 500 years of Greek literature. There is nothing in Luke's words to suggest anything else. Let the others prove their case from Luke.

There is, however, solid evidence that Luke deliberately wrote the Eclipse text contrary to the way the Jewish prophets described eclipses.

The Hebrew Septuagint, "Darkness" and the Discrepancy Between Luke 23:45 and Acts 2:20.

Luke truly conformed to the standard Greek way of reporting eclipses in his Gospel, but his Greek actually contradicted the ancient Hebrew language for eclipses. This peculiar circumstance goes a long way to proving Luke meant "eclipse". Let me explain.

Careful study by scholars of Luke's composition style and his use of Greek over the past 80 years has uncovered several key insights into his method of compiling his material. Luke's Greek Gospel demonstrates the borrowing of words and phrases from both Hebrew and Aramaic, the original language of Jesus, into the Greek he wrote.[113]

Of all the New Testament writers, Luke most often includes in his books phrases from the Septuagint, a Jewish-Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible into Greek, written around 280 B.C. at Alexandria, Egypt.

Luke was first and foremost trained as a physician in the classical Greek educational system. He may have lived in a college town. With the exception of the Apostle Paul, he was the most Greek cultured of all the New Testament writers. The

[113] This has become a standard field of inquiry, since Creed (1930) discussed it. Fitzmeyer, writing in 1979, does not feel the evidence for Aramaic is as prominent in Luke as Creed claimed 49 years earlier, but his later explanations do not satisfy me personally They raise issues of doubt without solving them

reason he alone references the Septuagint is that it was a showcase product of Jewish religion to the Greek world in Alexandria. Luke, a Gentile, needed such a door into the sacred writings of the Jews. Alexandria was Luke's cultural capitol, Jerusalem was his religious center. The Septuagint lied at the intersection of both worlds. One might also say Luke's reliance upon it shows his bent towards scholarship.

Luke's writing reflects his Greek cultural persuasion. The introduction to his Gospel is a standard device in classical Greek histories--a dedication to a patron followed by an explanation of his purpose in writing.[114] Only Luke, among the four Gospel writers, uses this device. It demonstrates his orthodox compliance with the Greek way of writing history. His Gospel is written by a Greek-Gentile for Greek-Gentiles who are converting to Christianity.[115]

Beginning in the 1890's scholars began studying Luke's vocabulary for insights into who he was and how he wrote. Men such as Martin Creed (1930), who also was at Cambridge, have determined in the decades after Westcott and Hort, that Luke's written Greek is not pure classical Greek. Neither does Luke simply copy out whole passages from the Septuagint. Every instance of Luke's borrowing or imitation has been counted, documented, categorized and analyzed in exact detail and compared against his overall writing.[116] Westcott and Hort's 1881 blanket statement that Luke could have freely sampled from the Septuagint and used any loose Jewish example of "ekleipo" for his Eclipse verse, is pure speculation, even fiction. It no longer holds when we have the exact number counts for which Greek words are, or are not, in Luke's Gospel.

What kinds of Septuagint-borrowings do men like Creed, and even Fitzmeyer, find in Luke? Luke writes the Greek equivalent of short Hebrew expressions, idioms, grammatical constructs and individual words.[117] Luke's language control is based in his Greek education. He writes with a "Greek" mind and his writing is "good Greek".[118] He wished to provide his Gentile audience a Greek literary document that was flavored with the subtleties of the Jewish world of Jesus and the Old Testament.

As a Greek-Gentile, Luke relied upon the Greek-Hebrew Septuagint as his window into the Hebrew world of the Apostles and his Savior. He leaned upon the text as a reference or aid the way modern writers will use a dictionary or thesaurus.

Luke was sufficiently educated that he could correctly write of eclipses in Greek and also refer to darkness of the Sun in the Greek-Hebrew of the Jewish prophets as he saw the need to do so. Let me explain.

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[114] See the introduction to Plutarch's Moralia, pps 7,6, where the Greek poet dedicates his work to Clea. Other examples can be given

[115] Fitzmeyer, J., op. cit., vol I, pps. 57-59, especially p. 59

[116] Ibid, pps 109-124, plus bibliography on pps 125-127.

[117] Ibid, especially pps 114-116

[118] Ibid, p. 113.

Luke references eclipses twice in the two New Testament books he wrote--his Gospel and the book of Acts, which is the history of what happened to the Church after Jesus died. In both places he refers to the Eclipse at Jesus' crucifixion, but he uses totally different language, in each case. in his Gospel he uses the standard Greek word of his day; in Acts he quotes and imitates the Hebrew-Greek of the prophet Joel, taken directly from the Septuagint. He uses the two distinct words that are so familiar to us --"eklipien / eclipse" in Luke 23 and "skotizo / darkness" in Acts 2:20. Does this use of "darkness" prove "skotizo" is the correct word for Luke 23, after all? When you reflect a little, it demonstrates the exact opposite.

"Skotizo", as used in Acts 2:20 is an exact Greek translation of the Hebrew phrase the Israelites used to describe an eclipse. It is a "Hebrewism". Joel wrote in his prophecy, "the sun shall be turned into darkness", not, "the sun will be eclipsed". If some Greek such as Thucydides had written the words, they most likely would have been, "and the Sun shall be "ekleipo". Joel's original Hebrew phrase is properly translated into "skotos" when we move from the Hebrew Old Testament to the Greek Septuagint[119] and this is exactly what Luke copies into Acts 2:20 when he in turn quotes Joel[120]. Luke is being strictly orthodox with the original words of the Hebrew prophets. He is <u>not</u> playing fast and loose with Greek words, as Westcott and Hort would have us believe.

Both Fitzmeyer[121] and Creed[122] suggest it was virtual habit for Luke to utilize these Hebrew-Greek phrases in his own work. Therefore, since Luke refers to the Eclipse twice, we might expect him to quote the Hebrew phrasing of Joel twice and use the Hebrew-Greek expression "skotos" for eclipse twice, as a matter of preference and consistency. But Luke does not do this.

Luke is meticulously tailoring his language to the circumstances he is reporting. Greek for Gentiles, Hebrew-Greek for Jewish scripture. He deliberately uses "eklipontos", the standard word for "eclipse" in his Gospel, because it is the correct Greek idiom. He does this at the expense of breaking with his normal procedure of copying Hebrew-Greek phrases directly from the Septuagint into his history. Luke is displaying control, clear choice and self-mastery here. He needed to reverse himself in order to put "eklipontos" into Chapter 23, and so he did. In Acts 2:20, he was better off to follow his usual method of directly copying the Septuagint, and so he did. <u>It ought to be apparent that he deliberately made this change of language in order to accurately report in classical Greek that the Moon blocked the Sun for three hours</u>.

There was no other reason to do this.

There is another subtle point in all this. The commentators fail to realize that "skotizo", which is wrongly applied to Luke 23, can indeed be correctly used to

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[119] Brenton, L., The Septuagint with Apocrypha, p 1083, Joel 2:31 The Greek word is "skotos".

[120] See The Acts of the Apostles, Greek Text with Introduction and Commentary, by F.F. Bruce, pps. 120-121 The entire phrase of Joel in the Septuagint has been copied verbatim by Luke

[121] Fitzmeyer, op cit., vol. I, p 116

[122] Creed, op cit., p lxxvii

describe an eclipse, when we are using the proven Hebrew expression "the Sun will be turned into darkness".

In short, both meanings of "eklipontos" (eclipse or fail) and even "skotizo" can all be used to describe a literal eclipse of the Sun in the Greek and Hebrew-Greek of 2,000 years ago, when we stick with the right idiom of the right language. No matter what word we choose, no matter which definition we pick, if we put the right word into the right passage of Luke, the various Greek and Hebrew usages will still lead us back to a supernatural Eclipse of the Sun in Luke 23:45. We simply have to be honest with the language and not misapply the words.

G. You Can't Get the Big Picture From One Word: The Meaning For Eklipontos Has to Come From What Luke Was Saying in Both Verse 44 and Verse 45

Many discussions of verse 45 ignore its relationship to what is said in verse 44 and even the whole passage that concludes Luke 23. By divorcing verse 45 from the information in verse 44, we lose Luke's purpose in writing the sentence and therefore the full meaning of what he was saying can be reinvented. The problem is, we no longer understand what we have under our noses. When we split the whole sentence into pieces and then try to pin down the meaning of one word in a vacuum, apart from the rest of the other words, we can easily lose our objectivity. Luke 23:45 means any kind of darkness you want it to, because no one is bothering with the rest of the sentence.

This is an example of problems encountered in the study of semantics. An old chestnut applies here. Tell me what the following sentence means: "Time flies like an arrow, but fruit flies like a banana." Now tell me what "flies" means in the first part of the sentence. You can't because the meaning comes from how you interpret all 11 words as a whole. The same principle applies with Luke 23:44 and 45. Verse 45 is actually the second half of a complete thought it breaks in two. To rightly understand the proper meaning of "eklipontos" in verse 45, we have to place it back into the full context of verses 44 and 45. Verse 45 gives the cause of the darkness that is first mentioned in verse 44. When we appreciate this fact, some of the translations immediately become silly.

They say things like, "And there was darkness upon the whole land because the sun was dark". Of course there was. Have we learned the reason why? No. This is little better than saying, "And there was darkness upon the whole land because it was dark." Contrast this meaningless sentence with, "And there was darkness upon the whole land because of an eclipse of the sun", or "And there was darkness upon the whole land because of a Khasmin Sand storm." Now you are being told something. The translators and commentators don't worry about creating a silly sentence, as long as they get around the idea of an impossible eclipse. Phooey. An empty sentence cannot be what Luke actually wrote to hungry Christians. Of the four Gospel writers, Luke was the one who gave the extra details.[123] The translators make this sentence the least informative; in fact, in its revised state, it is insulting to the intelligence.

[123] See Luke Chapter 1, verses 1-3 in any Bible

Another point to consider: When we look at the whole statement in verses 44 and 45, the tearing in half of the veil that hid the Holy of Holies in the Jerusalem Temple from human scrutiny was described in verse 45 along with the darkness. No human hands could have performed such a tearing. It was a top to bottom tearing of a richly embroidered curtain, perhaps 20 feet high that was said to symbolize the physical universe. This rending should be viewed as a miraculous sign of the highest order to the nation of Judah. No sign could be more serious or important: God's inner sanctum beyond the physical realm was exposed by this act. To a reader of Luke's Gospel, who but God Himself could have permitted this to occur? So we are left with the idea that a meaningless darkness, or a coincidental Sand storm is the equal of a violation of the throne room of God on Earth. If this is true, Luke then was writing like a schizophrenic, mixing the profane and the sacred in one thought. No. The sense of the single sentence is that the cosmos stood still, the world went dark AND the throne of God Himself that was beyond the physical universe became directly available to all men for the first time in history, through the death of His precious Son. The translators would have to belittle this second impossible sign in order to make it the equal of the first. That they could not do.

A more courageous remark was made in The Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, a world-class standard reference.

> Of the darkness of the sun at the crucifixion ... this is a miraculous eclipse, A SIGN .... The reference is to an eclipse of the sun, not just darkness of the atmosphere, as rightly seen by Luke. .... That this was astronomically impossible at the time of Passover IS NO ARGUMENT TO THE CONTRARY.[124] (emphasis mine)

Thank you very much, gentlemen. By now, the answer to the question of how eklipontos should be translated today is apparent. The vague meaning is not vague, the true meaning is the common usage of its time, Luke deliberately chose to use "eclipse" over an alternate Hebrew phrasing, the full sentence speaks of a miraculous event. When viewed through these four factors, any less meaning is simply that: inferior.

H. How the Other Greek Word, "Skotizo", Got to Be Substituted for "Eclipse".

How did "skotizo" find its way into third and fourth century copies of Luke 23:45, when the earlier ones said "eklipontos"?

The problem has to do with the influence of one man who lived over one hundred and fifty years after Christ died and what HE wanted the whole Christian world to think happened at the Crucifixion. The theologian was Origen of Alexandria, Egypt.

[124] Kittel, G , The Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, vol vii, p 439, and note 137 for the second half of the quotation starting, "The reference ."

I will have much, much more to say about Origen in these pages. His many secret ties to astrology, Egyptian Sun religion and Gnosticism will be uncovered in substantial detail in Chapters 2, 4 and Appendix 4. He will prove to be the mystery man of Luke 23-bashing for some very esoteric reasons.

But for now, we are going to take a brief historical excursion. When this side trip is finished we will have the complete answer to the question of why "skotizos" appears in later inferior manuscripts of Luke's Gospel and why Bibles today sometimes have vague wordings for Luke 23:45. Only a very brief statement of the facts is necessary to launch this subject.

If we examine the writings of Origen, critics of the Church and others called Church fathers who lived in the first centuries after Christ, we find out that some of them ridiculed Luke, some tried to change what Luke wrote in the earliest manuscripts, while others at the same time defended the eclipse wording as the original, intended and true meaning.[125] This much is apparent to all modern researchers, but no one seems to take Origen's religious slant into account when they accept his objections against the eclipse. Origen scholars address limited aspects of his un-orthodoxy in texts totally separate from Luke commentaries, but the Eclipse commentators never apply this added information to the subject of Luke 23:45. When they discuss Origen's objections to Luke, they glorify him as a man of reason and never bother to look behind the facade. The eclipse verse was actually a point of contention between very different systems of belief in 220 A.D.

Origen and other independent religious teachers founded schools, cultivated disciples, founded monasteries, wrote books and yes, produced their own Bibles with their own words, in order to legitimize and perpetuate their unorthodox doctrines.[126] Churchmen hundreds of years after Jesus realized the Eclipse verse was important enough to contend over and to modify. They were not battling over a tradition of a dust storm or a rainstorm. Most never even attempted to give some alternate explanation; they just wanted to discredit a miraculous eclipse. They knew the verse legitimized the Christian God. It still does.

When Raymond Brown explains why translators formerly preferred the incorrect definition of "the sun having failed" over "the sun was eclipsed", he also concedes some very interesting facts of history:

> Because of the influence of Origen, ... older commentators favored the second reading [i.e. "the sun having failed"] ; but with the advent of [the German textual scholar] Tischendorf in the last century and a sharper sense of textual criticism the first reading ["the sun having been eclipsed'] has come into general favor.[127] (notes and emphasis added)

[125] Westcott, B , and Hort , F , Introduction to the New Testament in the Original Greek, p 70 of Appendix, says: "some Christians believed there was a special miracle of an eclipse "

[126] Aland, K., and Aland, B., The Text of the New Testament, p 66

[127] Ibid See also note 15 on the same page

Take a moment to appreciate the magnitude of Brown's admission. He says that Origen's ideas as a theologian in the third century A.D. largely overwhelmed commentators sixteen hundred years later in spite of the fact the literal language of the verse contradicted Origen. Origen therefore appears to have great credibility with modern scholars yet the facts are, he was highly inconsistent when he wrote about the Crucifixion eclipse. Consider the following.

In one tract he explains away the eclipse as some other darkness; in a commentary he denies that Luke even wrote about the Sun in the verse.[128] Most modern commentators dismiss this inconsistency as irrelevant to disproving the Eclipse; they do not attempt to explain it. But as I will show, there is a deeper, "rational" reason why Origen holds both opinions, one that is rooted in astrology and mysticism.

Like Raymond Brown, Joseph Fitzmeyer admits the real precedent for modern hesitancy is Origen:. "the variant reading mentioned above [eskotisthe], [was] *preferred by Origen*."[129] (emphasis added.) Westcott and Hort say similar things.[130]

Fitzmeyer plainly states the difficulty of having a full moon Passover eclipse led to variant, that is, CHANGED wording in the Greek manuscripts as promoted by Origen. I will next show he was a neo-Platonist and an advocate of the immortal Sun. This added insight is critical to understanding Origen's motives.

Brown, Fitzmeyer, and Plummer[131] suggest Origen's opinion that the eclipse could not have happened was approved by scribes in contrast to two hundred years of early Christian witness. It sounds as if the scribes were impartial judges who finally realized, prompted by Origen, that Luke had to be wrong so they very wisely changed the verse. This explanation is probably a bit too kind or flat out wrong. As I mentioned above, it is more likely that Origen's schools in Alexandria and Syria produced their own manuscripts as part of his doctrinal campaign to "clarify" the scriptures in the light of Neo-Platonism. Sympathetic followers of Origen dutifully generated more of these manuscripts in the ensuing decades throughout Syria and Alexandria. They survive to this day.

It is also important to realize the general Christian population did NOT universally receive Origen's thinking in his own time. In his generation he was largely rejected as a heretic and a deviant, but his schools continued for decades and even centuries after him. In the modern age Bible commentators of the 1800's, swept off base by the Enlightenment, evolution's claims and the quest to justify materialism over religion, were misdirected enough to doubt the Eclipse wording and seek weaker, more reasonable, more natural explanations than "God did it". They turned to Origen as a Churchman who could save them... Even after a pointed effort by

[128] Westcott, B., and Hort , F , op. cit p 70 of Appendix
[129] Fitzmeyer, J , op cit , pps 1517-1518
[130] Westcott, B , and Hort, F , op. cit , pps 69-71 of Appendix Their account of Origen's rejection is the most substantive I have found thus far
[131] Plummer, A , loc cit

Tischendorf[132] and a raising of scholarly standards by his followers, the Luke commentators only grudgingly admitted that the correct Greek really is "eclipse".[133] Origen's doubts still carried weight because it made more sense to these men. With him as their guide they turned to other, more feeble explanations--the "sun failed" for some unknown reason, and as we will see in the next Section, Luke's supposed mental incompetence. Excuse making is not objective scholarship. It is fixing the data to match one's prejudices.

Our modern commentators became enmeshed in a web of contradictory definitions and a cocoon of uncertainly of their own making, largely because they trusted in the reasonableness Origen's ancient and defunct, criticism. To this day this is where the matter stands. After all, Origen is still admired as a towering intellect and an authority on Church doctrine, even after Tischendorf.

A Sampler of the Secret Origen

Because of his education and development in Alexandria, Egypt, which was a rich mixture of Greek, Roman, Egyptian and Christian cultures, Origen fell heir to a rich tradition of deliberately injecting Egyptian religious concepts into Biblical doctrine. This approach began with the Jew Philo in the first few years of the first century A.D. (Philo was born 30 B.C. and died about 50 A.D.) and continued with the Catechism schools Origen led in Alexandria and Syria. (Much more of this in Chapter 4.) These schools were institutions set up to expound on Christianity in ways Christ and the Apostles flatly rejected, but teach they did. This covert approach to Christianity had existed almost from the beginning, but it attempted to become public orthodoxy and flourish under Clement of Alexandria and his disciple Origen. All three men were followers of the ideas of Plato, the Greek philosopher who lived 500 B.C. One author calls Origen "the first neo-Platonist" in Western culture. Origen also fervently embraced what he thought was Christianity. In Origen's view, to oversimplify somewhat, Plato was God's true Prophet and Jesus Christ was the living fulfillment of everything Plato wrote. Clement's works especially parade Plato as the first Christian theologian. God's true Apostles, especially Paul, repeatedly condemned the vanity and presumptuousness of Greek philosophers as destructive to Christian development (see Romans 1:18 - 30), but this basic fact never seems to have affected Origen when he expounded the Bible as if it were based upon Plato.

It is not.

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[132] "eklipontos" was apparently first cited as the correct text in the various editions of Tischendorf's Greek New Testament, which appeared between 1845 and 1872. Editio Octavia Critica Major was produced in Leipzig between 1869 and 1872; volume vi, p. 173 gives this reference. Westcott and Holt amplified on the usage of "eklipontos" in their 1881 work, Introduction to The New Testament in the Original Greek.

[133] For some background on the labors of Constantin Tischendorf (1815-1875) in discovering, reading, deciphering, and translating early Greek New Testament manuscripts, see Aland and Aland, The Text of the New Testament, pps. 11-14, and their references. Also Metzger, The Text of the New Testament, pps. 42-44, 54-55, 126-127. Metzger gives the human history of the discovery and accumulation of the family of New Testament documents. Interesting reading.

Origen's Anti-Eclipse Agenda

Exactly why did Origen challenge the supernatural eclipse as an impossible act for a supernatural God and why did he substitute the word "skotizo" for "eklipontos" when he wrote about the Eclipse?[134] There is a[135] very specific theological reason WHY a neo-Platonist such as Origen would need to discredit a supernatural eclipse of the Sun at the death of Christ. Let me quickly summarize his motives here.

Plato absorbed the Egyptian idea that the Sun was the physical manifestation of an invisible First Cause, a Spirit Being called "Iao", which literally lived in the spirit realm beyond the orb of the Sun's furnace. They termed it the Sun behind the Sun; Iao was imperishable.

Now relate this "Sun of the Sun", or "First Cause", to the Crucifixion eclipse. To have such an Egyptian / Platonic First Cause miraculously eclipse itself would have destroyed all of his Pagan theology, because his First Cause could not be enfeebled and eclipses weaken or negate the powers of the stars. So guess which concept Origen rejected? Christian God or Pagan "Sun of Suns"? A Supreme Being that works a miracle of immense scale in the natural world to debunk the powers of Pagan religions while His Son is dying on the Cross, is the main thrust of my present book. So we are at direct loggerheads with "Egyptian / Platonic" Origen. History calls him a Christian theologian; I do not.

And yet Origen was alone in his age in several doctrines. He publicly taught things that had been secret Gnostic "improvements" upon Christianity--things like the immortal soul, a two-day Easter, astrology and Sunday worship.

Origen's insistent fusing and melding of Christianity into what he believed to be more fundamental Platonist ideas which in turn were derived from Egypt, forced a response from many of the more traditional, Christian theologians of his day on all the issues he raised.

The Majority View in The Third Century

Ultimately, a later generation of Catholic theologians would accept Origen's ideas in a less offensive format. The Christianity we have today is due more to Origen than it is to Jesus and Paul. But the ancient Church leaders' rejection of Origen also applied to his interpretation of the Crucifixion eclipse. Notice:

> The fact that Origen argued against the eclipse interpretation shows that it had support in his time; and there were famous

[134] Alfred Plummer, the Oxford scholar of the early 20th century, on p 537 of his commentary on Luke (middle of the page) quotes Origen as using the Greek phrase "kai eskotiothn o helios", in his tract, Contra Celsus Approximately three hundred years after his death, Origen was publicly disowned by the established Roman Church, and his books were burned, but his ideas on the trinity, Luke 23:45 (skotizo), the immortal soul, and other topics remained

[135] There is a considerable body of literature on this subject One starting point for both the history of Plato and Origen, and the explanation of Origen's Solar reconstruction of Christ is the book, Jesus Christ, Sun of God, by David Fideler, which is examined in section 3 2

> church writers ([John] Chrysostum, Cyril of Alexandria) who accepted it, even if they posited a special act of God in producing it.[136] (emphasis added)

According to Elgin Moyer, the author of Who Was Who in Church History, John Chrysostum lived 347 to 407, A.D.,[137] dying a martyr's death. Origen died approximately 254, almost 100 years earlier. We do not have here a dispute between contemporaries. If you study Chrysostum's original words, he gives the lengthiest, most spirited defense of the Crucifixion Miracle of all ancient writers. Chrysostum is utterly convicted; totally given over to this event. He is its most ardent supporter. He does not consider it a normal eclipse, but he does acknowledge it as a supernatural blocking of the Sun.[138] He was most likely not alone in his conviction. Thus the crucifixion Eclipse had support for over one hundred and fifty years after Origen. Ancient theologians' conviction of a supernatural eclipse could not be shaken by any manner of counter-arguments for at least one hundred and fifty years before Origen; they believed it after him. That is a very long time for two opposing points of view to be placed on a table for Church leaders to consider and a very long time for them to reject the common sense approach that Origen offered. Clearly, Origen's thesis did not meet with a ready audience in any age except ours. Why were there not more scholars who joined Origen over the century and a half after he first wrote? Could no one in that age think as rationally and as independently as Origen? Or did they all know better?

Origen's provocative writings challenged all this for the first time. We have no documented evidence today that anyone, Christian or Roman, had ever publicly raised this point in two hundred years.

It should come as no surprise that Origen's schools in Syria and Alexandria, during his life, but especially after his death, produced Bibles with the "eskotisthe / skotizo" wording in them. Monks and men such as Pomphilius and Eusebius who led the Church in the time of Emperor Constantine's conversion, (320-340 A.D.) multiplied the number of these Bibles. The whole Eastern part of Christendom between Egypt and Syria became infiltrated with these versions.[139] It was these texts which became the basis for the majority text we have today.

Summary and Last Thoughts

Origen influenced the thinking of how to translate Luke 23:45 in two ways: first, in his own age, some copyists changed "eklipontos" to "skotizo", in order to harmonize with his ideas, and second, translators today weakened the meaning of the correct word "eklipontos", because they agreed with Origen's line of thought. After all, he was a "Church Father" of great intellect and it seems reasonable today

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[136] Brown, R E , op cit., p. 1040, note 21
[137] See p. 89 of that work
[138] Schaff, P , The Nicene and Post Nicene Fathers, First Series, vol x, p. 520
[139] Aland, K , and Aland, B , The Text of the New Testament, p. 66 for all facts in this paragraph

to question the Eclipse, so Origen is creditable. Case closed. Origen's thinking gave them an out for avoiding the unpleasant.

But the best manuscripts say "eklipontos" and the word does mean "eclipse".

A final thought: Be careful of which translation you pick up in a bookstore. The true words have been in eclipse for eighteen hundred years.

1.3 Was Luke Ignorant or Confused When He Wrote Those Words?

The words are real. Luke wrote there was an Eclipse under a full Moon at the Passover. Two hundred years later, the attacks of incompetence and doubts against his words would begin. Clever men who wished to discredit the facts of Jesus' death for their own purposes would give many other reasons over the centuries. I, in turn, will debunk them.

Obviously, most of the scholarly world today does not view the Darkness as a profound intervention by God Almighty that altered human history. In contrast, what we have, starting with Origen, is a dialogue of doubt. In the last Section I focused on disproving the contrived doubt over the correct definitions Luke used. But in modern times, as the reality of "eclipse" became clearer and clearer to scholars, another ploy surfaced. The word was genuine all right, but Luke must have been under some mental lapse or defect when he wrote it. Discredit shifted to the messenger, because the message was unpalatable.

That is a quick summary. The modern rejection of Luke's ability to write rationally is another thread braided into the confusion over the Eclipse. We now have our second controversy, which critics would surely throw at me, if I did not address it--Luke's mental competence when he wrote the word "eclipse". The word may be there all right, and it may even mean "eclipse" in this case, but Luke did not understand what he was writing; he made a colossal blunder. Nothing really happened in history, case closed. Afraid not. The arguments against Luke's competence are frayed, they do not stand the litmus test of logic. They too, need to be exposed.

Framing Our New Challenge

The history of Luke bashing is important to study, as much for what it says about the accusers, as it does to prove they are not up to the task of eliminating the Eclipse with any form of reason. Just as with the doubt over word definitions, It again reveals the failures of these men to achieve objective scholarship.

If we make this examination, we will find a persistent, almost obstinate refusal over some eighty years by modern scholars to take both the author and the verse seriously; that is, the refuse to view Luke as a rational reporter of a literal act of God. Most troubling, this refusal stood firm even while the evidence for Luke's ability to report facts accurately was continually mounting. (Luke scholar I. Howard Marshall wrote in 1987: "the case for ... a reliable account [by Luke] for the rise of the early church is considerably stronger today than it was in 1970." He also wrote, "In matters of detail .... [Luke's] historical stature is high) Of those facts in Luke which can be checked, he consistently proves to be highly accurate, even meticulous. The trend has not reversed itself thus far.

The record shows the specific reasons given against Luke 23:45 have changed over the last eighty years, but the conviction that it must be wrong never has.

It may therefore appear that rational men have always seen through the "preposterous" nature of Luke 23, or that they were simply trying to "prop up" a pitiful blunder, but those are false conceits.

The problem for the critic today is, the same objections that are now being made against the historical correctness of Luke 23:45 were also raised in the 1880's and '90's against other verses Luke wrote. Identical. Yet the complaints against those other verses have been proven to be patently false. So how valid then, can those identical claims be when they are made against Luke 23 today? I will rehearse the complete 200-year-plus history of rejection in Section 1.4, but the reader needs to appreciate up front, before I discuss any of the modern critics' remarks, that the objections against Luke 23 are not new, they are not unique and they have not stood the test of time elsewhere.

Consider briefly one of the most notorious examples of these old attacks.

In Chapter 2 of his Gospel, Luke wrote a story about a Roman census that was held shortly before the birth of Jesus. Critics said this census never could have occurred at the time Luke claimed and they further claimed the fictitious census was a figment of Luke's imagination. Luke suffered from lapses of mind; he had no ability to correctly handle facts that occurred decades before him. All these charges were leveled and rebutted, in the years 1880-1920.[140]

In that period, the scholarly view of Luke's ability was one of overriding contempt.

In 1906, a German professor by the name of Harnack, was said to be of the opinion that Luke was "a singularly bad historian .... incapable of being accurate and, ... untrustworthy".[141] In contrast to this denunciation one supporter of Luke wrote:

> It was not easy to make any headway .... [against] the strong tide of opinion [against Luke] . There was hardly any attempt to show up the fallacy, ignorance, and pretentiousness of the 'critics'.[142]

How much has changed over the decades since 1906? The facts presented here will show the general opinion against Luke was forced to change with the uncovering of new facts from archeology. The opinion against Luke 23:45 never had to change. It softened over time from such bigotry, but only due to the improvement of Luke's reputation in other areas.

A leading champion of Luke's integrity in the census story was the Englishman, Sir William Ramsay, who in 1912 dug up the ground in Turkey that greatly enhanced

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[140] This is not to say that the arguments against Luke have completely disappeared They have not. However, the strong character assassination against him is no longer seriously put forth when discussing real or imagined problems with this other verse That is, except the Crucifixion verse

[141] Ramsay, W M , Luke the Physician, p. 23 Perhaps 1906 was the year the tide turned in favor of Luke's reputation. See Luke the Physician, published in 1908, pps. 3-5, and notes on p 5, for a contemporary account of this change.

[142] Ramsay, W.M., The Bearing of Recent Discoveries On the Trustworthiness of the New Testament, p 227

Luke's reputation as a historian.[143] While Luke had his defenders for decades[144], they were more academic, than diggers in the field. Ramsay, by his fieldwork, almost single-handedly reversed the flow of criticism with striking first-hand evidence from the ancient world.[145] Ramsay found carved monuments which, he argued, proved both the existence and the time of the census. Other scholars challenged Ramsay's interpretation of the evidence and today the question is left as: "We need a little more proof". Regardless, no one today believes Luke was an incompetent blunderer.[146] A.N. White, in a study published by Oxford University, wrote in 1963 that any attempt to reject Luke's history and its details, "must now appear absurd."[147] The evidence we do have on this one point of the census may not as yet be conclusive, but it thoroughly shows that all the practices and customs of Roman census-taking which Luke describes, were in fact practiced in the Empire. Luke spoke from facts, Luke was accurate[148]

Sir William traced the path of Luke's literal journeys in Turkey. He visited and excavated the cities where Luke and Paul spread the Gospel. He reviewed the careers of the political leaders Paul and Luke met. After all this intense effort, he produced numerous scholarly books about modern archeology and the truth of Luke's New Testament record.[149]

What Ramsay unearthed has permanently silenced the critics of 1880. A century later, we can find a drastically different opinion of Luke in the literature, as illustrated in this 1974 quote from W. Gasque:

> **...it may almost be said, *all* scholars who have studied Ramsay's work closely -- have agreed that his major thesis [which was, 'Luke's history is unsurpassed in its trustworthiness'], has been proven."[150] (second emphasis added)**

To lend credibility to his statement, Gasque also points his readers to a substantial list of other scholars who share this opinion.

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[143] Brown, R., The Birth of the Messiah, p. 551.

[144] Gasque, W.W., A History of the Interpretation of the Acts of the Apostles, p. 55

[145] See Gasque, W.W., op. cit., Chapter VII, Luke The Historian Defended, pps. 136-163, especially pps. 136-137

[146] See Section 1.3.3E - "Critiquing Luke's Historical Accuracy", for modern quotes that praise Luke

[147] Gasque, W.W., op. cit., pps 138-139, note 11

[148] I have discerned three basic approaches to Luke Chapter 2 in the literature. Ramsay (The Bearing of Recent Discovery on the Trustworthiness of the New Testament, pps. 238-300) believes his evidence completely proves Luke 2. F.F. Bruce (The New Testament Documents - Are They Reliable? pps. 86-87) says the evidence makes Luke highly rational and his report very plausible. Raymond Brown sees this same evidence as still falling short, although, when I read his words, I did not agree with Brown's conclusion. Nevertheless, Brown nowhere calls Luke's mental state or competence into question on this subject. (See The Birth of the Messiah, pps. 547-556, and especially pps. 395, 549, and his bibliography on pps. 555-556.) Fitzmeyer explains the whole problem away as a theological motif invented by Luke. I found that most improbable, and give his suggestion the least weight of all.

[149] I have counted a good dozen. Some of the titles include: St. Paul he Traveler, The Cities of St. Paul, Luke the Physician, Was Jesus Born at Bethlehem?, The First Christian Century, The Letters to the Seven Churches of Asia, and The Bearing of Recent Discoveries On the Trustworthiness of the New Testament

[150] Gasque, W.W., op. cit., p. 138.

Ramsay's candor and his perception in dealing with false criticism, is as incisive today as it was a century ago. I repeatedly refer to Sir William throughout this section. Notice an important insight he expressed in 1914 concerning the assault upon Luke's census story:

> A number of the German critics, followed by many outside of Germany, used to say without hesitation until recently that [emperor] Augustus never issued any decree ordering a census,
> ....
> The reason for that feeling of triumph .... lay of course in ... their refusal to admit the superhuman element in the government of the world.[151] (emphasis added)

Regardless of modern intent, we are confronted today with the very same negation of God's divinity in the present rejection of Luke 23. I believe this is little more than a remnant of earlier agnostic prejudice. The commentators do not allow God to be supernatural when they discuss Luke 23:45. Rather, either the verse, or Luke's mind, must be flawed.

As Ramsay wrote in 1906,

> The first century [A.D.] could find nothing real .... that was not accompanied by the .... "supernatural". The nineteenth century could find nothing real and true that was.[152]

Ramsay was not able to vindicate Luke's abilities from every attack. Other scholars followed after Sir William in authenticating Luke's abilities as an historian of great detail and accuracy. I will mention later the work of Henry Cadbury and E. M. Blaiklock, published in the 1950's. F.F. Bruce wrote in 1943, "Luke's accuracy can be checked time and again" and "our respect for Luke's abilities has grown as our knowledge of the field increases."[153] The fact is, the case for Luke's knowledge and competency has grown so strong over the decades, that uncomfortable critics were forced to view Luke 23:45 as a totally out-of-character aberration in the work of an otherwise excellent scholar. While scholars still struggle with supposed differences between Luke and the other Gospel authors,[154] the general consensus is, we are left today with the awkward notion that Luke 23:45 is little more than a one-time colossal blunder.

Ramsay's very first insight into Luke: if he was meticulously accurate in one of his details, he most likely was meticulously accurate in other details as well,[155] has to

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[151] Ramsay, W.M., The Bearing of Recent Discoveries On the Trustworthiness of the New Testament, p 225.
[152] Ramsay, W.M., Luke the Physician, p 9
[153] Bruce, F.F., The New Testament Documents - Are They Reliable?, p 91.
[154] I contend there are none. The Gospels interleave, they must be merged not put in opposition to each other, in order to give a seamless, common picture. The Bible itself justifies this position in Isaiah 28, verses 8-15. There it is explained that God deliberately writes His scripture in a scattered pattern to conceal its meaning. Only by properly merging "line upon line", or fact with fact, can the full narrative be understood. I have tried it and it works.
[155] Gasque, W.W., op. cit., p 137

be factored into any discussion of Luke's report of an event as colossal as the Crucifixion eclipse. But as we shall see, Luke's capacity for focusing in on decades-old details with laser-like precision, is never considered. Like the boy who covered a hole in a dike with his thumb, simply to get the water to stop, the sole objective of the commentators is to find some explanation for the verse, any explanation will do, the larger picture is not addressed.

When one reads the commentators remarks, he is left with the impression Luke experienced a one-time lapse in his feeble mind, which the wise commentators have clarified for the modern reader; but the circumstances are not that favorable to such excuses. As I show in the next few pages, Luke actually wrote about the Crucifixion eclipse twice, in two totally different situations and in two separate books. The second location is Chapter 2 of the book of Acts. In Acts 2 the eclipse reference is publicly made before some five thousand Jews, who were just a small part of the eyewitnesses to the events of the Crucifixion.[156] None of them protest the claim. Rather, they are cowered by it. Are we to suppose this second reference, with half of the world watching, is also a colossal blunder? I will flesh out this point more fully in section D, which I have appropriately named: "Do the Scholars Realize How Poor Their Explanations Are?"

As with the census story, so much of the gainsaying against this one verse has been published without any challenge whatsoever and sits encrusted around every mention of it. Because this rejection carries the full endorsement of today's scholars, right or wrong, it is the modern voice of reason on the subject, regardless of Luke's improved overall reputation. Any contrary opinion effectively must become the little child announcing to the world that the emperor has no clothes. But scholars do not always bow to comments from the peanut gallery.

Clearly, what follows must be yet another exhaustive rebuff of all the arguments. As I cautioned earlier, my advice to the casual reader is to begin this new Section and continue reading, until you are satisfied I have either proven, or not proven, my point, but read no further. To the expert, I once more invite you to engage me on all arguments. I believe I have done due diligence to address the full set of arguments against the historical truth of Luke 23:45.

And if all the best attempts to give natural explanations for the Darkness, coming from the most erudite of scholars, are truly inadequate, if Luke truly is a highly competent reporter, then once and for all, the Supernatural must be considered.

The next step is to list and refute all the arguments that say somehow, for one brief moment, Luke did not mean what he wrote.

A. The Previous Objections to Luke 23:45:

We saw previously that several sets of objections to Luke's language circulated in scholarly circles during the years 1880 to 1930, until finally "ekleipo" became accepted among the academics. But the doubt never went away.

[156] See Appendix 7 - How Many People in Jerusalem Saw the Crucifixion Darkness?

Once the language-based explanations for Luke 23:45 were shown to be inadequate to debunking the clear supernatural intent of the verse, a new tact had to be found. Taking the lead from the general scholarly bias against Luke, commentators began to fault the verse by attacking the author. The next step to enforce a natural sky over the Crucifixion was to question both Luke's knowledge of eclipse phenomena and his abilities as an historian. The approach became, Luke wrote what he wrote, but he did not know what he was doing when he wrote it.

However, Luke 23:45 is not a trivial verse about a nondescript event in history. We next find that It provoked an over-reaction from the commentators.

As stated above, in the late 1800's, the charge of mental incompetence was leveled fairly indiscriminately at anything Luke wrote. I should note here that even Ramsay started his career believing Luke was mentally defective in some details he recorded in the Book of Acts. According to young Ramsay, Luke had made "a blunder due to ignorance or stupidity". But Ramsay's personal archeology turned his opinion of Luke completely around.[157] Ramsay's best work became the standard defense of Luke for the generations that followed after him.

How then, could anyone possibly disprove these very same arguments when they were leveled against a supernatural eclipse, especially since no one in the Roman world mentioned it? Surely any objection against Luke 23:45 had to stand because the verse was too preposterous, known history was too silent and no conclusive proof could ever be found from archeology. This rationale that a literal eclipse was "unprovable" induced the commentators to engage in half-baked solutions.

What the critics did not grasp is that there is indeed a starling archeological record of the eclipse, the record isn't in the dirt and history is not silent. Rather, the record resides in modern computer programs that can simulate the exact sky over Jerusalem 2,000 years ago. It resides in the native histories of the entire South Pacific, the Roman Senate and in the behavior of Tiberius Caesar himself. The modern critic may not be privy to most of this information, but it is as good or better than what Ramsay unearthed to vindicate Luke in his time. On the contrary, the current mindset towards Luke 23:45 seems to be:

"How are we going to discredit Luke's outlandish miracle, but still give him respect as a venerable 'Church Father'?" How indeed?

B. Was Luke's Mental State the Problem?

Truly, the various objections regarding Luke's personal competence on this most troublesome verse, cover every aspect of his ability to function as a rational man. Even if he accurately reported the details of thirty years of Church history in the Book of Acts, he clearly misconstrued the natural sequence of events when he reported Jesus' death.

[157] Ibid , p 79

Immediately, there is a major problem with this approach. The various authors cannot agree amongst themselves as to the precise reason for Luke's incompetence. There is no true way to know which modern speculation is correct.

As a first example of this respectful, but improbable Luke-bashing, look at the following quote from the Handbook of Biblical Chronology by Jack Finnegan, another highly respected Biblical scholar. It summarizes and encapsulates the objections of many into one concise statement.

> .... A simple confusion in the tradition between a lunar and a solar eclipse can well account for the statement in Luke 23:45 about an "eclipsed" or "darkened" sun.[158] (emphasis mine)

Therefore, by the way, the Bible is certainly not Divine Revelation, we just tolerate these errors of incompetence because we are sophisticated, educated, realists.

At this point the critics' dialogue drifts into a twilight zone of implausible speculation. A host of conflicting excuses, varying across a sizable spectrum of conjecture, was invented by the commentators, perhaps more as a quick-fix, than a rational explanation of all facts.

If Luke's mental state was at issue, if he spent years misquoting or hiccuping at the truth of the Crucifixion darkness, we should have a pattern of aberrations throughout his work. There is none. Only accusations which William Ramsay and others were able to blunt and refute. However, there is indeed a pattern to Luke's Eclipse reporting. As I mentioned earlier, Luke deliberately repeats it; once using traditional Greek usage and elsewhere imitating the phrases of the Hebrew prophets. The pattern then, is one of Luke insisting the event occurred, not one of contradictory mental lapses.

Examine the details and follow these arguments to their logical (?) conclusions for yourself. Weigh carefully all that follows for its reasonableness and soundness.

C. The List of Scholarly Excuses About Luke's Psyche

One set of modern authors thinks Luke confused his Passover solar eclipse with a real solar eclipse that occurred anywhere from 6 months to 3 1/2 years before Jesus died.[159]

J.F. Sawyer has suggested that Luke, perhaps a mature or older man when he wrote his Gospel, confused a known solar eclipse of November 24, 29 A.D., with events of the Spring Passover that Jesus died.[160]

Another set of authors believe Luke confused the Passover Solar eclipse with a Lunar eclipse which did occur the night Jesus was in the tomb.[161]

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[158] Finnegan, J., Handbook of Biblical Chronology, p 364
[159] See Guillermier and Koutchmy, Total Eclipses, pps 88-90
[160] Brown, R E , op cit., p 1041, note 24

The next explanation involving Luke's inability to sort things out, is perhaps the most bizarre and superficial of all. It does not mix eclipses, rather it confuses texts.

E. A. Abbott, in 1893, offered the idea that Luke confused "the failing of the Sun's light" in his own gospel with the "failing" of Elijah to deliver Jesus from the cross, as stated in Matthew's Gospel (Matt. 27:46-49).[162] The idea is Luke used Matthew as a source, but didn't like what Matthew wrote, so he changed it, on his own initiative. We need not worry about divine inspiration guiding both Luke and Matthew, there is none; its just two scribes disagreeing amongst themselves. Luke made an editorial decision that Matthew was wrong: Elijah didn't fail to deliver Jesus-- after all, Jesus was resurrected at the end of three days. Rather, the Sun must have "failed" instead of "Elijah". This explanation appears to me to be little more than a word game in Greek that would appeal only to crossword puzzle solvers. It attracted little academic following when it was first written, but the American scholar, Henry J. Cadbury, may have appropriated its logic when he offered his reasons why Luke did not know what he was writing.

These are the "confusion" explanations. Now we turn to the "ignorance" accusations. Only the theological writers give these explanations. For some reason, astronomers, who one might expect to use this argument, do not, only the theologians consider Luke ignorant. H'mm.

The argument goes as follows: pious Luke, a man of love and faith, was just plain ignorant of basic eclipse astronomy. Religious men two thousand years ago simply weren't informed of the facts of science in those days. Presumably Luke did not know the difference between a new Moon and a full Moon and where the Sun was supposed to be at those two times of the month. Possibly he never looked up in the sky in his entire lifetime. He also believed anything that had to do with miracles.

As far as I can tell, at least in the English-speaking sources I have reviewed, the highly respected American, Henry Cadbury, who taught at Harvard University, mid 20th century, pioneered this particular belief. In this "ignorant" scenario, Luke now is merely an unquestioning reporter of Church tradition, rather than a historian who researches, weighs and validates the events of the day Jesus died.

Cadbury wrote The Making of Luke-Acts, in 1927. In it, he rightly pointed out that Luke 23:45 is a rework of a verse in the older Gospel of Mark.[163] (Notice Abbott did the same for Luke and Matthew's Gospel.) He then uses his own imagination to speculate that Luke must have creatively embellished Mark's words and made an error in the process.[164] According to Cadbury, Luke's sin was one of unchecked ignorance, creatively rewriting Mark's verse.

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[161] This is Humphreys and Waddington, whom I briefly mentioned earlier. There will be more analysis of their works in these pages.

[162] See Plummer, op. cit., p. 545 - "Additional Note on XXIII. 45".

[163] Again, both Abbott and Plummer anticipate this in their discussions, but they do not make Luke ignorant.

[164] It is this idea of creatively reworking Mark, that Abbot, and Plummer also put forth. See Plummer, op. cit., p. 545.

> If .... Luke assumed that the darkness at the crucifixion was an eclipse of the sun, he was probably mistaken; but he was not the last reader of Mark's narrative of the passion who did not stop to calculate that Jesus was killed near the Passover and that the Passover occurred near the full moon when eclipses of the sun are impossible.[165]

We see here that Luke supposedly never took the thought to realize the consequences of what he wrote. I would counter that Dr. Cadbury is also guilty of what he accuses Luke. Dr. Cadbury has abandoned objective scholarship by refusing to even acknowledge a supernatural eclipse as a possibility worth investigating. Thirty years before Cadbury, (1896) commentators like Alfred Plummer did indeed flatly state the eclipse was supernatural.[166] What now leads him to reject such a possibility?

Dr. Cadbury outlines his position by claiming Luke and everyone in Luke's age, immediately accepted miracles on face value. Apparently at that time, there were no individuals, such as Cicero, the Roman philosopher, or Julius Caesar, who called themselves agnostics. If someone said there was a miracle related to Jesus or the Apostles, it was universally believed, because the faith of the age demanded it.[167] Such a position seems to me to be a bit prejudiced.

Dr. Cadbury readily admits that in his generation, early-to-mid twentieth century, there was enough traditional belief in God left in academic circles, to generate huge controversies over the matter of miracles in scripture.[168] But he side-steps all this when he addresses Luke 23. Rather, he presents his reader with a final verdict. He has decided it is not and he has decided Luke did not think the matter through.

I contend at the very least, Dr. Cadbury and those that followed him should have added the verse to the pot of verses that could not yet be resolved.

There is a second error in the doctor's argument. We must believe Luke did all this gullible embellishment in a vacuum. No one in the first century Church, or in the Roman authorities, ever caught the error. The idea that Luke could write such a thing in a vacuum without reprisal, is very poorly thought through. It generates all sorts of difficulties. (I will explain all these issues more fully in a few pages.) Yet look at what the professor says of Luke: "... Luke's narratives often suggest just such failure to think the situation through."[169] (emphasis added). Were he alive, I would respectfully respond that Dr. Cadbury will rue the day he made that remark. This whole section will turn the Dr.'s last sentence on its head.

It therefore appears to me that Henry Cadbury's "ignorance remark" of 1927, with all its buttressing comments, became the standard scholarly response to the

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[165] Cadbury, H , The Making of Luke-Acts, p 334.
[166] Bock, D.L, Luke, Volume 2: 9:51-24:53, p. 1859.
[167] Cadbury, op. cit , p 337
[168] Cadbury, op. cit , pps 338-339
[169] Ibid., p 334.

miraculous claim of Luke 23:45. He did not need to explain the verse as an event in history, he simply left the burden of proof on the supporters of Luke, thinking they could struggle all they liked. In effect, he started a scholarly tradition of sidestepping objectivity by indicting Luke for his lack of knowledge. We see traces of this in the explanations that were invented in the years that followed.

More than one commentator, M.J. Lagrange and J. M. Creed (1930), offer a slightly different, and most troubling variation on this presumption. For them, Luke suffers from a blithe ignorance that borders on senility. They "think .... that Luke simply did not realize 'the impossibility of a solar eclipse at the time of the Paschal full moon.'"[170]

Maurice Goguel (The Life of Jesus - 1932), repeatedly calls the Darkness an early Christian tradition.[171] He offers no details as to its invention, or how Luke discovered and accepted this "tradition". He does, however, point out that Thallus, the Greek historian, was already quoting this tradition in 52 A.D, at least 8 years before Luke wrote. From this, we may be tempted to suppose that Luke simply accepted hearsay. He was little more than a pass-through for pious whispers. Again, the commentator presumes Luke gave no thought to what he wrote, because neither he, nor his associates, knew any better. In effect, Goguel's "tradition" argument is the alter ego of Cadbury's "ignorance" explanation.

Raymond Brown (1994) is another commentator who presumes Luke is ignorant. He allows Luke to be of a sound, questioning mind, but he too, makes Luke clueless: "Probably Luke did not know that there could not have been an eclipse at the Passover."[172]

Frank Matera (1985), offers a novel twist on Luke's state of mind.[173] It was not deficient in the usual sense of simple incompetence; rather, Luke was being deliberately mystical. Luke is actually framing a mystical connection between the Crucifixion darkness, whatever it was, and words written by the Hebrew prophet Joel. Luke is deliberately vague in his use of "eclipse", in order to elevate Christ's death to the level of a fulfilled prophecy of Joel. The problem is, the original Hebrew of Joel and the Jewish custom, credit Joel's omen to eclipses, and no other cause.[174] Mystical or not, Luke had to be referring to a supernatural Solar eclipse. Once more, Luke's mental state is being deftly used to avoid addressing the issue of a major miracle in human history that came from the Hand of God the Father.

We now have the complete set of objections against Luke's competence that Ramsay was forced to address in 1914, invented a second time, with a few extra possibilities added. Such explanations are most respectful to Luke's Church office,

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[170] Fitzmeyer, J.A , op. cit., p. 1517-1518
[171] Goguel. M., The Life of Jesus, pps 92,93, 540-543
[172] Brown, R Ibid., note 23.
[173] Matera, F J., The Catholic Biblical Quarterly, vol 47, no. 3, pps 472-473
[174] See Cohen, The Twelve Prophets, p. 73 Cohen writes: of Joel's original words: "In heaven will be seen total eclipses of the sun [,] and the moon colored blood-red "

most insulting to his personal abilities, most economical for the modern writer and most ridiculous in their consequences.

D. Do the Scholars Realize How Poor Their Explanations Are?

Does Luke suffer from a failure to think things through? Or do the commentators?

If Luke wrote of the Eclipse in confusion or ignorance, why did he repeat himself in two separate passages, in two separate books of the Bible, which he wrote at two separate times? Extended delusion? Gross ignorance? Consider the circumstances.

In the second passage, in the book of Acts, Luke has the words come from the Apostle Peter. Peter has just assumed earthly leadership of the Church, he is giving the very first Sermon in the history of the Church and he is speaking for his life.[175] Peter is in Jerusalem less than two months after Jesus died; he is addressing a sea of humanity, perhaps 5,000 Jews and gentiles. Most of these people were present at the events of the Crucifixion. They were angry with the Apostles and not likely to accept fanciful stories. One inflammatory or preposterous remark from Peter and the crowd could easily have dragged him from the dais and killed him.

Peter quotes the Hebrew prophet Joel to them. Joel had prophesied two eclipses: one of the Sun at noon, and one of the Moon. Peter does indeed apply the prophetic eclipses to Jesus. Peter is making this Man, killed as a common criminal, into the Divine fulfillment of the Jews' greatest hope, their Messiah. To falsely turn a criminal into the Messiah by referring to a Sign in the heavens would have been a sacrilegious provocation, a grievous insult to the pious Jews and their priesthood. It would have sealed Peter's fate: death by stoning. What do we find? Peter is killed and Christianity never begins? No one is converted by this lying, fanciful fabrication of Peter? No, Christianity starts with a major, vehement, conversion by thousands who hear these words of Peter quoting Joel. Perhaps Peter never spoke these words so Luke wrote falsehoods that people, eyewitnesses and even members of that crowd, thoughtlessly accepted years later, say, 63 A.D.? None of this makes any sense, no matter how we try to slant the words.

There was no outcry, no storming the speaker in Jerusalem. The thousands of Jews listen, then cry out in terror for deliverance from the meaning of the signs.[176] How in the world can all this supposed "blundering ignorance" become part of the official birth of Church history, with no objections from Peter, the Jews, the first Christian converts and half of Jerusalem? All these people were actually thinking and speaking about one or two eclipses that occurred six months or 3 1/2 years before Jesus died, and before they were assembled in Jerusalem staring at one another; truly bizarre.

[175] Acts 2, verses 14 through 40, especially verse 20
[176] Bruce, F F , The Acts of the Apostles, p 121, note on Acts 2:19

Therefore, all the claims by commentators that the eclipses were confused with ones that occurred months before Jesus died make absolutely no sense whatsoever when we apply them to the second Eclipse account in Acts 2. When we examine this second account, we do not have one man saying it happened, and being confused, we now have Luke, Peter, and 5,000 Jews all agreeing to the same, "confused" eclipse. All the modern mis-explanations are eliminated from possibly being correct.

Had Dr. Cadbury and the other distinguished scholars thought through all this, when they wrote their criticism of Luke? Decide for yourself.

I repeat, do the commentators really understand the consequences of what they are proposing? Lets now answer the question for them, concerning Luke's supposed ignorance.

What are the logical consequences of saying Luke was ignorant, misinformed, or senile when he wrote of the Passover eclipse? Let's examine my "vacuum" counter-argument more completely.

A mentally defective Luke is also a stupid Luke, who operates in an intellectual vacuum, never troubling to realize that others will ever read his words and challenge their accuracy. For the blunder to propagate, Luke's audience, the very first converts, must also be as stupid as he. Peter must be as ignorant as Luke. Nobody in Jerusalem knew that the darkness was actually a dust storm, even though they all saw it. No one in Jerusalem understood that the eclipse they all talked about seeing at the Crucifixion actually was another form of darkness--a dust storm, or a rainstorm.

The ability of the faith to grow in the real world has been compromised by this lapse of the truth. The Church could not possibly afford to make such fantasy part of its official history. Yet none of this fallout is ever seriously addressed by the critic, who claims "Luke simply did not know". There is nothing "simple" about this explanation. It is as if Luke can cause the most disastrous harm to his own cause imaginable, yet we need not worry ourselves that the faith should have been impeded, let alone ask ourselves why it wasn't. The mists of time and the vacuity of the peasants' minds salvage all this from concern.

Curiously, while some other verses in Luke's writings are still challenged,[177] the modern scholars no longer make this kind of gross incompetence claim against Luke for any other verse he wrote. Apparently, the largely rehabilitated Luke, a certified historian of integrity, now suffers only from "Selective Verse Incompetence".

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[177] These challenges are the remnant of the wholesale dismissal of Luke in the 1880's As I mentioned earlier, the number of such problems diminishes with the decades A second notable example comes from the book of Acts, which Luke also penned The charge here is that Luke separated one trip of the Apostle Paul to Jerusalem into two separate ones In this case he is merely accused of failing to combine two sources into one. It is a literary failure, not a misunderstanding of the natural order. See Fitzmeyer, vol. I, p 49 I address several other false complaints against Luke the historian in Section 1.3 3, paragraph F - "Critiquing Luke's Historical Accuracy "

Can the statement of a Solar eclipse at the Crucifixion be properly called a slipped detail in one man's mind? Especially if three thousand people are worked into the account? If some historian today claimed that Queen Victoria of the British Empire publicly danced around a May Pole in Trafalgar Square on Easter morning of 1889, would it not be challenged? Is this likely to be an error that could "creep into" a history because the author was ignorant, had a memory lapse, or indigestion? Would a generation or more of time somehow blur the memory, and blur the objections of interested parties?

Christians could be sent to fight lions by their enemies and go willingly, but their enemies would never publicly deny the "ridiculous" tradition of Omens at the Crucifixion, omens that, if they were true, were powerful reasons for spreading this "vile" faith throughout the Empire. The Romans, steeped in astrology and ever the political animal, permitted the greatest propaganda claim of a tiny upstart Middle Eastern sect to stand for decades and even centuries; they never attacked it. Why?[178] It never happened? It did on paper, and that paper was being circulated in order to get new converts. Besides, the modern idea is that they all were dumb enough 2,000 years ago to believe whatever was on paper, regardless of what actually happened in the sky.

Answers to these extended consequences of the modern interpretation, simply do not appear in any literature this author has reviewed. The question then becomes, how intelligent are the commentators when they say Luke was ignorant?

In contrast to Dr. Cadbury's above suggestion, other commentators point out that Thucydides, the Greek historian I quoted in the previous section, clearly did know that solar eclipses occur only at new Moons, and he wrote this five hundred years before Luke.[179] So, their argument goes, if Thucydides understood the rules of when Solar eclipses occur, and he was no astronomer, shouldn't that information be popular enough in the ancient world for Luke also to have known better? Shouldn't this have prevented Luke from making such a blunder? Once more, these world-class commentators leave the question dangling, they do not robustly confirm or deny it.[180] Then what was the cause for the blunder? Gentlemen, there was no blunder.

My point is, the feeble excuses of the commentators are now shown to be a failure. Only if we all agree not to think too hard about the Eclipse can we dance around it like Queen Victoria. I find this group denial disappointing and unacceptable. For the sake of completeness, I will now address these other remaining excuses, in order to also discredit the present objections against the Crucifixion Eclipse. I think it makes interesting reading.

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[178] See Chapter 4, The Heavenly Signs and the Romans - The Assault Upon the Authority of Tiberius Caesar and The Imperial Cover- Up, for the complete answer

[179] R. Brown, The Death of the Messiah, vol I, p. p. 1041, n. 23. See also Fitzmeyer, J.A., op. cit., p. 1518

[180] Ibid.

The first aspect of Luke's supposed mental deficiency we examine is his personal knowledge. Was Luke truly ignorant of rudimentary eclipse science?

Did Luke in fact understand that the Moon has to cover the Sun for a Solar eclipse to occur and did he know the difference between a new Moon and a full Moon? The new Moon is on the same side of the sky as the Sun and the Full Moon is on the opposite side from the Sun. It requires a new Moon to cover the Sun and create a Solar eclipse. This is all he needed to understand to show he was not ignorant.

How could one possibly prove today what Luke did or did not know about eclipses in 60 or 80 A.D.? In fact, the evidence is overwhelming.

E. The Ancient Eclipse Science Surrounding Luke When He Wrote - An Overview

1. Introduction

We can examine much, much better evidence than ancient Thucydides, to prove eclipses were very well understood in Luke's time by men of his social position and learning, as well as much lower classes in the Empire. This last observation is both surprising and important, because for most of classical history, even the most rudimentary understanding of eclipses was totally denied to the masses of Rome.[181] One event, a proclamation by Emperor Claudius, in 45 A.D., changed all that.

First, it should be clearly stated that underlying the popular view of eclipses which appeared in texts like Thucydides' history, was a science of eclipse prediction that was the most advanced of all knowledge in the ancient world. This science was so well developed by the time of Luke that the commentators' statements are simply incredible. We are speaking of a science that goes back to at least 700 B.C. in Babylon, that spread to Greece and Rome, that predicted solar and lunar eclipses fifty years in advance, with an accuracy of 15 or 30 minutes.[182] (Presumably, if they could do this, they knew the difference between a solar and a lunar eclipse.) Priests, astrologers and horoscope makers routinely achieved this in the time of Luke.

A whole field of study, the history of ancient mathematical astronomy, has developed with the excavation of original cuneiform tablets and reed papyri in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Many evidences of sophisticated insights into the solar system have been unearthed from the lands of Egypt and Babylon, exactly as they were written millennia ago. These precious records have been meticulously uncoded from their original languages and the arcane mathematics written therein translated into modern astronomy. Such effort involves unraveling the mathematics and geometry behind the precise measurements and predictions that were made about all manner of heavenly phenomena in the ancient world. Events such as the rising of stars, the exact times of new and full moons, and the precise timing of future eclipses were all catalogued and predicted with surprising

[181] Cramer, F H , Astrology in Roman Law and Politics, p 49
[182] Oppenheim, A L , Ancient Mesopotamia, p 309

mathematical precision by Babylon, Greece and Egypt astronomer-priests centuries before and after Luke wrote. The modern study of this ancient discipline blossomed in the 1870s in Germany and increased in the 1920's after the modern discovery of troves of ancient records. Many, many modern texts and papers have been generated in this vibrant field. Although most of the ancient riddles have been solved and catalogued in the period 1930 -1960, it is still very much alive today.

Some of the leading names in this field over the last century have included: Strassmier, Epping, Franz Xavier Kugler, Otto Neugebauer, Abraham Sachs, Asgar Aaobe, Alexander Jones, Francis Stephenson, George Toomer, Francesca Rochberg, Norman Swerdlow, and many others.[183] Forgive me for saying, but how is it possible that religious commentators on Luke 23 never encountered any of these experts, unless they never bothered to investigate the history of astronomy in Luke's age? Perhaps the ultimate single text in the field is a massive three-volume work by Otto Neugebauer entitled, A History of Ancient Mathematical Astronomy, first published in 1975. That work alone would condemn any Luke 23 commentator to the fires of eternal embarrassment.

Neugebauer produced many scholarly papers on Egyptian, Babylonian and Greco-Roman astronomy during his career, that address many of our concerns. Let me give you a flavor of the kinds of information about ancient astronomy and mathematics that has been deciphered and published by Neugebauer and other modern researchers.

1. As stated above, Greek and Babylonian astronomers of Luke's time were able to predict solar and lunar eclipses to within 15 or 30 minutes, 50 years in advance.

2. Babylonian astronomers were able to mathematically determine the exact color and magnitude of a Lunar eclipse years in advance.[184]

3. Precise times for new and full Moons were routinely predicted and cataloged in handy almanacs two or three years in advance. We might liken these records to a "Farmer's Almanac" for Babylonian priests.

4. Babylonian, Greek and Jewish astronomers had developed methods for determining the number of hours and minutes a first crescent Moon would appear after the new Moon, again, for months or years in advance.

5. Babylonian (and probably Jewish) astronomers could accurately pinpoint the exact moment of the equinoxes and solstices of the Sun a year or more in advance.[185] This is important to note, because it strongly suggests the Rabbis of

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[183] For a concise overview of the historical development of this entire field from 1870 up until the present day, naming each significant scholar and their contributions, see the Introduction, pps 1-19 of Norman Swerdlow's book, Ancient Astronomy and Celestial Divination, MIT Press.

[184] Neugebauer, O. in Astronomy and History - Selected Essays, pps 232-237, and his references. This book contains some 33 papers dealing with the state and transmission of ancient astronomical and mathematical methods to later ages

[185] Neugebauer, O "Solstices and equinoxes in Babylonian Astronomy during the Selucid period", J Cuneiform Studies 2 (1949) pps 209-222

Jesus' day correctly knew how to calculate the date of the new year and the Passover full Moon. (Much more on all these points can be found in Section 2.3 and Appendix 9.)

The above points are mere highlights of the technical knowledge that underpinned the ancient's understanding of eclipses. This most technical knowledge, was, to be sure, safeguarded by the priests and Rabbis; it was in no sense common knowledge. However, there was a vast body of non-technical literature produced before and during Luke's time that openly spoke of the basic causes of solar and lunar eclipses. This proof has been compiled by modern scholars from a significant cross-section of ancient writings. These more popular eclipse statements prove that basic understanding of eclipses was shared among the educated and powerful of Luke's day.[186] Historians, Emperors, aristocrats and others understood and wrote about the basics of eclipse conjunctions and they probably were fortunate enough to have horoscopes prepared for them that predicted eclipses. As early as 1862 in modern times, the Englishman George Cornwall Lewis had written a broad, 500 page historical survey of ancient astronomical knowledge that ranged from 670 B.C. to 160 A.D. and covered the civilizations of Egypt, Babylon, Greece and Rome.[187] It was titled, "A Historical Survey of the Astronomy of the Ancients". Couple Lewis' text with Neugebauer's work on Mathematical Astronomy, and we have in these two works a devastating tableau of the level of eclipse knowledge in the age. This statement is, however, too broad. We should appreciate more carefully the differences between what the various classes of Roman society knew about eclipses.

We have, in a sense, three concentric circles of knowledge, with the innermost having most: 1) priests, 2) aristocrats and 3) illiterate common folk. The tendency of uninformed moderns is to collapse aristocrats and peasants into a common class of ignorance. This is a most false misconception. The body of ancient books and quotations accumulated by men like Lewis shows the educated elites across the Empire all had a basic understanding of when and how the Sun and Moon eclipsed. This does not of itself say anything about the level of understanding of the most uneducated peasants, or the army, which was always relegated to superstition. For an appreciation of the understanding held by the common man, we must turn to Emperor Claudius' public proclamation involving the Solar eclipse of 45 A.D., which was made to everyone in the Empire.

Lets next examine a little more closely the well-known facts of ancient eclipse prediction, that appear in the works of Neugebauer and others. There was a long, well-documented, thread of scientific prediction, both before and after Luke's generation that has surfaced in the 20th century; it clearly delineates the levels of eclipse knowledge held by the different social groups.

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[186] See Brown, R., The Death of the Messiah, vol ii, p. 1043 quotes Plutarch, Ovid, Cicero, Josephus and Pliny in this context He also cites a modern scholar, Grandez, who lists "some thirty passages from twenty-five Hellenisic authors", and "some rabbinic parallels" See his references in note 29. While Brown's major emphasis is on the ancient desire to associate eclipses with the death of great men, it still proves my point.

[187] G.C. Lewis, Historical Survey of the Astronomy of the Ancients

Afterward we survey the various levels of understanding held by society, I will offer the evidence from Luke's life to show that he personally had to have this knowledge. We will then review Luke's mental competence, accuracy and attention to detail as a historian, especially when he gave himself to making the most important claims in his writings. All these facets will then be assembled to show the true man who wrote the verse, in the informed age that he wrote and with the solid understanding he had, that cannot be discredited by modern conjecture. View all of the following in light of the modern presumption that Luke was mentally incompetent, or ignorant of anything that had to do with eclipses in his day.

2. Tracing the Level of Eclipse Science from Babylon to Luke

According to surviving records, the Babylonian priests knew and timed Solar eclipses at least as far back as 700 B.C.[188] Their record-keeping began under royal decree, in 747 B.C.; their science existed centuries before even that mile-marker date.[189] Another of Neugebauer's books, The Exact Sciences in Antiquity is one of the most quoted and respected popular texts on the state of ancient science. While discussing the evolution of eclipse science, he makes a point of stating that at least as early as 700 B.C., "it had been already recognized that solar eclipses are only possible at the end of a month (new moon) [and] lunar eclipses at the middle [i.e. full moon]."[190] (comments added)

Babylon in 700 B.C. is a long distance and a great timespan away from Jerusalem of 60 A.D., but the skills and secrets of Babylonian astronomy were transported to the Hellenic and Roman world, around 280 B.C., by one of their own, a priest named Berosus and others, such as the Egyptian priest Manetho.[191] It was no doubt part of a forced cultural plunder of Babylon, initiated at the behest of the ruling Greeks of Egypt, hungry for advanced technical knowledge that could be used to establish and exalt their kingdom over venerable Babylon, their effective rival.

So Babylonian science was imported into Greek Egypt and Greece itself, well before Luke's time and the learning centers of these countries diffused the information to initiates from all over the Roman Empire. Not only was Babylon the source of Greek science, but also the Greek debt to Babylon was greater than most admitted.

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[188] Neugebauer, O., The Exact Sciences in Antiquity, pps. 98, 101. On the same page, the author notes that Ptolemy Claudius had recorded eclipse and star sighting information that extended from 747 B.C., up until his own time (160 A.D.) For Babylonian knowledge of lunar eclipses, see the paper, "Magnitudes of Lunar Eclipses in Babylonian Mathematical Astronomy", in Neugebauer's Astronomy and History, Selected Essays, p. 232.

[189] Thurston, H. Early Astronomy, p. 141

[190] Neugebauer, O., loc. cit.

[191] This is a standard date in the present consensus. See the very authoritative Cramer, F.H. Astrology in Roman Law and Politics, pps. 13-4, and his notes. Cramer also admits the probability that others came to Greek Egypt from Babylon either before or with Berosis. See also vol. i of Fraser's classic, Ptolemaic Alexandria, for references to Berossus, and accompanying notes.

It has been certified since the 1930's that Babylonia was the primary source of all Greek astronomical learning, with Egypt a distant second.[192] In turn, the Egyptian Greeks in the time of Julius Caesar, Augustus and Luke were the primary source of Roman astronomical knowledge.[193] The bibliography of what Babylon, Greece and Rome knew about astronomy in the time of Luke is vast. In addition to what I have mentioned here, the interested reader may want to consult the materials at the end of volume 2.

More evidence of eclipse knowledge and predictive ability, perhaps two hundred years before Christ and Luke, comes from an English author, Emily Plunkett. Although the focus of history had moved away from Babylon and onto Alexandria Egypt, Babylonian science was still quite functional in the second century B.C. Discussing the known state of Babylonian astronomy at 150 B.C., based upon the archeological work of two German scholars, she wrote in 1903,

> .... the Babylonians of .... the [second century B.C.] .... dr[e]w up almanacs for the ensuing year ; almanacs in which the eclipses of the sun and moon, and the times of the new and full moon, were accurately noted ...[194] (note and emphasis added)

Years after Ms. Plunkett wrote, it was established that the Babylonians were able to predict eclipses not simply one year, but up to fifty years in advance.[195]

Greek-Egyptian eclipse science, founded upon the archives of Babylon, reached its pre-Luke zenith under Hipparchus of Nicea, who flourished at the same time the Babylonian almanacs were being compiled, 180-125 B.C.[196] One has to ask oneself if Babylon was still influencing the Greeks, even at this late date.

Among other things, Hipparchus formalized the science of trigonometry, which was necessary for accurately tracking the Sun and Moon over the seasons. He also calculated the exact values for various parameters of the Sun, Moon and Earth with a precision that was only exceeded in modern times.[197] Using advanced sighting

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[192] See Heath, Greek Astronomy, pps XV-XVI for an early statement of this Twenty-odd years later, this was confirmed in: Parker, R A., A Vienna Demotic Papyrus on Eclipses - and Lunar-Omina, p 1.

[193] See Manilius, Astronomica, trans. by G.P. Gould, Loeb Classic Library, for a Latin treatise on astrology and astronomy written approximately 15 A D. in Rome The extensive Introduction details the Greek - Roman absorption of astronomical science Claggett, Greek Science in Antiquity, says on p 99, " Rome had little great independent science, however great were her engineering achievements " See a very similar comment in Raymond, A , History of the Sciences in Greco-Roman Antiquity, p 92 Other useful works include, "The Place of Astronomy in Roman Egypt", by A. Jones, in T.D Barnes, Sciences in Greco-Roman Society (Edmonton, Alberta), "Astronomy of the Roman Period", by A Jones, in Centaurus, vol 40

[194] Plunket, E , Calendars and Constellations of the Ancient World, pps 1-2

[195] Oppenheim, A , Ancient Mesopotamia, p 309.

[196] Smith, D E A History of Mathematics, p 119.

[197] Claggett, Greek Science in Antiquity, p. 200

equipment; he was able to accurately measure the 25,000 year long precession of the equinoxes for the first time in history.[198]

Hipparchus also extended the formal archiving of eclipse times and durations, adding new data onto the old Babylonian lists, in order to improve his eclipse prediction accuracy.[199] By this time, priestly astronomers had studied eclipses in Alexandria Egypt, the islands of Rhodes and Samos, Babylon and other areas of Sun worship throughout the Mediterranean world.

John M. Steele, a professor at Durham University in England, wrote (2000) a whole book that analyzes the precision of eclipse predictions in the centuries immediately before and after Luke.[200] Like Lewis and Neugebauer, Steele opens up a vast vista on the true state of eclipse knowledge in Luke's age. The data in Steele's book conclusively debunks the whole gamut of issues surrounding the supposed ignorance of ancients about eclipses. Steele catalogues solar and lunar eclipses that were predicted, seen and accurately timed in Babylon, Greece and Egypt during the years 684-8 B.C.[201] and again in 125-136 A.D.[202] For some 74 solar eclipses which were predicted between the years 472 B.C. and 37 A.D., the astronomers incorrectly predicted the start of the eclipses by an average time of 2 hours.[203] Later Greek prediction of eclipses (125-136 A.D.) was supposed to be accurate from 42 down to 4 minutes.[204] Other scholars wrote: "the probable error in an eclipse time 2,000 years ago is typically five minutes"[205]. Again, this error was obtained as much as one to three years in advance.[206]

The methods of this kind of eclipse prediction were written up in works produced even closer to Luke's age. About 70 B.C.,[207] Geminus of Rhodes wrote a comprehensive astronomical text entitled, Introduction to Celestial Phenomenon. He clearly explained the differences between solar and lunar eclipses some 130 years before Luke wrote.[208] More than this, he devoted one chapter each to detailed explanations of how solar and lunar eclipses come about and how to predict them.[209] Geminus was not alone in his explanations. Another astronomer,

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[198] Heath, T.L., Greek Astronomy, pps. lii, 142-145, especially p. 144. Hipparchus' mathematical method for arriving at the precession value is briefly discussed in Heath, TL, A History of Greek Mathematics, vol ii, p 259. For a discussion of Babylon's role in this subject, see O Neugebauer, "The Alleged Babylonian Discovery of the Precession of the Equinoxes, p. 249 of Astronomy and History.

[199] Steele, J M , Observation and Predictions of Eclipse Times by Early Astronomers, pps 92-93, and his references

[200] As above.

[201] See Tables 2.4 and 2 5 on pps 58-62

[202] Ibid, Table 3 5, p 103

[203] Ibid, Table 2.8 on pps 72-73, comments on p. 73, and figure 2 15 on p 74

[204] Ibid, pps 102-105, especially p. 102

[205] Humphreys, C J., and Waddington, W G , "Astronomy and the Date of the Crucifixion", p. 176, in Vardaman, J., and Yamamuchi, E , Chronos, Kairos, Christo

[206] Compare Steele's data references, cited above, with remarks in Otto Neugebauer's Astronomical Cuneiform Texts, pps 1,10.

[207] Heath, T A History of Greek Mathematics, vol ii, p. 223

[208] Lewis, G.C., Historical Survey of the Astronomy of the Ancients, p 232, and note 79.

[209] Ibid , p. 234

Cleomedes, writing about the same time, also described the science of eclipses and how solar and lunar eclipses differ.[210]

Perhaps the best proof of how knowledgeable Luke's generation was concerning solar and lunar eclipses, is a two-thousand-year-old proclamation from Claudius Caesar, made in 45 A.D. In it, the Emperor writes of a predicted Solar eclipse that will occur shortly. He then becomes even more specific, explaining the way in which eclipses work. The eclipse did in fact occur when predicted by the Imperial astronomers. Much more on this Proclamation and how it affected the entire Roman Empire of Luke's day, is in the next section.

There is also evidence from the time immediately after Luke, which throws light on what his earlier generation understood.

One or two generations after Luke, Claudius Ptolemy (150 or 160 A.D.), an astronomer at the priestly complex in Alexandria, produced his masterwork on the Solar system, Almagest. Almagest was the culmination of 900 years of Babylonian and Greek astronomy and eclipse predictions featured prominently in it. Modern research has shown Ptolemy borrowed more from his predecessor Hipparchus and the Babylonian's ancient records than he admitted,[211] nevertheless, Almagest became the standard for explaining the motion of the solar system up until the 1450's, when present astronomy began with the age of the Europeans Copernicus, Kepler and Galileo.

Along with Almagest, Ptolemy developed a supplemental text or appendix for making future observations, based upon patterns present in the earlier Babylonian data and Hipparchus' later work. It is called Ptolemy's Handy Tables and was used to predict the times and locations of the appearances of planets or stars in the sky and the occurrence of eclipses.[212] Users had to take the data and perform various calculations on them to get the desired results. Today, scholars like Alexander Jones, Owen Gingerich and George Toomer have analyzed and discuss the accuracy and usefulness of the Handy Tables for making astronomical predictions two thousand years ago.[213] Toomer translated and richly annotated Almagest in 1983. With appendices, Ptolemy's ancient trove of information is nearly 680 pages long, not exactly a tome to ignorance.

3. Conclusion

So there really is no doubting on this matter. Eclipse science was well known and exact in the time of Luke. The answer to the skeptic is, If Luke, an educated doctor, had any awareness of the science of his day, he most likely did know that solar eclipses do not occur under a full moon. This of course, is a general statement.

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[210] Ibid, and references in note 80.

[211] There at one time was a roaring controversy about this, starting with Robert G Newton's 1977 book, The Crime of Claudius Ptolemy See Steele, p. 91, for other references in the discussion.

[212] Steele, J , op cit , p 91, Swerdlow, op. cit , pps. 18-19, 315-318, 357-69.

[213] See Jones book Astronomical Papyri of Oxyrhynchus, for one example of this detailed analysis

Much better critical evidence is available to confound the skeptic. We next look at the critical significance of Claudius Caesar's Proclamation in 45 A.D., which was sent out to the entire population of the Empire.

1.3.1 Was Luke Ignorant? - Caesar's Proclamation to the Roman World in 45 A.D. Explaining How Eclipses Work

There is rather dramatic information from Roman society that directly relates to Luke's Crucifixion eclipse statements. It is not new, it has resided in the history books since Luke, but to this writer's knowledge, it has never been directly applied to the controversy surrounding Luke 23:45.

Claudius Caesar found it necessary in 45 A.D. to issue a Proclamation explaining the purely scientific causes for Solar and Lunar eclipses to the entire population of the Roman world. He did this because he believed a Solar eclipse that had been predicted to form on August 1, his birthday, could cause civil unrest and even rioting in the Army, the Senate and the population at large, leading to his overthrow or assassination. No doubt, other, more forceful measures were taken by the wily politician, besides this simple information campaign.

The evidence is that Claudius Caesar personally made sure that the whole Roman world knew exactly how both solar and lunar eclipses work just fourteen years after Christ died and during Luke's lifetime, before Luke wrote his gospel.

This is a dissemination of highly specific scientific knowledge to the public on a scale as grand as the Empire itself. The 2000 year-old text comes from The Roman History of Dio Cassius.

In this passage, Dio Cassius is speaking of Emperor Claudius. I quote him at length, because his words are so critical to my argument.

> ... [Emperor Claudius] therefore issued a proclamation in which he stated not only the fact that there was to be ... [a Solar] eclipse, and when, and for how long, but also the reasons for which this *was bound to happen*[:] .... The moon, which revolves in its orbit below the sun, ... When .... [it] gets in a direct line with the sun over our heads and passes under its blazing orb, it obscures the rays from that body that extend to the earth. To some of the earth's inhabitants this obscuration extends for a longer and to others for a shorter time, whereas to still others it does not occur for even the briefest moment. .... [He also gives the correct explanation for a Lunar eclipse:] .... Whenever then the moon gets directly opposite the sun, (*for it is eclipsed only at full moon, just as the sun is eclipsed at the time of new moon*) and runs into the cone-shaped shadow of the earth, a thing that happens whenever it passes through the mean point in its latitudinal [sideways] motion, it is then deprived of the sun's light and appears by itself just as it really is.[214]

How significant was this Proclamation?

[214] Dio Cassius, Roman Histories - Books LVI - LX, p 433

The Romans were a superstitious folk. In their pagan way, they feared displeasing the gods and sought to avoid the fate of scoffers.[215] Part of this fear involved a terror of omens, sure spokesmen of men's destinies.[216] Superstition was especially common in the Army and the peasantry of the Western Mediterranean.[217] Omens and battles, omens and Caesars, were the staple of the society. Omens were cited at the succession of Caesars, they were found in the unusual behavior of birds, or of sacrificial animals, or in floods, or comets, or, yes, eclipses.[218]

The signal nature of a total eclipse on Caesar's birthday was something most likely to be remembered. The purpose of explaining it in advance was to teach this eclipse knowledge to the population and disarm any fears.

August was the month in the Roman calendar named for Augustus Caesar, successor to Julius Caesar, the patriarch of the dynasty which ruled Rome after him from 44 B.C. to 68 A.D.[219] The title Augustus was especially chosen by the Senate for him.

> "[It] was deemed more holy and venerable, [than other titles, because it gave him] a name and title which raised him to the rank of a deity .... while he still dwelt upon earth."[220] (comments added)

August 1, then, was not simply Claudius' personal birthday, it brought to itself the aura of the official state birthday, the Empire holiday that indirectly commemorated the whole Augustan dynasty and its divinity. Any ill omen on this date would be viewed as a direct threat to the divinity of the Emperor and the Dynasty.

Given all this, we know Luke and the whole Roman world understood a solar eclipse could not occur under a full moon, because the explanation was a landmark event in their lives, authored by the most powerful man on earth and we know Luke wrote his words regardless, without concern of being challenged by anyone in the Empire.

Who saw this eclipse? Not everyone in the Roman Empire, but certainly millions in Italy and the Mediterranean area, extending to Palestine and beyond.

The solar eclipse of August 1, 45 A.D. is well documented in present-day scientific works. It is listed as eclipse number 2997 of the Austrian von Oppolzer's classic work, Cannon of Eclipses.[221] The tracking Chart for this eclipse plainly shows that it was a total eclipse of the Sun. The path of greatest blackout began in the Atlantic Ocean, continued due west across the northern third of Africa, passed through the

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[215] See "Omens in Tacitus' Histories I-III, by M Gwynn Morgan, pps 25-42, of Divinations and Portents in the Roman World, Wildfang and Isager, eds., and Morgan's bibliography

[216] "Omens were an indicator of one's relationship with the gods." from Wildfang, op cit., p. 28

[217] Cramer, F.H., op cit., p 49

[218] See pps. 28, 30, 37, 38, and 33-34 of Wildfang, op cit. for these examples

[219] Nero, last of the line, committed suicide on June 9, 68 A D

[220] Florus, Epitome of Roman History, p. 351.

[221] See page 120, and Chart 60 of that work

Arabian peninsula, continued westerly, touching the southernmost tip of India, then finally ending south of Malaysia.

It was indeed a major eclipse, clearly visible across the entire Mediterranean world, the Near East and all of the central Roman Empire. The midpoint of the eclipse, where it was at its greatest duration, occurred over the Red Sea. Most likely Paul, Peter, the other Apostles and Luke himself saw it. Certainly they were informed of it. Claudius' astrologers had advised him well.

Eclipses were spoken of and remembered for centuries throughout the ancient world as major disruptions in the cosmos. Frederick Cramer wrote, in his classic work, Astrology in Roman Law and Politics, "The lunar eclipse prior to the battle of Pydna, [for Roman control of Greece, in 168 B.C.] and the scientific explanation of it by Sulpicius Gallus were long remembered."[222] Stories of portents and the supernatural, regarding emperors such as Julius Caesar, Augustus and Vespasian became part of folk-legend, natural histories and other sanctioned Roman literature for generations.[223] An eclipse that fell on Caesar's birthday could not easily be forgotten, nor the Proclamation attached to it.

Who heard the words of Claudius' Proclamation? Virtually everyone in the Roman Empire. That of course is what Proclamations are intended to do, be heard by the entire population of the realm. Luke, as a citizen of Antioch, Syria, or some other population center, would most certainly have been exposed to it. Certainly, he must have reflected upon its significance.

The sensational nature of both this Proclamation and the August 1 eclipse argues for notoriety, discussion and remembrance by the majority of people throughout the Empire. These are the very people to whom Luke's Gospel would have gone out. Are we to assume that not one of them remembered Claudius' decree when they were confronted with a Gospel that said the Sun was eclipsed at a full Moon, for the true Deity?

The converse is also true. We have evidence that Luke researched and possibly read the Imperial decrees of the Empire. Luke refers to five instances of Imperial activity in both his Gospel and the book of Acts, that go as far back in time as 6 B.C.[224] This is important because it requires that he be conversant with sources for events in the Empire which the Emperors initiated at times well beyond Luke's personal ken.

As prime example, I return to the census Luke records in Chapter 2, verses 1-2 of his Gospel. He wrote there was a decree from Augustus Caesar shortly before the birth of Christ that required Joseph, Jesus' stepfather, to register the family in Bethlehem for the census. Notice Luke 2, verse 1: "And it came to pass in those

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[222] Cramer F H, op cit, p 50

[223] A few examples: The Comet of 44 B.C. and Caesar's Funeral Games, by J T Ramsay and A.L Licht, Wildfang, R., "The Propaganda of Omens: Six Dreams Involving Augustus", pps. 43-55, in Divination and Portents in the Roman World

[224] See Luke 2:1, Luke 3:1, Acts 11:28, Acts 17:7, and Acts 18:2

days that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be taxed." How did Luke ascertain this event? It certainly happened before he was born. What were his sources, and doesn't this suggest that Luke may have had access to information about other Imperial decrees as well?

Luke had more than one opportunity to interview the Apostle Paul, who was of Jesus generation and would have also seen the Eclipses. Perhaps fifteen years before he wrote Luke 23, Acts 16:10 shows that Luke was in the company of the Apostle Paul when Paul left to preach to Macedonia, on the Greek mainland. This was approximately 50 A.D., just five years after the Eclipse Proclamation. Luke said he researched his Gospel material from eyewitnesses and others. This trip was clearly a time when he would do so, speaking to Paul. Thus we have Luke, Paul, the Proclamation decree and Paul's eyewitness to the Crucifixion eclipse all in one locale for many months or more, just five years after Claudius' proclamation. Wouldn't this extended opportunity for dialogue have helped Luke's mental acuity concerning the events described in the future verse, Luke 23:45?

If, as some think, Luke was again assisting Paul in Rome in the early 60's A.D., Luke may have been able to directly research Eclipse information in the Imperial archives.

Regardless of the exact circumstance, Luke's writings show evidence of detailed research and familiarity with the official activities of the Caesars, especially with regard to Imperial actions that affected the entire population of the Empire. The Proclamation of 45 A.D. falls into this category.

Further Insights into Luke's study of Imperial decrees can be gained from his writings.

Luke mentions Claudius Caesar twice in the Book of Acts (Acts 10:28 and 18:2). In Acts 18:2 Luke refers to a decree of Claudius that banished the Jews from Rome. By most accounts, this decree was issued in 49 A.D.,[225] just four years after the Eclipse decree. Is it reasonable to suppose that Luke knew and investigated one act of Claudius that affected only the Capitol City, but was ignorant of the other which spread across the whole Empire? He lived through both events. Luke wrote Acts either in 59-63 A.D., or 70-80 A.D. We know he used Mark's Gospels as a source of information and meticulously expanded, enhanced, or omitted the

[225] See Bruce, F.F. New Testament History, p 298, and The Acts of the Apostles, p 391, for addition proof and discussion

information contained in those accounts.[226] Once more we are pointed in the direction that he studied other, secular, materials as well as Christian testimony in order to carefully compose his verses.

[226] See Fitzmeyer, J., op. cit., vol I, pps 66-74 for a detailed, verse-by-verse introduction to what Luke borrowed and enhanced from the Gospels of Mark and Matthew. See pps 92, 107-108 for a discussion of Luke's linguistic revisions of Mark's material. Ramsay, writing two generations earlier than Fitzmeyer, in Luke the Physician, p 38, also mentions this. I will also review how Luke carefully revised Mark 15:33, in order to write Luke 23:45, in Section 1 3 3, sub-section C

1.3.2 Was Luke Ignorant? - Other Examples of Public Eclipse Knowledge in the Time of Luke

With your patient indulgence, I would like to expand the circle of evidence even further for an eclipse-literate aristocracy in Rome in the time of Luke. The more we today can demonstrate the knowledge level of the educated classes in Rome, the more obvious it is that Luke 23 and Acts 2 were deliberately written, with forethought. And of course, the case for Luke's eclipse "intelligence" burgeons as well.

It is essential to realize how thoroughly the lore of eclipses and omens permeated the Roman social mind of that day, and indeed ALL nations. Battles were one, nations were vanquished and kings were overthrown on the aftermath of eclipses. Claudius' decree may have proved my point, but the record of Roman society's involvement with portents and omens was far more extensive than I have thus far indicated. To flesh out this larger picture, I want to address two key areas: 1) the reading materials available to the educated and, 2) the word of mouth folklore of the society at large.

A. What the Educated Greco-Romans In Luke's Time Knew About Eclipses From their Literature and History

I have already given some 10 examples of solar and lunar eclipses that were described in the Greek histories of Thucydides, Polybius, Diodorus Siculus and others in the centuries before Luke. (Refer back to Section 1.2.) Bear in mind, their accounts were part of the Greek, not Roman, literary tradition; a mere one or two line report of eclipses in the history of ancient Greece. Luke, a Gentile grounded in Greek literature, and many Greek-educated Romans would have been aware of these remarks. But what of the Roman rulers and Roman aristocracy? The culture and literature of Rome had its own witnesses to eclipse phenomena that were far more familiar to the patricians of power. They clearly show the level of understanding these people had of eclipses.

We touched upon the eclipse at the battle of Pydna, when Rome defeated Greece. This sign was far more than a footnote to an ancient battle; it was part of Rome's imperial lore. Cicero, the premier Roman politician, orator and philosopher of the century before Jesus, extolled it as a fateful sign of national greatness in his book, The Republic.[227] A leading character in Cicero's narrative of this eclipse was Scipio Africanus, then a youth, destined for greater military successes that would forge the Empire. In short, the Pydna eclipse was woven into the folklore of the rise of the Empire and the careers of its greatest generals, as told in hallowed tones by its greatest politician. By Jesus time, Pydna was firmly ensconced in the Roman saga, as prepared by the elites, for the elites. C

Cicero performs this same merging of eclipses with the glory of Rome in another place in The Republic. Using the calculations of an astronomer named Ennius, he tells the story of how the wise men of science were able to trace back through

[227] Cramer, F H , op cit , p 49, note 47, p. 50, note 48

history to confirm the eclipse that accompanied the ascension of Romulus, the founder of Rome, into heaven.[228] Cicero was taken with eclipses as omens and portents and he fused them into the story of Rome to magnify the glory of Rome for the widest possible audience of elites that he could. He portrayed Rome at every turn as a nation whose fate the gods ordained at every turn through the powers of the heavenly orbs.

Quintus Curtius probably was a contemporary of Jesus, Luke and Claudius Caesar.[229] He is remembered today for a History of Alexander the Great. It was a product of the Roman world, designed to educate Roman intellectuals, which may have been written while Claudius was on the throne, perhaps just 20 years after Jesus. In it Curtius describes how an eclipse of the Moon on the eve of battle (September 20, 331 B.C.[230]), greatly intimidated Alexander's men. Quintus wrote:

> ... the moon, in eclipse, hid at first the brilliance of her heavenly body, then all her light was sullied and suffused with the hue of blood and those who were already anxious ... were struck with intense ... awe .... and dread.[231]

He then adds to his history a very straightforward explanation of eclipses, as good as the one in Claudius' Proclamation:

> ... although they knew well enough ... that the moon suffers eclipse either when it goes behind the earth, or is covered by the sun [they] do not teach the common people the knowledge which they themselves posses. ...[232]

John Rolfe, who translated these words of Curtius, wrote in a note, "Curtius means not the mere setting of the moon when visible, but a real eclipse, the cause of which was known to the ancients ..."[233] (emphasis added)

Another historian, Dio-Xiphilinus, recounted how one night after a mutiny in the Roman army, "the moon appeared both blood colored and black and gave out still other terrifying colors."[234]

Still other examples from the writings of the educated in Luke's generation can be given. Pliny the Elder wrote about eclipses in his multi-volume Natural History.[235] Plutarch, an educated man, but no scientist, wrote in his work, Isis, in the time of

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[228] Lewis, G C , Historical Survey of the Astronomy of the Ancients, p. 230.

[229] There is some question as to which Quintus Curits wrote the History. Apparently the name was somewhat common The translator of the Loeb volume I use states the majority of scholars place Quintus either in the time of Claudius (50 A D) or Vespasian (70 A.D.) (See pps. XIX-XX) Thus the words could have been written when he was in either his prime or in dotage Internal evidence favors youth. But in either case, he is still a contemporary of Luke

[230] Quintus Curtius, History of Alexander, p 252.

[231] Quinus Curtius, History of Alexander, Books I-Iv , p. 253

[232] Ibid , pps. 253 and 255.

[233] Ibid., pps 252-253.

[234] Wildfang, op. cit , p. 38.

[235] Natural History, vol ii, bk 10, 7.

Luke: "Then again the Moon herself obscures the Sun and causes solar eclipses, always on the thirtieth of the month."[236] The thirtieth of the month is the time of the new Moon.

Summarizing the spread of celestial science throughout the age of Augustus and Tiberius, one historian wrote, "The number and spread of such books indicate how strongly astronomy as a living science was rooted in the society of the time."[237]

We have here the evidence proving the educated elites of Rome had available to them, and were conversant with, the basic principles of when eclipses occur and when they do not. They certainly knew Solar eclipses could only occur at a new moon.

This knowledge resided in books. Not everyone read every book that had eclipse definitions in it. The general lore of a society is much better known. Both the educated and illiterate share in that pool of facts and fables. Eclipse omens were indeed rife throughout that larger culture.

B. The Record of the Mass Culture in Greco-Roman Society

It is important to realize that for most of the first century A.D., a radical shift occurred in the official Roman position towards astrology, the stars and eclipses.[238] Encroaching "religious" influences from conquered rivals Egypt and Greece, previously repulsed by the morality of the old Roman Republic, finally rooted themselves in the Italian Principate, in the last years of Augustus' life, 11-13 A.D. At that point, astrology, long recognized as a problem, became a force worthy of Caesar's direct attention. A "universal" proliferation of the belief in astrology, thrust astronomy in all its forms into the "very center" of cultured life in Augustus' age.[239] The Emperor banned astrology as a foreign threat to him and ancient morals, but he consulted astrologers privately, and his successors embraced it as an aid to their grasp of supreme power.[240] Tiberius Caesar, his immediate successor, studied it for years and practiced it, as I will show in Chapter 3.

From 13 A.D. until 96 A.D., all of the Caesars promoted astrology and its portents into the first rank of Roman politics and society. "[T]he influence of court astrologers rose to an unprecedented peak."[241] The motions of the Sun, Moon and stars became paramount in deciding matters of Empire and the nobility followed in tow with these ideas. Along with this, came a tradition of linking the Caesars with the stars. It began with the first Caesar.

When Julius Caesar had died in 44 B.C., a comet was said to have traced the sky over Rome some months later, when athletic competitions were being staged in his

[236] Babbitt, F., Plutarch Moralia, Vol V., p. 107.
[237] Pannekoek, A., A History of Astronomy, p 132
[238] Cramer, F.H., op. cit., p. 82.
[239] Pannekoek, A., loc. cit., p 131
[240] See Cramer's whole richly detailed narrative of this phenomenon on pages 81-146 of his book, especially pages 81-93
[241] Ibid., p. 82

memory. The Roman historian Suetonius, writing over 150 years after Caesar,[242] pointed out the universal acceptance of a heavenly sign by the Roman people:

> He died .... and was numbered among the gods, not only by a formal decree, but also in the conviction of the common people. For ... a comet shone .... seven successive days, ... and was believed to be the soul of Caesar, who had been taken to heaven ....[243] (emphasis added)

Augustus, his embattled successor, was quick to interpret this comet as a sign of the gods' (and Caesar's) eternal pleasure, thereby turning it into sure propaganda against those who might yet wish to assassinate him.[244]

Pliny, ancient Rome's historian of Natural Phenomena, wrote that many and frequent eclipses of the Sun attended the death of Julius Caesar. Marc Antony, Caesar's subordinate who later fought for and lost control of the Empire, noted that, ""the very sun turned away" in darkness from "the foul deed" committed in the assassination of Caesar.[245] Moderns believe these occultations were due rather to ash clouds from eruptions of Mount Etna.[246] Regardless, eruption on earth, or eruption in heaven, the propaganda made for Caesar a political transition to the level of a god and exalted a ruling family to a dynasty of future gods.

The notion that the Sun was supernaturally darkened at the death of a Caesar, THE world-ruling king, thus became part of the common folklore of a people, firmly fixed within the collective Roman psyche, 75 years before Jesus and 100 before Luke wrote. As I showed with Claudius, the fact that all Caesars claimed a common lineage secured and hallowed this tradition.

Raymond Brown noted that the idea of celestial portents at the death of great men had become an accepted cultural tradition of Luke's time. He cites examples of nearly 30 such reports scattered throughout the works of Greek and Roman writers of the age.[247] Claudius' self-serving Proclamation of 45 A.D. must be viewed in this sweeping cultural context. It was astrology that granted or denied sanction to any particular Caesar on earth. The stars gave, the stars took away and all society paused to consider their heavenly verdicts. The Romans exalted their great men into celestial gods; such an omen-rich tradition was prime for an assault upon its deified rulers. The God of the Bible besieged and confounded all this when the true Creator died in Jerusalem, surrounded by true Omens.

Tiberius Caesar was on the throne when Jesus died and was rightly considered to be the son of the deified Augustus. If either the false tradition, or the true event

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[242] The given date seems to be approximately 120 A.D. See Suetonius, vol. I, translated by Rolfe, p26 of the Introduction by Bradley

[243] Rolfe, J.C., op. cit., p. 147

[244] For a full discussion of this and a somewhat technical explanation of where to find the comet, see Ramsey, J.T. and Licht, A.L., The Comet of 44 B.C. and Caesar's Funeral Games

[245] Fitzmeyer, vol. ii, p. 1518, citing Josephus, The Antiquities of the Jews.

[246] See Ramsay and Licht, op. cit., pps. 193-194, and 99-107

[247] See Brown, The Death of the Messiah, vol. ii, p. 1043, note 29

surfaced during his reign, how would he react to the notion that some Jew in Palestine was said to be the Son of God, thereby usurping Tiberius' own title? How would Tiberius further react to the claim that the Sun was eclipsed at that Man's death? Ignore it? Consider the consequences.

Reports of a major disruption in the heavens at the death of Jesus, true or false, could not have gone unnoticed or unchallenged by the State. The first known reporting of the Crucifixion eclipse was by Thallus, a Greek historian who wrote in 52 A.D. just 7 years after Claudius, and 8-18 years before we think Luke wrote his Gospel. Thallus reported a broad-based tradition that originated far earlier than 52 A.D. Pontius Pilate, the Roman ruler in Judea when Jesus died, was obliged to quickly report such mischief and propaganda to his superiors in Rome. There is indeed a legend that Pilate reported the Eclipse to Tiberius Caesar, and the Roman Senate, but most historians today discredit its authenticity. In the fable, Tiberius repents. Of course, false documents can contain elements of truth.

The Eclipse claim would readily have been considered sedition and rebellion against the state, whenever it was reported. Such a claim also struck at the very self-image of the State-psyche. We have Luke's words, yet there is no mention today in Roman histories of any Senator or Consul or Knight or Princep ever disputing the matter. We know that neither Thallus nor Luke was ever condemned to death for reporting such treasonous remarks. The reason why may surprise you. Yet the record shows Tiberius Caesar condemned religious leaders to death for far less crimes than this. Consider further, what we do know.

Tiberius Caesar was said to have personally pushed a false prophet to his death from the high cliffs of the island of Capri. In fact, he did so routinely. In 19 A.D., he crucified the high priest of the goddess Isis for engaging in a plot to compromise the honor of a Roman noblewoman. Again I ask, how much more would he have done to a false religion that propagated a cosmic threat to his own family and his Imperial Divinity? One that could have incited rebellion against the state?

The evidence from history which I present later, is that Tiberius was thrown into one of the deepest depressions imaginable, and nearly went mad shortly after the Crucifixion. He then engaged in a huge purge of Roman aristocracy. This peculiar turn of events has never been fully understood by modern scholars.

Tiberius was an astrologer, steeped in his lore. His closest companion for decades was the astrologer Thrasyllus, who taught him the art before he took the throne.[248] Tiberius understood that the Sun in astrology represented the King, and an unexpected eclipse would signal the King's death. Such a tradition was a very real political threat to Caesar. Yet Tiberius, and all his immediate successors before 52 A.D., never condemned the tradition of a Crucifixion eclipse as a pernicious blasphemy to either Julius Caesar or the Principate. Rather, as Tertullian, the

[248] Cramer, F.H , op cit., pps. 98-108 gives the story of how Thrasyllus and his heirs became rooted in the Imperial palace for decades See also Grant, M. (trans.), Tacitus, ,The Annals of Imperial Rome, p 210-211

Christian orator, wrote to the Roman Senate in 200 A.D.: "An eclipse of course, they supposed it, ...yet that cosmic event you have in your archives..."[249]

Tiberius ruthlessly protected himself by killing thousands, but he laid no hand on the disciples of the Cosmic miracle. Why? I will show layer it was a paralysis and paranoia that stemmed from fear of the Crucifixion Eclipse Sign. It was years before Roman intimidation subsided enough to persecute the Christians, but subside it did.

Remember too, the ones most threatened by burgeoning Christianity were also the ones most knowledgeable about eclipses. Clearly, they would have had rapid recourse to challenge the claims of a cosmic death Sign, when this story first surfaced. The Imperial astrologers and priests would have interpreted and confirmed the true positions of the Sun and Moon on the day Jesus died, for Tiberius. The popular memory knew whether or not such an eclipse occurred, there was no way to hide it. The more difficult then, it would have been for Christianity to maintain this claim generation after generation, and still increase its converts; eventually overwhelming the Roman state religions. In short, all the Romans had to do to invalidate Christianity was to prove or propagandize how ridiculous the "lie" of a Crucifixion eclipse was. A decree form Caesar or the Senate, coupled with persecution, would be sufficient to discredit it completely, making it abhorrent to the rest of society. The whole Christian religion could have fallen, or suffered a great setback, but apparently no such turn of events ever transpired.

Known Roman condemnations of Christianity are sparse, yet one would think the most important objections would survive. The cosmic Eclipse of Luke 23 is never vilified in the Roman rejection of Christianity. Neither do we find any Christian defenses of the Crucifixion Eclipse until after 220 A.D., and then, it is to rebuke Origen, a "Christian Father". My critics will be quick to interject the reason we find no such dialogue is because the Eclipse never happened, but that is reasoning from ignorance. At the very least, the fair-minded among them must admit one possibility for this silence is that the Romans knew the eclipse was true, and they were cowered by it.

I would summarize the above argument in the following way: the folk culture of Roman society was rife with eclipse traditions that should have spawned a swift and conclusive denial of the Christian claims. Instead, as we will prove later, we find the most powerful state on earth struggling for its rule of law after Jesus dies, and explaining eclipses to its subjects 14 years later, to prevent an overthrow of the government.

I do not offer the above as conclusive proof of the literal eclipse. That will come from the hard numbers of Astrophysics. I will also provide the historical knowledge the critics lack about Tiberius in Chapter 4. My point here is that a rethinking of the circumstances two thousand years ago is critical. We are in the process of exhaustively proving that present scholarly explanations are feeble and

[249] Tertullian, Apology, trans. by T.R. Glover, p. 111

untenable.[250] Therefore the whole matter must be exhumed and restudied in another light.

A proverb for the reader to ponder: Whatever a man's enemies are silent upon, often is truth.

[250] Explanations that deal with an "End of Days" explanation for the literal eclipse, I will not address My focus is those explanations that are based in some real world facts in human history

1.3.3 Was Luke Mentally Defective When He Penned the Eclipse Verse? - The Evidence From His Writings and Education

The weight of ancient science and public knowledge which we have seen thus far makes it highly unlikely, virtually ludicrous, that Luke and all of his readership were ignorant of the differences between new Moons, full Moons, and when eclipses can occur. Now let us examine the reasonableness of the notion that Luke had some form of mental lapse, either chronic or fleeting, which went unnoticed and unchecked, when he composed Luke 23:45.

A. What Do The Circumstances Say For Luke's Competency And Accuracy?

When commentators make the statement, "Luke simply didn't know", or suggest he could not grasp the meaning of what he was writing, they completely disregard the circumstances by which those words became official New Testament doctrine. Luke's Gospel is not just the record of what he wrote, it is evidence of the message the entire leadership of the New Testament Church approved, and brought to the world. Luke's Gospel is a shared statement of beliefs, made by all the ministry of the Church, at its earliest stages.

If there are problems with the idea that outside critics were silent, there are bigger ones if we think Luke was a "lone-wolf" writer. This "vacuum" argument says Luke was able to hallucinate without anyone objecting inside the Church. It implies that the Church winked at Luke 23:45 in a fit of mass delusion that propagates for generations. Consider such a notion from the standpoint of a Church hierarchy that set public policy and had to approve his history as its Gospel. The time is somewhere between 60 and 80 A.D., and the Church is growing.

Luke probably had the rank of an Evangelist. He was not an Apostle in the Church. These other men set policy, and monitored his works, holding him accountable to comply with Church standards.

The early New Testament Church represented itself to both a doubting world and its membership via an image of truthfulness and Godliness. The Church considered its doctrine to be "the Truth". The concept of the Church being the bastion of an absolute, objective "Truth", originates with Jesus as God's Messenger, and ran throughout all the Church's writings. The Apostle John, in his own Gospel, quoted Jesus as saying:

"And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." (John 8:32) (NKJ)

Again, John quotes Jesus as saying:

"To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice." (John 18:37) (KJV)

Clearly, truthfulness and objective reality were hallmarks of the original Church doctrine, as well as its leaders, not to be trifled with in their presence. Lets bring this dictum closer to the man Luke. Notice what the Apostle Paul, Luke's sometime boss, mentor, and traveling companion, said concerning standards of accuracy and truthfulness in official Church doctrine. He is speaking in Luke's history, the Book of Acts. (We have here an elliptical scenario, in which Luke the historian is reporting upon the plea of an Apostle for accuracy, in a history which Luke, supposedly inaccurate, wrote.) Paul is speaking to an assembly of Church Elders in Miletus, Asia Minor (modern Turkey), before he goes to Jerusalem and ultimately Rome, to die a martyr. Notice his emphasis, (and Luke's), on maintaining the absolute integrity of what is taught to disciples. Whether you believe these men to be honest or not, capable or not, you must admit the following is how they wished to represent themselves to the world.

> Acts 20:29-31 - When I am gone I know that .... 30 .... men of your own numbers will arise with perversions of the truth to draw the disciples after them. 31 So be on the alert, remember how for three whole years I never ceased for night and day to train each one of you with tears. (Moffat translation - underscore added)

If Luke represents Paul as being so keenly mindful of a sacred responsibility for truthfulness and accuracy, Luke certainly should have carefully considered whatever he wrote for public consumption. At the very least, he is forcing his Christian audience to do so. If Luke wrote of the eclipse twice, then the error becomes even more glaring.

Since Luke was not the one to make his Gospel official Christian teaching, his superiors in the Church become responsible for approving the two Passover eclipse statements. Consider some further fallout of this.

The Apostle John, an eyewitness to the Crucifixion Darkness, is generally credited with supervising the official formation of the New Testament literature into canon, simply because he outlived all the other Apostles. John, like Luke, wrote a Gospel of the life of Jesus, covering the same events as Luke. John had to be an ideal critic of Luke's words, since he also had to recount the Christ stories. While John's Gospel does not address the Crucifixion darkness directly, Mark, Matthew and Luke all do, and John was the final editor, censor, of all four Gospel works. John was editor-in-chief of what the others wrote, having lived through the events they described. Eusebius, the church historian said this for John:

> The three gospels [Matthew, Mark, and Luke], already written [,] were in general circulation [,] and copies had come into John's hands. He welcomed them, we are told, and confirmed their accuracy....[251]

[251] Eusebius, The History of the Church, p 132

We already saw how John professed Jesus' personal commitment to truth, now notice in the next quote how John consciously wrote his own Gospel in order to instill total belief in his listeners: (John speaks of himself here in the third person.)

John 18:35
35 And he who has seen [the Crucifixion] has testified, and his testimony is true; and he knows that he is telling the truth, so that you may believe.
(NKJ)

At the end of his career, John wrote these next words to the generation of Christians he was leaving behind. Notice his emphasis on the importance of believing what was literally seen and heard in the generation of Christ.

I Jn 1:3-4
3 that which we have seen and heard we declare to you, that you also may have fellowship with us [that is, join the ranks of true believers]; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ.
4 And these things we write to you that your joy may be full.
(NKJ)

Based upon John's affirmation of such principles, should we then assume that John was too old, senile, and hallucinating after he wrote the book of Revelation, to objectively execute his great mission in life and carefully review the eclipse verses, comparing them with his own memory of the events? John was present both when Jesus died, and when Peter first spoke of the Eclipse before 5,00 people. John too, could have been killed that day, for Peter's "erroneous" words. We are speaking here about a movement that resulted in the martyrdom of all of John's associates, that he was attempting to continue into the next generation after his demise.

John in turn had disciples, assistants, scribes, and other Christians who advised him. They were either other eyewitnesses, or Christians familiar with those who were. This continuation of error by so many people in high places of Church authority, if it is true, becomes an indictment against all of them. Such indictments are easy to formulate in one's heart. Proving them in fact is another matter. Luke's individual incompetence, which then grows step-by-step into collective incompetence or worse, on the part of eyewitnesses and their assistants, seems to this writer an outlandish excuse. Someone within the Church (the Holy Spirit?) should have caught it. After all, Luke 23:45 was written to be read, and it was read by contemporaries. These things were not done in a corner; the eclipses were not a trifling detail, an addendum to a mythic tale told in secret by whispering peasants.

B. What Does Luke's Scholarship Say For His Mental Consistency and Accuracy?

If Luke was surrounded by responsible church leaders that claimed truthfulness in public, and exacted accuracy in their own works, it is unlikely an outlandish error would have escaped their notice. The modern arguments therefore become rather implausible on yet another front. To complete the discussion, lets next consider Luke's writings strictly as evidence of his personal accuracy and competence.

Ramsay has observed that "[t]he great historian is great by virtue of his permanent quality of mind."[252] He calls it "intellectual character".[253] Elsewhere he points out that it is foolish to assume a competent historian "had good authorities to rely on for one or two details alone".[254] Cadbury, however, says errors will always creep in, the facts must be confirmed from scratch, every time. Whatever we learn about Luke from one verse, or a whole book, should be thrown out when we look at the next problem.

The issue is one of confusing the professional historian with the gossip-columnist. The truly professional historian puts his integrity on the line with every fact he offers his readership, and he knows it very well. The gossip columnist will simply tell his story for the sake of telling it; integrity is a secondary issue. If a truly professional historian cannot substantiate a fact, he will not report it. How professional was Luke? How difficult would it have been for him to verify that the Sun was covered by the Moon for three hours when Jesus died? How hard would it have been for him to simply have omitted that fact?

Three questions should be addressed in this regard. 1) What were Luke's claims for his standards of scholarship, 2) Did he have the intellectual capacity and formal training sufficient to carry them out, and finally, 3) What accuracy score do modern reviewers give Luke's work, based upon the record that has been preserved for us?

By answering all three questions, we should be able to demonstrate how well Luke lived up to his stated intent to write a solid history. Think of it as a modern high school proficiency examination. If he meets all three criteria, then he demonstrates he has enough character to authenticate a verse that says "thousands of people saw God do a great miracle in the sky when Jesus died."

Clearly, Dr. Creed did not think Luke had the ability to judge between pious hearsay, and true cosmic Events, when he wrote, "... Luke simply did not realize 'the impossibility of a solar eclipse at the time of the Paschal full moon.'"[255] Apparently, the doctor may not even believe Luke diligently investigated history by interviewing the Apostles, and others, who were eyewitnesses at the crucifixion. After all, we are led to believe that Luke simply penned the verse on hearsay, paused for a moment to think about the words and went no further. But we have already seen, and Luke emphatically says, he was constantly about the business of making every point of information solid and authoritative. That was his purpose; others had written of it all before. Luke was the clean-up man; the one who double-checked the earlier ones to substantiate or deny what they had written.

[252] Ramsay, W op. cit., p. 223
[253] Ibid., p. 80
[254] Ibid.
[255] Fitzmeyer, J A., op. cit., vol. ii, p. 1517-1518

C. What Were Luke's Public Claims for His Scholarship?

It is highly ironic, that Luke, the only one of the Gospel writers to publicly state his passion for accuracy in the very beginning of his text, should be the one most constantly and furiously attacked for ineptitude by modern critics.

Luke's stated purpose is emblazoned on the very front of what he wrote. It is framed as a formal, classically composed paragraph that some have almost called beautiful.[256] He wants to correct inferior attempts by earlier writers. His goal is to provide the ultimate reference work, substantiating all the details of what his brothers and sisters in the faith knew. In the original Greek, his words are more like a well-composed painting, than a disclaimer. Luke dedicates the work to a man he calls by the title, "most Excellent", or "Your Excellency".[257] This individual, named Theophilus, may have been the patron of Luke's book, the man who paid for it to be copied in numbers and distributed to a wide audience.[258] He most likely was "highly placed in the society".[259] The circumstances reek of integrity.

Luke wrote for all people, but he also intended his work to reach a wide audience of educated, well-to-do, middle and upper class individuals.[260] As I pointed out in Section 1.2, he presented his Gospel as classical literature, on a par with any Greek or Roman work of history or literature that these people might have read. Why is this important, when we are asking what were his public claims for accuracy?

Luke was specifically targeting his Gospel to the very same educated people who would know the most about how eclipse actually work. We have already seen how many history books and legends of Rome these people were familiar with. We have seen how they were indoctrinated in signs at Caesar's death. In short, Luke was actively courting disaster. As I also pointed out earlier, his wealthy readers were the last people who would believe hearsay from Jerusalem concerning Cosmic signs. Nevertheless, he practically shoves this work into their collective faces by writing it as literature and then having one of their own, Theophilus, pay for it. If you were Theophilus, would you want to be associated with pious lies before your business partners and social equals? Men who could report you to Rome? I think not. Luke wanted his Crucifixion verse to sit on the library shelf of these people, right next to a book that explained how eclipses worked.

Had Dr. Creed, or Dr. Cadbury considered any of these additional possibilities, when they postulated that Luke wrote the verse in ignorance?

Joseph Fitzmeyer, in yet another respected two-volume commentary on Luke, makes the point that Luke has in effect thrown down a gauntlet to his readership, to be their champion of historical accuracy, detail and therefore, world-salvation.[261]

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[256] Marshall, I H., The Gospel of Luke - A Commentary on the Greek Text, p. 39 He says, "The preface is written in excellent Greek, with a most carefully wrought sentence structure "

[257] Fitzmeyer, J.A. op. cit., vol I, p 287

[258] Marshall, I.H., Ibid; see also p 40.

[259] Fitzmeyer, loc cit., p 300 and Creed, op. cit., p 2.

[260] Ibid

[261] Fitzmeyer, J.A., The Gospel of Luke I-X, p. 289.

Luke inseparably ties his historical accuracy to a Gospel of cosmic truth.[262] This is exactly the same position as the Apostle John takes in his writings.
And remember, Luke wanted to publicize his work to the largest possible audience of believers, including the aristocracy. Church leaders would know this book would go to the educated, yet they never feared, or censored the Eclipse verse.

We see from this, that Luke made strong claims for accuracy and he enforced those claims by boldly (or foolishly?), targeting the book to the most critical audience of all, the most knowledgeable people who could contradict him on any false point.

To complete the record on Luke's claims, I will next present a word study of Luke's original claim. Please do not be put off by this. It is important to hear his original voice, in order to experience first-hand the intent of his mind and character. In my opinion, these words demonstrate his mind was far too disciplined and focused, to permit colossal lapses to occur while he was sorting out his material. (The immediate objection, that Luke's protests of accuracy prove nothing, he lapsed no matter how sincere he was, will be addressed later.)

Nevertheless, some may want to read over this review of Greek words and definitions. The main body of the text resumes with sub-Section D: "Did Luke have the Ability to Research and Be Accurate?"

Sidebar - Studying Luke's Own Words from the Original Greek to Learn His Intentions[263]

Luke 1: 1-4, (in the Moffat translation):

> Inasmuch as a number of writers have essayed to draw up a *narrative* of the *established facts* in our religion, 2 exactly as they have been handed down to us by the original eye-witnesses who were in the service of the Gospel Message, 3 and inasmuch as I have *gone carefully over them* all myself from the *very beginning*, I have decided, O Theophilus, to write them out in order for your excellency , 4 to let you know the *solid truth* of what you have been taught. (emphasis added)

[262] Green, The Gospel of Luke, p 39

[263] Henry Cadbury, The Making of Luke-Acts, pps. 344-346, performs the same kind of analysis as I do here, and downplays the meanings of Luke's original Greek, to produce a milder Luke. I am not a Greek scholar, but some things in Cadbury's translation jumped off the page at me when I read it. He says we cannot put modern scientific precision into the classical mind or tongue. That is too general a belief to be applied to one man, such as Luke. Every age has its exceptions. My point , which I repeat elsewhere in this book, is that Cadbury's word definitions are not enough to disprove Luke's overall intent. The overall sense, even in Cadbury's weakened wording, is that Luke is doing all this research (fumbling, according to the doctor), in order to establish solid reality. Dr. Cadbury's translation reads to me something like: "I did all this half-hearted research to produce absolute truth." I cry, "foul" In my opinion, the Doctor has produced an inconsistent translation that is at cross-purposes to itself; it does not stand.

Luke's opening remarks, when examined in their original Greek, are far more biased towards accuracy and correctness than the English translations suggest. They fairly bristle with protests of correctness and focused scholarship.[264] Consider the full meanings of five Greek expressions he uses in the above passage from Moffat.[265]

a) "draw up a narrative" - Greek *diegesis* (Strong's New Testament word number 1335) - to set out in detail, recount. .... to relate fully, to conduct a narrative through to the end.

b) "of the established facts" - Greek (4135) - to assure, or convince, to entirely accomplish, be most surely believed, be fully known, make full proof of ....

c) "I have gone carefully over them all myself" - Greek *akribos* (199) - exactly, diligently, perfectly, circumspectly .... the word expresses that accuracy which is the outcome of carefulness.

To use modern-day vernacular, Luke is saying here he searched out, double-checked and proofread his research material. He certifies he has dotted his "i's" and crossed his "t's", before he let this material out of his control.

d) "from the very beginning" - Greek *anothen* (509) - literally means from above, from the top, from God above, from heaven above, from the very first

The focus here is that Luke began, conducted and finished his research with one focus.

We are immediately struck with Luke's relentless hammering away of accuracy, correctness and untainted truth. Luke in his single opening sentence intends to give full confidence to the reader that full, complete and accurate information is being meticulously presented.

The literal meaning of the last expression, "anothen", - "from above" makes for an important sidelight here. While Moffat translates verse 3 to mean that Luke was diligently sorting out the facts from the very first time he attempted his narrative, the literal meaning of "anothen" could give it a dual meaning. Luke may be saying he diligently examined these facts as given FROM GOD ABOVE, i.e., he actively sought divine inspiration as the source of his accuracy, as well as pursuing human research, from the very start. This duality only strengthens Luke's appeal to the accuracy of everything he wrote - He is saying to the novice Christian, "It came from God Above, from the very beginning, exact, diligent, complete, full. thoroughly factual. I researched it." With this dual meaning in the Greek, Luke places his reputation and that of his religion ever more fully in harm's way, should any glaring

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[264] This analysis echoes Fitzmeyer, op. cit., pps 292-293, although I am far more compact, and direct Fitzmeyer created a theological commentary on these words. I have merely listed their meanings.

[265] In the above definitions, both the English meanings and the numbers in parenthesis are from The New Expanded Strong's Exhaustive Concordance Greek dictionary

errors be found in what he wrote. I would also note that the modern commentators may have an awkward time dealing with Luke's claim for divine inspiration.

One final word from Luke's pen:

e) "to let you know the solid truth of what you have been taught"- Greek *asphaleia* (809) - not liable to fall, steadfast; firm, hence denoting safety

According to I. Howard Marshall, who wrote a commentary on the original Greek text of Luke, this word signifies "firmness, safety, security, certainty and reliability".[266] This is very important to note, because critics such as Henry Cadbury[267], have tried to water down the modern understanding that Luke was performing accurate, scientific research and verification, by saying Luke was the child of a less scholarly age and his words are less precise.

Cadbury would have Luke say, "I traced the line of events", instead of, "I diligently ferreted out the details."[268] In my opinion, Cadbury has fallen into the very same trap as the critics of Luke 23:45. One meaning in one verse does not give the whole picture of what is being said. He seizes upon individual word definitions while ignoring the purpose Luke plainly states. He tries to accumulate a set of details to overthrow the meaning of the whole verse, but he fails. Whatever the Greek words Dr. Cadbury translates, actually mean, Luke plainly states his mission was to give "solid, certain, reliable" results to his readers. Marshall points out Luke expected his work to be widely read.[269] So, if Dr. Cadbury wants to make Luke say he did a casual, superficial skim of tradition, in order to give solid, reliable, certainty to his readers, that is Dr. Cadbury's problem.

Final note: All five words are packed into one long Greek sentence which is broken up in the English and translated into the first four verses of Luke Chapter 1. Luke does not come up for breath when he makes his eloquent opening salvo. With this perspective, we now have the full force of Luke's mind. It is what the critics struggle to confront and wind up misinterpreting.

End of Sidebar

D. Did Luke have the Ability to Research and Be Accurate?

Many scholars have done a verse by verse comparison of Luke's Gospel with the other Gospels of Mark and Matthew.[270] From such exhaustive work we know that Luke went beyond being a mere copyist of another man's words; Luke consistently strove to refine and extend Mark or Matthew for his Gentile audience. He also provides extra details on common subjects in the Christ story, which his fellow writers omit. There is also his discriminating use of words from the Septuagint and

[266] Marshall, I.H., op. cit., p. 44.
[267] Cadbury, H., op. cit., pps. 344-347.
[268] See his discussion on pps. 346-347 of The Making of Luke-Acts.
[269] Marshall, I.H., op. cit., p. 40.
[270] See Fitzmeyer, vol. I, Chapter III, The Composition of the Lukan Gospel, pps. 63-106, especially pages 66-03.

Aramaic sources. In sum, we find Luke makes scores of such decisions as to what to add, expand, or eliminate, when he reviews information from written sources. The ways in which he modifies the language or rephrases sentences also varies. Luke displays every editing and composition skill we could ask for. The man is clearly thinking about what he is writing before he writes it. This is especially true of our controversial verse.

As I mentioned earlier, Luke 23:45 is actually a rewrite and an enhancement of a verse Mark wrote before Luke. Mark's original verse, Mark 15:33, while accurate, does NOT give the exact cause of the darkness.[271] This circumstance is very revealing. It tells us that Luke had to focus his energies on researching and acquiring the additional detail of the Solar eclipse for his own account, from eyewitnesses, documents, as well as his own recollection. This whole process of researching and modifying an existing verse of scripture is the exact opposite of a slip in memory or an ignorant blunder. Luke also had the option to omit the new information, due to inadequate sources. He clearly thought they were good enough. To assume he plucked it out of the air while composing is to ignore his established method of researching and writing the extra details.

If the commentators are correct we have before us a man on a search for additional information, who claims to be accurate, who claims to talk to reliable eyewitnesses for his facts. The eyewitnesses claim to be truthful, his information is verified, he [illegible] seeker of truth comes up with a complete blunder on the most spectacular Miracle since the Creation. This blunder is a very poor beginning for a man given to claims of authenticity and meticulous research. It is also a black mark against those who made Luke's detail-oriented Gospel official Christian doctrine. Solar eclipses look nothing like sand storms, or thunderstorms. They are rather hard for eyewitnesses to confuse and there were probably a quarter of a million of them at Jerusalem that day, since it was custom for Jews from all over the Roman Empire to flock there to keep the Passover each year.[272] Hopefully the reader can now appreciate the enormous inadequacy of such a flimsy modern excuse.

E. The Critics Appraise Luke's Claims for Accuracy

1. Verifying the Details in Luke's Histories

It ought to be apparent by now that the critics challenge and debate everything about Luke and Luke 23. Everything. It also ought to be apparent that they do not declare defeat easily, regardless of the weight of evidence produced to vindicate Luke. The matter of Luke's historical accuracy is no different. In its present state, it has evolved in favor of Luke, but it is still a two-sided "debate". I need to report both perspectives when I claim the moderns now respect Luke. They do and they don't.

[271] We will see later that Tiberius was moved to insanity by the Eclipse as a threat to his life and rule. I am speculating here, just a little, that was deliberately vague about the cause in order not to bring Roman persecution upon himself and fellow Christians. Luke wrote after Mark, and risked this

[272] See Appendix 7 - How Many People in Jerusalem Saw the Crucifixion Darkness?

Where the Modern Critics of Luke Have Taken Their Battle

As Luke's attention to the details of early church history became more and more proven and praiseworthy over the last century, yet another backlash, one of almost irrational proportions, developed in the 1950's. It was highly specialized; it concerned only those parts of his writings which were not verifiable facts of history. Let me explain.

Luke's works consist of unique, well-chiseled details, actions taken by key personalities and speeches or conversations made by these individuals. As the truth of Luke's details was becoming bold as bronze (with a few undetermined exceptions), the tact to discredit him, now re-directed itself towards his written conversations and dialogues. These passages were attacked as unhistorical and pure poetic license. Then a great leap was taken: if the conversations were false, the proven details were also somehow odious and tainted with error as well. Even though the details make Luke a creditable historian, his conversations make him an inferior historian. Of course, another way of looking at the matter is to admit that the great accuracy of his details implies Luke's written dialogue was creditable; it came from diaries, collected sayings and eyewitness accounts of what was spoken by the great men of the Church. This alternate possibility is never seriously considered in the current literature, even though all scholars believe there must have been an original source of written sayings of Jesus, which Luke, Mark and Matthew did use. So Luke had written notes for Jesus words, but when he wrote the Book of Acts, he made up everything spoken in that Book by Peter, Paul, Barnabus and others. Yet his Gospel and Acts are considered to be so closely tied together that they are often called one book. Luke therefore used primary sources for Jesus on page 10 of his two books, but invented everything spoken on page 50, and, by the way, his most critical details. The ones we can investigate are impeccable; nevertheless everything Luke wrote must be pure spiritual poetry; nothing must be creditable. Several books, notably ones in German, have been written taking this position in the last 50 years.[273] This is the one of the positions you will find in scholarly books if you wish to check up on me.

The illogic of such reasoning is painfully apparent to me. Once more, if I do not mention it, I will be counter-attacked as unlearned and simplistic in my support of Luke, so I must address it. I believe the case can be made for Luke searching out and transcribing inspired, doctrinally correct sermons by Apostles and Evangelists from original sources and eyewitnesses. We have the words of Martin Luther and the Popes, but somehow, no one cared to save the words of the Apostles, excepts for their few letters, the ones that became the New Testament. Again, others reviewed Luke's writing and others, higher in authority than he, gave it a stamp of approval and made it official doctrine. Invented or real, the leaders agreed its

[273] See the works of Robert Morganthaler, and pps. 39-40, of Barrett's brief book, Luke the Historian in Recent Study, where Luke's writing is considered divine poetry of the highest sort. There is literal poetry in the book of Isaiah the prophet, the Psalms of David, and elsewhere in the Bible. There is a beauty in Luke's writing, but to label it divine poetry is to blunt its historical precision, or worse, trivialize it into Divine ramblings

content should go to the world. But even if the critics wish to dismiss every spoken word Luke reports, that still does not affect my case. We are concerned here with the accuracy and competence of Luke's details: "this event happened that day", "this ruler had that title for three months in 52 A.D", "this town had these tradesmen living in it" and, "this Eclipse happened on that Day". Perhaps I. Howard Marshall's quote bears repeating here: "... compared with other ancient historians Luke acquits himself very creditably. In matters of detail his historical stature is high".[274]

Dr. Marshall is not alone in this judgment.

What Luke's Modern Supporter's Say for His Accuracy

F.F. Bruce, whom I referred to earlier in this Section as a respected New Testament scholar, devotes some fifteen pages of research and analysis in his book, The New Testament Documents - Are They Reliable? to Luke's competence and accuracy as an historian of details.[275] Bruce wrote: "[Luke's] detailed accuracy is something which can be checked time and again."[276] Bruce also cites many specifics that prove Luke trustworthy.

Let me give here a few examples. They are all highly specific; once more, they demonstrate Luke's ability to reach down through the decades for the smallest of details that occurred over the shortest amounts of time and still get his facts straight.

Luke successfully differentiates between twenty-year-old magistrate's titles that had changed within months of each other.[277] Bruce notes: "this was by no means an easy feat in his day, as it is in ours." He calls it "a most remarkable token of ... [Luke's] accuracy."[278] He correctly identifies where town-meetings were held years after the locations were moved.[279] His account of when one magistrate replaced another, while Paul was in their successive custody's, matches perfectly with the proven time they changed offices.[280] Luke accurately describes events in a public amphitheater in Ephesus, down to the smallest trinkets that were sold there.[281] The list of such minutiae goes on. Even Henry Cadbury admits that Luke's details of the Apostle Paul's missionary travels are "confirmed constantly by striking coincidences in the Pauline letters..."[282]

Bruce also points out that accuracy can be easily challenged when one makes claims for worldwide events, such as cosmic miracles, occurring in recent history.

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[274] Marshall, I H., Luke, Historian and Theologian, p 69
[275] Chapter 7, pps 80-92, addresses the whole question of the historical accuracy of all of Luke's writings, as well as pages 41-43 It is recommended
[276] Ibid., p. 91.
[277] Ibid., pps 82-83.
[278] Both quotes, Ibid., p 82
[279] Ibid., p. 85
[280] Ibid., p. 88.
[281] Ibid., p 84
[282] Cadbury, H J., op. cit., p 366

Bruce addresses my basic theme, the one that the commentators of Luke 23 forget: nothing that involves heavenly signs can be done in a vacuum. There were probably 250,000 people in Jerusalem and millions in the Empire that either saw the Eclipses or saw nothing the day Jesus died. Either way it would be impossible to cast a big lie in the face of so many, and escape unchallenged.

> A writer who .... relates his story to the wider context of world history is courting trouble if he is not careful; he affords his critical readers so many opportunities for testing his accuracy.
>
> Luke takes this risk, and stands the test admirably.[283] (emphasis added)

If Bruce validates Luke on lesser matters, where might a Solar eclipse that attended Christ's death fall into such meticulous accumulation of arcane detail?

C. J. Hemer was another scholar in line with Bruce, who sought to conduct an exhaustive proof of Luke's accuracy. Following Ramsay, Hemer amassed the latest archeological data available in the 1970's and '80's to demonstrate the truthfulness of as many minute details as possible in the Book of Acts. By 1987 he had developed a full canvas of Luke's reports and character which demonstrated the Evangelist to be "a careful historian who stands alongside the best" of the ancient masters.[284]

All this evidence must nevertheless be tempered by the fact that some of Luke's historical statements have yet to be conclusively proved as completely accurate. The facts we have today are inadequate to decide these events.

I began Section 1.3 by referring to the Roman census story in Luke Chapter 2 that is still not completely proven. Some critics attempt to use this as a basis for discrediting Luke, but most admit the issue is unresolved.

Bruce cites various other authorities who criticize Luke, but he also offers other, more balanced scholars, who both criticize and uphold Ramsay's best work on Luke; men such as Henry Cadbury, whom we are familiar with and E. M. Blaiklock. Cadbury is interesting because like Ramsay, he too begins his publishing career (1927) with exceptions to Luke's historical accuracy. (I have already addressed some of these early objections in passing.) By 1953, however, Cadbury has "produced a fascinating work which can but enhance the reader's admiration for Luke's achievement."[285] After years of study and objective criticism, both Blaiklock and Cadbury give Luke certification as an historian of first rank.[286]

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[283] See p. 82 of that book

[284] Marshall, I.H., op cit, p 226 See Marshall's references to Hemer's writings in note 17

[285] Bruce, F F., op. cit., p 91

[286] See Cadbury, The Book of Acts in History, 1953, and Blaiklock, The Acts of the Apostles, 1959

Echoing Marshall, Bruce, Hemer, Ramsay, Cadbury and Blaiklock, The NIV Study Bible (1985), makes these comments about Luke's attention to historical accuracy in his second history, the Acts of the Apostles:

> Every page of Acts abounds with sharp, precise details, to the delight of the historian. The account .... reaches across the lands from Jerusalem to Rome. Luke's description of these times and places is filled with all kinds of people and cultures, ... Yet in each instance archeological findings [recall Sir William Ramsay and C. J. Hemer] reveal that Luke uses the proper terms for the time and place being described. [287] (emphasis and comment added.)

Such precision is not a simple matter, easily open to misinformation and requiring substantial confirmation. The NIV Bible then adds the most favorable endorsement:

> Hostile criticism has not succeeded in disproving the detailed accuracy of Luke's political and geographical designations.[288] (my emphasis)

We have here a consensus of scholarly opinion that evolved over an eighty year time frame of active digging and debate, that says Luke is highly proficient in recounting events and all their particulars: people, places, times and circumstances are all noted with precision.[289] If Luke can accurately ascertain an official's title forty years after the fact, should we believe he could not determine what was happening in the whole sky across the Roman Empire the precise day Jesus died?

2. Some Afterthoughts on Luke's Accuracy and Intellectual Consistency

Some pages ago, I talked about New Testament textual criticism. We found it sets very high standards of accuracy to determine which are the most authoritative New Testament documents from antiquity that exist today. Textual scholars actually attempt to describe the personal discipline and character of the scribe, the man who recopied the text, by looking at his handwriting technique, spelling and faithfulness to the original words.[290]

This scholarly pursuit deals only with the ability of re-copying or transmitting a text over the decades, based upon what was first authored. What of the original authors?

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[287] Barker, K , The NIV Study Bible, p 1642

[288] Ibid

[289] For another retelling of all Luke's richness in description, see R D Culver, The Earthly Career of Jesus the Christ, p 18

[290] For a modern discussion and examples of such analysis, see Comfort and Barrett, The Text of the Earliest New Testament Greek Manuscripts, pps 24-29, 60-62, 207-228, 381-387, and 503-504

Given his forceful intent, his stated desire to win the reader over to his truthfulness and his demonstrated track record of accuracy, I ask a basic question: If Luke were a scribe, how would we apply the standards of modern textual criticism to him? With the "mental profile" that is forming from his own words, does he appear to be sloppy, casual and careless, senile and halting, or disciplined, focused, fastidious and meticulous; highly concerned for correctness, able to ferret out facts? Or is he double-minded, scheming and fraudulent? This then is but a first glance at the mind of the man accused of incompetence and irresponsibility in the matter of reporting the cosmic Crucifixion Eclipse.

Of course, the unrepentant critic's response to all this will be: No matter how high Luke's standards, or forceful his claim, no matter who reviewed Luke's words, no matter how highly modern scholars praise his accuracy, error crept in; the Eclipse was a colossal misunderstanding on Luke's part. By now I believe I have proven such prejudice verges on the unreasoning. For the sake of thoroughness and to accommodate any such stubborn rejection, I will address the notion of a mental lapse in a presumably otherwise competent, historian. The exhausted reader may wish to proceed directly to Section 1.4 at this point.

F. Was Luke 23:45 a Mental Lapse of an Otherwise Competent Scholar?

If Luke 23 was the product of a mental lapse, in a superior historian, it occurred at one of the most phenomenal verses he ever wrote, second only to the virgin birth, and the Resurrection. I would ask the reader to briefly reflect upon what it means to mentally skip a beat when reporting cosmic events. The Old Testament has its own statements of miracles that defy human logic, such as the parting of the Red Sea at the Exodus, or Joshua's long day. What might we think if an Old Testament commentator said Moses had a mental lapse when he wrote that God descended from heaven to the top of Mount Sinai in a cloak of smoke and fire, and gave the Ten Commandments to the nation of Israel? How might we react to a statement that Moses was confused when he wrote that God separated the Red Sea? How should we respond to some modern excuse that Joshua was senile when he wrote that the Sun stood still in the sky when he fought his battle for the Promised Land? Hopefully this comparison makes clear the kind of issues we bring upon ourselves when we attempt to reduce an avowed act of God down to the level of human control.

The more spectacular the event an author reports and the more it calls attention to itself, the more it jogs the author's mind with its imposing claims and the less likely he is to downplay or misstate it. If Luke 23 is one of the few fact of history Luke wrote about that has yet to be confirmed, among many statements now known to be correct, then the accumulated facts tip the scales towards a competent historian who habitually got it right, and once more another set of scholarly excuses are shown to be improbable.

I have attempted to address every sort of objection against the historical reality of Luke 23:45, from whatever quarter it came. By now it becomes clear that the modern critics of Luke 23:45 were forced to paint that verse as a mental aberration, because all other options were denied to them; all the Luke scholarship of their day

was proving Luke to be more and more accurate.[291] Have the commentators been objective with Luke's integrity, or are they balking at the weight of an immense miracle they do not know how to prove?

G. What Do Later Generations Of Christians Say For Luke's Truthfulness?

In the time of 150-200 A.D., heretics tried to discredit Luke. Church leaders responded, issuing counter-statements that praise the integrity and factual accuracy of Luke's Gospel at that early time. One such defense which has survived to the present day, is a tract by the Churchman Irenaeus. There are obvious parallels between that criticism and the modern one that we can draw lessons from.

Perhaps the modern critic might use such controversy as a wedge to prove the Eclipse verse was considered fable in its own age, but such thinking is itself a lapse in reason. If the whole society was aware of eclipse science in 63 A.D., it continued to be so in 150-200 A.D. (We talked earlier about Claudius Ptolemy, the great astronomer who wrote in 160 A.D.) If Gentile historians such as Thallus (52 A.D.) and Phlegon (120 A.D.[292]) reported a Crucifixion eclipse, the Gentile world still knew of it in 150 - 200 A.D. If Church hierarchy approved Luke 23 in 63 A.D. and then consciously canonized it in 95 A.D., it was still unchallenged in 150 - 200 A.D., when men such as Irenaeus wrote. Irenaeus' defense of Luke has to be viewed in light of all these realities.

If anything, we see the opposition to Christianity waiting for time to pass, hiding behind the fog of history to discredit what was vigorously defended decades earlier. Luke's mental capacity was not compromised by the passage of time, rather his enemies used it as a cover for promoting false charges.

Irenaeus was a third generation Christian. He was taught by Polycarp, who in turn was taught by the Apostle John, eyewitness to Christ. Irenaeus wrote a tract against the heretic Marcion. Marcion was actively promoting a Gnostic movement which denied various Christian doctrines. In attacking Marcion, Ireneus specifically pointed out the integrity and accuracy of everything Luke wrote. Irenaeus paints his defense with a very fine brush. He enumerates for his readers nearly 30 facts of Christian tradition unique to Luke's writing. Luke therefore is a key source for authentic Christian information to be found nowhere else. Irenaeus basically says: "We all know and agree to the accuracy of everything Luke wrote." Even Origen, who tried to reinterpret the nature of the Crucifixion Darkness, agreed with Irenaeus. Origen wrote:

> Matthew, Mark, John and Luke did not "try" to write [their Gospels]. They wrote .... when they were filled with the Holy Spirit. .... Luke knew by firm faith and by careful consideration

[291] Bruce, F F , op cit., p. 91

[292] Paul Maier gives the date of Phlegon's writing as 137 A.D (p 125 of Vardaman, Chronos, Kairos, Christos

> and did not waver on any point, wondering whether it should be this way or that.[293] (emphasis and comment added)

We see here no questioning of Luke's competence. There was no Church tradition that errors had been found in Luke or that he was grossly wrong on any point of history. No controversy, no outcry. Rather the unbroken tradition is one of confidence in everything Luke wrote. If the commentators wish to make Luke lapse, they get no support from the Christian community, only opposition. Moreover, the early Church also validated the material unique to Luke.

> .... through him we have become acquainted with very many and important parts of the Gospel. ....
>
> It follows then, as of course, that these men [the ancient critics] must either receive the rest of his narrative, or else reject these parts also. For no persons of common sense can permit them to receive some things recounted by Luke as being true and to set others aside, as if he had not known the truth.[294] (emphasis added)

There are differences between my usage of these words to prove Luke's integrity and how modern commentators react to them. Irenaeus is speaking here of professing Christians who claim to view Luke's Gospel as the inspired Word of God, as "Divine Truth". Luke's words have a blanket divine authority to the believing Christian of 60 A.D. Modern commentators need not be so believing. In 1927, in his book, The Making of Luke-Acts, Henry Cadbury wrote "we shall prefer to form our verdict about its contents piece by piece."[295] He probably had Irenaeus in mind when he wrote those words. Fair enough. The doubting scholar has no reason to be a mindless disciple of Irenaeus when all he does is prove one fact of history after another. But is that what Luke's gospel is, simply a collection of facts to be proved one at a time?

Irenaeus' words still stand, when we consider Luke's Gospel represents the authority of the Christian faith. Let me rehearse precisely what this means.

The modern commentator must agree that scripture was used as authority for the doctrines of the Church in 60 A.D., whether or not they believe God truly inspired it. If the scripture is more than folktale, its authority over the people, however the commentators wish to define that, must be uniformly applied to all of Luke, not some of Luke. First century church authority was all-or-nothing, first century doctrines and facts also had to be all-or-nothing. The first generations of the Church knew Luke to be historically correct, all-or-nothing. Commentators today say Luke's historical accuracy must be checked one point at a time. They say so without realizing that the Church would have faced scandal or even collapsed two

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[293] Just, A.A., Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture - Luke, p. 3.
[294] Roberts, A., and Donaldson, J., The Ante Nicene Fathers, vol. I, p. 439
[295] Ibid.

thousand years ago if it made the kinds of blunders they claim Luke made in Chapter 23, verse 45.

Commentators beware, both history and Irenaeus are saying, "You can't selectively pluck out passages from Luke's work, cast them aside and then accredit only what remains as historically correct. There never would have been a Church if your reasoning is true. Luke had no mental lapses or blunders." The fact that the Church, based upon eyewitnesses' reports, never faced such turmoil from within or without, strongly supports this. The silent testimony of history challenges you to prove otherwise. If Luke's words were flawed in the Darkness verse, show where they were challenged by honest men two thousand years ago.

Shall we look at the best that the commentators have to say about Luke 23:45, when they treat it as an isolated snip of history? Specifically referring the Darkness verse, Henry Cadbury wrote:

> A modern historian [of the Crucifixion Darkness] ... might possibly have taken the trouble to find out whether contemporary astronomical records [in Luke's day] mentioned such an event. If he did not, he would be as likely as ancient writers to jump to conclusions without thinking ... [296] (comments and emphasis added)

I have found no proof that Dr. Cadbury exhaustively examined ancient astronomical records, to either prove or disprove the Crucifixion darkness as an Eclipse-related phenomenon. More modern scholars have attempted to look at the starry record of long ago, but failed. They didn't know which day Jesus died.[297] I believe I have performed this task in the present book and Dr. Cadbury is in error on this "piece" of Luke's scholarship.

Can we entertain the idea that the Doctor may have jumped to a false conclusion based upon a naturalistic bent of mind? A "flaw" in the mind, coupled with a "lapse" in scholarly pursuit? He did so, by not studying the astronomical records for the sky over Jerusalem at 12 noon the day Jesus died. He has not examined Luke point by point. Should we then label this consummate scholar as inadequate? Should we challenge everything he ever wrote, on a point by point basis. We could, but I would not. Yet his words, penned in 1927, became the basis for a tradition of scholarly disdain against Luke 23:45, that remains to this day.

Should we accept Luke's words as a uniform package? If God is included in the picture, yes; and isn't that the very bone of contention of the Darkness verse? Saying God does or does not exist?

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[296] Ibid , p 334

[297] See my discussion of the confusion over a Good Friday Crucifixion, in Section 1 5, and the research from history in Section 2 4

1.4 But The Commentators are Reluctant to Make God Supernatural

I have just discussed the many objections to Luke 23:45 in terms of language-based excuses and slurs against Luke's person. Now we turn to the deepest of all objections: As Ramsay noted nearly a century ago, the verse is a litmus test for how those who judge it view a living God. If part of the scholarly community defends Luke's competence as a historian, especially his ability to accurately report the details of history,[298] why do we find a sealed verdict against the historical truth of Luke 23:45 on the part of <u>all</u> of them?

Commentators have developed and carried on a tradition of their own which says no miracles exist, all early Christians were gullible or ignorant victims of the age they lived in; there <u>must</u> be either a natural or a mystical explanation for everything Luke wrote.

But as we just saw, their naturalistic explanations are not workable; none of them remain rational when they are examined in light of other facts. Men are pitting their prejudices against the reality of a supreme God in the rawest of contests and losing the battle of logic. It appears to me that the facts thus far show the claim for a Creator God to be more consistent than the critics' objections. Yet the reality of their untenable position, staring them in the face, is not enough to dissuade them from abandoning it and seeking a more logical, but less natural, solution. They are reluctant to make God supernatural. As Christ wisely said of human nature in the parables, "Even if one were to return from the dead, they would not believe."[299] And of course, He did.

Is God God, or is He "Nature"? The Creator, as revealed in the pages of the Bible, is <u>not</u> the Creation. The Supernatural is not the natural order of things; He is above it in powers and control. That fashionable blur is either muddied thinking or great presumptuousness. Now for some additional facts on this curiosity.

The last commentator I could discover who credited the Crucifixion eclipse to a divine agency in the real world and who was not speaking abstractly or poetically, was the English scholar, Alfred Plummer. He wrote his commentary on Luke in 1896. He cites most of the evidence for the eclipse that I have already included in this book and he stated it was due "either to a supernatural cause, or to a providential coincidence".[300] The record from astrophysics shows both Plummer's reasons are true. There was indeed a supernatural cause that moved the Moon halfway around our planet and the orbits of the Earth and Moon providentially favored such an event to take place with the least disruption to the Solar system. Yet ten years later, in the final edition of his commentary, Plummer reverses himself and says we cannot know the true cause for Luke's statement.[301]

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[298] Marshall, I H., Luke the Historian and Theologian, p 69

[299] See Luke 16:31 for this quote

[300] Bock, D L., op cit., p 1859 My 2004 reprint of the Fifth edition of Plummer DOES NOT contain the words Bock cites, presumably from the original 1896 edition.

[301] Plummer, op cit., pps 537, and 545

Seemingly, the tendency to make God a part of "nature", claimed its last holdout in 1906.

This playing with Who and What the true God is, of always minimizing His divinity, has a very long history. It is evident in the writings of Origen (180-240 A.D.), the very first revisionist of Luke 23:45, whom I first mentioned at the end of Section 1.2.

Origen most definitely did not go about saying Luke blundered. He sought to discredit the literal fact of a Solar eclipse at the Crucifixion, but he cast it more as a mystical event than a mistake. He raised this new interpretation in order to promote his secret Gnostic doctrines involving astrology and a great Sun spirit called "Iao" that was far more powerful than the Christian God. Origen was in effect re-ordering a Pagan pantheon to supersede and assimilate the Christian Godhead within itself. In an age which knew nothing of Newton's laws of force and gravity, Iao was said by the Greeks to exist within the Sun. Iao, not the earth turning upon its axis, was the power that moved the Sun across the heavens each day. Such a Power as Iao could NEVER be eclipsed or exceeded by Christ and his Father, for the Sun never stood still. Therefore, Luke, man of the Christian God, had to be ignorant of higher mysteries and his words, of necessity, reinterpreted to glorify Iao.

Origen was no atheist or disciple of Darwin. In truth, Origen and Julius Africanus, a sometime disciple, were lone critics of the Eclipse for centuries.

Early Luke-Bashing was Really God-Bashing

Approximately 1721, C. Heumann wrote a text discrediting Luke as an inspired writer of Gospel truth. To Heumann, Luke was a writer who lived centuries after Jesus and collected hearsay and fable to prove to the Pagans that the Christian religion of their day had some basis in history.[302] The upshot of this separation of Luke from early Christianity was to short-circuit the God who presumably inspired Luke, as an ineffectual Power. Luke was no oracle of a living God, just a too-late apologist for other men.

In the Enlightenment, about forty years later (1760), the severity of the attack against Luke and his God increased. With Hermann Reimarus and Gotthold Lessing, we find the beginnings of a series of German and European scholars that pictured the New Testament writings as inconsistent and unhistorical.[303] By attacking details, they could overthrow the Infinite. In England, in the 1790's Edward Gibbon made direct attempts to discredit the Crucifixion eclipse as unhistorical. Gibbon had no need for traditional religion or its God. In 1830, F. C. Baur had founded the Tubingen School, a "sect" of scholars at Tubingen University in Germany, dedicated to the serious criticism of the scripture. It spawned many of the severest critics of Luke and suffered the greatest defeat when he was

[302] Gasque, op cit , p. 21.

[303] For a concise description of some of the key authors, their writings, and the controversies from 1760 to 1940, see Durant, W , Caesar and Christ, pps. 553-554, and his references

vindicated in the 20th century.[304] In the mid 1800's, just as the cities of the Bible were first being unearthed by Europeans in Mesopotamia and Tischendorff was discovering manuscripts, Earnest Renan wrote a popular and scandalous Life of Jesus that argued for inconsistencies among each of the four Gospel accounts.[305] Once more, the supernatural was being gutted out of the Christ story. The ensuing decades built upon such bigotry, creating the tidal wave of Luke-bashing that prevailed over all of Luke's work in the 1880s.

The onslaught did not go unchallenged. There arose a backlash of Biblical research in England, Europe and the United States, which created the present level of knowledge about Biblical origins. It began as a crusade to defend God Himself, but evolved simply into a defense of the scriptures as a reliable history book.

It involved both archeology and scholarship. The process still continues (witness this book). Nevertheless, the collective psyche of the commentators never returned to an earlier level of confidence in a God who ruled over the affairs of men and worked fabulous miracles to intervene at select moments in human history.

The intellectual climate of the early 20th century was one of the passage of an old order of absolutes, replaced with uncertainty, relativism and staring into the abyss of gargantuan warfare. The modern age was too educated, too ravaged by war, for a supernatural God to be kept at the center of men's souls.

It seemed that even as the proof of the flood, Nineveh, Babylon and Luke was being dug out of the original ground in the Middle East, other forces were busy in Europe and the modern world, destroying the natural order of men's belief system. As Ramsay suggested, the modern scholars are the victims of the age that spawned them.

The losers in all this were mankind in general, Luke 23:45 in particular and the Almighty in sum. Christian scholarship could prove that Jesus truly lived when the Scripture said He did. It could uncover an ancient record of the Crucifixion, the Apostles and the facts surrounding Jesus' life, but a total eclipse of the Sun was beyond science or belief in the 1880's or 1900's. It was all but forgotten in the 1880's. Naturalism prevailed as an explanation of last resort.

As Alfred Edersheim wrote of the Eclipse in 1879, "I simply cannot believe it."[306]

Even after Luke was first proven competent by Ramsay in the early 1900's, the Eclipse rejection was never revisited; to do so would be to resurrect the idea of a literal, miracle-working Creator God. As evidence for Luke's abilities and accuracy mounted, Luke 23:45 was left isolated by the scholars. Rather, the excuse-making mentality became orthodoxy and it remains in large part to this day.

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[304] Gasque has a very good overview for the Tuningen group on pages 21-54 of his "History". See also notes and references on page 26, and following. There are far too many scholars and opinions for me to identify them all here.

[305] Durant, W., loc. cit., p. 554

[306] I am paraphrasing sentiments he expressed in note 1 of The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah, vol. ii, p. 604. See also p. 605, notes 1-3 for similar remarks

In the later 20th century the scholars had convinced themselves the task of "debunking" Luke 23:45 had been completed. Forgetful of the ancient reality and mindful of 19th century rationalism, the intellectual climate that circulated within their community prevailed no matter what Luke actually wrote.

Only that nagging word "eklipontos" remained, or so it seemed.

Hundreds of years of scholarly opinion against the Eclipse, starting perhaps with Edward Gibbon, has justified and sanctioned the present mindset: vindicate an incompetent Luke, but reject a supernatural God. This mentality, whether scholars realized it or not, cuts against the most powerful claim of the Christian religion: that an all-powerful Creator God intervened in the natural world and vindicated the Sacrifice of His Son before the eyes of sinning men, two thousand years ago. Throw out or negate the Crucifixion miracle and you gut Christianity of its true power, true message and true ability to deliver mankind. In other words, the modern record clearly shows that when commentators discuss issues relating to a Supreme Being, the supernatural is impossible and should *not* be considered for any real length of time.

How Objective Has the Modern Age Made the Commentators?

How can a position such as "Do not mix God with the supernatural", be rational or logical? I contend that anyone who reasons about anything religious from this position is condemned to failure, because they are reasoning from a blatant contradiction, they are straddling logical opposites that are moving in opposite directions--God's dynamic prerogatives and the natural order. Painful.

Cross-discipline studies in many fields must be addressed, in order to objectively grasp Luke 23:45 and they transcend merely the study of ancient astronomy. Egyptian and Hebrew calendars, celestial mechanics, history of religion, New Testament textual criticism, Biblical chronology, Roman history, Far Eastern culture, Lunar theory, physical Optics and other fields all become relevant to a search for the truth. I attempt to do this in the present work.

In light of the fact that the majority of Biblical commentators sidestep the entire field of classical astronomy, this next observation is painful but necessary: When only the linguistic and historical background on this matter is addressed by scholars, when cross-discipline studies are ignored or limited to a few familiar ideas, the scholars labor within a restricted and therefore false understanding. The recent approach to Luke is more promising, but it still has not resolved the question of the Crucifixion Eclipse. With all due respect, this is not good enough.

A New Generation Attempts to Look at Luke and Astronomy

Some few studies on Luke 23, which attempt to explain the Eclipse verse in terms of modern astronomy, do exist in specialized books and publications of the last 20 years. They are more rare than the Bibles that mention the eclipse. One can find articles in the British journal *Nature*, or study the two books Chronos, Kairos,

Christos, volumes I and II. These modern astronomy works are quoted in some few commentaries,[307] but few Bible scholars take the clue and extend their personal study into the ancient astronomy of Luke's time.

Conversely, the problem with the modern "Luke 23 astronomers" is that they have not investigated the history of religion. They accept the common tradition that the Crucifixion was on Good Friday, which it was not, and they alternate between one or more possible Friday Passovers in either 30 or 33 A.D. as the correct date. Neither date, as I will show later, can be used to prove a solar eclipse at the Crucifixion from astronomy. They are satisfied with a probable date, usually 33 A.D. and assume we can do no better.

They are therefore unable to take the next step, which is to think the unthinkable, namely that a Supernatural God has indeed intervened from time to time in human history, and then set themselves to rationally solve the riddle of what happened 2,000 years ago.

The have forgotten the labors of Sir William Ramsay and his successors.

[307] In particular, Raymond Brown, is to be commended. Writing in The Death of the Messiah, vol. 2, he surveys some of the Christian-astronomical literature, (see pps 1375 - 1378 of vol 2) but he states he "has no competence in the matter", and he did not revert to the primary astronomical works of Neugebauer et. al , in order to address Luke 23:45

1.5 Conclusion - Accept It or Not, Luke Uses the Word "Eclipse" - Now What Do We Do With It? Trivialize It or Prove It?

Luke wrote the word "eclipse". Luke was sound-minded; Luke was accurate. Thousands of people in 60 A.D. and later agreed with him. The leadership of original Christianity and eyewitnesses of the events all agreed with him. Rome never engaged in a massive campaign to overthrow the claim that supernatural signs attended the death and deity of Julius Caesar. Only when the same kind of stories were part of the Christian "propaganda", do we begin to see a possible alternative reaction by the State.

Given all this, can we honestly say that the scales are decidedly tipped in favor of a thunderstorm at the Crucifixion when Luke writes otherwise? There is more than reasonable doubt it was not raining that day. Now what do we do? We must go outside the standard ideas the modern authorities on Luke's Gospel teach.

Darell Bock, in his massive two-volume commentary on Luke, makes an observation about how his highly respected fellow commentator, Raymond Brown, explains Luke 23:45. Bock's very candid comment cuts to the heart of the dilemma, "What should be done with Luke's words?"

> R[aymond E]. Brown discusses the eclipse options and finds none persuasive. He sees Luke creatively tying these details together, but in other cases where ...[the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke] overlap *Brown is less skeptical, so it is uncertain why he is hesitant here.* [308] (emphasis added.)

In other words, this particular passage, Luke 23:45, perhaps of all the ones in the first three Gospels, is the most troubling and difficult to decide for the most eminent of Biblical scholars, even though they admit they know the verse says "eclipse". Then is the problem with the verse or with the scholars?

Perhaps we can gain additional perspective on this by forging one last comparison. This time, compare Luke with his latter-day commentators. We know Luke claims to have reported what he diligently ascertained to be the accurate facts of history. We also know that the Commentators have diligently striven to ascertain what is accurate in this verse. Perhaps they should more closely follow Luke's example, and simply report what they have found with complete conviction. Once that step is taken, the next step in research amounts to the burden of this present book, to unflinchingly confirm or deny, by all means scientific and historical, the Solar and Lunar eclipses at Christ's death and burial.

What really happened in history? And When?

The next step in my effort to prove Luke 23:45 is to establish with finality the exact date of the Crucifixion. Once that date is determined, calculated astronomical data for the exact positions of the Sun, Earth and Moon at the time Christ was dying,

[308] D. Bock, op, cit , p. 1859

can be obtained from existing scientific reference works and state of the art computer programs.

The date we will uncover in these pages has been mentioned once or twice in history and used by a small group of churches throughout the ages. Any mainstream researchers for the Eclipse event have not offered it, primarily because they have been sidetracked by the un-Biblical notion of a Good Friday Crucifixion.

It never happened that way. Scholars from Yale Divinity School and other backgrounds have already demonstrated the error of a Good Friday interpretation. Jesus was crucified on a Wednesday. A prophecy in Daniel said Messiah would be cut off in the midst of the week. That literally happened. After I prove the actual date Jesus died, I will address the origin of Good Friday in very great detail. Let me briefly sketch here the key issues involving the phenomena of Good Friday, the false Crucifixion date.

As has already been suggested, Good Friday was invented from an ancient pagan tradition that produced the religions of Osiris, Attis, Dionysius and other cult gods. It was not formally adopted as a Christian day of worship until 370 A.D. (I carefully document all this in Chapter 2.) History shows there was a three hundred-year-long controversy over a Good Friday Crucifixion in early Christianity. Good Friday was substituted after the fact by Gnostic opponents of original Christianity in order to perpetuate their own religious system under the guise of Christ.

What we have today in Good Friday observance is a symbolic date that only became official after centuries of concerted struggle. This date is much like the official birthday of the Queen of England, or the official day for celebrating the birthday of President George Washington in America. Neither of these two dates are the literal dates on which the events occurred. They are selected for convenience and ceremony.

Good Friday is directly adapted from the 4000 year-old mythology of the Babylonian Sun god, Tammuz and his counterpart in Egypt, Osiris. We are going to see this in graphic relief, with newly marshaled facts that go beyond anything this author, and probably you, have ever seen.

All Crucifixion researchers who are hamstrung by the Good Friday error wind up offering only curious possibilities about the Eclipses; their Good Friday dates will not yield a perfect match with scripture, the positions of the solar system, or history. They do yield partial results, namely because all manner of eclipses of various sorts were occurring in Jesus age, but none of the results are conclusive. With the correct date as carefully determined by the scriptures and history, all this vagary is eliminated and the pieces of the puzzle fall into place flawlessly. The eclipse results are novel; they are also liberating.

They prove the existence of God and they prove Jesus Christ is the Son of God.

The issue is no longer a matter of faith. The world knew it for 1,700 years. Only in later generations, have men's collective understanding become darkened to the facts of history which are uncovered here.

They show the Impossible with certainty.

After I have traced the true course of history and totally reversed the built-in bigotry of a Good Friday Crucifixion, the astronomical data for the Sun, Moon and Earth on the correct Passover will be crosschecked with major new historical insights into the life of Tiberius Caesar, to confirm the case. We will also discuss at length the secret philosophy of the Gnostic Church "Fathers", the men for whom the expression, "wolves in sheep's clothing was originally coined by Christ. Finally, certain aspects of the Egyptian religious calendar will be mentioned in order to prepare for the second major point of the book: the literal Crucifixion eclipses confounded all the religions of Egypt and Rome the very day Jesus died.

This is the path we will follow through the material of the next and following Chapters. Hang on, dear reader; the pace gets faster, the river wider and the journey longer.

2. When Did Jesus Die? - Pinning Down When Everything Happened and Uncovering Secrets of the Ages

Now that it is apparent the Bible stubbornly states there was an eclipse, we need to turn from matters of manuscripts and Luke's psyche to the events themselves of 2,000 years ago. In the last chapter, we undertook an archeological investigation of sorts into the original words of the Bible; now we will engage in a systematic unveiling of time and season, of Earth and Moon, as it played out the day Jesus died. We will not, however, be finished with controversies over what Greek or Hebrew words mean. It seems intellectuals are prone to repeatedly lose themselves within the ambiguous meanings of ancient words.

As with Luke 23:45, controversy over the dates of Christ's birth, ministry, death and resurrection has existed for centuries, even millennia.[309] Just as with the Eclipses, every facet of every claim and counter-claim on when Jesus died has been debated by experts in the last 200 years. Yet the point of this book is that for all their writing and rhetoric they have not come to the correct understanding. They do not know when Jesus died. Once again, if you were to seek enlightenment from the authorities on the date of the Crucifixion, the ideas you would discover in the pages of their books would be in conflict with the information you find in this book. Once more, everything I write on the subject of Jesus' death will be challenged the very first time you look for mainstream opinion. Once more, the very first words out of my mouth must be contrasted with the experts' opinions and I must prove the experts wrong.

The date of the Crucifixion is basic to this book; it must be conclusively established.

Overview of the Details Covered in This Chapter

This Chapter is the biggest of the book, the backbone of the material that follows. I need to give you a roadmap so you can fix the larger objectives in mind as we march through the details.

How can we canvass the historical record to determine the literal date when Jesus died? What new insights can we gain, that others have missed? There are multiple stages to solving this new problem that we must step through. Briefly, it runs like this:

All of the religion and astronomy in this Chapter revolves around dates. The first question to answer is, Do we know the correct Jewish Passover dates for 2,000 years ago? We will quickly review present understanding of the ancient Hebrew calendar, just to demonstrate our knowledge of it is firm and sure. All present inquiries into the date of Jesus' death start with certain basic facts. We know Jesus died during the tenure of Pontius Pilate, a Roman-installed ruler of Judea.

[309] For some of the early speculations on the date of the Crucifixion, see Finnegan, Handbook of Biblical Theology, pps. 185, 364-365, 384-385. For a few later day examples, Ibid, p. 367.

The Gospel of John says Christ died on a Passover day.[310] Additional evidence from other books in the Bible proves it was on Nisan 14 in the Hebrew calendar (April). Careful study of the Gospel narrative shows it was a Wednesday. Mainstream researchers do not agree with this conclusion. We will prove a Wednesday Crucifixion both from the researches of others and from much new material within the Gospels that has never been understood before.[311] We will also take a look at the limited language arguments scholars offer for Good Friday and disprove them.[312]

There was more than one Wednesday Passover in Jesus' generation, while Pontius Pilate was ruling. On which one did Jesus die? The ancient rabbinical method for setting the start of every New Year is still known; it can be used to produce the literal date of each Passover in Jesus' adult life.

After this, we will examine statements from the scriptures and the major events of world history to identify the one year which uniquely satisfies all the criteria of sky and earth. Once more, every victory must be hard fought if we are to truly prove the greatest event of our history.

Once this is completed, we will take a sweeping 4,000 year side trip to discover and document the ancient origin of Good Friday and the true story of how it came to be a part of the original Passover week observance in 370 A.D. Much of the material in this Section is, I believe, produced for the first time.

In Part B of this Chapter (Section 2.5), we will launch into the marvelous movements of the Solar system and uncover the Eclipse Astronomy that irrefutably proves the Day Christ Died was unique in the heavens of 2,000 years ago. We will prove from advanced Lunar programs that the Earth was perfectly aligned with the Moon that day for a supernatural Eclipse of the Sun to occur. We will also show from ancient eclipse records that this same alignment produced a documented Solar eclipse in China just two weeks after Jesus died. We will prove from respected scientific works that a natural blood-red eclipse of the Moon occurred over the skies of Jerusalem the first night Jesus' body was in the tomb. It was the biggest, reddest Lunar eclipse of Jesus' generation. The astronomy discussion will be the most technical of all the burdens I put upon you, but the final results will be clear, simple and startling.

Finally we will consider evidence from across the world that proves the Moon's miraculous journey halfway around the planet and back, the day Jesus died was seen over the South Pacific, Japan, Siberia and Tibet.

There will be yet more evidence, this time from documented Roman and European history, in Chapters 3 and 4.

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[310] Compare John 19:14 and John 19:31; then match this result against Leviticus 23:5-7 which shows John's preparation day is the same day that Moses commanded the Passover lamb to be slain and eaten

[311] I am speaking here of the extremely close connection between Christ's resurrection of Lazarus, and his own resurrection; of the exact words of the Pharisees when they asked for Jesus' tomb to be sealed three full days, and other facts

[312] Some of this material will be transferred to Appendix 8. I will note which, as we go through the paces.

It is real.

A. The Time

First Task: Confirming the Accuracy of the Hebrew Calendar 2,000 Years Ago

For many years during the last century, scholars believed that the actual months for the Hebrew calendar of 2,500 to 2,000 years ago were correctly known, fixed and unchallengable. In the 1940's however, scholars at Brown University began to publish information that proved our ideas of when the months fell in the Jewish calendar 2,000 years ago were slightly off. The possibility existed that some of the Passovers in Jesus' lifetime were wrong, early by one month. We thought they fell in March, when actually they occurred in April. Clearly, the new information, if true, had to be looked at by Jewish and Christian scholars. It was, and the changes were accepted.[313] (For more on this, read the note at the bottom of the page.[314])

The two primary scholars who compiled these revisions were Richard Parker and Waldo Dubberstein. Their work was originally based upon astronomy and historical records. It was later slightly revised by one or two others, but modern astronomy, which gives the exact placement of the Sun, Moon and Earth, over thousands of years, coupled with the Jewish rules for starting the New Year, has removed all doubt as to its correctness. No physicist will ever tell us in the future that the Moon wasn't where the programs say it was on October 13, 382 B.C. No Rabbi will ever tell us the calendar rules used in 14 A.D. have been changed. Parker and Dubberstein's work has become the stable standard for modern inquiry into the

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[313] See Babylonian Chronology - 626 B.C. - A.D. 75, by Richard A. Parker and Waldo Dubberstein. Although it is out of print, facsimile copies may still be purchased.

[314] The Hebrew calendar was anciently revised each year to keep it in step with changes in the length of the seasons. Every year, winter, and the seasons vary slightly in length, some years being longer and some years being shorter. Calendars are by nature a fixed set of days. From time to time each calendar, whether Roman, Hebrew, Persian or Chinese needs to add a day, or more to ensure that winter always falls when the calendar says it is December. In Western society we are all accustomed to the "leap year", every 4th year, which adds a day, to ensure this synchronicity between man and nature.

This task of keeping the Hebrew calendar in step with the seasons was performed each year by a committee of the ruling Rabbis 2,000 years ago. They did not have computer models of the Solar system with which to generate long term dates, they had to look every year to see what the seasons were telling them-- was it going to be a long winter, or a short one? There was a well-known Jewish method for performing the determination, and it was meticulously practiced perhaps as far back as 500 B.C. The method used in Jesus' age worked for its age; it was not at fault. Our modern knowledge of all the conditions the Rabbis had to deal with in Jesus' lifetime however, turned out to be incomplete. They correctly calculated their calendar 2,000 years ago, we today just could not correctly reproduce what they did. In 1956 Richard A. Parker and Waldo Dubberstein, professors at Brown University in Rhode Island, with the assistance of Father Johan Schaumberger, Abraham Sachs, Otto Neugebauer, and others, uncovered proof for several additional "leap years" in the original Hebrew calendar of 2,500 years ago that were not previously realized by us moderns. These are years that contained one month more than was originally thought. The Hebrew calendar has short years of 12 months, and long years of 13 months, but after every 19-years, it goes back to the same relative starting point; the alignments of the Earth, Sun, and Moon regenerate in the sky every 19-years. These "leap months" had to be added in order to make the Passover begin co-incident with the sprouting of the new grain, and the maturing of the young lambs. The entire Babylonian-Hebrew calendar system from 626 B.C. to 75 A.D. was revised by this scholarship.

ancient Hebrew calendar and the events of ancient history. And yet, because their results are only fifty years old, some respected authorities are reluctant to give them full support. This cloud will be removed in Section 2.2.[315]

Which Passover Did Jesus Die?

John's Gospel states Jesus died on the daylight portion of a Passover day, at three P.M. in the afternoon, just as the Chief priests were beginning the process of slaying the lambs for thousands of Jews at the Temple in Jerusalem.[316] **Jesus, in effect, was the very first of the Passover sacrifices for the sins of Israel and the**

[315] Jack Finnegan, in his book, The Handbook of Biblical Chronology, makes reference to Parker and Dubberstein on page 363 While he provides them equal time, he does not unequivocally endorse them For this reason, I will go back to nature, and the rabbinical rules for setting the calendar 2,000 years ago Of course, there are also perpetual Jewish calendars in circulation today, developed by Jewish scholars A quick search on the Internet will yield several One calendar this author has consulted is called Hebcal.

[316] See John 19:14-31 Edersheim, The Temple and Its Ministry, p 174, says the Passover sacrifices started between 2:30 and 3:30 on the afternoon of Nisan 14 John, with the other Gospels puts Jesus ' death at 3 P M on Nisan 14 Edersheim reports both these facts, but it does not seem to me that he makes the complete connection of the times

world. It is a duality that has been observed by several commentators.[317] The calendar date of the Passover is fixed as Nisan 14 in the Hebrew calendar, but which one, and which Western date does it correspond to today?

The next set of Christian controversies for us to address deals with the correct Passover dates for the years 27 through 37 A.D. It is well known from the Gospels that Jesus was executed while a man named Pontius Pilate ruled Judea for the Romans.[318] Pilate's tenure is documented to have lasted from 27 to 37 A.D.[319], so a Nisan 14 between these years is the starting point for all inquiries. The current approach is to review all the Passovers in Jesus' life and look for Nisan 14s that fell on a Friday during 27-37 A.D. There are some. I will not follow that approach. Rather, I will look for Nisan 14s that fall on a Wednesday.

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[317] Torey, R., Difficulties in the Bible, pps 158-159 does not specifically state the 2:30 time from Edersheim, but he understands the Passover Lamb "type" applied to Jesus better than any writer I have seen Brown, R. The Death of the Messiah, vol ii, p. 1355-1356. But I do not agree with his conclusion that Jesus died on Nisan 15, because the Passover meal He ate was on the night of the 14-15 Rather, careful study of Exodus 12 and later chapters shows me it was instituted, and Jesus kept it as a meal on the night of Nisan 13-14 Alfred Edersheim points out that this is well known in the rabbinical literature (See The Temple and Its Ministry, p 164.) The Rabbis knew that they were not keeping Moses' Passover Service They distinguish in the Mishnah between "The Exodus Passover", which Jesus kept, and "The Permanent Passover", which the Jewish community keeps to this day. Both Passovers have the Lamb killed on Nisan 14. In the Exodus Passover it is cooked and eaten on the night of 13-14, on the Permanent Passover it is killed late on the 14th, but eaten a few hours later on the 15. Alfred Plummer, in his commentary on Luke, p 492, correctly states the lambs were killed on Nisan 14 at 2:30 - 5:30 P.M, , following Edersheim

[318] Matt 27:2, Mark 15:1, Luke 23:1, John 18:29

[319] There is an additional, but minor controversy over whether the years are 26-36 A.D , or 27-37 A.D It will not affect our results in any way

2.1 Internal Evidence from the Gospels Proves Jesus Died on a Wednesday Passover

If you consult virtually any commentary or book on the four Gospels, it will invariably assume a Friday Crucifixion and offer "solid" reasons explaining how the scriptures teach a Friday Crucifixion. They do not. My task here is to prove to you that I understand those Friday arguments, I can disprove those Friday arguments and I can prove Jesus died on a Wednesday. This "extraneous material" will be included in the book in order to prove I have not invented some irrational hypothesis that has no bearing in reality. (Again, if you are not interested in these more didactic details, I will constantly notify you whenever this material is about to be presented; it can be skipped over by the more general reader.)

A. What is the Problem With Good Friday? Answer: It Can't Give Us The Year Jesus Died

None of the set of possible dates for Jesus' Crucifixion that is presently cited in scholarly literature gives us any hope whatsoever for proving a Solar Eclipse occurred when Jesus died. The dates are all Fridays; they are the only Friday Passovers between 27 and 37 A.D. They do not corroborate the realities of Luke 23:45 which have already been demonstrated in Chapter 1. Some scholars have published well-reasoned arguments that Friday April 3, 33 A.D. is the date of choice. A brief Lunar eclipse was seen later in that day over Jerusalem, just past twilight, so the scholars claim victory. They have a Lunar Eclipse, even though the Darkness at the Crucifixion must be explained away. They cannot conclusively prove 33 A.D. is the date from the other known facts of Christ's life, they simply say they believe it has the "highest probability" of being correct.[320] Others see evidence supporting Friday April 7, 30 A.D. as a second candidate.[321] Why is this? Not enough information? Yes and no. Their conclusions have been reached through various false assumptions, the chief of which is a Friday Crucifixion. Others remain. In order to force the Gospels to endorse a Friday Passover death for Jesus, these false assumptions in turn lead to a massive reinterpretation of the words in the Gospels. It almost works, but not quite.

The Knowledge Gap That Modern Researchers Labor Under

Just as misinformation and false opinions blunt the ability of Luke 23 scholars to grasp the realities of that verse, so the manufacture of traditions in Christianity has thwarted modern researchers of the Crucifixion Eclipses.

Crucifixion researchers almost always presume all early Church traditions (those from the time of 100-325 A.D.) are genuine, "Apostolic" truths. They are not. Modern crucifixion researchers do not stop to look at the massive war of words that engulfed original Christian doctrine from the very beginning and raged for

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[320] Ibid , p, 746, and Finnegan, Handbook of Biblical Chronology, pps 365, and 364 Brown, The Death of the Messiah, vol. ii, pps 1373-1376 gives both dates equal probability He cannot decide between the two

[321] Finnegan, J loc cit., p. 366. On pps 362, 367 and 368, gives a brief list of major modern scholars and their picks for the year of the Crucifixion He favors April3, 33 A.D

centuries. It is assumed that the Christians who survived the doctrinal wars of 90 or 165 A.D. were pure; only the heretics perished at the stake, or were driven from the congregations.[322] That too, is not quite right. What we today call early Christian traditions are not authentic at all, especially the ones that deal with Christ's Crucifixion and Resurrection. Scholars have tried and found that these "second generation" Christian beliefs cannot be used to determine the exact date of Jesus' death.[323] This inadequacy should immediately cause us to question the factualness of the men who followed after the Apostles in history's spotlight, yet for some reason it does not.

Crucifixion researchers also have an incomplete understanding of the series of days given in the Gospels for the week Jesus died. They get their informed opinions of Friday second hand, from other scholars, the commentators we met in Chapter 1. According to the Gospels, when did Jesus eat his last meal?[324] According to the Gospels, on what day of the week was he arrested, tried and Crucified?[325] If you were to become the Crucifixion researcher and pour over the commentators' words, you would discover uncertainty in all these areas. Yet despite all their misgivings, the commentators invariably conclude Good Friday is authentic. So who am I to pretend to know more?

Watch.

Modern crucifixion sleuths have multiple answers to choose from in each of these questions. They also presume, based upon our present understanding of Roman history, that the Crucifixion was some isolated event in a tiny corner of the Empire which no one knew about until the Apostles arrived and informed them of it. Therefore, they certainly do not look for indications of wider knowledge of Jesus' death in larger Roman society. Yet as you will see in Chapter 4, Tiberius Caesar, the "first" Roman of Jesus' generation, is the best witness of all to the Crucifixion Eclipses.

In the last 100 years various men have seen through the confusion Good Friday causes in the Bible and history and realized that the New Testament actually teaches Jesus died on a Wednesday Passover.[326] The majority, however, have offered scholarly reasons that "debunk" Wednesday and reaffirm the tradition of a Friday Crucifixion.[327] They hold to the Good Friday tradition and do everything in

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[322] For evidence of Church conflict and controversy around 90 A.D., see Brown R., Epistles of John, pps. 69, 47-68, 103-107. The controversy of 165 A.D. is known as the Quartodeciman (14th of the Month) Controversy. It involves whether to celebrate Christ's death on Nisan 14, as it happened in history, or on Easter Sunday. Easter Sunday won out. See Eusebius, The History of the Church, pps. 229-233.

[323] Finnegan, J. op. cit., p. 364, lists several examples of early date fixing by "Christian Fathers". Their claims make no sense today. (March 21, March 25, and April 20. These dates all have pagan or hermetic significance; they are not historical.)

[324] Brown, R., op. cit., pps. 1351-1352.

[325] Finnegan, J., op. cit., p. 354.

[326] See Hoeh, H., The Crucifixion was Not on Friday, first published in 1959, for just one example.

[327] Dr. Samuel Bacchiocchi, has written a solidly researched and linguistically argued book, The Time of the Crucifixion and the Resurrection that opts for Friday. Many of his citations will be retorted in these pages. While I respect his scholarship, I believe there are additional factors that ultimately prove him wrong. Nevertheless, by raising so many issues, and quoting so much material, he is a very worthy study.

their power to make supposedly ambiguous words in the New Testament fit with a Good Friday - Easter Sunday interpretation of the facts. They can make the Greek appear to be consistent with tradition, but they cannot remove the contradictions it creates with the flow of events as stated in the Bible story.

Trying to Reconcile Good Friday with "Three Days and Three Nights" - A Brief Introduction Into How Present Scholarship Props Up Good Friday, While Rejecting A Wednesday Crucifixion

Jesus said he would be "three days and three night" in the grave. There are 72 hours in three days, but there are only about 36 hours between late afternoon on Good Friday and Easter Sunday morning. This discrepancy is an alarming inconsistency, which requires total redress. If 72 hours is the actual time Jesus was dead, then he could not have died on a Friday. "Three days and three nights" sounds clear-cut and simple to our modern ears, but the New Testament Greek is actually a translation of older Hebrew idioms and expressions. When we read the Greek words for "three days and three nights", or "night and day", we are mostly confronting the Jewish way of expressing time, not the Greek.[328] Herein lies a problem which Good Friday defenders seize upon for advantage: because under some circumstances, a "day" in Hebrew can refer to less than a full 24 hours, this rule is immediately applied to Jesus' words "three days and three nights" in the Greek, and then presumed to prove Christ did not intend 72 hours at all. This is a wresting of language[329] that amounts to re-interpreting what Jesus actually said. The claim is made, that the words "three days and three nights", whether they are written in Matthew in Greek, or in the prophet Jonah in Hebrew, mean 36 hours and not 72.

Language versus Reality

The advocates for Good Friday now have a way to vindicate their cause with language, but as I said above, Good Friday still cannot explain everything the Gospels say happened while Jesus was dead; there is not enough time. Further, Good Friday cannot explain Luke 23:45. If Good Friday is true, Luke must have been senile and referring to a rainstorm. History proves it is in fact a created holiday. The language, when "adjusted", appears to allow for a 36-hour / Good Friday interpretation. If we ignore all the events that were transpiring while Jesus was in the grave and how long it took for them to occur, then of course, we have the language on our side to show Good Friday and 36 hours makes sense. But if we use both the chain of events AND the language, then the full picture forces the Greek to mean 72 hours. This in turn, means a Wednesday Crucifixion.

The data from astronomy, however, uniquely point to one year as the best year for the eclipse to occur. It just happens to match the year the Crucifixion fell on a Wednesday. The data from astronomy does not match any year in which there was

[328] See The New Strong's Expanded Exhaustive Concordance, Greek Dictionary of the New Testament, p 112, word number 2250, for a concise statement of this.

[329] See Appendix 8 -The Distorted Language Behind a Friday Crucifixion, where I cover all the intricacies of this argument at length

a Friday Crucifixion. Again, history states a Wednesday Crucifixion was observed for 350 years all over Europe. As you saw in the first chapter, forcing definitions into the original text of the Bible did not work with "skotizo" and it did not work with "ekleipo"; it will not work with "three days and three nights".

Therefore, rather than immediately engaging in studies of ambiguous Greek and Hebrew words, or misapplying Hebrew idioms to prove tenuous arguments, we will start first with a careful review of the literal chain of events surrounding Jesus' death and Resurrection. The timeframe given in the narrative does indeed produce a 72-hour, Wednesday Crucifixion on Nisan 14. Only after a timeline has been confirmed from all the facts, should any ambiguities of Jesus' words or Hebrew day-counting be studied.

Now to the business of working through the details of all this. (Casual readers might want to move ahead to Section 2.2 - Reconstructing the Date of Each Passover in Jesus' Adult Life, or even 2.3 - On Which Passover? - The Crucifixion was on Wednesday, April 25, 31 A.D., at this point.)

B. Breaking the Logjam of Ignorance and Confusion - Reuben Archer Torrey and a Wednesday Passover

A Wednesday Crucifixion is not some idea this author was forced to adopt in order to make sense of astronomy. Far from it. Theologians of great eminence in American evangelical circles have espoused it for at least 100 years, well before this book was ever conceived. Reuben Archer Torrey (1856-1928) was educated at Yale Divinity School. He was well known as a Christian preacher in the early 1900s and headed the highly respected Moody Bible Institute for nearly 10 years, teaching future ministers and Bible scholars for a total of nearly 19-years. He wrote over forty books on popular Christianity.[330] He has been called "one of the greatest evangelists of modern times"[331], the forerunner of almost all radio and television evangelists in 20th century America. One of his books was called Difficulties in the Bible. In one of its brief chapters, he addressed the question of what day Jesus died and whether Jesus truly was dead for a full seventy-two hours, as he said he would be ("three days and three nights") before his resurrection. Torrey carefully spliced together the accounts of Mark and Luke's Gospels to show that the events they recorded clearly took place over 72 hours and that Jesus died late on a Wednesday afternoon.[332] He gave 10 citations from the Gospels that show the phrase "three days and three nights", when considered from all the evidence, can only refer to a full 72 hours, the alternate interpretation that they are referring to "partial days" is inadequate. Torrey made the following key points in his explanation.

Torrey's Points on What the Gospel Narratives Reveal:[333]

[330] Moyer, E., Who Was Who in Church History, p. 409, for all these facts.
[331] Torrey, R.A., Difficulties in the Bible, p. 191.
[332] Ibid, pps. 146-149
[333] Torrey, R.A., Difficulties in the Bible, pps 155-162

1. Jesus entered Jerusalem, riding on a donkey, to the acclaim of the people, on a Saturday, not on Palm Sunday.

2. Jesus ate the Passover seder meal on the night portion of Nisan 14. (Nisan 13-14) He did not institute some new meal on a different day, which we now call "the Lord's Supper". The Lord's Supper was a Passover seder.

3. Jesus died in the afternoon of Nisan 14, a few hours before the start of an annual Jewish Holy Day that was called "The First Day of Unleavened Bread". His death occurred on a Wednesday Passover. It was not on a Friday Passover before the seventh day Sabbath, as most teach today.

4. He arose 72 hours later on a Saturday afternoon, just before Sunset.

5. When the first visitors to Christ's tomb arrived early in the darkness of Sunday morning, He had been gone for quite some time.

C. Were Two Passovers Held the Year Jesus Died? Not Really[334]

So much has been written in scholarly journals over the years that anyone who wishes to research what I write here is sure to find an opposing point of view on each of Torrey's points.[335] Part of the confusion reverts back to the fact that, as in life, one term can be used in several different ways in the Gospels, making it easy to misunderstand what is being said. Prime case in point: "the Passover". In the Gospels, Jesus keeps the Passover the night before he dies, but the entire Jewish community of Jerusalem, along with many visiting pilgrims, eats the Passover sacrifice one night later, hours after Jesus has died.

Are there two Passovers in Judaism? In a sense, yes; the observance definitely evolved over the centuries. The Rabbis and the pious Jews are well aware of this. According the Alfred Edersheim, the rabbinical authorities "distinguish between the Egyptian and the Permanent Passover".[336] Unger's Bible Dictionary says, "Observances connected with the Passover are in two categories, those established at the keeping of the first Passover and those enacted after the Exodus."[337]

Jesus kept the original Passover service of Moses (1450-1440 B.C.) as described in Exodus 12 (this is the Egyptian Passover), while the Jews of his time were

[334] For an excellent example of all the scholarly debate over whether Jesus kept the Jewish Passover, see Leon Morris' book, The Gospel According to John, Additional Note H: The Last Supper and the Passover, pps. 684-695, and the substantial bibliography for the "problem", on p. 695.

[335] I tried to compile a brief list of examples, but there simply were too many to catalogue

[336] Edersheim, A., The Temple - Its Ministry and Service, p. 164 The Old Testament directly confirms all this. It appears that the "permanent Passover" celebration began under King Hezekiah of Judah. See II Chronicles 30: 1-17, especially verses 13,15, and 17, which describe how this King marshaled the priests, cleansed the Temple, and invited the outlying peoples to come to Jerusalem to have the Passover sacrificed for them. See also Ezra 6:19-20 for another of the earliest examples where the Levites perform the Permanent Passover on the behalf of the victims of the Babylonian Captivity

[337] A similar discussion to Edersheim's appears in Unger's Bible Dictionary, pps. 410,-411, especially p. 41 under the subject heading, "Festivals" see also the limited bibliography at the end of the article.

upholding a modified version of the day. Jesus kept the Passover Seder on the evening of the 13/14th of Nisan, the Jews kept it on the night of the 14/15th. Jesus' lamb was individually slain for his household in private on the beginning of Nisan 14. The head of the house where he was eating did it. The priests at the temple killed the Jews' Passover lamb for all the households of the city in one massive public ceremony. It too was killed on the 14th of Nisan, but about 20 hours after Jesus' lamb. The Jews shifted the killing to the end of the day and they delayed the eating until after the Sun had set, so effectively they were eating the Passover Seder one day later than Jesus, even though both Lambs were killed on Nisan 14. This one-day delay in the eating meant that Jesus' Passover meal was eaten on the "preparation day" 20 hours before the Jews' Passover meal. We have here one day, one observance, but two different meals. Effectively, the Jews are bumping the eating part of the day onto the next evening, which, to complicate things further, is a High Sabbath day called the First Day of Unleavened Bread. So the Gospels call the night Jesus ate the roasted lamb "the Passover", and then, speaking of the Jews, also refer to the next night's meal as "the Jew's Passover". The "Passover", and "the Jew's Passover" are actually two different nights in one week. Both terms are accurate. When you read the different references to "the Passover" in the Gospels, this distinction is not clearly stated. It is quite easy to confuse the two observances. This confusion is then transformed into justification for a Good Friday observance, when there is none.

Add to this the ambiguity of "three days and three nights" and perhaps you can see why there are so many different ideas on when the Crucifixion occurred. Some scholars do not pick up on this "double Passover" at all, but it is there. Naturally if we try to reconcile the scattered Gospel references to "the Passover" into one event, we will come to a dead end. We will not be able to fix a unique date in history for this combined "Passover", because of the built-in contradictions that arise from mixing two days into one. We will arrive at a "probable" date. And so they do. This is one source of confusion.

A second point to bear in mind is that many scholars believe the 15th of Nisan, the high holy Sabbath called the "First Day of Unleavened Bread", fell on a regular Saturday Sabbath the year Jesus died. If this were true, we have two Sabbath days falling within the same 24 hour period - a Saturday, that year. As an additional complication, if this were true, then the "preparation" day right before this double Saturday Sabbath would have been Friday, and since Jesus died on the preparation day, Jesus died on a Friday, which was both the 14th of Nisan and "the Passover".

Sounds reasonable, but once more I must note this scenario conflicts with the activities of some of the people in the Gospels that week, as we shall see. Their moving about will not work in a week that has Jesus dying on a Friday preparation day. So again, a plausible Good Friday explanation only causes more problems.

Commenting on all this, Reuben Torrey wrote:

> It is remarkable ... how many seeming discrepancies in the gospel narrative are straightened out when we once come to

understand that Jesus died on a Wednesday, and not on Friday.[338]

Deciding if Jesus died on a Friday or a Wednesday does not begin with Greek definitions of ambiguous words. As I did with Luke 23:45, let the original words of the Gospel narratives tell their own story and let us see where their candid statements take us.

D. How Many Hours are There Between the Crucifixion and Resurrection If We Use ALL of the Gospel Narratives in Harmony with Each Other?

What happened between Christ's burial and resurrection and how many days it took to transpire, can be deduced from a fair-minded examination of the actions of two women, Mary Magdeline and Mary the wife of Cleopas. These two ladies, not the Apostles, become the focus of the Gospel story, as soon as Jesus dies. In the moments immediately following the Crucifixion, they devote themselves with caring for Jesus' body, watching exactly where he is laid and ensuring he has a proper burial. They do this in haste, the High Sabbath, the First Day of Unleavened Bread, where all labor must stop, is about to begin at sunset and it is only minutes away. The initial entombment had to be rushed, but these two ladies would plan their work and return to the tomb as time allowed, once the sacred Sabbath time was past. Though it was a Sabbath, it was not free from duties and activities. They were encumbered with simple preparation of meals, grieving with relatives and guests and supervising their families at the Passover season. Tens and hundreds of thousands of people were crowded into Jerusalem at this time; the day after all these horrific events was normally one of great ceremony, ritual and rejoicing to the Jewish people. A solemn assembly would be held in the next morning at the Temple complex. During and after the services, festivities would be conducted in and around the Temple's plaza. With all this activity diverting their attention while they sorrowed, there could be no reason to visit Jesus' grave until the holy feast day was complete.

The time order of their actions presents us with a simple, but intriguing problem that many commentators have overlooked; its solution is the key to how long Jesus was buried and what day he died upon. The accounts of their activities are given in the narratives of Mark, Luke and John.[339]

The basic outline of events is this:

John says that the rest day which began hours after Jesus died was a "high" Sabbath.[340] This may or may not be the seventh day of the week. We need more information to decide what day of the week it is; what we do know from John is

[338] Ibid, pps. 163-164

[339] Mark 15:46-16:2, Luke 23:53-24:6, John 19:38-20:2.

[340] John 19:31. There is a debate over what "high day" means exactly. I cover this also in Appendix 8 - "The Distorted Language Behind a Friday Crucifixion". For now I simply say it does indeed refer to the First Day of Unleavened Bread, an annually recurring Sabbath of special importance. It does not refer to the weekly Sabbath that falls every seventh day

that Jesus died right before the start of the "First Day of Unleavened Bread", a high day.

Mark mentions the Crucifixion, then the women resting on the high Sabbath, the women buying spices after the high Sabbath is over and their going back to Jesus' tomb to anoint his body before sunrise on the first day of the week. He does not tell us where the weekly Sabbath fell in this chain of events. It is a missing piece of information.

Luke says something different. According to Luke, there is the Crucifixion, the women rest on the high Sabbath day, they prepare their spices after the high Sabbath day is over and then they rest AGAIN on a SECOND Sabbath day. Finally, they go to the tomb to anoint Jesus' body before sunrise on the first day of the week.

According to the principle I use in this book, each of these three accounts is taken to be objective fact; each of these accounts meshes with each of the others to reveal the full picture of what happened and how long it took to happen between Jesus' death and Resurrection. There is enough information in all three accounts to prove 72 hours. Consider:

Luke says the SECOND Sabbath was right before a Sunday. The second Sabbath is the normal weekly Sabbath day. Further, since Luke makes the two Sabbaths two separate days, there is no way that the high Sabbath and the weekly Sabbath could fall on the same day in Luke's account; they are separate days. What about the "preparation day", the day right before the first Sabbath started? There is no way that this "preparation day", the day Jesus died, could be a Friday in Luke's account, because Saturday is the second of the two Sabbaths Luke mentions, they are two separate days and the first Sabbath must fall on a Friday or sooner in the week. Since the first Sabbath must fall on a Friday or sooner, the "preparation day", the day before the first Sabbath and the day Jesus actually died, has to fall either on a Thursday or earlier in the week than a Thursday.

Because Luke describes two separate Sabbath days during Christ's burial time, separated by a day where the women could conduct business and buy their spices, we now know there were two days between the day Jesus died and the Saturday. Jesus had to have been put to rest on a Wednesday.

Once again, it is Luke's account that provides the key details that reveal the answer to what actually happened at the Crucifixion.

If an outline of the events in Mark 15-16 and Luke 23-24 is placed into a timetable, and the two sets compared, two points will become apparent. First, as Torrey pointed out, everything in the two accounts can be explained completely by a Wednesday / Saturday timeframe that contains two separate Sabbath days--a High Holy Day on Thursday and a normal weekly Sabbath on Saturday. Second, a Friday - Sunday scenario with only one Sabbath day, a double day (Saturday), cannot possibly account for these Gospel events.

Timeline of Events While Christ was in the Tomb
(The Clock is Ticking in Columns 4 and 5)

Mark's Account	Activity	Luke's Account	Day in this Timeline When the Activity Occurs	Elapsed Amount of Time Christ is in the Tomb at the End of Each Day
Mark 15: 46,47	Jesus body is placed in the garden tomb, while the women are watching	Luke 23:53, 55	Day 1 of action; minutes before sunset	0 hours; a few minutes. Counts as one "onah".
	The women return home to rest on the High Sabbath	Luke 23:56a	Day 1 of action, minutes before sunset;	0 hours; a few minutes. Counts as one "onah".
	High Sabbath Ends		Day 2 of action, sunset to sunset	1 Night and 1 Day - 24 hours have elapsed
Mark 16:1	AFTER the High Sabbath is OVER, the women BUY spices. (No business could have been conducted from the time Christ was laid in the tomb until the following night. Possibly, no business was conducted on that night either, but on the following day.		Day 3 of action, somewhere between sunrise to sunset	2 Nights and 2 Days - 48 hours have elapsed at the end of day 3.
	The women prepare the spices which they have bought the day After the Sabbath	Luke 23:56a	Day 3 of action, sunrise to sunset	2 Nights and 2 Days - 48 hours have elapsed at the end of day 3.
	AFTER they prepare the	Luke	Day 4 of	3 Nights and

	spices and ointments, the women rest on the Sabbath day according to the commandment (This last phrase refers to the fourth commandment, that is, IT REFERS to their keeping A WEEKLY SABBATH DAY.)	23:56b	action, sunset to sunset	3 Days - 72 hours have elapsed at the end of day 4; Christ is resurrected by the Father at this time. He is now Spirit; He does not need the stone rolled back in order to get out.
Mark 16:2	Very early in the morning of the first day, as dawn is breaking, the women come out to the tomb to anoint the body.	Luke 24:1	Day 5 of action - at sunrise	4 Nights and 3 Days - 84 hours have elapsed. An angel opens the tomb for the witnesses to see.

If you look in column 4 you will see that by Sunday sunrise we are on the fifth day of activity and on the fourth day after the Crucifixion. The elapsed time between the start (when Jesus is interred), and end (Sunday morning visit by the women) is nearly 84 hours! There is no way a 36-hour entombment can square with these circumstances. Only a Saturday afternoon resurrection will answer all questions.

Herbert Armstrong, a Christian evangelist who flourished some fifty years after Torrey, also espoused a Wednesday Crucifixion. His arguments are identical to Torrey. He summarizes the above table, and gives the sense of the two reconciled passages in this way (the flamboyant capitals in the text are his own):

> According to Mark 16:1, Mary Magdalene and her companions did not buy their spices to anoint the body of Jesus until AFTER THE SABBATH WAS PAST. They could not prepare them until after this--yet AFTER preparing the spices THEY RESTED THE SABBATH DAY ACCORDING TO THE COMMANDMENT! (Luke 23:56). ....

> There is only one possible explanation: After the annual high-day Sabbath, the feast day of the days of Unleavened Bread--which was Thursday--these women purchased and prepared their spices on Friday, and then they rested on the weekly Sabbath, Saturday, according to the Commandment! (Exodus 20:8-11)
>
> A comparison of these two texts PROVES there were two Sabbaths that week, with a DAY IN BETWEEN. Otherwise these texts contradict themselves. (Emphasis the original Author's)[341]

Every commentary this author has reviewed on the 72 hours never addresses the time spent by the women in preparing the spices, or the need for an extra day.[342] Not one of them. I challenge the reader to find accounts which do deal with the story of the spices and also claim to prove there was a Friday Crucifixion. I know of none.

If the only logical way to make sense of Mark and Luke is to admit a Wednesday Crucifixion, then that is what we will do in this book -- follow reason over tradition. Bear in mind I have proved this point without any reference so far to history or the positions of the Earth, Sun and Moon on a Wednesday Passover. Yet both history and the exact positions of the solar system will independently confirm that it was indeed a Wednesday when Jesus died. I am getting ahead of the story, but, if you grant me to be correct in advance of seeing my proof, how is it that the planets happen to align on the true day the Gospels say Jesus died? How would the Greek scholars and Hebrew combatants explain the perfectly matched positions of the Sun and Moon on a Wednesday Passover?

I do not believe they could.

(Once more, casual readers will probably want to skip past the following discussion of Greek and Hebrew language controversies and move on to Section 2.2 or 2.3. In the rest of this Section we will look at eight other topics within and without the Gospels that offer other, more powerful evidence to directly contradict the 36-hour interpretation of Matthew 12. This new material has not appeared in any commentary or tract. You will, I believe, find it vital and stimulating, but as always, you may only want to sample. First, we will review the present state of official information that says I am totally wrong, language conclusively proves Good Friday and therefore there was no Eclipse the day Jesus died.)

E. How Commentators Misconstrue Hebrew Grammar and Justify Good Friday - The Details

Commentators vigorously assert their opinion that "three days and three nights" must only be understood as a figure of speech in both Hebrew and Greek with surprisingly few facts. The NIV Study Bible, in a note on Matt. 12:40, succinctly

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[341] Armstrong, H , The Resurrection Was Not on Sunday!,

[342] See bibliography for list of all commentaries consulted on Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John

summarizes the entire argument: "Including at least part of the first day and part of the third day, a common Jewish reckoning of the time"[343] (emphasis mine). That is all the proof that is given to the general reader. Rarely will you see an alternative point of view discussed saying Matt. 12 could also be viewed as three full days. Neither will you learn details of the Jewish mourning process nor how three full days figure in that custom. It is an intellectual tradition of tweaking the words in Matthew 12:40 that goes back to Origen in 200 A.D. The Hebrew explanation for Matt. 12 by Christian commentators seems to start in the 1600's with John Lightfoot. Since that time, a body of various and sundry secondary arguments has been developed to bolster this main interpretation. I will counter the core arguments in what follows; the other, more technical claims on the fine points of grammar and scripture will be left to Appendix 8. I am being so taxing because I do not wish to allow any of their points to stand. Let me begin by unraveling the key contention about Matt. 12:40 simply being common Jewish reckoning.

Supposedly, the original Greek in Matt 12:40 is ambiguous because Jesus is actually quoting the Hebrew of Jonah 1:17.[344] (While Jesus did quote Jonah directly, Jonah's original phrase is exact; it has nothing to do with parts of three days. See Appendix 8.) John Lightfoot was a Cambridge scholar who wrote a commentary on the New Testament strictly from ancient Jewish texts. A Good Friday defender, he cited a rabbinical rule for gauging time in the Hebrew language to prove his case. It involved parts of a day, twelve hours or less, that the Jews call an "onah".[345] According to the Rabbis both the full 24-hour day and any small fraction of a few hours or less, are sometimes called "onah". Under certain circumstances in Hebrew speech, the day or the fraction are spoken of in identical terms, as if they both were the same amount of time, when in fact they are not. The question becomes, when is it appropriate to use such plastic phrasing and was it the original Hebrew or Greek of "three days and three nights? If you read Lightfoot you will see just as with the moderns, he starts with the assumption Good Friday and 36 hours are true.[346] He then infers that "three days and three nights" must be explained by making the first and third days only parts of a day. He never pursues the other side of the argument, discovering the intent of the original words in Jonah, based upon Jewish usage and culture.

Lightfoot quotes four Rabbis to explain the word "onah", he quotes none to explain the words in Jonah. Each Rabbi has a slightly different opinion on how to apply the idea of "onah" to real life. Some Rabbis taught a complete "onah" was 12 hours long, , being either day or night. The opinion that prevailed was "an onah is a day and a night, (a full 24 hours). The "portion" idea was always present. Now notice something. The very definition of "onah" states that the expression, "a day and a night" means "24 hours"; when you see the words, think 24 hours. So by the same definition, when we see "three days and three nights" shouldn't we think 72 hours? It would appear that part of the very definition of "onah" PROVES Jesus meant 72 hours in Matt. 12:40. This is not something the commentators admit. Perhaps I am

[343] Barker, K., NIV Study Bible, p. 1460.
[344] Ibid, p 1590, comment on Luke 24:46
[345] Lightfoot, J., op. cit., vol ii, p. 210
[346] Ibid, pps 209-210.

simply misguided? Let us briefly go through the tangle of language manipulations they do employ.

The Tortured Mis-Application of "Onah" to Jesus' Words

When English-speaking scholars incorrectly apply Jewish "onahs" to three full days in Matt. 12:40, they claim it automatically allows the Hebrew behind Matthew 12 and Jonah 1:17 to be "miraculously transformed" into a small part of the first day (first onah), all of the second day (second onah) and a small part of a third day (third onah), as if this total time constituted a full 72 hours.[347] Confused? As we saw, the English-speaking scholars claim is that this is a routine, indiscriminate use of the Jewish language. The only problem is the literal words "three days and three nights" cannot be treated in this fashion at all because they are the untouchable definition of 72 hours. You cannot take the full day definition of "onah" and then modify it with the "fractional day" definition of "onah" to wind up with "day and night" meaning part of a day. This is exactly what the English-speaking commentators have done since John Lightfoot, in order to reconcile Good Friday with Matt. 12:40. They appeal to this argument even though Jonah literally says "three days and three nights" and Jonah's language is very unusual Hebrew. You will find some of the more recent commentaries admitting that Jonah 1:17 truly is a full three days (See Jack Sasson's book, Jonah, for the Anchor Bible Series), but even here, presumably because they are sensitive to the Matt 12 controversy, they fall short of saying Matt. 12 also refers to a full three days. It appears the belief in a 36-hour explanation has a life of its own independent of the facts.

Yet the admission of the greatest miracle of all is clouded behind this misunderstanding.

In truth, Lightfoot and his heirs have concocted a broad brush misapplication of the "onah" concept, forcing this rule onto a perfectly clear phrase that does not and cannot use it. As they strive to prove that Jonah and Matthew say "three days", but actually mean 36 hours, they never seem to explain how an exact 72 hours is expressed in Hebrew or Greek; they do not reflect upon the full definition, as we just did. Everything in their discussions becomes implied "fractions of three days", nothing in the Hebrew of Jonah or Greek of Matthew describes a full day when we listen to their explanations. The Good Friday apologists say this ambiguity is there in Jonah and other Old Testament verses[348], but it is not.[349]

We will continue our exhaustive debunking of "the Language of 36 hours" with seven more topics from the Gospels that prove Jesus could not possibly have meant 36 hours. The next point modern commentators overlook involves how Matthew uses the phrase "days and nights" elsewhere in his writings:

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[347] Lightfoot, J., op cit., p 210, gives a very full, and possibly the earliest explanation of "parts of a day" and Matt 12:40

[348] I Samuel 30:12-13, and Esther 3:17

[349] See Appendix 8 Section A 8 1

F. Why Don't Commentators Compare Matthew 12:40 with Matthew 4:2?

Commentators focus all their energies on re-interpreting the definitions in Matt. 12:40 and its Hebrew equivalent, Jonah 1:17. Very well. Let us meet them on their own turf. Let us examine another reference to "days and nights", that is also in Matthew, to uncork their entire word argument for Matthew 12.

The respected scholar F.F. Bruce and others, are quick to point out that the phrase used in Matt 12, like the one in Jonah, is unusual[350] and therefore open to interpretation. But what they do not bother to mention is there are many near-identical phrases peppered throughout both the New and Old Testaments. Probably the greatest and most devastatingly similar one is the phrase "forty days and forty nights" which Matthew wrote in Matt. 4:2. The usage is: "Jesus fasted forty days and forty nights". The layout of this sentence is virtually identical to Jesus' words, "the Son of Man will be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth". In both cases, we have a very simple sentence: subject, verb and a fixed duration of time. The actual Greek, if you consult the leading Greek New Testament in print today[351], is identical for both Matt. 4:2 and Matt. 12:40, with the one exception that "forty" comes after "days" in the Greek, while "three" is placed before it. Roland de Vaux, a French historian and archeologist who worked for many years in Jerusalem and Paris, explained Jewish day-counting this way: "When they wanted to indicate the whole length of a day of twenty-four hours, they said 'day and night' or some such phrase."[352] This saying, without the use of "onah", is the common Jewish way for expressing three full days, or 40 full days. This is exactly what we find in Matthew 4 and Matthew 12. Matthew 4:2 reads:

"After a fast of forty days and forty nights, he was very hungry." (The Phillips Translation of the New Testament)

The parallel account to Matthew is in Luke; it emphasizes the time element even further:

"Jesus, ... was led by the Spirit in the desert, 2 where for forty days he was tempted by the devil. He ate nothing during those days and at the end of them he was hungry." Luke 4:1-2 (NIV)

Notice both Matthew and Luke treat the forty days and forty nights as a complete block of time, exactly as de Vaux describes the usage. It may be an idiom, but not one that shortens the time. The two writers are not speaking of 38, or 39 days being "the end" of forty days. You cannot be in a "part" of the 40th day and also be at the end of the 40th day. Never has anyone ever suggested that Jesus fasted part of the first day, all of 38 days, and part of the last day.[353] This time was something Jesus could control, and he based the time upon examples of "forty" used in the Old

[350] Hard Sayings of the Bible, p 380

[351] Nestle-Aland Greek-English New Testament, Editio XXVII, pages 6, compared with pages 31-32

[352] de Vaux, R Ancient Israel - Its Life and Institutions, p 181.

[353] We can go as far back as Lightfoot, in the 1600's for this accepted position See his Commentary, volume ii, p. 84 for his enthusiastic support of a full 40-day fast. (He mentions 40 days three times)

Testament. I have not uncovered any opinions claiming this expression is a catch phrase that simply means an extended amount of time of unknown duration. It is understood to be a literal expression of forty complete 24-hour days.[354] Yet when the number forty is replaced with "three" in a different verse, all manner of excuses and revisions sprout up.

Commentators readily admit the account of Jesus' fast parallels other events of 40 days in the Bible. Jesus, who is the New Testament fulfillment of Moses, imitates Moses' fast of forty days in the book of Exodus. Commentators also admit Jesus' fast is reminiscent of the 40 years God tested the nation of Israel before they were allowed to enter into the Promised Land.[355] Since the commentators claim Matthew and Luke mimicked Moses' fast, we should ask, Did they know how to correctly read "40 days" in the Hebrew of Exodus? Yet no one ever questions in scholarly literature whether Moses truly fasted a full 40 days. The Jewish translation of Moses, the Tanakh, says "Moses remained on the mountain forty days and forty nights"[356], implying his total time, including the ascent and descent from the mountain, would be even longer. In the same way then, Jesus went into the wilderness, fasted forty days and forty nights, and left. No one ever doubted the Israelites were a full 40 years in the wilderness; yet if Matt. 12:40 is treated as merely fractions of days, shouldn't the same approach to the language be strictly applied to Moses' 40 days , and even the Israelites 40 years? It never is by the scholars; to do so would be ridiculed. We have here in Matthew, the same language phrase with diametrically opposite interpretations, and no justification except the Christian tradition of Good Friday.

We can do much, much better than simply show how arbitrary the usage of "parts of onah" is when applied to Matt. 12:40. There is rich, though buried, material in the Gospels which proves that Jesus was adamant about the need for a 72-hour resurrection and only 72 hours, as the proper means to glorify the great powers of God the Father. Commentators do not always appreciate in every verse they study that Jesus spoke and moved within the Jewish culture and all its many manifestations. Like any other, that culture has norms concerning the cycle of life and death. It will do well to consider how the Jewish customs of death, burial and mourning relate to Jesus' actions and words concerning the resurrection of men.

Lets now expand our inquiry into these greater issues. It is another fascinating detour, with abundant insights to reward us.

G. Why Did Jesus Stipulate A Full Three Days to Prove He was From God? The Answer Is Rooted in the Entire Jewish Culture of Then and Now

One modern author has claimed that Jesus' reference to Jonah and three days was not concerned so much with an exact time of 72 hours as it was with the simple

[354] See The King James Study Bible, p 141 and Lightfoot, loc cit ,, to name two; but check any reference on this verse, any

[355] Many citations are possible See the NIV Study Bible, p 1446, note on Matt 4:2. Others relate it to the 40 days of rain that precipitated Noah's flood See Everett Fox, The First Five Books of Moses, Schocken Press, p 392

[356] The Tanakh, Jewish Publication Society, p 123 (Ex. 24:18)

idea of a resurrection. Hours don't matter, either for Jonah, about to die inside a large fish, or Jesus in a tomb. It is the symbolism of Jonah being dead and then returning which Jesus refers to in his saying.[357] This is most unfortunate.

Jesus meant a full 72-hour burial for a very important reason: It was a tradition of the Jewish religious leaders and a landmark of Jewish culture that a man was not truly dead until at least three complete days, a full 72 hours, had passed. The scholarly writings of the Rabbis certified this position and it is clear to most that the tradition was very old, older than Jesus. Men had been known to revive, return from comas, whatever, in the days immediately following their "death". There was no heart monitoring or brain scanning 2,000 or 2,500 years ago. The one method to prevent possible interment of the living, was to repeatedly examine the body for signs of life for three full days. Only after the three days were complete, was the person officially certified as dead.[358] The Rabbis documented a story of one man who had been declared dead for nearly three days, then revived and went on to live another 25 years.[359] This was not viewed as a divine miracle, or a resurrection at all. The Rabbis also taught that the spirit of a person hovered around the body for three days, seeking the opportunity to return to it. Only after three full days were passed, would it accept the irreversible decay of the corpse's face as final and return to God.[360]

This conviction was not simply a scholarly bit of esoterica privy only to rabbinical students, rather, it was built into the mourning process for all Jewish dead. It was a known thread in the fabric of the culture, accepted by all Jews, then as well as now.

> Jewish mourning is built around three distinct periods of time. The Rabbis decreed thirty days are for Mourning. The first three days are for Weeping; the next four are for Lamentation. At the end of the first three days, "all hope of ... [the dead man's] coming [back] to himself [was] wholly gone."[361] (emphasis mine)

The undercurrents beneath Jesus' words run deeper still. Besides the dictates of the decomposition process, (Jews did not embalm their dead, they only perfumed the body with spices), the number three has an old and hallowed place in the Jewish culture. When something is repeated three times, or when it is refused three times, the idea is one of finality, certainty, full empowerment, or irrevocable completion.[362] The number "3" is used in this way throughout the Old Testament.[363]

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[357] See The Time of the Crucifixion and the Resurrection, by S. Bacchiocchi, for a well-argued presentation of this point of view.

[358] Lightfoot, J., A Commentary on the New Testament from the Talmud and Hebraica, vol iii, p 367.

[359] See pps 190-191 of Stern, Jewish New Testament Commentary, where he quotes the 8th century writing, S'machot 8:1, also Lightfoot, loc cit

[360] Brown, R., The Gospel According to John (I-XII), p. 424, and his reference to Strack and Billerbeck's Commentary on the New Testament from the Talmud and Midrash, vol ii, p. 544 Two more rabbinical citations can be found in Bernard, J H , Gospel According to St John, vol ii, p 396.

[361] Lightfoot, J., loc cit.

[362] Sasson, J., Jonah, p 153 I do not agree with Sasson's explanation for the use of "three" in Jonah's story, which he also gives on p. 153

[363] Sasson, J , Ibid, and de Vaux, R , Ancient Israel, p 181

Jesus was tapping into this cultural consciousness when he used the word "three" and referred to Jonah. His audience, as we will see next, fully understood his intent. Certainly, a "day and a half", would never strike this kind of resonance in the minds and hearts of the Jewish people.

We see that Jesus was working off the deeply engrained social beliefs of his time, offering a Sign that He would be utterly dead beyond any hope of revival; a Sign that would pass even the most stringent tests of the most scrupulous religious leader of his day. Some had ridiculed his miracles as deception and magic; they would certainly do the same for anything less than 72 hours.[364] Contrary to the modern opinion, time, the full 72 hours, was the most critically important part of the Sign Jesus gave. No one, least of all no Jew, would have become his disciple without it. This Sign was not limited to proving Jesus' identify as one sent from God, it also revealed his later role as the One who would resurrect all mankind from the power of death.

It had to happen on a Wednesday.

H. The Political Realities of a 72-hour Entombment

With this larger background firmly in mind, we can now better perceive the various dynamic flows of political opinion, belief and disbelief at work in the confrontation described in Matthew 12:40.

When the Jews come to Jesus in the passage of Matthew 12:40, asking for a Sign, they are asking for an external, supernatural commendation directly from God which will unequivocally prove he is in truth the Messiah, Savior King of Israel. The three days and three nights was a critical part of the answer Jesus gave them. (Some may think, Didn't the majority of Jews reject Jesus 2,000 years ago, and doesn't that cold reality suggest he was not in the tomb for 72 hours? They miss the fact that the Christian faith started at a public event attended by thousands of Jews on the Day of Pentecost. Thousands of those people did accept all the claims of Jesus' Apostles. This singular event can only be explained by what I describe in the Section.)

Miracles were one thing, but the true substance of Messiah, in their eyes, was his political dimension. Christ in turn, calls them adulterous; that is, their hearts are turned from God in utterly worldly pursuits, and yet they wish a reason for faith! The Jews ask for a Sign proving Jesus will overthrow the Romans and re-establish David's political system on earth in the next few months, only then they will follow him; Jesus answers their demand in his own way, for his own purpose. The only evidence he will offer of his Messianic status is a sign that proves he is the One to save men from eternal death and resurrect men to life beyond the struggles of this world. He will be resurrected from the dead so that all may know He in turn has been empowered by God to resurrect all men from the dead. He has the Divine favor to both be resurrected and to be the Resurrector of all mankind.

[364] See Matt. 27:63 for an indication of this

It all hinges upon the fact that he will be totally, legally dead as dead can be in the eyes of the Jewish nation for a full three days and three nights, a full 72 hours according to their customs. His religion, his political identity, his whole movement revolve around this Sign. These words MUST mean a full 72 hours in the grave, or Jesus had said nothing concerning a supernatural resurrection or a political regime in any age to the Jewish people. His "only Sign" would have been immediately rejected as a superfluous fraud by the very people whom he was inviting to his religion. All Jews would have spurned a 36-hour resurrection as a mere quirk of biology; it was no act of God at all, in their eyes. Jesus would be no Messiah or Savior or Resurrector of men unless he was truly 72 hours dead. Nothing less would suffice.

Jesus was no less emphatic in this challenge than his questioners. Just a few Chapters before Matthew 12:40, in Matt 5:17 and 18, Jesus clearly states how absolutely precise he is when dealing with the fulfillment of scripture. He shows there,

> "Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets [that is, the Old Testament]; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. I tell you the truth, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished."
> Matt 5:17-18 (New International Version)

To then assume He would be vague or cavalier about the *only sign* from the prophets of the Old Testament that proved his Divinity or his political supremacy to his own people, seems preposterous. Jewish culture gives Jesus' context. The Gospel account bears this out. An angel at the tomb told the women, "He is risen as he said." (Matthew 28:6) If we take this statement literally, what actually happened when we include the story of the spices, is what Jesus actually meant - three full days would expire before he was raised.

I. Was the Resurrection of Lazarus Greater than the Resurrection of Jesus Christ?

There is clear evidence that Jesus deliberately orchestrated a major miracle to comply with the Jewish social stricture on a 72-hour death. It too, runs deep within the Gospel text, but like all the other jewels we have uncovered, it is dramatic and fascinating. It involves Jesus' last great miracle before the Crucifixion - his raising of his beloved friend Lazarus from the dead "on the fourth day".

Somehow, in the minds of commentators, there is a tradition of "boxed thinking" going back at least to the 1600's and John Lightfoot, that says the circumstances of Lazarus' resurrection demand a full three days and three nights, but the Resurrection of Jesus only needs a day and a half. Yet Jesus' Messiahship is at the center of both resurrections. We will briefly touch upon this incredible myopia after I first show you how Jesus' behavior in the Lazarus resurrection is totally in harmony with, and anticipates, the "three days and three nights"" in his OWN Resurrection.

In Chapter 11 of the Gospel of John, Jesus is said to have raised his friend Lazarus back to physical life, by the power of God the Father, for the glory of God the Father and for his own glorification[365], after three full days had passed. John's narrative is very clear. Jesus, who is nowhere near Lazarus, receives the news of Lazarus being deeply sick via a messenger. The distance separating them is one day's journey by foot or donkey.[366] Yet Jesus deliberately waits two full days, (48 hours) before he so much as indicates a desire to come to Lazarus. By this time, John indicates that Jesus knows within himself that Lazarus is dead. Journeys in that age took place only during the daylight portion, due to fear of highwaymen or brigands. Christ notes this in the very passage of John we are discussing.[367] Consider the time involved in this turn of events. Jesus is informed, probably around 6 P.M., by a messenger who has just traveled all day to reach him. A night of 12 hours passes next. Jesus waits an additional 48 hours after this for the morning of the third day to begin his journey to Lazarus. At 6 P.M. or so, on the third day, Jesus arrives to find Lazarus already dead and in the tomb "on the fourth day".[368] (Presumably Lazarus died shortly after the messenger left to inform Jesus.) Although it is the fourth day since his burial, only 72 hours of time have completed. When the time for journeying and the actions of Jesus are factored together, only one conclusion can be reached: Jesus deliberately timed his trip to produce an arrival a full 72 hours after Lazarus died. If Jesus had left the next morning, instead of waiting two additional days, Lazarus would have been dead for 36 hours when Jesus arrived. This is the exact time for a Good Friday - Easter Sunday Resurrection, but here we see him deliberately rejecting this "Sign" and instead orchestrating events in order to turn a 36-hour death into a 72-hour death. Thirty-six hours was not good enough in Jesus' eyes to glorify either God or himself, it had to be 72 hours. This rather blunt fact is totally missed by modern commentators who argue for the day and a half interpretation of Matt. 12:40.

At his arrival, Jesus performs the resurrection, in the presence of many Jews. All of them accept the terms of this resurrection as legitimate and binding--a man truly has been brought back from the dead. No Jew protests that the three-day rule of their culture has been flouted. In fact, some go back to the Rabbis, tell them of the event, yet none of the Rabbis discredit the account.

If bold actions are more definite than ambiguous Greek words, Jesus' forthright behavior proves he was supremely mindful of the three day rule on Jewish deaths and how surpassingly critical it was to transcend it and glorify God in the face of unbelief.

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[365] John 11:4: When Jesus heard that, He said, "This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified through it." (NKJ)
John 11:39-40 says: Jesus said, "Take away the stone " Martha, the sister of him who was dead, said to Him, "Lord, by this time there is a stench, for he has been dead four days." 40 Jesus said to her, "Did I not say to you that if you would believe you would see the glory of God?" (NKJ)

[366] For authoritative comment on this time and distance, see Morris, L., op cit., p 479, Brown, R., The Gospel According to John I-XI, p 431, and Bernard, St John, p. 376

[367] See John 11:9-10, and Luke 24:13, 28,29, which shows something very similar.

[368] John 11:39 Leon Morris, in The Gospel According to John, p 496, note 83, points out that the Greek in this verse is literally, "he is a fourth day man"

If Jesus did all this to resurrect a man back to physical life, should we then expect a lower standard for God's power and Jesus' glory when Christ in turn is resurrected to Eternal Life? Would 36 hours in the tomb be any proof of Jesus' own divinity, when he deliberately waited 72 hours to resurrect Lazarus? Once more, a sound minded examination of the major events in the narrative gives complete understanding of issues that microscopic word splitting cannot resolve.

There is an ironic element in all this: almost all commentators starting with Lightfoot, recognize that three days and three nights was essential to proving God alone resurrected Lazarus, yet none of them in 350 years seem to be either willing or alert to apply this same critical thinking to Jesus' own resurrection. I have given four clear-cut examples of this in the note below; I urge you to read it carefully.[369] The need to bend to the popular tradition of Good Friday has compromised the critical judgment of world-class scholars when they examine Jesus' behavior in this matter. The confusion and absence of mind in this most critical matter is simply mind-boggling.

Jesus died on a Wednesday because God transcended the Jewish 72-hour definition of death.

J. The Pharisees Understood Jesus Meant Three Full Days

The religious leaders who were the listeners when Jesus first spoke the words in Matt. 12:40 2,000 years ago, were the intellectual heirs of a tradition that made "day and night" mean 24 hours. Few modern scholars grasp the sensational fact that these same men admitted in scripture Jesus meant 72 hours when he spoke Matt. 12:40; they are our eyewitnesses to the fact. First, consider some background evidence on their own understanding of what "three days and three nights" meant in their own language in that age.

I have pointed out repeatedly the exact expression which Jesus used, "three days and three nights", comes from the Old Testament Hebrew of the book of Jonah. The phrase only occurs twice in the Old Testament; it is an unusual expression, not normally used to count days. Consider what the religious leaders of Jesus' day would know about Jonah 1:17, "onah" and unusual expressions for counting time.

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[369] Compare Lightfoot, op, cit , vol ii, p 209-210, and vol iii, p 367. These words were written somewhere around 1650, and seem to have molded a manner of thinking in their successors' pens F.F. Bruce cites the same 72-hour rabbinical rule in conjunction with Lazarus' resurrection on pps 243 and 253 (note 5) of The Gospel and Epistles of John Yet in Hard Sayings of the bible, p 380-381, he does not apply it to Matt. 12:40 Bernard, op. cit., p 623, says Nisan 14 "fell on a Friday" the year Jesus died, yet on pps. 395-396 he cites Lightfoot , and the rabbinical three-day definition of death for the case of Lazarus Raymond Brown, on p. 424, note 17 of The Gospel According to John I-XI, also cites the rabbinical teaching; in Death of the Messiah, vol. i, p 1351, he opts for a Friday Crucifixion and a "parts of three days" explanation for Matt 12:40. However, world-class scholar that he is, Brown in note 2 on that page gives a robust explanation of the Wednesday Passover time sequence, He unfortunately concludes there is not enough evidence to prove it I would be honored, were he still living, if this Section would change his mind Leon Morris' The Gospel According to John, note 40, p. 485 also references the rabbinical judgment on three-day death On p 175 he says Jesus' time in the tomb is less than three days, and on pps 731, 732 he speaks of an Easter Resurrection

Since they were great students of the scriptures in the Jewish nation, these leaders would be well acquainted with such a phrase, as well as all the various forms of expressing time in Hebrew. There are many pieces of evidence we can accumulate to prove they had this knowledge. Recall that Roland de Vaux, the French historian and archeologist, explained Jewish day counting as: "When they wanted to indicate the whole length of a day of twenty-four hours, they said 'day and night' or some such phrase."[370] The Apostle Paul, a contemporary of Jesus who had formerly been a prominent Jewish scholar and religious leader, used a similar phrase when he described his personal experience of being shipwrecked in the ocean: "A night and a day have I been in the deep", he wrote.[371] As with the Old Testament phrase, the Greek word Paul used is unusual; it means a full twenty-four hours.[372] Paul, the former Pharisee, is expressing in Greek the same Jewish idiom of his culture - "night and day" refer to a full twenty-four hour period. There is also well-documented evidence for this usage from Rabbis near the end of the first century. Somewhere around 100 A.D., Rabbi Eleazar Ben Azariah, wrote the sentence that Lightfoot later seized upon, "a day and a night constitute ... an Onah (a full day) ..."[373]

But why don't we consult the language authorities of 2,000 years ago to discover their opinion on the matter? The words in Matt. 12:40 were spoken directly to these religious leaders and language experts. Months after he died, these same individuals went to the Roman ruler of Judea, Pontius Pilate, and rehearsed before him the original words of Jesus they had heard spoken earlier. Notice how they interpreted "three days and three nights":

> On the next day [following the Crucifixion], ... the chief priests and Pharisees gathered together to Pilate, saying, "Sir, we remember, while He was still alive, how that deceiver said, 'After three days I will rise.' "Therefore command that the tomb be made secure until the third day, lest His disciples come by night and steal Him away, and say to the people, 'He has risen from the dead.' So the last deception will be worse than the first." Matt 27:62-64 (New King James Version)

Notice the circumstances encased in this scene. The next day after the Crucifixion the Pharisees are asking for Jesus' tomb to be secured "until the third day. Third day from when? Third day from today, the day they are speaking, which is the day

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[370] de Vaux, R. Ancient Israel - Its Life and Institutions, p. 181

[371] Paul's Second Epistle to the Corinthians, 11:25.

[372] Plummer, A., The Second Epistle of St Paul to the Corinthians, p.325, Thayer, J., op. cit. p. 431, Strong, J., The New Strong's Expanded Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, Greek Lexicon, p. 174, word no. 3574.

[373] The quotation is a composite on my part. Two references have been used for this wording. See Kittel, G. The Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, vol. I, article by Gerhard Delling, p. 950, Bacchiocchi, S., The Time of the Crucifixion and Resurrection, p. 27, where he cites and slightly modifies Delling's original wording. Both Delling and Bacchiocchi address the definition of "onah" which I have already discussed. See also their references to the original Rabbinic remarks in the Jerusalem Talmud, Shabat, 9,3, 12a, 15, 17, and the Babylonian Talmud, Pesahim 4,a. My point here is that the phrase "a day and a night" constituted a well-defined unit of time, 24 hours, as taught by the Rabbis in the age of Jesus. See also Lightfoot's citation of this same quotation, volume ii, p. 210.

after the Crucifixion. We have today, tomorrow and the third day. But Christ died yesterday. So how many hours are the Pharisees asking for guard duty? All of today, all of tomorrow is already 48 hours. All or part of the third day is 48 to 72 hours. This is clearly more than 36 hours; it immediately shows they understood Jesus to mean much more than 36 hours. Why then did they come prepared to ask Pilate for a 72-hour watch instead of a 48-hour watch? the answer is in the Hebrew.

The Gospels indicate that these men routinely seized upon Jesus' every word, in an attempt to discredit him as an ignorant fraud or charlatan. They were practiced in carefully dissecting Jesus' words, probing his every meaning. It should not stretch the imagination to believe they went to their sacred scrolls of Jonah after Jesus spoke, studied the original Hebrew words, debated "onah" and Jonah (is there a connection between the words?) among themselves and did everything possible to uncover the precise meaning of what Jesus said to them in Matt. 12:40. What they in turn spoke to Pontius Pilate, "After three days", was the culmination of months of careful reflection by a committee of experts on what the Hebrew words in the book of Jonah actually mean. We have here the greatest scholars on the Hebrew language in Jesus' age, translating the exact words Jesus spoke, "three days and three nights", into "after three days". Their words to Pilate are as authoritative as a judgment today by a world-class Rabbi, because they were the world-class Rabbis of Jesus' time. Their words are the official rabbinical ruling on what "three days and three nights" means in the original Hebrew of Jonah's book, based upon language AND the tradition that one is not truly dead until three days have passed. We have here proof of what Jesus said, not by modern Gentiles splitting hairs over the Greek version of Jonah, but by the opinion of the greatest Hebrew scholars of that age. Also note: by them equating "after three days" with "secure the tomb until the third day", the Pharisees were saying they understood "until the third day" to mean "until the third day is completed", NOT, "until some time during the third day". Pilate would not commit a watch of soldiers to "sometime" on the third day. All other ambiguities or uncertainties in the language in other verses must be viewed in light of these two statements by the Pharisees: "three days and three nights" means "after three days" and "until the third day" means "after the third day is over".

K. How Much of the Day Remained After Jesus was Buried - A "Part", or Nothing?

When authors argue for the "parts" of a day" interpretation of Matt. 12:40, they usually assume there was an hour or two of time left after Jesus was buried, that could count for the first day. If we examine the Gospels, we find there was virtually no time left between the burial of Jesus and the start of the Jews' High Sabbath day. In short, the case can be made that the "first part" of the three days and three nights is near zero, virtually non-existent. We only have one day and one night and part of a second day. This is "two days and two nights". The evidence comes from Matt. 27:53 and Luke 23:54.

Matt 27:57-58: Now when evening had come [about 3 P.M. in the afternoon[374]], there came a rich man from Arimathea, named Joseph, who himself had also become a disciple of Jesus. 58This man went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Then Pilate commanded the body to be given to him. (NKJ)

The story continues in Luke.

Luke 23:53-54: And he [Joseph] took it down and wrapped it in a linen cloth and laid Him in a tomb cut into the rock, where no one had ever lain. 54 And it was the preparation day and the Sabbath was about to begin. (NAS)

The Greek for "the Sabbath was about to begin" is far more dramatic than the English. It indicates a momentary start is imminent, mere minutes or seconds away. The original word, "epi-phosko" only appears twice in the New Testament. It means to "grow light, to dawn into another day." Matthew's language becomes, in poor English, "and the Sabbath [night] was being dawned into". Two points need immediate clarification.

First, even though the setting is plainly nightfall, Matthew uses the expression "dawned into". Why? Second, how far had this dawn into night progressed? Once more, the answer comes from Jewish culture outside of the New Testament. The Rabbis determined that night officially began when three medium sized stars became visible in the night sky.[375] So the Sabbath night began with the dawning of three stars in the sky. To say the evening was dawning into the Sabbath night can very well mean one or even two of the stars had appeared when Joseph finished rolling the stone to cover the tomb. Only moments remained.

The "parts of a day" advocates will be quick to point out that the Rabbis counted even "only a few minutes remaining" as a full day[376] We are down to that much time or even less. Would this brevity of time be sufficient to convict a Rabbi that the Crucifixion day was over? Probably not. But does it seem reasonable that Jesus, if he indeed prophesied the time, intended 3 seconds or 3 minutes to be part of the Sign of his Messiahship? God does not skin onions. In my opinion this marginal reference is inconsequential to proving One is sent by God. If we are to accept the "parts of a day" mentality, then Jesus gave 3 minutes as part of the incontrovertible Sign of who he was. This is a very poor choice to instill belief in doubters. This makes the three days and three nights technically correct by about three minutes, but flimsier and less believable than eve. If this were the intent, Christ would have been more credible if he described this time as "two days and two nights" and applied the "parts" rule to that timeframe.

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[374] See Thayer, J. Greek Lexicon, p. 471, word number 3798 for an explanation of how "evening" can refer either to the afternoon, about 3 p.m., or to the nightfall after 6 P M. Since none of the activities after Jesus' death could have been completed in 20 minutes to one half hour before Sabbath, the verse must be referring to the first definition of even, that is, about 3 P.M Thayer notes this in his study of the word

[375] Talmud: Shabbat 35b, as cited on p 150 of the Jewish New Testament Commentary, referring to Luke 23:54.

[376] Bacchiocchi, S., op. cit., pps 27-28

L. Final Observation: The Early Church Could Never Have Grown If Jesus' Burial Was Less Than 72 hours

Finally, we are asked to believe that the early Church fathers made no difference between a true 72-hour, miraculous resurrection, and a hokey 36-hour counterfeit that would not impress any Jew. All the original converts to Christianity were Jews from Jerusalem and the Mediterranean nations. How could the early preachers present Jesus to the Jewish world as Messiah, raised by God from the dead, when he had been dead for only parts of three days? It would not have worked, the religious leaders would not have tolerated it and the Church would never have grown as it did in Judea. History, as we will see, bears this out. No, the early preachers probably fought to the last man for the 72-hour belief. In the Gospel account of John, the disciples plainly state they believed Jesus after the Resurrection, because all the events of his death and resurrection transpired exactly as Jesus said they would. This includes the Sign of Jonah, the sign the Jews asked for.

Notice the original teaching in the account of John:

John 2:18-22, as written in the New International Version:

> Then the Jews demanded of him, "What miraculous sign can you show us to prove your authority to do all this?"
> Jesus answered them, "Destroy this temple, and I will raise it again in three days." ....
> But the temple he had spoken of was his body. After he was raised from the dead, his disciples recalled what he had said. Then they believed the Scripture and the words that Jesus had spoken.

Matthew 28:6 also says:

He is not here [in the tomb]; he has risen, just as he said. Come and see the place where he lay. (New International Version)

These words give us a very direct method for confirming what the New Testament teaches about a Wednesday Crucifixion. We must first discover the timeline of events from the narrative and then we will understand the intent of Jesus' "ambiguous" words, "Three days and three nights". According to his followers, what actually happened was what Jesus meant. His disciples understood it as such personally and they left that legacy for future generations to prove or disprove. The Jews at large of 2,000 years ago also believed it and Christianity grew on the basis of this three day proof, rooted in a Wednesday Crucifixion.

If Jesus' words are placed in the context of his culture and claim to being the Messiah, then a 72-hour interment becomes far more compelling than placing blinders over one's eyes and limiting themselves to Greek or Hebrew word studies.

The internal evidence from the Gospels and these realities, clearly show Jesus died on a Wednesday Passover somewhere between 27 and 37 A.D.

But which one?

2.2 The Problems Involved with Reconstructing All the Passover Dates in Jesus' Adult Life

In order to know which day Jesus died we need to know all the Passovers in the decade 27-37 A.D., the decade when Pontius Pilate ruled over Judea. You will read this statement in virtually all of the scholarly works that are devoted to the subject.[377] Sounds simple, but as usual, scholarly doubts and inventions of every stripe and shading await us at every turn. Once more, the scholars will say I am breathing ignorant bliss if I simply quote a date to you and confidently proclaim, "This is the day Jesus died".

When it comes to conclusively pinpointing on a calendar the precise day Jesus died, all modern scholars have been convinced by the debates of the last 120 years that this enterprise is fruitless. Not that they do not engage in the quest, they do, but they settle for only "high probabilities" at best. Forget the issues of Good Friday being fallacious, or New Testament scriptures appearing to be ambiguous; now a new set of issues arises, forming an absolute wall of resistance against everything this book hopes to prove.

The Next Set of Controversies We Must Confront and Resolve

Today the scholars are not even sure the ancient Jews always knew the correct days of the month in their own calendar.[378] It goes beyond this: modern scholars actively seek to prove it is impossible to know today the exact dates of the Hebrew calendar, because the Rabbis were so imprecise in their methods of setting dates 2,000 years ago.[379] I, in turn, claim we can know with certainty the precise day Jesus died. Such a mindset, rejected and disdained by world-class scholars, makes me appear foolish and laughable. It leaves me in a very difficult position, if I do not offer greater, more telling proofs than they. And so I must, with you as the judge once more.

Perhaps the most compelling, competent and seemingly overwhelming arguments against ever hoping to know the precise day Jesus died come from Rodger T.

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[377] Some believe the decade is 26-36 A.D., but this involves Pontius Pilate making a trip to Rome before the death of Tiberiusin 36 A.D. Some think he took nearly one year to make this trip (36-37 A.D.), more likely it occurred after a few months in 37 A.D. See "The Crucifixion was Not on Friday, p. 30, by H. Hoeh, for the details of the 27-37 dating scheme.

[378] See Finnegan, Handbook of Biblical Chronology, p. 360 for one example of this. He cites the work of Beckwith, "Cautionary Notes on the Use of Calendars and Astronomy to Determine the Chronology of the Passion" as it appeared in the volume, Chronos, Kairos, Christos, pps. 183-205. Another example of scholarly uncertainty comes from Jeremias, The Eucharistic Words of Jesus, pps. 10-13, under the Heading, "The Contribution of Astronomy", and all his notes. See also Parrker and Dubberstein, Babylonian Chronology - 626 B.C. - A.D. 75, and their references to works by Fotheringham, Karl Schoch, and Otto Neugebauer for an overview of the new Moon visibility problem that most moderns believe. Jeremias, on p. 12 of the above reference, gives an excellent rendition of all the problems, real and potential, associated with proving each Passover is correct. I will return to address his doubts in the body of this Section, and in Appendix A.9.

[379] The leading candidate in this regard that I have discovered is the paper, "Cautionary Notes on the Use of Calendars and Astronomy to Determine the Chronology of the Passion." by Rodger T. Beckwith, pps. 183-208, in Chronos, Kairos, Christos, ed. by J. Vardaman and E. Yamauchi. I will speak voluminously to all of Professor Beckwith's marvelously argued points. As I point out in the text, either he is right, or I am right.

Beckwith, a marvelous scholar of Biblical chronology at Oxford University. In 1989, Professor Beckwith carefully surveyed the landscape of Christian astronomers' efforts to date the Crucifixion by using an eclipse over Jerusalem.[380] This is precisely the problem I address in the present book. Professor Beckwith cataloged the great progress astronomy has made in helping to narrow down the list of possible Good Fridays (as you can see, we already disagree on the day of the week Jesus died), but he also pointed out and documented some five or six major reasons why, even with all the benefits of modern science, we can never be completely sure of the correct date.

Professr Beckwith's reasons as I have catalogued them, run as follows:[381]

1. The primary method of making the Jewish calendar in Jesus' time was simply to wait to see a new crescent Moon appear in the sky each month. This simplistic method was easily prone to sighting errors.

2. The Rabbis were NOT familiar enough with either Babylonian or Greek astronomy to use it to create an accurate, trustworthy calendar.

3. The Jews did NOT use the highly dependable 19-year-time-cycle calendar developed in Babylon as their own calendar until the fourth or seventh century A.D. None of this accuracy applies to the calendar of Jesus' day, which was far more prone to haphazard error than we realize.

4. The Rabbis did NOT always fix the Passover after the Spring Equinox, as some think today. There is historical evidence to show they observed the Passover sometimes before and sometimes after March 23, in a very untrustworthy manner.

5. The only reason the Rabbis added a leap month to their calendar was the changing seasons of Jerusalem. If it was unusually warm in a year, they would add a month, We have some evidence today for the seasons and droughts of ancient Jerusalem, but this only proves there could have been irregularities in the calendar, it does not conclusively identify them well enough so that we can reconstruct the exact sequence of days and months in Jesus' lifetime.

Let me give an overall response to these issues immediately. Detailed counter-arguments are in Appendix A.9.4.

Statements exist in rabbinical literature that prove astronomy was taught and studied by ancient Rabbis centuries before Jesus. The family of Rabbi Gamaliel, which Professor Beckwith admits ruled over the Jewish calendar for nearly 200 years, can be proven to be a whole dynasty of Greco-Babylonian astronomers. The passages in ancient rabbinical texts which seemingly prove the Jews used only constant observation to set their calendar, have been re-appraised by Jewish scholars to prove the Rabbis of Jesus' time were actually engaged in sophisticated astronomical calculations. Jewish scholars also admit the calculations for the

[380] Ibid
[381] They are all derived from the "Cautionary Notes . " paper mentioned above

accurate 19-year calendar were being carried out by Rabbis in the time of Jesus, centuries before this calendar was officially proclaimed in 359 A.D.

I prove in Appendix A.9 how all rabbinical astronomy was completely taken from Babylon and Greece well before Jesus. We will see evidence from an Arab historian of 1000 A.D. that the Jews officially appropriated the highly dependable 19-year calendar from Babylon around 133 B.C. I will offer new proof from Babylonian eclipse records that strongly suggests the Jews used the eclipse of September 3, 134 B.C. in order to synchronize both the months and the equinoxes of their calendar by means of accurate Babylonian data. There is historical evidence proving the Jews highly respected the equinoxes and did not place any Passover before the Spring equinox, as Professor Beckwith suggests. I will also offer an explanation of ancient Christian texts that supposedly prove the Jews kept the Passover before the Spring equinox, in a cavalier fashion.

I discuss all these matters point by point, giving many references, in Appendix A.9.4 - "Reply to the Critics of a Fixed Calendar in Jesus' Age". The general reader will see these arguments in passing throughout the present Section.

The First Calendar Complaint

The approach of most Crucifixion scholars is to simply study the Jewish calendar of 2,000 years ago and ask, "If the calendar's accuracy depended upon sighting the new Moon in Jerusalem every twenty-nine or thirty days, how good could it possibly be? And how could we possibly know today all the mistakes they made so many years ago, let alone reproduce those mistakes to find the true day Jesus died?" Yes, the Jews visually confirmed the start of each month. It would indeed be easy for them to miss the new crescent of the new moon in a rainstorm, or on a cloudy day. Therefore, modern authorities reason, "We can never know for certain that the Rabbis picked the proper start for the Passover month every year in Jesus' lifetime. Our reconstruction of the ancient calendar, no matter how precise we make it, will never match what they actually did millennia ago". Tread lightly, all who espouse certainty about the day Jesus died. Once more, the mists of time and the ignorance of the ancients (never our own) have served to defeat the quest for exact knowledge about the Crucifixion. I claim all this is merely a self-fulfilling prophecy.

How the "Visibility Problem" Dogs the True Date of the Passover

The Rabbis taught that the new month began on the day AFTER the new crescent first became visible in the sky. There had to be a clearly discernible new crescent at 6 P.M. of the current day, or the new month would have to start the next day.

The Rabbis sent out their "watchers" many hours before 6 P.M. Jerusalem time. BUT the records show the Rabbis had calculated it all out in advance, using sophisticated Babylonian and Greek astronomy; they were simply waiting for the witnesses to report what they already knew from the mathematics. The purpose of the watchers was to confirm the mathematics, not to set the calendar. This is not

what present-day New Testament scholars believe was happening. They see a frail system prone to simple, but disastrous error.

Suppose the new Moon crescent first appeared at 5:30 P.M. on the last day of the old month, but it was not seen, due to an overcast sky, until 9:18 P.M. Then the Rabbis would be forced by their decrepit old rules to say the month had not begun on the present day, which started at 6 P.M.; it would start tomorrow. Bad weather had made the Rabbis err. Their month was now starting one day later than it should and we today would never know what happened that night. This kind of "visibility problem", and its ramifications, bedevils all the doubtful literature about when Jesus died. As I will catalogue for you very shortly, many New Testament scholars have subscribed to it in the past decades.

Such reasoning is a poor vote of confidence for the intelligence, skill and wisdom of the Rabbis of 2,000 years ago. Are we to assume the Rabbis, or the Babylonian priestly astronomers before them, never confronted cloudy days in the 2,000 years between the start of Babylonian astronomy and the life of Jesus? They never sat in council and deliberated in advance what the wisest policy should be to prevent calendar error due to a cloudy day? The Jews had over 1,500 years to deal with the problem (the centuries between Moses and Christ) and they did nothing about it? They simply were entrenched in self-defeating traditions that were too crude to resolve the problem of one-day accuracy. The record proves otherwise. The point is that calendars are indeed prickly objects to handle, but we will find the Rabbis were experienced and skilled.

The Problems with All Calendars - Ancient and Modern

Thousands of years ago calendars all over the Western world were very untrustworthy. They shifted against the seasons. Your grandfather could have been keeping Christmas in winter, while decades later you wound up keeping it in the fall. Originally in Mesopotamia, every city had its own temple and its own calendar and they did not always agree.[382] We know today about the Julian and Gregorian

[382] For an in-depth discussion of all aspects of ancient Mesopotamian calendars in all their variety, see The Cultic Calendars of the Ancient Near East, by Mark E Cohen A very detailed treatment of early Sumerian and Babylonian calendars can be found in H Radau, Early Babylonian History--Down to the End of the Fourth Dynasty of Ur. For the dualism between Babylonian and Hebrew calendars, and the debt of Israel to Babylon, see the essential work, Babylonian Menologies and the Semitic Calendars, by Samuel Langdon For the seminal modern treatise on the exact dates of the ancient Babylonian-Hebrew calendar, see Parker and Dubberstein, Babylonian Chronology 626 B.C. - A.D. 75 For the Hebrew calendar in its modern setting, along with its medieval roots, see The Comprehensive Hebrew Calendar by Speir, and The Sanctification of the New Moon, the authoritative Jewish volume on setting the new month written in the Middle Ages by the sage Maimonides. For a classic in resolving the problems of the Egyptian calendar, see Parker, The Calendars of Ancient Egypt, and Rose, Sun, Moon, and Sothis - A Study of Calendars and Calendar Reforms in Ancient Egypt . Rose's bibliography is very good. A literary compendium of primary materials and a handbook for Egyptian timekeeping is Claggett, Ancient Egyptian Science - A Source Book, (3 vols) Vol II - Calendars, Clocks, and Astronomy For aspects of the ancient Roman festival calendar, see Salzman, On Roman Time. Magdalen Bear has produced a painless perpetual Julian-Gregorian calendar entitled: Days, Months and Years, A Perpetual Calendar for the Past, Present and Future. She includes a brief account of their workings For a general text on many different calendars around the world, and how they work, see Calendrical Calculations by Dershowitz and Reingold

calendars, which need leap days regularly added every fourth year in order to keep January 1 in sync with the winter Sun.

The seasons shift earlier and earlier into the year because our estimates for how long the year actually is, are always a little too short. We use 365 days instead of 365 1/4, so the true, fractionally longer year arrives slightly later and later each year and the "shorter" human calendar arrives sooner and sooner in the longer actual year. Other irregularities in the true motion of the Earth and Moon only add to the problem. Calendars, like a fast watch, have to be regularly reset with leap days and even leap months. These are extra days that compensate for the runaway year and bring our human schemes back into line with actual time. The Hebrew calendar uses leap months and one-day shifts called "postponements", that regularly bump it back into alignment with the seasons.

These periodic little bumps are based upon astronomy. If you practice bad astronomy, your calendar corrections are useless and no one will know when Jesus died. The accuracy of ancient astronomy affects the worthiness of the old Hebrew calendar. This is the problem we must resolve in order to remove all objections against the true date of the Crucifixion.

Two Thousand Years of Not Knowing When Jesus Died - Why?

Since there is so much variety on the date of the Crucifixion in respectable books you can reference, I have decided, as always, to give you the full background on this matter so that you will not be ignorant of the counter-arguments to what I claim here. In addition to investigating the supposed "fallacies" in ancient Jewish calendars, we are first going to take a sidetrip into the history of Christian uncertainty and debate that surrounds the Crucifixion date. I will provide you with the different dates Christian scholars have proposed over the last 2,000 years for the Crucifixion. Then I will show how the quest for certainty in the last 120 years has led to the study of ancient astronomy, the accusations against the Rabbis and the final conclusion that the best we can hope for today is a <u>probable</u> day Jesus died. After this survey has been completed, we will return to the original subject and dissect the facts of ancient rabbinical, Babylonian and Greek calendar science, removing all doubt as to what was actually practiced in ancient times and how scientific it truly was; we will find <u>all these modern concerns against an accurate calendar in Jesus' time are groundless</u>.

Only then will I tell you we can know the exact day Jesus died with certainty. (Faint-hearted readers may wish to jump to Section 2.3 at this juncture.)

How the Date of the Crucifixion Changed Through History and How Astronomy Eventually Became the Savior and Then the Villain in Determining When Jesus Died, Creating More Problems for Us in This Book

The modern debate over when Jesus died ranges widely, over many different possible years, from as early as 21 A.D., to as late as 36 A.D. In 1890, the range of contested years was much smaller, but the diversity of opinion just as great. One author wrote: "An imposing array of names can be cited in support of any year

from A.D. 29 to A.D. 33"[383]. The present state of uncertainty allows for some rather non-traditional thinking to flourish without reproach. The battleground has shifted over the centuries from Church tradition, to revised history, to astronomy and the calendar, to extreme modern speculation. It has evolved into the present opinion that Jesus probably died on Good Friday, April 3, 33 A.D. He did not. The choice is ironic, because nearly 1900 years ago, a Pagan with no real knowledge of the calendar or science, supposedly wrote that Jesus died on this same day. Apparently all our modern insights have only served to confirm Good Friday.

Or have they?

We know the exact day Julius Caesar was assassinated, we know the exact date Augustus Caesar and all the Caesars died, but we do not know the exact day Jesus died. None of the ancient candidates square with all known facts. No one seemingly preserved the true date, even in the generations when Jesus overtook Caesar. Ancient Christian history seems littered with ambiguity and controversy. Why such mesmerizing uncertainty?

Originally, astronomy and the Hebrew calendar were not appealed to at all when Gentile Church Fathers put forth their opposing opinions on the date Jesus died. At least not publicly. We will discover later that their divergent points of view were actually based upon astrological interpretations of when Jesus had to die, if he were a Sun-god. (See Section 2.4) Phlegon of Tralles, a Greek slave freed by Emperor Hadrian around 120 A.D., reported in his history, The Olympiads, that Jesus died in the fourth year of the 202nd Olympiad. This arcane way of tracking the years translates into 33 A.D.[384] Phlegon's writings were lost. We only have a secondhand record in a revised history written 200 years after him, that says he gave 33 A.D. as the date Jesus died.

There were many opinions on the year Jesus died in the first few centuries, especially before the Council of Nicea in 325 A.D., when Emperor Constantine made Christianity the state religion of Rome. It should not surprise us that the surviving opinions of history on when Jesus died may not square with other, more practical facts. The date we have inherited is part of the cover-story created by Pagans for their savior-god doctrines. The ancient controversy was not a matter of simple ignorance on the part of many people, but yet another battleground where false religion assaulted historical honesty as a means for power and survival. As I explain in Section 2.4, everything in the first centuries of Christianity was subject to doctrinal warfare and propagandizing by reactionary Pagans and Gnostics, who sought to preserve their status in society, their wealth and their power in the face of an upstart religion. There is a strong likelihood that Phlegon's date of 33 A.D. was an alteration, made centuries after he wrote and done at the precise time

[383] Anderson, R , The Coming Prince, p 98 For some of the names in that prior debate, see Anderson, op. cit , pps. 96-100, and Schurer, E , A History of the Jewish People in the Time of Jesus Christ, Division II, Volume 1, pps 30-32 Professor Jack Finnegan, Handbook of Biblical Chronology, p 353, gives a useful bibliography of sources from the 1930's until 1992

[384] Finnegan, J , Handbook of Biblical Chronology, p 185, Brown, R , The Death of the Messiah, vol ii, p 1042.

Gnostic theologians were officially promoting Good Friday as a replacement for the Wednesday Passover death of Jesus.

Was The Date of the Crucifixion Altered in Ancient Documents?

Phlegon's original work, The Olympiads, has only survived in fragments. The actual reference to 33 A.D. we have today was written by the Church historian Eusebius, probably around 310 A.D.[385], some 200 years after Phlegon. Did Eusebius actually report 33 A.D., or were his words altered?

Eusebius, a personal friend of Emperor Constantine and a leading Churchman with much to gain by having his official Church doctrines become Roman law, was at the heart of many initiatives to stabilize and standardize Church doctrine in the years around 325 A.D. Eusebius' Chronicles have come down to us in an Aramaic version and in a Latin form, translated by the theologian Augustine. In addition to this, his original words are known to have been heavily tampered with by various scribes within 50 years' of his death.[386] This timeframe - 380 A.D., fits exactly with the official adoption of Good Friday, which occurred around 375 A.D. and the official removal of Passover observances from Christian services (See Section 2.4 for the proof and historical references).

Clearly, if we can prove that Christ's death was officially shifted from a Wednesday to a Friday about 375 A.D., that change is only part of the revision needed to complete a full reworking of history. In order to completely validate the new Good Friday tradition, a year had to be picked close enough to the actual date of Jesus death, that placed the Crucifixion on a Friday Passover. If historical Chronicles by respected Churchmen said otherwise, those documents needed to be altered in order to justify the new position as authoritative. Given that the timing in history, 375 - 385 A.D., matches a need to benefit, what is the evidence that Eusebius' quotation from Phlegen was actually switched? It runs as follows:

Eusebius wrote at least two statements about when Jesus died in his Chronicles. In one place he stated that Jesus died in the 18th-19th year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar. This particular version was the one translated by Jerome.[387] Modern scholars admit this translates into the year 31 A.D., not 33 A.D.[388] Raymond Brown expressed it this way: "Tiberius reigned from 14-37; was Eusebius thinking of A.D.

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[385] The Chronicles of Eusebius are mentioned in his History of the Church, which has been dated to 325 A D See pps. 16 and 20 of The History of the Church

[386] For an in-depth discussion of Eusebius' original work, and the vast array of its various re-incarnations in later manuscripts, see the excellent book, The *Chronicle* of Eusebius and Greek Chronographic Tradition, by A. Mosshammer. Page 29 gives the textual reworking of the original Chronicles, and pps. 138-145 Eusebius' use of Phlegon's older history. For the possibility that Eusebius' reference to Jesus death date was switched to 33 A.D., consider Brown's note 27 on p. 1042 of The Death of the Messiah, vol. 2, where he questions whether Eusebius was referring to either 31 or 33 A.D. See Finnegan, Handbook of Biblical Chronology, p. 352 for Jerome's alternate dating of Eusebius to 31 A.D.

[387] See Finnegan, Handbook of Biblical Chronology, p. 352 for Jerome's alternate dating of Eusebius to 31 A.D.

[388] For the possibility that Eusebius' reference to Jesus death date was switched to 33 A.D., consider Brown's note 27 on p. 1042 where he questions whether Eusebius was referring to either 31 or 33 A.D. Finnegan, loc. cit.

31-32?"[389] Why is that important? We will see in the next Section that the Passover fell on a Wednesday in 31 A.D., so Eusebius' original remark becomes of prime importance when we can prove the Crucifixion was actually on a Wednesday. But elsewhere in his work, when Eusebius is quoting the tables prepared by Phlegon, the text reads that Jesus died in the 4th year of the 202nd Olympiad, or 33 A.D. 31 A.D. would have been the 2nd year of the 202nd Olympiad. A simple one-character switch, from "4" to "2" would have effected the change. So there is a curious contradiction between Eusebius' two dates, that can be explained by a change in the text, which just happens to switch the Crucifixion from a Wednesday to a Friday. This circumstance is in exact agreement with what I will prove actually happened at the same time in church history--a Wednesday to Friday shift.

The Traditional View of History Re-Emerges

Around 1560, Archbishop James Ussher, writing a timeline history of the world, used Phlegon's original date that Jesus died on Good Friday, April 3, 33 A.D. It became something of a religious benchmark for centuries.

In more modern times, with the advent of evolution and the assault on all things scriptural, educated men changed the way they approached the matter of Jesus' anniversary. Critical scholarship in Europe actually rejected Good Friday for a time, because it produced the wrong year compared to known facts of history. In the nineteenth century, German scholars looked at what various verses in the Gospels said about when Jesus died and they came to a most untraditional opinion. If we disregard the Good Friday tradition, the facts of history and the words of the Gospels show Jesus died in either 30 or 31 A.D., the very year Eusebius may have actually written in 325 A.D. Over 100 years ago (1890), scholars believed, "the only subject of contention" was "whether 30 or 31 A.D. was the year of Christ's death."[390] All this changed in the last quarter of the nineteenth century.

By drastically distorting a chain of events in history: "This king must have been married in that year, so John the Baptist must have died in the other year, so Jesus died three years later", one scholar proposed Jesus died in 35 A.D., which was quite a radical idea in the nineteenth century[391] Once more, a counter-argument was mounted to quash the radical point of view. Practical correlations between events in the Gospel story and the facts of Roman history were being rejected in order to create an exotic match of flimsy circumstances which ultimately proved false.[392]

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[389] Brown, loc cit The observant reader may protest that Brown is speaking of the year in between my claim and 33 A D. There are two questions that need to be addressed here First, it is possible that the first year of Tiberius reign was counted from 11-12 A.D., therefore the 18-19 works out to 30-31 A D. (I will prove later that this was Luke's position on counting Tiberius' reign) Second, when did the year Eusebius was writing about begin? Was this in January, or in July, when Caesar was crowned ? Even if we accept this latter perspective, the point is that Brown realizes the year in Eusebius is at variance with popular opinion, it needs to be shifted to an earlier date, one or two years prior

[390] Schurer, E , A History of the Jewish People in the Time of Jesus Christ, Division I, volume II, p 30

[391] Ibid

[392] In 1886 Alfred Edersheim, writing his Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah, at Oxford, wrote that Jesus died in 29 A.D. (vol ii, p 604) G.F Chambers, writing a book on Eclipses in 1912, said the year was 33 A.D (see p 110)

Modern Astronomy Comes to the Aid of Crucifixion Scholars

In the 1920's, after it became possible to accurately determine the Moon's exact position in the sky for every single minute thousands of years ago, conservative scholars rejected 35 A.D. and returned to the idea of Friday Passovers. By 1928, another Oxford scholar, John Fotheringham, had applied the science of the Moon's motion to calculating the first day of each new year in Jesus' adult life, creating a scientific list of all the Passovers from 27 to 37 A.D. But Fotheringham did not apply all the arcane calendar rules of the Rabbis to his list of new Moons. Some of his dates, while correct calculations, were not true to the way the Hebrew calendar worked. Fotheringham had neglected to account for leap-years the way the Rabbis did 2,000 years ago. His results were off by one month every few years.

There was also a nagging problem with the astronomy at that time. Although a mathematical theory of the Moon's exact behavior made it possible to turn the clock back 2000 years and discover the dates of new Moon's (new months) in Jesus' life, the results were not quite precise enough to remove doubts about months where the new Moon showed itself right around 6 P.M. Jerusalem time. The "visibility problem" we spoke of earlier began to rear its head once more. A new set of arguments, this time centering around the Jews' inability to determine the first appearance of the new crescent, finally took center stage in the Christian debate.

The "Visibility Problem" Surfaces in All Its Details

Even if we know the day and minute for the totally black new Moon of March 19, 33 A.D., it can take 18 or 24 hours for the Moon to get past its new phase and begin to show some sunlight around the rim. Scholars wanted to know, "How can we know the precise minute when the Moon first made its appearance as a silver crescent every month 2,000 years ago?" They began to reason in the following way: Even if we were able to produce all these monthly first crescents from modern calculations, we have <u>not</u> determined the possible dates Jesus actually died. How do we know the Jews were able to come up with the same results 2,000 years ago? If the Jews thought the new crescent was a little earlier or later than we determined it, they could have set their new month one day earlier or later than we say it should be. We would say the Passover was April 3, 33 A.D., but the Jews in 33 A.D. would have said the Passover was on April 2, or April 4 and we would never be able to know what day they actually used. At best, we could only say, it is "highly probable" that Jesus died on April 3 or April 2 of 33 A.D. (IF he died in that year.) We could never penetrate the mists of time and ignorance; we could never know the true date Jesus died for sure. Case closed. Reason triumphs over faith.

Afraid not. I will show you that better science triumphs over conjecture.

The Scholarly Recreation of an Accurate Hebrew Calendar for Jesus' Age

This "wobbling Hebrew calendar" has become the dominant principle over all thinking on when Jesus died from 1928 up until the present, but there were other

problems as well. Fotheringham's Passover list for 27-37 A.D. was revised with additional material culled from ancient records and compiled in the work of Parker and Dubberstein. These two men built upon the work of many other scholars, who were both historians and mathematicians[393], to produce the most comprehensive year-by-year, month-by-month reconstruction of the Hebrew-Babylonian calendar. It covers some 700 years before and after Jesus. Even that massive calendar, which runs from 626 B.C. to 75 A.D., has its missing pieces, but none for the 400 years surrounding Jesus' life.

The ancient Babylonian astronomers' standard of faithfully conforming each new year to the seasons, while also perfecting a rigid formula to predict the calendar in advance, produced a marvelously stable calendar. Yet the fact that this ancient method evolved into a stable device between 700 and 370 B.C. only contributes to modern scholars' nervousness. They still feel justified in doubting Parker's latter dates. But the majority of scholars who seek to identify the Crucifixion date are not mathematicians, calendar experts, or astronomers. They have no grasp of how good the Babylonian calendar is, or how closely we can track it today. To put things into perspective, it should be noted that the fixed, predictable Babylonian-Hebrew calendar was put in its final form around 370 B.C. and it continues in the same form to the present day, longer than our own Gregorian system.[394] Nevertheless, nineteenth and twentieth century Crucifixion scholars still hold to their doubtful confidence in the abilities of the ancient Jewish Rabbis, due in part to Parker's early gaps. They are the experts who would tell you I am ignorant when I claim to pinpoint the day Jesus died.

What You Will Discover in Modern Texts on the Crucifixion

I have collected a few of the present-day objections against finding the exact date of the Crucifixion for you to inspect first-hand. We already met the objections of Professor Roger Beckwith. These additional comments are less specific than his, more total in their condemnation. They are the kinds of comments you will find in print today if you decide to investigate the claims in this book. We have addressed most of them already; we will look at the intimate details of history which overthrow them all completely, in what follows. (This list is by no means complete.)

A. Alfred Edersheim (1890)

> This brings up yet another difficulty. The Jews calculated the month .... beginning with the appearance of the new moon. But this opened a fresh field of uncertainty. It is quite true that every one might observe for himself the appearance of a new moon.

[393] Some of the individuals involved, since 1890, include: J N. Strassmaier, F,H, Weissbach, Joseph Epping, Johan Schaumberger, Franz X. Kugler, Eduard Mahler, Eduard Mayer, C F Lehmann, Carl Shock, O Neugebauer, J K Fotheringham, and Abrham Sachs. For the contributions of most of these individuals, See the notes to Wacholder, B., and Wiessberg, D., "Visibility of the New Moon in Cuneiform and rabbinical Sources", HUCA, XLII, 1971

[394] Spier, A , The Comprehensive Hebrew Calendar, Neugebauer, O , "The Astronomy of Maimonides and Its Sources", pps 382-383, in Astronomy and History

> But this would again partly depend on the state of the weather.[395] (emphasis mine)

Of all the scholars I quote here, only Alfred Edersheim is Jewish; he was an Oxford-based Rabbi who wrote much about the Jewish background to Christianity in the latter half of the nineteenth century. His studies in the rabbinical treasure houses of the Talmud and the Tosefta should have given him the answer to the dilemma he proposed, but he does not indicate any other opinions or understanding. I will refer to all these doubtful critics as "Protestants", including, unfortunately, Rabbi Edersheim.

B. Sir Robert Anderson (ca. 1900)[396]

Robert Anderson (1841-1918) was an Irish lawyer, government official, Criminal prosecutor, as well as a minister and student of the Scriptures in his later life. He wrote many books defending the Bible from critics in the nineteenth century. One of his volumes dealt with a prophecy in the book of Daniel called the "Seventy Weeks". In it, his gives his explanation of the Hebrew calendar, and the exact day Jesus died. He wrote:

> The Jews, like other nations who adopted a lunar year, ... failed in obtaining complete accuracy. We know not what their method of calculation was at the time of the Christian era.[397]
>
> The proclamation by the Sanhedrin .... may have been sometimes delayed till a day or even two after the .... [new Moon] and sometimes the .... [new Moon] was delayed till the moon was 1d[ay], 17 h[ours] old ... so that the 1st Nisan may have fallen several days later than the true new moon.[398] (comments and emphasis added, both citations)

While this is true, the month actually began at the new crescent, which was seen a day or two after the new moon, Anderson does not show he is aware the difference. To hear him tell it, it began at new Moon and therefore the Rabbis were in error. To substantiate this claim, Anderson discusses the Passovers in specific years. He believes the Passover of 32 A.D. could have been delayed one day, from March 31 to April 1, because the new Moon was late on the evening of March 29, making it difficult for the Rabbis to discern the true time. He further suggests another whole month could have been added, moving the Passover from its correct

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[395] Edersheim, A., The Temple and Its Ministry, p 156.

[396] Sir Robert's doubts were expressed in his book, The Coming Prince, which went through some 20 editions before going out of print in 1975. I am not sure of the date of first printing, although his mention of Archibald Sayce, the British Assyriologist, seems to place this work in the last one decade of the nineteenth century or the first of the 20th

[397] Anderson, R., The Coming Prince, p. 100, note at bottom of page, quoting Fasti Romana by Clinton, vol ii, p. 240

[398] Anderson, R., op cit., p 102, note at bottom of page

date of April 14 to April 15th and finally to May 14.[399] The Rabbis were that incompetent; we cannot know what they did.

C. Jack Finnegan (1998)

Jack Finnegan, a former Professor of New Testament History and Archeology at The Pacific School of Religion, expressed his doubts about guaranteeing the exact date for the Crucifixion this way:

> Although such [modern calculated] dates are precise .... it must be admitted we do not know if the Jewish calendar was always in agreement [with them], so we have to consider our results probable, and even highly probable, ... but not absolutely assured."[400] (comments and emphasis added)

D. Joachim Jeremias (1955)

Writing in 1955, Dr. J. Jeremias, Professor of New Testament Studies at the University of Gottingen, Germany, gave a list of probable Passovers from 27 to 34 A.D. which he had culled from various German authorities over the previous 60 years. Dr. Jeremias firmly believed the visibility problem made it impossible to know the precise day of each Passover. The best we could hope for was either one day, or the one immediately following it. His words are maddening. He discusses the alternate-day candidates using such phrases as "either ... or", "probably .... perhaps", "most probably ... hardly" and, "Only in the case of a leap-month, which however is unlikely".[401] He was convinced that the amount of light at dusk, or the clouds in the sky, absolutely prevented the Rabbis from properly declaring the correct day. All the dates we calculate today for the Passovers in 27-34 A.D. are uncertain because atmospheric conditions 2,000 years ago must have invalidated the astronomical calculations of the Rabbis.[402] Even though the months were fixed at 30 or 29 days, somehow uncertain Rabbis could have added an extra day. Dr. Jeremias' logic breaks down at this point. Consider the following: If you have three months and you know the first must be 30 days long, the next must be 29n days long and the third must be 30 days long, how is it possible to turn the first into a 31 day month, or the second into a 30 day moth? It is not, the constraints upon you are too rigid to permit such a thing happening, no matter what you see or do not see in the sky. I will return to this point of the calendar constraints forcing the Rabbis to get the dates correct, shortly.

E. Humphreys and Waddington (1983)

The problem of trusting the Hebrew calendar is slightly different for these two Oxford scholars. They admit that the Hebrew calendar was "rigidly fixed" in Jesus' time, yet they believe because there were leap-months inserted into the calendar at

[399] Ibid, pps. 102-103
[400] Finnegan, J Handbook of Biblical Chronology, p. 360
[401] See p. 11, and 12 of The Eucharistic Words of Jesus, and note 6 on p 11
[402] Ibid, p. 11, note 4, and 12, note 1

regular intervals, this addition of leap-months introduced errors by the Rabbis that we can never know exactly today.[403] They claim that the addition of extra months was something the Jewish Calendar Committee resorted to whenever it needed. This notion is false. As we will see later, all the extra leap months in the time of Jesus were known years and centuries in advance; there was no human opinion or judgment involved with the addition of leap months in Jesus' age. Yet Humphrey's and Waddington's point affects their whole approach to proving when the Crucifixion occurred. They too, can only give "probabilities" for their Good Friday date.

F. Raymond Brown (1994)

Dr. Raymond Brown, the highly respected Jesuit scholar, makes a statement that combines several misconceptions about how the Rabbis calculated the time of the new Moon. He wrote:

> **Passover (the full moon in the middle of the month) was calculated from the *sight* of the new moon at the beginning of Nisan .... ancient Jews had an exact knowledge of astronomy that may have helped the naked eye ....[404] (emphasis added)**

Contrary to the implications of Professor Brown's statement, much research on the subject[405] suggests the Babylonians and Jews[406] created almanacs of six months,

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[403] Humphreys, C J and Waddington, W G, "Dating the Crucifixion", Nature (306), December 1983, p. 744

[404] Brown, op cit, p 1362.

[405] The three-volume opus, Astronomical Cuneiform Texts by O Neugebauer (pps. 80 and 142 among other locations) gives the exact decipherments of original Babylonian Lunar and planetary almanacs (ephemerides) excavated in Babylon, which all the present discussion is based upon In addition, there are the Astronomical Diaries, (ancient Babylonian sighting records) published by Professor Abraham Sachs. I am of the opinion no one should enter into the present discussion without first studying these two foundational texts and their bibliographies to some degree Neugebauer's papers, "The Survival of Babylonian Methods in the Exact Sciences of Antiquity and Middle Ages" pps 157-164, "The Astronomy of Maimonides and Its Source", pps 381-424, "The History of Ancient Astronomy: Problems and Methods", pps 33-98, and "Mathematical Method in Ancient Astronomy" pps. 99-129, all to be found in his book Astronomy and History, all provide background information to the question of what the Rabbis did or did not know in Jesus' age. Other, connecting quotes from other sources tie all this information together to form the full picture The details of this are in Appendix A 9 1 Other, equally important primary sources for ancient rabbinical methods include: The Sanctification of the New Moon by Moses Maimonides written in 1178 and cataloging 1,000 years of rabbinical lunar science (see in particular the Introduction by Obermann, and the Commentary by Neugebauer at the end of the volume, which put Maimonides astronomy into an ancient historical perspective that goes back far earlier than the fourth century A D.), and rabbinical Astronomy and Mathematics by Rabbi William Feldman, which gives the detailed mathematics behind Maimonides discussions (when we compare Feldman's mathematical revelations of Maimonides with Babylonian mathematics, it is clear the Rabbis got their original astronomy from Babylon.) Other sources, such as "Elements of a Lunar Theory in the Mishnah, Rosh Hashannah 2:6 and the Talmudic Complements, Thereto" by Earnest Weisenberg, demonstrate that the Rabbis were doing far more than observing the Moon in Jesus' time.) See also Wacholder, B Z., and Weisberg, D B. "Visibility of the New Moon in Cuneiform and Rabbinic Sources", Hebrew Union College Annual, (42), 1971, a modern rabbinical assessment of the whole ancient Jewish calendar fixing process. Many other texts could be mentioned for less profound insights they offer See Swerdlow, N M Ancient Astronomy and Celestial Divination, MIT Press, for a useful history of the decipherment of the lunar almanac texts and a historical bibliography To assume the Jews strove for an accurate calendar, and yet were indifferent to all this is rather surprising.

one year, two years, or even fifty years in advance, listing the new Moons. In parallel with this, the leading Rabbis and their assistants developed additional monthly calculations for predicting the time immediately before, during and after the literal new Moon, depending upon the "closeness of the call", but not the full Moon. The literature shows that calculations were made independent of the sightings, which were used primarily to confirm what the Rabbis already knew. All this will be rehearsed in detail for the scholarly reader who again thinks I am ignorant of the facts. It is certainly likely that the Rabbis performed their own sightings of the Sun and Moon with sophisticated equipment copied from Babylonian and Greek astronomers,[407] but that was private science and not the public new Moon ritual held at the start of every month. What is interesting here is that Dr. Brown has melded the facts together, while somehow preserving intact a sense of no confidence in the Rabbis. Modern doubts survive regardless of the details.

G. William Propp (1998)

Dr. Propp, in his wonderful commentary on the book of Exodus (Old Testament), applies the modern consensus of uncertainty all the way back to the origins of the calendar under Moses and Aaron (ca. 1460 B.C.) He too feels we cannot be sure that the Israelites knew the exact day of a month's beginning, as we might figure it today.

> **The Israelite lunar month began approximately on the new moon but we are not sure exactly when. ... Reckoning from the first new crescent, as in Babylon, puts the average full moon on day 13 .... But it is quite possible that, like the Egyptians, the Israelites considered the fifteenth day the full moon, irrespective of astronomical reality (cf. Parker pps. 9, 12).[408] (emphasis added.)**

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[406] For the Jewish tradition of such almanacs going back into antiquity, see later on in this section, and Appendix A.9.

[407] The Greek astronomer Hipparchus had improved upon a simple device called a "dioptra" to enable comparison of shadow lengths in order to determine the exact moment of the Spring and Fall equinoxes, which are the moments when the Earth is exactly in light and dark for 12 hours Hipparchus' device was called an "equinoctial ring" Hipparchus was able to determine the equinoxes with in a matter of hours using this measuring device He achieved this accuracy around 140-30 B C Because the Hebrew calendar is based upon alignments with the Sun, two of the key measurements of the Sun which the Rabbis must have completely accurate to define their calendar are the equinoxes of the Spring and Fall As I will show in the next Section, and Appendix 9, Rabbi Gamaliel II (died 110 A D), his father Rabbi Simeon, and grandfather Rabbi Gamaliel I (ca. 30 A.D.), were ALL students of Hipparchus methods It would not be difficult for them to learn of such a device and to either obtain a sample, manufacture a copy, or re-invent their own version, once they understood the principle of casting shadows and comparing their lengths in a circular frame Hipparchus device was used simultaneously in two or three locations: Alexandria, Rhodes, and elsewhere, apparently to "triangulate the time (Pannekeok, op cit., p 124) The Tosefta seems to indicate the Rabbis did something similar, using Jerusalem, Trans-Jordan, and Galilee (Tosephta Sanhedrin 2:3). As we will see in Appendix A.9, the Rabbis were rapacious for knowledge from every culture; anything the Gentiles had of value was adapted as appropriate, whether it be Babylon, Greece, or Arabia

[408] Propp, W.H., Exodus 1-18, p 383.

He is making a judgment under the assumption that the 15th day festival and the full moon were intended to be synonymous. That is simply conjecture. The fact is the Babylonian calendar system was the Hebrew calendar system, as Samuel Langdon and others proved over 60 years before Dr. Propp wrote.[409] These words may simply be a reflection of the culture of doubt that existed in the scholarly literature of the 1970's and 90's.

Finally, I have added a few more thought s on this subject from Professor Beckwith.

H. Roger T. Beckwith (1989)

The Oxford scholar has made various statements which coincide very well with the comments of scholars less familiar with the issues surrounding the Jewish calendar.

Here is a brief sample of his thoughts, taken from his article, "Cautionary Notes on the Use of Calendars and Astronomy to Determine the Date of the Passion".

> .... the most responsible writers on New Testament chronology are well aware that in the first century the Jewish year was governed by observation and not by [astronomical] calculation. This affects the dating of the most important of all first-century events, the death and resurrection of Jesus.
>
> ... the Jews did not begin to calculate the date of the Passover astronomically .... until between the fourth and the seventh centuries A.D.[410] (emphasis mine)

I sincerely hope the reader does not now think I am irresponsible. I will use evidence from scholars of classical and Hebrew astronomy such as Otto Neugebauer, Solomon Gandz, W. Feldman and Earnest Weisenberg, to prove the premises underlying both these statements are incorrect.[411]

The Climate of Doubt Created Today's Date Controversies

The upshot of Professor Beckwith's "Cautions Against Astronomy", the doubts about Parker's accuracy and the "visibility question", all serve to justify a wide spectrum of opinion on when Jesus died, all of it derived from the same basic set of facts. As I noted earlier, the candidates today range anywhere from 21 to 36

[409] Langdon, S , Babylonian Menologies and the Semitic Calendars
[410] Vardaman, J., and Yamamuchi, W., Chronos, Kairos, Christos, p. 188 Quotation order is reversed,
[411] See a brief outline of my evidence in the second Note following this present one

A.D.[412] The further effect of such a scattering of opinion is to seal the matter in a case-hardened conviction that it truly is impossible to know the literal day Christ died. Once more, the novice or layman will come away bewildered, completely convicted of the insurmountable obstacles to certain truth. The majority consensus today seems to be split between two Friday dates: 30 A.D. and 33 A.D., with the preponderance of scholars favoring Friday, April 3, 33 A.D.[413] This just happens to be the original date Phlegon put forth about 120 A.D.[414] All our science, scholarship and debate has in a sense, has added nothing to what he simply penned so many years ago. The two modern problems serenely intertwine in calendar criticism: Parker could possibly be wrong on a Passover date in Jesus' lifetime and the Jews of 2,000 years ago may not have been good enough to either use the right calendar, or see the new Moon, even when Parker correctly said it appeared.

Now that we have completed our survey of the long and varied history of the Crucifixion Dates, lets return to investigate more deeply how the calendar was set 2,000 years ago, what kind of science the Rabbis actually used and how accurate that science truly was. We will uncover far greater detail than the New Testament experts usually address. Once more, there are surprising answers lurking underneath the cover of scholarly doubt.

The Ancient System for Determining the New Moon - Was It as Hapless as the Moderns Think?

The ancient Rabbis were a wise and rigid class, with scientific predecessors that went far back into the Babylonian priestly system, notably the scribe Daniel. Part of this joint tradition of Babylon and Judah was a code of silence and discretion in matters of advanced astronomy.[415] Priestly knowledge was hidden from rival nations and the masses. The public never knew the learning of the priests, although over time other nations, such as Greek Egypt, acquired the knowledge of Babylon and finally Babylon itself promoted its secrets in a bid for cultural dominance. The public system the Rabbis used for determining the start of a new month or new year in Jesus' age came directly from Babylon, it was as follows:

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[412] This uncertainty has permitted various opinions of various degrees of substance to flourish The Harper's Bible Dictionary in 1950, claimed Jesus died in 28-29 A.D., without offering much proof (see p. 326) The highly respected Raymond E. Brown wrote in 1994 that it was either Friday April 7, 30 A.D., or Friday April 3, 33 A.D.; he could not decide between the two dates (p. 1376 of vol. ii of The Death of the Messiah). In 1998, Jerry Vardamann, another "new wave" radical historian, offered a chronology that showed Jesus died in 21 A.D. (Chronos, Kairos Christos II, p. 316). In 1989, in a predecessor volume, Chronos, Kairos, Christo, scholar Nikos Kokkinos offered evidence to show Jesus died in 36 A.D. Fred Coulter, an evangelist of modern times, wrote in a massive and well-documented book, The Christian Passover, in 1999, that Jesus died in 30 A.D., on a Wednesday, April 5, instead of the traditional Friday April 7 usually given as the Passover for that year

[413] In 1994 Brown gave a then current listing of the major scholars in each camp, although he said, "It is useless to list all the names" He gives 15 well known experts in favor of 30 A.D., and 10 for 33 A.D. See note 50, p. 1375 of Death of the Messiah, vol. ii. Jack Finnegan, author of the Handbook of Biblical Chronology revised in 1998, prefers 33 A.D. as more probable than 30 A.D. Finnegan cites three authorities who favor 33 A.D., and one who prefers 30 A.D. (see p. 362 of that book, and note 215 on the same page.)

[414] Paul Maier gives the date of Phlegon's writing as 137 A.D. (p. 125 of Vardaman, Chronos, Kairos, Christos

[415] Propp, W., Exodus 1-18, p. 384

A committee of three knowledgeable Rabbis[416], called the Sod Haibbur[417], was selected for the task from the ruling 72-member Sanhedrin Council which regulated all of Jewish society, with the Chief Rabbi as its head. At the end of a month, when the Moon had vanished from the sky, spotters, men of honest reputation, went out to see if the first crescent of the new Moon was yet visible at or before 6 P.M. of the intended day. In some cases as many as 40 pairs of witnesses complied, and gave testimony; only the first pair, if believed, mattered.[418] (The Rabbis convened for the entire day in a great palatial portico or courtyard in Jerusalem called Bet Yazeq, awaiting the news that could arrive at any moment before 6 P.M.[419]) The first verbal report was immediately presented to the Council, which carefully scrutinized it for accuracy via a series of pointed questions. The older witness of the first pair was interrogated first, followed by the other. Rabbis would ask the spotters questions such as: "What shape was the crescent? Where did it appear in the sky compared to the Sun? How wide was it? Which way did it curve compared to the Sun?"[420]

One Rabbi used sample charts of the new crescent to question the witnesses. When the examining Rabbis were satisfied with the witnesses' report, the new Moon was declared to have been found and the new Month "sanctified", or set apart from the old one.[421] Yet, in rare cases when questions were raised, the procedure was for the three to add two more Rabbis and debate the matter, then add two more, for a total of seven who finally passed judgment.[422] In spite of all this, there are several examples of exceptionally adept Rabbis holding court and single-handedly overruling the whole process to assert that the Month must begin "NOW", regardless of sightings.[423] This was the basic method used; most today have assumed it was all that was involved with setting each new month. It was not.

Clearly, the Rabbis had to have had prior knowledge of what to expect each month; they wanted confirmation from eyewitnesses of what they had already determined through their science. In recent times, scholars have analyzed each of the five

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[416] Neusner, J., The Mishnah, tractate Sanhedrin, subparagraphs I:2 D, E, F on p 583

[417] Spier, A., The Comprehensive Hebrew Calendar, p. 1

[418] Neusner, J., The Mishnah, Rosh Hashannah, I:6, p 300

[419] Neusner, J., The Mishnah, Rosh Hashannah, 2:5, p 301

[420] Wacholder and Weisberg, Visibility of the New Moon in Cuneiform and Babylonian Sources, HUCA, (XLII) 1971, note 12, pps 231, 233

[421] The Rabbis made the pronouncement, "It is sacred", to signify the new month had been officially dedicated as part of the calendar: Edersheim, The Temple and Its Ministry, p. 156, note 8, Neusner, The Mishnah, Rosh Hashannah, 3:1, p. 303 See also Spier, p. 1 for a brief overview of this process

[422] Cohen, A., Everyman's Talmud, pps 304-305.

[423] Neusner, J., The Mishnah, Rosh Hashannah 2:8, pps 302-303 gives such a debate where Rabbi Gamaliel, a skilled astronomer, accepted testimony that said the crescent had appeared, even though the Rabbis did not see it the next day The Rabbis who were not astronomers complained, demanding a reversal of the calendar, but Gamaliel refused, pronouncing an edict to prevail. He succeeded in convincing his fellows. I believe that Gamaliel the astronomer, knew of lighting conditions which blocked the latter appearance, while realizing the crescent had to be properly positioned the day before, and so he let the contradictory testimony stand. I will discuss more of this kind of rabbinical reasoning in Appendix 9

questions the Rabbis used in the time of Jesus to query the witnesses.[424] The modern conclusion is that every question is actually a sophisticated probe that confirms the key results of mathematical lunar astronomy.[425] The conclusion? The Rabbis were NOT querying witnesses to find out whether the new Moon was seen at all. Rather, they were seeking eyewitness confirmation for seven or more mathematical values that gave them the exact positions of the Sun and new Moon. These values were the very same critical elements the Babylonians used in their Lunar theory.[426] The Rabbis knew when to expect the new Moon, they were simply using eyewitnesses to confirm the accuracy of their own mathematics, so they might make any minor corrections to their mathematics, as need dictated.

The ritual of fallible "lookout" astronomy, which modern Christian theologians worry about so much, simply was not conducted 2,000 years ago in the manner the moderns think. The uncertainty of cloudy days simply wasn't at issue and the calendar was more sophisticated than what they believe. I will offer some spectacular evidence to show the Rabbis actually set their calendar from a Babylonian eclipse prediction that occurred in 134 B.C. (See Appendix A.9)

Concluding the Public Ritual

After the questions were answered and the new month declared, the spotters, be they 10 or 40 or 80, were feasted the night of the new crescent in the great hall with the Rabbis, to encourage their future participation.[427] Fires were lit on mountaintops to signal the event to the surrounding towns and messengers were dispatched the next day with letters of authority identifying the first day of the new month to Jews of other lands, such as Syria or Babylon. This transmission did not happen every month, but at the Spring Summer and Fall seasons.

Keeping the Calendar in Step With the Seasons Involved Secrecy that Lingers Today

The Jewish calendar had two problems to surmount every year. It had to square with both the circuit of the Sun and the monthly circuit of the Moon. This is analogous to keeping two different sets of beats simultaneously in music and finishing both at the same time when the song is over. Two fundamental sets of benchmarks had to be met each year. The calendar had to be in step with the four seasons that were precisely defined by the Spring and Fall equinoxes and the Summer and Winter solstices. (The Rabbis called these four anchors of their

[424] Weisenberg, E., "Elements of a Lunar Theory in the Mishnah", Hebrew Union College Annual, vol. xxxiiii, pps 153-195 This paper is highly useful, even essential reading, but it needs to be understood in the light of other books, such as Feldman's rabbinical Mathematics and Astronomy, and Gandz', The Sanctification of the New Moon. In my opinion, what Weisberg leaves out is the greater mathematical and cultural context of what the Rabbis were doing, and where they got their mathematics from. I answer this, somewhat thoroughly, I think, in Appendix A 9

[425] Weisenberg, E , "Elements of a Lunar Theory in the Mishnah", Hebrew Union College Annual, vol xxxiiii, p 195

[426] Weisenberg lists those items as: Solar longitude and declination, Lunar longitude and separation from the Sun, Lunar longitude, declination, and parallax. - Weisenberg, E , "Elements of a Lunar Theory in the Mishnah", Hebrew Union College Annual, vol xxxiiii, p 195.

[427] Edersheim, A , loc cit , and Neusner, J , op cit , Rosh Hashannah, 2:5, p. 301

calendar "Tekufoth".) Along with this, all of the months had to begin at a new crescent and a complete number of new moons had to be fitted into each year, without throwing the New years far away from the Spring equinox. Accurately marked equinoxes and new Moons were the key measurements all others depended upon.

Following the tradition of Babylonian priests, virtually all of the science associated with this fixing of the seasons and months was hidden from the general public. The Rabbis openly spoke and wrote about other criteria for setting the Passover: the barley harvest had to be ripe at the time of the Spring new year (this of course could only happen after the Spring equinox); the Passover lambs had to be old enough for the sacrifice and the fruit trees had to be in blossom. While all of these factors from agriculture definitely had to be fulfilled, it was all they explained to the public. It is also all that the New Testament scholars consider today.

A Little About the Rules the Rabbis Used to Keep the Calendar on Time

If these three signs of Spring's presence were in timely evidence, the new year was declared at the new Moon in mid-March; if not, the Rabbis waited an extra month. This statement is a little simplistic. In fact, the real criteria for either setting Nisan 1, or adding an extra month had to do with accurately measuring the exact position of the Sun at the Fall and Spring equinoxes compared to fixed constellations of the Zodiac.[428] If the calendar months did not properly reflect the seasons as proclaimed by the position of the Sun in the Fall or Spring sky, the present new month became a leap month. It was needed to mark time to ensure the calendar was back in step with the cycles of nature. There was significant controversy among scholars over the last 120 years over how well the Rabbis set the leap months in Jesus' time, and how we could possibly know today when such mistakes were made.[429] The 19-year Babylonian-Hebrew calendar removes all this doubt, so the scholars claimed the Jews could not have been sophisticated enough to use it in Jesus' time. We will see otherwise.

The Critical Advantages that Came With Using the 19-Year Cycle Calendar

The leap month inserted before the Passover was called Adar II. This adjustment to the calendar of adding a whole month was called "intercalation". The Babylonians had perfected this rhythm of inserting leap months over the 6th through 4th centuries B.C. It occurred with complete regularity 7 times in a 19-year period. The rule was for an extra, 13th month to be added in the following years of the 19-year cycle, and only in those years: 3, 6, 8, 11, 14, 17 and 19.[430] We have here a fixed, endlessly repeating pattern that removes all uncertainty from any date in the year.

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[428] More on this in a few pages.

[429] Anderson, R. The Coming Prince, pps. 98-105, especially his incorrect table on p. 104. You will need to compare it against Parker and Dubberstein's data, which I provide in Appendix 9 to see the kind of errors, which befell the scholars 120 years ago.

[430] Parker, R.A., and Dubberstein, W., Babylonian Chronology - 626 B.C. - A.D. 75, pps 2,3, and Chart on p. 6 (Plate I), also cited and clarified by Rabbis Wacholder and Weisberg, "Visibility of the New Moon in Cuneiform and Babylonian Sources", HUCA, (XLII) 1971, pps. 236-237. This usage of Parker by the Rabbis constitutes a validation of sorts.

Let me reiterate something that was mentioned earlier: This procedure for setting the months of each year was rigidly fixed in a "predictable pattern" for at least 400 years before the crucifixion of Jesus. I prove in Apendix A.9 it was employed by the Rabbis one or more centuries before Jesus, not 400 years after him, as modern scholars claim[431] The Rabbis who were astronomers knew almost indefinitely into the future when a year would require an extra month; they just continued the 500 year pattern of 19-year cycles as far out as they wanted.

In addition to insertions of a complete month, there was a second set of rules which shifted the first day of a month forward by one day. These later set of rules were called "postponement". So the Hebrew calendar could be changed by a whole month, or by a single day. Both of these modifications required a minute by minute knowledge of the positions of the Sun and Moon, as well as human judgments, which modern Crucifixion scholars find troubling. The moderns assert that the Rabbis were not up to the task of correctly calling each postponement day in Jesus' time. To hear them tell it, the correct start of the Passover month was a knife-edge reckoning in which poor times, or cloudy days could shift the Jewish New Year off by a single day, or a whole 30 days; we will never know. A few minutes error and a whole month was lost to human frailty. Lets look at the facts of Hebrew calendar science and see if we can get beyond the smoke screen of modern doubt.

The Jews Freely Adopted Gentile Calendar Science, Causing Problems

The Chief Rabbis' responsibility to ensure the calendar's correctness comes as part of a charge given to Moses nearly 3,500 years ago in Exodus 12:2: to set and proclaim the first month Nisan of the sacred calendar, every year.[432] This of course, is the month within which the Passover falls. Such a responsibility, as given to the Prophet who talked with God on Mount Sinai, was something the Rabbis did not take lightly. It was also something sacred that put upon itself an air of purity that must not be sullied with Pagan ways. This sanctity of the calendar-making process would eventually force the Rabbis into a straitjacket of secrecy and create a tradition of silence on gentile astronomy that plagues us to this very day. (See next section for additional insights.)

The Rabbis faithfully performed this divine function over the centuries, but their calendar knowledge had to be developed and perfected by borrowing from other cultures. In different ages, different schemes were used to keep the calendar on

[431] Britton, J P., in "Treatments of Annual Phenomena in Cuneiform Sources", Steele, Under One Sky, gives a detailed description of the development of the 19-year calendar in the centuries before Jesus Parker and Dubberstein calculate the dates of the calendar from 626 to 75 A D., and corroborate the calculated months with exhaustive written archives from all the civilizations that used the calendar during this long period Wacholder, B., and Weisberg, Ibid, especially Table II on p 236, which gives the period of predictable calendars as starting in 482 B C Parker, and Abraham Sachs (p 235 of Wacholder) however, gives it starting around 383 B C or sooner Wacholder tentatively concludes (Item 3, p 239) that the Rabbis did not adopt the 19-year calendar until the 4th century A D., IF we assume they told all in their writings. Yet he admits the Rabbis of Jesus time were trained in Greek astronomy. The implications of this statement turn the tide against his conclusion as I carefully document in Appendix A.9

[432] Feldmean, Maimonides

time, based upon the progress that societies made in understanding the heavens. In the beginning years of Israel's existence as a captive nation, an eight year system was used, then later, around 130 B.C., the more exact nineteen year cycle was officially integrated into the Rabbi's calendar.[433] These later methods were appropriated directly from Babylonian astronomers. (Here, I am being very controversial, but read on.) Detailed study of all the components of Jewish timekeeping shows the entire Jewish system for marking and measuring years, months, days and hours was adopted virtually intact from Babylon, Greece and finally Arabia. (See Appendix A.9. for the full exposition.) This should not be surprising; the practice had an even earlier history.

In the 1920's and 30's Professor Julian Morgenstern, of the Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati Ohio produced a virtual book of some 250 pages on the sources and evolution of the Hebrew calendar from the time of Moses down to Babylon. He discovered the Jews employed three major calendar systems over some fifteen hundred years before Jesus.[434] The systems were used to keep track of the Sun, Moon, and seasons, but the months, festivals and holy days were always the same as those given to Moses on Mount Sinai. Morgenstern demonstrated the first calendar system was adopted from the Phonecians and Caananites who inhabited Palestine before the Jews.[435] The last system was the one adopted in the exile of the Babylonian captivity. The significance of Morgenstein's work is that it breaks through the notion of perpetual Jewish control over their calendar, and shows how dependent Jewish society was upon gentile science throughout the centuries to perfect its time-keeping.[436] Morgenstern's work establishes a long and consistent tradition of calendar borrowing by the Jews, which makes it much more difficult to believe the Jewish calendar was an island of independence in the centuries before and after Jesus. It is one of several examples of modern Jewish scholarship which New Testament experts should duly acknowledge.

It took several centuries for the nineteen year system to be perfected in Babylon; so the development of the present Hebrew calendar has some gaps of accuracy in it for the sixth and fifth centuries B.C. This checkered past may simply be a lack of data on our part today, but it presents itself to modern eyes as ancient incompetence, not our modern ignorance.[437]

The Many Constants Built Into the Babylonian-Hebrew Calendar System

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[433] al-Biruni (1000 A.D.) said the Jews made the official transition to the 19-year system somewhere around 130 B.C. (The Chronology of Ancient Nations, pps. 67-68. I explain this more fully in Appendix A.9.2. Robert Anderson, writing about 1890, believed the Jews used ONLY an eight-year cycle calendar in Jesus' time, based upon meager research (The Coming Prince, pps. 102-103 plus notes.) We have already mentioned Mahler's work in the main text. Briton, gives the full development of the eight year cycle into the 19-year cycle in Babylon, while the Jews were resident there, in the period 560-360 B.C. in Under One Sky, edited by John Steele.

[434] Julian Morgenstern, "The Three Calendars of Ancient Israel, Hebrew Union College Annual, vols. I,III,X.

[435] Morgenstern, J., Supplementary Studies in the Calendars of Ancient Israel, HUCA vol. III, pps. 2,5-10

[436] Ibid, pps. 1-2 clearly shows this break with the traditional view of his age.

[437] Parker, R.A., and Dubberstein, W., op. cit., p. 2

Calendar error can only come from lax rules or poor measurements. This is not what we discover 2,000 years ago. The Rabbis had a fixed length for each month in their calendar, just as we do today. Only certain months, like our February, were allowed the option of multiple lengths. Centuries before the time of Jesus, they knew in advance the first month of the year would be 30 days long, the second 29 days and so on. They had calendar rules which demanded the New Year begin somewhere between mid March and early April.[438] They could not deviate from declaring the end of a 30-day month because clouds covered the Moon over Jerusalem for 5 days. We also have to appreciate the fact that the Rabbis of Jesus' age were professional astronomers, trained in the best astronomy of the age.[439] What modern Protestant scholars may not appreciate when they doubt the Rabbis' abilities is that the Rabbis indeed knew the limits of their science, they had debated calendar problems over the centuries and they had an official policy for guaranteeing the calendar would be correct in spite of any mis-sighting of the new Moon.

The proof for this and the full explanation of how the Rabbis handled a new Moon on a cloudy day comes from The Tosefta[440], a part of the rabbinical literature compiled around 200 A.D. from much earlier texts. Some of the New Testament scholars in Europe and America may never have read the plain words you are about to read next. If they had, the whole argument against rabbinical cloudy-day errors would have vanished with the stroke of a pen.

The Policies Behind the Public Sighting Ceremony

The Rabbis' strategy for dealing with a cloudy day was as follows: The New Year and the new month would be declared on time, as calculated, AS EXPECTED, regardless of what was seen in the skies at 6 P.M. over Jerusalem. From the rabbinical treatise on matters of Jewish society, called Rosh Hashanna, in The Tosefta, we read:

> R[abbi] Eleazar .... says: If it [the new moon crescent] did not appear in its expected time, they [the Calendar Council] do not sanctify it [the new month or the new year], FOR HEAVEN HAS ALREADY DECLARED IT SANCTIFIED.[441] (emphasis added)

Notice the Rabbi speaks of an expected time declared by heaven. This can refer to both God and astronomy. It can only be a time predicted in advance of the literal sighting, which gives the moment when the new Moon must appear. The new crescent would be expected due to calculation, or an accurate calendar which gave the length of each month in advance, such as the 19-year system. We will find out the Rabbis had all of this. Most scholars admit these words were compiled about

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[438] Ibid, p 3

[439] Wacholder, B., and Weisberg, D., op. cit., p 233, note 22

[440] Also The Mishnah, and Babylonian Talmud, which contain parallel passages to what I will quote from The Tosefta My preference for using The Tosefta is based upon the fact that it addresses the visibility problem with a multiplicity of rabbinical answers, rulings, and insights - 3 or 4, all in one place; although The Mishnah and Babylonian Talmud also have their unique statements which add to the understanding

[441] The Tosefta, Rosh Hashanan, 1:17, V., vol I, p 610

200 A.D. from rabbinical texts and traditions that went back as far as 200 B.C., yet according to comments we have already seen, none of this kind of thinking begins until 350 or 700 A.D.! Clearly we have an inconsistency between fact and opinion.

How did the Rabbis know in advance when the new crescent would appear in 200 B.C.? Rabbi William Feldman very diplomatically admitted the answer in his landmark book, rabbinical Mathematics and Astronomy: "It would appear that the Council had mathematical experts to act as their assessors."[442] They were astronomers and computing experts and they did their work in advance, based upon advanced Babylonian Lunar theory.[443] If for any reason that expected appearance did not occur, the Council behaved as if the presumed time was correct regardless and the new month was observed in complete harmony with the known rules of the calendar, independent of what may have been "mis" calculated, or not seen.[444] Even if they could not calculate down to 5:59 or 6:01 P.M., the Rabbis knew enough to realize the regulation of the calendar demanded the new Moon had to be seen today and they made sure their pronouncements worked out according to schedule. There were never any 31-day months. By the end of the 30th day of an old month, the new month was decreed no matter what was seen or not seen in the sky.[445] Similarly, leap years would always fall on time, based upon the "secret method" for calculating when the Spring equinox would occur.[446] It is a fact that the Rabbis named BOTH the Council that examined the witnesses and the equinox calculation that set the new year, "Sod Haibbur".[447] This dual name clearly demonstrates that calendar judgments rested in the secret mathematical calculations which the witnesses knew nothing about. We must therefore look beyond the public descriptions of the new Moon process to find the actual method. New Testament scholars do not do this.

The rabbinical teaching that Heaven sanctifies the month "on time" regardless of man's abilities is repeated twice more in the Tosefta. It is a statement of belief in the timely, predictable workings of the solar system. As we saw earlier in this chapter, "three times" in Jewish culture signifies finality, permanence and irrevocability. In short, by making this statement not once, but three times, the Rabbis who produced the Tosefta are cautioning the pious Jew not to rebel against seemingly perverse judgments from the Sod Haibbur, "If the new Moon is not seen when it has been calculated to appear and when the calendar dictates a new month must begin, we reserve the right to debate the issue with the astronomers and to declare, after careful deliberation, that the Moon still appeared on time". The private dictum, which was not communicated to the larger public, was: "God, [and science] are better than the eye of fallible men; the calendar goes on as scheduled by the astronomers". If you read the rabbinical literature, this kind of candor we find in the Tosephta is not universally expressed, it must be discerned.

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[442] Feldman, W M , rabbinical Mathematics and Astronomy, p 180.
[443] Weisenberg, E , "Elements of a Lunar Theory in the Mishnah", Hebrew Union College Annual, vol xxxiiii, pps. 153-195. Comparison with Babylonian astronomy, such as described by Neugebaurer in A History of Ancient Mathematical Astronomy, will demonstrate this point
[444] Feldman, W.M , op. cit , p 179
[445] Ibid
[446] Ibid
[447] Ibid

As I suggested above, with this understanding of the Rabbis' astronomy and their pragmatic solution to starting the new month, all the objections of modern Protestant and Christian scholars against the correct Passover dates evaporate. The Jews knew what they were doing in 99% of the time; their calendar was sure. My critics will counter, "This is not 100%, we still cannot be certain of the Passover day Jesus died." I will demonstrate in Section 2.2.2, using data for the years of Jesus' adult life, that the Spring Equinox, the March Sun and the new Moon occurred in such a way that there were no "close calls" in rabbinical astronomy. There was no way poorly applied astronomy could have led to predicting the wrong day compared to modern results. When we look at the actual numbers, the protests and concerns made by modern critics are baseless. There were no 5:57 P.M. or 6:03 P.M. new Moons over Jerusalem in the last decade of Jesus' life, 6:01 P.M. Spring equinoxes. The calculations the rabbinical astronomers could make were broad enough, even with a one or two hour inaccuracy, to consistently yield the correct start of each new year in Jesus' lifetime. The science of the Rabbis, coupled with their pragmatic approach to taking calculation and a 30-day month over fallible human sightings, was good enough for them to arrive at the same Passover days 2,000 years ago that we arrive at today with modern science. We can know today from preserved business documents of Jesus' age that the Rabbis picked the exact days for the Passover and Jesus' Crucifixion, which modern science dictates. The Rabbis were not off by one month; they were not off by one day. Everything matches between then and now.

2.2.1 Misconceptions About the Jewish Calendar Complicate the Quest for the True Date Jesus Died

Turning Aside the Traditional Jewish Teaching on Observation

If you study the words of the 12th century Jewish scholar Moses Maimonides, or the 20th century calendar authority, Rabbi Arthur Spier, you will only learn that calendar calculation in Judaism is a sacred tradition of great antiquity; however, sighting the Moon's position in the sky was the true method for setting the calendar, used since the earliest times.[448]

While completely true, this is also highly filtered information. There is also a very long history of scholarly inquiry and debate on how the ancient Rabbis set the calendar, which these texts do not bother to address.

Eduard Mahler was the first scholar in modern times (1892) to propose the Hebrew calendar was Babylonian in origin. While some of his details have proven inaccurate, his overall intuition has stood: the present Jewish calendar comes from ancient Babylon.[449] **The problem today is, when did the Jews take it over? in 200 B.C., or in 360 A.D.? Almost all popular accounts say in 360 A.D., even though, as we saw in the last section, there is evidence from rabbinical writings that shows otherwise. How can this inconsistency exist?**

There is a natural reluctance to infringe upon the traditions of ancient Rabbis, which results in "diplomatic" scholarship on the part of modern Jewish scholars. Modern Jewish scholarship, while quite good, is not explicit on all points. This care is mis-interpreted by Christian scholars who have little appreciation for the subtlety of the issues involved. As we saw, the Rabbis' need for secrecy was two-edged. It concealed their methods from the public and it protected them from recrimination of resorting to Pagan science to solve a problem the Jewish God gave to Moses. In the eyes of many pious Jews, even modern ones today, pagan science has no place with the sacred God of Israel, no matter how expert it is. The Old Testament condemned the arts of pagan astronomers as worthy of death.[450] **A deep cultural divide existed over such borrowings that forced yet greater silence on the matter.**

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[448] In these texts, as well as Everyman's Talmud, by Abraham Cohen, (p 304) no mention of Gentile science is mentioned. However, in the works of Otto Neugebauer, W. Feldman- rabbinical Mathematics and Astronomy (pps.179-180), Wacholder and Weinberg's "Visibility of the New Moon" paper, Babylonian Menologies and Semitic Calendars by Langdon, The Venus Tablets of Ammizaduga by Langdon and Fotheringham (Oxford 1928), and The Chronology of Ancient Nations by al-Biruni written about 1000 A.D, (p.68 and elsewhere) the fuller picture emerges

[449] Wacholder, B., and Weisberg, D., op cit., p 227; also notes 3 and 4 on the same page, and their references.

[450] Deut 18:10-14 reads:

10 There shall not be found among you anyone who makes his son or his daughter pass through the fire, or one who practices witchcraft, or a soothsayer, or one who interprets omens, or a sorcerer,

11 or one who conjures spells, or a medium, or a spiritist, or one who calls up the dead.

12 For all who do these things are an abomination to the LORD, and because of these abominations the LORD your God drives them out from before you

13 You shall be blameless before the LORD your God

Such admissions, however, are almost always restricted to obscure scholarly texts. By this ongoing gentlemanly silence in popular books, the uninformed are led to presume a mysterious fiction: since the Rabbis had a divine commission to keep the calendar accurate, they must have also had a perfect method for executing this responsibility from the very first.

We already saw how Julian Morgenstern demonstrated there was a tradition of Jewish calendar borrowing from other societies. Not festivals or months, but calendar systems to guide the accurate observance of those festivals over the decades. Another question should be considered. If the Jews in fact adopted the Babylonian calendar in 359 A.D., under Rabbi Hillel II, how many years did it take them to do so? One year?

In a comment in the Babylonian Talmud, Professor Selig Brodetsky admitted that the mathematical skills of Hillel go back to the time of Jesus. The Rabbis could perform Hillel's calculations of the new Moon in 30-70 A.D., nearly 300 years before Hillel made them public.[451] The Babylonians spent some 250 years (626 - 370 B.C.) developing, testing and revising their calendar. Would the Rabbis accept it in a day? Hardly. They had to have known of and traced the behavior of the Babylonian system for decades or centuries before they uncompromisingly gave their whole society over to a method that could lead them to observe wrong dates and sin against the tradition God gave to Moses. The notion of a denouement in 359 A.D. must conceal a long-term involvement with the Babylonian system. The only way to judge a calendar is by keeping records over decades and seeing if it slips relative to the seasons over time. Most today are aware the Julian calendar was in error some 11 days in the late 1500's forcing the Gregorian reform. This error took centuries to accumulate. The Rabbis, if they had any sense of obligation, had to be monitoring and recording the Babylonian calendar for centuries as well, before they officially accepted it.

Professor Emil Schurer lends credence to this. He wrote around 1890:

> [two] Rabbis who had specially interested themselves in maters concerned with the calendar [were] THE BABYLONIANS Mar Samuel in Nehardea and Rabbi Adda bar Ahaba in Sura .... both in the third century after Christ ....

But notice what follows

> The latter had an exact acquaintance with the nineteen years' cycle in the improved form given by [the Greek astronomer Hipparchus] in the second century before Christ [140 B.C.] The

14 For these nations which you will dispossess listened to soothsayers and diviners; but as for you, the LORD your God has not appointed such for you

[451] See Professor Brodetsky's comments in paragraph 4, immediately following the Tractate Rosh Hashanah, in The Babylonian Talmud, Hebrew-English Edition, volume VI (No page numbers used)

> Palestinian Hillel must therefore have received the incentive for his work from the Babylonians.[452]

We will see in Appendix A.9 that the whole family of calendar experts which thrived in Jesus time [20-170 A.D.] was also expert in Hipparchus' methods, in fact, they taught the techniques to other Jews in "academies". Eight hundred years after the Jews were first allowed to return to Jerusalem, we have Hillel, the leading Palestinian calendar-authority, relying on the science of Babylonian Rabbis to make the Jewish calendar. Clearly, Babylonian science was held in high esteem by the Jews, long after Babylon stopped being an empire.

There is another statement, this time from the Arab, al-Bitruni (100 A.D.), which flatly states the Jews officially adopted the Babylonian calendar around 130 B.C. This timeframe also happens to be the age of Hipparchus and his improved 19-year calendar system.[453] If they were monitoring the Babylonian calendar for decades and centuries before 130 B.C. and if they also were experts in Hipparchus' improvements 400 years after he died, then the Rabbis of Babylon were indeed constantly monitoring Babylonian and Greek science. They would have had to become first interested in the 19-year calendar scheme somewhere in the time of 350 B.C. or earlier, when it was first standardized in Babylon. Since the Rabbis lived in Babylon, where the calendar was discovered and refined, this is highly plausible.

I show in Appendix A.9 that most, if not all of Jewish calendar-keeping, and even festivals such as the fast on Tammuz 17, were actually derived from the Babylonian captivity.[454] Science, calendars, social customs, all derived from Babylon. The more facts we uncover, the more intimate the relationship becomes.

There is an even greater reason for believing the Jews were monitoring Babylonian science and calendars during the Captivity--it was forced upon their elites by the Babylonians themselves on the sixth century B.C.

The Obvious Precedent for Jewish Adaptation of Babylonian Science

We read in the book of Daniel, which tells the story of a young prince of the Jews who experienced the national Captivity firsthand, how he and his contemporaries were formally instructed by the wise men of Babylon for three years and became expert in all the science of their Babylonian rulers.[455] Daniel's circumstances must

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[452] Schurer, E , A History of the Jewish People in the Time of Jesus Christ, Division I, Volume II, p 372, note 9b

[453] See Appendix A 9 for the story of Sidersky's discovery, the lunar eclipse of 134 B C , and the timing of the Jewish calendar to the 19-year system of 134 B.C.

[454] Langdon persuasively documents this fact in his book, Babylonian Menologies and the Semitic Calendars It is an important study for any inquiry into this subject

[455] Dan 1:1,3-6:

1 In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came to Jerusalem and besieged it.

3 Then the king instructed Ashpenaz, the master of his eunuchs, to bring some of the children of Israel and some of the king's descendants and some of the nobles,

have been disconcerting. The Pagans were teaching him things about interpreting dreams and watching the skies that Moses had condemned. Yet by appeal to his God and loyalty to his religion, Daniel was able to turn pagan astrology into Divine inspiration and ultimately lay the foundation for the end of his people's Captivity. Nevertheless, the Jewish scriptures clearly demonstrate the forced adaptation of Babylonian science by their most prominent social elites. Daniel spent almost 70 years in the position of "the master of the magicians"[456], as the king called him. We know he had associates in his youth who were also trained. How many generations of young Jewish men were trained under Daniel in those 70 years? None? Most unlikely.

This indoctrination process definitely included astronomy, astrology and calendar science, as well as the other prophetic gifts which the story also highlights.[457] This acculturalization could not have ended with Daniel and his familiars, but became a fact of rabbinical intellectual life for centuries. It was in Babylon's interest to turn Jewish elites into their cultural subordinates. The development of Jewish appreciation for Babylonian calendars and astronomy had a political motive behind it: long-term conquest of a subjugated people through social, cultural and economic integration.

The Jewish community of Babylon eventually prospered, creating with its wealth an educational system that taught astronomy and developed leading rabbinical authorities.[458] In the centuries before and after Jesus, this community produced the Babylonian Talmud, a vast repository of learning from these men. The responsibility for setting the Hebrew calendar remained with the Jerusalem community, but the Rabbis of the Babylonian Captivity (586 - 539 B.C. and after) were consulted and exchange between the two groups was constant. Emil Schurer, whom I quoted above, went so far as to write: "... the later Jewish calendar was

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4 young men in whom there was no blemish, but good-looking, gifted in all wisdom, possessing knowledge and quick to understand, who had ability to serve in the king's palace, and whom they might teach the language and literature of the Chaldeans

5 And the king appointed for them three years of training for them, so that at the end of that time they might serve before the king.

6 Now from among those of the sons of Judah were Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah

Dan 1:17-21 reads :

17 As for these four young men, God gave them knowledge and skill in all literature and wisdom [of the Babylonians]; and Daniel had understanding in all visions and dreams 18 Now at the end of the days, when the king had said that they should be brought in, the chief of the eunuchs brought them in before Nebuchadnezzar 19 Then the king interviewed them, and among them all none was found like Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah; therefore they served before the king. 20 And in all matters of wisdom and understanding about which the king examined them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians and astrologers who were in all his realm 21Thus Daniel continued until the first year of King Cyrus (comment and emphasis added) (NKJ)

Recall that the Babylonian astrologers were the chief astronomers, mathematicians, and physicists of the land

[456] See Daniel 4:9, and 5:11, where the original king's grandson is still addressing the old Daniel as "master of the magicians"

[457] Note the above comment on the knowledge of the astrologers of Babylon

[458] Schiaparelli, G , Astronomy in the Old Testament, p. 128, and note 2 mentions Rabbis Samuel and Adda as two such examples

constructed not by the Palestinian, but by the Babylonian Jews".[459] (emphasis added)

Centuries later, Rabbi Moses Maimonides admitted much of this process in his treatise on the Calendar, The Sanctification of the New Moon. In 1178 he spoke of the "many and great dissections among the ancient peoples who used to engage in the study of astronomy and mathematics".[460] In Maimonides' time, the Arabs led in such fields, but here he is speaking of ancient peoples, that is, multiple nations and cultures, not just the Rabbis, who used to, but no longer, engage in astronomy and mathematics. He also admits that they debated many of these issues; that is problems concerning the calendar were debating by the scholars. The Tosephta records some rabbinical debates on the calendar, but these occurred 100 A.D., or even earlier, they did not blossom forth from a vacuum in 358 or 359 A.D.

How could it be possible for Rabbis to be taught Babylonian science, be aware of Babylonian debate, know of it eight hundred years after they left the nation and not become interested in such calendar-systems? This is especially incongruous, since the Babylonian calendar naturally matched the Jewish system; month for month, day for day, and the Jews took the names of all their months directly from Babylon. Take the names of the months in 500 B.C., but not the mathematics that made the calendar work until 360 A.D.?

History shows the only ancient peoples who had been known to engage in the study of astronomy in Maimonides time were the ancient Babylon, Assyria, Syria and Greece. Some have said it took Maimonides ten years to produce his treatise on the Hebrew calendar; it was written after much study of ancient rabbinical texts and traditions, now long gone. Maimonides had to have knowledge of such ancient inquiry and debate, or he is "speaking vanities". After this he states, "In the long run, ... after a great deal of observation AND RESEARCH, some scholars did find the correct method for these calculations."[461] (emphasis added) Who was doing this research? Supposedly the Jews had none of it. If this is so, then Maimonides is referring to Gentiles. Therefore Maimonides had knowledge of ancient Babylonian and Greek debates on the calendar, or his is mis-stating his facts. If it was Rabbis he is referring to, then the Rabbis were doing "MUCH Calculating" before they adopted the 19-year calendar, and that can only be done with decades or more of data. Either way, Maimonides statement contradicts the standard assumptions that are made about ancient Jewish calendar-fixing. It points to a long Jewish association with Gentile calendars and astronomy, that had to go beyond Rabbi Hillel's final announcement in 359 A.D., of a perfectly working calendar, with no further need for refinement.

We have a very plain statement here from Maimonides, flatly stating the ANCIENT purpose for observing the new Moon was indeed, to perfect calculation. It was science and mathematics the Rabbis were pursuing before Rabbi Hillel, NOT some

[459] Schurer, E , A History of the Jewish People in the Time of Jesus Christ, Division I, Volume II, p 372, note 9b .
[460] Gandz, S The Sanctification of the New Moon, p 42
[461] Ibid

simple-minded sighting of the Moon each month, as some Christian scholars think today.

There is more evidence for an early adoption of the 19-year system.

There is rather shocking evidence to suggest the Rabbis directly appropriated key data from a Babylonian eclipse almanac of 134 B.C. as the basis of all their calendar calculations for at least 1350 years. In the later centuries, better mathematical techniques were taken from the Arabs, who had improved upon the calculations first invented in Babylon (see the next section, Appendix A.9.2 for full details). The Rabbis took the best science from all and melded it together for their needs, in a constant pursuit of perfecting calendar accuracy. This is all quite honorable science, but the less enlightened members of ancient society would not see it that way; they would consider it profane knowledge shared in harmony with Pagans, or worse: astrology, punishable by death in ancient Israel. No wonder the Rabbis were so cautious, they had every reason to do so.

So if the Rabbis in Jesus' time and beyond relied heavily upon the methods and manners of Babylonian and Greek astronomy, how good was their science? Was it good enough to enable the Rabbis to correctly calculate and observe every true Passover of Jesus' lifetime as we know them today? Once more, Appendix A.9.2 contains the full answer, along with all the statistics. I will touch upon a few highlights in the next Section. The short answer from mathematics is: if the Babylonians could predict an eclipse to within one minute, the Rabbis could fix the Passover on the right day. Yes, the astronomy was that good.

2.2.2 How Accurate Was Gentile Science in Predicting the New Crescent? Good Enough to Get It Right

If it is now apparent that the Jews were doing more than using ancient observational rituals to start their months in the time of Jesus, we need to address the question of how good their methods were compared to today's "theoretical estimates" of when the months should have begun 2000 years ago.

Why should we split this hair deeper and deeper for another 5-10 pages? Because rabbinical incompetence and inaccuracy in any form is a rallying cry for modern scholars who believe any certainty in the particular day Jesus died is misplaced and naive. According to them, we simply cannot trust the ancient calendar of the Jews, whether it was fixed by monthly observations of the new crescent, or by calculation.

The Accuracy Question

How powerful were Babylonian and Greek methods for predicting the new and full Moons in advance? I mentioned in Chapter 1 a little bit of how truly accurate Lunar tracking capabilities were in the time of Jesus. Lets consider the numbers at greater length.

We saw in Section 1.3 that Emma Plunkett and Otto Neugebauer reported Babylonian astronomers could predict the new and full Moons as much as 3 years in advance, but this number is very likely an under-estimation of later Babylonian and Hebrew powers.

According to Professor Alfred Oppenheim, wringing in his book Ancient Mesopotamia, the Babylonians produced eclipse almanacs which predicted the conjunctions of the new Moon and the Sun as much as 50 years in advance,[462] yet the standard Babylonian almanacs for new and full Moons only extended two or three years into the future.[463] This 3-year-versus-50-year division is artificial and cannot be the complete story. Most likely, the three-year almanacs were convenient summaries, revised and produced every year for the reference of temple priests or astrologers, much in the same way we today do not create massive almanacs of the Moon for the next 500 years. The shorter tables were casual records, but they did not represent the limits of Babylonian predictive powers. The science necessary to predict eclipses 50 years in advance certainly includes the ability to predict new and full Moons 50 years in advance. It should therefore be apparent that if they chose to, or if we can unearth other, presently unknown examples of extended almanacs, we would find the Babylonians of the centuries immediately before Jesus predicting the phases of the Moon a full 50 years in advance.

Similarly, Rabbi Arthur Spier, writing in The Perpetual Hebrew Calendar, says it was the long-standing custom of Jewish sages to produce 50 and 100 year tables

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[462] Oppenheim, A L , Ancient Mesopotamia, p 309
[463] Ibid

giving the new Moons that signaled the start of the months.[464] One has to wonder if these extended Jewish almanacs go back to a tradition the Jews first learned from Babylon.

John M. Steele, a professor at Durham University, England, has written a whole book that analyzes the accuracy of solar and lunar eclipse predictions in the centuries immediately before and after Jesus.[465] Since solar eclipses are based on the time of the new Moon, the skill involved in these predictions directly applies to fixing the new months of the calendar. For some 74 solar eclipses between the years 472 B.C. and 37 A.D., the astronomers' predictions were off by an average of 2 hours from the actual start.[466] Other scholars, citing other data, have stated: "the probable error in a .... [lunar] eclipse time 2,000 years ago is typically five minutes"[467]

We have here the evidence of how accurately the Babylonians and Greekscould predict new Moons. Recall that the Hebrew calendar is luni-solar; it must be faithful to the motions of both the Moon and the Sun simultaneously. Our knowledge of the Babylonians' lunar predictions is a direct index into the scientific skills of antiquity, but such accuracy needs to be complemented with facts concerning the other part of the calendar, the Sun. Before we can judge the ancient Hebrew calendar, we need to first understand how good the ancients were at predicting the equinoxes of the Sun and the seasons of the year.

But Did The Jews Know?

Before we look at the equinox-predicting accuracy of the ancients, we must briefly address an old matter from a slightly different vantage point. Modern scholars have objected in so many different ways that all this scientific accuracy in Babylon is not enough to prove there was a scientifically accurate calendar in Jerusalem in 30 A.D.[468] Such accuracy was in Babylonian and Greek eclipse science, but can one prove from the Rabbis' own words that they were schooled in this discipline and they had mastered it for fixing their own calendar in the time of Jesus? The more one studies the subject, the more one becomes convinced the Jews took their entire calendar system, "lock, stock and barrel", directly from their Babylonian masters. (See Appendix A.9.1.) Some highly respected scholars think not and they offer you a host of reasons why not. (See my responses in Appendix A.9.4.)

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[464] Spier, A , The Perpetual Hebrew Calendar, p ix

[465] Steele, J M , Observation and Predictions of Eclipse Times by Early Astronomers The data in Steele's book conclusively debunks the whole gamut of issues surrounding the supposed ignorance of ancients about eclipses It is a convenient repository for the facts produced by a whole industry of scholars, as I have pointed out in Chapter 1

[466] Steele, J M , Observation and Prediction of Eclipse Times by Early Astronomers, Table 2 8 on pps 72-73, comments on p. 73, and Figures 2 14 and 2.15 on p. 74

[467] Humphreys, C J , and Waddington, W G , "Astronomy and the Date of the Crucifixion", p 176, in Vardaman, J , and Yamamuchi, E , Chronos, Kairos, Christo .

[468] I am speaking here of Oxford Professor Roger Beckwith's paper, "Cautionary Notes on the Use of Calendars and Astronomy to Determine the Chronology of the Crucifixion" in Vardaman, J , Chronos, Kairos, Christos, pp 183-208

According to them, even if there were this kind of science extant in the ancient Jewish world, the Rabbis of Jerusalem would have none of it. The Rabbis clung tenaciously to visual observation and error.[469] My statements above will not be sufficient for the modern experts. They will say I am now going too far in an area with little more proof than my own conjecture. They will want to examine a full set of details proving the adoption of this science by the Jerusalem Rabbis BEFORE the life of Jesus, or they will probably stop reading this book at this very sentence. So if I am making statements in this section that run against commonly-held scholarship of the last 100 years, I need to accumulate more and more evidence to prove my case. I provide what I believe is very thorough evidence of Jewish skill in Babylonian-Greek astronomy in Appendix A.9.2. Precise statements from medieval Rabbis such as Savasorda of Spain and Moses Maimonides, along with deeper insights of accounts in the Mishnah, the Tosefta and the Babylonian Talmud give a little of the social history behind what I have just claimed. Further analysis by modern Jewish scholars completes the picture. It extends the astronomy of the Rabbis to at least 150 B.C. This date is probably conservative. After all, the scribe Daniel was indoctrinated in all this astronomy and mathematics when he was taken captive by the Babylonians around 600 B.C. He was only the first of a series of brilliant young Jews who were granted this education by their Babylonian and Persian masters. There is no reason to assume this tradition stopped when Daniel died.

With this additional challenge from modern opinion duly acknowledged and addressed elsewhere, lets now return to the matter of astronomy and calendar accuracy.

We will next look at modern calculations of the equinoxes and new Moons for 2,000 years ago and compare them against the known errors of ancient astronomy. The "accuracy question" we will answer is:

Given the known degree of error in the astronomy of Jesus' age, is there any way the Rabbis, being inaccurate, could have mis-calculated the Passovers of Jesus' lifetime by one or more days?

(Some may wish to bypass the following and move on to Section 2.3. It is mildly technical. I will give a summary of the combined results at the end.)

The Ingredients for Fixing an Accurate Calendar in 30 A.D. and How Precise the Ancients Were Able to Make Them

In addition to lunar eclipse accuracy, we need to anchor the four seasons by marking the equinoxes and solstices. In particular, the Fall equinox in September was used by the Rabbis to determine when the New Year should begin in the following Spring.[470] Since Jesus was crucified in the Spring, understanding this

[469] Beckwith, R., op. cit., p. 188
[470] Gandz, S., op. cit., p. 30

accuracy is most critical for determining the integrity of the possible dates Jesus died.[471]

Equinoxes were anciently predicted with mathematics and then measured with sighting instruments. In turn, the times of sunsets and the lengths of days in the subsequent months were figured off of the moment of the equinox.[472] Determining when the new crescent can first be seen in any month depends upon knowing how the sunset varies with the seasons as well.[473] So the prediction of a new month was built upon knowing the moment of the equinoxes and solstices that produced it.

1. Equinox Accuracy

Both of the two great Greek astronomers, Hipparchus and Ptolemy, measured the moment of equinox.[474] After fifty years of measuring the Spring equinoxes (178-128 B.C.) and nineteen years of measuring the Fall equinox (161-142 B.C.), Hipparchus' ability to predict equinox times improved to within 2 hours for the Fall equinox and 5 hours for the Spring.[475] (Before Hipparchus, ancient Babylon had perfected the times for the Summer and Winter Solstices to within 5 hours.[476]) The ancients gave only crude estimates for when the equinoxes fell. They limited themselves to four six-hour divisions of a day--morning (6 A.M. to 12 noon), noon (12 noon to 6 P.M.), evening (6 P.M. to 12 midnight) and night (12 midnight to 6 A.M.).[477] Since they could not measure much better than 5 hours this convention suited them. It continued even after their accuracy improved. Presumably those Rabbis who studied Hipparchus before and after Jesus also would have diligently studied his recorded times and imitated their prediction.

Poor Accuracy? It Depends Upon What You Use It For

In Jesus time the Rabbis had a rule, which I will explain shortly, that said the Passover must always fall at least six days AFTER the Spring equinox.[478] If one knows the Spring equinox to within a few hours, a morning, or an afternoon, or an evening, one can fix the Passover to six or more days later with complete certainty. The only time a problem might arise is when the equinox fell somewhere around sunset; that is, in the range of 3 P.M. to 9 P.M. Since the literal day of the equinox is 12 hours light and 12 hours darkness, evening at equinox occurs at precisely 6 P.M. A three hour error on either side of 6 P.M. could cause the Rabbis to be in error by a full day compared to modern calculations. The new day would start at 6 P.M. sunset. If they had an accuracy of only five or six hours and the equinox fell at

[471] Of course, the Rabbis also calculated the Fall new year from the astronomy of the Summer and Fall. Tishri and Rosh Hashannah were their starting points for the year. But the second new year in the Spring owed its timing to the calculations of the prior Fall, as well as the Spring

[472] Gandz, S., op cit., p 39.

[473] Appendix A.9.1 explains this. See also Neugebauer O., "Mathematical Methods in Ancient Astronomy", in History and Astronomy - Selected Essays, pps. 113-114

[474] Thurston, H., Early Astronomy, pps. 125-126, and Evans, J., The History and Practice of Ancient Astronomy, pps. 205-207

[475] Thurston, H., Early Astronomy, pps. 125-126.

[476] Britton, J P., "Treatments of Annual Phenomena in Cuneiform Sources", in, Under One Sky, p. 74

[477] Thurston, H., Early Astronomy, p. 125

[478] Hoeh, H., The Crucifixion Was Not on Friday, p. 21.

6:10 P.M, they could possibly think it fell on the old day instead of the new, thereby making the calendar and the Passover, early by a full day. Were the Rabbis guilty of this kind of error?

The very first issue modern Bible scholars do not always appreciate is the constant obsession with precision the ancient Rabbis evinced. As al-Biruni, the Arab astronomer pointed out, the Rabbis used five different systems for calculating the cycle of their yearly calendar, not just the 19-year method.[479] As we will see, they did the same kind of "over-calculating" with equinoxes, solstices, new Moons and new crescents; it was all one issue of precision to them. Nothing was left to a single mathematical method.

There were at least three different ways available to the Rabbis to identify the moment of the equinox: the equinox measurement rings, calculating the equinox from the first equinox when the world was created (the Rabbis claimed to know the exact time this occurred[480]) and finally, noting the exact position of the Sun in the heavens each year compared to the constellations.[481] How useful were these combined methods to accurately fixing the Hebrew calendar?

Setting the Time of the Equinox by Observing the Sun's Position Among the Stars

Because the Earth orbits around the Sun, every time we look at the Sun's position in the sky at the same time of day (sunrise or dusk), the backdrop of stars behind the Sun seems to shift a little in the same direction. This continues until one year later we return to the original set of background stars.[482] The set of stars used to mark where we are in this progression of the Earth's orbit is the familiar Zodiac. The Zodiac constellations are 12 equally spaced "mile-markers in the sky" by which we can all describe the Sun's apparent position at different times of the year. The Rabbis fixed the time of the equinox by sighting the very first moment the Sun first entered into the part of the sky occupied by the constellation called Aries (the Ram).[483] This method was taken directly from the standard Babylonian and

[479] al-Biruni, The Chronology of Nations, p 63. The cycles were 8,19, 76, 95, and 582 years long.
[480] Gandz, S , The Sanctification of the New Moon, p 37
[481] See following note on ARIES 8.
[482] I am ignoring the effects of the precession of the equinoxes for this explanation
[483] Ganz, S., The Sanctification of the New Moon, pps. 44, 37. See also, Neugebauer, O., "The Astronomy of Maimonides and Its Sources", in Astronomy and History, pps 402-403

Greek procedure for sighting the Spring equinoxes, as opposed to more clumsy measurement with the equinoctial ring.[484]

The Rabbis used the Sun's appearance in Aries as a sure method for determining when to look for the crescent new Moon that started Nisan 1. The Sun would traverse Aries in a little more than 30 days, but on the eighth day, when the Sun was now almost 8 degrees within the constellation, the Spring equinox was certain to occur. Any new Moon that occurred slightly before or immediately after the Sun was 8 degrees inside Aries, was the crescent Moon for Nissan 1. Since the Passover always fell on the 14th of Nisan, the Rabbis developed a simple rule without mentioning Aries at all: the Passover could not fall any closer to the Spring equinox than six days after it. Why this seemingly arbitrary statement? It implied the Sun's first presence in Aries eight days earlier.

Suppose we start Nisan 1 with the Sun just inside Aries. Since 8 + 6 = 14, eight days before the equinox plus six days after the equinox gives us the Passover on Nisan 14. Making the Passover fall six days after the equinox forces the Sun to be in Aries eight days earlier. The month of Nisan could begin before the Spring equinox, but only at most eight days before. On the other extreme, the Nisan new Moon could fall some 21 days after the Spring equinox as well. To be in harmony with the seasons, six days had to be the earliest possible date the Passover was allowed to fall and the Rabbis' accuracy was up to the task.

Ancient Accuracy in Sighting Heavenly Objects

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[484] ARIES 8 - For the use of Aries 8 in Babylonian and Greek astronomy, see Neugebauer, O., Greek Horoscopes, pps 4,25,26. Otto Neugebauer traces and documents the use of Aries 8 from 400 B C. to 700 A D., and from Babylon to Greece to Rome and medieval Europe in A History of Ancient Mathematical Astronomy, vol I, pps 594-597 His ancient references are thorough if not exhaustive. Phillip Schaff documents the rabbinical requirement that the Sun be in Aries and the Passover after the Vernal equinox to almost 200 B C , the time of Ptolemy VII - Philomen His references to Philo (50 B.C.), Josephus, (90 A.D), and Eusebius (310 A D), conclusively date the Rabbis' use of Aries to before, during, and after the time of Jesus See Schaff, A History of the Jewish People in the Time of Jesus Christ, Division I, volume II, pps 370-371, especially notes 9 and 9a Some have claimed this practice existed only in Alexandria Egypt during those years, but this makes no sense to me whatsoever, since the Jewish communities of Babylon and Jerusalem led in doctrine, and Alexandria served more as a source of wealth to ancient Jewry than doctrine Whatever Alexandria had in astronomy would therefore have been at the service of Babylon and Jerusalem, or in imitation of its source in Babylon There is no way in my mind that the Egyptian Jews could have practiced Aries 8 while the Babylonians, who were where it was first discovered, did not The Tosephta, a rabbinical treatise compiled ca. 200 A.D., but with origins as far back as 200 B C , refers to "the course of the Sun" as a factor in adjusting the Passover. Schaff, and others have declared this is a reference to the sun outside of Aries (Ibid) Neusner translated these words as "the lateness of the spring equinox", Tosephta, tractate Sanhedrin, 2:2, p. 1147. al Biruni (1000 A D) wrote that the Egyptian Jews fixed their Spring calendar with the Sun entering into Aries, and that other Jews of his day taught the Sun of Genesis 1 first appeared in Aries. (The Chronology of Ancient Nations, pps. 60,168) Moses Maimonides speaks of Aries and the Nisan 1 new Moon in The Sanctification of the New Moon, in 1178 A D See Gandz translation, p. 37

There is evidence that the long-running Genesis calculation also imitated a Babylonian method for defining the equinoxes and new year via a scheme that spanned 19-years, and then repeated itself. The Babylonian method goes back to approximately 626 B C , a few decades before the Jewish nation was taken captive by Babylon See Britton, J P , op cit , p 30.

Astronomers 2,000 years ago were able to mark an object's position in the sky down to about 1/12 of one degree of arc. (There are 360 degrees in a full circle around you, so they had the ability to break a complete circle down into 4,320 smaller parts.) Hipparchus' 2 and 5 hour errors in measurement were due to a combination of factors: his equinox rings were too small, the Sun cast fuzzy shadows on the rings, making it difficult to discern the exact moment of the equinox and he had difficulty in slanting the ring to match the exact tilt of the Earth's axis. Other such irregularities plagued him. Nevertheless, when it came to sighting the Sun or Moon in the sky, the ancients had the ability to pinpoint the exact position of an object very accurately. Sighting the position of the new Moon was much easier than determining the equinox from some shadow that fell only twice a year on the inside of a brass ring the length of a man's forearm. Calculating the new Moon in advance was another matter, as we will see shortly.

Were equinox errors made during the Passovers of Jesus' adult life? Did these equinox errors shift the month of Nisan one day, or even one month from when it should have been observed? Today it is extremely simple to find the times of the equinoxes at Jerusalem between the years 27 and 37 A.D. We can use calculated tables and sophisticated modern software to answer these questions with hard numbers. I have prepared two tables for your consideration. The first shows the occasions when the Spring equinox came so close to 6 P.M. that a possible error by the Rabbis could have occurred. The second one shows that all the new Moons of early Spring fell within the eight and 21 day limits without any uncertainty. We can see from these two tables that even when the measurement for the equinox could have been wrong, the sighting method of the Sun in Aries, combined with the six day rule of the Rabbis, prevented a mistake from occurring. The first table shows this kind of problem could have been in evidence three times during the years 27-37 A.D.: in 29, 33 and 37 A.D. Was this potential problem fatal to calendar accuracy? As always, decide for yourself.

Were There Any Spring Equinoxes Subject to Mis-Calculation in Jesus' Age?

Year	Date of Equinox	Time of Equinox[485]	Was this Equinox Three Hours Before or Three Hours After 6 P.M?	
27 A.D	March 23	8:04 A.M.		NO
28 A.D.	March 22	1:50 P.M.		NO
29 A.D.	March 22	7:47 P.M.	YES	
30 A.D.	March 22	1:37 A.M.		NO
31 A.D.	March 23	7:26 A.M.		NO

[485] These values were generated from the computer program "Newcomb" by David Eagle, Willman-Bell, Inc. These numbers vary by a few minutes compared to other sources, such a Tables of the Sun, Moon, and Planets, by J Meeus The differences do not affect my conclusions since I am only concerned with equinoxes, which occurred a full three hours before or after 6 P.M in any given year

32 A.D.	March 22	1:13 P.M.		NO
33 A.D.	March 22	7:00 P.M.	YES	
34 A.D.	March 22	0:50 A.M.		NO
35 A.D.	March 23	6:21 A.M.		NO
36 A.D.	March 22	12:14 P.M.		NO
37 A.D.	March 22	6:09 P.M.	YES	

If the equinoxes could be correctly determined to the proper day and even the proper quarter of a day by the Rabbis, what about the new Moons? Did any of them fall within a few hours of the Spring equinox, confusing the Rabbis? We saw earlier that eclipse prediction times, which involve predicting the position of the Moon, were down to two hours and even five minutes in the time of Jesus. Greek observation of eclipses was accurate down to one hour, or on time.[486] For later eclipses between 125-136 A.D., the error was slightly better, ranging between 42 and 4 minutes.[487]

Lets take as a reasonable error for predicting the time of the new Moon one hour. Lets then ask the question, Were there any new Moons that fell eight days before the Spring equinox, give or take one hour?

The New Moons and Spring Equinoxes - How Close Together Were They in Jesus' Time?

Year	Date of Equinox	Time of Equinox[488]	Day of New Moon	Time of new Moon[489]	Did the New Moon Clearly Fall Within the Rabbis' Desired Limits?
27 A.D	March 23	8:04 A.M.	March 26	8:24 P.M.	YES
28 A.D.	March 22	1:50 P.M.	March 15	2:54 A.M.	YES
29 A.D.	March 22	7:47 P.M.	April 2	8:06 P.M.	YES
30 A.D.	March 22	1:37 A.M.	March 22	8:22 P.M.	YES
31 A.D.	March 23	7:26 A.M.	April 10	2:08 P.M.	YES
32 A.D.	March 22	1:13 P.M.	March 29	10:31 P.M.	YES
33 A.D.	March 22	7:00 P.M.	March 19	1:04 P.M.	YES

[486] Ibid, pps. 102-105, especially Table 3 4, p 101

[487] Ibid, p 103, Table 3 5

[488] These values were generated from the program "Newcomb" by David Eagle, Willman-Bell. These numbers vary by a few minutes compared to other sources, such a Tables of the Sun, Moon, and Planets, by J. Meeus These minutes do not affect my conclusions since I am only concerned with equinoxes, which occurred a full three hours before or after 6 P M in any given year

[489] Goldstine, H., New and Full Moons 1001 B C. to A.D 1651, pps. 86,87 Goldstine gives times at Babylon. He explains Jerusalem sighting is 37 minutes earlier. I have made this adjustment for the table presented here.

34 A.D.	March 22	0:50 A.M.	April 7	2:03 P.M.	YES
35 A.D.	March 23	6:21 A.M.	March 28	6:26 P.M.	YES
36 A.D.	March 22	12:14 P.M.	March 16	6:13 P.M.	YES
37 A.D.	March 22	6:09 P.M.	April 4	1:47 P.M.	YES

Lets briefly take stock of these numbers, keeping in mind the Rabbis' rule that prohibited the Passover from falling any closer to the equinox than six days after it occurred. Even if the Rabbis did make the equinox a day earlier or a day later, there still had to be a new Moon immediately after the wrong day, in order for this close call to upset the calendar. We can see from the above table that this combination of a full Moon falling at the heels of an equinox never happened during these years. The eight-day equinox rule and its equivalent, the six-day Passover rule, were always viable. Whatever errors were made by Rabbis when they setting the equinox, the mistakes were not enough to produce an invalid Passover date by either one day or one month.

We now have the evidence there were no conflicts between any approximate measurements of the equinoxes 2,000 years ago and the needs of the Hebrew calendar. There were no conflicts between the appearances of the Spring new Moons and the arrival of the equinox that could mislead the Rabbis, even with their imperfect accuracy. If they followed Greek science and Hipparchus as the Mishnah indicates and if they used the Babylonian Aries 8 method for tracking the Sun, the Rabbis were able to calculate useful equinox times and they made the proper adjustments to their calendar based upon those times, throughout the final years of Jesus' life. Beside all this, there was the framework of the fixed Babylonian calendar, which the Rabbis also relied upon. (This broad conclusion will probably elicit more objections by traditional New Testament scholars. Once more, see my response in Appendices A.9.2 and A.9.4.)

Driving the Passover Dates Ever More Deeply into a Vicegrip of Certainty - Combining the Equinoxes and New Moons

A new Moon is not the same as a new crescent. The new Moon is a blank sky. The new crescent appears hours or even days later, depending upon the season; it is the first discernible sliver of Moon one can see. The Hebrew and Babylonian calendars start their new month with the appearance of the new crescent. The calculation for a new crescent (new month) is built upon the one for a new Moon, but it is a separate matter. To be thorough, we should ask, How accurate was this third calculation 2,000 years ago?

As with the equinoxes and new Moons, when the Rabbis calculated the time of a new crescent, they did not make an isolated calculation for one month only; or some arbitrary month only. Rather, they calculated each new crescent as the successor to the time the last new month began, knowing full well a month lasted slightly more than 291/2 days.[490] This was all part of the full technique which Babylon used for determining when the first month of the new year should fall. The

[490] Babylonian Talmud, tractate Rosh Hashanah, paragraph 25:a

Rabbis viewed each month as one more step in a continuous progression of calculated months that went back all the way to the creation of the world in the book of Genesis. The Babylonians were more modest; they worked backwards and forwards in 19-year time cycles.[491] It was possible to calculate the start of individual months directly, but remember, the Rabbis always relied upon multiple methods to ensure the certainty of any one calculation. The Babylonian method allowed them to combine equinox and new month calculations into one result that gave the time of the first month of the new year, Nisan 1.

Every result was crosschecked and triple-checked. Their calendar accuracy was a marching calculation that went forward with every month, building upon itself month upon month, equinox upon equinox.[492] Couple all this with their monitoring of the young lambs, the fruit trees and the barley harvest for timely Spring growth and we can appreciate the thoroughness with which they approached the task.

Three calculations, one for the equinox, one for the new Moon, one for the new crescent, combined to give the start of a new month and a new year. Three sources of error combined to ruin the accuracy of the new month proclamation.

2. New Crescent Accuracy

The Visibility Calculation for a New Crescent Explained

There is a significant time delay between a new Moon and a new Crescent. The Rabbis of Jesus' age believed new crescents could occur between 161/2 and 42 hours after the new Moon.[493] If a new crescent first appears in the daytime, the bright Sun may wash out the tiny sliver, making it appear non-existent. The Rabbis used criteria for determining when the new crescent should appear and whether the new crescent could be seen at its first appearance. Only when both sets of factors were true, was the new crescent visible. This later time was the moment by which the new month was officially hailed as coming into existence.

The delay for a new crescent involves computing two more factors. They are called "elongation" and "arc of visibility".[494] Most crudely explained, "elongation" is

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[491] Britton, in "Treatments of Annual Phenomena in Cuneiform Studies" Under One Sky, p 30

[492] Determining a leap year involved fixing the moment of the Fall equinox of the year before the Passover in question The Fall equinoxes were more important to the Springtime calendar than the Spring equinoxes, because the Fall equinox provided a forecast into the overall shape of the Earth's orbit for the next six months The Spring equinox was too close to the new year to provide this kind of insight It would be analogous to pressing one's face up against a plate glass window in order to see oneself Distance gave the needed perspective.

[493] Babylonian Talmud, Rosh Hashanah, 25:a as quoted and amended by Rabbi Ben Zion Wacholder in "Visibility of the New Moon in Cuneiform and Rabbinic Sources", HUCA vol XLII, 1971, p. 233 The numbers were first (?) calculated by Sir Isaac Newton, in one of his expositions on lunar theory, and have since been refined See Anderson, R, The Coming Prince, p. 99 note Newton's values as given by Anderson are 18 hours and 41 hours.

[494] For a full discussion of these matters, see Feldman, W., rabbinical Mathematics and Astronomy, pps 160-177 The basic definitions appear on p 160 Maimonides revealed these concepts in 1178 in The Sanctification of the New Moon (Gandz translation, pps. 69-73) Weisberg, "Elements of a Lunar Theory . . " HUCA, 1962, applies this astronomy to the Rabbis of Jesus' age in great detail.

simply the horizontal distance, measured in degrees, of the space between the Sun and the new crescent. You can think in terms of "east-west", or "left-right" and not be too far from the mark. "Arc of visibility" is the same kind of separation, this time from top to bottom, or "up-down" in the sky, measured also in degrees. Babylon, Greece and the Rabbis all used these factors to determine the moment of the new crescent, although they calculated the exact numbers using different formulas.[495] We will now ask the "accuracy question" for new crescents: Were there any new crescents that were overpowered by the daytime sunlight before the Passovers of 27-37 A.D? Were these crescents ever overpowered by daytime sunlight at a moment that might force the Rabbis to make Nisan start one day late compared to modern calculations? Once more, we will see there were no borderline appearances of the new crescent that could possibly be misinterpreted as occurring a day too late.

Separation Between the Moon and Sun at the Moment of New Crescent, 27 - 37 A.D.[496]

Year	Time Range for New Moon (as Calculated with the Rabbis' Accuracy	Time Range for New Crescent Visibility	Elongation -- "Left-Right" Separation Between the New Crescent and Sun, Expressed in Degrees	Arc of Visibility -- "Top-Bottom" Separation Between the New Crescent and Sun, Expressed in Degrees	Would this New Crescent Force a Delay in the Calendar if We Use the Rabbis' Value?
27 A.D.					NO
28 A.D.					NO
29 A.D.					NO
30 A.D.					NO
31 A.D.					NO
32 A.D.					NO
33 A.D.					NO
34 A.D.					NO
35 A.D.					NO
36 A.D.					NO
37 A.D.					NO

This table demonstrate two key points: The times for new crescent that were calculated with the same error range the Rabbis would have had, show there were

[495] See Appendix A 9 for the historical evidence of this

[496] These numbers are based upon the actual times of the new Moon over Jerusalem, as given in Goldstine, op. cit., pps 86-87

no ambiguous dates in the decade (see last column). Second, what we can calculate today, the theoretical values which some scholars discredit so much, are actually invaluable indicators of when the Rabbis set the calendar.

So there are not any issues with near-miss visibility sightings being tabulated for any of these years. Even though the 19-year cycles and the leap months are exact, the length of months are known in advance.

3. Combining the Accuracy of The Equinox and New Crescent Measurements

Finally, I give a summary of all the possible errors the Rabbis could have made. I combine the errors of the equinox and visibility calculations together to see if they become so erroneous that they force the new year to start early or late. The answer by now is obvious. They do not.

Measurement and Prediction Accuracy in 30 A.D.

Event	Accurate to the Correct Day?	Within How Many /Minutes of True Event?
Equinoxes	Yes	5-2 hours with observation; 5 minutes with Aries method. All that is needed is the correct day.
Lunar Eclipse / New Moon	Yes	45-5 minutes
Visibility of New Crescent	Yes	

The potential errors raised by modern scholars of the day Jesus died truly evaporate when we do the mathematics for each Passover at the end of Jesus' life. There are no "wobble" days in the actual calendar. Since the Rabbis always preferred calculation over measurement, we are left with no more accuracy issues.

<u>The alarm for an unreliable ancient calendar has been loudly sounded by gifted modern scholars, but it is false.</u>

2.3 On Which Passover? - History Proves the Crucifixion was on Wednesday, April 25, 31 A.D.

Now that we have established the Calendar Council did indeed predict the months and seasons in advance and we have developed some idea for how accurate they were in the time of Jesus, we might think we can now list out all the literal dates of the Passovers in Jesus' final years and simply pick the best Wednesday candidate.

Not quite yet.

Professional scholars take all the arguments we just overthrew and mix them into a tangle of some thirty or more candidates. They also add arguments from history as to why a certain Passover is more likely than some other. These many and varied date lists are the authoritative candidates which any upstart challenge, such as 31 A.D., will be judged against. While we already have weakened virtually all of these possibilities, will look at them in passing, so you may understand the bramble bush of factions that obscures the one true date of the Crucifixion. From there, we hurry on to finally prove from history the true date Jesus died. For convenience I label the modern theories as two main camps: calendar arguments and historical arguments. Why? Even with a perfect calendar, we will find the experts have their contrary opinions; but you, dear reader, are no longer surprised at any of this.

How Scholars Decide Which Day Jesus Died

The official "calendar arguments" build upon all the material just covered: ignorant Rabbis, poor visibility, disregard for equinoxes, plus one or two others, to produce their date lists. The additional twists involve subtleties of the Rabbis' calendar lore. Sometimes, as we will note later, calendar scholars omit to use all the rules of the Rabbis when they create the leap years of 2,000 years ago. Calendar experts usually reduce all the possible dates to two or three Good Fridays (April 7, 30 A.D. and April 3, 33 A.D.) and then pick between them using a little astronomy, a little history and some logic.

Historical arguments are the photographic reverse. They avoid almost all astronomy or concerns about the calendar. Instead they focus only on the larger facts of history surrounding Jesus' adult life-- when a princess was married, when someone died, when Caesar began to rule, when Jesus started his ministry and how long he preached. They then reinterpret these dates in novel ways to produce dramatically different Crucifixion years. Such scholarship assumes a valid, dependable calendar was in use. They nevertheless argue vigorously for diverse interpretations of the events and times surrounding Jesus' birth, ministry and death. One scholar will make the facts turn into a 21 A.D. death, while another will use very similar material to prove it was actually 36 A.D.[497] These scholars are not concerned with a lunar eclipse in 30 or 33 A.D. as much as they are with

[497] Vardaman, J , "A Provisional Chronology of the New Testament: Jesus Through Paul's Early Years", pps. 313-320, in Chronos, Kairos, Christos II edited by Vardaman, J., compared with Kokkinos, N., "Crucifixion in A.D. 36: The Keystone for Dating the Birth of Jesus" pps 133-164, Chronos, Kairos, Christos, ed by J. Vardaman, and E Yamauchi.

reinterpreting the events of ancient Palestinian history. Their cases are plausible, but they usually do not offer facts to disprove any contrary opinions. They simply put forth their concepts with as much evidence as they can muster.

I, of course am interested in exact dates and astronomy, yet history must not be avoided. If the date is true no matter how one arrives at it, the various facts of larger Palestinian history should automatically fall into place without bizarre reinvention.

They do.

The Actual Dates and The Different Scholarly Opinions About Them

Virtually all scholars acknowledge Jesus died in the reign of Pontius Pilate, the Procurator of Judea. This rule is given as either 26-36 A.D., or 27-37 A.D.[498] There are some 5, 6, or 7 differing lists of possible picks for the Passover dates in that timespan. As you will see, the variations are bewildering, but they do represent the authority of the experts. The different choices are given below. I provide them as a record of what we are confronting. Since this tour will be quick, the interested reader will find a full analysis of these various calendar-based dates, giving their strengths and weaknesses and why they ultimately succeed or fail, in Appendix A.9.3 - Sorting Through All the Dates Proposed for the Crucifixion.

Possible Dates for the Crucifixion as Given by Various Calendar and Astronomy Experts in the Last 100 Years[499]

Year	Passover Dates Given	Authority	Day of Week
27 A.D.	April 9	Robert Anderson	WEDNESDAY
	April 10	John Fotheringham	Thursday
		Collin Humphreys	
		Joachim Jeremias	
		Richard Parker	
	April 11	Jeremias	Friday
28 A.D.	March 29	Anderson	Monday
	March 30	Fotheringham	Tuesday
		Humphreys	
	April 28	Parker	WEDNESDAY
29 A.D.	April 16	Herman Hoeh	Saturday
	April 17	Anderson	Sunday
	April 18	Fotheringham	Monday

[498] Herman Hoeh explains this one-year shift in, The Crucifixion Was Not on Friday, p 30 He cites The International Standard Encyclopedia, article "Pilate".

[499] The references for all these dates appear with the corresponding table in Appendix A 9 3

		Humphreys	
		Parker	
30 A.D.	April 5	Hoeh	WEDNESDAY
	April 6	Anderson	Thursday
		Jeremias	
	April 7	Fotheringham	Friday
		Humphreys	
		Jeremias	
		Parker	
31 A.D.	March 27	Anderson	Tuesday
		Fotheringham	
		Humphreys	
	April 25	Hoeh	WEDNESDAY
		Jeremias	
		Parker	
	April 26	Jeremias	Thursday
32 A.D.	April 13	Humphreys	Sunday
	April 14	Anderson	Monday
		Fotheringham	
		Hoeh	
		Parker	
33 A.D.	April 3	Anderson	Friday
		Fotheringham	
		Humphreys	
		Hoeh	
		Jeremias	
	April 4	Jeremias	Saturday
	May 2	Parker	Saturday
34 A.D.	March 23	Anderson	
	March 24	Fotheringham	WEDNESDAY
		Humphreys	
	April 22	Parker	Thursday
		Jeremias	
	April 23	Jeremias	Friday
35 A.D.	April 11	Anderson	Monday
	April 12	Humphreys	Tuesday
36 A.D.	March 30	Anderson	Friday
	March 31	Humphreys	Saturday

37 A.D.	April 18	Anderson	

Again, this maze of information is clarified and simplified in Appendix A.9.3.

Two Calendar Rules The Scholars Do Not Always Observe

Some scholars (notably John Fotheringham, the modern father of astronomical Crucifixion studies), have not included the complete set of leap years in 27-37 A.D.[500] Another, less obvious error also persists. The Rabbis bumped their holy days by one or two days every year depending upon various rules that were separate from the Babylonian calendar cycle they used. These extra, rabbinical rules were called "rules of Postponement". Some modern scholars do include these rules when selecting their Passover dates, but a surprising per cent do not. It is as if one wished to find the date of Easter, without troubling to imitate the exact method the Catholic Church uses to count the day. We all agree on the Gregorian calendar for the year, but no one bothers to use the rules the Church stipulates for setting Easter; we just look it up in April. The Gregorian calendar is correct, but the date we so clumsily pick for Easter is not. Suppose further, someone says both sets of dates are equally correct, the Catholic Church's and our blind pick. This kind of sloppy calendar sleuthing produces two more pitfalls to avoid: calendar lists must faithfully reflect all the leap years and they must also accurately account for all the rabbinical rules of Postponement. After these conditions are met, we will finally have the true set of dates in Jesus lifetime from which to pick the correct WEDNESDAY date of the Crucifixion.

These additional issues have also been carefully addressed and documented for the curious reader in Appendix A.9.3; the final results are presented here.

Once we eliminate non-Wednesday Passovers from all the scholarly lists for 27-37 A.D., only three Wednesday dates remain in contention.

Year	Passover Date	Authority	Day of Week
28 A.D.	April 28	Richard Parker	Wednesday
30 A.D.	April 5	Herman Hoeh, Fred Coulter	Wednesday
31 A.D.	April 25	Hoeh	Wednesday
		Joachim Jeremias	
		Parker	

Which one, if any, of these candidates, is correct?

[500] See Finnegan, Handbook of Biblical Chronology, p 362-363, quoting Fotheringham's original paper in Journal of Theological Studies vol 35, 1934

Recall that Emil Schurer, after studying the history of Jesus' age, wrote sometime around 1890 that the only question remaining was ""whether 30 or 31 A.D. was the year of Christ's death."[501] Most scholars today give little credence to Schurer's words. He is too far removed from modern scholarship to carry any weight. There is another scholar, Paul Maier, who has high regard in our present generation. Dr. Maier wrote, "The results of all the chronological [research he conducted] ... would allow a range of dates from A.D. 31 to 33 for the Crucifixion."[502] (comments added). Dr. Maier, of course, is looking only for Friday Passovers. If we apply his stricture to our results, Dr. Maier is saying the most likely Wednesday Passover would be in 31 A.D., identical to Emil Schurer a century before. We also saw that Raymond Brown, the highly respected authority of the last three decades speculated that Eusebius, the very first Church historian, was actually "thinking of 31-32 A.D. as the date of the Crucifixion"[503]. All these comments are based only upon history, totally divorced from any Friday obligations. All this is also discounted by other scholars as mere opinion; it does not register well with years of training. Let us see for ourselves how well history bears out these scholars when we are not tied to the unworkable date of a Friday.

Direct statements from the Bible and known facts of history can pinpoint the exact year the Wednesday Crucifixion occurred. Bear in mind these same facts we are about to examine gave confusing and ambiguous answers when scholars try to apply them to Good Friday dates. Perhaps that is why there are so many attempts to unravel the issue; no Good Friday solution fully satisfies all the facts.

That will no happen here; <u>from now on, everything falls into place seamlessly.</u>

Choosing Among the Wednesday Passovers From History

A. Jerusalem Fell Forty Years After Jesus Died, Just as He Foretold

The Gospels, the official Christian expression of their doctrine to the world, state that Jesus died slightly less than forty years (the time for a Biblical "generation"), before the fall of Jerusalem. The words are placed in Jesus' mouth, as part of a prophecy spoken immediately before his death[504], but they constitute the message the Church gave to the world in 70 A.D. and indeed, to all future generations: the early Church's position was that Jesus died mere months less than forty years

[501] Schurer, E., A History of the Jewish People in the Time of Jesus Christ, Division I, volume II, p. 30
[502] Maier, P., "The Date of the Nativity and the Chronology of Jesus' Life", in Vardaman, <u>Chronos, Kairos, Christos</u>, pps 124-125
[503] Brown, R. The Death of The Messiah, vol 2, note 27 on p. 1042
[504] Matt 24:34, Mark 13:30, Luke 21:32

before the fall of Jerusalem.[505] There are a second and a third source for this timespan as well.

The Church historian Eusebius, writing about 325 A.D.,[506] referred to this prophecy of Christ as an astonishingly accurate depiction of time. He related it to known historical events, adding Jesus died forty years before the destruction of Jerusalem.[507] This statement of Eusebius, made in The History of The Christian Church, was the authoritative Christian view of its time. It compares extremely well with what we saw earlier: namely, that in another work, The Chronicles, Eusebius very likely wrote that Jesus died in 31 A.D., but his words were later altered to say 33 A.D. instead. Clearly, if Eusebius wrote in one book that Jesus died forty years before the fall of Jerusalem, but in another, he died only 38 years before, we have a contradiction of dates that must be explained away as historical inaccuracy, incompetence, or bad memory. Eusebius fumbles the most important date in all of Christian history. With the added insight of an altered chronology, all this disappears. Instead, we have incompetent forgers who do not bother to cross-check their alteration against another passage in another, totally different, manuscript.

It is well known that Jerusalem fell to the Roman general Titus in the Summer of 70 A.D. Slightly less than forty years before this event would put us at Passover of 31 A.D.

There just happens to be a Wednesday Passover in 31 A.D.

The Jews themselves give strong evidence to Christ dying forty years before the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple. Jesus is not named; the evidence falls out after the following fashion.

The official place of Judgment for crimes in Jerusalem was called the Hall of Graven, or Polished, Stones.[508] It was adjacent to the Palace of the High Priest. The Gospels show that Jesus was tried and condemned in this very Hall, at the start of the Passover.[509] Yet the rabbinical literature of later ages repeatedly states the Hall of Graven Stones was somehow destroyed, made untenantable, forty years before the destruction of the Temple.[510] Apparently, no ruler of Judea or Rome ever offered to repair the damage. From that point onward, for forty years, the Rabbis had to dispense judgment from a makeshift court in the marketplace.[511] What could

[505] Concerning Luke 21:32, Alfred Plummer pointed out: "This cannot mean anything *but the generation living when the words were spoken*. The reference is to the destruction of Jerusalem ." The Gospel According to St. Luke, p. 485. More modern commentators have pointed out that the parallel passages in Matthew and Mark might be capable of prophetic interpretation, but most admit the passage in Luke is so clear that any other meaning is clearly forced

[506] Eusebius, The History of the Church, p. 20.

[507] Ibid, p. 118.

[508] Edersheim, A., The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah, vol. I, p. 114

[509] John 18:24-28, especially verse 28 and Luke 22:54-67, especially verses 55

[510] Jerusalem Talmud, tractates Yoma 43c, Talmud tractates Yoma 39b, Aboda Zarah 8b, and Sabbath 15a.

[511] Edersheim, A., The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah, vol. I, p. 114

have caused this destruction and why was it never remedied? Various authors have pieced together the answer from ancient testimony.[512]

The New Testament teaches there was an earthquake at the Crucifixion which, among many other things, ripped in half, from top to bottom, the massive curtain that shielded the Holy of Holies Throne Room from the outer areas of the Temple.[513] The Temple and the Judgment Hall were very close to one another; perhaps a mere 120 feet separated them.[514] They were all part of the complex of priestly buildings and palaces on the Temple Mount.

The Jews recorded this curtain was composed of two parts, each 60 feet high, thirty feet wide and as thick as the width of a man's fist.[515] According to early documents and historians such as Jerome, this earthquake actually split in half and completely collapsed a massive stone cross-member that spanned the top of the 60-foot high doorway that led into the Room.[516] Modern estimates make the stone some 30 thirty feet long and 30 tons in weight.[517] When this massive lintel-stone collapsed sixty feet to ground level, the Judgment Hall, some 40 yards away, would no doubt have been severely damaged as well. We have no other evidence of anything causing such catastrophic damage to either the Temple or Judgment Hall forty years before the fall of Jerusalem. Yet the New Testament, gentile writers and the Jews admit it happened and the Rabbis never chose to explain why.

In support of this and as collaboration for my own arguments, I should mention it is a fact of eclipse science that Solar eclipses can be accompanied by significant earthquakes. This is because the alignment of the Moon and Sun on the same side of the Earth creates a greater gravitational pull on the Earth's surface than at other times. It is true for Solar eclipses which last less than eight minutes.[518]

If the Moon and Sun were fixed over Jerusalem <u>for three full hours, the earthquake would have been immense</u>.

The total collapse of the lintel stone and the known destruction of the Hall of Graven Stones nearly forty years before the summer of 70 A.D., fits together flawlessly with a supernatural eclipse of the Sun at a Crucifixion in 31 A.D. No other explanation you will read harmonizes these facts and probabilities so perfectly.

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[512] Coulter, F., The Christian Passover, pps. 381-383, especially p 383, and his references to <u>Secrets From Golgotha</u>, by Earnest L Martin Edersheim, A , op. cit., vol II, p. 611. See also Edershiem's comments on p. 610, where he suggests the tradition of a candlestick being extinguished 40 years before the destruction of the Temple must relate to the Crucifixion.

[513] Matthew 27:51,

[514] Ibid, p. 383, quoting Earnest Martin, <u>The Secrets of Golgotha</u>, pps. 230-231

[515] See Edershiem's recounting of the facts given in the Jerusalem Talmud, on p 611 of vol II of <u>The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah</u>.

[516] Schneemelcher, W. New Testament Apocrypha, Revised Edition, vol. I, Fragment 21, p. 162

[517] Coulter, F. The Christian Passover, p 382 quoting Earnest Martin, <u>The Secrets of Golgotha</u>, pps 18-19

[518] As another example, the tsunami of 2004 occurred shortly after the Winter solstice, when the Earth is closest to the Sun, and the Sun's gravity can contribute most powerfully to destabilizing the continental plates

If Jesus died on a Friday, then the candidates would be Passovers in 30 or 33 A.D. These two dates give 401/2 years and 371/2 years for the time to Jerusalem's downfall: too long and too short when we compare them with Jesus' words and a Wednesday Crucifixion in 31 A.D. If we adhere to a Friday Crucifixion, the testimony of history must be disregarded or discounted, when we employ the correct day, as the Gospels indicate, the ancient histories suddenly become creditable. So which is it? Our modern opinions, or their ancient testimony? (For those who still protest, I will address this point a little further in the following Sidebar.)

Sidebar: Removing Any Doubts - How Long is a Biblical Generation?

Is my evidence for a forty year span between Jesus' death and Jerusalem's fall too weak to be believed? What of the fact that Passover of 31 A.D. is actually 39 years and four months before July-August in 70 A.D.? Doesn't this demonstrate that 30 A.D., is a more precise fit? Not at all.

The three Gospel accounts in Matthew 27, Mark 13 and Luke 21 have Jesus address the disciples immediately before his death and sternly inform them that all the evils he foretells will occur before "this generation" passes away. Commentators dispute whether the meaning is for the end of humanity, or the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D., but this is a needless distinction. The fall of Jerusalem was foretold as a forerunner to the end of the world. Biblical prophecy is dual; it has an initial fulfillment and a broader, final one. The events Jesus described happened in 70 A.D. and they will happen again before the Second Coming.

What then, is the length of time for a "generation"?

The Gospels were written to legitimize Jesus as the Prophet predicting by Moses in Deuteronomy 18:15-19:

15 "The LORD your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from your midst, from your brethren. Him you shall hear,
16 "according to all you desired of the LORD your God in Horeb in the day of the assembly, saying, 'Let me not hear again the voice of the LORD my God, nor let me see this great fire anymore, lest I die.'
17 "And the LORD said to me: 'What they have spoken is good.
18 'I will raise up for them a Prophet like you from among their brethren, and will put My words in His mouth, and He shall speak to them all that I command Him.
19 'And it shall be that whoever will not hear My words, which He speaks in My name, I will require it of him.
(NKJ)

The Gospels make various analogies between Jesus and Moses. Jesus fasts 40 days in the wilderness, as did Moses. Jesus gives his major teaching which expounds the Ten Commandments, the Sermon on the Mount, from a mountain, as Moses received the Ten Commandments by going up into a mountain. Jesus reveals the meaning of the Passover the night before he dies, as Moses was the

one who first gave it to Israel from God. Moses led the people out of physical Egypt. Jesus leads his disciples out of spiritual Egypt. Moses built a Tabernacle for God to dwell in on Earth. Jesus was the human tabernacle in which God literally dwelt. The people are to hear Jesus as they heard Moses. When the children of Israel refused to believe Moses and feared to enter into the Promised Land, they angered God and were condemned to wander for 40 years in the wilderness, dying off, until a later generation would grow to enter into the Promised Land. Notice Numbers 32:11-13

11 'Surely none of the men who came up from Egypt, from twenty years old and above, shall see the land of which I swore to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, because they have not wholly followed Me,
12 'except Caleb the son of Jephunneh, the Kenizzite, and Joshua the son of Nun, for they have wholly followed the LORD.'
13 "So the LORD'S anger was aroused against Israel, and He made them wander in the wilderness forty years, until all the generation that had done evil in the sight of the LORD was gone.
(NKJ)

Since Christ is represented in the New Testament as a type of Moses, when He is not believed by his own people the Jews receive a punishment of the same order as their ancestors: before 40 years have completed their generation will face the final loss of the Promised Land. A Prophet appears; faith in his words must be shown, rejection by the People results in a loss of the Promised Land to a future Generation. These are the themes that play in both accounts of Moses and Jesus. This common tableau demonstrates a New Testament conviction to temper Christian history to one God whom both Moses and Jesus represent, and who is constant in his dealings with men in each generation. Therefore, the generation Christ refers to in the Gospels is forty years long, just as Moses' was. Any other definition would devalue the message of the Gospels that Christ brought the True Promised Land of the Eternal and reduce Jesus as the Prophet Moses predicted.

We saw earlier how the Jewish people, under some circumstances, could view a part of a day as a full day for the sake of language. The Rabbis and the Jewish people use this same approach to counting years. When counting calendar time the Rabbis had a dictum that one day of a year counted as a full year.[519] Thirty-nine and one half years would be properly viewed as forty years. Conversely, forty years and one day would be viewed as forty-one years, so 30 A.D. becomes too early.

Beside all this, recall that Jesus' exact words were "This generation shall not pass UNTIL all things be fulfilled."[520] That is exactly what happens, to a matter of months, when we use 31 and 70 A.D. as the beginning and ending years. If we start

[519] See Babylonian Rosh Hashshanah, 2b, and reference in Gandz, The Sanctification of the New Moon, p xL, note 22.
[520] Luke 21:32 says: "Assuredly I say unto you, This generation shall not pass away, till all be fulfilled."

counting with any earlier year, such as 30 or 28 A.D., his words are imperfect and the timespan becomes either 40 or 42 years.

End of Sidebar

B. Jesus Began Preaching in The Fifteenth Year of the Reign of Tiberius Caesar--When Was It?

There is a rather clear statement in the gospel of Luke that pinpoints when Jesus began to preach. It relates to the start of Tiberius Caesar's ascent to government. If we add the length of Jesus' ministry to the start date, we will have the year he died. This simple statement has caused no small measure of difficulty to modern scholars, yet the Greek language is rather plain.

Luke sets the stage for the first appearance of the Messiah by explaining who were the rulers over Judea at the time and their responsibilities. He mentions all the men who ruled all the regions in and around Judea, giving the full complement of government authority at the moment Jesus appears. His perspective is local to his region. Notice.

Luke 3:1
1 Now in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judaea, and Herod being tetrarch of Galilee [a tetrarch rules one quarter of a territory], and his brother Philip tetrarch of Ituraea and of the region of Trachonitis, and Lysanias the tetrarch of Abilene,

Luke lists four local governors and one ruler over all the region, Tiberius. He omits nothing. The problem is, Tiberius was granted rule over the provinces of the Empire in 12 A.D. by Augustus Caesar, but he became Caesar over all of Italy and the provinces in 14 A.D. when Augustus died. Which year does Luke have in mind. Some claim Tiberius was joint Caesar with Augustus from 12 to 14 A.D., but this term is an unfortunate over-simplification of his true relationship with Augustus during that time. Such a depiction only complicates the resolution of this problem. Strictly speaking Tiberius was not co-regent with Augustus.[521] Augustus was supreme, yet starting on October 23, 12 A.D., Tiberius ruled all the provinces of the Empire, no doubt being carefully supervised by Augustus.[522] After all, the seemingly friendly Senate and the Army were watching them both. We have a hierarchy of responsibility being exercised during those two years. Matters of state that developed in the provinces went to Tiberius first and then to Augustus for consultation, final review and approval. From the standpoint of the provinces, Roman government issued from Tiberius' hand, regardless of what role Augustus actually played in settling each matter. Augustus was 75 years old and aging in October of 12 A.D.[523] He had less than two years to live and while he was able to present a good appearance to the Senate and public, his capacity for work was

[521] See a very detailed and helpful clarification of this point in Plummer, A , The Gospel According to S Luke, p. 82.
[522] Levick, B , Tiberius the Politician, p 63, and the references in note 59.
[523] He was born September 28, 63 B.C , Suetonius, Live of the Caesars, vol I, p 156, note 10

waning. Who ruled Palestine in 12 A.D.? Both men? The modern historian says yes, but from the standpoint of those living in Palestine, as a practical matter, when did Tiberius begin his government over them? October of 12 A.D. or September of 14 A.D.?[524] In 12 A.D.[525]

Most scholars do not consider Luke's words from this standpoint; rather, they believe Luke was giving a general rehearsal of abstract events in history, as a modern scholar would, if he were writing history at that time. They therefore conclude Luke is referring to 14 A.D., but they admit there are problems with picking this "more reasonable" date: it contradicts other facts.[526] The Roman writers Suentonius and Dio Casssius start Tiberius reign in 14 A.D.[527] and Luke's words seem out of touch with them.[528] The answer is plain: Roman historians had the seat of Empire in mind when they wrote, while Luke had the governance of Palestine as his focal point. Luke was referring to 12 A.D. These two perspectives produce the differing statements. Let us see where this difference of opinion leads.

Adding fifteen years to both these dates gives 27-28 and 29-30 A.D. respectively as the year Jesus began preaching his message to the world. Raymond Brown, the Jesuit scholar, looked at the facts of history without regard to making the Crucifixion fall on a "proper" date. He wrote: "the ministry of John the Baptist [was] in the 15th year of Tiberius - October 27 - 28 A.D."[529] Not all, but some modern scholars admit the Gospels show there were four Passovers during the ministry of Jesus[530], resulting in a timespan of 3 1/2 years for his preaching: starting in September and ending in April 31/2 years later. If we add this time to the two possible start dates we arrive at Passover of 31 A.D. and Passover of 33 A.D. The first date is a Wednesday and the latter a Friday. The first date matches the 40-year statements in the Talmud, while the second does not. Viewing this quandary of choosing between 31 or 33 A.D., Alfred Plummer wrote: "*If* the earlier date is admissible [since it produces a Wednesday Passover and seems to contradict other facts], the agreement becomes exact."[531] In other words, if we behave like

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[524] Augustus died in August of 14 A.D., but Tiberius is not formally invested with full Imperial power by the Senate until September no doubt much politicking, and proffering of gifts was being exercised by Tiberius in the intervening month

[525] Strong's Concordance, Greek Lexicon number 2231 - "hegemonia" (hayg-em-on-ee'-ah); from 2232; government, i.e (in time) official term: KJV– "reign" It denotes Tiberius' practical hands-on administration of the Region

[526] See the discussion by Paul Maier in, "The Date of the Nativity and the Chronology of Jesus Life", Chronos, Kairos, Christos (ed by J Vardaman), pps 120-121, and his references to the massive solutions given by Jack Finnegan in Handbook of Biblical Chronology Most commentaries on the history of Luke 3:1 or the chronology of Jesus' life will also make this point

[527] Although his apprenticeship is admitted

[528] Plummer, A., The Gospel According to S Luke, pps. 81-82, and Maier, P., op. cit., p. 122. Maier attacks the co-regency argument as synonymous with 12 A.D., believing he can slay both with one stroke As I point out above, this is not possible

[529] Brown, R., The Gospel According to John I-XII, p 116

[530] See John 2:13 and 23, Luke 6:1 (as explained by Hoeh in The Crucifixion Was Not on Friday, p 32, and Finnegan, Handbook of Biblical Chronology, p 350, and bottom of p 351) John 6:4, and John 11:55 Finnegan provides a documented, authoritative Table of the four Passovers (Table 173) on p. 352 of his Handbook, which all interested parties should consult. Maier concurs with Finnegan (and Hoeh) and gives this list, in less documented form, on pps. 123-125 of Chronos Kairos, Christos

[531] Plummer, A., The Gospel According to S Luke, p 82

Raymond Brown and look only to the facts of history, regardless of what Crucifixion year they produce, our search leads us to 31 A.D. as an exact fit for all the facts and times. How arbitrary then are my arguments, if world-class scholars in moments of personal confession, admit the same results?

Indeed it does fit exactly. We now have a second set of evidence for Wednesday 31 A.D. being an exact match between the Gospel accounts and history, completely removing the ambiguities created by forcing a Friday Crucifixion into the scenario.

C. The Reference to Rebuilding the Temple

In John 2:20, at the first Passover of Jesus' ministry, he is challenged by hecklers to prove his Messiahship: give them a supernatural sign that conclusively demonstrates his unique role. He responds by referencing only his future Resurrection, but the response provokes his listeners to a mild form of outrage. Misunderstanding him, they counter his remarks with the protest, "This Temple has been forty-six years in the building process and if it is destroyed, you will raise it up in three days?"

We have here solid reference to real events of history that can be easily confirmed. When was the Temple first rebuilt? By citing references in the writings of Josephus, the Jewish-Roman historian, most scholars agree the Temple at Jerusalem was first rebuilt in the eighteenth year of Herod the Great, which corresponds to 20-19 B.C.[532] The Temple building was repaired by the Priests in a one and one half year period (20-19 to 18-17 B.C.), but other work, such as enlarging the Temple's platform, providing sturdier foundations and walls and enlarging promenades, continued until 63 A.D.[533] It was a continuing process of

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[532] Paul Maier (Chronos, Kairos, Christos, p 123), Jack Finnegan (Handbook of Biblical Chronology, pps 346-349), Herman Hoeh (The Crucifixion Was Not on Friday, pps. 28-29), and Raymond Brown (The Gospel According to John, I-XII, p 116) all give the date for the start of construction as 20-19 B C There is some controversy between Maier-Finnegan and Hoeh-Brown on whether to count the forty-six years from the start of the Temple work, or the end of it 11/2 years later. Raymond Brown's explanation, and his translation of the original Greek completely answers Jack Finnegan's objections. While Finnegan is correct, the literal phrase means the Temple boiling was completed 46 years ago, it makes no sense to presume the Temple, which was not completed until 63 A D was being spoken of here as a completed project, even if we are referring to only one part of the renovation. Brown gives a very important counter-example to Finnegan, Ezra 5:16 in the Septuagint translation, which uses the exact wording to say the second Temple construction was "complete" BUT NOT FINISHED. The Temple was not truly finished until 63 A.D. Even if we focus on the Temple building refurbishment which ended in 18 B.C., it makes little sense to ignore the much more massive, ongoing expansion work, since the whole point of Christ's hecklers is to show how massive and ongoing the Temple project truly is, in order to belittle his remarks. Finnegan and Maier skew the impact of the verbal exchange in order to make the words sanction a Friday Crucifixion in 33 A.D. If we start with 20-19 B.C., we arrive at 28 A D and a Wednesday Crucifixion 3 years later. If we use the 18-17 B.C. date of Finnegan and Maier, we are placed at Passover of 30 A D, and achieve a Friday Crucifixion three years later. As before we are left with the Wednesday-Friday contest. This is why I will spend some 100 ages in the next Section (2.4) conclusively proving from history the impossibility of an original Friday custom, and demonstrating the true inception of the Easter festival from the writings of Gnostic Church Fathers decades and centuries after Jesus died. Anyone with any doubts on this point is encouraged to carefully examine the information provided in the next Section and its related Appendices.

[533] Brown, R., The Gospel According to John, I-XII, p. 116, citing Josephus' Antiquities of the Jews, Book XX, Chapter IX, paragraph 7

rebuilding and extending a "greater Temple". This ongoing, extensive enhancement and renovation of the Temple and its environs is what Christ's critics have in mind when they attack him. Forty-six years after the start of this building process gives the Passover of 28 A.D. as the moment in time John describes. (See above note for yet other scholarly objections and my answers.) Three years after the Passover of 28 A.D. brings us to 31 A.D., in complete agreement with the fifteenth year of Tiberius Caesar.[534] Once more, we have a flawless match among the facts of history when we use a Wednesday Crucifixion in 31 A.D.

D. When Did Herod Die and When Was Jesus Born?

Here is another little puzzle among the dates surrounding Jesus' age and death that disappears when we use the Wednesday Crucifixion of 31 A.D.: Luke says Jesus was about thirty years old when he started his ministry.[535] We have seen this year was 27 A.D., in the fifteenth year of Tiberius Caesar's administration of Palestine. Elsewhere the Gospels state Jesus was born before the death of Herod the Great, ruler of Judea.[536] If we work back from 27 A.D. 30 years we come to 4-3 B.C. But most commentators do not believe Jesus was born in that time. Rather, they pick a date 1-3 years before or after and then claim "about 30" really means 35 years old or 36 years old, or even 28 years old. They are the ones who are right, and Luke uses careless language. By now it should be apparent that I am a champion of Luke's accuracy. "About thirty" means just that; it is the commentators who are taking license. Can all the facts be reconciled? When did Herod die? When does Herod's death place Jesus" birth and does this birthday reconcile with an age of thirty in 27 A.D. for Jesus? See for yourself.

Once more, we start with commonly accepted facts that become drastically re-interpreted in dramatically different ways by the time we complete our inquiry.[537]

Herod dies sometime in the year 4-3 B.C., after ruling for 37 years, a reign which commenced in 40 B.C.[538] The mathematics is simple: 40 - 37 = 3, but most scholars make it come out to 4 B.C.[539] The signal event which fixes his passing is an eclipse of the Moon, which most scholars agree occurred during the late night hours of

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[534] Raymond Brown makes this very point: Tiberius' fifteenth year, Herod's Temple and 27-28 A D all fall in the same year See p 116 of his commentary, The Gospel According to John, I-XII

[535] Luke 3:23

[536] Matthew 2:1-19 gives the full account

[537] The most comprehensive modern bibliography on the date of Herod's death and the Nativity that this writer has discovered is Finnegan, Handbook of biblical Chronology, pps 291-292. For a bibliography listing the opinions scholars held 100 years ago, see Schurer, A History of the Jewish People in the Time of Jesus Christ, Division I, Volume I, p 464, note 165. For some idea on the diversity of modern opinion on this subject, see J. Scarola, "A Chronology of the Nativity Era", Chronos Kairos, Christos II, pps. 61-62, and Bibliography on pps 82-84; also the paper of D Beyer, "Josephus Reexamined: Unveiling the Twenty-second Year of Tiberius", on pps 85-96 of the same volume Brown, The Birth of the Messiah, pps 166-167, 606-607, has a surprisingly brief bibliography on the subject. The complete history of this range of opinion encompasses a bibliography too large for this book to list, reaching back to early Gnostic theologians in the first , second, and third centuries A D (see Beyer), and continuing to this day

[538] Hoeh, H., The Crucifixion Was Not On Friday, p 26.

[539] Emil Schurer notes this obvious fact, then discredits Josephus as incompetent in his ability to report years correctly. (Ibid, Division I, Volume I, p 465. Other scholars, following after Schurer, accept 40 B.C and 37 years of reign, they DO NOT object to Jesephus, yet they still revert to 4 B.C. as correct!

March 12/13 in 4 B.C.[540] Yet this event has its ambiguities. Once more, the event is recorded by the Jewish historian Josephus, but its interpretation seems to have been missed by almost all. Josephus notes the eclipse, then says Herod died in the Springtime at the Jewish Passover.[541] Most scholars presume this is a clear statement of an eclipse in March of 4 B.C., followed by Herod's death less than 28 days later on April 11 of 4 B.C.[542] Therefore, Jesus must have been born January of 4 B.C. or even earlier. There is a problem with this reasoning, IF we read Josephus more carefully than simply searching for a date. The problem is, Josephus has Herod traipsing up and down the countryside in search of healing, going to a spa, plotting palace intrigues and changing his will then dying with a lavish funeral and mourning period of some 7 days supposedly all between March 13 and April 11 of 4 B.C. No one ever seems to ask the question, "How could all this activity occur in a matter of three or four weeks by a dying man in severe discomfort?"[543]

It could not.

How many activities could a terminally ill man who has to be carried about in a litter, engage in during a period of some 15-20 days? Let me briefly list Josephus' full itinerary for the dying Herod for you, so you may decide.

1. Consults a group of local physicians at his palace and follows their advice for an unspecified period of time.[544]

2. Travels beyond the river Jordan to a spa for a "cure". The duration of his stay is not given, but we know he tries both the waters and oil baths. We should presume a man such as Herod will give himself every chance to recover from his disease. He would not rush a cure, but let it work to full capacity before rejecting it. The doctors would be unlikely to take him to a spa on one day, stay there a short time, admit failure and then require that the sick man, just having recuperated from the rigors of a land-trip, start the whole process of traveling all over again. The travel might do more to kill Herod than the disease. In short, several cures were tried, given proper time to effect results on a very sick man, re-appraised by the doctors and then other cures devised. This would be done until the doctors were sure nothing further could be gained by staying at the resort. Including the time to carry a very sick man across country, this alone should have taken at least 2-3 weeks.[545] (More likely, Herod was there for months.)

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[540] Severasl authors have compiled the list of all lunar eclipses that could be seen over Jerusalem in the years 7 to 1 B.C. See Finnegan, Handbook of Biblical Chronology, pps. 294-295. for tables and reference to the original work by Earnest L. Martin on this subject.

[541] Josephus, Antiquities of the Jews, Book XVII, Chapter IX paragraph 3, and P. Maier, "The Date of the Nativity and the Chronology of Jesus' Life" in Chronos, Kairos, Christos, p. 115 The dates have been recalculated by moderns, with uniform concurrence

[542] Maier, P., op. cit., p. 118

[543] Paul Maier does (above reference), but his list of Herod's activities is half of what I find in Josephus, and he pre-judges each event as "minor", when there is not justification for doing so. I find his time estimates unrealistic and incomplete.

[544] The Works of Josephus, Antiquities of the Jews, Book 17, Chapter p. 365

[545] Ibid

3. Returns to his palace. Commands payments to all his senior staff, friends and soldiers. (This would involve a fairly thorough listing of specific men and their proper rewards, involving staff preparing the full list of names, then reading the long list to Herod, for his pronouncement on each reward. It too, should have taken days to complete.)

4. Goes to Jericho and turns even sicker.[546] Jericho can be very hot in the summer months. This fact strongly suggests Herod was vacationing there during the winter time and not for a few days between March 13 and April 11 of 4 B.C. (see note)

5. Calls for and receives all the Jewish leaders from all his provinces, imprisons them at Jericho and plans to slay them all before he dies.[547] Josephus says this is a very large number. We should ask how quickly hundreds of men to assemble from all parts of the region. We should include here the time it took for (fast) messengers to arrive with the news, the time the individuals took to prepare and embark on their journey and the actual time of journey for the farthest individual to travel to Jericho. I estimate 3-7 days for this whole process, as a minimum.

6. Has his son executed, dies himself five days later.

7. Changes his will before he dies.[548]

8. A seven day period of mourning is held.

9. Passover falls.

Combining the seven day funeral with Herod's assassination of his son five days before that, we have a minimum of 12 days before April 11, or March 30, 4 B.C. From March 13 to March 30 is just 17 days, or 2 1/2 weeks. If Herod died in 4 B.C., then all these events transpired in 17 days or less. Josephus only reports that Herod becomes mortally ill and seeks the physicians advice after March 13. Are we then to believe that Herod was only sick for 17 days while he went all over his realm seeking help? If this were the case, then he was so mortally sick, that the physicians should never have carried him back and forth to a spa for a cure, since he only had two weeks to live. Better to attend to him in the palace and wait for a soon-coming death. The circumstances favor a severe illness that debilitated him, but left out hope for any exotic cure. It is much more realistic to admit they occurred over a period of months and Herod died at the Passover of 3 B.C., nearly thirteen months after the eclipse Josephus mentioned.[549]

This time frame puts the birth of Jesus in the year 4 B.C. to 3 B.C. A halfway point would be September of 4 B.C. Add to this 27 years until the 15 year of Tiberius and

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[546] Ibid

[547] Herod does this at Jericho, yet as Maier observes (Ibid, p 118), Jericho is too hot in the Springtime for a sick man to sustain its clime The circumstance strongly implies a longer season of events, where Herod stays at Jericho in the winter of 4-3 B C , when it is cooler

[548] Ibid, p 366

[549] Hoeh, H , loc. cit. , and comment, p 368 to Antiquities if the Jews, Book XVII, Chapter IX, paragraph 3

Jesus starts his ministry in 27 A.D., almost exactly at age 30, which is precisely what Luke wrote.

Add to this the 3 1/2 years of Jesus ministry and we arrive at the Wednesday Passover of 31 A.D.

E. Jesus Age in 27 A.D.

Luke wrote, "Now Jesus himself began his ministry at about thirty years of age" (Luke 3:23, NKJ). This is another detail of the Gospels that does not fit effortlessly into the traditional reconstruction of how old Jesus was when he preached and died. If Herod died in 4 B.C., then Jesus had to have been born in 5 B.C., which makes him 31 or 32 in 27 or 28 A.D., when then believe the 15th year of Tiberius occurred. It is as if they are forced to make Jesus' birth too early and Tiberius' 15th year too late, to match with Jesus being 30 when he starts preaching. It forces various scholars to make the word "about" into a very vague and imprecise word indeed. They resort to other examples in the New Testament where the word is used with thousands of people or other, much larger numbers than 30. They do this to show that if "about 5000" could mean 4,800, then "about 30" could mean about 35 or 40. This is unfortunate. There is another use of the expression "about" with a person's age, that proves the opposite: Luke meant within days or months of Jesus' 30th birthday.

It involves Christ's resurrection of a dead young girl. The expression here reads:

For he [Jarius] had one only daughter, about twelve years of age, and she lay a dying. But as he went the people thronged him. (Luke 8:42, KJV)

Now when a child has lived only a decade or so, one year is a fairly large error to make in their age. We should not expect that if Luke says "about 12", this girl was actually 8 or 16 or 20 years old. No, "about 12" confines us to her 12th year of life, otherwise Luke would have stated the true year as closely as possible. The principle is, the smaller the number, say 12 compared to 5,000, the more precise the use of "about" has to be. We do not say "about 10" and mean 5,000,000. There is much less room for error or slippage when we use "about" with smaller numbers. This exactness carries over from 12 to 30 far more than any vagary can be imputed from 5,000 to 30.

Another example of this kind of precision with small numbers can be found in Luke 23:44, the verse immediately before the keynote verse of this book. Luke 23:44 says, "And it was about the sixth hour, [12 noon] and there was a darkness over all the earth until the ninth hour." (KJV)

If Luke says "about noon", do we have the right to say it could have been 10 A.M., or 4 P.M.? Hardly. With so few hours in the day, if Luke wanted to say 4 P.M., he could have easily said so. "About" used with small numbers means at or near the number being used, not some other number.

Therefore, if we respect the integrity of the words "about 30" as Luke wrote them, we are faced with the conclusion that Jesus was indeed 30 in the 15th year of Tiberius' reign over Judea (27 A.D.), he was born in 4 B.C. and all other schemes are overworked attempts that simply do not fit the facts.

I have given enough facts to show how a Friday Crucifixion entangles its advocates into a mesh of misfit circumstances and historical inaccuracies. None of this occurs with Wednesday of 31 A.D. I will address one last point for the diehard Friday proponent. It is the notion that the history of Palestine provides key reasons why Jesus could not possibly have died before 32 A.D. Once more, we will see how solid such arguments are under the weight of a Wednesday Crucifixion.

E. Is 31 A.D. An Impossible Year Because of the Assassination of Sejanus?

One respected scholar has used an event in 31 A.D to seemingly prove Jesus could not have been Crucified before 32 A.D., therefore Friday, April 3, 33 A.D. becomes a near certain date for the Crucifixion. The arguments he offers can be re-interpreted to prove the exact opposite of what he claims. (I will have much to say about the full set of circumstances surrounding the death of Sejanus, the head of Tiberius Caesar's personal bodyguards, in Chapter 3. Events actually prove Sejanus was being assassinated by Tiberius as a sacrificial substitute for Tiberius himself, in order to reverse the occult consequences of the Crucifixion eclipses. The Crucifixion prompted the exact time and manner in which Sejanus was killed in 31 A.D.)

The argument runs that Sejanus, a highly ranked intimate of Tiberius Caesar, was stridently opposed towards the Jewish population of Jerusalem. Sejanus was responsible for appointing Pilate to office in Judea, therefore Pilate should never have vacillated when called upon to spare Jesus' life; he should have dismissed the charges against Jesus when confronted by Sejanus' enemies. Since Sejanus died in October of 31 A.D., the Crucifixion had to have followed it.[550]

Consider the consequences to Pilate if he did reject the Jewish demands as recorded in the Gospels. There would have been a Jewish reaction; blood would have been spilled in the general populace, hundreds or thousands killed, Pilate possibly deposed and a massive inquiry initiated by Caesar. The population was polarized, with thousands favoring Jesus and thousands rejecting him. We know one of the first things Pilate wanted to discover when he interviewed Jesus was if Jesus thought himself the King of the Jews, ready to mount an insurrection against Pilate and Rome. Jesus replied, "My Kingdom is not of here, else would my servants fight", clearly putting Pilate's concerns to rest. We should also note that Pilate was not simply a politician or soldier. His primary function was as a magistrate or judge. He was skilled in the balancing of opposing views to reach a decision. This was the mindset he reverted to continually: seek out a middle ground and escape personal harm. It was too late to dismiss the suit, the mob had been loosed, it was outside chanting. The best midpoint Pilate could gain under

[550] See Finnegan , op cit., p 362, and Maier, Sejanus, Pilate, and the Date of the Crucifixion, in Church History 37, 1968m pps. 3-13.

such realities was to divorce himself from all responsibility by ceremonially washing his hands of the matter. In this way, only a report of a local execution would ever be returned to Rome and a potentially disastrous civil disorder would be averted. Whether Sejanus was alive or dead at the time could not negate Pilate's need to control the population of Judea and protect his own career. The antipathy of Sejanus towards the Jews is insufficient reason to force an explanation for when Jesus died; it is merely a curiosity which other, more significant factors color and explain.

The conclusion of this whole section is:

The Hebrew calendar is accurate; Jesus died on Wednesday, April 25 of 31 A.D., the Friday arguments from history are plagued with uncertainty.

But if world-class scholars of great ability are convinced Jesus died on a Friday, what of the ancient traditions that say this is so? How can I fly in the face of 2,000 years of solid Church history which universally affirms Jesus died on a Friday, no matter how I manipulate the words of the New Testament?

Surely all that history cannot be overthrown?

Watch.

2.4 Where Did the Good Friday / Easter Sunday Tradition Come From?--"Inanna's Descent into Hell" and the Origin of Christian Gnosticism

(Note: This present Section constitutes a very long but riveting digression from my basic theme of proving the Wednesday Crucifixion Eclipses. I have been forced to include it here at great length because of the absolute faith modern scholars place in a Good Friday Crucifixion. I must show from history it never existed, or their first words will dismiss this entire book as unhistorical whimsy.

The anxious reader may want to jump ahead some 140 pages to the next Section, 2.5, which deals with the proofs from astronomy for the Darkness at the Crucifixion. By all means, do not neglect to read this present Section at some point. It explains much you never knew about religion, Good Friday and its true origins. It reads a little like the story of civilization.

NO, Good Friday did not exist for 350 years in Christianity, it was invented. We can clearly trace how Jesus' Wednesday death was turned into a Friday memorial from the very words of ancient Christian "fathers". The existing evidence is that good. The problem is, no one seemingly wants to look at it any more.)

Our Present Ingrained Faith in a Friday Crucifixion is Insupportable

The Wednesday Crucifixion, like many other facts of history I cover, flies in the face of everything you may have been taught. Most likely you would agree with the following defense of Friday as the original day Jesus died:

> ...Christian tradition has unanimously held to the Friday/Crucifixion-Sunday/Resurrection chronology. This is all the more surprising since some early Christian writers did place the Last Supper on Tuesday evening rather than Thursday evening. ... however, no early Christian writer ever disputed or doubted its occurrence on Friday.[551] (emphasis mine)

We will see that this statement is at best, only partially correct. Early writers spoke of a Tuesday Last Super because Jesus died the next day, on a Wednesday. We will next look at evidence from early Christian writers which plainly shows the earliest theologians wrote about a Wednesday Crucifixion; the above author and all his colleagues are simply incorrect. The Good Friday tradition was an ancient pagan festival that both pre-dated and co-existed with original Christianity, but it was not part of official Christian doctrine for centuries, WEDNESDAY WAS. We will unravel the intricacies of this history as well.

Years of believing in Good Friday may make it very difficult for you to reject the day based upon what I have thus far written. You may reason, "Its only his arguments from the Bible that claim a Wednesday, we all know history teaches otherwise." There is much more weight of evidence I can offer you.

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[551] Ibid , p 47.

The modern perspective that most people have, namely that Good Friday is a sacred, factual bulwark of basic Christianity, is really the end product of dynamic growth by fledgling Christianity and a violent response to that unwelcome growth by its Pagan rivals. When we study early church festivals and doctrine, will find they "transformed" over the first four centuries of the Christian era.[552] Why was it necessary to transform anything such as the day Jesus died? The survival of ancient pagan ways was at stake and the priests of paganism were not about to surrender thousand-year-old customs to a fledgling Christianity that was prospering under their very noses. Rather, they embraced it, recast it on their own terms, and "refined" it after their own doctrines in order to meet their own needs for survival.

We will see that this "metamorphosis" was the offspring of a determined struggle between opposing camps. That struggle left us today with a messy tangle of layers of beliefs in the historical record from 100 to 400 A.D., from which we must struggle to discern the true origin of modern Christian tradition. It is true of Sunday worship, it is true of the Trinity and it is especially true for the observance of Good Friday. Once more, the truth of history is intertwined with many false starts, red herrings and contradictory facts. Once more we will have to dig deeply for the treasure hidden in the dirt.

Once we see from history conclusive evidence that Good Friday was transferred to Christianity directly from Egyptian and Babylonian religion and transformed by Gnostic priests in Alexandria Egypt into a drastically different festival, with a totally different meaning, all objections to a Wednesday, April 25th, Crucifixion in 31 A.D. become hopelessly swept away in the winds of history.

Some of the material here is truly new. I have organized it into two logical groups: the history of Good Friday, and the doctrine behind Easter, with some little overlap between the two. Sections 2.4.1-2.4.3 give the public history behind the development of Good Friday, from its non-existence in the time of Jesus until its first official inclusion into Church liturgy in the late fourth century.

Sections 2.4.4 through 2.4.7 deal primarily with the world of ideas. They trace the ancient pagan origins of the Easter story and the later interplay between original Christian doctrine and Gnostic mysticism that produced the modern observance of Good Friday - Easter Sunday. We will discover the lines of reasoning and the basic Gnostic beliefs that Greek and Egyptian intellectuals buried beneath the ritual they endorsed for Good Friday. Much of it is astrology.

To properly understand the story of Good Friday, we will cut a large swath of history, covering millennia and cultures, so it is best to now give a brief overview

[552] Dr. Paul Bradshaw, whom I refer to throughout this section, seems to have first applied the term. It suggests the RADICAL transformation Christianity underwent, from its original state, to the present set of holidays and doctrines we take fro granted.

that will assist in keeping the reader focused as I later engage in many, many details and side excursions.

2.4.1 Good Friday is Missing from Early Christian History

Scholars Admit Good Friday Cannot Be Forced into History or the Gospels; It Was Never There

We have seen some of the problems Good Friday choices produce when they are matched with the facts of history and we also saw that Wednesday April 25, 31 A.D. eliminates these problems. This fact is not merely my own invention. World-class scholars have admitted their frustration at this problem without knowing how to solve it. The universal commitment to a Friday Crucifixion makes it impossible for any expert to adapt the necessary new thinking to get beyond this impasse.

Raymond Brown, the acclaimed Jesuit scholar whom I quoted in Chapters 1 and 2, cut at the heart of this dilemma with an insight that begs to be heard. Speaking of the hard choice between April 7, 30 A.D., or April 3, 33 A.D., he wrote:

> ... there has been a tendency to reject 33 as implying too old a Jesus and too long a ministry, since he would have been almost forty when he died and have had a public ministry of some four years. If he died in 30 he would have been about 36, and have had a ministry of somewhat less than two years. Neither date fulfills every detail in the Gospel evidence about Jesus' birth and ministry. (emphasis added)

Yet we saw earlier that these two Fridays are the most likely candidates in modern scholarship, bandied about by the most capable men for at least 100 years. After a lifetime of studying this whole mass of work, Dr. Brown came to the conclusion Good Fridays do not fit well with either reality or the Gospel record. The quandary should be a signal to modern scholars to reexamine their basic assumptions on the Crucifixion, but that does not seem to have happened, as far as this writer can discover. And yet, there exists in easily accessible works, including the collected writings of early Church fathers, plain evidence that a Wednesday Crucifixion was noted and observed centuries after Jesus died.

Dr. Paul Bradshaw, professor at Notre Dame University, edited a book entitled, Passover and Easter, Origin and History to Modern Times. In it, he very plainly stated that both Good Friday and Easter were inventions over three hundred years after Jesus.[553]

> ... in the course of the fourth century, ... GOOD FRIDAY AND THE OTHER DAYS OF HOLY WEEK GRADUALLY EMERGED. ...[554] (emphasis mine)

> ... Pascha (as Easter was known) began life as the Christian version of the Passover, observed on the same day as its Jewish

[553] See Chapter five in Bradshaw, P , The Origin of Easter, pps. 81-97 for the complete discussion, plus many additional and valuable references I consider this material very authoritative and candid

[554] Ibid, p. 93

> antecedent [14/15 of Nisan] and focused upon Christ as the Paschal lamb who had been sacrificed for the sins of the world, ... By the fourth century the festival had changed its form and meaning. It was now observed on the Sunday following ... the Jewish date, and constituted the final part of a three day celebration .... of Friday-Saturday-Sunday commemorating the passage of Christ from death to resurrection.[555] (emphasis added)

Dr. Bradshaw also explains that official Church observance of the Passover was limited to only one nighttime service in the spring for three hundred years. There was not even an Easter SUNRISE or morning service for all that time and there was no separation into distinct observances for the death and the resurrection of Jesus.[556]

> By the end of the fourth century, the feast of Easter had already EXPANDED INTO A THREE-DAY PERIOD called the *Triduum Paschale*. [English translation: "the three-day Passover"!][557] (emphasis and comments mine)

What this is saying is that church fathers deliberately decided to turn the one day Passover on Nisan 14 into a three day observance with a drastically different meaning. WHY? And why was it pursued with uniform conviction over so many decades and centuries? We will spend much time documenting the true motives of these "progressive" theologians in what follows. You probably will be surprised at what we find them teaching. After this centuries-long process of re-inventing the Passover finally stabilized around 370-375 A.D., the church liturgy formally spoke of it as three unique days, each with its own worship.

> Through the fifth century, the triduum was [finally] understood to be comprised of Good Friday, Holy Saturday, and Easter Sunday.[558] (comment added)

The Consequences of Dr. Bradshaw's Remarks

The above quotes are terse; they encapsulate basic facts of church history in a respectful diplomacy. Let me carefully and deliberately amplify what has just been admitted.

Originally ONLY the date of Jesus' death was observed and that day was whatever day of the week the Jewish Passover fell upon. It is called the Christian Passover. Good Friday is nowhere to be found at this time (30- 160 A.D.). Good Friday "emerges" into history and it does not appear until AFTER the Christian Passover is "transformed in the course of the fourth century" A.D. The observance begins

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[555] Ibid, p 1.
[556] Ibid, p 3.
[557] Ibid, p 161.
[558] Ibid, p 178, see note 2.

as a one day event on the 14th of Nisan in the Hebrew calendar, which shifts every year to another date and day of the week. One year it is Wednesday April 25, another year Nisan 14 falls on April 3. After a highly divisive controversy that rocked Christendom around 165 A.D., the majority of bishops reject the Nisan 14 Passover and decree Jesus death must be observed as a single-day event which falls every year on a Sunday (170-350 A.D.). They still refer to this event as "Pascha", or the Passover at this stage. The terms "Easter" and "Good Friday" do not exist. This one-day "Passover" is then further evolved over the next 200 years by theologians demanding further change, into a three day Friday-Saturday-Sunday "Passover - Resurrection" (375 A.D.) All these changes are the result of years of writing, preaching and teaching radical doctrines in churches, seminaries and monasteries for decades before they are finally officially accepted by the Church leadership. We have preserved for us today a garbled paper trail these theologians left behind. You will see for yourself this chain of ever-changing doctrine over the centuries.

If this series of events sounds strange to your ears, I apologize, but history will reveal it to us. When additional details of history are filled in, Dr. Bradshaw's remarks provide the framework for proving there is NO basis for thinking original Christians observed Jesus' death on a Friday every year in a religious observance called "Good Friday". Rather, for three hundred plus years the tradition was that Jesus died on the Jewish Passover, now made Christian, which was originally the 14th/15th of the month of Nisan and eventually shifted to a Sunday. Whatever day of the week the fourteenth fell upon was the day the original Christians observed, not Friday.

Since my claims are so drastic, we are going to examine this evolution in greater detail. First, I will give you an outline of the doctrinal undercurrents that beset the church and later, we will return to a careful examination of the church fathers actual words. We will discover how the concealed pagan doctrines surface before our eyes, once we grasp what lies beneath.

The Paganism Underneath "Progressive" Christian Theologians

Dr. Bradshaw states that the very first revision Church fathers made to the Jewish Passover death of Jesus was to move it to A SUNDAY every year.

Let me make a rather brash claim at the very beginning of this inquiry: The trend from the Nisan 14 Passover to Sunday is rooted in the desire of Gnostic churchmen to reinvent original Christianity into "warmed-over" Pagan mystery.

Second century churchmen and even earlier ones who were in direct competition with faithful Christians, sought to turn the one day memorial service of Jesus' death into a mystery of passage through BOTH death and rebirth, <u>because that was what the resurrection religion of the Egyptian Sun-god Osiris had always taught for centuries</u>. The revision of Christianity began with Greek-Egyptian theologians from Alexandria Egypt. They, not Rome, dominated Christian theology for the period 100 - 370 A.D. The doctrine was home-grown Alexandrian Sun-worship overlaid on Christian symbolism. Alexandria was a Greek-Egyptian city. It embodied the

heritage of both proud civilizations. The doctrines were Egyptian, but the philosophy was pure Greek speculation on the ancient mysteries.[559]

The modern Jesuit mystic, Hugo Ranher, devotes a whole book to this Greek incursion into early Christianity. He titles his book, Greek Myths and Christian Mystery. He calls his introductory chapter "Christian Mysteries and Pagan Mysteries". At the very start he writes:

> .... from the second to the fifth century .... a broad stream of Greek piety forced its way into the Church transforming Christianity's pristine Biblical simplicity into the mystical sacramental form that lives on in .... Latin Christianity .... affinity between Christianity and the cults .... [became] more marked at the end of this period than at its beginning. ...[560] (comments and emphasis added)

I disagree a little with Rahner. The broad stream that forced its way into Apostolic Christianity was Greco-Egyptian, with Mesopotamian sources that went back to the tower of Babel. (We will document this very thoroughly.) According to Rahner, Greek paganism is "piety". The New Testament does not agree. Rahner's "piety" is normally called Gnosticism. Notice he speaks of original Christianity transforming over three centuries into a system that bears striking resemblance to pagan cults. This is the same time frame required for the institution of Good Friday. There is no coincidence here. Which cults? What doctrines? Which Crucifixion? What Passover? Perhaps you can see where this is all leading.

The revisions were done by degrees and over time. It began with fixing the death of Christ on the day of the Sun, as a backlash to the darkness that covered Jerusalem when Jesus died. Please bear in mind, in the time of Jesus the predominant form of Deity was the Sun-god. (I will devote most of volume 2 to this fascinating subject.) The Crucifixion darkness, no matter what you think its cause at this point in my story, deals with a shutting down of the Sun's light while Jesus was dying. That message was taken to the world wherever the Gospel was preached: when Jesus died, the powers of the Sun failed for three hours. Pagan Sun worshippers believed an all-powerful spirit inhabited the Sun. To say the Sun failed, was to make Jesus' religion more powerful than their own. The Gnostic Christians did not gracefully accept this humiliation. Rather, they constantly attempted to either merge Jesus with the Sun, or to enfold Jesus into the Sun as a lesser entity.

Rahner documents this concept as a trend of history that started in Alexandria and lasted for centuries in Europe.

> ... the sun had its part to play .... on the days devoted to the commemoration of Jesus' death and his descent into hell, i.e., the Friday and Saturday preceding the actual "Sun" day of

[559] The modern Jesuit mystic, devotes a whole book to this Greek influence upon early Christianity, Greek Myths and Christian Mystery In the opening pages he wrote, "

[560] Ranher, H, Greek Myths and Christian Mystery, p 3

> Easter. The darkening of the Sun, for instance, at the time of Jesus' death, is regarded by Jerome as a sign of its shame at the setting of the true sun, Christ.[561]

Rahner then traces this Crucifixion darkness / Sun god theme in Christian belief up until at least the 12th century. A French monk, Abelard, composed a hymn to be sung on Good Friday in which he claimed "the true sun" suffered on the cross, while the material sun also suffered.

The Alexandrian Christians had a tradition of painting the physical sun darkening directly above Jesus' cross, to show the strong symbolism between Jesus as the incarnation of the Sun and the grief of the spirit behind the Sun.[562] They turned the darkness of the Sun away from a defeat of their Sun-god and into a fusion of Jesus and their Solar spirit. In a 12th century painting, this symbolism is again depicted, with the words, "The fiery sun grows dark in the heavens because the Sun of Righteousness suffers on the cross."[563]

Much, much more of this interlocking theology will become evident as the facts of history are unveiled.

The Passover Crucifixion was moved from Nisan 14 to a Sunday and given a whole new set of meanings that were less consistent with Jesus and more in line with the death and resurrection of the Egyptian Sun-god Osiris and other cult gods. Eventually, as Rahner points out, the concepts of death and spiritual rebirth mature into the first and the third days of a three-day "Christian" observance. The original meaning of Christ's sacrifice becomes secondary. Only then, after Easter grows to a three day festival, will Good Friday appear in the form and with the name we know today.

Part of the method used by Alexandrian theologians to fuse paganism into New Testament Christianity was to dilute the plain teachings of original Christian doctrine with ambivalent symbolism. Simple word, such as the Passover, became mystical badges for fuzzy, but profound truths that one could only guess at. The pagans knew the answer. "Gnosis" meant "knowledge". This double-minded vocabulary permitted both a Pagan and a Christian interpretation for commonly known traditions. It was done at the cost of manhandling scripture. One author said there was a "general tendency among the Alexandrian theologians to de-historicize and allegorize the Christian mysteries."[564] (emphasis added) Of course, at this original stage, there were no Christian "mysteries". We might say more accurately there was a tendency to turn Biblical statements into pagan-like mystery. The author was probably referring to Clement of Alexandria and his protégé Origen, the leading Alexandrian theologian of 210 - 230 A.D., when he wrote those words. Hugo Rahner quotes Clement as saying, "As the Father makes the sun to shine upon all

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[561] Rahner, H., op. cit., pps. 116-117. Rahner gives several references of the Sun in chariots and other Solar motifs in "Christian" art in note 2 on p. 117.

[562] The Alexandrian "spirit behind the Sun" was known as IAO his symbol, invented 300-400 years before Jesus, was a cross. I explain all this in Appendix A 4.

[563] Ibid, p. 117.

[564] Bradshaw, P , The Origin of Easter, p 84

men, ... so the Sun of Righteousness upon his journey passes over all mankind."[565] Osiris and Ra journey across the sky every day, Jesus never does. The journey of the Sun across the sky becomes the Passover of the Jew in Clement's logic. We see here the merging of symbolism which allows for Pagan-Christian interpretation of the same words. Clement compares Christ's sacrifice for mankind to the actions of inanimate objects. There is a blasphemous tinge to all this. Rahner then states:

> This Pasch [Passover] from the death on the cross to the life of the resurrection .... was fashioned by the ancient church in the liturgy of the Easter vigil INTO A MARVELOUS SUN MYSTERY.[566]

What Rahner omits to say is that the basis for this "marvelous" re-fashioning of the Nisan 14 Passover into Easter was taken from older Pagan doctrine. This too, will be meticulously documented in what follows. Origen, more secretive than Clement, wrote the following in a commentary on scripture; he denies the importance of literally accepting the historic events reported in the Gospels, even though they were made from eye-witness accounts:

> For we ought not to suppose that historical things are types of historical things, and material things of material, but that material things are typical of spiritual things, and historical things of intellectual.[567]

In other words, the literal events of history should not be accepted as such; rather their meaning should be abstracted and the events turned into pure ideas. This generalization should replace the literal event. He is, in effect arguing for the license to reinvent the literal events of Christianity into whatever analogies he chooses, with us as his willing students. Slick.

At this early juncture, many readers will think I have unjustly distorted Dr. Bradshaw's words and "invented" an Osiris explanation for the Sunday Passover when none exists. I may also be accused of unfairly categorizing the brilliant intellect of Origen as pagan. Nearly 100 pages of further details will come to my rescue.

Lets turn the clock back to approximately 50 A.D. The original Apostles are spreading the Gospel of Christianity to the world for the first time. Our paper trail begins with proof of a raging controversy that exists between the original Apostles of Christ, and the early Gnostic "Christians" of Alexandria Egypt, who preceded Origen and his mentor Clement.

A Brief Sketch of the Original Christian-Gnostic Conflict

My prior statements need to be put into sharper relief. It is impossible to appreciate what churchmen outside of Jerusalem and Asia Minor were writing and teaching in

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[565] Rahner, H., op. cit., p. 119.
[566] Rahner, H., op. cit., p. 119.
[567] Roberts, A.,, op. cit., vol. ix, p. 391.

50 or 150 A.D. without understanding a basic point: original, authentic doctrine and practice of the early New Testament church was challenged and systematically replaced by a counter-system of rival pagan doctrines vigorously preached and enforced even as the Apostles Paul, Peter and John were preaching Christianity to the world for the very first time. Congregations were taken over and rival doctrines were being taught Paganized Christianity even before the Apostles' bodies were buried. It was further revised and refined in the centuries after them.

The primary philosophy of this opposition and takeover has been generalized by modern historians as "Gnosticism", but that label is a catchall; there were twenty or more such sects throughout the Mediterranean basin, having both a common approach to their "higher knowledge" of Christian doctrine and widely varying practices in their private ritual and morality. Some Gnostics were monkish, some practiced orgies; all sought to return Christianity to a mixture of Plato and / or ancient pagan doctrine of the Sun gods.

There are many modern statements that admit this ancient struggle was fought. The first counter-response was mounted to the Apostle's original evangelizing tours. Ancient Gnostics, first hearing Paul's message, engaged in an "...., outburst of activity .... which followed close upon St. Paul's preaching in Asia Minor."[568] The same could be said for Peter and the other Apostles. Alexandria responded to the preaching of the Evangelist Mark.

Gnosticism worked against nascent Christianity on a powerful scale:

> Generally speaking, Gnosticism played a most important part in the history of Christianity. [French Scholar] Renan's view, that it was a disease which, like croup, went near to strangling the infant Church is often quoted ....
>
> .... the Church, in receiving such [Gnostic] recruits lost much of that simplicity of doctrine and practice to which it had hitherto owed her rapid and unvarying success.[569](emphasis added)

The question is, were original Christian doctrines "lost" to Gnostics, or were they forcibly changed as some earlier authors suggested? Notice what the Apostle Paul was writing about his competitors while he was still alive. In this next passage, taken from a letter he wrote to newly evangelized Christians in the province of Galacia, modern day Turkey. He says:

> I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting the one who called you .... and are turning to a different gospel--which is really no gospel at all. Evidently some people are throwing you into confusion and are trying to pervert the gospel of Christ. But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach a gospel other

[568] Legge, F , op cit , vol ii p 85 I have reversed the order of these two phrases from the original statement The sense is intact
[569] Ibid, p 22

> than the one we preached to you, LET HIM BE ETERNALLY CONDEMNED! As we have already said, so now I say again: If anybody is preaching to you a gospel other than what you accepted, let him be eternally condemned!
>
> Am I now trying to win the approval of men or of God? Or am I trying to please men? If I were still trying to please men I would not be the servant of Christ. (Galatians Chapter 1, verses 6 - 9 - NIV translation)

Paul's words in this particular instance were not written specifically against Gnostics but the principle he gives here of rejecting false Gospels definitely applies to them and their "piety". It is a hallmark of Gnosticism that they created and palmed off MANY false Gospel documents. These were literal texts for the faithful to study, memorize and follow as truth, which supplemented or even superseded the original four Gospels of the New Testament. We have to ask why such documents were produced in such vast quantities, if not to "suffocate" the original message with counter-teachings. We have today a whole litany of Gospel documents they produced to "supplement" Christianity - the Gospel of Peter, the Gospel of the Truth, the Gospel of the Egyptians, the Gospel of the Nazarenes, the Gospel of Thomas, the Gospel of Mary, mother of Jesus, the Gospel of Nicodemus, a second, secret Gospel of Mark, just to name a few.[570] All these documents were circulated in the first through fourth centuries and had their devoted practitioners. None were authentic Christian scripture.

Professor Henry Chadwick, a distinguished historian of the early Christian Church, clearly puts Paul at the center of a battle to rout Gnostic influence. He writes of "the Gnostic crisis within the church". He cites evidence for Paul's resistance to Gnostics within the Church from letters Paul wrote to the Corinthians and Colosians and he points out that when Paul says "Beware, lest anyone delude you through philosophy and vain deceit", Paul is referring to the tactics of the Gnostics in his own day.[571]

In the letter the Apostle Jude wrote to first century Christians, we read something even more striking. Modern scholars admit it was written to directly counter Gnostic influence over true Christian believers. Jude wrote:

> .... I felt I had to write you and urge you to contend for the faith that was once and for all entrusted to the saints. For certain men whose condemnation was written about long ago have secretly slipped in among you. ....
>
> Yet these men speak abusively against whatever they do not understand; and that things they do understand by instinct, like

[570] See Waite, C B. History of the Christian Religion to the Year Two Hundred, for a more extensive list Schneemelcher, W New Testament Apocrypha, volume one, contains all the text material of all the apocryphal Gospels

[571] Chadwick, H., Early Christian Thought and the Classical Tradition, pps 7-8

> unreasoning animals--these are the very things that destroy them.[572] (NIV translation; emphasis added)

The accompanying commentary from The NIV Study Bible confirms Jude is speaking here of Gnostics.

> It has generally been assumed that these false teachers were Gnostics. Although this identification is no doubt correct, they must have been forerunners of fully-developed second century Gnosticism.[573] (emphasis mine)

We have here an admission of a sustained and evolving Gnostic front against Christian teaching that begins with a backlash against original Apostolic preaching and blossoms over the decades into the more tolerated Gnosticism of Clement and Origen.

The same early contest with Gnostic teachers can be discovered in the writings of the Apostle Peter. The NIV Study Bible refers to Peter's objections to Gnostic heresy in his Second Letter to Christians, writing about false doctrines and teachers: Peter wrote against false Gnostic doctrine from the first Century A.D.[574]

Gnostic teachers were not timid or respectful when they assaulted the original Christian Gospel with their own competing beliefs. Around 150 A.D., probably in Rome, Ptolemy, a disciple of the Gnostic master Valentinius, wrote the following admission about competing Gnostic sects and their methodical perversion of Christian doctrine. It comes from the modern book, The Gnostic Scriptures.

> .... they say, the reason that the savior--for they do not wish to call him the lord--did nothing publicly for [the first] thirty years [of his life] was in order to manifest the mystery of the aeons. [Note: The Greeks, Babylonians and Persians believed there were groupings of spirit beings that had charge over regions of space and time - and called them "ages" or aeons. One such group was the thirty aeons.] ... And these great, admirable, secret mysteries are the fruit that they [the Gnostics] bear wherever they have been able to accommodate AND ADAPT some passages of scripture TO THEIR OWN FICTITIOUS CREATION.[575] (comments and emphasis mine)

Notice that Ptolemy states certain Gnostics do not wish to call Jesus Lord. In the book of Jude, which clearly refers to Gnostics, J.B. Phillips translates a verse as saying of these Gnostics:

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[572] Barker, K., op. cit., pps. 1920-1921.
[573] Ibid, p. 1919
[574] Ibid, p. 1897.
[575] Layton, B. The Gnostic Scriptures, p. 283, for the quote. See p. 307 of this volume for a brief biographical sketch and a dating of when Ptolemy wrote in Rome

> They have no real reverence for God, and they abuse his grace as an opportunity for immorality. They will not recognize the only master, Jesus Christ our Lord[576] (emphasis added)

So both Jude and Ptolemy make the identical point about at least some Gnostic sects of the first and second centuries. Jude rejected these individuals as fifth column infiltrators of early Christianity who refuse to submit to the moral authority if Christ. then we have to ask, If they would not submit to Christ's doctrine or moral authority, what were they doing in his Church?

One of the primary Gnostic-Christian texts written in the third century A.D. was called the Pistis Sophia. There were other works like it, most of which are lost. The Pistis Sophia pretends to enlighten one in secret wisdom Jesus imparted to his original disciples after he was resurrected. It is conveyed to the novice by a spirit named "Sophia". Modern scholars have carefully documented the underlying role of Babylonian astrology within this Gnostic-Christian work.[577]

All Gnostic belief was underpinned by a broad foundation of astrological concepts: the zodiac, angelic powers which moved the stars, enlightened men's minds and controlled men's fates. It also required a literal practice of astronomy to note and record the effect of such powers in individual's lives.[578] We will find that Origen was the leading calculator of astronomical positions for the Sun, Moon and planets in his day; a Christian who practiced astronomy and wrote of the light the Moon imparts to the human mind on the Passover.

Gnostics sought to impose astrology over the Christianity of the Bible as a form of greater knowledge that transcended anything the Bible could offer. In their view Babylonian and Greek astrology was more profound, more spiritual, than anything Jesus or the Apostles taught.

The pantheon of spirits that governed the fates of men from birth to death were at work in the Egyptian Gnostic writings that purported to enhance original Christianity,[579] and evolve the Crucifixion into Good Friday. Pagan gods, astronomy and a belief that angels inside stars ruled men's lives was the inner core of Christian Gnostic teaching. We will repeatedly return to this point. Such thinking is not isolated to The Pistis Sophia but will be found in the writings of Clement, Origen and others who developed Good Friday over the centuries. We will accumulate more and more Gnostic references to Osiris, the Sun, the Moon, the transmigration of souls across the universe, pagan gods, angelic creatures, reincarnation and men's fates throughout this discussion of Good Friday mysticism. No wonder the Apostles rejected Gnostic incursions into original Christianity and fought bitterly to eradicate them from their midst.

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[576] Phillips, J.B., The New Testament in Modern English, p 529.

[577] van Leiven, A., "Gnosis and Astrology - Book IV of the Pistis Sophia", in Under One Sky, ed. by J.M Steele, pps 223-232. This paper is important for its capture of all facets of this issue, in one place Recommended

[578] Ibid, p 223.

[579] Ibid, p 232.

One author of early Christian history addressed this shocking state of affairs that naive students of Christianity encounter when they begin their studies. He took the more worldly view that all this concision and conflict had been predicted by Jesus. Wolves were promised to enter the infant Church, covered by the deceptive clothing of sheep. Christianity, like all enterprises, had its adversaries, but they were not only found in gladiator arenas. Some of the most insidious came from rival religions.[580]

In summary, the Apostle Paul fought for doctrinal purity, while Gnostics and others invented Gospels and revised scripture with abandon. The Apostles Peter and Jude also fought the spreading influence of Gnosticism within the early church. There is a uniform consistency in all this adamant Apostolic resistance that suggests a war of major proportions. At the same time it must be admitted, those Gnostics who were most extreme in their views, such as the Valentinius school, were in turn attacked as heretics by other leaders such as Irenaeus and Epiphanes. Yet Irenius and Epiphanes may have subscribed to one or more Gnostic doctrines. By 150 A.D. the line between pure and corrupt Christian doctrine has blurred in the official Church histories. We have to look at smaller groups, "sects", to find the remnants of original Christianity preserved intact. The pendulum always swung from side to side, it never returned to center. The techniques of forcing Gnostic beliefs into scripture, or writing "new" gospels, such as the secret Gospel of Mark, continued sub rosa for centuries. Authentic Christian warnings in the books of Jude, Galatians, I Johm and II Peter are still there in scripture as mute testaments of God's displeasure against these people.

The merging of Sun-god worship with original Christianity is well known. Gnostic Christians of the generation after Paul also continued to practice the ancient mysteries of such Sun gods as Osiris, Attis and Adonis, while they attended Church:

> .... There seems no doubt that the earlier Gnostics continued to attend the mysteries of .... deities in Greece and .... their Oriental analogues, Osiris, Attis, Adonis, and the like, ... while professing to place upon ... [them] a Christian interpretation.
>
> .... any faith which would enable men of weight and influence to continue the religious practices in which they had been brought up, .. with but slight modification, was sure of wide acceptance.[581] (emphasis added. These two paragraphs are reversed in the original text.)

So after the original Apostles, not only were churches infiltrated with Gnostics who denied Jesus was Lord, but marginal Gnostic Christians of wealth and power attended Pagan services, all the while pretending to be devoutly Christian. The pretense had evolved to both sides of the pulpit. As we will see next, this rank subversion directly applies to the doctrines second-generation religious authorities

[580] Roberts, A , op. cit., vol. I, p. 309.
[581] Legge, F., op. cit., vol ii. p 21

employed to their revised Passover. With this background insight, the strange and seemingly contradictory statements of Church fathers like Clement, Origen and others, will begin to unravel.

End of Sketch on the Christian - Gnostic Conflict

Concerning the transformation of the Passover from Nisan 14 to the Sunday following it, we can now begin to discover the roots of the "marvelous sun mystery" of Easter, which Hugo Rahner described.

Recall that Clement invented and taught an analogy between the Sun's daily passage in the sky and the Christian Passover, while his successor Origen spoke of history as merely intellectual allegory. We will start our discovery of the roots of Good Friday by separating out the distinct threads of Pagan and Christian doctrine that were intertwined to produce the "marvelous Sun mystery" of the final Easter service.

Gnostic teachers never said Jesus died on a Sunday; they accepted the fact that the literal death was on some other day, even when they first moved the Passover from Nisan 14 to a Sunday. At this first stage, they sought to suspend Christian observance of the Jewish Passover as the day Jesus died so they could induce Christians to observe a purely symbolic memorial to Jesus on the first day of the week which displayed him as having a common nature with the Sun. Simultaneous with the Sunday Passover, a reinvention of Jesus was effected. The Gnostic transformation of Jesus into a Sun God has been thoroughly documented in the book, Jesus Christ Sun of God, written by David Fideler. I will reference his scholarship at some length in the coming pages. (See Sections 2.4.5, 2.4.6 and Appendix A.4 for an exhaustive development of all this Christian Sun God theology.) Recall this all happened in Greek-Egyptian culture of Alexandria. Author Samuel Sharpe wrote this Egyptian-Christian religion virtually took over the whole of original Christianity in Egypt. In his book, Egyptian Mythology and Egyptian Christianity, he writes very picturesquely of this early state of affairs:

> The new religious opinions, ... of the [second century] Egyptian [Christian]s had very little in common with the religion of the Apostles. They took such parts of the Gospels as suited their views, and could be fitted on to their old religion; but these rays of light they mixed up and buried under such a mass of superstition, that the Apostles themselves would not have easily recognized their own doctrines. The Christianity of the Egyptians, thus corrupted by the Paganism of the country shows itself in Alexandria first under the name of the Gnostic heresy.[582]
> (comments and emphasis added)

In this context, lets review the last quote from the Sidebar, paying close attention to the role of Osiris in all this.

[582] Sharpe, S , Egyptian Mythology and Egyptian Christianity, p 95

> There seems no doubt that the earlier Gnostics continued to attend the .. mysteries of .... Osiris, Attis, Adonis, and the like .... while professing ... a Christian interpretation.[583] (emphasis added)

The attempt to turn original Christianity into ancient Egyptian paganism and Sun worship was so persistent and so strong that in 300 A.D., a Christian preacher named Arnobius had to debunk the claims of Egyptians that Jesus was actually a magician who gained all his miracle working powers by visiting Egypt in his youth. Supposedly he gravitated to the temple centers of religious worship and intensely studied arcane inscriptions on temple walls, learning great secrets of control over demonic powers which he took back to Palestine.[584] According to the heretics of 300 A.D., all of Jesus' spirituality was literally learned and taken from Egypt through this personal study.

These are still broad brush statements which cannot of themselves prove the origin of Good Friday; they do however demonstrate an overbearing effort was being made for centuries to recast the Christian religion as an inferior offshoot of the Egyptian system, which was centered around Sun worship.. We will need to uncover many more details about Osiris' and Tammuz' Sun worship before we can trace out the exact flow of events that produced Good Friday. These details do exist. The doctrinal connection the ancients made between Osiris, the Egyptian counterpart of an older Babylonian Sun-god named Tammuz and Jesus Christ cannot be stressed enough. Osiris and Tammuz were the suffering solar heroes of 2,000 B.C. whom Jesus incarnated when he appeared in the generation of the Gnostics.

The truth of the statements about "Christian" Osiris worship can be seen in second generation Christian practices that anticipate the invention of Good Friday. It is here that Clement's analogy between the Sun's daily passage and the Passover becomes exposed for what it truly is: Egyptian Sun religion. By adopting the Solar rituals of Egypt and Babylon to Christianity, Alexandrian Gnostics virtually forced Good Friday to became a necessary ingredient of the new religion. I intend to trace out the full two-thousand year history that led up to the Gnostic invention of Good Friday in 370 A.0. A sampling of this infusion of Osiris worship into the original Christian religion can be readily seen by matching Clement's words with the known facts of Osiris' sun religion.

Turning The One-Day Christian Passover Into A Three-Day Egyptian Festival Of PASSAGE From Death To Rebirth (and Paving the Way to Invent Good Friday in the Process)

Clement's words about the "Passover passage" were not merely commentary by a theologian. They became the blueprint for the re-invention of the Passover. In his book on the history of Easter, Dr. Paul Bradshaw made a point of stressing that the major thrust for turning the one day Passover into a three day observance was

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[583] Legge, F., op. cit., p 21

[584] Roberts, A , and Donaldson, J., The Ante-Nicene Fathers, vol vi, p. 425.

fueled by Clement, who, around 200 A.D., re-interpreted "Passover" to mean a spiritual journey or PASSAGE from life to death, from human profanity to true spirituality.[585]

Clement was a preacher who left us a large body of literature to read through which praises Gnostic thinking as ultimate Christianity. Less known, he was also the main proponent of a "secret Gospel" of the evangelist Mark, who first brought Christianity to Alexandria in the age of the Apostles. This secret Gospel has been lost, but Clement's commentary on its importance survives, and we will analyze it later. It contains references to Jesus as Osiris. Another ancient document called the Acts of the Apostle John, which contains references to the dismemberment of Osiris' corpse, was also believed to have been espoused by Clement.[586] The latter-day British Gnostic, G.R.S. Mead, discussed Osiris and Christ as one mystical entity when he reviewed the Acts of John in his pamphlet, The Gnostic Crucifixion.

Clement openly admitted in his writings he was a Gnostic. Origen never did and some authors have claimed that both Clement and Origen were initiated priests of the Osiris mystery religion. This possibility is usually not discussed.

(Once more, Appendix A.4 has a full description of Origen and Clement's life history, personal remarks and immersion in pagan mystery doctrine. None of this should surprise us. In Appendix A.4 I also highlight the fact that Alexandria Egypt was intended by its founders to be the primary seat of occult knowledge in the ancient world, designed to overtake Babylon itself and that Osiris worship was engaged there in a frenzied pitch for centuries. Clement and Origen were NOT calm, disinterested churchmen who mused about Jesus and abstractly invented harmless Christian doctrines for others to ponder. No, not at all.)

What would a secret priest of Osiris in 200 or 250 A.D. have known or observed in Alexandria Egypt, that could have been applied to the religion of Jesus and the Apostles? Are there clear parallels between the Osiris religion and the transformation of the Christian Passover from a Jewish memorial to a three-day "passage" ritual in 370 A.D., as Dr. Bradshaw explained? Or were Clement's words plucked from the musings of an abstract intellect? Were they pure Christian theology, or little more than masked Osiris worship? Our hunt for the origins of Good Friday enters into high gear.

A. Enacting the Physical Passage of Osiris from Death to Life

What were the Osiris festivals that Clement or Origen would have seen in the streets of Alexandria, or even participated in at some time in their lives? Jane Harrison, a 20th century English anthropologist, wrote of Osiris' death and resurrection as it was originally observed in the Egyptian city of Abydos. For three full days, the city became a living stage for a Passion-play about the sufferings, death and resurrection of Osiris, very similar in nature to what Europeans today use to commemorate Good Friday and Easter Sunday. The Abydos custom existed

[585] See Bradshaw, P., op. cit., pps 83-84, and 87
[586] See Schneemelcher, New Testament Apocrypha, vol 1, p

for centuries before and after the life of Jesus. First century Christians in Jerusalem or Asia Minor decidedly did not hold three-day Passion plays in honor of Jesus. On an international scale, different cities observed different festivals for Osiris, Tammuz, Adonis, and other suffering gods in each nation of the near East, so Clement and the Gnostic priests had a rich palette of customs to draw upon in order to obtain the best match between their gods' worship and the Christ story.

In Abydos, the Passion Play commemoration was told in three distinct parts, occurring over three successive days.[587] Interestingly, there was a total of 48 hours between the fist observance on the first day and the last observance on the third day. I have shown that according to the Gospels, Jesus was resurrected after 72 hours--three full days and three full nights of time. Today, Easter services are observed forty-eight hours or less after Good Friday, so there are immediate similarities here with the time schedules for both modern custom and Osiris' ancient Passion Play. The similarities are far greater than this and the history marries Osiris to Good Friday. Osiris' "sufferings, his death and his resurrection were enacted year by year".[588] The three-day long play had three highly emotional aspects to it that drew the worshippers into sharing the sufferings of the god. In the Greek language of Alexandria Egypt, they were called:

1) "agon" - Osiris' struggle against an evil One and evil itself.
2) "pathos" - Osiris' personal defeat, suffering of physical pain, death and entombment.
3) "anagnorisis" - Osiris' revival, and glorification.[589]

The Osiris festival, with each of these three elements acted out every year, was observed for centuries across Egypt, before Jesus ever walked the Earth. Yet notice how easily each one of these stages in Osiris' "passion" can be transformed into the three-day memorial to Jesus of later Christianity. Agon, or agony, clearly relates to the Crucifixion, "Pathos" becomes the mourning at Christ's death and burial and "Anagnorisis" Jesus resurrection. Writing of this same festival, Edward Carpenter stated, "... [Osiris] body was placed in a box, but afterwards came to life again".[590] Carpenter then adds: "in the cult of Osiris an image placed in a coffin was brought out before the worshippers and saluted with glad cries of 'Osiris is risen'".[591] That is what Clement and Origen saw acted out every year in the broad avenues of Alexandria Egypt.

Recall that the original Passover observance of the New Testament Christians centered around an adult appreciation for Jesus' atoning blood sacrifice. Emotional sympathy for his sufferings was secondary to a profound understanding of the difference his sacrifice made in the life of the believer. All of this

[587] Edward Carpenter, writing in Pagan and Christian Creeds, also refers to Harrison's words. On p 22 of his book, he quotes Plutarch, the ancient authority on Osiris cult religion, and plainly states the festival was observed on three successive days This with be studied more closely in Section 2

[588] Harrison, J. Ancient Art and Ritual, p 4 This reference applies to all quotes and material in the above paragraph not otherwise noted.

[589] Ibid

[590] Carpenter, E , Ibid

[591] Carpenter, E., Ibid

understanding was cast aside in the Osiris' observance. Next, compare this kind of ceremony and concern over Osiris as expressed in the "agon" and "pathos", with how later Christians in Egypt observed Good Friday.

> The devotional center of Holy Week tended to be Good Friday and its focus on the suffering inflicted on Christ by sinful human beings, to which Easter day constituted a joyful corrective, when God intervened to put right the wrongs.[592] (emphasis mine)

The Osiris festival was simply recast as Christ's. The correspondence between the ancient Osiris festival and later European Easter customs is even more striking. Jane Harrison also writes of a Greek Easter custom extant in her generation (ca. 1920), in which a statue of Christ was placed into a coffin or holding vault and then taken out, having said to become resurrected. The people of the region displayed heartfelt emotions throughout the festival, even to the point of doubting whether Jesus would revive and rejoicing with surprise when the statute was finally displayed in its glorified state on Easter morning.[593]

All these displays of well-meaning emotion were not at the center, or part of the original Passover observance two thousand years ago.

B. Explaining the Spiritual Passage of Osiris from Death to Life

What was the theology behind the Osiris death and resurrection festival of 200 A.D. and earlier? An article on Ra, the Egyptian Sun god, in the Dictionary of Dieties and Demons in the Bible, shows the "Passage" nature of Osiris' death and resurrection.[594] The article explains that in later Egyptian religion [1200 B.C. and later], Osiris was merged into Ra, creating a hybrid Sun god appropriately named "Osiris-Ra"[595] Ra's daily journey of night and day that extended beyond the horizon and back into the daytime sky, was fused into Osiris' death and resurrection, becoming a mystical explanation of life and death via the daily passage of the Sun across the heavens. In this merged belief, Osiris was called the night Sun and the son of Ra.[596] When twilight fell and the Sun slipped beyond the western horizon, it became Osiris in the Netherwold, visiting the dead on a ship that sailed the currents of the Milky Way, the heavenly Nile river[597]; a celestial version of the river Styx that ran through the Greek Hades. The start and the end of Osiris' journey were secured by Sun-lions which guarded the western and eastern horizons.[598] These lions were claimed by Ra and other lesser Egyptian gods, but they were also

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[592] Bradshaw, op cit., p 4

[593] Harrison, J op. cit., pps 36-37

[594] The transformation occurred ca. 1500 B.C. See van der Toorn, K, Dictionary of Deities and Demons in the Bible, pps 689 - 692, especially p. 690.

[595] Budge, in vol. i of The Gods of the Egyptians, says there was: "a perpetual contest between the two great priesthoods of Egypt, namely, those of Ra and Osiris ; in the end the doctrine of Osiris prevailed, and the attributes of the Sun-god were ascribed to him " (p. 334)

[596] Budge, E A., The Egyptian Book of the Dead, p 253

[597] In Egyptian Cosmology, (p 100), Gadallah says: "Ancient Egyptians correlated the Nile to the Milky Way, the *celestial river*."

[598] See Antelme, R., op. cit., pps. 55-57, especially the line drawings on pps 56-57 Budge, in The Gods of the Egyptians, vol ii, has a dual-lion illustration facing p 98, which he relates to the two horizons

spoken of as the symbols of Osiris' consort Isis,[599] a goddess of the dawn who was instrumental in resurrecting him via powerful spells. The beasts also symbolized yesterday and tomorrow, from the standpoint of Osiris, fixed in the midnight Netherworld of perpetual physical time and the starry universe.[600]

> ... the [daily] solar journey reflects ... conceptions about death, rebirth, and immortality. ... The nocturnal phase of the solar journey is depicted as a *descensus ad infernus* [A descent into hell, or the land of the dead. Interestingly enough, this is the name of the Ishtar myth which we will soon study in regard to Good Friday.] ... . The god ... himself undergoes death and resurrection / rebirth during this journey, ... At midnight, in the extreme depth of the netherworld, the Sun god unites with Osiris ... This union links 'yesterday' and 'tomorrow' ...[601] (emphasis and comment are mine.)

Symbolically then, Osiris' passage from death to immortality has three parts to it: yesterday, which represents death, midnight (the moment of his quickening) and tomorrow (rebirth). This is at most a 48 hour period of time, spread over three phases, which is very similar in nature to the time between Good Friday and Easter Sunday: three phases containing much less than 72 hours.

This Sun mystery was not limited to original Egyptian culture. If not before, then certainly after Alexander's conquest of Egypt in 331 B.C., the Greeks had identical understanding of Helios' daily travels into darkness and night. Hugo Rahner noted "For both Egyptian and Greek such ideas as these are of the very stuff of which their religious life was made." He further generalized the Resurrection Sun mystery to a belief of both Pagans and Christians. I would label Rahner's Christians as Alexandrian Gnostics and heretics.

A few more citations from Rahner should round out the extent to which the Gnostic Christians embraced Solar Christianity: "For the men of antiquity, Christian and pagan alike, the nocturnal road traveled by Helios from West to East was a matter steeped in the deepest mystery."[602] "... Christianity dethroned Helios and at the

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[599] Turner, P , and Coulter, C , The Dictionary of Ancient Deities, p 242. The reference is to the Assyrian Ishtar and her lions, but see the article on Isis, also on p. 242, which intimately connects the two goddesses Joan Oates, on p 173 of her book Babylon, says that Ishtar was frequently depicted as riding upon the lion, her "sacred beast".

[600] Budge, E.A , op cit , p 277 There is some question as to whether the words are "yesterday and tomorrow", or "yesterday and today" Budge, in The Egyptian Book of the Dead, the reference I am using here, personally renders the Egyptian text as "yesterday" and "tomorrow". But in another work, The Gods of the Egyptians, (vol ii, pps 98-99, and illustration) Budge gives the earlier history of these lions, connecting them with the primitive Egyptian god Seb, and two ancient loin-headed gods, called Akeru. In this case, Budge translates the days as "yesterday and today", while referencing the Book of the Dead for confirmation! (See p. 99) Normandi Ellis, in Awakening Osiris, (p. 20) says something similar to the second Budge quote. She speaks of an intermediate time when the lions were now associated with Ra, before Osiris was merged into Ra: "The lions of yesterday and today (time) were symbols of Ra, and these were called re-re, or the sound of lions roaring."

[601] van der Toorn, K., op cit , p. 690.

[602] Rahner, H., op cit , p. 113

same time brought him back to his home."[603] "The Christian of antiquity .... was only too ready to enliven ....[his understanding] with the imagery of Christ the sun journeying through the nether regions."[604] "All the mysteries of the Christian faith are to be seen in this marvelous sunscape."[605] The daily Sun mystery truly was a common religious fixture for Greek and Egyptian, Gnostic and Pagan, in the age of Clement. It certainly was not part of Apostolic Christianity or the resurrection of Christ.

There is other evidence that Osiris' resurrection was related to the nightly passage of the Sun and occurred at the Sunrise.

In The Wisdom of the Serpent, by Joseph Henderson and Maud Oakes, there is a line figure drawing depicting the Resurrection of Osiris, taken from an Egyptian wall relief. In it, Osiris' horizontal body is rising from a couch that rests upon the Sun-lion of tomorrow and sunrise. The authors give this explanation of Osiris' resurrection motif:

> The Solar lion couch, ... supports the god Osiris, who is in the position representing the resurrection of the sun at sunrise. Underneath the couch are three sons of Horus, guides and protectors of the soul.[606] (emphasis added)

The Sun supports Osiris in his resurrection and Osiris' resurrection is fashioned after the rising of the Sun at dawn. Ishtar, the Assyrian version of Osiris' wife Isis, was also associated with the dawn.[607]

And what of the three spirits underneath the Solar couch? They are said to be the spirits of Osiris' grandsons. Osiris' son Horus had at least four sons.[608] The fact that not all of them are present to guide Osiris is significant. Osiris was mourned for parts of three days in the Abydos Passion Play, some 48 hours in total. These three sons, or three "keepers of the soul" can very well represent spirits who protected and guided Osiris' soul on each of the three phases he was in the netherworld (yesterday, midnight and tomorrow), making his passage to immortality. In the Christian version, the three phases transform into three separate days.

C. The Christian "Passage" Theology of Clement and Origen

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[603] Ibid, p. 118
[604] Ibid, p 116
[605] Ibid, p 117
[606] Henderson, J., The Wisdom of the Serpent, p. 67 Similar line drawings appear in vol ii of Osiris and the Egyptian Resurrection by Budge, especially on pps. 43, and 46. Budge gives references that state the drawings come from the temple at Denderah. The figure on p 43 also appears on p 137 of vol ii of Budge's Gods of the Egyptians
[607] See Appendix A.4.5 - How the Names "Easter" and "Good Friday" Originated for the details
[608] See Budge, The Egyptian Heaven and Hell, pps vol. I, p. 135, vol ii, p. 47 On pps. 283 and 287, 4 or 5 Sons of Horus are indicated

As we saw, Clement extended the meaning of Sunday Passover to a spiritual passage, but he did not publicly call it a three-day affair. We do have records showing he privately taught material from the secret gospel of the evangelist Mark, which does discuss a three-day resurrection, so we know he believed in it.[609] The distinction of publicly claiming Osiris' three-day festival as Christian was left to Origen, his successor.

Once Clements views were published, the Passover became a symbolic "Passage", but the notion of expanding the one-day Sunday Passover into a three-day Festival did not spontaneously erupt all over Christendom. Rather, the need for a three-day Christian festival begins ONLY with Origen, who worked both in Egypt, the homeland of the great god Osiris and in Syria, its religious satellite. Monks from Egyptian monasteries and colonies in Syria would have been the first to support Origen's views. According to Dr. Bradshaw,

> .... evidence from both Egypt and Syria at this period [200 - 250 A.D., the time of Origen] reveals the beginning of a trend to view the [Passover] observance as a .... three day celebration of the transition from death to resurrection.[610] (emphasis and internal comments are mine)

What was the evidence given and how convincing was the argument the Gnostic theologians made for turning the solemn, one-day Passover into a three-day celebration of spiritual passage?

We can find references to the Osiris Solar Resurrection in Origen's explanations of Christ's Passover. They echo the words of his mentor Clement. Because Origen lived in times of great persecution and religious turmoil, (as a youth, he saw his father dragged away from home by soldiers and later found the beheaded body in a temple), Origen is definitely subtle in his explanations, but the story of the yesterday-tomorrow death and rebirth of Osiris can be seen in this commentary he wrote about the Passover in the Gospel of John.

> But this aforesaid prophecy of the Lamb [Jesus Christ] is to be our nourishment only during the night of this dark life of ours ; what cones after this life is, as it were, THE DAWN OF DAY.... . But when the night is passed, and the day which succeeds it is at hand, then we shall have leavened bread to eat which has nothing to do with the older and lower state of things.[611] (comments and emphasis mine)

All these analogies fit more closely with Clement and Osiris than they do with Paul or Jesus. Notice also he turns the Christian Feast of Unleavened Bread into higher, leavened bread from a spirit existence, a direct contradiction to the terms of original Christian doctrine. Finally, he adds:

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[609] See Appendix A.4 3 - Clement and the Secret Alexandrian Gospel About the Resurrection
[610] Bradshaw, P., op. cit., pps 83-84.
[611] Roberts, A., op cit., vol ix, p 390

> This, then, in brief, is the INTERPRETATION of the Passover sacrifice for us, which is Christ in accordance of the view taken of it by the Apostles ..."[612](emphasis mine)

Afraid not. For 200 years Christians used or needed no such interpretation. Their Bible ended with commands not to add or delete from the written words of the faith. New Testament writings emphasized a lifelong need to change one's behavior, adopt virtuous qualities and live a fundamentally different life. All this is downplayed and sidestepped in the "passage" theology of Egypt. Origen reinterprets the meaning of the Passover, yet he says he is in harmony with the Apostles when he does so, thereby legitimizing a bogus restatement of doctrine. The interpretation he ordains for his listeners is, however, a harmonious interpretation of Jesus' sacrifice as an Osiris passage from death to life.

It is a matter of public knowledge that the adherents of Osiris also believed they merged into the Osiris death and resurrection process when they died. They further believed they became Solarized, changed into the Sun-god, after their death, perfectly imitating the transformation of Osiris-Ra. John Smith-Ra, if you please.[613] So Origen's words are open to a double interpretation. On a rudimentary level, his remarks demean Christianity as a religion of the afterlife.

The intermingling of the Osiris resurrection with Christian symbolism, surpassing the Christian belief and subordinating it to a mere physical subset of greater, higher, Egyptian doctrine, marks Origen as a closeted Gnostic spreading a doctrinal agenda as far as he can in difficult times. Yet this strategy, whether it was understood or not in its day, became the basis for the introduction of Good Friday.

> "Origen clearly viewed the paschal events as extending over three days in fulfillment of Hosea 6:2 even if they were not yet liturgically celebrated in this way."[614]

What is this new mixing of sacred scripture with pagan theology? Hosea 6:2, is a verse in the Old Testament, which none of the New Testament leaders referred to when they discussed the Passover. Origen has plucked out a verse that has no Apostolic recommendation to justify a three day expansion of the Passover. The verse reads as follows. See if you can find a plain command that turns the one day Passover into a three-day affair in it.

Hosea 6:2 - After two days he will revive US, on the third day he will RESTORE US, that we may live in his presence. (my emphasis)

Who is revived? Who is restored? The Christian? Not really. I should point out that the first few verses of the book of Hosea clearly mark it as a prophecy for the

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[612] Ibid, p 391.

[613] See Becoming Osiris, (note the title), by R. Antelme, pps. 31-33, for a very fluid and insightful explanation of all this. On p 52 she says "the deceased [is] transmuted into Osiris-Ra"

[614] Bradshaw, P., op. cit., p. 87

national peoples of Israel, NOT for Christians. Of course, using his principle of re-interpreting historical events into allegory to suit one's purposes, Origen makes this is an indirect reference to Christ and Christian spirituality. He does this because it is reasonable to think that Christ's death and resurrection revives and restores the believer, but he is lifting scripture out of context to make it say something never intended: the Passover should become a three-day affair. For all we know this section of Hosea is speaking of the Second Coming of Jesus, when he saves his national Israel from three years of literal captivity in the Great Tribulation that climaxes human society. (In fact, that is what modern Christians take it to mean, a prophecy of end-time events, not an allegory on the Resurrection. Origen's inference is by extension--if the people are restored, it must be through what happens to Messiah.

However we view Hosea's words, are they reason enough to alter the Passover, which was instituted with a "Thus says the Lord God" in the Old Testament and a direct command by the Apostle Paul in the New Testament? Can one part of the Bible be used to reverse the statements of another part of it? Atheists and scoffers believe so, but should a churchman side with them in this matter? No, arbitrary weak analogy cannot be used to overturn direct commands from one's professed God. As we probe deeper into Origen's woks, this violent destruction of scripture will become even more obvious.

One last point before we advance. If Good Friday did exist before 370 A.D. in the Roman world, shouldn't we expect to see it listed on ancient calendars of all the festival days observed in the Empire? It is not there.

Good Friday was not even known in the official Roman world as late as 354 A.D., although Easter was officially observed. An ancient parchment document, bound in a book-like manner, has circulated through Europe in various copies for centuries. One of these copies is in the Vatican Library. It consists of an illustrated calendar and festival plan for the official Roman year of 354 A.D. This codex might be considered as a window into the cycle of Pagan and Christian festivals as they were actually observed in 354 A.D.

The calendar was hand printed and illustrated for a wealthy Roman named Valentinus[615], who may or may not have been a Christian.[616] In either event, the calendar contains supplements that make it into a comprehensive time-document for the Romans of its day. "Roman calendars recorded only public, officially recognized events and festivals."[617] This was true for both Pagan and Christian. Among other things, along with the yearly calendar, there is a complete list of the dates Easter was observed in Rome from 312 to 411 A.D.[618] All manner of Roman

[615] Salzman, M.R., On Roman Time, p. 3.

[616] Author Salzman believes so, she writes "Surely Victorinus was a Christian", on page 199 of the book, and on p. 26 she notes that the style of the dedication is Christian as well { do not find this conclusive I am of the opinion merely possessing a calendar with Christian feast days on it proves little except Victorinus, as a prominent person in an age when Christianity was flourishing, thought it prudent to be informed of its festival dates in order to move around Roman society

[617] Ibid, p. 17.

[618] Ibid, pps 39, and 254

and Pagan holidays are mentioned in the calendar with the observance dates given.[619] The list includes dates for the Imperial Cult of the Caesars, the observances for gods like Attis, Sol, Osiris and Jupiter, Hercules and Mars, but Good Friday IS NOT LISTED IN THE CALENDAR, not for the year 354 and not in the Easter lists for 312 to 411 A.D. Whatever Good Friday's status in 354 A.D., it was not an official Christian day of observance, even though Christianity had become the official religion of the Roman Empire nearly thirty years earlier, in 325 A.D. The death of Jesus is mentioned as a literal event of history, along with his birth, in a footnote to the list of Consuls who governed the Empire through the ages, but it is not called Good Friday, or spoken of as a holiday; it is simply referred to as the literal event of history.[620] Other documents and first person quotations from this age give the same result.

We have completed a first key example of how Egyptian religious ideas were systematically forced upon Christianity over time to justify the creation of a new Holy Day called Good Friday. We have also seen a little of how the day is missing from official calendars. The record is much more comprehensive and we will now examine some of the plain statements that Churchmen gave for observing Wednesday and Friday, centuries before they ever invented Good Friday. The basis for turning Friday into Jesus' official memorial is rooted in the fast days the Gnostics introduced into Christian practice in the second century A.D. They shifted the Passover to a Sunday and added a Friday fast. Curiously though, they were also bound to keep a Wednesday fast. Wednesday, Friday and Sunday were for centuries the days Gnostic Christians observed concerning the death of Jesus, both before and after Clement and Origen began to publicize the theology of Osiris.

In the next section we will consider ancient material from the second and third centuries that refers to Easter Sunday, the Passover, the fourth day and the sixth day, but never Good Friday. The reader is challenged to find any reference in these ancient sources for Good Friday; they simply are not there.

[619] Ibid, pps. 131-175
[620] Ibid, p. 36

2.4.2 Early Church Fathers Admitted the Crucifixion was on a Wednesday - Its in Their Writings

Most readers who have never considered the matter will probably refuse to believe that Christ died on a Wednesday and not a Friday. As we just saw, Good Friday did not exist in Roman calendars for over three hundred fifty years. There is strong reason to believe the Egyptian solar resurrection cycle was imposed upon the original Passover, creating the Friday tradition. The Solar resurrection cycle was daily but Sunday dawns at the head of each week. If we apply Osiris' death, midnight transformation and sunrise resurrection cycle to a weekly schedule then Sunday, at the head of the week, is the day of the Sun's weekly rebirth. Saturday would correspond to the midnight journey of Osiris and Friday would correspond to his nighttime death. Extending the three-step daily rebirth of Osiris-Ra to the week naturally produces a Friday-Sunday cycle. But did it happen that way?

And what of the writings of other, more secretive theologians than Clement or Origen? Perhaps they anciently referred to a Friday death of Jesus? Yes and no. We will now expand our inquiry to include "mainstream" Passover teachings and customs in the years 100-370 A.D. None of them reference Good Friday. Many of them command a double-observance, a Wednesday-Friday dual festival. The usual explanation the ancient Churchmen give for this was that Jesus was betrayed on a Wednesday, imprisoned on a Thursday and finally crucified on a Friday. This of course is a flat out fabrication. All the Gospels show the seizure, trial, judgment and Crucifixion occurred within a matter of hours on one night during the period 10 P.M to 9 A.M. The Wednesday-Friday fasts cannot be explained from scripture yet they exist and the betrayal-death explanation is the only one given.

What do we have here? Two days, both involving the death of Jesus? Both observed in exactly the same way? Why? He died on only one day, so why are the two days virtually equal in importance in the Crucifixion week of 100 A.D? Once more, Clement will give us the answer the other churchmen eschew, but I want to hold off on that solution until I demonstrate how all this custom is derived from ancient Egyptian practices. <u>There is a transfer of meaning taking place from Wednesday to Friday</u>. Second century Churchmen are double-talking and redefining the Passover to suit some unspecified agenda. Further, there is a clear trend in their writings over the years 100-375 A.D. that points directly away from Wednesday and towards a Friday. So why did they ever bother to observe Wednesday in the first place? One reason is they had to; Wednesday was a given fact of the first century Church that could not simply be dismissed in a day.

What we find in the ancient record of commands to observe the Crucifixion remains a mix of blatantly contradictory remarks; words from men who straddle the fence and say: "Observe BOTH a Wednesday <u>and</u> a Friday." These days were called "stationary days" in the writings. Presumably this is to contrast them with the Passover, which could move from year to year and fall on any day of the week. This again demonstrates the Churchmen wanted to rid themselves of the Nisan 14 tradition by offering up a contrasting system of when to observe Jesus' death. In spite of this, there are also examples of theologians in 300 A.D. <u>admitting</u> Jesus died on Nisan 14. They taught this at a time when the whole Christian world was

observing the fixed Sunday Passover.[621] Conflicting remarks exist side by side in official writings with little explanation of why they differ. The official commands are calm, measured and schizophrenic. Only when we leave the catechisms behind and study the history of the men and their debate, do we find it was the result of a pitched battle.

I noted earlier that the paper trail for the day the ancients considered to be the true Crucifixion always references "fast days". One would presume the principle in action was that piety in the original church led to many days of fasting throughout the year, most important of all being the Crucifixion. The fact is New Testament Christianity does not mandate particular fast days with the exception of only one day, the Day of Atonement. When to fast is left entirely to the individual. So from what source do these ancient fast days originate? A good part of the answer comes from paganism and Egyptian asceticism. Pagans conducted various rigid fast days for specific festivals. One had to partake of purification fast before becoming a member of the religion of Osiris and Isis. These pious vigils were the standard of the religion.[622] By the time of the second century, the Christian-Gnostic struggle has therefore progressed from doctrinal challenges and verbal skirmishes to the Gnostic addition of contrary observances. The Gnostics no longer simply presented themselves as the authorities; they now have taken over mixed congregations of Bible Christians and Christian-Gnostics and defined church behavior. The lines between original and revised Christianity are more drawn, with all camps claiming to be authentic Christians.

This is the atmosphere that produced the contradictory remarks on when to observe the Crucifixion.

We will start our review with a candid second century admission of these conflicting observances. It was written by a churchman named Irenaeus, who lived 120 - 202 A.D. in Lyons, Western Europe, now southern France. This is a long way from Jerusalem, so clearly, both Christianity and Gnosticism had traveled many miles though the Empire at this stage.

Irenaeus is generally considered a staunch defender of original Christian beliefs who targeted the Gnostics. This may or may not be completely accurate. His greatest surviving work is called Against Heresies. It is one of the largest surviving documents we have from this age, covering over 250 pages. Irenius had much to rail against. He was also personably responsible for averting a major international split in the Church involving Passover / Easter observance, that threatened to erupt in 189 A.D. This was some 25 years after the first Passover / Easter controversy had been quelled in favor of Easter Sunday.[623] The controversy was not easily quashed. The fact that the proponents of Nisan 14 attempted to restore the custom 25 years later suggests the depth of commitment the Passover adherents had to

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[621] See the remarks of Peter of Alexandria (ca, 300 A,D on p, 282 of Roberts, A , The Ante-Nicene Fathers, vol. vi

[622] See Turcon, R., The Cults of the Roman Empire, pps. 107-108, and Serge Sauneron, The Priests of Ancient Egypt. for further details on the role of fasting in the ancient Egyptian religion

[623] Roberts, A , op cit , vol I, p 309

the original day. It also demonstrates the finality with which the progressives wished to eliminate the day.

Irenaeus is describing the situation in the church about 190 A.D. He focuses on the different fasts associated with the Nisan 14 Passover and Easter.[624]

> For some consider themselves bound to fast one day [Wednesday], others two days [Wednesday and Friday], others still more, while others ... forty[625] (emphasis added)

Other Church fathers, including Clement, identify these two fast days as Wednesday and Friday. We have here a jumble of co-existing customs practiced all over Christendom. These differing practices are like the wreckage that remains after a great object is exploded. We can work backwards from them to realize there was a time when the whole Church was unified and then fragmented into the state we find under Irenius. In the decades before and after Irenius, six day, ten day and forty day Passover fasts were adopted in monasteries, doctrinal schools and congregations throughout the empire.[626] All these differing times can and will be related to aspects of Osiris' worship.

While Ireneus remarks highlight this reality, they only summarize the controversy. The evidence for a lingering Wednesday observance simultaneous with Friday fasting is more damning than this.

A. Texts Teaching Both Wednesday and Friday Observance.

James Walther, after studying the works of early churchmen on the date of Jesus' death and the Passover fast, wrote the following about ancient Christian documents in 1958:

> References in the *Didascalia,* in Epiphanius, in Victorinus of Pettau .... support the Tuesday [night] Passover dating and the subsequent arrest of Jesus in the morning hours of Wednesday.[627] (emphasis added)

Given that the Roman day started at midnight, the evidence from these ancient church writings therefore shows Christ was arrested early on a Wednesday morning and died on a Wednesday.

Herman Hoeh, in his booklet, The Crucifixion Was Not on Friday, also quotes Walther and agrees with him. Dr. Hoeh explains: "... numerous Catholic writers for centuries maintained that Jesus ate the Passover Tuesday night"[628], in anticipation of His Wednesday death.

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625 Roberts, A., op cit., vol. I pps. 568-569.

626 Bradshaw, P. op. cit., p. 85.

627 Walther, J.A., "The Chronology of Passion Week" Journal of Biblical Literature, June, 1958. I have cited H. Hoeh's quotation of Walther, the comment is Dr. Hoeh's, not mine.

628 Hoeh, H. The Crucifixion was Not on Friday, p. 14

The Didascalia is a part of a series of texts known today as the Apostolic Constitutions. It represents official third century Church teaching on Christian living and the high days the ancient Church observed at that time. There is no mention of Good Friday in the Didascalia, only the command to hold commemorative fasts on the fourth and sixth days of the week in honor of Jesus death. (This was done 52 times a year.)

Another of Walther's references is the churchman Victorinus. Like Irenaeus, he was based in Europe, he was not of the Egyptian Gnostic schools and he did not teach their doctrines. Little else is known of him except that he died in 304 A.D. as a martyr.[629] One of his surviving tracts, On the Creation of the World, is of interest to us. In the following passage, Victorinus is talking about the fourth day of the Creation week as mentioned in Genesis. It is the day God created light for the Earth. Victorinus sees strong parallels between this fourth day of creation and the day Jesus died.

> On the fourth day [of the Genesis story] he made two light in the heaven, the greater and the lesser [Sun and Moon] ....
>
> Now [with the death of Jesus] is manifested the reason of the truth why the fourth day is called the Tetras, WHY WE FAST EVEN TO THE NINTH HOUR, OR EVEN TO THE EVENING [on the fourth day of the week], or why there should be a passing over even to the next day. [630] (emphasis added)

Vitorinus is contrasting here the creation of light on the fourth day of Genesis with the darkness that occurred when Christ the Creator of that Light died on the fourth day of the week. Bear in mind the ninth hour, or three P.M., is precisely the time that Jesus died on the cross. The time is unique in Christian teaching and it is central to Victorinus' explanation. (See below for an explanation of the "ninth hour".[631]) Victorinus' statement describes a custom which was keyed to the exact

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[629] Roberts, A , op cit , vol vii, p 341

[630] Ibid

[631] Jesus Christ was crucified from the third hour until THE NINTH HOUR, that is, from 9 A.M until 3 P M., according to the Jewish system of reckoning the hours.
All commentaries on the gospels address this issue of the time Jesus died, and what "the month hour" means A few references would be: Nolland, p 1156, Fitzmeyer, pps 1512 and 1517, Brown, pps. 1034, 1044 and note 34 on that page, p 1350, note1, and pps 1352-1353

One note: there is one disagreement among some commentators that needs mentioning Finnegan, (Handbook of Biblical Chronology, pps 358-359, and his sources), believe there is an inconsistency between the hour John gives for the crucifixion, and the hour in Mark's account There is not John used the Roman time which began at midnight, so Pilate hands Jesus over at the sixth hour, which is six A M, in this system, while Mark used the Jewish system of the day, which began counting at six A M Mark says Jesus was crucified at the third hour, which is nine A.M. in the morning. There is no inconsistency between a six A M. sentencing and a nine A M. crucifixion at all. (See also Brown, pps 1352-1353, who dislikes this as an unnatural explanation My response is, the colloquialisms of the audience and the writers permit this, it explains the issue, literary style is not a matter here)

moment Jesus died and it emphatically states this 3 P.M. death was on the fourth day of the week ("tetra" means four). It is a direct reference to a Wednesday Crucifixion.

Note also that Victorinus uses the phrase "passing over", to describe some who extended the Wednesday fast beyond 3 P.M. It would seem he is attempting to make a play on the word "Passover" and extend it beyond its proper time. Why mention Passover as the fourth day at all, if there were not some deep tradition Jesus died on a Wednesday? Even when he is being allegorical, Valentinius is using language that refers to a 3 P.M. Wednesday Passover.

Yet Victorinus also says that Christians make a fast on the sixth day, because of the suffering Jesus experienced at the Crucifixion.[632] He DOES NOT say that Jesus literally died on this day, only that Christians remember Jesus' suffering on this day. All the signs he gives about the Wednesday fast point to a Wednesday crucifixion, yet in 290 A.D., Victorinus seems to say Christ died on a Friday. Then why doesn't he cite a custom of fasting until 3 P.M. on a Friday? It did exist. We will see shortly there were two days in which Christians fasted until 3 P.M., the hour Jesus died. This incredible circumstance could not have followed from a unified Church with one set of doctrines. One of the days is false. Victorinus gives Wednesday all the trappings of the literal day Jesus died, but refrains to say it is the true day; he memorializes Friday, but refuses to say Jesus died on this day. We have here a very skilled slight of hand, which can only leave the disciple with a rather toothless faculty for deciding what happened when.

Why would ANY of this indoctrination be given in 290 A.D. in Europe, if there weren't am very strong tradition that Christ died on a Wednesday at three in the afternoon?

The only places in the New Testament where the words "ninth hour" are used are in the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke, and in the Book of Acts (The references are in: Matt. 20:5, Matt 27:45-46, Mark 15:33-34, Luke 23:44, Acts 3:1, 10:3, and 10:30) Matthew, Mark, and Luke all use "ninth hour" to refer to the time Jesus died. Matthew 20:5 is part of a parable that Jesus spoke. Acts 3:1 gives the time of day Peter and John went to the temple to pray; Acts 10 refers to the time of day a Gentile saw a vision. There is no other event in the New Testament, or in all of Christianity for that matter, of such importance that occurs at the ninth hour, certainly not one for which Christians in 300 A.D. would fast, no, none

All church writings used the expression "ninth hour" fully aware they were referring to the moment Jesus died on the cross. For example, in The Apostolic Constitutions, a compilation of older documents that was put together either 325 or 360 A.D., the authors, when giving a detailed description of Christ's sufferings on the cross, write: "Then there was darkness for three hours, from the sixth to the ninth, [631] (emphasis mine)

[632] Roberts, A., The Ante-Nicene Fathers, vol. vii,, p. 341

Side by side with Victorinus was the teaching mentioned in the Didascalia, or Apostolic Constitutions.[633] It was the standard Gnostic position for centuries we will look at its curious statements shortly. But first, I want to offer more evidence that Gnostics before 290 A.D. did indeed know they were altering the Passover to a an idealized day. We find more candid admissions from avowed Gnostics about the Passover death of Jesus, than the more orthodox Christians will admit.

Gnostics Admit the Passover was First

A letter written in 150 A.D. by the Gnostic teacher Ptolemy a new Christian convert named Flora, demonstrates that the men who changed New Testament doctrine into Pagan allegory had to confront the problem of prior Christian observances. The Passover death of Jesus and other original holy days were so well known and so deeply entrenched in original Christianity that the Gnostics had to struggle to convince new converts that their liberal ideas were acceptable. There simply was no time in the original schedule of Christian festivals to "add in" a Friday observance, so the earliest tactics employed by the competitors of original Christianity was to admit the days were kept in Apostolic times, but then claim the Passover and Days of Unleavened Bread were now done away, replaced with a greater spiritual truth that permitted them to change the days into something more flexible.

Unleavened Bread was dropped as a festival completely and the rites of Passover were turned into a time of fasting and ritual purification, becoming a season of one, two, ten, or forty days, depending upon which heretical sect one subscribed to in Syria, or Asia Minor, or Rome or Egypt.[634]

With this background, lets examine the literal words from the pen of Ptolemy, explaining the Gnostic reinterpretation of the Passover and the Days of Unleavened Bread to Flora in 150 A.D.:

> And the third subdivision of God's law is the symbolic part, which is [patterned] after the image of the superior, spiritual realm: I mean what is ordained about offerings, circumcision, the Sabbath, fasting, Passover, the Feast of Unleavened Bread, and the like.
>
> Now once the truth had been manifested, the ... [basis] of all these ordinances was changed, inasmuch as they are images

[633] Roberts, A., The Ante-Nicene Fathers, vol. vii, pps. 445, 469, and also 379. The passages here claim Jesus was betrayed on a Wednesday and died on a Friday, but as Wailther notes above, any superficial reading of the Gospels shows Jesus kept the Passover, was betrayed, and tired in one night, and died the next day. The Apostolic explanations are a flimsy gloss that point to the ancient fact that Jesus died on a Wednesday, and that tradition had to be acknowledged, even while Church fathers were shifting the primary meaning to a Friday. As a side note, even though the Passover in 31 A.D. was on a Wednesday, the Biblical instructions for keeping the Passover are to do so on the evening of the fourteenth of the month Nissan, which will vary every year to a different day of the week. This Wednesday memorial, while more accurate than Friday, is still not what the religion of the Bible commands.

[634] For some discussion of this in Syria and Egypt, see Bradshaw, op. cit., pps. 86-88

> and allegories [the Saturday Sabbath, the Passover, and the Feast of Unleavened Bread]. As to their meaning in the physical realm and their physical accomplishment THEY WERE ABOLISHED; but as to their spiritual meaning they were elevated, with the words remaining the same but the subject matter being altered.

Ptolemy tells Floa this change was made by the Apostle Paul, but this claim is totally specious.

> .... the Apostle Paul makes it clear that Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread were [merely] images [of spiritual reality, so Ptolemy in turn has the right to dismiss them as fulfilled.][635] (emphasis and comments mine)

Concerning the Passover and Unleavened Bread, Paul plainly commanded New Testament Christians: "Therefore LET US KEEP THE FEAST". Ptolemy is following the standard Gnostic formula of indiscriminately picking and choosing those parts of scripture that suit his purposes and rejecting the rest as allegory. Paul's use of analogy was not employed to eradicate the Passover service, rather, his symbolism was intended to elucidate why Christians still had to observe these Jewish days under the New Covenant.

So, Paul commands the Jewish Passover to be kept as Jesus' memorial and Ptolemy claims Paul treated it as an allegory that does away with the observance once it has literally occurred in history. In spite of all this, the Wednesday tradition was impossible to deny, so both the Wednesday Passover and the Gnostic Friday were observed side by side in many areas of the Roman empire during the Paschal season. Look at this next admission by a modern scholar. It proves how deeply these traditions were held:

> It was already a well established tradition for Christians to keep every Wednesday and Friday throughout the year as days of fasting, usually up to the ninth hour of the day (about 3 P.M.), when a meal would then be eaten ....[636] (emphasis mine)

As stated earlier and as this author has omitted to mention, 3 P.M. is the time of Jesus' death. As we saw with Victorinus, two days, Wednesday and Friday, are being treated equally as the day Jesus died.

Some may think, Perhaps Jesus actually died on a Friday and Wednesday was simply a memorial fast before the true Crucifixion day? If this were true, we would expect the Church leaders to state this fact unambiguously. They do not. Rather they offer a rather poor reason why Wednesday is kept at all.

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[635] Layton, B op. cit., p. 312
[636] Bradshaw, P., op. cit., p. 85.

The explanation Church fathers gave for this incongruity was that Jesus was betrayed by Judas Iscariot on Wednesday evening and Crucified two days later on a Friday. That is pure fabrication; all four Gospel accounts, the only history they had, deny it. The New Testament plainly shows the betrayal, trial and execution of Jesus took place over a period of a night and a following morning.[637] This schedule of events translates into a Tuesday night betrayal and a Wednesday afternoon crucifixion. Friday is too late for this chain of events; it is fraudulent. No scholar today bothers to justify this explanation, yet that is what these men taught to their followers.

What we have here is evidence that those in authority in the second generation of the church were forced to continue, a Wednesday observance, even as they were demanding Friday be kept and giving false reasons for why Friday should be kept. The only possible explanation for this circumstance is that Wednesday was so deeply engrained in the collective human mind that it could not be pre-empted for centuries. What might cause such tenacious cleaving to a Wednesday? Bible-reading and tradition? Yes, but perhaps also a three-hour eclipse of the Sun that permanently scared the collective memory of all mankind for centuries.

(Note to the reader: Please reserve your final judgment on this matter until after you see the Wednesday-Friday explanations of Clement. They are revelatory.)

The Wednesday-Friday tradition has a long past; we can trace it back to the generation immediately after the Apostles died. This fact deserves some attention. The Apostles teach "observe the Passover". Internal evidence from their Gospels shows this was on a Wednesday. They die. A Gnostic counter-movement nearly overtakes Apostolic Christianity. The next generation breaks tradition with them and says, "Observe both Wednesday and Friday". Hopefully the force of these circumstances bolsters my point: Friday was added.

Ignatius, a Churchman who lived from 30 to 107 A.D., may be the earliest Church figure we have on record to discredit the Wednesday Passover observance by authorizing the double observance of Wednesday and Friday. (Note again, while Friday is mentioned, it is not called Good Friday or singled out for special attention.) He wrote:

> After the week of the passion, do not neglect to fast on the fourth and sixth days, distributing at the same time of thine abundance to the poor. [638] (emphasis added)

Notice Ignatius starts out by saying "AFTER" the Passover week. It relates to the year-long observance of Wednesday and Friday. There were other customs as well. Some ancients observed TWO weeks for the Passover - using the weeks before and AFTER Easter for fasting. For example, much later, in 389 A.D., following this

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[637] See Matthew 26:21-27 through Matthew 27:35, Mark 14:11 through Mark 15:25, and Luke 22:19 through Luke 23:33 With so much text supporting this, it becomes hard to justify the honesty of those who denied this sequence of events, and the one-day time frame in which they all occurred.

[638] Ibid, vol I, p. 119

Egyptian tradition, Emperor Theodosian issued an edict to Albinus, prefect of Rome, which defined the Easter "vigil" "as the seven days before and the seven after Easter."[639]

What is Ignacius' authority? Does mention the Apostles, one of whom might still possibly be living when he wrote these words? No. Ignatius' statement is similar to what we found with Ptolemy. He gives no Apostolic tradition, he quotes no scripture, he does not refer to a statement of Jesus, he simply commands that the sixth day be kept based upon what Irenaeus called "private fancy". This arbitrary command ought to raise warning signs.

The Constitutions of the Apostolic Fathers also demonstrate this. It states:

> If any bishop, or presbyter or deacon, or reader, or singer does not fast the fast of forty days, or the fourth day of the week, and the day of the Preparation [Friday], let him be deprived ... [of office and responsibility][640]

There are many more instances where Churchmen prescribed fasting on the fourth and sixth days of the Passover week for Christians.

1) Clement of Alexandria, commended the Wednesday / Friday practice and related it to deeper Gnostic truths and pagan deities.[641] (See the next Section for a discussion of Clement's secret meanings)

2) Peter of Alexandria, head of the sacred college, successor to the Gnostics Clement and Origen, wrote commanding it according to tradition, in about 300 A.D.[642]

3) Another tract of the time, The Teachings of the Twelve Apostles, also commanded it.[643]

4) Tertullian, preaching at Rome around 200 A.D., wrote of it in a monograph he composed for believers, entitled On Fasting. "not as if we slighted the ninth hour, (an hour) which on the fourth and sixth days of the week we highly honor"[644]

5) Yet again we read in the Constitutions of the Apostolic Fathers:

> But He [Jesus] commanded us to fast on the fourth and sixth days of the week ; the former on account of his being betrayed, and the latter on account of His passion.[645] (emphasis added)

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[639] See note 13 on p. 236 of Salzman, On Roman Time
[640] Ibid, p. 504.
[641] Ibid, vol. ii, p 545
[642] Roberts, A , op cit vol vi, p 278
[643] Ibid, vol. vii, p. 379.
[644] Ibid, vol. iv , p 109
[645] Ibid This same phrasing is repeated on page 469 of volume vii of Roberts, which is also part of the Apostolic Constitutions

"But He commanded us". If this is referring to Christ, it is a bogus statement. None of the Gospel accounts have Jesus doing such a thing. Perhaps there are Gnostic Gospels which say this, but they are not church canon.

B. Peeling Away the Layers: The Origins of Passover Fasting and Its True Relationship to Good Friday

We saw earlier that Gnostics used specific reasoning and tactics when inserting their doctrines into Christianity, but scholars admit there was also a well defined method of operation which Gnostics used to introduce new ritual, such as Passover fasting, into Christianity.[646]

Since the Gnostic concern was to intercept the curious and introduce them to Gnostic Christianity, the introductory rites to Christianity had to be replaced with Gnostic ritual and bewitchments. One of these was the custom of fasting as a means of spiritual purification for the neophyte.

Scholars admit prescribed fasting by initiates into the Gnostic beliefs was a part of this:

> Abstinence from food was a feature common to ... all the Mysteries. .... The Mysteries, in demanding abstinence from candidates, were introducing and promoting the Oriental [read Babylonian] ascetic ideal into the religious practices of the West. ...[647] (comment and emphasis added)

There are very specific reasons why Gnostic sects fasted both before and after the Passover. It goes back to the indifferent methods the Egyptians used to practice the sacred and the profane in one common religion--their version of Christianity.

> ... the Christians in Egypt, ... the racial descendants of the ancient Egyptians, seem never to have succeeded in divesting themselves of the superstitious and weird mythological conceptions which they inherited from their heathen ancestors.[648]

What is true in this statement was certainly true at the leading temples in the capitol city of Alexandria, where the Christian theologians could observe ancient rites first-hand and then invent Christian philosophy about pagan "truths".

The island temple of Philae, built upon a small island in the middle of the Nile river, was an ancient center of Isis worship, which contained as part of its complex a smaller temple room for the worship of her consort Osiris as well. The rites practiced in this building were never affected by Christianity, even after it grew

[646] Legge, F., op. cit., p 22.
[647] Angus, S. The Mystery Religions, p 85.
[648] Budge, E.A., The Egyptian Book of the Dead, p xlviii

across the land. One author says "... Christian and Isain rites were celebrated here simultaneously ..."[649] As the Emperor Hadtrian had noted in Alexandria, no distinction was made in Philae between the two religions, their priests and their rituals. This profanity enabled a borrowing and transference of custom from Osiris to Christ in the same building that was unprecedented in other nations. It included the ritual and surrounding ceremonial fasting, as well as the more important resurrection beliefs.

Those later six days that were kept in Egyptian Passover rites were days that were significant to Osiris, not Jesus. (Recall that in original Christianity, the Days of Unleavened Bread which immediately followed the Passover death memorial to Jesus, were feast days of rejoicing from coming out of sin; they definitely were not fast days. So the notion of fasting after the Passover cannot be Christian.) The six days after Nisan 14 were days when Osiris' powers in the Moon were peaking and fading and it was the Moon's light that vanquished darkness and caused rebirth into spiritual perfection, at least for the Pagans. The next few paragraphs explain all this.

"Fasting from meat and fish, and abstinence from the use of women were common among the Egyptians."[650]

In March, Egyptians celebrated a time when "Osiris entered into the Moon", [651] to give it the powers that brought out spring's revival of life. No question, Osiris was "In the Moon", energizing that orb, and the earth's return to life, at Passover time.

E.A. Wallis Budge, in his book, Osiris and the Egyptian Resurrection, explains that Osiris was called "the Lord of the Festival of the Sixth Day", the first quarter of the Moon, in his role as god of that orb from very early times.[652] This would be the literal sixth day of each month, but Gnostics would apply "the sixth day" in other, more mystical ways. They used a technique of numerology where dissimilar things with the same number became instantly related to each other. It was one the hidden principles behind their use of allegory. Many Gnostics and Clement in particular, applied numerology to Jesus name ("The Christian Gnostics made much of the fact that the name Jesus is equivalent to the number 888...."), to the day He was resurrected, (according to them it was Sunday, the eighth day) and to Jesus as the Sun god. (Clement taught that the "magic square of the Sun" totaled 888, which was Jesus' name-number.[653]) Gnostics were not limited to the number eight, they saw mathematical relationships, or "Logos" in all numbers and certainly in the number six, as we will cover very soon.[654]

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[649] Regula, d. op cit., p 38.

[650] Budge, E.A., Osiris and the Egyptian Resurrection, vol. ii, p 292 See also Murray, M., The Osireon at Abydos, p 26

[651] See Plutarch Moralia, Isis and Osiris, Chapter 43, for a full explanation of this.

[652] Budge, E.A., op cit., vol I, p 389 See also Murray, M., The Osireon at Abydos, p. 26 for the quarter Moon explanation

[653] See Fideler, D., Jesus Christ, Sun of God, pps 29 -31 for all these references, and a further discussion of Clement's deep involvement in numbers and Jesus - the Sun of God

[654] One source for this subject is the book by Lea and Bond, Materials for the Study of the Apostolic Gnosis (1920) It is clearly introductory, but forthright, and useful

Other days of the month were also celebrated as sacred festivals to Osiris, notably the first and the fifteenth days of each month.[655] The Babylonian Ishtar, equivalent to Isis, Osiris' wife, was called "mother of the Sabatu day", that is, the Full Moon, fifteenth, or half-month day.[656] The number 15 was sacred to Ishtar and in 10th century Babylon she was honored on the 15th of each month.[657] In Egypt, the formal image of Osiris as Moon god, has him wearing a crown which is a crescent moon on its side, curving upward, like the bottom half of a cut grapefruit and holding in its middle curve a full Moon.[658] It is a "double-moon", if you will. This iconography displays his role as lord of both the sixth and fifteenth days of the month. "On the fifteenth day of each lunar month, when the moon is at its fullest, the 'Fifteenth-Day Feast' to Isis and Osiris was kept...."[659] "... the fifteenth day festival ... was that of the full moon, whose phases are another reference to the cycle of death and rebirth ...[660] (emphasis added)

In the rituals that were performed to induct new priests into worship of Osiris and his Isis, candidates were required to fast for ten days before their actual induction[661], the same amount of time some Gnostics fasted before and after the crucifixion. A description of this process was given in the Metamorphosis, written some 2,000 years ago by Apuleus. Not surprisingly, the midnight initiation rites for priests of Isis sound very similar to what we learned earlier about Osiris' passage to rebirth at midnight.

The ten day fast which began before and lasted six days after the Passover exactly corresponds to this Egyptian priestly ritual. Six days after Nisan 14 puts us at Nisan 20. Egyptian months consisted of three ten day weeks, numbered 1-10, 11-20 and 21-30. As the Egyptian year had only three seasons, so the Egyptian month had only three phases to mark the passages for the growth and failure of the moon's light.

This threefold division of time, centered around the 15th of the month, when the moonlight is at its peak, echoes the Osiris rebirth story, in which yesterday, midnight and tomorrow are linked together as a triple of time that defines the never-ending present and the eternal spiritual. Fasting before and after the Passover death of Jesus corresponded to the purification fasting that was done by priests of Osiris in the middle of the month, at the time when Osiris' powers were at their greatest, when his rebirth occurred. (See note below[662]) This was true every month, but in the spring there was a second, more profound celebration of Osiris

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[655] Murray, M. Ibid

[656] Langdon, S , Babylonian Menologies, p 90

[657] Ibid, p 95

[658] Budge, op cit , p. 59.

[659] Regula, D., The Mysteries of Isis , p. 105

[660] Antelme, R S , Becoming Osiris, p 33.

[661] Sauneron, S., The Priests of Ancient Egypt, p. 49.

[662] I have just anticipated some of the reasoning that will be uncovered in Section 2 4 6 2 In that Section I will look at another thread in this Osiris-Christ masquerade I will cover there the literal days of the month Osiris was said to have died and been resurrected, and relate them to the Passover week of Jesus death That exercise will produce Good Friday

as the power of the Moon, designed to welcome in the spring and the return of life in nature for the next year. Fasting in the middle 10 days of the Spring month was the time to be most filled with the spirit of Osiris. It had nothing to do with piety and Jesus.

The Egyptian Gnostic theologians of Alexandria had a tradition to fast forty days in honor of Osiris, which went back millennia before Jesus.

> ... a Lent of forty days was observed in Egypt ... this Egyptian Lent of forty days ... was held expressly in commemoration of Adonis or Osiris, the great mediatorial god.[663] (emphasis added)

Notice how this same event becomes "Christian" in the right hands.

> There had originally been an annual forty-day fast observed by Egyptian Christians in the period following January 6 in imitation of Jesus fasting of forty days in the wilderness ... [it was] also used as a period of preparation for the baptism of new converts in Egypt.[664] (emphasis added)

Indeed, and what were those Egyptian converts taught in the forty days that honored both Osiris and Jesus? Earlier quotes on how Gnostic ideas were fused into Christian doctrine, on how wealthy, minimal Christians continued to worship Osiris while professing Christianity, directly apply to this forty day initiation period.

Easter is calculated as "the first Sunday after the first full Moon after the Spring equinox." As we saw earlier, the rabbinical calculation of Passover falls on Nisan 13-14, which is usually hours before the full Moon, not after it. We have a discrepancy between the rabbinical method and the Church method of calculating two different festivals. This is not a trivial or insignificant point. There is a definite connection between this formula for Easter, and Osiris, the god of the Full Moon, the god of the Sixth day, the god of the forty day fast. It will take a few Sections to make all this graphically real.

We need next to uncover the mythology that will lead us to the detailed intermixing of Tammuz' myth with the Crucifixion Week of Jesus. We also need to uncover the literal connection between Pagan resurrection gods and Gnostic churchmen. It exists. One Egyptian Christian who tried to achieve this meshing of Pagan and Christian festivals became utterly frustrated with the task. The Christian Holy days simply would not mesh with their Pagan counter-parts. He wrote :

> To us, however, ... it is IMPOSSIBLE for all these things to come aptly at one and the same time, namely, the moon's fourteenth, the Lord's day, and the passing of the equinox and the

[663] Bislop, op cit., p 105 While some claim Hislop unscholarly, I am satisfied the references he uses for this point are genuine I put the burden on any detractor to check the notes for himself

[664] Bradshaw, P., op. cit , p 2 See also The Constitutions of the Apostles, Roberts, op cit , vol vii, p 469 for the primary quote on this

> obligation of the Lord's resurrection .... to keep the Paschal festival on the Lord's day. [665] (emphasis mine)

Don't worry, he tried. The author is brazenly admitting an after-the-fact attempt to somehow shoehorn together Christianity and Osiris worship into one common Passover week festival for Christian and Gnostic alike. They just couldn't reconcile the calendars, so they broke with practicing Christianity and the Bible and did it their way: they added the Pagan days into the Passover week. The most critical part of this struggle to force pagan festivals into the Crucifixion week is detailed in Section 2.4.6.

We start the chain of events that will eventually lead to Section 2.4.6 with some rather blatant evidence from Clement of Alexandria that the Passover sacrifice of Jesus is mystically transformed into a Friday resurrection cycle of Osiris, (or Tammuz, or Adonis). Why was Tammuz, the Babylonian forerunner of Osiris, chosen as the model for this transmutation? The answer will surprise you. We will go back to the primitive source, an ancient Sumerian telling of the Tammuz myth, called "Inanna's Descent into Hell", to study amazing similarities with the death of Jesus that lent themselves to pagan application centuries later. We will consider the unbroken development of the Tammuz myth into a full-scale Sun religion which spread, along with its twin Osiris, into the various nations of the Middle East. From there we continue on to consider the specific Alexandrian application of the Inanna myth to Christ's death in Gnostic theology. We will witness their individual resonings and private application of Tammuz-Osiris to Jesus and the Passover in unprecedented detail. This will be accomplished largely through studying the writings of both Clement and his disciple Origen.

Clement will reveal a deliberate Gnostic fusion of Jesus into Osiris that dates back to 80 A.D. It will be far more comprehensive and damning than the Solar Resurrection allegory we have already discovered from his pen.

Origen will provide the intimate proof referencing Good Friday to the exact day and to the year of 31 A.D.

You have been very patient, kind reader, please be patient still. The comprehensive proof of the true origin of Good Friday demands we make a broad sweep of history. The detailed pieces of this puzzle will fall into place and the answer will reveal itself in dazzling clarity in due course.

You are about to see yet more history unfold that has lain hidden for centuries. Enjoy the discovery.

[665] Roberts A , op cit , vol vi, p 148.

2.4.3 Missing Link - Clement of Alexandria, Hermes, Aphrodite and a Friday Crucifixion Myth

In a surviving masterwork on Christian "mysticism" called The Stromata, Clement of Alexandria (c. 150 - 216 A.D.) talks about the ideal Christian, whom he says is the Gnostic[666], and how this "superior Christian" approaches and understands the Wednesday and Friday Passover fasts.

> He knows also the enigmas of the fasting of those days--I mean the Fourth and the Preparation [Friday]. For the one has its name from Hermes, and the other from Aphrodite.[667] (comment added)

According to Clement, the Wednesday Passover fast's true significance lies in the fact that it is named for Hermes, the Greek messenger of "secret doctrine", while Friday symbolizes Aphrodite, the Greek equivalent of Ishtar, wife to Osiris. Clement the Christian theologian is claiming that Greek gods explain the true meaning of the Christian Wednesday-Friday tradition. Wednesday transforms into Friday,' Christ's Crucifixion actually leads the "superior Christian" to Ishtar and Friday. We will dissect this claim in excruciating detail.

In the bulk of this passage, Clement discusses abstinence from physical pulls, moral ideals and so forth, but why does he relate all this to "the enigmas of fasting", or Hermes, the keeper of sacred knowledge for the Greek gods, unless Clement wants us to think much more deeply about the principles of Greek religion? Both Aphrodite and Hermes have far more to do with Clement's Gnostic theology of the Passover, than they do with self-control or fasting. Clement is pointing to far more than ritual fasting when he mentions the fourth and sixth days of the week. We must learn a little of Greek religion before we can appreciate these remarks.

This seemingly casual reference to Hermes and Aphrodite is part of his established method of invoking profound secret Gnostic doctrines in his Christian discourses for the general public.

All of Clement's writings were rife with this kind of dual meaning and double entendre. It was a standard way of communicating private doctrine, employed by Gnostic churchmen of the second and third centuries. One author commented on this dualistic rhetoric in the following manner:

> the use of mystery language ... we find everywhere in Clement. The Christian revelation is .... "the Divine secrets", "the secret Word" .... Jesus Christ is "the Teacher of the Divine mysteries" ; the ordinary teaching of the church is "the lesser mysteries" ;

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[666] Clement, in Book vii of The Stromata, makes this his major theme. He says: "It is our purpose, then, to prove that the Gnostic ALONE is holy and pious, and worships the true God in a manner worthy of Him. (Roberts, A., op cit , vol ii, p 523) See pps 523-536 of that volume for Clement's full discussion

[667] Ibid, p 544

> the higher knowledge of the Gnostic, ... leading to full initiation, "the greater mysteries."[668] (emphasis added)

Finally the author says Clement "wish[ed] to claim the Greek mystery-worship, with its technical language, for Christianity...."[669] (emphasis mine)

Elsewhere, Clement readily admitted he both obscured his true meaning and suggested deeper hidden doctrines when he wrote. He said he

> interspersed the dogmas which are the gems of true knowledge, so that the discovery of the sacred traditions may not be easy to any one of the uninitiated.[670] (my underscore)

Clement repeated himself many times on this point. He also wrote: ".... secret things are entrusted to [private] speech, not to writing ...."[671] Again he wrote: "Some things my treatise will hint ; on some it will linger ; some it will merely mention."[672] Other examples can be given from his Stromata.

Secrecy and indirect reference was his standard method of communicating Gnostic ideas to both the ignorant public and the knowledgeable initiate and he let his audience know this.[673]

Now return to Clement's original statement at the start of this section concerning the Wednesday and Friday fasts and Greek gods. With this background on how he taught his doctrines, we can be sure Clement is suggesting there are mysteries, hidden spiritual truths about the Wednesday Passover fast, that can only be understood by fasting and meditating upon the "higher" myths of TWO PAGAN GODS--Hermes and Aphrodite. We will follow his advice and meditate deeply on Hermes and Aphrodite.

What is the enigma or religious secret that Clement is referencing? A solid understanding of his comments can be gleaned from "meditating on" some very fundamental aspects of Hermes, Aphrodite and the Crucifixion.

First, lets review some of the realities of the society Clement lived in and addressed, which we touched upon previously.

Alexandria, where Clement thrived and gained his followers, was originally intended by its Greek masters to become the occult capital of the Western world in

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[668] Inge, W , Christian Mythology, p 88
[669] Ibid
[670] Fideler, Jesus Christ, Sun of God, p 349, note 19
[671] Roberts, A op cit , vol ii, p. 302
[672] Ibid
[673] I am getting ahead of myself at this point, but Clement, who we will see is totally given to the doctrines of Plato, is actually imitating Plato's style of communication and concealment In one small section of a key work of Plato, the Timaeus, which I will refer to later, this author found four notes from the translator describing how Plato's explanations are either "compressed", "condensed", "obscure", or bypass relevant topics See Desmond Lee, The Timaeus, pps 48 (note 2), 49 (note 1), 50 , and 55-56 (note 1)

direct opposition to Babylon.[674] This was its avowed charter, hundreds of years before Jesus and the apostles ever walked the earth. The city also was the home of a sacred college and vast libraries, where pagan ideas were routinely studied as supreme spiritual enlightenment, for generations before Christ.

Clement was the head of that college, the keeper of its rich and varied storehouses of occult knowledge.

The culture of the city was classical Greek intellectualism superimposed upon the native Egyptian superstition which we discussed earlier. The educated Gnostics lived in both worlds, rational Greek and superstitious Egyptian, drawing intellectual sustenance from both. Clement, born in Greece, trained in Greek, could alternate between the publicly known religions of the two cultures and the "simplistic" doctrines of Christianity, realizing his pagan Gnostic listeners would grasp that he was actually speaking hidden references to Egyptian resurrection beliefs when he used the Greek equivalents of Hermes and Aphrodite. It was common knowledge that the Greek Hermes and the Egyptian god Thoth were one and the same deity. The reference to the Greek god Hermes was also a veiled reference that connects Jesus with Osiris.

1. Hermes, Jesus, The Logos and the Number Four

Clement's association of Hermes with the Wednesday fast corroborates the fact that Jesus died on a Wednesday. It accomplishes this in the following manner: In Greek mythology, Hermes, just as Thoth, was acknowledged as the guide of dead spirits in the Underworld.[675] The Greeks had a festival called "the Day of the Pots", in which Hermes was called upon to return dead spirits back to the netherworld, so Hermes was both guide and guardian of dead spirits.[676] When Clement associates Hermes with Jesus on the Wednesday of Passover week, he is confirming that Jesus' death was on a Wednesday. Clement is further claiming that Christ was then "guided" by Hermes to the underworld, presumably waiting for the Resurrection.[677] This parallels the idea that three of Horus' sons guide their grandfather Osiris though the daily cycle of the nighttime Sun. This myth was a daily activity of Osiris-Ra, re-enacted endlessly and deeply etched into the consciousness of all Egyptians; it was the innermost marrow of their ancient and living culture.

We can unravel the enigmatic tie between Hermes, Osiris and Christ even further, through the roles played by the numbers four and six.

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[674] Cooke, H , op cit , p 76. Cooke is quoting J Yarker, Arcane Schools, p 95 of that work.

[675] See Kerenyi, C., Dionysos, p. 366, and Kerenyi, C , Hermes, guardian of Souls, Spring Publications.

[676] Ibid, p 284.

[677] This doctrine of "Christ's Descent into Hell" is patently unbiblical, although modern scholars have thought to find evidence for it in scripture. I Peter 3:18 was used anciently, and in modern times, to support the view, but Peter is referring to a time after the Flood when Jesus, God of the Old Testament, (See I Cor 10:4, where Christ is identified as the One who led Israel out of Egypt) explained to spirits of the netherworld that they had not destroyed mankind, there would yet be a divine rule on the planet. This was misinterpreted into Jesus speaking to dead sinners in the grave while he himself was dead. It became a fixture in the early days of Gnostic popularity We will return to it in section 2 4 7)

The Secrets Behind Clement's Use of the Numbers "Four" and "Six"

Hermes, god of hidden knowledge about those who die, "directs" the Gnostic's thinking from the Wednesday Crucifixion to Aphrodite's day, the sixth day, which now becomes the spiritual fulfillment of the fourth day. Historical facts, such as the literal dearth of Jesus, must be perceived in light of the greater mystical truth that is concealed in the names and numbers of the weekdays.

This Wednesday-Friday mysticism includes various beliefs about the Greek "Logos", a Revelator God, who lived inside Hermes and was also Second Person of the Greek godhead, the supreme Rational Mind that communicates from the Unknowable God to the creation. This mind reduced the unknowable to terms finite men could grasp, via a ratio or proportion that scaled the infinite down to the level of the simple. Why is this connection so critical? Because Logos / Hermes / Thoth is a concept found in both classical Greek philosophy, ancient Egyptian myth AND the New Testament. "Logos" fuses Hermes, Jesus and Greek number schemes into one idea, even while Hermes teaches Jesus the deeper mysteries of death and resurrection that will come from understanding Aphrodite's doctrines of resurrection.

(From the standpoint of a New Testament Christian, the gospels call Jesus Logos in a fulfillment of old Pagan terminology; the Pagans in turn reduce Jesus to a level less than their Logos in an act of Christian blasphemy and self-justification--"We pagans have the pre-eminence, our Logos is greater than Jesus. Jesus was a mystic who gained access to our Logos." Jesus is a latter day incarnation of the Logos in human history, a man-Logos; Hermes is the ancient Logos manifested in the netherworld and the afterlife. Jesus is but a man whom Hermes / Logos favored with a mystical visit. Hermes / Logos has come to visit the Gnostic community in their generation through Jesus. Paganism lives on in Christ.)

David Fideler, in his book, Jesus Christ, Sun of God, (note the word "Sun") points out that the concept of Logos and the name existed with both the Egyptians and Greeks centuries before the man Jesus walked the earth. More about the Greek Logos: He was an abstract entity whose essence existed in two pagan gods, Apollo and Hermes, "... Hermes was actually called the Logos by the Greeks ... Hermes was the inventor of the lyre, which he gave to Apollos."[678] (emphasis mine)

The lyre is the instrument for resonating with the greatest mysteries of the universe. It plays off of the number harmonies in the universe. All the number secrets of creation can be generated like musical notes from this Lyre. It is a symbol of creative thought and secret knowledge; its transfer from Hermes to Apollo can be viewed as a spiritual "anointing" of Apollo with Hermes' "Logos" capacity. In the last book of the Bible, Christ is called the Revelator of world events, men's fates and a new universe[679].

[678] Fideler, D , Jesus Christ, Sun of God, p 80
[679] Revelation Chapter 1

The Egyptians also claimed Hermes' exact knowledge. To hear them tell it, Thoth is the original revelator and the Greek's Hermes a latter-day imitation.[680] (We derive the English word "thought" from "Thoth".) The Egyptians also made a strong connection between Thoth, secret knowledge and number schemes. Thoth was credited with writing forty-two books of secret wisdom on all subjects for the Egyptians, long before the Greeks embraced him as Hermes. Additionally, Thoth "was the confidential scribe of Osiris, who invariably accepted his advice upon all matters."[681]

Thoth or Hermes also assisted Isis in the resurrection of Osiris.

Since Clement was a master of the mysteries that were prevalent in both worlds--Egyptian and Greek and had access to all the esoteric knowledge of Alexandria's great libraries, he was familiar with the deeds and writings of Thoth and he mentions them in his "Christian" work The Stromata, where the original Hermes - Aphrodite quotation about the Passover is contained.

Numbers, Hermes and Clement

Curiously enough, Clement chose to discuss the books of Hermes / Thoth, the god of the fourth day, in the sixth book and the fourth Chapter of The Stromata. Recall Clement freely admitted he hints at certain truths without ever explaining them. This apparent numerical coincidence is the tip of another hermetic iceberg in which common numbers are the mystical link that makes very different things all merge into a catchall of higher insight for the Christian Gnostic.

Common numbers shared by totally dissimilar things allow them to be imbued with mystical similarities. Common numbers are the bridge a Gnostic uses to take the qualities of one thing, say a Greek god and fuse them into a totally different entity, say Jesus. Professional mathematicians find this notion to be both curious and embarrassing. Very, very few respect it as rational, to make a play on the word Logos. By this soft and seductive reasoning, the number four becomes some deep truth of the universe that both the Wednesday Crucifixion, Hermes and Clement's fourth chapter now share in common.[682]

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[680] See Fowden, G. The Egyptian Hermes, Princeton University Press, Boylan, P., Thoth, the Hermes of Egypt (1987 reprint by Ares Press), and van Sertima, I., Egypt Revisited, pps 131-132

[681] Budge, E.A., Osiris and the Egyptian Resurrection, vol i, p 10

[682] This approach of Clement's belongs to an ancient discipline of numbers that might loosely be called numerology or gematria. Clement devotes a chapter to discussing arcane points about it in The Stromata (Book 6, Chapter 11) He titles his revelations, "The Mystical Meanings in the Proportions of Numbers, Geometrical Ratios, and Music". Let me just slightly parody what he does in order to uncover his mystical meanings Clement relates small numbers (one, two, three, etc) to various qualities ("truth", "beauty"), then factors bigger numbers into these smaller components, and discovers the beauty in everything. This is of course silly. The scripture says of some philosophers: "Professing themselves to be wise, they have become fools "[682] To be fair, in addition, he also uses an abstracting technique for getting at these numbers that, if honestly used, becomes the basis for legitimate math disciplines such as algebra, set theory, transfinite numbers, and formal logic BUT, Clement's, and most Gnostic's use of the methods or the numbers is never this fair

Clement trumpets the number patterns four and six in other passages that link Hermes, Osiris the Resurrection-god and the Passover death of Jesus. They unveil more of his original intent in comparing Jesus and Hermes.

According to Serge Sauneron, writing in his book, The Priests of Ancient Egypt, Clement made his comments about these books of Hermes or Thoth in connection with a public procession of the Egyptian priests of Osiris, in Alexandria Egypt, who walked, honoring Osiris, in a sacred order that symbolized the categories of knowledge in Hermes' forty-two books.[683] Even more curiously, the first six books of the forty-two are broken down into groups of two and four. The first two books are for the King and the next four are knowledge of the universe. We saw earlier, that Victorinius extolled Jesus as revealing the heavenly lights on the fourth day of creation. I have also suggested that Clement may have been a priest of Osiris, possibly, therefore, walking in these processions himself. Clement has given us a pattern of two, four and six in connection with Osiris-Ra, Egyptian resurrection god, Hermes, Logos of the Greek gods, guide of the dead Jesus and Jesus himself, the last incarnation of the Greek Logos. This time, the numbers relate to a "procession", or "passage".

In Clement's Christian writings, the numbers four and six in Osiris' procession (which is a passage from death to life and from this world to the next) are not limited to the death and resurrection cycle of Osiris and the Sun, they also have a mystical quality that allows Jesus' literal Crucifixion to progress from being remembered on a literal Wednesday, to being kept on a symbolic Friday. This is because Friday is where the true meaning for the Gnostic resides. (Aphrodite is the goddess of a Greek resurrection story, as we will see.) Recall also that in Egyptian religion, one of Osiris' titles is "Lord of the Sixth Day". We have a deep involvement with resurrection gods and the number "six", in pagan stories from both Greece and Egypt that exist centuries before Jesus. (None of this is curious coincidence; both stories and their "sixes" are rooted in the Babylonian myth of Tammuz.) The upshot of all this Gnostic teaching is the irrevocable conviction: "Forget what Christianity has to say, the Pagans knew it first and better". Recall also there was no discernible difference in Alexandria between the priests of Osiris and the ministers of Christianity. The knowledge of Hermes' books would no doubt be one of the things Osiris' priest and the Gnostic theologian shared in common. It was a central part of the "hidden mysteries" that Clement admitted he constantly referenced. Naturally, Osiris is also the Egyptian god whose three-day death and resurrection passion play was later adapted to become Good Friday services. These are some of the elements Clement has in mind as he references Hermes, who transmits this knowledge to the Wednesday Jesus died.

We have uncovered another layer of Clement's true motivation, but we can do still better in unraveling his hidden meanings between Wednesday and Friday, Jesus, Hermes and Aphrodite.

[683] Sauneron, S , op. cit , pps. 136-137 See also Roberts, A., op cit, vol ii, p. 488 for this same quote of the Osiris procession in Clement's Stromata

What more can we learn of Clement's reference to Aphrodite? If Hermes refers to passage through physical death and learning secrets of the physical universe, does Clement's use of Aphrodite corroborate and extend this secret perspective? Does she too, like Osiris, relate to a pagan resurrection and a reborn spiritual life on a higher plane? Is there any deeper significance of the number six in the mythology of Aphrodite? The answer to all these questions is, Indeed, yes.

2. Aphrodite, Adonis, the Resurrection and the Number Six

Sir James Frazer, in his book, Adonis Attis Osiris makes short work of proving that the Greek-Syrian Adonis, the Egyptian Osiris, and the more ancient Babylonian god Tammuz are all one and the same entity, known and worshipped by the whole Near Eastern world in ancient times.[684] Each of these three gods had a consort: respectively named, Aphrodite, Isis, or Ishtar and each of these goddesses went on a quest to recover the dead god's body and resurrect him. Talking about the common nature of Adonis and Osiris worship, Frazer writes:

> **..... at Amathus [in modern Lebanon, northeast of Egypt], ... as at Byblus, [also in Lebanon] they instituted the rites of Adonis and Aphrodite [;] these rites resembled the Egyptian worship of Osiris so closely that some people even identified the Adonis of Amathus with Osiris.[685] (comments are mine)**

To supplement these observations, we learn from Arthur Weigall,

> **Isis was also identified with Venus or Aphrodite, and the mourning of Isis for the slain Osiris was thus assimilated to the mourning of Venus for the slain Adonis.[686]**

Aphrodite is the rescue figure in the annual death and resurrection festival of Adonis.[687] Aphrodite and Adonis had a significant public presence in Alexandria; that relates directly to Jesus and the Crucifixion week.

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[684] See in particular pages 6-12 of volume I of that book, as well as Turcan, Cults of the Roman Empire, pps. 143-148, especially p 145, also Harrison, Ancient Art and Ritual, pps 6-7. See also Butterworth, Clement of Alexandria, p, 49, note "c", where he identifies Osiris, Adonis, Attis, and Tammuz as being the same god. Most of the titles in the bibliography that deal with comparative religion will also vouch this While I do not support it in all its aspects, Sir James' basic contention is the basis of the research that fills this and the following sections concerning the Ishtar Descent Myth and its relationship to Osiris. I have extended its relevance to the private doctrines of the Alexandrian Christians and the Gnostic theology of Easter Legge, vol I, p 137, note 1, says much the same about Adonis and Osiris

[685] Frazer, J G., Adonis Attis Osiris, vol I, p 32 I have transposed the words, "they instituted the rites of Adonis and Aphrodite" out of Frazer's order, to compact the quote

[686] Weigall, A., The Paganism in Our Christianity, p. 132

[687] Let me add to what is stated above Legge, vol. I, p. 37, identifies Adonis, lover of Aphrodite, with Osiris, and says the death and resurrection stories of these two gods are most likely the same Regula, p. 204, identifies Aphrodite with Isis, Ishtar, and Inanna, through their common association with the planet Venus in ancient astrology.

Witt says Aphrodite was originally a separate goddess from Isis / Ishtar, and was willfully associated with these goddesses in Greco-Roman times, well before Clement (See pages 123-124, 20,58, 68-69 - Isis Aphrodite and Astarte are identified here)

The Aphrodite-Adonis festival version of the original Babylonian resurrection myth was held all over the Greek-speaking world: in the islands of the Aegean, in Syria, Western Turkey, Greek Egypt and other former centers of Alexander's old Empire. In Alexandria, where Clement taught, it lasted several days during the summer and began with a marriage of the statues of the two gods, followed immediately the next day by a funeral dirge for Adonis and then, on another day, the literal resurrection of the statue. All this drama occurred in processions and ritual, pomp and pathos, for the masses of worshippers to experience as a theater-in-the-round,[688] both in the city streets and in the temple of Aphrodite. The correspondence between this procession of Aphrodite and the Egyptian parades for Osiris should be noticeable.

More than a century after Clement, Cyril of Alexandria wrote that this custom continued up until at least 400 A.D.[689] He also stated that "Aphrodite was represented re-ascending from Hell with Adonis and that a choir rejoiced with her, dancing".[690] Clearly, in his time, Clement would have experienced both the marrying of the statues and the wailing of the mourners firsthand. He would have witnessed Aphrodite's descent into Hell and her triumphant return with Adonis. He would have seen the resurrected Adonis paraded in glorious delight before the joyous people.

His public references to Aphrodite and his indirect reference to the death and resurrection of Adonis, with all its ritual, were attached to the sixth day crucifixion fast which later church fathers enjoined upon the original Christian faith. This deeper reference would not be lost on any of Clement's hearers in the Greek world, where all this ritual was celebrated. The Wednesday fast purified one to worship Jesus, the Friday fast purified the Gnostic to contemplate even higher knowledge of the spirit world. Wednesday could be appreciated by the simple, those who honored history. Friday could be revered by those who were initiated into higher Pagan truth. By pointing to Aphrodite and the sixth day as the end-point for Gnostic Christians to ponder, Clement was submerging the Crucifixion of Jesus into the seemingly greater myths of Adonis' death and resurrection, as well as Osiris' Solar resurrection. There is far more evidence from Clement's writings of this co-mingling of doctrines. We will see next that Clement sought to unify ALL Pagan death and resurrection gods under the story of Jesus. All of them. He also uses the number six in yet other contexts relating to Christ's Crucifixion. Consider two additional points he makes in The Stromata:

3. Piecing Together Supreme Gnostic Truth from Christ's Story AND ALL the Pagan Resurrection gods

Clement brazenly admits this very process of piecing together both pagan and Christian doctrine in order to gain higher truth, (gnosis) by showcasing a very key Pagan symbol: reassembling the scattered body parts of the dismembered pagan

[688] Frazer, Adonis Attis Osiris, vol. I, pps. 224-225
[689] Ibid, p 224, note 2
[690] Turcan, R., The Cults of Ancient Rome, p 145

resurrection gods, the very ones he suggests comparing to Jesus. Here is another "gem" for us to think about; it exposes Clement's impulse to collect ultimate truth from all the pagan religions of antiquity and it relates to Adonis and Aphrodite, but mostly, it refers to Osiris:

> So then the barbarian and Hellenistic philosophy has torn off a fragment of eternal truth not from the mythology of Dionysus [another Greek form of Osiris and Tammuz,, also see the note below[691]], but from the theology of the ever-living Word [this is the Greek Logos, which inhabited Hermes and supposedly, also Jesus}. And he who brings again together the separate fragments, AND MAKES THEM ONE, will without peril, ... contemplate the perfect Word, the truth.[692] (emphasis mine)

In Clement's mind, truth does not come from Christian scripture only, rather, great treasures of truth lay hidden in Pagan myths. There is no distinction to be made between sacred al profane, religious or secular. All are holy. Says who? Clement. By what authority? His own. Notice another candid admission of where Clement derived his thinking.

> .... truth is one .... just as the Bachantes [followers of Bacchus or Dionysus, another form of Tammuz] tore asunder the limbs of Pentheus, so the sects both of barbarians and Hellenistic philosophy have done with truth, ... But all, in my opinion are illuminated by the dawn of Light. Let all, .. produce whatever they have of the word of truth.[693] (emphasis and comments added)

There are references here to Clement's other doctrine of the "marvelous solar mystery of Jesus and Osiris-Ra." Clement's use of the phrase, "dawn of Light", takes us back to the midnight metamorphosis of Osiris into the reborn Sun of tomorrow's dawn and Christian transformation in the afterlife. The resurrected Osiris, after his midnight elevation into Osiris-Ra, revealed himself to men as the dawning spiritual Sun of the new day of existence. Once more, now speaking of Dionysius or Bacchus (seemingly different gods), Clement focuses his disciples' attention back to this solar resurrection myth. We see Clement expanding his range of dieties to include more of the Mediterranean gods, while at the same time expressing the conviction that they and the Pagan beliefs they contain are really one truth. This fusion of all gods from Syria, Babylon, Greece, Egypt and Rome into a universal entity was a product of Alexander's "one-world" culture, developed to unify his empire. (Ironically, it was divided.) It is known as syncretism and was a universal belief held by Pagan religion in the days of Christ and the Apostles. We will discuss its role among the Sun gods later in this chapter and also in volume II.

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[691] Dionysus was a Greek resurrection god, whose corpse was torn to pieces before his resurrection, as was also done with Adonis, and Osiris

[692] Roberts, A., op cit, vol ii, p. 313

[693] Ibid

Clement is saying that only when we join together ALL the resurrection myths, piece by piece, can the Solar dawn of understanding the next life be realized. Osiris-Ra will be formed in the Gnostic Christian who embraces ALL Pagan resurrection myths into his Christianity. no one else will ever understand the greatest truths of this existence. The Apostle Paul would not agree with Clement's concealed theology and indeed, most clerics of his day DID NOT support Clement's ideas. Nevertheless, the festivals which he advocated, once stripped of this deeper meaning, DID succeed in replacing the literal day that Jesus died.

We now have exposed before us the very thought processes by which Clement and his Gnostic forefathers merged Christianity with Paganism.

Let me secure the idea that all his talk about Bacchus' limbs actually refers to the Alexandrian Osiris-Ra, Adonis and Tammuz. When he speaks of "re-assembling" the torn body of Pentheus" Clement is doing nothing more than masking his "home-town" deity in aliases. (We might speculate that "Pentheus", is little more than a cover name for "Pan-Theus" or "All-gods", in the Greek.)

First, Sir James Frazer wrote: "Dionysus [was] a god who resembled Osiris in many points and was said like him to have been torn limb from limb [just as Osiris was said to have been treated]."[694] [The French scholar] Depuis makes this even more exact. He says the rending asunder of Dionysus' body, "dead, descended into Hell and re-arisen", was "in imitation .... of the sufferings of Osiris."[695]

Finally, note at the end of the quotation that Clement says: "Let all, .. produce whatever they have of the word of truth." This too, has dual meaning. It refers to object reality, "truth" in the colloquial sense and it also refers to the Gnostic Logos, for "word" is a poor translation of Logos. We saw earlier how this "Logos" was shared and transferred among Hermes and Apollo, the Sun god and how Jesus was believed to be the final incarnation of this Logos. by Pagans. It is no great stretch of the imagination to see that Clement is suggesting this "Logos" inhabited all the dieties worshipped across the Middle Eastern world. So Clement is suggesting that all nations have a partial understanding of the divine Solar Logos that they can all contribute to the full picture. This international slant on resurrection religions by Gnostics is a theme I will continue to emphasize and refine throughout this Section. Note it, also.

David Fideler's book, Jesus Christ, Sun of God, surveys the whole history of Gnostic belief in Jesus' solar nature and their larger doctrines, with scholarship, thoroughness and originality.[696] It also shows that Clement's above remarks actually refer to the Osiris resurrection myth. Agreeing with Frazer, Fideler asserts:

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[694] Frazer, J.G., The New Golden Bough, p 406

[695] As quoted in Carpenter, op. cit., p 53

[696] See pps. 270-271 of that book, where Jesus is called "the Sun behind the Sun", and the "Universal Logos". Fideler's explanation of "Logos" in Chapter Three - The Solar Logos: The "Word of the Sun" in Hellenistic Mysticism and Cosmology, on pps. 37-41 is very good.

> .... the ancients themselves recognized the essential unity of these divinities: the Greeks identified Dionysus with Osiris, and these [the Syrians] with Adonis...."[697] (my comment)

G. Butterworth, in his volume, Clement of Alexandria, also confirms that Clement understood the Dionysus myth to be a substitute for Osiris' death and resurrection. Dionysius' dismemberment is actually a perpetual death and life cyclical story, because his head is preserved and from its spirit another body is grown which once more is destroyed the following year. Clement conceals the perpetual rebirth of Dionysius when he writes about it, for it would reveal too much of the rebirth process of Osiris-Ra. He concludes by noting Clement is actually speaking of "death and resurrection, akin to those of Osiris in Egypt and Attis in Phrygia; ... it probably served .... for teaching .... human immortality."[698] (emphasis mine) This would be the method Clement would teach wealthy Gnostic-Christians the "secret doctrines" of his Christianity in his academy and university.

David Fideler further explains how men like Clement contrasted these two Greek and Egyptian gods: "Dionysus is the indestructible stream of life which undergoes countless transformations" (death and rebirth) and "Osiris is this [same] capacity simply translated as Life-Power."[699] We can see that the role of both Dionysius and Osiris as symbols of the transformation of life into immortality was a basic part of their worship, one that would be applied directly to original Christianity by a man like Clement.

More details of Clement's "re-assembling all faiths" emerge from his writings. In another work, Exhortation to the Greeks, he makes plain that he is well informed in both the religion of Osiris and the wisdom of ancient priests in Mesopotamia. Passages in the Exhortation parallel what we have already read from the Stromata, but to the Greeks he offers more practical details, naming names and revealing his own point of view in the process. He tells the story of how the temple to Serapis-Osiris was built in Alexandria, five hundred years before him and how a fabulous statue of the god made from molten metal and jewels was prepared for it.[700] In the same work, he quotes the Sibylline Oracle of Rome, who prophesied the great temple of Isis in Alexandria would one day be burned and the temple of Serapis dismantled and razed to the ground.[701] (Both events happened well after Clement's death and in the manner predicted.) He further quotes the Babylonian historian Berosus (who wrote around 250 B.C.), suggesting Berosus also had a prophetic knowledge of these events.[702] The implication is of the universal knowledge that Pagan mystics had over Christianity, be they Roman or Babylonian.

Most tellingly of all, Clement mixes the Old Testament prophets with Plato. He claims both were equally inspired in matters of the spirit and prophecy! He seeks of convince the Greeks that they do not possess all knowledge. The Truth of the

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[697] Ibid, p 24.
[698] Butterworth, G , Clement of Alexandria, p 382
[699] Ibid
[700] Butterworth, G.W , op cit , pps 109-111
[701] Ibid, pps 113.
[702] Ibid, pps. 147 and 393

One True God, as revealed by both the Hebrews and Plato, is the real key to unlocking the spiritual secrets contained in the Astronomy of Babylon, the Wisdom of Assyria, and the Geometry of the Egyptians.[703] In this new admission to his Greek compatriots, Clement highlights the supreme role of Plato as the chief Prophet of this Universal Spiritism. Plato articulated the true religion better than all and as we will see, he even prophesied the coming of Jesus. We will also find that Plato spent many year in Egypt, studying the Egyptian Sun religion with the original priests of Ra. Plato knew of Osiris' mysteries firsthand. He is the perfect role model for the Greek-Egyptian Clement to base his "Christianity" upon.

If we review Clement's earlier statements in light of this insight, then whether he is speaking of Adonis and Aphrodite, Hermes, or Dionysus (who are all Greek), we see again that the common, invisible god in his Gnostic catechism is actually the Egyptian Osiris. The body of truth Hermes leads us to, the spiritual reality Jesus' Wednesday death points us to, is all of ancient pagan knowledge. Once more, the original Apostles would not be impressed with this conclusion, rather they would fiercely condemn it and resist it.

Clement's position that the spiritual truth of Christ's death and resurrection comes from piecing together the doctrines of all recorded pagan religions like so many body parts of Osiris the ancient resurrection god, is supreme evidence of his slant towards re-interpreting Jesus' Wednesday memorial into Pagan mystery, with Plato as its prophet.

With so strong a bias, it should be apparent that Clement and his Gnostic forefathers would insist the Passover day be MOVED from Wednesday to a more comprehensive (Pagan and Christian) day than the original, Jewish, Nisan 14. The "facts", as I have just explained them, were on their side.

We almost have to remind ourselves that Clement pretends to be, first and foremost, a Christian theologian. Yet Clement seems to be fired by the conceit that through Plato he can straddle both worlds like a spiritual Colossus of Rhodes and attain higher truth. Impossible. No wonder the established Church rejected him and he was never canonized. Yet, unfortunately, many of his ideas, inherited from earlier Gnostics and Plato, did prevail in the Church although in a watered-down fashion.

(Note to the Reader - this next point taken from Clement's arguments in Stromata, deals with another Passover-related teaching of Clement that is rather abstract, mystical and allegorical. Some may wish to pass it by.)

4. According to Clement: "Four Becomes Six When Christ Becomes Glorified"

My final point in this discussion moves to how Clement viewed the Glorified Christ. As might be expected, the more Christian scripture leaves the physical realm for things spiritual, the more Clement's teaching displays mystical leanings. He now takes the numbers four and six to their logical conclusion as Gnostic symbols. In

[703] Ibid, p 159

their final usage by Clement, the two numbers are completely stripped of their physical meaning and become pure symbol for the mind to ponder. Sparks, the Gnostics call it. From this final revelation, we can see that the fasts of "Hermes and Aphrodite", ultimately rest upon sheer perversion of scripture. Our earlier samples of "twisting scripture" by Clement and Origen will pale in comparison to what follows. Clement violently distorts the Holy Writ to unrecognizable lengths in order to legitimize his spiritual bridge between Wednesday and Friday.

This last insight centers around his Gnostic interpretation of a vision related in the original Gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke, that is called "the Transfiguration". In it, Christ takes three of the Apostles with him up into a mountain (notice immediately that we have here a total of four people). Jesus is then instantaneously transformed into a glorified Spirit before their eyes, speaking with two additional beings that also suddenly appear; they are identified as the resurrected, glorified Moses and Elijah. So now there are six beings on the mountain. Christ's face shines as the Sun and his clothes become like light itself. We have here a New Testament passage that simply cries out to be re-interpreted in the light of Osiris-Ra and the Pagan resurrection gods. One further note: In two of the Gospels, it says this happened six days after Jesus told the disciples they would see such a thing, in Luke's, it says "about eight days". None of the stories refer to it happening on a Friday. The day of the week is not given, at all.

This apparently was too much for Clement to leave alone. Once more, he turns this story into Gnostic esoterica dealing with the Adonis resurrection myth, the Friday Passover fast and Christ transformed into the Solar Logos. Clement's text is confusing, but I will attempt to break it down for you into its proper meanings.

> .... the Lord, who ascended the mountain, the fourth [of a group of four people, but shouldn't Christ more properly be called the First, since his disciples were lesser than himself?], BECOMES THE SIXTH [after Moses and Elijah appear we now have six people on the mountain, but Clement is suggesting Jesus' nature has changed into the "god of the sixth day - namely Osiris. this is clearly a very tortured use of scripture], and is illuminated all around with spiritual light .... by the seventh, the Voice [God the Father speaks at this moment in the story] .... while he [Jesus] by his [spiritual] birth, which was indicated by the sixth [the Osiris resurrection] conspicuously marked, becomes the eighth [that is, the Sun, or the Solar Logos, but none of this "eighth" business is in the story, Clement has added it in order to complete his Pagan theology.][704] (emphasis and comments are mine)

By his number association rule, Clement uses the number six as a pointer suggesting a higher truth. He explains elsewhere[705], that six, when factored into 2 x 3, actually represents male and female. Presumably the male and female he has in

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705 See Roberts, A., op cit, p 513.

mind are Aphrodite and Adonis, the god and goddess united in their resurrection myth, or Osiris and Isis, etc, etc. So, based upon all that Clement has written, we can say that four people growing into a group of six people on a mountain, means two things to Clement: first, that the Wednesday Crucifixion should not be taken literally, since this Scripture transforms four (number code for Wednesday) into six (Friday) when Jesus is glorified. Second, Christ in his glorified state transforms into the resurrected essence of both Aphrodite and Adonis, or Isis and Osiris. This fanciful distortion of logic most likely was the basis of a Gnostic argument that the Bible secretly supports a mystical Friday Crucifixion and that Wednesday should be rejected as an inferior, merely historical, day.

Drop down to the end of Clement's quote. The phrase, "His birth" refers to Jesus' glorification on the mountain, a foreshadow of his literal Resurrection. The next phrase, "indicated by the sixth conspicuously marked" is not completely repetitive. It means to Clement that because the Gospels specifically say the vision occurred six days after the disciples were told it would happen, the Gospel writer is telling us to connect the Transfiguration with Osiris, "Lord of the Sixth Day" and the Friday of the Crucifixion week, the day dedicated to Aphrodite / Adonis. That is a cosmic stretch of imagination.

But Christ's spiritual birth is the Resurrection, NOT THE CRUCIFIXION shifted to a Friday, so Clement is getting himself into trouble. He wants "six" to refer to a Friday, which is the start of Adonis' crucifixion cycle, while he calls the sixth day the day of Christ's birth, which is the conclusion of Jesus' transformation. However, the day of the Adonis birth comes still later, on a Sunday.

The only way for Clement to make Adonis' Friday death refer to both Christ's death and rebirth, is to stretch his false Christian Friday memorial out into a three-day "Passover". Therefore, from this twisted distortion of New Testament scripture, we can see a reason for Egyptian theologians arguing that the Passover MUST become a "triduum Pascha", a "three-day, stretched-out Passover", in order to accommodate this private mystery.

When we now go back and review the literal sequence of events that transformed the Passover into Good Friday over the centuries, this hidden Gnostic scheme, when inserted into the picture at say, 100 A.D., becomes a magnet, attracting and invisibly guiding the course of events to its final result. Play the video tape from 100 A.D. to 370 A.D.: Christ's Wednesday death became a Sunday death. The Wednesday fasting became Wednesday and Friday fasting and Friday fasting became a Friday, Saturday and Sunday observance. Wednesday fasting was then minimized or discarded as inferior. This may seem to be coincidental at this point, but I have even more facts to offer.

Let me offer you a few more observations on Clement's mishandling of "birth" and the number "six" in the Transfiguration story. The original wording in the Scripture is that "His birth", to use Clement's expression, occurred "AFTER six days", or "about "eight days" (see Luke's Gospel account). In other words, "His birth" occurred after the sixth day, which was the SEVENTH DAY after Christ told the Apostles, so by Clement's reasoning the "birth conspicuously marked" points us

to a seventh day, or a Saturday resurrection, NOT a Friday crucifixion and Aphrodite. Because Clement has tried too hard to force the Scripture to say something, he has missed the mark and when we look at all three Gospel accounts of this story, Clement's "birth" analogy for Jesus winds up pointing us to a Saturday, directly opposite to his intention.

To paraphrase Clement again, one might say that "the fourth actually becomes the seventh, not the sixth". However, we don't have a pagan resurrection god on Saturday, we have Saturn, so the analogy breaks down.

Clement then adds, "his birth .... becomes the eighth". Eight is the number symbolizing the literal Sun in the sky and in Greek, when the letters of Jesus' name, IHSOUS, are added together as numbers, the total is 888. (See footnote for the math.[706]) This is a number associated with the Sun by Greek mystics and all Gnostics.[707] So, as David Fideler says, the Gnostics are able to make Christ, in his resurrected, glorified state, into the "Solar Logos", simply by adding up the numbers implied in Jesus name.[708] The Logos of God has become the "Sun behind the Sun", or the eighth, since in ancient times only seven heavenly bodies were known to exist. (The Sun, the Moon, and five known planets.)[709] The Scripture doesn't say that; Clement does, in his Gnostic riddles.

We have now seen a parade of evidence in The Stromata, by which Clement connects Christ's Wednesday death and subsequent resurrection with the myths of Pagan gods. He does this by going to the Bible directly and referring to the numbers four and six in irrational ways. We can also ask the question, By discussing all these things, wasn't Clement also revealing to the public the true reason why the sixth day fast had been invented in the first place and added to Nisan 14 over 100 years before him?

Of course.

If Clement consistently taught a Gnostic tradition that merged the resurrection myths of Adonis or Osiris into the Passover week, then we should expect to see some evidence of this "sacred tradition" of merging stories in the writings of his pupils, most notably, Origen. I will save the best evidence from Origen for much later, but I will offer one small indicator now.

Origen was a Greek-Egyptian astronomer, astrologer, Platonist and of course, Gnostic. He was Clement's successor at the theological school, master of its vast library and teachers of its truths. He too was well versed in the mythology of pagan resurrection gods: Tammuz, Adonis, Dionysus and Osiris. He will figure even more prominently in the following pages.

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[706] See Fideler, p. 29. He also mentions Clement in connection with the Solar Logos belief here The math of 888 is this: I = 10, H = 8, S = 200, O = 70, U = 400, S = 200 The total is then 888

[707] Ibid, pps 30-31, especially p 31.

[708] Ibid, pps 42 and 269.

[709] This is contained in Clement's words in the Stromata, see Roberts, A , vol ii, p 513

Origen was the first in classical theology to publicly state that Adonis was actually Tammuz.[710] What Clement hinted at, his disciple published. In other words, by "revealing" that Adonis is Tammuz, Origen shows he understood both the history and the interconnections between the pagan resurrection religions of Babylon, Syria, Greece and his native Egypt.

Like Clement, Origen shows he is willing to derive his Christian theology from any pagan myth, and piece his truth together to gain ultimate knowledge or "gnosis". In talking about Dionysus, Clement ridicules the mythology of the god, but he does not dismiss the story. Rather, he says that if anyone would subscribe to an allegorical understanding of the Dionysus myth for their spiritual truth they must examine Dionysius on a point-by-point basis, carefully accepting or rejecting the nuances of his story, to arrive at solid "truth".[711] Apparently, the purity of Paganism was compromised in the Dionysius myth, a circumstance not to be tolerated, although tampering with Christianity is no problem at all for Clement.

Origen does some similar skirting of the issues when he discusses the Greek goddess Minerva and the Egyptian Osiris. He casts Minerva as a goddess of the Sun, although there is much more to her divinity. One might make the case for similarities between aspects of Minerva, Isis and Aphrodite. (While Minerva was no goddess of love but a cruel destroyer of men, Isis had two sides--love goddess AND a violence greater than that of ten thousand men when her wrath was incurred.) Why this emphasis on Minerva the Sun goddess, when speaking of Osiris? Origen says Christians do not worship the Sun, they merely praise it as God's handiwork, but in this writer's opinion there is enough ambiguity in his words to make one wonder whether he is truly treating it as an inanimate object, or a luminous place-holder for the Solar Logos. One could also say the Solar Logos was God's handiwork. Concerning Minerva, like Dionysus, her mythology is dismissed as fable, BUT, Origen allows for the fact that there may be "hidden meaning" within it.[712] Minerva (Isis), the Sun, "hidden meanings" and Osiris, all mentioned in one thought by Origen. Surely we can see where his thoughts are leading. Origen does not condemn Paganism in public; rather he entertains it, plays with it and suggests there may be more value to it than appears to the casual eye.

Origen's treatment of Osiris is very similar. The Osiris story is called fable and even ridiculed, but Origen admits that an allegorical meaning can be applied to it. Osiris may not have literally existed, but there are elements in his story that can edify the Christian. It has more to offer. Once more, Pagan gods are not dismissed as thoroughly as we would like to see them. What hidden meanings are contained in the Osiris story, Origen will not say.[713]

Origen does not limit his flights of intellect to simply contemplating Pagan myth or the Scriptures. Like Clement, Origen's writing demonstrates an international grasp

[710] See Frazer, Adonis Attis Osiris, p. 6, note 1.
[711] Roberts, A., op. cit., vol. iv, pps. 472-473.
[712] Ibid, p. 664-665 for both quotation and all references in the above paragraph
[713] Ibid, p. 560

of resurrection religions.[714] As I will amplify later, the library at Alexandria was the greatest, and largest in the world at this time, having been populated with materials by the Greek kings of Egypt for nearly five hundred years. There is a tradition that Alexandrian harbormasters forcibly removed the books of every ship from every nation that ever entered the port and returned them only after scribes had copied the texts.[715] In his capacity as head of the sacred doctrinal school, Origen studied from papyri, or learned from other experts and travelers, much concerning the religions of Egypt, Greece, Persia, Ethiopia, Arabia and Babylonia.

Further, a huge temple existed on the outskirts of Alexandria, on a massive hill, dedicated to Osiris in his form as the Father-god Serapis. As with Clement, surely Origen had to have walked by the temple daily or weekly; he must have entered it and observed its public ceremonies, just as he would have viewed the yearly resurrection of Adonis at the temple of Aphrodite.

Since a very strong connection between Adonis or Tammuz and Osiris existed, since both gods had temple festivals in Alexandria and since Frazer has written a 640 page book on this connection based upon ancient sources, it is reasonable to assume that Origen <u>also</u> understood the similarities between Adonis/Tammuz and Osiris. If Origen was conversant with the similarity between Adonis and Tammuz, as Syrian and Babylonian gods, certainly he knew of the relationship between them and Osiris, the Egyptian.

We will next explore Origen's grasp of these three international myths; it will explain the deepest level of all in the invention of Good Friday. Behind Osiris-Ra and the Sun cycle, behind Greek gods, and unifying the doctrines of all resurrection gods, stands the fountainhead of all this religion, which saturated the ancient world: the Babylonian mythology of Tammuz. Above all other dogmas, it is the source of the doctrines that composed "good Pagan doctrine", which Clement and Origen sought after. We will find in this innermost level, greater, more astounding reasons why the Wednesday Crucifixion had to be moved to a Friday by the Gnostics.

Before we enlarge our view to its ultimate depth and breadth, lets review the case against Clement and Origen thus far:

1) They were first to argue for re-interpreting the one-day Passover observance as a spiritual "Passage". Origen's spiritual discussions of Christian "passage" and rebirth borrow their imagery from the midnight rebirth cycle of Osiris.

2) Origen was first to argue for a three-day Passover celebration, using a dubious scripture from the book of Hosea. Adherents of Osiris worshipped him in this three-day fashion.

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[714] For a brief sampling of the nations and religions that Origen is conversant with, see Roberts, vol iv, pps. 403, and 560 This is by no means exhaustive.

[715] See Parsons, E , The Alexandrian Library, p. 163 Other interesting vignettes appear in the following pages.

3) Clement relates the Friday Passover fast to a multiple-day resurrection cycle of Adonis and Aphrodite in at least two places in his writings. Modern authorities acknowledge that Adonis worship is almost indistinguishable from Osiris'.

4) Clement uses the story of Dionysius' dismembered body as the basis for spiritually piecing together the complete truth about Christ's resurrection from international Pagan myths.

5) Origen publicly advances the notion that the Babylonian and Syrian resurrection gods, Tammuz and Adonis, are one and the same. He admits he finds truth by allegory on a case-by-case examination of any myth from any nation. Most likely he knew that Tammuz and Osiris are the same god.

6) Origen suggests the Bible commands Christians to praise the Sun as God's handiwork; an ambiguous statement that may be used to justify astrology in Gnosticism. The rebirth cycle of Osiris and the other gods is based upon both the daily and yearly travels of the Sun.

Clement's words and Origen's discourses are an outward bridge that offers a first, direct link between the resurrection cycle of Adonis, Osiris, Tammuz and Dionysus, with an invented Friday Crucifixion of Jesus.

Some may claim all this evidence is just my retelling of Gnostic allegory; it merely suggests a curious and murky origin for Good Friday. The skeptic requires greater proof and so greater, more ancient facts from history will be given. We will dig deeper still in this same ground and uncover an ultimate source for it all, deep in history's earliest layers. We will uncover the core mythology behind Clement's usage of Adonis, Dionysus and Osiris. The following discussion will show that the bond between Pagan and Christian resurrection observances is truly ironclad. And we will also prove it out of more words from these two Christian revolutionaries--Clement and Origen.

2.4.4 The Myth of Inanna / Ishtar's Descent into Hell

I have demonstrated that Osiris and Adonis worship underlies ancient Christian practices such as passion plays, fasting before and after the Passover and other ritual, but to understand the source of conflicting Passover observances in the early church, to conclusively establish the origins of Good Friday and to understand why Gnostics all over the Roman Empire hundreds of years after Jesus were so enthusiastically pursuing doctrines outside of original Christianity, we need to turn the clock back further, to the land of Sumer, in the south of Babylon, about 3,200 years before Jesus, for our ultimate "spiritual enlightenment".[716]

Before Aphrodite and Adonis and all the Greek gods, there was Inanna and Tammuz.

Babylonia, the region of the Tigris and Euphrates rivers, also called Mesopotamia and modern day Iraq, would eventually have three great centers of civilization, all similar to each other: Sumer, Babylon and Assyria. Sumer came first in regional power and prominence, about 3800 B.C. It was southernmost along the two rivers, closest to the Persian Gulf and the fertile lands of the river deltas. It was absorbed by the growing city-empire of Babylon around 2000 B.C.,[717] then Assyria, the northernmost region, gained military advantage about 1400 B.C. and finally rebellious Babylon regained supremacy for 100 years from 640 to 540 B.C. The cultures, mythology and even languages of these three adjoining areas were all related, although Sumer was most distinct in its language from the other two. Cuneiform writing, the impressing of wedge marks into soft clay tablets, was invented in Sumer and inherited by Babylon and Assyria, along with their religions.

Each civilization had similar sets of gods, differing in name, but not in function. In the third millennium B.C., the chief god was originally named Sin, the Moon god, but the greatest female deity in Sumer was his daughter, Inanna. She was known as Ishtar in Assyria and Astarte or Beltis in Babylon. Inanna's chief city of worship was Uruk, or Erech, in central Mesopotamia; her fame was universal. It extended to Syria, Lebanon, Arabia, parts of Turkey, Persia and ultimately Egypt, Greece and Rome. Ultimately she became Venus, Isis, Diana and of course, Aphrodite. Several Sumerian myths deal with the deeds and loves of the original Inanna, but the one

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[716] I am now tacitly forwarding the premise that Mesopotamian mythology is as old, or older than Egypt's. I recognize that some scholars will dissent at this point, especially in light of Martin Bernal's book, Black Athena, and all that has followed in its aftermath I take a more center of the line approach The evidence is that native Egyptian culture, primitive as it was, existed very early on, but the later cults were clearly in imitation of concepts first formulated in Babylon. My response to them is in the next Chapter - "Interregnum - The Meaning of the Crucifixion Signs to the World Begins with Babylon and Spreads Throughout All the Religions of Rome" In this chapter I marshal substantial evidence to prove strong similarities between the religions of Egypt and Babylon, and I retell the tale that it diffused from the Euphrates to the Nile, and not the other way (This does NOT mean that the two are identical, but it DOES demonstrate cultural transfer from Babylon TO Egypt.) Those who claim sole primacy for Egypt over Mesopotamia need to review that material first The debt of Syria to Babylon is well known, and the case has been made that Greece was seeded with the religion of Babylon via island civilizations of the Aegean, who got it from Syria and the Levant

[717] Kramer, S. Sumerian Mythology, p 6 gives a thumbnail sketch of the Sumerians entry into Mesopotamia around 4,000 B C., and their struggles with other peoples up until their final defeat about 2050 B.C

that is of interest to us is "Inanna's Descent into Hell". The Sumerian version we have today, dated to 3200 B.C., was the basis for a later Assyrian version, "Ishtar's Descent into Hell", as well as the Greek Aphrodite-Adonis festival of Alexandria and the Osiris Passion Play.[718]

In both Sumer and Assyria, Inanna and Ishtar are said to have been lovers or wives of the Sun god Tammuz. At one time, most scholars believed that Inanna's descent into hell was prompted by her desire to rescue a lover from a savage and ignominious death. Today, fewer subscribe to this, but the idea still has supporters. Part of the reason for this ambivalence is that the various tablets or inscriptions found in Sumerian debris heaps do not always speak the same thing about Inanna. In different cities and at different times, Inanna is pictured as the consort of differing personages. "In the Sumerian literary tradition .... the goddess is depicted as the wife of various Tammuz figures, fertility gods who are the power of new life and growth."[719] Are these personages one, differing, or a manufactured composite of many other gods? To complicate things further, some texts have made the Inanna figure to be Tammuz' mother. This corresponds to the Babylonian tradition that Nimrod, the builder of the Tower of Babel in Mesopotamia, married his own mother.[720] So mother becomes both wife and symbolically, sister as well. We will uncover evidence as we progress, that argues for a small handful of many-named gods and goddesses whose essence was infused into multiple stories throughout the ancient East. Modern scholars approach this phenomenon in a more isolated fashion. They do not fuse the various personalities together with a Middle Eastern mind, rather they preserve each entity as a separate god.

First example: This mother-wife duality is acknowledged in Egyptian religion as well as Sumerian. In the case of Osiris, the Egyptian Tammuz, one author has written that he was re-animated and resurrected "by his wife-sister-mother Isis"[721] In The Wisdom of the Serpent, we read of four "mother goddesses and their son-lovers--Inanna and Tammuz, Isis and Osiris, Cybele and Attis, Aphrodite and Adonis".[722] By now, the conscious reader should agree that all these pairs all originate in just one, Inanna and Tammuz.

Another example of this many-named phenomenon: the following quote uses a name for the Inanna character that is new to these pages: Mylitta. The name and its probable meaning is of interest to our story. In 1886, Charles Bigg, a professor at Oxford University, said in a lecture that Mylitta was the same as the Great Mother of the Syrians (Cybele), Astarte of the Arameans and Isis of the Egyptians.[723] James Frazer, in his book, Adonis Attis Osiris, wrote:

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[718] To repeat my above comments, some will challenge me on this subordinate role I give to Egyptian religion Henri Frankfort's book, The Problem of Similarity in Ancient Near Eastern Religions immediately comes to mind I am well aware of the arguments, and do my best to answer them in volume II.

[719] van der Toorn, K., op cit, p.452.

[720] See pages 22-23 of The Two Babylons for a discussion of this phenomenon among the gods in the ancient near east

[721] Van Sertima, I., Nile Valley Civilizations, p. 180

[722] Henderson, J, Oaks, M., The Wisdom of the Serpent, p. 17

[723] Bigg, C, The Christian Platonists of Alexandria, p 282

> ....at Babylon, every woman, whether rich or poor, had once in her life to submit to the embraces of a stranger at the temple of Mylitta, that is, of Ishtar, or Astarte...[724] (emphasis added)

In a note, Frazer quotes H. Zimmern as saying that the name Mylitta derives from the Babylonian phrase "Mu' allidtu" which is rendered as "she who helps women in travail".[725] This has double significance. It certainly applies to women in child labor, or in personal peril, but by extension it relates to the resurrection or re-birth of Tammuz from the dead, since Ishtar was in severe torment, wailing and deeply grieved at his loss, when she went to seek him in the netherworld. Now consider the next quote concerning Mylitta and Tammuz from a modern writer.

> The ancient Assyrians and Babylonians worshipped a goddess-mother and son. .... Mylitta, and .... Tammuz, or Adonis, the Savior, ... Tammuz was born on the twenty-fifth of December, and like other sun-gods, suffered and was slain. The accounts of his death are conflicting. One, however, STATES THAT HE WAS CRUCIFIED. He descended into Hell, he rose from the dead on the third day, and ascended into heaven. His worshippers celebrate annually, in early spring, a feast in commemoration of his death and resurrection, ... An image, .. the representation of their Lord, was laid on a bier and bewailed in mournful ditties ; precisely as the Roman Catholics, at the present day, lament the death of Jesus in their Good Friday mass. ... This image was carried with great solemnity to a tomb. The large wound in the side was shown, just as, centuries later, ... the wound which Christ received from the spear-thrust.
>
> After the attendants had bewailed the death of this just person, he was at length understood to .... have experienced a resurrection SIGNIFIED BY THE READMISSION OF LIGHT. The people then exclaimed : "Hail to the Dove! The RESTORER of Light." [726] (emphasis added)

The similarities between Clement's Solar mystery, Jane Harrison's recounting of the Osiris passion play at Abydos, the Alexandrian Adonis festival and Tammuz worship in Babylon, are all very evident in this passage.

Let me emphasize here the role physical sunlight plays in certifying the Pagan resurrection; in addition to echoing Osiris-Ra, it explains why Origen insisted on shifting the date of the Passover from Nisan 14 to Nisan 15, in order to always have it fall after a perfect full Moon, which is when the Moon's light is at its greatest.

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[724] Frazer, J.G., Adonis Attis Osiris, pps 36-37, and note 1 on page 37
[725] Ibid
[726] Morris, C., Aryan Sun-Myths and the Origin of Religion, pps 84-85

There is a much richer connection between Inanna's descent into hell, Tammuz' crucifixion and restoration and the Good Friday / Easter Sunday tradition than even this quote reveals; it comes from other ancient variations of this story. The version that perhaps had the greatest influence on the Alexandrian inventors of Christian doctrine was invented around 650 B.C. To extol the dramatic new fortunes of the city of Babylon, a new version of Inanna's descent and Tammuz' death was invented just for that city, in which the gods of that city, Bel and Beltis, took over the roles in the Inanna myth. The one major difference seems to be that the male figure, Bel, now assumed the prominent role of the crusader who ventures into hell. Bel dies in hell and the details of his death and Beltis' rescue, show an even more uncanny resemblance to the events of the Crucifixion.

These three accounts, in their original complete state, formed the basic tradition that Gnostics worked from when they revised Christian doctrine. We will touch very briefly on the Inanna story, then concentrate on the Assyrian Ishtar version because of its richness in details and then finally we will show the relation of the Babylonian version to Christ, Osiris and the invention of Good Friday / Easter Sunday.

The Original Myths for Good Friday

The outline of the original Inanna story is this: Inanna, goddess of the highest heavens, extremely independent and temperamental, chooses to descend down into the lowest depths of the netherworld and hell, where the living dead are kept in darkness and hopeless terror. In the present incomplete version, we are given no explanation for her decision, but other versions give us a probable explanation.

She warns her faithful minister that if she does not return after three days and three nights, he is to importune the gods vehemently, to force her return from the clutches of hell. She then violently presents herself at the gates of hell and after arguing with the gatekeeper, forces her will upon him. She must pass through seven gates in order to reach the place of the dead. At each gate, a royal symbol or article of clothing must be forfeited, until by the time she reaches hell, she is totally vulnerable and unprotected. At this point she confronts the gods and spirits which rule over hell and receives her fate: death and permanent entombment in hell, with no hope of escape. Modern translations read:

> At their word, the word which tortures the spirit, ...
> The sick 'woman' was turned into a corpse,
> THE CORPSE WAS HUNG FROM A STAKE.
> AFTER THREE DAYS AND THREE NIGHTS HAD PASSED,
> Her messenger Ninshubur, ...
> Rushed about for her in the house of the gods, ... [727] (emphasis added)

[727] Henderson, J., op cit, p 105,

Ea, the supreme god, is finally put upon to create two spirits who are given water of life, which they use to revive her. She then passes back through the gates, receiving back her emblems and is returned fully to life.

This is clearly a fragment, for no real plot with purpose or conflict or resolution can be found in what was just read. Inanna does something unexplainable, suffers and is restored. The key point contained in this version is that Inanna, the forerunner of Aphrodite, spends precisely three days and three nights in hell, hanging dead from a stake. This is precisely the time Jesus spent in the grave and it is also precisely the same type of execution he suffered.

Although the present-day versions of the Inanna and Ishtar myths are silent on the reason of why she makes her journey, several authors have pointed out there is additional evidence to indicate the myth involves a rescue by Inanna of her lover Tammuz, from the tragic misfortune of an early death.

The later Ishtar myth has an appendix to it, a last page that seems to be addressed as instructions from a public reader to his audience, telling the audience how to properly mourn for their own lost ones and honor Ishtar.[728] It was customary during Tammuz' memorial each June, for a chorus to sing this postscript to Ishtar's Descent, even while the women wailed for him,[729] so the two stories are deeply intertwined in the actual ritual. The consensus among scholars today is to presume Ishtar descended in order to release Tammuz from the bonds of death.[730] The truth probably is: Ishtar AND Tammuz died in the same way; Ishtar shared Tammuz' penalty in order to (magically?) release him from his fate. Several authors corroborate this.

> It may be conjectured therefore that the motive of the goddess in descending to the underworld was to bring back her youthful husband from the dead. ...[731]

Most likely then, Tammuz was also hung dead from a stake, or, as mentioned in the quote from Charles Morris, crucified on a stake or tree, presumably for three days and three nights. There are echoes of Tammuz' fate in his own cycle of myths which tie his death to Inanna's. Notice what we know about Tammuz, and see for yourself if it relates to Inanna's descent and punishment in hell by hanging from a stake.

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[728] See pages 459 and 460 of The Civilization of Babylonia and Assyria, by M Jastrow

[729] Sayce, A , op. cit , p 426

[730] In 1890, Frazer wrote in uncertain words: ".. we gather . . Tammuz was believed to die and his divine mistress journeyed in quest of him . " (New Golden Bough, p. 341)

[731] King, L , Babylonian Religion and Mythology, p. 183. There are some variations to this. Alster tells of a variant in which Tammuz is looked upon as a surrogate to return Ishtar back to life.(See pps 832-833, van der Toorn, op cit) Regardless of who is the victim, or who is the Savior, we can still see that the deaths of Ishtar and Tammuz are intertwined, and the story still revolves around the exchange of one god's life for the others. We do NOT see one god descending to Hades on a private errand, the way the story was originally found The myth involves BOTH gods in death and resurrection

> When Adapa, the first man, was sent by [the god] Ea to the heaven of Anu, he found on either side of the gate [of heaven] two gods clothed in mourning, and weeping for their untimely removal from the earth. .... One of them was Tammuz, and the other Nin-gis-zida, "the lord of the firmly planted stake." [732] (emphasis and comments added)

> .... Tammuz was a sun-god who spent half his annual life in the underworld, or, according to another view, as a fellow warder with Nin-gis-zida of the gates of heaven. .... Nin-gis-zida means "the lord of the upright post" .... [733] (emphasis mine)

From The Dictionary of Ancient Deities, article titled Ningishzida we learn a little more about this gatekeeper and partner of Tammuz in heaven: "Guardian or tree god. .... He could be an aspect of ... Tammuz. .... [734] (emphasis mine)

Lets recapitulate. The above three items refer to upright posts, planted stakes and trees. Nin-gis-zida becomes a personification of how Tammuz died. We have Tammuz the god and his symbolic death guarding the gates of heaven, for all suffering men to enter. All these images, associated in the mythology either with Tammuz, or his fellow gatekeeper and alter-ego Nin-gis-zida, can also be related to how his lover Inanna died: hung from a stake. It suggests a bond in death between god and goddess who were bonded in life as mother-son, sister-brother and wife-husband.

Very graphic confirmation for this co-mingling of all the imagery--trees, stakes, impalements and a three day death, comes from the real world of those times: a gruesome practice of the Assyrian armies in actual battle. The Assyrians, to intimidate their foes in arms, made public spectacles of captured prisoners during the siege of a city:

> The prisoners .... [were] impaled, the posts with their living burdens are placed in a line, near enough for their friends to watch their agony, yet too far off for an arrow to reach the sufferers .... . It is a slow, painful death, for the victims often linger two or three days in great agony ; and since new prisoners are daily added to their numbers, if the siege is long the posts at last stand like a forest between the two armies.[735] (emphasis added)

This brutal and sadistic punishment of war combines the metaphor of tree and forest, with an upright stake and a three day death, exactly what befell Inanna in the Sumerian myth. Since this manner of punishment is also associated with Tammuz and Nin-gis-zida in an Assyrian myth that was written hundreds of years

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[732] Sayce, A. op. cit., pps. 459-460.
[733] Ibid, p. 350, note 1
[734] Turner, P., and Coulter, C., op. cit., p. 346
[735] Maspero, G., Life in Ancient Egypt and Assyria, p. 349

after the original Inanna story, the common method of death by impalement or hanging in both these sagas can be considered a tradition of the story that continued over time from Inanna in Sumeria down to Tammuz in Assyria; impalement on a stake surely applies to his death as well.

A few more pieces of evidence will cement this connection between the Assyrian Tammuz in heaven and the way Inanna died over three days and three nights in her story. The later Assyrian versions also intertwine aspects of Tammuz and Ishtar in the character of Nin-gis-zida. The gatekeeper seems to become a mix of Ishtar and her lover / husband. We should also add, by some accounts Ishtar has a dual nature: she is both female and male, "an Ishtar who was at once both a goddess and a god."[736] This same androgynous nature has been ascribed to Osiris and Isis, the Egyptian counterparts of Ishtar and Tammuz.[737] This male-female duality carries over into the god of the upright stake. Sure enough, we find "Nin-gis-zida seems to be regarded as a goddess. .... It is possible that at Eridu she was held to be the wife of Tammuz."[738]

Since Ishtar has a male aspect, that "maleness" would be her imitation of Tammuz, her spouse, and the trinity of Tammuz, Ishtar, and Nin-gis-zida is completely merged into one essence, with one common death experience. As Ishtar joined with Tammuz in heaven after his death and resurrection, so she must have joined with him in hell in his death. His death was hers as well. (Recall how Clement broke 6 into 2 x 3, male and female, in his musings about Adonis' Friday death.)

If we consider all this evidence we come to the following observation:

As Inanna / Ishtar overcame the Seven gates of Hell to rescue Tammuz from early death, so his return and suffering was memorialized on the gates of heaven. In that way, "the lord of the upright stake" symbolizes the fate that Tammuz suffered and delivered from. Tammuz is therefore honored as the First Man Resurrected, the one who admits or refuses all mortals into heaven. His is the Judge of Mankind. His ordeal on the stake is the standard for all men, much as the Apostle Paul wrote: "I am crucified with Christ".

Other writers have also stated that the Inanna myth relates directly to Tammuz. Morris Jastrow, writing in 1898, believed that he could perceive the original layers of the Assyrian Ishtar myth from what we just reviewed. He believed there were originally two complementary tales, one for Tammuz that was lost and the second concerning Ishtar's Descent, which survived to our time. He also offered a final ending to the tale. He stated:

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[736] Sayce, A , The Religion of Ancient Egypt and Babylonia, p. 338. This seemingly schizophrenic personality is part of a larger problem with Ishtar's character. In The Dictionary of Demons and Deities in the Bible, Ishtar is said "to exhibit conflicting or contradictory traits: she is death and life, male and female ". She is also a goddess of war and sex whose symbols may include both lions and doves. On p 340, Sayce calls her "the male principle in female form."

[737] See Cooke, H , Osiris, p 50, where he says, "Osiris is male, Isis female . But are they not really one deity having, however, two aspects? This deity then is . male-female or herm-aphroditic and not only active but passive "

[738] Sayce, A , op cit , p 384, note 1

> A similar story must have been told of Tammuz, the sun-god, who is also the god of vegetation. The two stories were combined. Ishtar marries Tammuz and then destroys him. The goddess produces fertility but cannot maintain it. Tammuz goes to the nether world. Ishtar repents, bewails her loss, and goes to seek for her consort and rescue him. .... The story in this form must have ended in the restoration of Tammuz.[739] (emphasis added)

The relation of all this to Jesus' death and resurrection is obvious. If Ishtar's death was an exact duplicate of Tammuz' original death and if her imitation death were a necessary part of the process to resurrect him, then the impaled Tammuz is truly a forefigure of the crucified Christ, and Ishtar becomes the resurrecting force for Tammuz. She can thus be associated with Easter (same pronunciation), the presumed day when God's resurrecting force revived Christ to glory. Similarly, Gnostics like Clement and Origen can freely relate Aphrodite and Adonis, Isis and Osiris, alter egos of these gods, to the Crucifixion story.

The Egyptian resurrection story does not have Isis crucified and hanging from a tree along with Osiris for three days and three nights, but it does relate imagery, on the order of Nin-gis-zida, to Osiris in his resurrected state and it also makes Isis a key agent in his resurrection. Trees, or tree-like objects figure in his worship as well.

> .... the Egyptian Tet cross, which is a conventionalized image OF THE TREE and which represents THE BACKBONE OF OSIRIS ... represents the place of union between human and the divine, material and spiritual, living and dead.[740] Gerald Massey states that the Tet cross is a type of the eternal, and signifies death and the dead, i.e., those who have "crossed over." When the Tet cross is erected, Osiris, the dead god, is raised up, "suspended", as it were from his backbone, and thereby reigns as the resurrected one, Lord of Eternity...."[741] (emphasis added)

A few observations. First, the imagery is strikingly familiar. Osiris vertically suspended from his backbone compares very favorably with Ishtar suspended from a stake or upright tree. Rather than being internal, the backbone acts as a separate external support to the dead Osiris, much as the stake is external to Tammuz, Ishtar and Nin-gis-zida. If the Egyptian Tammuz were suspended from his backbone or enclosed in an upright tree in death, then most likely his Babylonian equivalent, who can be proven older, also died this way. Working backwards from the Osiris imagery, we now have a second line of reasoning independent from

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[739] Jastrow's discussion appears on pps 563 - 576 of his book, The Religion of Babylonia and Assyria. The above quote is from p 574

[740] In order to give a meaningful flow to this extract, I have transposed the words: "represents the place dead" from their original place, immediately before the start of this quote, to where the reader now finds them

[741] Van Setima, I Nile Valley Civilizations, pps 190-191,

Ishtar's descent story, that shows Tammuz most likely died the same way as both Osiris and Ishtar: on a stake or upright post.

Henri Frankfurt, writing in his respected work, Kingship and the Gods, explains some of the facts relating to the Tet resurrection. In the myth as told by Plutarch, Osiris' body is conveyed by ocean currents from Egypt to Byblos in Syria, on the Eastern Mediterranean coast, where it is engulfed and imprisoned by the growth of a massive tree. The tree trunk is harvested and becomes a great pillar supporting the palace roof of the King of Byblos. Isis, like Ishtar, goes on a quest and recovers the body from upright imprisonment in the great wooden pillar, by begging it from the King.

E.A. Wallis Budge, the famed British Egyptologist, wrote in his book, Osiris and the Egyptian Resurrection, the fascinating point that the wife of the King of Byblos, is named Astarte, which is another name for Ishtar or Astoreth.[742] In other words, when the Isis quest reverts to the part of the story where Osiris becomes associated with an upright stake or pillar, a remnant from the original Ishtar myth surfaces in the Egyptian version: Astarte is the "keeper" of the upright body of Osiris. This strongly suggests the close ties between the Assyrian and Egyptian myths and the priority of the Mesopotamian versions over the Egyptian.

Frankfort also notes that many Egyptian coffins have Djed pillar of Osiris painted upon them, in anticipation of a resurrection like Osiris'[743], but the Tet pillar and the tree trunk are not quite the same. Budge clarifies: "The tree trunk, or [Djed} pillar, is confused with the Tet"[744], which is more properly the literal vertebra of Osiris. He distinguishes between the two, but he also recognizes that many have created a close, almost indistinguishable similarity between tree pillar and backbone. So although Osiris is not crucified, tree trunks are associated with the dead Osiris, albeit in an abstract manner.

Author deTraci Regula mixes the symbols of the tree and the backbone together. She says that tree worship was the basis of the Djed resurrection ceremony of Osiris.[745] She adds the interesting note that the religion of Osiris viewed living trees as sacred, they were not to be cut down[746]; only dead wood might be harvested. Presumably, the life in the tree was reminiscent of Osiris still in the tree or still on the stake, before his resurrection. To cut down a living tree would be a sacrilege to Osiris as god of the resurrection.

Frankfurt makes the connection between Isis and the tree trunk in the story of Osiris.

[742] Budge, E A., Osiris and the Egyptian Resurrection, vol I, p 5
[743] Frankfort, H. Kingship and the Gods, p 178, and figures 40, 41 following p 212
[744] Budge, op. cit., p. 6
[745] Regula, d., op. cit., p 216
[746] Frankfurt, H., Ibid

> The story of a pillar recovered by a goddess may well be a rationalization of an earlier belief that a pillar was identical with a goddess.[747]

In light of what I have written about the Assyrian Nin-gis-zida and Ishtar, Dr. Frankfort's conclusion is most heartening.

Other evidence to support the tree-like death of the resurrection gods comes from the worship of both Dionysus and Attis, the Greek and Roman entities. (Wallis Budge confirms Dionysus has been recognized as a form of Osiris[748] and Attis is one of the three primary gods in Frazer's landmark book on the subject. Recall Frazer wrote: "Dionysus [was] a god who resembled Osiris in many points, and was said like him to have been torn limb from limb."[749] He also highlighted "... the similarity of the rites of Osiris, Adonis, Attis, Dionysus, and Demeter...".[750]

The myth and imagery of Dionysus provides us with treelike icons of him in death. Figures of the moribund Dionysus painted on Greek pottery show a robed corpse facing the viewer, hanging from an upright column that extends above the head and below the feet of the body. Several tree branches are springing out of the top of the column, just above the head. Several examples of this imagery exist in pottery now in museums in Greece and Italy.[751] It is a direct imitation of the Egyptian Djed Pillar of Osiris.

In the case of Attis, the similarity is exact. At the start of Attis' Spring death and resurrection festival, a pine tree is cut down, stripped of all its branches, covered in a woolen cloth, decked with flowers and a statue of the god is affixed to it, hanging from it in the exact manner that Inanna and Tammuz died. The time frame between death and resurrection in this festival is also three days and three nights.[752] This ceremony was being observed in the Roman world while Christ, the Apostles and the Christian Gnostics were all alive.

From Mythology to Festivals to Good Friday- How Did They Do IT?

Because of all these exact parallels among festivals that were being enacted throughout the Middle East, the ancient Ishtar-Tammuz myth in all its different forms was like a strident, inescapable noise that permeated the entire ancient world. It readily lent itself to comparison with Jesus' sufferings in 31 A.D. and the Gnostic theologians would be swift to grasp that fact. There is a Christian fable, called "Christ's Descent into Hell", which very strongly imitates the Inanna / Ishtar story. It was invented around the time of Good Friday, 370 A.D. As I will demonstrate in detail later, this is no coincidence.

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[747] Ibid

[748] Budge, E.A., op. cit,, vol. 1, p. 9.

[749] Frazer, J.G., The New Golden Bough, p. 406.

[750] Frazer, J.G., Adonis, Attis, Osiris, vol. i., p. 127

[751] See Kerenyi, C., Dionysos, plates 76A, 76B, 76C, 84, and 85, following after p. 388, also written comments about these plates on pps. 281,282, and 284 of the text.

[752] See Frazer, Ibid, pps. 267-268

In addition to these overpowering similarities, as previously stated, one of the Ishtar stories was publicly enacted very close to the Passover time when Jesus died; the version invented around 650 A.D. that showcased the chief god of Babylon, Marduk instead of Tammuz. It was enacted at the Babylonian New Year festival, held from the first until the 12th of the month Nisan[753], in the spring, almost exactly at the time of the Crucifixion. (The 14th of Nisan you will recall, is the day of the Passover.) The length of this festival, 12 days, is not accidental. It is a proportion worthy of Clement's Logos. It compresses the twelve moths of the year down into twelve days (a day for a month). This is a very curious fact that has importance for our story later on. Please note it. Various authors have noted the interplay between Tammuz' festivals, based upon the Inanna myth and the origins of what they call "Christianity". The role of Gnosticism in subverting original doctrine through these festivals usually escapes the modern historians, however.

> .... the form of the [Ishtar - Tammuz] cult which apparently most directly affected the origins of Christianity is that in which Marduk of Babylon was identified with Tammuz. At the .... New Year festival at Babylon, Bel [Marduk] was said to have been imprisoned in the lower world .... . A malefactor was slain with Bel and they descend together to the land of darkness. Beltis, his wife, descends to hell to seek him, ...Bel was laid in a sepulcher from which he soon comes forth. This Marduk transformation of the NATIONAL TAMMUZ CULT is only another effort of the [Babylonian] priesthood of the capitol to enlarge the worship and importance of the local cult.[754] (emphasis added)

We see here the method by which priests of Tammuz could skillfully restructure their original Tammuz festivals to effect a power play over Christian congregations and extend the influence of ancient mysteries in the face of primitive Christianity: modify the myth to match the popular concerns of the age and aggressively extend its notoriety in this more accepting audience. We also see how the root doctrines of Tammuz / Marduk must in some way become related to the "Christ story".

The next point is critical: The above author admits he does not understand the exact method by which the Tammuz myths were used to transform Christianity. We saw earlier that Paul Bradshaw could only speak of the "emergence" of Good Friday; he too, was lacking in critical details of the day's invention. What is so critical about this state of ignorance? The development of Good Friday is actually a very intricate matter involving the attempt by Gnostics to match up the calendars of two very different religions at one point in the springtime. Please bear in mind, we are speaking of an exact day of an exact week in an exact month in history, the literal day Jesus died, that needs to be replaced with an alternate day which is acceptable to all. This can only be accomplished if we can take a well known pagan festival and somehow maker a spiritual connection of sorts between the day it falls and the literal day Jesus died. But pagan festivals had many and varied reasons for why they fell when they did. These reasons could not be swept under

[753] Botero, J , Religion in Ancient Mesopotamia, p 158
[754] Langdon, S , article Tammuz, p 776

the rug when the new day was broached as the "new" day Jesus died. Earlier, we saw an ancient quote from a Pagan theologian saying he repeatedly tried to merge the Passover of Nisan 14 with the full Moon, the Spring equinox and the day Jesus died, BUT HE COULD NOT DO IT. The calendar rules for calculating these two days were at variance with each other. Apparently, someone eventually figured out a way around this date problem that the laity could accept. What was it? Can we ever know? All of the critical details of the exact ideas, the precise Tammuz festival and the critical dates the Gnostics used are simply missing from the record. We see a strong similarity between ancient Pagan ritual and later Christian liturgy, but we do not know how the men of 100 or 200 or 300 A.D. specifically made this transition between two incompatible festival schedules.

Part and ONLY part of the answer lies in the fact it was Egyptian Greeks, not Babylonian priests, who somehow spliced together aspects of Tammuz and Osiris rituals and inserted them into Christianity. But why do the Babylonian rituals seem to be the ones introduced into Christianity, when we have already seen Alexandria was the hotbed of Gnostic revolt, not Babylon? Wouldn't Alexandrians place their own rituals above that of Babylon? How do Babylonian festivals wind up in Alexandria Egypt as the leading force behind the transformation of the Passover? What of the role of Osiris in all this? The above author ignores Osiris, yet we have already seen it was the Osiris-Ra Sun myth which lay beneath Clement's desire to turn the Passover into a rite of spiritual "passage". Is the above author simply wrong on all his points? What is the exact relationship between the Marduk ritual of 650 A.D., the Osiris Sun mythology of Egypt and the date changes introduced into Christianity in 370 A.D.?

This tangle of seemingly adversarial circumstances must be separated out, one thread at a time, before we can truly claim to have proven that the myths of Osiris and Tammuz were used to create Good Friday. If we fail to do this we can only point to all these similarities and tell ourselves, "It certainly looks incriminating, but how did they justify the leap between Nisan 14 of 31 A.D. and Good Friday? Where is the smoking gun?" We will fill in the missing information of HOW the various Tammuz myths were collated by the scholars of Alexandria, how they picked among the various festivals of the ancient world for the right information they needed to justify Good Friday and what the exact information was which indelibly linked the exact Tammuz festival with Christ's Passover. In the process of doing this we will discover that the only year this change could have been applied to, was a year in which the literal Crucifixion fell on a WEDNESDAY. The true, detailed explanation of Good Friday's origin serves to prove the literal day Jesus died in history had to have been a Wednesday.

For all the evidence offered thus far, we have yet another detective mystery of the ancient world to resolve. The level of detail presented here to accomplish this result is most likely unprecedented. But before we advance to solving this next puzzle, we should understand the basics of the Marduk crucifixion myth.

The Marduk Myth Briefly Considered

The descent myth of Marduk said that Bel, or Marduk, "soon came forth" from hell and the grave. How long was his stay in hell? According to modern reconstructions of the twelve-day-long New Year's festival, Marduk was extracted from Hell on the eighth of Nisan after he had been brought there on the fifth of the month: three days and three nights just as with Inanna some 2,500 years earlier. The indications are that all of Babylon and the surrounding cities were involved in acting out the death and resurrection of Bel during the New Year's festival. People thronged the streets in mock anguish for three days and rejoiced at his deliverance on the third day, just as we saw earlier of Osiris and Adonis in Egypt and Syria.[755]

Most references in modern texts do not specifically state that Bel was crucified in hell, or that hung from a stake, as is provable in the Inanna and Ishtar versions. They say he was bound in a netherworld mountain where he endured torment and death. However, there is one reference in the ancient texts which seems to corroborate a death by impalement. It is talking about the kind of clothing Beltis, the Babylonian Ishtar, needed to wear, in order to dress the lifeless body of Bel as she was bringing him back from the dead. It reads:

> Beltis of Babylon who binds an *atu* garment upon her back and a *sipu* of wool on her face .... (that is because she with her hand wipes away) THE BLOOD ON THE BODY [OF BEL] WHICH WAS POURED OUT.[756] (emphasis mine; the first comment is the original author's.)

We don't have all the facts, but if all of Bel's blood was poured out while he was bound in a tortured death, impalement upon an upright stake for three days is certainly one way for that to happen. Note also a similarity between this incomplete account and the story of Attis. The tree trunk of Attis is covered in a woolen cloth, just as Beltis wraps her face with wool in this account. While not conclusive, this similarity does nothing to make the Babylonian story more different from any of the earlier versions; if anything, it brings it into line with what is said in the Inanna and Ishtar stories.

It also makes the Bel story even more relevant to the Crucifixion of Jesus, since the scriptures plainly state that Jesus' blood was poured out on the Cross, when a Roman soldier thrust a spear in his side. Another similarity: Beltis wiping up the blood of Bel is vaguely similar to the apocryphal story of Veronica wiping the blood from the face of Jesus with her veil, as he went with his cross to Golgotha, the place of execution.

Information from the different "Descent" myths can be consolidated into a basic reference that the Alexandrian theologians were familiar with.

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[755] See Frankfort, H , Kingship and the Gods, pps 323 - 324; also Oppenheim, Ancient Mesopotamia, p 187

[756] Ibid, p 323, and note 33 on that same page for a reference

Inanna, Ishtar and Bel Descent Myths[757]					
Gods Involved	Location / Empire	Date (Approx.)	Purpose for Descent	Punishment of Ishtar Character	Punishment of Tammuz Character
Inanna / Tammuz	Sumer	3200 B.C.	Uncertain	Hung and impaled from stake for three days and three nights	Not stated
Ishtar / Tammuz	Assyria	800 B.C.	Probably to rescue Tammuz	Not stated	Probably hung from stake
Beltis / Marduk	Babylon or Neo-Babylon	650 B.C.	Bel character is rescued from death and resurrected	Not stated	Bound, bloody corpse - dead three days and three nights

Given these three basic myths, with their various differences and our present-day knowledge gaps, it may seem unlikely that we can prove a single, precise link between them and Good Friday in Egypt of 370 A.D. Are there any other details from the Babylonian and Egyptian resurrection myths which will place the pagan resurrections precisely on a Friday in April of 31 A.D.? Or is our inquiry at an impasse? Yes, there is one simple fact that vitalizes our whole inquiry:

The next information deserves to be repeatedly highlighted and underscored for its absolutely sensational nature. Once more, note it carefully.

The greatest festival honoring the greatest Egyptian resurrection god--Osiris-Serapis, was held in Alexandria Egypt and Rome on April 25 of every year, the very day we have shown that Jesus actually died. While the Sun was going dark in Jerusalem, the Sun gods were being worshipped as supreme powers in Alexandria Egypt and Rome by the powerful and poor. Every year after the Crucifixion, the Pagan feast of Osiris was celebrated as a reminder to the Pagans of what happened on April 25, 31 A.D.--the Sun went black, due to the death of this "new" God. Year after year after year, Pagan Sun festivals were pre-empted in importance by the literal Crucifixion. This was nothing the Alexandrian priests would forget. Rather, the incentive burned fiercely for them to reverse this disgrace. They must somehow work with the literal week of April, 31 A.D., to turn Jesus' Wednesday death into a memorial to the Sun gods. It had to be a day-for-day exchange. This incredible "coincidence" uncovered by our scholarship and confirmed by the facts

[757] See Sayce, The Religions of Ancient Egypt and Babylonia, and Gordon, The Bible and the Ancient Near East, for the general dates listed here

of history is totally provable, by the most casual researcher.[758] Several references plainly state that Osiris-Serapis was celebrated in Rome and Alexandria on April 25 for centuries before and after 31 A.D.

This PROFOUND collision between the death of Christ and the Sun gods of the ancient world has been hidden from view for millennia.

It is the single most factor in the drive to turn the Wednesday Crucifixion into Good Friday.

The citizens of Alexandria found out virtually instantaneously that the God of the Christians died on the very same day that their supreme god was being exalted. It was the catastrophic shock that spurred the rival faith of Gnosticism to action. What exactly did they do with this Divine blow against their religion?

Read on.

[758] For proof, see Salzman, On Roman Time, p. 170, Table 7 and note 203. See also Turcan, Cults of the Roman Empire, p. 118-119, and his references.

2.4.5 The Short Answer to the Origin of Good Friday--When Jesus Dies on a Wednesday Osiris Dies on a Friday

While distinct commodities, Osiris-Ra and Serapis-Zeus were the pinnacles of their respective pantheons and a common focal point of the national pride of Greek Egypt. To secure Greek hold over the Egyptian culture, Osiris-Ra and Serapis -Zeus were also forged into the super-god father figure Osiris-Serapis. The Alexandrian Gnostics had an immediate and inexorable collision of their supreme god with Jesus Christ on April 25, 31 A.D. The fusion of both Greek and Egyptian religions was being overthrown in 31 A.D.

Historian Francis Legge observed that "post-Christ" Gnostic sects universally and immediately adopted a heightened secrecy about their ways very similar to the Osiris sects.[759] It is as if all the Gnostic students of Plato, Pythagorus and others, who lived and practiced their religion one way before the death of Jesus, suddenly turned inward and went underground, immediately assimilating both the teachings and the modus operandi of the Osiris cults--lock, stock and barrel. Such a signal and landmark change in behavior in the Gnostic world would be easily explained by the great eclipse events of April 25, 31 A.D. They were overawed, terrorized and threatened by "acts of the gods" in their own age.

This spectacular "co-incidence" of history is the one fundamental point the Tammuz scholars do not know. Vast heavenly portents occurring on the anniversary of Osiris-Serapis' festival, immediately shift the location for the Pagan origin of Good Friday from Babylon to Egypt. The extended Good Friday - Easter Sunday, three-day celebration required more theology, more struggle, more revision of the ancient myths to invent it, than a common date shared by Jesus and Serapis. If there were only Serapis, Jesus and Wednesday, April 25, for the Gnostics to meditate upon, we would be celebrating Good Wednesday today instead of the Passover. They would not have eventually replaced the Passover with a three-day observance in 370 A.D.

The "Gnostics" of 31 A.D. had a rude awakening in the sky, which they then had to transform into a full-blown Pagan theology in order to overwhelm original Christianity and perpetuate themselves as a priesthood. That new and revised Gnostic theology which borrowed its esoteric details from Tammuz, Marduk and Osiris myths and created the festival of Good Friday-Easter Sunday, is what we will now reconstruct. It was based upon pieces of information from Babylon, Assyria and the most ancient Osiris festivals, but it was invented in Alexandria, not in Babylon. The Alexandrian Gnostics' re-interpretation of those diverse stories,

[759] Legge, F., op. cit., vol I, p 17

turned these collective myths into a single, unified and expanded international religion of the resurrection gods.[760]

They would develop this counter-doctrine well before 100 A.D., before Emperor Hadrian called Serapist priests Christians and Christians followers of Osiris, keeping it in secret texts and making its teaching highly privileged, just as Legge pointed out above. Their actions would later provide Clement with a sacred tradition that hid beneath his reference to Osiris-Ra, Hermes and Aphrodite. This is no mere idle speculation on my part. Clement plainly lectured his contemporaries that only Alexandria had special teachings on the Resurrection Mysteries, directly given from the evangelist Mark and Jesus. Clement's more general boasting have been known about for centuries, but blatant evidence of this key Alexandrian stratagem has been uncovered only in the last fifty years.[761]

A letter written by Clement has been found and authenticated by modern scholars. It discusses a secret Gnostic Gospel about Christ's mystical teaching on His Resurrection and it also contains characters that can easily be substituted for Isis and Osiris.[762] According to Clement, the Gospel was preserved in a secret repository, like some relic of the Church, for centuries. (See Appendix 4 for a full discussion of this Secret Alexandrian gospel of Mark)

Morton Smith discovered Clement's letter in a Middle Eastern monastery in 1958 and Harvard University published the resultant monograph with full scholarly corroboration in 1972. In Clement's letter, he admonishes a disciple not to be fooled by other Gnostic groups. The Alexandrians alone have been made the owners of Mark's secret gospel for the elect Christians, and no one else, not even the Jerusalem Church Jesus started. Clement clearly prizes this document in his letter as a source of great truth [763]

If April 25 was a Wednesday, where does Good Friday come from? We will engage in some preparatory, background scholarship before I provide a chart of the week for April 25, 31 A.D., that merges Pagan festivals into the literal Wednesday Passover Jesus died. We will work through all the unanswered questions, all the vagaries and all the various festival dates, from Inanna in Mesopotamia, up to Serapis in Egypt, in order to authenticate my case.

Tracking Down the Unanswered "Festival" Questions

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[760] One author, Henri Frankfurt, disputed the great commonality among Osiris, Adonis, and Tammuz that Frazer so laboriously proved in his book On pps. 287-294 of Frankfurt"s Kingship and the Gods, he argues for deep-rooted differences between the three My response is that Frankfurt's deep differences do not negate Frazer's deep commonality We have, in my opinion, an effort to chip away at a grand statement with details Frankfurt's objections are out of proportion to Frazer's proofs See also The Problem of Similarity in Ancient Near ?Eastern Religions for more of Frankfurt's respected, although myopic objections

[761] Smith, M Clement of Alexandria and a Secret Gospel of Mark, p 81

[762] Ibid, pps. 446-447

[763] Ibid. See Smith's Introductory discussion for the many, many authorities that he consulted in verifying the authenticity of this letter, and the existence of the "secret gospel".

Here are the new issues that need to be addressed.

1) Modern scholars believe the Gnostics were most influenced by the Babylonian version of the Inanna story, but extended research shows otherwise. Clement repeatedly makes indirect references to the *Osiris* myth and hidden Egyptian wisdom in the Stromata when he discusses the Crucifixion. Christ died on Serapis-Osiris' festival, not Marduk's, yet the similarities between Marduk's festival and Jesus are greater than those of Osiris'. What is going on here? What are the true roles of Tammuz and Marduk in the invention of Good Friday?

2) Why were the Assyrian, Babylonian and Egyptian festivals held at different times of the year, if we are really speaking of one Pagan god? Doesn't this scattering of festivals throughout the year make it more difficult to associate Tammuz and Osiris with the Spring Passover? What kinds of difficulties did these different dates pose for Gnostics trying to borrow from all three religions? And how did they resolve all these differing dates into a sensible scheme for themselves?

3) In both the Tammuz and the Osiris cycles, the full death and resurrection of the god takes mere days, but the spiritual glorification of the god actually takes the whole year; it is accomplished across the seasons. In some versions, Osiris dies and is physically resurrected in the late Fall, but he does not empower the Moon or planets until the following Spring. In other versions, Tammuz dies and is resurrected in the Summer, but he regenerates in the Spring Sun. Why is this? How could these festivals that extend over months be the spiritual basis for a Gnostic-Christian festival that was held only in the Spring?

4) Finally, we return to the primary question: If both Jesus' death and Osiris-Serapis' holiday were on a Wednesday in 31 A.D., why was Clement teaching that "four becomes six" and why were Church fathers fasting on both a Wednesday and a Friday for hundreds of years after 31 A.D. Why not just create "Good Wednesday", with no Easter Sunday at all? How did the early Alexandrians arrive at Clement's Friday reference to Aphrodite?

There is no true cohesion between the calendar for the Passover and April 25. From year to year, the Passover can fall anywhere among the four weeks between late March and late April. Its date can vary significantly due to all the leap months that are added and left out from year to year in the Hebrew calendar. The Passover does not fall on April 25 for decades and centuries after 31 A.D. An April 25 ceremony dedicated to both Christ and Serapis, will not work, because the Christians will be observing Passover in March and early April while Serapis is feted at the end of the month. Something had to be done to anchor a Pagan myth with the Passover week, whenever the Passover week falls, be it March or April.

We are going to discover when we properly merge the ancient festivals of Osiris and Tammuz into the Crucifixion week of 31 A.D., Good Friday immediately emerges. When Jesus dies on a Wednesday, Osiris and Tammuz die on a Friday. I stress the word "properly". Two key insights tie together the festivals of Inanna hanging on a tree for three days and three nights, Osiris and Good Friday.

1) Although there are many and sundry resurrection festivals scattered throughout the year in 50 A.D., the earliest ones in both Mesopotamia and Egypt have a common origin--they were all held in the Fall. In this way, a common root source exists for all these differing festivals that Gnostics could tap into for their Easter theology. However, the Fall of 3000 B.C. is not the Spring of 31 A.D. We will see how the Assyrians, Egyptians and Babylonians eventually expanded this Fall observance into the Spring of the year, centuries before the Gnostics, making the task of the Gnostics to merge these festivals with the Passover even easier. Even so, there were Spring, Summer and Fall festivals in 50 A.D., and none of them except Serapis, matched April 25; none of them matched a Wednesday.

2) Even though their ancient festivals were held in different months, both Tammuz and Osiris died on the same day of the month.[764]

The problem before us then is to recreate how the Gnostics justified matching the seasons and matching the day of the month for very different festivals involving Jesus, Tammuz and Osiris.

[764] The alert reader may question as to whether this could be true for Marduk, based upon his special New Year's observance His observance seems different from the other god's festivals, but it is not I will show later Marduk's 5th through 8th day observance in Nisan is still derived from the religion of Tammuz

2.4.6 How Good Friday was Invented - Fitting the Death of the gods into the Crucifixion Week of 31 A.D.

How the Gnostics Solved a Two-Part Problem: Merging the Seasons and Merging the Day of the Month to Counter the Signs of April 25, 31 A.D.

When a modern researcher first examines the resurrection festivals in Jesus' time, attempting to simply match one of them with Good Friday, he is in for a surprise. In fact, the reaction can be one of outright exasperation. Even if we can trace the ideas behind Good Friday to the Tammuz mythology, a veil seems to have been cast over the origin of the literal Good Friday observance. Granted there was some discussion by Origen of a three-day event over 100 years before 370 A.D. but basically the festival just appears on a Friday in 370 A.D. seemingly from no prior tradition. And yet, as we have seen Inanna was hung from a stake for three days and three nights and modern scholars recognize Good Friday must have come from the Marduk (Tammuz) myth. How can we reconcile these two very distant facts of history?

Shuffling the Festivals Around on the Calendar to Get A Christ-Osiris Date That Matches the Passover

The major feasts of Marduk, Tammuz and Osiris are each held in a different season of the year, and to complicate things further, throughout history each god has had several different times during the year when the same theme was celebrated. Even though the Marduk festival gets moved to the Spring, it falls before the Crucifixion, there is no one festival, of all the many possibilities, that naturally falls on the Friday after Christ's Passover. (We have to "mystically" justify moving the correct festival from its normal place in the Fall into the Spring, in order to make it land on the right Friday.) It is as if Christmas has been celebrated twelve times a year over the centuries, but never on December 25, with no real explanation why.

Practically speaking, we have before us a roadblock, which high-level discussion of religious trends and similarities cannot remove. In order to progress from Inanna and Tammuz hanging on a stake in 3200 B.C. to Good Friday, I need to carefully document several pieces of information:

1) The different festival dates of Tammuz, Osiris and Marduk throughout the centuries.

2) The common origin for these separate festivals that links them all together as one "mystical" festival with a common date.

3) Proof from the existing writings of Gnostics, as to how they merged known facts from Osiris' festival precisely into Good Friday. (It exists.)

Nothing less will suffice to prove the literal origin of Good Friday.

Lets begin the process of tracing out 32000 years of resurrection festivals. First we will examine how the festivals came to be kept at different times of the year and

what the Gnostics did to overcome this huge problem in time in order to make Jesus a part of this pantheon. Second, after we have exhausted all the seasons, we will find the common thread that Clement used to leverage the festival times all together into a single date: the gods all died on the same day of the month, no matter what season they died in.

A. Why Did One god Die in Different Seasons? And How Could Clement Merge These Seasons into the Spring Passover? Identifying the "Fragments" of Pagan Truth

I have suggested that just as there are multiple versions of the Tammuz myth, so there are several times during the year when the gods' passion was commemorated in the centuries before and after Jesus. It was actually much more diverse than this picture. Festival dates varied from nation to nation and even city to city throughout areas such as Greece, Asia Minor and Babylonia.[765]

Although modern authorities consider him a lesser god in Mesopotamia's pantheon[766], Tammuz' mythology dominated both the early and later calendars of the region[767] and he also was a god of infectious appeal, readily accepted in many foreign lands by many different peoples.[768] Ancient calendars were filled with dates dedicated to Tammuz. In more rural communities, or in the Aegean Sea, local custom heeled the greater Tammuz myth to its service, creating regional celebrations with no universal relevance and no common date for observance. In 50 A.D., the wise men of Alexandria would have perceived these local festivals as secondary phenomena of little importance as they contemplated the greater truths before them, seeking after their holy grail of a unified Pagan-Christian "Resurrection Mystery".

This happenstance of unrestrained diversity can be considered the incentive for defining the first criteria the Gnostics might be expected to apply to the many resurrection traditions they considered: What aspect of each festival was truly universal and what part of it merely local culture, to be discarded?

Here is a synopsis of the more widely observed festival times for the resurrection gods of the Near East, up to and including first-generation Christianity. The following table is for convenient reference. If it seems a tangle, please continue on.

[765] Frazer, J.G., The New Golden Bough, pps. 346-347.

[766] See Appendix 3 for a re-assessment of these ideas

[767] See Radau, Early Babylonian History, pps. 297, and 307, which prove the New Year originally began in the Fall, in a month named for Tammuz. When the New Year was moved to the Spring, June-July became the month of Tammuz. See Langdon, S. Babylonian Menologies, p. 19, for the later calendrical reference

[768] Frazer, J.G., Adonis Attis Osiris, p. 7 says: "... Tammuz, or his equivalent Adonis enjoyed a wide and lasting popularity among the peoples of Semitic stock ...". See also p. 6 of that work. Jastrow, Religion of Babylonia and Assyria, p. 683, corroborates this.

Festival Seasons for Resurrection Gods - 3000 B.C. to 50 A.D.

Resurrection God	Time of Murder	Time of Resurrection
Tammuz (Mesopotamia)		
a. Sumerian	September-October (later, June- July)[769]	Two days after death (On the third day)
b. Assyrian	June-July[770]	Two days after death (Also a yearly Sun interpretation)
c. Babylonian	June-July[771]	Two days after death[772] Evidence for a December Resurrection holiday of 138 B.C. also exists.[773]
Adonis		
a. Syrian	Early-Mid Spring[774]	One day after death[775]
b. Greek	Midsummer (in Attica region)[776]	One Day after death[777]
c. Alexandria, Egypt	Late Summer[778]	One day after death
Attis (Phrygian)	Early Spring (March 25)[779]	Three days after death
Bel / Marduk (Babylonian)	Early Spring (March - April)	Three days after death
Dionysus (Greek)	Early Winter (Nov.-Dec.) and Early Spring[780]	Early Spring (Mar.)
Osiris (Egyptian)[781]	November[782]	Two days after death

[769] Frazer, J.G., Adonis Attis Osiris, vol I, p. 10, note 1, Langdon, S , Babylonian Menologies, p 19, and Sayce, The Religions of Ancient Egypt and Babylon, p. 474.

[770] Sayce, loc cit.

[771] Sayce, A , The Religions of Ancient Egypt and Babylonia, pps 473-474, Langdon, S , Babylonian Menologies and Semitic Calendars pps 120-122

[772] Langdon, loc cit , p 121

[773] Ibid, note 9, and p 137,

[774] Frazer, J.G , The New Golden Bough, p 346.

[775] Ibid Frazer adds: "in some places his revival was celebrated on the following day".

[776] Ibid, p 347

[777] Ibid, pps. 346-347

[778] Frazer, also on p. 346 of The New Golden Bough makes this conjecture based upon the fact that ripe fruits were used in the festivities I have not found any better data

[779] Frazer, J.G , Adonis Attis Osiris, pps 267-268

[780] Frazer, J G , The New Golden Bough, p. 420, says Dionysus had "biennial" (winter / spring) festivals; in the Aegean, and the island of Cyprus, although in some locations it was only once a year, presumably in the Spring Regardless of the Fall festival status, Dionysus always "brought in" the Spring Similar comments can be found in The Dictionary of Demons and Deities in the Bible, art Dionysus, p 253 There the winter and Spring festivals are identified as 1) Agrionia, and 2) Anthesyeria. Carl Kerenyi says the Athenians held a multiple-day festival dedicated to Dionysus' death and dismemberment about Nov 8 of each year (Dionysos, p 291, note 50, and p 294; also pps 292-293 Turcan, in The Cults of the Roman Empire, says that the original worship of Dionysus was held only in the city of Eleseus, and only in the "end of September - beginning of October" (pps. 294-295) This phenomenon of an Original festival in the fall, was also true for the early Tammuz, and the original Osiris The above catalogue of dates came into being centuries after the literal fall festivals for these gods.

Resurrection God	Time of Murder	Time of Resurrection
Serapis - Osiris (Greek - Egyptian)	NOT a true death and resurrection festival	One day dedication only

Lets make some order out of this data. First, one general point.

The only way to unify so many different dates and times in one "mystery" was through: 1) their common heritage, 2) the astrological cycle of the Sun in the seasons and, 3) allegory and abstraction--this last point being the standard Gnostic methods we looked at earlier. Given such a diversity of dates, Spring, Summer and Fall to work with, none of which immediately matches Good Friday, Gnostics had to use these other avenues of mystical reasoning in order to bring known festivals in line with the astronomical events of April 25, 31 A.D. Is this wild speculation on my part? Hardly. Look at this very critical quote from Clement on how the Gnostic uses "astronomy" [read it as "astrology"], to improve his senses and give him great powers to see the common identities in seemingly different things:

> astronomy .... lead[s] the soul nearer to the creative power [i.e. to God in Heaven above. But is Clement referring here to a man's intellectual growth, or to the transmigration of souls across the universe when a man dies? Either interpretation is possible. You may want to read the words again.], [Astronomy gives the practitioner] .... quickness in perceiving the seasons of the year .... [and makes the initiate] observant, ... of discovering correspondences and proportions, so as to hunt out for similarity in things dissimilar.[783] (emphasis and comments mine)

I will return to this critical statement of Clement later, the point right now is that it reveals the way Gnostics reasoned about seemingly dissimilar facts in the mystical waters of their - they used astronomy and the positions of the Sun and Moon during the year to "discover correspondences", that is, to find common mystical ties between events on earth that occurred in different seasons of the year. That, of course, is the problem we have before us right now. How do we find some common ground between Osiris' festival in the Fall, Marduk's festival in the Spring, and Jesus' Crucifixion at the Passover? One thing we can note right away is the mystical similarities between the Spring and the Fall equinoxes, the days when light and dark are booth twelve hours, when "good" and "evil" are in balance in the heavens. The equinoxes make it possible to compare events in the Fall with events in the Spring, as we will see.

Astrology's influence in Mesopotamia and Egypt was constant over the millennia, it grew in importance in Greece. The astrological mentality of the Babylonians and

[781] Frazer, (New Golden Bough, p. 420) notes that Osiris and Dionysus are MOST similar in their resurrection cycles and observance schedules.
[782] Budge, E A , Osiris and the Egyptian Resurrection, vol. I, p 4, note 1
[783] Roberts, A , op cit , vol ii, p 501

Assyrians is critical to understanding why the Tammuz festivals were moved around the seasons. It also provides the precedent for the Greeks to do the same kind of reasoning when they invented Good Friday.

Astrology is hardly an exact science, but astronomy is. In different Gnostic hands, various mystical wonders were revealed from the same data. We saw earlier that many Gnostic groups made crude attempts over the decades[784] to get the various resurrection dates to somehow fit together cleanly with the true Crucifixion, but their literal-minded shuffling of dates was inadequate to the task; they never really succeeded at a seamless fit. In addition to trying to move Tammuz' festival to the Spring, centuries after Jesus, when April 25 was slipping from collective memory, they tried the opposite tact: they tried to move the date of the Crucifixion around the months of March and April to coincide with a date that matched well-known Pagan festivals. The best they could do was to revise history. Some said the Crucifixion was on March 25 (the day Attis, another form of Tammuz, died), some said Jesus died on March 21, just before the Spring equinox, or April 14 or April 20.[785] These latter dates had meaning in the Egyptian calendar. Yet none of these alternatives could ever bring Pagan and Passover services together to everyone's satisfaction. Gnostic disputed Gnostic over the "best" spiritual date for the Crucifixion. Clement of course, believed he had the ultimate solution, as his secret Gospel of Mark led him to reconstruct the calendar. The curious thing here is that none of the disputing Gnostic sects ever tried to tell the world that Jesus died on April 25, the day of Osiris-Serapis. That connection, whether you believe my proofs for April 25 or not, could have been easily made by all of them, but the record clearly shows it was avoided. Either no Gnostic knew what was in the standard Roman festival calendar, I am utterly wrong in everything I have presented thus far, or the connection was being shunned at all costs by these men.

This is the true explanation of why the date of the Crucifixion became a confused, contentious issue in the centuries immediately following the Apostles. Dating Jesus' death was no longer a matter of truthful history, rather it was a war of competing mystics and astrologers. The Alexandrian successors of Clement and Origen finally presented to Emperor Constantine what they had been teaching in secret for centuries[786]: Osiris' Friday fit into the Passover week. It is interesting to note that in the century before Constantine made Christianity the state religion of Rome, Clement publicly stated the different ideas of <u>other</u> Gnostic groups on when to observe the Crucifixion; <u>but he was silent on his own understanding</u>.[787]

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[784] Finnegan, in <u>The Handbook of Biblical Chronology,</u> lists several of the Gnostic opinions on which day Jesus died, that circulated in the Mediterranean world in the decades before Clement See Section 2.4.6.3 - The Struggle to Match Pagan Dates with the Passover, which follows later on in this book

[785] See Finnegan's discussion of these dates in Handbook of Biblical Chronology, p 364.

[786] There is an unbroken trail of leading Bishops and scholars from Alexandria, which dominate the early Church up until, and even after, Emperor Constantine legalizes the Church in 325 A.D. Rome does not become the center of the Church until after 350 A.D., until then, the heirs of Clement define the Church for the world. Some of this, including lists of these men who carried forth Clement's teachings, are given in Appendix A.4.3 - The Preeminent Role of the Alexandrian Schools in Subverting Christianity

[787] Roberts, A., Ibid

This struggle to reconcile diverse and discordant facts among competing Gnostic factions was the basis of Clement's homogenizing doctrine that all nations have a piece "torn from the body of truth", which Gnostics then had the right to re-assemble. In practice, Clement's "Word of Truth" was more like a polyglot anagram, than a law of Nature, but as Frazer wrote, "In name and detail the rites varied from place to place ; in substance they were the same."[788] This reality paves the way for grasping the Alexandrian invention of Good Friday.

We will return to see more of the Gnostic application of astrology to the Crucifixion, retracing their exact lines of reasoning from surviving texts. But first, we need to see the layout of the different festival dates as they were held over the entire year.

A.1 The Different Seasons: Understanding the Many Festivals of Tammuz and Adonis

The reason why the worship of Tammuz and Adonis was spread over different seasons in different lands in Roman times comes from the 3,200 year history of how the Festivals were adapted and revised by different peoples. The "mess of dates" the Gnostics had to grapple with in 50 A.D. relates to four factors: 1) the evolution of the god's identity over the centuries, 2) Babylonian revisions of the original Sumerian calendar system (this was done in the period 2350 - 1700 B.C.,), 3) Assyrian changes to the Babylonian calendar about 900 B.C. in which the role of the gods was revised, and finally, 4) the fluctuating influence of empires-won-and-lost politics and astrology, over the state religion throughout Mesopotamian history.[789]

According to ancient astrology, the seasons were fixed quarters of the Zodiac, that, among other things, marked the life cycle of a man, with spring representing birth and winter death. Each season was a separate mystical beginning, having unique properties, inaugurated by a different phase of the Sun (equinox or solstice), which defined times of increasing spiritual light or darkness upon the lives of men. In parts of Mesopotamia and Egypt, Fall was the time to both harvest and plant seed, for next spring. Thus the Fall could be viewed both as a time of in-gathering, completion and death, and also as a time of regeneration, anticipating a rebirth or resurrection in the following spring.[790]

The months of the earliest Sumerian calendars (ca. 3000 B.C.) were named for times of planting and harvesting, with one exception. The month that Tammuz died in, is named for him. It is the only month that deals with a human being, in the middle of all this planting, growing and harvesting.[791] The indication is that Tammuz' death (and resurrection) was a singular event in ancient history that was

[788] Frazer, J G , Adonis, Attis, Osiris, p. 6.

[789] For a brief review of the evolution, that I trace here, by a Cambridge scholar, Norman Lockyer, see his book, The Dawn of Astronomy, pps. 372-373 Lockyer in turn quotes several other authorities.

[790] For ancient discussions of these ideas, see, Book I, Chapter 12, The Annual Seasons, p. 21, and Book ii, Chapter 11, The New Moon of the Year, pps. 63, 64 of Ashmond's translation, Ptolemy's Tetrabiblos

[791] Radau, op cit., pps. 289-290, gives the original ancient names for the months as: "grain-harvest", "ear-of the corn", "sowing", "field-in-blossom", all except for "Duzu", which is Tammuz, the great fallen king

integrated into the yearly calendar as the ultimate planting, to be harvested for immortality and eternity. Mark Cohen (The Cultic Calendars of the Ancient Near East), wrote: "Dumuzi / Tammuz was the power in the barley seeds planted in the fall, which ultimately would manifest itself in the bountiful harvest of the spring."[792] Thus Tammuz, like Osiris, was everyman in the resurrection, the man of all seasons who merged the calendar with his death and resurrection cycle.

The original Sumerian month names were revised twice - once each by the Babylonian and Assyrian peoples who overran and absorbed Sumeria, but Tammuz is a constant name in the calendar regardless of who was ruling Mesopotamia.[793]

In addition to these label changes for the months, we have the cultivation and extension of the star mythology the ancients associated with each month. Each month was ruled by its individual god, who set the tone for that 30-day cycle of the Moon. Nevertheless, at key moments in history, the King and the priests could together change which god ruled which month, promoting a lesser god to an even greater status than the entities whom he once served.[794] This was an interpretation of time as religion that also started with Sumeria.[795] The Assyrians of 900 B.C. had a monthly star mythology that focused on Tammuz as both a lesser folk-hero and a supreme, glorious Sun god. The Neo-Babylonians of 650 B.C. had one that was more akin to the story of Creation, with Marduk as a key benefactor to a troubled pantheon. These changing undercurrents of belief that swirled around Tammuz, strongly influenced how the priests over the centuries enlarged a developing Sun-god to become the supreme Sun of all four seasons. Coupled with astrology and the independent tradition for separate feasts by each of the Babylonian cities, these shifting perceptions also give part of the explanation why the festivals were celebrated in competing seasons all over the Roman Empire by the time of Jesus.

A.1.a The Evolution of Tammuz' Role in Mesopotamian History

There was a correlation between how Tammuz was viewed by his worshippers through history and when those worshippers chose to honor him during the year.

[792] Cohen, M., The Cultic Calendars of the Ancient Near East, p 477.
[793] See Langdon, Babylonian Menologies, pps 12-13, for this overview
[794] Sayce, A., The Religions of Ancient Egypt and Babylonia, pps. 473-474, plainly shows this was the case in Old Babylon
[795] Langdon, op cit., pps. 11-12

Many historians have noted that the original Tammuz / Osiris myths of 3200 B.C. were based upon events in the life and death of a literal ancient King.[796] This man had a larger than life existence, probably ruling over the river valleys of both Mesopotamia and Egypt[797], but died an untimely and catastrophic death at the hands of an enemy; his life's exploits were then memorialized and deified.[798] When the human Tammuz was first mourned, the observance was most realistic. It lasted a few days, a week, or two at the most; the month in which he was remembered led the year.[799] Original Sumerian myths of the same time[800] describe Tammuz as a mere Shepherd-king[801]. One modern scholar simply called him "a lesser god".[802] By perhaps 2900 B.C., a growth in his role is apparent. Clay tablets had been inscribed that call him a Sun-god and a Moon-god,[803] but he is a solar deity that has only one or two facets of the Sun's glory. In the words of one author, he is "the primitive sun-god of [the city of] Eridu".[804]

Shamosh (the Sumerian Utu) is the supreme Sun-god of Babylonia, depicted with Solar wheel as his emblem and potent rays of light proceeding from his presence. Tammuz is not at this time a "first string" deity, like Shamosh, Anu, or Ea, who rule the Sumerian pantheon. He is not supreme Father-god of the heavens or the

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[796] See Murray, M., The Osireon at Abydos, p 25 In 1954 "Falkenstein .. asserted that .. Dumuzi [Tammuz] was no god, but a human being who became deified." The name Dumuzi appears twice in the King list of Sumer, once before, and once immediately after the Flood See pps 829 - 830 of The Dictionary of Deities and Demons in the Bible, for the rest of this citation See also Sasson, J , Civilizations of the Ancient Near East, vol ii, p 1874 Hislop, in The Two Babylons, says this person was the Biblical Nimrod, who reigned in both Mesopotamia and Egypt after the Flood See pages 55-56 of that book Herman Hoeh, in his Compendium of World History, agrees with Hislop, and he reconstructs Nimrod's reign over the two regions from ancient king lists Wayne Chandler, writing a chapter called "Of Men and Gods", in the book Egypt Revisited, says that the Chronicles of Ancient Egypt definitely say Osiris, the Egyptian Tammuz, was a human ruler who was so great that he was deified after death His life's exploits are mentioned in the Chronicles (see page 126 of Egypt Revisited) See also H Brugsh, Egypt Under the Pharaohs, p 14 Budge, in Egyptian Ideas of the Afterlife, (p 59), says: "He represented to men the idea of a man who was both god and man Originally they looked upon Osiris as a man who lived on earth as they lived, who ate and drank, who suffered a cruel death .. "

[797] Compare Herman Hoeh's treatment of Nimrod, op cit., vol pps, who he says ruled in BOTH lands, with other scholars admission that Tammuz ruled in Mesopotamia, Osiris ruled in Egypt (and other lands), and the fact that Tammuz was Osiris The conclusion follows Sayce, The Religions of Ancient Egypt and Babylonia, p. 325, quotes Ball who proved that the Sumerian word Asari, and the Egyptian hieroglyphic for Osiris are IDENTICAL Sayce wrote: "the character and attributes of Asari and Osiris were the same." Sayce also points out in the same place that Asari can be defined as "strong one" or "prince" The Bible says that Nimrod was "a mighty hunter before, [or in place of} the Lord" (Genesis 10:9), and that he had a kingdom (Genesis 10:10)

[798] Bottero, on p 62 of Religion in Ancient Mesopotamia, explains this "divinization" of Tammuz (Dumuzi) whom he identifies as a literal King of Uruk, the Mesopotamian city dedicated to Inanna / Ishtar, the mate of Tammuz. He makes similar comments on p 107 of Everyday Life in Ancient Mesopotamia Budge, in The Judgment of the Dead, (p 15) cites six different roles ,which the ancient Egyptians accorded to Osiris One of them was a "deified king of all Egypt". That is, a human king who was turned into a god after death, just as Tammuz Budge adds, the religion of Osiris "grew up" from "myths" about the life of the human King. All this fits very well with what Hislop wrote, as cited in the above note.

[799] Radau, op cit., p 297, says: "The year originally began with .. *Dumuzi* "

[800] Langdon, art Tammuz, p. 775

[801] van der Toorn, op cit., p. 829 Sasson, J , op. cit , p. 1874 says much the same

[802] Oppenheim, A., Ancient Mesopotamia, p. 196

[803] Ibid, p. 830., says, about 1800 B C " Dumuzi rises like sunlight over the mountains, and is reborn every month like the moon."

[804] Sayce, A., The Religions of Ancient Egypt and Babylonia, p 350, note 1

universe. He does however, have dominion over the calendar, which is viewed only as the marker of earthly events. Tammuz' pre-eminence in the temporal regulation of men's affairs is a befitting vestige of the sovereign control he literally exercised upon society when he lived and ruled as a man. This presence in the calendar is not equal to Tammuz controlling all the spirits that lie behind the Zodiac, the Sun, the Moon and the planets. Tammuz is an earth-based power at this time, heaven is ruled by others greater than he.

The first Tammuz resurrection festival was observed in Sumerian times in the Fall of the year, in September-October, at or about the New Years celebration.[805] Anciently it was called Edinna-U-Saga.[806] This ancient Fall festival provides the bridge between all the Mesopotamian flavors of the story and the Egyptian religion of Osiris-Serapis which the Alexandrians observed. This aboriginal Fall worship of both Tammuz and Osiris was the common heritage of one god, that justified indiscriminate Alexandrian borrowing from any form of the myth, in any season of the year. Let me very quickly secure this point.

At the risk of oversimplifying a very fragmented calendar system, there were perhaps five major calendar regimes and related festival seasons for Tammuz worship during the period 3000 - 650 B.C. in Mesopotamia. They would be: 1) Sumerian, 2) Old Babylonian, 3) Old Assyrian, 4) New Assyrian and finally, 5) New Babylonian.[807]

In 3000 B.C., in the earliest age, Sumeria had many local calendars; every temple celebrated its festivals by its own method[808] and even business transactions were written up in the local city's calendar where a deal was made.[809] There was no true standard way of counting days and years throughout the region. The dominant Sumerian calendar was that of the capitol city - Nippur. It became the standard for the Babylonians and Assyrians when they arrived in Mesopotamia around 2400 B.C.[810]

Ambivalence seems to be inherent in the Mesopotamian method of marking time from the earliest ages. As Samuel Langdon pointed out, the original Sumerian

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[805] Most accounts of this ancient Fall festival were scattered throughout the literature this author was able to amass, but Radau, cited earlier, p 297, is conclusive, the year began in the Fall with the Dumuzi festival at or near New Year's day. Sayce, in The Religions of Egypt and Babylonia, p. 474, says the original resurrection was observed at the Fall New Years. Altscher, in his article Tammuz, in The Dictionary of Deities and Demons in the Bible, says that one Damuzi festival, first thought to be in the Spring, is now understood to have been held in the fall. Since the Summer feasts are well documented, this Spring to Fall shift affects the earliest festivals (See p 831)

[806] van der Toorn, Ibid.

[807] Langdon, op cit., p. 11, gives the last three. Radau, p. xxx, the first, and Radau and Sayce the second. (By New Assyrian, I mean the Standard Mesopotamian Calendar, as termed by Marc Cohen, which became the basis for the Hebrew calendar. See p 13 of his book, The Cultic Calendars of the Ancient Near East. We could refine this outline further into north and south Mesopotamian calendars, and even individual temple / city calendars, the interested reader should consult Cohen, op cit., pps 8-13)

[808] Sayce, A. The Religions of Ancient Egypt and Babylon, p. 473, and Langdon, Babylonian Menolgies, pps 12-13.

[809] Langdon, S., op. cit., p 13

[810] Ibid, and p 18

calendar was actually two six month calendars[811], beginning with the equinoxes of September and March; the September calendar originally beginning the year.

> In many locations [in ancient Mesopotamia] there were parallel major festivals in the first and seventh months--suggesting that rather than considering one of these festivals as marking the beginning and the other the half-way point of the year, the ancients viewed each as beginning the onset of .... a six-month equinox year.[812]

So from earliest times, an interplay exists between Fall and Spring, which proves fertile ground for the ancient shamans to invent their Tammuz festivals. The two seasons are both related to each other as the start of separate "years" and in opposition to each other: one signifies death and the other rebirth. Why this peculiar state of affairs? The answer is very simple if we consider the obstacles under which ancient Sumerian priests had to keep time.

There were two six month calendars in ancient Mesopotamia because that was the only way early astronomers could anchor time with hours of equal length - wait for the equinoxes to arrive and use the hours of those two days for the start of the next six months.[813] They were also the days that pegged the Spring and Fall harvests, the most critical activities of the year for survival.[814] Regardless of whether there were leap years or leap months, by tracking time from equinox to equinox, the calendar could always be kept in precise harmony with the seasons and harvests, with very little instrumentation. This rudimentary fact, which created two six-month "years", also became the basis for Tammuz festivals being observed both in Fall and in Spring, with complete interchangability. Tammuz, the potent despot in life, gave his prowess to the earth when he was returned to it. As mentioned earlier, Tammuz was glorified to become the animating force that went into the ground with the Fall barley seed and returned to life in the plenteous Spring harvest. Let the story unfold through time.

The original Sumerian calendar of 3000 B.C., started the New Year in September / October, in a month named for Tammuz.[815] By the time of the great Babylonian king Sargon I (2350 B.C.), Tammuz was still September / October, but it was now the seventh month of a year that began in Spring at March 21, the equinox.[816] Eventually, (ca. 1000 - 800 B.C.) June / July, the fourth month of the Spring calendar, would be Tammuz' month, part of an internal Assyrian revision, based, as we shall see, upon astrology.

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[811] Ibid, p 97.
[812] Cohen, M , op. cit., pps 6-7.
[813] Tester, J., A History of Western Astrology, p 20. Gleadow, op cit., p.20, addresses the equinoxes as turning points for the early astrologers. Cohen, op cit., p. 6 shows the Bible (Ex 34:22 and I Sam 11:1 uses this same phrasing–"at the turn of the year"
[814] Ibid, p 7
[815] Radau, op cit., p 297
[816] Radau, op. cit , insert chart opposite p 306, and loc cit .

About 1700 B.C., Hammurabi, greatest king of the Old Babylonian Empire, under advisement from his priests, finalized and codified the calendar changes that had occurred earlier under Sargon I [817], who in effect had transformed the two New Years into a political institution of the Empire that regulated ALL temples and cities: Spring for religious matters and Fall to start the civil year. Under Sargon's system, now promoted throughout all the land by Hammurabi, the interplay between Fall and Spring equinoxes became a polarization of sorts between the practical and the religious.

Ancient coronations of kings in Sumeria and Babylon were strategically conducted in September / October, the first month, when the harvest was ingathered. Each king started his reign with the new wealth of the land in his possession, virtually dedicated for his office and use. A Fall inauguration was a politically astute method of securing the new king's power, at least for one year's harvest. When the kings died, their reign was made to end in the Fall, no matter when in the year they actually died. It now becomes obvious why this Fall season was the original time when the death and resurrection of Tammuz, viewed only as a human shepherd-king, was observed.

Sargon's transfer of the New Year to Spring did not create Tammuz' Spring festivals, it merely promoted what local priests were already doing for centuries. Astrology and the agendas of king and priest created a stronger emphasis on Spring festivals, but it did not invent them.

Ancient clay and stone remains, dated to 2100 B.C., speak of two distinct local festivals dedicated to Tammuz. (There were others as well, and mimic-festival of Inanna or some other form of the two gods were held throughout the region.) The two festivals which scholars note today, were held in the Babylonian cities of Una and Lagash. The Una festival was held in March, again, at precisely the time of the Spring equinox. It is clearly an astrological festival. In Lagash, the time to observe was in Summer at the Solstice, the longest daylight day of the year.[818] This merging of Tammuz' death with the fading powers of the Summer Sun is also blatantly astronomical.

The Lagash festival, with its Passion plays and weeping for Tammuz, became the template for Tammuz Summer worship in the ancient world, including, much later, Jerusalem. The tradition of Summer Solstice mourning for Tammuz was to continue in other parts of the Levant up until perhaps 900 A.D.[819] When the Tammuz festival is discussed in popular literature today, it is almost always this Summer festival that is referenced first.

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[817] On the date of 170 B.C. : Sayce, Ibid Sayce, writing around 1900, gave Hammurabi's age as 2200 B C More recently, this has been revised downward to 1728 - 1626 B C See Gleadow, The Origin of the Zodiac, p 152 Regarding WHO moved the New Year to Spring, Sayce, A The Religions of Ancient Egypt and Babylon, p. 473 is vague in his words, seemingly crediting Hammurabi for it But careful comparison of Radau, p. 298 with Sayce p. 473, shows it was Sargon I who moved the New Year to the Spring, and Hammurabi who revised the last month of this reconstituted calendar

[818] van der Toorn, ibid

[819] Frazer, J.G., op cit , p 230.

While these two festivals were held in separate seasons, they were not tightly integrated with each other into a single yearly worship cycle. While Tammuz was thought of in terms of the seasons, clear back into Sumerian times, his worship did not yet transcend or encompass all of the seasons and all of the powers of heaven, in a formal national Sun religion; but this would develop.

In Sumerian times, the calendar mythology of Tammuz extended to perhaps three months of the year - Tammuz, Ab and Elul (roughly speaking, our modern June, July, August). Much later, under the Assyrians, his saga will be applied to all 12 months.

Gaston Maspero explained how Tammuz grew over the centuries as an ever more powerful Sun god, associated with Summer and Springtime Solar festivals, in his book, The Dawn of Civilization. He also suggested the role astrology played in expanding Tammuz' identity into a Sun god who swayed all the seasons of the year. Maspero wrote:

> ... the same movement which instigated the fusion of so many [local] Egyptian divinities of diverse nature, led the gods of the ... [Babylonians] to ... lose themselves in the sun. Each one at first became a complete sun, and united in himself all the innate virtues of the sun--its brilliancy and its dominion over the world [that is, the astrological powers of the Sun over men], ... Dumuzi [Tammuz], like Merodach, became the sun BEFORE the summer.[820] (emphasis and comment added)

Exalting a primitive Sun god such as Tammuz or Osiris to yet greater powers over both crops and men, naturally enriched their theology to include yet greater mysteries about the seasons than had been previously taught. As Maspero indicates, even though Tammuz' death was feasted in the midsummer, he took on the two roles of the resurgent Sun BEFORE the Summer and the dying Summer Sun, in one grand doctrine. Now, we have festivals where Tammuz dies in both the Summer and Fall. His death and future resurrection is observed in the Fall and his Resurrection is emphasized in the Spring. The death and resurrection cycle that was originally a one or a three-day affair is extending across the seasons. The Spring Sun of course, was the one that was eclipsed while Jesus was on the Cross, the Sun of most interest to the Gnostics.

This trend by Babylonian priests in expanding Tammuz' functions to encompass the entire Solar year, gives us a mystical link between the Tammuz-Ishtar godhead and the Spring Passover season. It preceded and anticipated the Platonic (400 B.C.) concept of a Solar Logos, which was mentioned earlier and which was eventually applied to Jesus. Again, such "seasonal / yearly" astrology played heavily in Alexandrian Gnostic thinking about the Passover and Easter.

The prime example of this "spiritualization" of the more literal events of Tammuz' death is the later (ca. 900 B.C.) Assyrian version of the Ishtar Descent myth. In the

[820] Maspero, G , The Dawn of Civilization, vol ii-b, pps 646-647

later Assyrian version, we are not told that Ishtar is dead for three days and three nights like Inanna. Either that part is missing, or the tale was revised to be less literal and more allegorical. In fact, the length of both her, and Tammuz' disappearance, like that of Osiris, has now been extended through the year from summer to the next spring, to encompass all the seasons of the Sun. She dies in summer-autumn and revives at the next springtime, at planting season. In this later version, there is a shift away from a literal three-day, three-night death on a stake to a more symbolic, profound death and revival that deals with astrology on a national scale, the vegetation cycle and all life on earth. Nevertheless, as Maspero observes, the more modern Assyrian story is rooted in the older Summer version. Evidence of this more mystical death and resurrection cycle is apparent in the later Assyrian saga.

After Ishtar is slain, her personal servant and messenger canvasses the gods to find one who will resurrect her. After Shamosh, the Sun-god of Justice, weeps for Ishtar (much as others weep for her lover Tammuz) the Supreme god Ea is convinced to demand Ishtar's return to life. He creates his own personal messenger, a eunuch, to descend to the nether-world and relay these instructions to Ereshkigal, mistress of the dead and Hell. This messenger is named Asu-shu-namir. Morris Jastrow, in his book, The Civilization of Babylonia and Assyria, says this of Ea's messenger to Hell: "The name signifies 'His exit is resplendent'--clearly a symbolic allusion to the rising sun of the springtime." [821] (emphasis mine)

So first the Sun weeps at Ishtar's death, suggesting a subdued Winter Sun in mourning and then later the messenger that heralds her return is revealed as a glorious Sun of the Spring, perhaps even a veiled reference to Tammuz' symbolic spring resurrection. This "more allegorical" myth was interwoven into the Assyrian calendar and the feast days.

A.1.b Assyrian Revisions Within the Babylonian Calendar

In both Old Babylon and Assyria, we know that each month of the year was formally associated with a patron god or goddess.[822] While the ordering of which god guided which month was changed at one or more times in the history of Mesopotamia, the basic system prevailed until the time of the Alexandrian Gnostics. About 900 B.C., the Assyrian priests reassigned the Babylonian calendar gods to different months and their new arrangement went hand in hand with their expansion of the ancient Tammuz mythology. A quick look at the last two columns of the following table will show how thoroughly the later Assyrian calendar showcases all the gods of the Tammuz resurrection cycle. Tammuz, who was merely embedded in the original planting and harvesting calendar of Nippur, now has all of the months directly associated with his resurrection cycle. What the ancient Sumerians hinted at, the modern Assyrians proclaimed: Tammuz' resurrection rules the year.

[821] Jastrow, M op cit , p 457, note 103
[822] Langdon, S , op cit , pps 10,12

Assyro-Babylonian Months and the Tammuz Sun-Cycle of About 800 B.C.[823]

Name of Month	Order in the Year	Modern Equivalent	Associated Assyrian God for this Month	Related to Ishtar-Tammuz Descent Myth?	Significance of god and Month
Nisanu	1	March-April	Anu / Bel	Has similar myth	A form of Tammuz (Bel)
Aiaru	2	April-May	Ea	Indirect	Father of Tammuz - i.e., his source of life both once as well as in yearly regeneration
Simanu	3	May-June	Sin	Indirect	Father of Ishtar - same comments as for Ea apply here to Ishtar
Duzu (Tammuz)	4	June-July	Ninib	Yes	Sun god who heals mankind and "leads the dead back to physical life"(a form of Tammuz)[824]
Abu	5	July-August	Ningishzida	Yes	god of failing Sun, who controls gates of heaven (a form of Tammuz)[825]
Ululu	6	August-September	Ishtar	Yes	Month of Ishtar's mission to restore Tammuz to life
Tashritu	7	September-October	Shamosh	Yes	Supreme Sun god of righteous judgment who decrees resurrection of Tammuz
Arasamnu	8	October-November	Marduk	Has similar myth	A form of Tammuz (as warrior and conquering king over other gods)
Kislimu	9	November-December	Nergal	Son of Tammuz	Tammuz re-incarnated, or

[823] Unless otherwise noted, the data for columns 2-6 of this table was derived from Jastrow, The Religion of Ancient Babylonia and Assyria, pps. 462 and 547. Babylonian month names in column 1 are derived from p. 26 of Babylonian Chronology - 626 B.C. - A.D. 75 by R Parker and Dubberstein

[824] Ibid, p. 175.

[825] On p 547 Jastrow says that Ninib is eventually merged into Nin-gish-zida

Name of Month	Order in the Year	Modern Equivalent	Associated Assyrian God for this Month	Related to Ishtar-Tammuz Descent Myth?	Significance of god and Month
					acting through his son
Tibetu	10	December-January	Papaskal, or Asu-shu-namir, Anu and Ishtar	Yes for both Papaskal and Ishtar. (Role of Anu uncertain)	Ishtar and her messenger who asks the Underworld to restore the dead Tammuz[826]
Shabbatu	11	January-February	Ramman	No	God of Storms. Since "Tammuz" or "Duzu-Apsu" means "loyal son of the deep waters", that is, the Flood, the storms probably refer to the 40 days of rain before the Noachan Flood
Addaru	12	February-March	Seven Spirits	No	

This Assyrian calendar clearly revolves around Tammuz and the gods who revive him in the spirit world. The deliberate emphasis by the Assyrian priests on this god may reflect a desire on their part to use the Tammuz saga and its gods as an astrological device to revive the fortunes of the Assyrian Empire. The technique was later repeated (650 B.C.) in the Neo-Babylonian focus on Marduk as the restorer of Babylon's fortunes.

In addition to ruling Mesopotamia and Egypt, the historical Tammuz was said to have founded Nineveh, the capitol of the Assyrian Empire.[827] At the risk of being redundant, one point should be reinforced: Astro-theology, the associating of gods with planets, the Sun and the Moon, was ancient to Mesopotamia[828], even when Tammuz was principally viewed as a shepherd-king. To turn Tammuz from a god who overshadowed the affairs of men on earth to one who had his feet planted in the stars that guided each month was to seek to make one's national god the chief

[826] On p 181 of King, Babylonian Religion and Mythology, he is called minister of the gods, who informs them of Ishtar's fate.

[827]

[828] See Sayce, The Religions of Egypt and Babylonia, pps 237, 238, and 438. Lockyer, The Dawn of Astronomy, addresses this in various locations

astrological power over all the Empire's fortunes in a grandiose way. With no one greater in heaven to countermand Tammuz' decrees on Earth, surely the Assyrian Empire would last longer than Babylon. Therefore, as Assyria aspired to "world" dominance, its calendar-god necessarily must become more potent and his theology, more star-based and profound. With the fortunes of Assyria, Tammuz rules the seasons. The Assyrian promotion of Tammuz was not the introduction of a new type of theology, it was the expansion of one form of the god in an ancient astrological system.

This Assyrian aggrandizement of Tammuz establishes the calendar mysticism for one god which Gnostics later turned to their own advantage when they created Good Friday. Lets review the significance of each of these monthly gods to Tammuz' birth, death and resurrection throughout the year.

The first month of the calendar, Nisanu, is guided by Bel, the glorious form of Tammuz who is both triumphant warrior and savior of the gods from the powers of the Flood, by his clever use of magic. Bel is the personification of Tammuz resurrected, victorious king of glory who is elevated to first place in the pantheon.

With the second and third months, the cycle begins afresh. The guardians of these two months are the progenitors of Tammuz and Ishtar; they are simply an indirect reference to the "coming into being" of these two gods. They also represent Tammuz and Ishtar's time together on earth, before their calamitous journey.

The fourth month of the Assyrian calendar, Duzu, is the month in which Tammuz' literal death is observed. It denotes the tragic end of his physical existence, but he is not the god of his own death-month, Ninib is. Why? The month signals Tammuz' exaltation from man to god, via the sure hope of his soon-coming resurrection to divinity. In the person of Ninib, we once more find a variation of Tammuz, much like Nin-gish-zida, whom we studied earlier. Ninib was another ancient god who was later given attributes of Tammuz. Professor Morris Jastrow wrote in 1898 that Ninib eventually absorbed and became Nin-gish-zida, Tammuz partner in death and resurrection.[829]

Ninib is also a god of the dawning Sun, much like Osiris, who was resurrected with the morn and he is also a god of the Springtime, who energizes the dormant earth.[830] Ninib and his consort Gula, (another facet of Ishtar) are called "great healers", "'life-givers' in the widest sense of the word" and the ones who lead the dead to a new life.[831] To associate all these reviving, life-giving attributes with the fourth month, the one in which Tammuz dies, is to assert a sure faith that Tammuz will be revived later in the year, even while he is slain. Ninib guides the fourth month, because he is the "hope" of the dead Tammuz.

This view of Ninib-Gula-Tammuz, embedded in the fourth month, is very similar to the Egyptian view of their counterparts, Isis and Osiris. Isis assists in reviving her

[829] Jastrow, M op cit., p 547.
[830] Ibid, p 572
[831] Ibid, p 175.

consort from death and he too gains powers to revive men from death after he has been resurrected by his partner. So the fourth month, the Summer Solstice month, is also a month guided by spirits that will assure the revival of the Sun next Spring and the resurrection of Tammuz. This clearly shows the enlargement of the Tammuz story to include the rebirth of the Sun's powers at the equinox of the next Spring. Maspero's connection between the Summer Sun and the Spring Sun, which was stated in general terms, is now precise. This view of the seasons by the Assyrian priests was transmitted to Ptolemaic Egypt (300 B.C.) and later considered sacred "gnosis" by the Alexandrians.

Sidebar: How Clement Used Assyrian Calendar Mysticism to Justify Moving Tammuz into the Crucifixion

I have just, in effect, touched upon one of the major results of this present investigation. I claimed that the Alexandrian Gnostics understood such details of the Assyro-Babylonian calendar and were able to apply the interchangability of seasons and festivals to Christ's Spring crucifixion. I will completely document this later on,[832] but the time has come to begin offering you the proof from the Gnostic's own words. If we refer back to Clement's earlier statement on astronomy and astrology, it directly applies to the present subject: "astronomy .... lead[s] the soul nearer to the creative power, it teaches to quickness in perceiving the seasons of the year ...."[833]

This statement may seem innocuous, but like so many others it is dual and critical to understanding Good Friday development. Astronomy leading the soul higher to God is an oblique reference to the well-known Gnostic teaching that souls upon death literally migrate from the earth to the Moon and then to the Sun, finally reaching God's presence. Similarly, when Clement uses the word "perceiving", he is not simply speaking of determining the exact minute when an equinox or season of the year occurs, rather he is referring to a mystical perception of each of the spirits associated with the seasons and the Zodiac.

We can see an indication of this doctrine in another quote from Clement's Stromata: "by astronomy, ... [the Gnostic is] raised from the earth in his mind, he is elevated along with heaven and will revolve with its revolution, studying ever divine things. ...."[834] (emphasis added) The revolution of the heavens is the motion by which the Earth moves from month to month and the Sun passes into the different Zodiac signs over the centuries. Clement is saying that the Gnostic "moves" spiritually with the earth through the year and the signs over the centuries. If Tammuz died under the sign of Taurus and the Sun rotated into the sign of Pisces by the time of Jesus, then the Gnostic could "move" from Tammuz to Christ dying under Pisces.

[832] See sub section C.1 a - Gnostic Technique One: Shifting Ceremonies from Fall to Spring via the Zodiac and the Celestial Year of Plato.
[833] Roberts, A., op. cit., vol. ii, p. 501
[834] Ibid, p. 498

If Tammuz died in the Fall and Jesus died in the Spring, the Gnostic could spiritually "move" from September to the next April and "merge" Tammuz with Jesus.

In sum, if a pagan resurrection god died in the Summer or in the Fall, if he died millennia before Jesus, those facts did NOT limit Gnostic application of his story to the April crucifixion of Jesus. Rather, it enhanced it to a more mystical plane - the all-familiar "Gnosis" of the spirit.

End of Sidebar

Nin-gish-zida, the god who guides the fifth month in the Assyrian calendar, symbolizes the weakening powers of the Sun, as it withdraws from its greatest radiance in the Summer and reverts to a progressively lesser state. He is the hell-bound Tammuz, dead, but revivable. In the sixth month, Ishtar oversees events. She begins her mission to regain Tammuz and effect his revival. This scenario is merely thinly veiled astro-theology. Ishtar was associated with the yearly dawning of the bright star Sirius[835], which rose above the Babylonian horizon shortly before the Sun dawned. This timing of appearances occurred every July, the month Tammuz died. The original Sumerians adjusted slippage between their calendar and the Summertime by inserting leap months to ensure that the calendar was always in sync with Tammuz' memorial festivals. It controlled how days were set for the entire year. Thus we have a "lesser light" - Ishtar / Sirius, leading the way for the rising or resurrection of a "greater light" - Tammuz / the Sun, to eventually return from his shrinking days in Hades. All this was the lynch pin of the entire time keeping system for that ancient people.

The seventh month, dedicated to Shamosh, Sun-god of Righteous judgment, corresponds to the part of the descent myth when Ishtar is dead and her agent appeals to Shamosh for redress for his mistress' sad fate. Shamosh heeds the complaint, justice is served and the sure sentence is passed for Tammuz to be revived in the coming days.

In the eighth month of the Assyrian astro-calendar, Marduk, the demi-god king of Babylon, who saved all the greater gods from the arch-enemy Tiamat in a personal combat with evil, reigns, symbolizing a victory over evil and a hope of reinstatement for Tammuz, his own self. The promise of restoration and resurrection intensifies in the ninth month, which Nergal, Tammuz son, rules over.

[835] The evidence for this has to be pieced together The usual notation in the literature is that the Egyptian Isis was associated with Sirius, not her Babylonian counterpart However, the following evidence is available to prove BOTH forms were associated with the same star. First, Sirius was a star regularly observed, charted, and timed by the Babylonian priests (Jastrow, Religion of Babylonia and Assyria, p 372. Allen, on p 123 of Star Names - Their Lore and Meaning, says the risings and settings of Sirius were routinely tabulated in Babylon as least as early as 300 B.C.) Second, one of the Babylonian names for Sirius which Allen gives is Tishryta. It is common to both Babylon and Persia, its eastern neighbor. The Dictionary of Ancient Deities, p. 468, explains that Tishryta was definitely associated with the goddess Anahita, who is a Persian - Babylonian (Chaldean) form of Ishtar If anything we now have indications that Isis and Sirius worship centered in Babylonia and spread both west and east, to Egypt and Persia, from a central source in Mesopotamia. (The cultural link between Egypt and Persia, while justifiable, is much weaker than that between Babylon and Persia)

As with Osiris and Horus, Nergal is the embodiment of the dead Tammuz on earth. Through Nergal, Tammuz still reigns on Earth and over the fates of the people of Babylon. In fact, through Nergal's successors, each king of Babylon is a son and a perpetuation of Tammuz, for as long as there is a nation.

Papaskal, who besought the gods for Inanna and Tammuz' restoration, rules over the equivalent of modern December. The later Assyro-Babylonian myth was that Tammuz ruled in hell for six months and was restored to earth for the other six, a partial deliverance for the dead king. The return began in December, near the Winter Solstice, (Tibetu 28) and lasted until the Summer Solstice (Tammuz 18), when he returned to the nether world.[836] Papaskal who initiated that return, is the logical spirit to guide the month of Tibetu / December.

A.1.c Babylonian Politics, Empire and More Changes in Tammuz' Festival Dates

The final stage in the evolution of Tammuz worship before Jesus and the Gnostics was tied to the fortunes of the Neo-Babylonian empire, which overthrew and succeeded Assyria. It's establishment resurrected centuries' gone pride, but then it fell catastrophically, all in the years 650 - 539 B.C. This last change thrust Tammuz' sufferings to the forefront of the national pantheon without, however, coronating him.

At the start of this time frame, the city Babylon accedes by arms to chief position in Mesopotamia and brings with it its own gods to replace Ea and Anu of Babylon's pantheon. Assyria's Tammuz calendar can no longer be the one to guide the fate of Babylon. Now Marduk, the martial god of the city, is further exalted to champion the revived fate of the New Babylonian empire. The Babylonian priests' usage of Marduk made him yet greater than the Assyrian Tammuz. Whatever his role in past mythology, Marduk was now the cosmic god of men's destinies.[837] Nevertheless, when all hope was lost with the Babylonian defeat to the Medes a century later, Tammuz, the suffering god with promise of future revival, finally grew beyond Marduk in official stature among the Babylonian clergy.

Tammuz is eventually substituted for popular consumption by a chagrined priesthood as a palliative for the empire's failed fortunes and as a means to restore the damaged credibility of those priests. With the fall of Babylon, the Sumerian, Assyrian and Babylonian rivalries end. Now the Medes and Persians, peoples outside of immediate Mesopotamian culture, rule over the cradle of civilization. Tammuz, the shepherd-king who once conquered Babylon and Egypt, replaces the city-god Marduk, as the deity of long lost glories and present sufferings for all of the region.

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[836] Langdon, S., op. cit., p 121. See Radau, op. cit, chart facing p 306 for another reference to Tibetu as the 10th month, == December Radau also lists Tibetu as having only 28 days, so Tammuz is returned at the New Moon, much the same way the Osiris "enters into the Moon", in March, in the Egyptian version.

[837] Oppenheim, A , p 195, 233

In failure, the second Babylonian empire imitated Assyria. Tammuz never became the absolute arbiter of men's fates as did Marduk, although Babylonian priests of 650 B.C. revised the Marduk myth to follow Tammuz' story. Rather, following the foreign invasions of the Medes (539 B.C.), Tammuz' suffering nature, as expressed in both his own myth and Marduk's, became ever more important to Babylonians of low degree and indeed all men of the ancient Levant, thus preparing Pagan minds for the yet future Jesus.

A.1.d A Summary of the Different Tammuz Festival Dates

To summarize the progress of Tammuz worship over 3,000 years and the mix of dates with which it was celebrated, Tammuz observance first began in the Fall, when he was memorialized as a fallen king. Through association with Inanna, he was gradually endowed with powers of the Sun, but in a limited way.

Thereafter, but certainly by 2100 B.C., Tammuz is worshipped in the Fall, at the Summer Solstice and at the Spring Equinox, depending upon which competing city or region of Mesopotamia we visit.

By 800 B.C., a layering of newer doctrine on top of older tradition occurred in Assyrian Tammuz worship. The original Shepherd-King and the primitive Sumerian Sun god were not rejected, rather their Fall and Summer festivals and their heroic literature co-existed with the newer astrological update of the Assyrian priests, who turned Tammuz into a celestial patron spirit overseeing the resurgence of their earthly empire throughout the year. Both ancient Sumerian and later Assyrian interpretations were preserved in the Middle Eastern mind, without any apparent conflict of logic. Like the Assyrian Ishtar, the Assyrian Tammuz was a mystical, stylized figure. His Solar resurrection and rebirth began in Winter and was manifest in the Spring, when the Sun "crossed" the celestial equator.

The historical process of exalting Tammuz from arbiter of men's business to arbiter of nation's fates created a variety of seasons and festivals for his worship. It fixed Tammuz worship as a celestial phenomenon that could be applied to Spring, Summer and Fall via the reasoning of astrology, thereby anticipating the god's ultimate linkage to the Spring Crucifixion.

And yet, because allegory and myth did not echo each other flawlessly, problems of consolidation would remain for the dissonant Gnostic thinkers of future ages. They would naturally turn to their national god Osiris, for added insights into the mystical nature of the Resurrection gods and Jesus. Babylonia gave the literal Crucifixion connection between the Inanna gods and Jesus, but Egypt's Osiris contributed a rich theology of passage, transformation and spiritual regeneration. Both were needed to supersede the original doctrines of the Apostles.

A.2 The Different Festivals in the Worship of Osiris

Not surprisingly, the evolutionary pattern of Osiris' festival dates is very much similar to Tammuz', although the times and details differ. As with Tammuz, we start with Fall memorials to a human king.

There is an account from Diodorus, the Greek historian of 100 B.C., that Osiris was first a human king, who flourished to the North and East of Egypt, the general direction of Mesopotamia.[838] He is said to have traveled as far afield as India and Asia Minor, effectively encompassing the Tigris-Euphrates region by hundreds of miles.[839] The earliest festivals memorialized Osiris' death in late October or early November, directly corresponding to the earliest Sumerian memorials for Tammuz[840]. (This same pattern of an original Fall festival, is also true for the Greek's Dionysus[841], who was adopted from Adonis / Tammuz, probably around 700 B.C.)

Early on, Osiris' worship was interwoven with the Spring and Fall equinoxes. Harold Cooke wrote in 1931: "The cult of Osiris attached an importance beyond all dispute to the sun in the two equinoxes. .... in that far distant time, ... and it may be, in all times and ages."[842] We just reviewed this same interplay of Tammuz worship with the Solstices and astrology, but the case is much stronger. One tribe in the Middle East, the Harrans, claimed that Tammuz was slain because he attempted to reveal great secrets of astrology to a rival king[843], thus making the human Tammuz an initiate in the subject early on in his worship.

Cooke further expanded his point to say that Osiris was a god of both the Sun and Moon, virtually from inception, perhaps 3500 B.C., but certainly by 2000 B.C. Margaret Murray agrees with this[844] and E.A. Wallis Budge, the English Egyptologist, reports the same.[845]

We saw earlier that by 2900 B.C., Tammuz too, was called a god of the Sun and Moon. According to Cooke, Osiris was always associated with a sophisticated Egyptian astral-theology, that was evident in the architecture and layout of the temples and pyramids of that land. I add that early Egyptian star-religion was one

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[838] Murray, M , The Osireon at Abydos, p 25 Frankfort (Kingship and the Gods, p 204) notes that Osiris is called "Chief of the Westerners" in odes written about him on ancient pyramid walls I believe "West" here refers to those who moved west from Babylon While certainly not conclusive, it strengthens my point Breasted, (Development of Religion and Thought in Ancient Egypt, p 38) wrote, also based upon the Pyramid texts, that Osiris was a literal person who ruled northern Egypt Originally he was a malevolent despot who struck terror into his subjects Naville, op cit., p 175, translates an ancient papyrus as saying of Osiris: "Great is the fear which he inspires in the hearts of men " But before the first Pharaohs, this role was changed into a benevolent benefactor of mankind His physical headquarters was in Busiris, in the Nile delta region, near the Mediterranean, but Abydos quickly became the prime center of worship after his death Abydos was claimed to be the burial place of Osiris' severed head (See p 39, and van Sertima, Egypt Revisited, p 128,) This description of despot matches the Biblical Nimrod, who built cities in the delta region of the Tigris-Euphrates, and whom some believe to have ruled over both Mesopotamia and Egypt

[839] Murray, M , Ibid

[840] See Frazer, J.G., Adonis Attis Osiris, vol ii, pps. 91-95 for a discussion of this observance in Roman times The author also explains in this section how the festival was most likely first observed in the Fall

[841] Turcan, R., op cit pps. 294-295.

[842] Cooke, H op cit , p. 23

[843] Langdon, S., Semitic Mythology, p. 337 Although Langdon does not credit Sayce, it is clear from comparison that this information first appears in Sayces, Hibbert Lecture book of 1888, on p. 239, in a footnote.

[844] Murray, M , op cit., p 26.

[845] See his Osiris and the Egyptian Resurrection, vol. I, p 15, and vol ii, p 384.

quite different from Babylon's obsession with heavenly omens and portents. Perhaps the flavor of the two religions was more different than the substance. Regardless of how one classifies these two star religions, scholars acknowledge that the hierarchy of the early Egyptian godhead "was modeled upon that of Babylonia"[846] and millennia later, the Babylonian Zodiac system was imported and adopted into Alexandria at the time of the Ptolemies (280-260 B.C.). This statement has its consequences. If Egyptian religion borrowed from Babylon, then there d also be some kinship between the Sumerian six-month calendars and how the Egyptians viewed the seasons.[847]

Osiris' original Fall festival was anciently (ca. 3200 B.C.)[848] held as a literal three-day memorial of his death and resurrection. The three-day observance continued on for millennia at cities such as Busiris, Sais or Abydos, but by Roman times Osiris' glorification occurs in a second festival as well, held just before the following Spring equinox.[849] Osiris' story is now a saga that spans seasons of the year and is tied to the equinoxes (sound familiar?). The one difference with Tammuz worship was its greater tie to Summer and Winter Solstices, although Tammuz did have Spring festivals in some cities.

In addition to these enlarged equinox festivals, a set of refurbished old festivals was held by the Ptolemies in Alexandria, also in the Spring, beginning somewhere about 290 B.C.

Much like Tammuz' later Summer and Spring festivals, which created a confusing mix of dates for us moderns to sort through, the yearly cycle of all Osiris' holidays in all the various cities of Egypt, contains festivals whose meanings and dates seem today to clash with each other, falling at vague or puzzling times of the year. Margaret Murray, who unearthed the temple to Osiris at Abydos, greatest ever built to him, spoke of "confusion of names and forms that makes the study of Osiris difficult."[850]

Osiris' transformation into Egypt's supreme power occurred in stages, first as a great and popular god second to none and much later as supreme father god of

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[846] Sayce, A.H., The Religions of Ancient Egypt and Babylonia, p 496

[847] I do not suggest the Egyptian calendar is Babylonian. It obviously works around the cycles of the Nile, and has no 19-year cycle. What I mean by this is a disposition in the religion for Babylonian concepts of astrology, nothing more

[848] The scholarly consensus seems to be pushing this date farther and farther back in time. Staring with references that make it at 3100 -3000 B.C. (that is, the end of the fourth millennium B.C.), to a more recent reference of 3400 B.C. The most recent first. Brunson has uncovered an ancient linen burial cloth, most likely of the nobles or priests, with an applied scene showing a black Osiris figure in a cosmic boat being transported to the next life, similar to a scene described in a pyramid text. (See pps. 58-59 of Egypt Revisited.) He considers it proof of the Osiris religion and festivals in full swing in 3400 B.C.
Breasted (ibid) says the religion of Osiris reached Southern Egypt before the North and South were united, which he places at 3400 B.C.,
Frankfurt (op. cit., pps. 202, 204), says Osiris was worshipped as a great dead King, not a god, at Abydos, before Menes became the first dynastic king of Egypt, and he places this worship before 3100 B.C.

[849] See Murray, op. cit., p. 26, quoting Plutarch, who says it was on the 19th of the month Pachons, in the early Spring.

[850] Murray, M., op. cit., p. 26

creation, known as Osiris-Serapis, Zeus-Serapis, or Serapis-Helios. This apotheosis of the man-god is more total than the promotion of Tammuz in Mesopotamia and it happened much later in history, under the influence of Egypt's Greek rulers. By Clement's time, the ancient Egyptian religion had been further "polluted" by yet newer variants of Babylonian-Egyptian astrology. (New gods, new names, new powers, some of which were due to Plato's ideas.) This new "culture of the gods" became a lingua franca for the quasi-Christians to explore and extend, as we will see later on in this Section. Now lets notice a few more details of Osiris' career and its many festivals.

Early in his career as a Sun god, Osiris is a lesser one compared to Ptah or Ra.[851] He is later merged with these two gods, not absorbing them, but forming composites--Ptah-Osiris, or Osiris-Ra. The evolution is this: somewhere in the middle of the second millennium B.C., he is merged with Amen into a god of first rank, then he is said to be equal to Ra, the supreme Sun god. Later still, he is fused with Ptah to create an enlarged resurrection god - Ptah-Seker-Osiris.[852] By the time of the Greeks' occupation of Egypt, Osiris or Serapis is a full, supreme god of the Sun, the underworld and even all creation. Yet even this was by no means the full extent of Osiris' enlargement. Scores of such mergings and associations with other gods are found on elaborate coffins, on temple walls and inside burial pyramids of Egyptian kings. Just as Tammuz was the most popular god of Mesopotamia so was Osiris in Egypt.

After 1200 B.C., the ancient astrological festivals and religion appear to have become encrusted with magic and even greater mysticism than the ancient Egyptians had envisioned.[853] After 300 B.C., due to the political struggles between the rivaling Greek rulers of Mesopotamia and Egypt, two trends are discernible. First, the Egyptian Greeks seek to imitate and overtake Babylonian religion by exalting the native Osiris. During their rule, he is promoted to the cosmic father-god, Zeus-Serapis, source of all energy[854] and king of the Greek universe.[855] This is clearly a slap at the Babylonian Marduk, whom even Alexander the Great paid homage to before he died in that city. Secondly, Babylonian astronomy and mathematics, which is intentionally imported into Egypt to be imitated and

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[851] Robinson, Christianity and Mythology, p 146 Robinson wrote his judgment in 1900, but with controversy. Frazer, in The Golden Bough, took the opinion that Osiris was a Sun god, they all were, but only later in the god's career did this manifest. Robertson marshaled additional evidence, and disproved this, showing that Osiris had an early Sun identity, although Frazer never seems to have yielded Frankfurt, in Kingship and the Gods,

[852] Legge, F., op cit , vol. I, p 32 and his notes Budge, EA , Gods of the Egyptians, vol ii, plate facing p. 136

[853] Budge, E.A , Osiris and the Egyptian Resurrection, vol I, p ix

[854] Cumont, F., Oriental Religions in Roman Paganism, p. 89

[855] There once was a controversy as to whether Serapis was pure invention of Ptolemy I, or existed as a minor Egyptian god before the Greeks assumed control of Egypt. Stambaugh, in pps 1-13 of Sarapis Under the Early Ptolemies, traces the arguments and concludes that Serapis is first mentioned in the fourth century B.C , before Greek incursions, he was not invented by the Ptolemies, but re-invented Turcan, op. cit., pps. 76-77, says the festivals and Serapis worship began under either Ptolemy I (reigned 311 - 285 B.C), or his son Ptolemy II Philadelphus (reigned 285 - 246 B.C) Legge, op cit., vol. I, pps. 38, 48,49 believes Serapis was adopted out of the Egyptian god Osar-Apis during the reign of Ptloemy I Finally, Turcan explains that the magnificent temple for Serapis, with its permanent festival service, the Serapium of Alexandria, was built under the aegis of Ptolemy III (246-221 B C) (Idem, p. 77) See Encyclopedia Britannica, vol 18, art. *The Ptolemies*, pps 731-2, for the dates given here.

excelled, results in Babylonian astrology altering the religion of Osiris. Babylonian astrology and its Zodiac were engrafted directly into Osiris worship, especially among his priests, as in the great temple built at Denderah.[856] A huge zodiac map of the heavens glorifies this temple; it shows Osiris and his familiars tasking on the roles of Babylonian star-gods. This hybrid of two religions, is a marvel to behold. Babylon has been inserted into the heart of Egyptian religion. We will return to look at the hidden glories of this temple and ponder its mysteries shortly.

It is also important to note that in the time of Plutarch and the Egyptian Gnostics (90 A.D.), Osiris had festivals in all four seasons.[857] Since, in ancient astrology, it was believed that every hour, day, month, season and year had its own unique, controlling spirit or genii,[858] moderns, such as Cooke, have given an astrological twist to all the Osiris festivals that span the four seasons.[859]

The point here is that if festivals were under the sway of seasonal spirits that were tied to the stars of the Zodiac constellations and if those stars slowly moved around the visible heavens, then fixed festivals could also be moved to different seasons. It was all a matter of understanding how to view "the revolutions of the seasons", as Clement put it. Pardon the triviality, but it was in the stars to do so.

A word about the later Osiris festivals at Alexandria and Rome will demonstrate the influence of Babylonian astro-festivals in later Greek Egypt.

In March, at the Spring equinox, there was a festival in Alexandria dedicated to the physical birth of Osiris' son Horus, named Harpocrates by later Greeks. Harpocrates was in some sense conceived as the incarnation of Osiris on earth, reborn with the Spring equinox.[860] In Babylon and Assyria Tammuz' son Nabu, another reincarnation, was also born at the Spring equinox.[861]

Ptolemy I was preoccupied with many wars of survival during his initial reign over Egypt, he could give only sparing time to god while he was killing his enemies, so this festivals' exact origins are vague; but we can nevertheless see direct cultural influence of Babylon's Nabu on the newer Harpocrates festival of 290 B.C. Clearly, under the Greeks, Babylonian tradition recombines with Osiris, forming an international set of resurrection gods for later Gnostic theologians to digest, propound and apply to Jesus.

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[856] Cumont, F , Astrology Among the Greeks and Romans, Chapter 1, and pps 76-77, for his discussion of pan-Babylonianism and its spread to Syria and Egypt after the death of Alexander in 331 B C

[857] Frazer, J G., Adonis Attis Osiris, vol. ii, p 49. note 1

[858] Hill, J H , Astral Worship, pps 57-63, especially p. 60

[859] Cooke's book, Osiris - A Study in Myths, Mysteries, and Religion, is a good, if slightly confusing staring place

[860] Legge, op. cit., vol I, p.71

[861] Nabu was the son of Marduk, in the Assyrian -Neo Babylonian mythology of 900 - 600 B C But since this later Marduk borrows heavily from Tammuz, my point can be made (Frankfurt, Kingship and the Gods, p. 289) "The comparison of Nabu with Horus [Harpocrates] has been made repeatedly (Op cit, p 404, note 33) See the end of Section 6 1 a for further discussion of Marduk, Nabu, the Babylonian Spring New Year, and the Spring equinox

As with Tammuz, we have just surveyed a layering of festivals that originated in the Fall and accumulated over the centuries, that turned Osiris from local hero to minor Sun god to god of all seasons. His mythology also culminated in several disjoint Spring festivals--for Horus, Isis, Osiris and Serapis. Yet none of the original Fall resurrection festivals were ever discarded. All were celebrated in the Roman world in Gnostic times. The year became a grab bag of every festival ever invented for Osiris, regardless of when it originated. One author, Francis Legge, writing in 1914, has gone further than this. He believed there were many and sundry other feast days celebrated in Osiris' honor in the Egyptian calendar, which are missing from the texts we now have.[862]

Again, as with Tammuz, I give a synopsis of the Osiris festivals being held in the times of Gnostic theologians

[862] Ibid, p 70

Summary of Known Osiris Festivals in 50 A.D.

Egyptian City	Festival Dates	Nature of Festival	Time of Origin
I. Seasonal Holidays[863]			
Osiris' Death and Resurrection:			
All Sixteen Precints of Ancient Egypt, Including the Cities of:			
a. Abydos	Oct. - Nov.		Our records are from 300 B.C.[864], but there is no doubt the festivals go back to ancient times, probably 3400 - 3100 B.C.
b. Busiris	Oct. - Nov.		
c. Denderah	Oct.-Nov. ; lasts 18 days[865]		
d. Sais	Oct. - Nov. - much like an "All Souls" day[866]		
Alexandria (and Rome)			
a. Serapis - the Serapia	April 25	Sanctification of Serapis	ca. 290 B.C. (First records of Serapis go to 400 B.C.)
b. Horus / Harpocrates - the Pelousia	Spring Equinox - March 25[867]	Birth of Horus from Nile delta mud, reincarnation of Osiris on earth	ca. 290 B.C.

[863] Author Traci deRegula notes that all the fall-winter festivals were probably celebrated at one common time originally. The shifting Egyptian calendar allowed for the dates to be pushed later and later into the year Smaller cities observed Osiris festivals for 3-4 days, larger, for as much as 18 days (Mysteries of Isis, p 102.

[864] Frazer, J.G , Adonis Attis, Osiris, vol. ii, p 86

[865] Ibid, p 87

[866] The Sais version was similar to our "All Souls" day, in that it involved a nighttime festival or procession of lights, probably commutating not just Osiris' death, but the death of all men It was held early November, as All Souls is Nov. 1 in modern times Frazer, J.G , New Golden Bough, pps 398, 401 "Throughout all of Egypt" - loc. cit., p 398

[867] Turcan, op. cit , p 118, says it was on March 24

c. Isis - the Navigium or "Isidis"	March 5[868]	Opening of sailing season at ports of call (Alexandria and Rome)	ca. 290 B.C.
d. Osiris - "Entering the Moon"	March new Moon [869]	Osiris empowers the Moon to germinate life for the growing season	
e. Osiris - The "Discovery" of Osiris - Hilaria	Sep.-Oct., Nov.[870] 4 day obs.[871]	Literal death and resurrection of Osiris	
II. Monthly Holidays			
a. 6th of each month[872]		Lunar first quarter	"From early times"[873]
b. 15th of each month ((half month)		Full Moon	From early times
c. Tenait (3rd quarter)		Lunar 3rd quarter Especially held at Abydos	From early times
d. 30th of month (New Month)		New Moon	From early times
III. Daily Observances were also held, but they obviously were not changeable to different seasons		Three times daily--sunrise, noon and sunset[874]	

Osiris' great festival at the Egyptian city of Sais was held in November, with key parts occurring on the 13th through 16th of the Roman month.[875] It was most ancient and most literal.

[868] Ibid, p 114.
[869] Murray, M op cit, p 26
[870] Turcan, ibid, says it was on November 3 Frazer, however, says November 13 (the 7th of Athyr, Adonis Attis Osiris, vol ii, p 84.) Murray, loc. cit, gives a date of Pachons 19, in the Spring
[871] Frazer, Adonis Attis Osiris, vol. ii, p. 84
[872] Murray, ibid, gives all four festivals.
[873] Ibid
[874] Plutarch, Molralia, vol v, p 127
[875] Frazer, J.G., op cit, vol ii, p 84

A.3 The Role of the Spring Seasons in the Festivals of Marduk / Bel

Finally we come to Marduk, and the festival that some scholars believe was the inspiration for Good Friday - Easter Sunday, at least in its story and characters. The Babylonian New Year celebration in March-April was a festival that existed millennia before Marduk became its principle deity in 650 B.C. The ancient Sumerians called it Akiti.

The situation with Marduk's resurrection festival is quite different from that of Tammuz and Osiris. When the city of Babylon regained control over Mesopotamia about 650 B.C., Marduk was promoted to chief god of a previously subjected people who were now recapturing the lost glory of the Old Babylonian Empire, nearly 1,000 years earlier. As the people exalted in pride, the pantheon of the Assyrian oppressors was thrown out and Babylon's god Marduk was given astral powers over men on a cosmic scale.[876] One or two centuries before, under Assyrian prodding, astronomy and calendars had began a trek of becoming more precise. This was the long perfection of the 19-year calendar that we covered earlier. As the years constantly became more consistent with the beginning and ending of the seasons (well, almost always), accurate, extended record keeping of the skies was possible and astrology's predictions of men's fates also became more accurate. It would naturally be applied to the leading god of the political scene in a more assertive fashion. (The New Year's festival typified this.)

We are done with our survey of the seasons the gods died. The second, more exact part of the puzzle, documenting the day each god died in the ancient world, is a simpler task to complete.

B. Assembling the Fragments of Clement's "Body of Truth": The Day the gods Died was the 17th of the Month

B.1 The Day Tammuz Died

There is a fairly clear-cut tradition from late Babylonian times until today that gives one consistent date for Tammuz death, but it is not a unanimous verdict. Once more, a little reviewing of ALL the evidence needs to be done.

In his midsummer festival, Tammuz dies on the 17th day of the fourth month of the Babylonian calendar. Early scholars such as Morris Jastrow and Sir James Frazer supported this date with complete confidence. It is also the day for a Jewish fast that has been kept for nearly 2,500 years and moderns recognize the Jews got Tammuz 17 from the death of the folk-god, regardless of the reasons they offered to themselves. Samuel Langdon, who was active in the 1930's and 1940's, gave additional evidence to support Tammuz 17 as the day the deity died. More recent scholarship in the 1970's and later, based upon additional archeological discoveries, has opened up the possibility that it was the 27th of Tammuz and not the 17th. The evidence, while quite real, is incomplete and does nothing to invalidate the historical tradition of the 17th. Like everything else with Tammuz and

[876] King, C W., Babylonian Religion and Mythology, p 208.

Osiris worship, things happened on more than one day and this is true even with multiple death dates for the god, but there is an explanation for this seeming conflict.

Again, for the sake of completeness and to disarm my more scholarly readers, I will take a little time to review this situation, showing Tammuz 17 is the more significant of the two dates kept in his memory. I start off with the original proof text from Jastrow and Frazer:

> .... the Tammuz festival [was] .... a solar festival celebrated in the fourth month at the approach of the summer solstice. .... The calendar of the Jewish .... [people] still marks the 17th day of Tammuz as a fast .... . The day was originally connected with the Tammuz cult.[877] (emphasis added)

Samuel Langdan, in his book on Babylonian calendars (1935), accepted Jastrow and Frazer's statement and further substantiated it as the commonly observed day of Tammuz' death in the ancient world. He pointed out that there was an Assyrian custom to conduct a solemn torchlit procession on the 17th of Tammuz and adds "Tammuz was said to have descended to the lower world on the 18 of Tammuz".[878] Two almanacs from the time of Greek rule in Mesopotamia also give the 18th as the day of his descent into hell.[879] (Presumably he had to have died on the day before.) Langdon further states that the Jewish custom of fasting on the 17th of Tammuz "was obviously taken from the Babylonian calendar", apparently by religious leaders who were thoroughly overwhelmed by the circumstances of being in the Babylonian Captivity and completely adopted their master's customs. Later generations of Jews attempted to retroactively tie the custom of fasting on Tammuz 17 to events surrounding the fall of Jerusalem in 70 A.D., which is the modern explanation[880].

At least one modern scholar seems to discount all this, while making no effort to address the work of Jastrow, Frazer or Langdon.

Curiously enough, Professor Mark Cohen has written (1993) a very valuable and scholarly book on Babylonian calendars that simply sidesteps the connection between Babylon and Judah and omits to discuss whether the Jewish custom of fasting on Tammuz 17 was derived from the Babylonian Captivity.[881] He offers no evidence to disprove the contention. Rather, what Cohen does do, at the very last pages of his book, is marshall new evidence from recent archeological finds that clearly shows Tammuz' death was observed, at least in some Assyrian cities, on

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[877] Jastrow, M., The Religion of Babylonia and Assyria, p 682 Also cited in Frazer, Adonis Attis Osiris, vol I p 10, note 1

[878] Langdon, S., Babylonian Menologies, p. 121.

[879] Ibid, p 122 It should be added Langdon gives one example where the date is the 10th of Tammuz, but since Josephus, the Sabean people, and the other data all point to the middle of Tammuz, he accepts the 17th as the PREVALENT date of the observance See also the next paragraph in this text on the Day of the month Osiris died

[880] Ibid., p 121.

[881] See pps 315 ff., and 476 ff of The Cultic Calendars

Tammuz 27. The impression the professor gives is that Tammuz 27 is the only date Tammuz' death was observed. Let me cover some issues raised by Cohen's treatment and then offer a solution using all of the evidence--new, old, Jewish and Gentile.

There appears to be some murky scholarship in one key passage on Tammuz. In one place Cohen cites an Arabean (Syrian) tradition of weeping for the dead Tammuz in the summertime, that both Frazer and Langdon before him also cited, BUT, for whatever reason, he fails to address Langdon's statement that the Arabeans did so in the middle of the month of Tammuz for over 1,000 years and not at the end of the month.[882] Prior to Langdon, Archibald Sayce gave rather conclusive evidence for a mid-month observance. He wrote:

> Abu Sayid Wahb Ibn Ibrahim, in his calendar of the Sabean festivals, says under the month Tammuz, 'On the 15th of this month is the festival of the weeping women which is identified with Ta'uz, a festival held in honor of the god Ta'uz....[883]

I therefore found this selective citation of facts by Dr. Cohen[884] disappointing and disturbing. Cohen does, on the other hand, admit that a later Assyrian custom included Tammuz 17, extending some 19 days from Tammuz 14 to Abu 5, but he adds, "whether this ritual related to the Dumuzi motif is uncertain."[885] Since in another place he notes that the kings in Assyria were careful not to observe two different festivals to two different gods on the same day[886], by his own admission I am inclined to think that this Assyrian festival does relate to the Tammuz death and descent festival, and it does celebrate the 17th.

There is another problem with Cohen's apparent belief that Tammuz died on the 27th of the month. It again involves a failure to address contrary arguments by an earlier authority. Morris Jastrow pointed out that Tammuz was a Solar god along with Ninib and the Tammuz festival was held before the Summer Solstice (June 21-22 in today's calendar). Jastrow further points out that Ninib's own month came immediately after the Summer Solstice, thus bracketing the day between the two months of the two gods.[887] Langdon pointed out that the Babylonians believed Tammuz returned from a six month incarceration in the netherworld at or near the Winter Solstice (Tisbetu 28 in their calendar). So there is major evidence in the thinking of the peoples to suggest Tammuz' yearly death and resurrection cycle is based upon the timing of the summer and winter Solstices. It is easier to fit Tammuz 17 before or near the summer Solstice than it is the 27th. Using Tammuz 27 as the date he died does not integrate well with these known facts, it runs counter to them. Cohen does not address any of this.

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[882] Langdon, S , op. cit , p. 120.
[883] Sayce, A.H , The Hibbert Lectures 1887, note, pps. 239-240
[884] Cohen, M , op. cit., pps. 317 and 481
[885] Ibid
[886] Ibid, pps. 316-317. This quote is from a cuneiform text in which the King of the Assyrian city of Arbela instructs his priests not to observe a festival to another god during the 27th festival to Tammuz, so my point is very strong.
[887] Jastrow, M. op. cit , pps. 547, and 682. Frazer also quotes this in Adonis Attis Osiris, p. 10

What then, is the answer to this seeming disparity between earlier and later scholarship? As Cohen pointed out, Tammuz 27 was the date observed in Uruk, the city of Tammuz consort--Inanna / Ishtar.[888] We need first to appreciate the fact that there was a linking and imitating of other city's festivals that ran throughout Mesopotamia. Cohen makes this very point when he describes how the six-month "New Year" or a-ki-ti festival at Ur propagated to other cities in the region.

> The pageantry of [the god] Nanna triumphantly entering his city of Ur appealed to other Mesopotamian cities, which in turn adopted the festival, celebrating it two times a year, as at Ur.[889] (comment and emphasis added)

Just as there were parallel festivals to the same god in Spring and Fall, so Dumuzi's death was observed in his own city on the 17th of the month and then transferred and repeated in Ishtar's city 10 days later, on the 27th. After all, the Descent myth applies to both god and goddess, but Tammuz descends to hell before his consort goes on a mission to retrieve him. If Ishtar's city observed Tammuz' death on the 27th, then the myth demands that Tammuz' city observe it before the 27th. Where does this 10-day difference in time originate from?

There is another interesting bit of evidence for suggesting the linkage. We know that at one point in its history the a-ki-ti festival of September lasted eleven days.[890] Recall that early on, Tammuz' death and the a-ki-ti were celebrated together in the Fall, so, by proxy, the eleven day time frame might also be associated by the priests with the length of Tammuz' death memorial. The Ur memorial to Tammuz is the eleventh day of a festival beginning on the 17, if we include the 17th as the first day of the festival. In this way, the 27th becomes the last day of a time period begun on the 17th, a CONTINUATION of what began on the 17th. This sequential passing of the baton, continuing the festival from one city to the next, was a spiritual procession of sorts from one city to another, from Tammuz to Ishtar, an enactment of the Descent myth by two or more cities. Literal processions were definitely part of the ritual in every Mesopotamian city; each having wide, "sacred" boulevards specifically designed for literal festival marches and parades of the gods.[891]

Both the Jews' 2,500 year-old custom of fasting on Tammuz 17 and the Arabean tradition of weeping for Tammuz in the middle of the month were taken from the primary Tammuz observance, not the associated Uruk festival. Mr. Cohen has unfortunately presented this subject in an unbalanced manner.

He has also ignored the evidence from Tammuz' Egyptian counterpart, Osiris.

B.2 The Day Osiris Died

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[888] Cohen, M., op. cit., pps. 318, 481
[889] Ibid, p. 390
[890] Ibid, p. 402
[891] Oppenheim, A., op. cit., p. 139

Unlike Tammuz, there is absolutely no ambiguity about the day Osiris died. We have a plain authoritative statement from Plutarch, an admitted initiate into Osiris' religion, from about 90 A.D.:

"...the date on which this deed was done was the seventeenth of the month of Athyr" [892]

"The day of the murder of Osiris was the 17th of the month of Hathor ...." [893]

> The Egyptians have a legend that the end of Osiris life came on the seventeenth of the month .... [when] .... it is quite evident to the eye that the .... full moon is over. [894]
>
> His body was placed in a box, but afterwards, on the 19th, came again to life, and as in the cults of Mithras, Dionysos, Adonis, and others, ... an image placed in a coffin was placed before the worshippers and saluted with glad cries of "Osiris is risen" . [895] (emphasis added)

Plutarch, the primary ancient source for the Osiris myth, gives additional details.

> On the nineteenth day they go down to the sea at nighttime ; and the ... priests bring forth the sacred chest containing a small golden coffer, into which they pour some .... water .... and a great shout arises that .... Osiris is found...." [896]

Notice that water is poured on the image of Osiris, to resurrect him, in much the same way that "the waters of life" were sprinkled sixty times upon the corpse of the Assyrian Ishtar, to return her to life. So even the method of resurrection that the Egyptians use, sprinkling with water, is imitated from Sumer and Assyria. This very close duplication of detail between Egypt and Assyria suggests that the Egyptians scrupulously preserved key elements of the Babylonian myth, while adding local details. It also shows how universal the myth was: the Egyptians fully embraced what was done hundreds of miles away in Babylonia, as if it were their own culture.

These similar dates for Tammuz and Osiris lend themselves to later Gnostic re-interpretation.

The Alexandrian theologians of 50 A.D. had a VERY CLEAR PRECEDENT for borrowing AND modifying "Ishtar's Descent" and Marduk's resurrection to fit into Christianity. The Egyptian priests had done so millennia before when they adopted

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[892] Babbitt, F C (trans) Plutarch Moralia, Vol V., p. 37

[893] Budge, E.A , Osiris and the Egyptian Resurrection, vol. i, p 4.

[894] Ibid, p 101 Harold Cooke, in his book, Osiris - A Study in Myths, Mysteries and Religions, cites this Plutarch story of a seventeenth Athyr murder, and shows it most likely corresponds to the modern October-November time frame See pps 23-28 for details.

[895] Carpenter, E., op cit , p 22

[896] Babbitt, F C , op. cit , p 97.

Tammuz into Osiris. No doubt this was discussed in the Babylonian Berosus' work, Chaldean Histories, which he wrote for the Greek rulers of Egypt around 250 B.C.

B.3 The Day Marduk / Bel Died

Historian Henri Frankfort believes that in the late Babylonian version of the Descent myth, Marduk was lost, or died on the fifth of Nisan and he revived late in the seventh day, all this happening during the 12-day long Spring New Year's Festival.[897] So Marduk dies and is later resurrected on the third day (fifth, sixth, seventh), just as Osiris (17th, 18th, 19th) and Marduk's resurrection on Nisan 7 occurs just seven days before Christ's death on Nisan 14. Even in Marduk's case, it is his wife Beltis, an obvious variation of Ishtar, who descends and resurrects him with the help of other gods and their son Nabu. (It should be added, that in the full Egyptian story, Nabu's counterpart is named Horus, son of Isis and Osiris, and he too assists his mother Isis in resurrecting his father.) We therefore have complete correspondence between the Marduk myth and Tammuz and the Marduk myth and Osiris, which links the myth of all three gods to a mere seven days before Jesus died. This proximity of the festivals was immediately obvious to all men in 31 A.D., although the starting point for Gnostic speculation had to have been the Serapis-Osiris festival on April 25, the exact day of Jesus' death. The problem with keeping April 25 and merely substituting Serapis for Jesus was that the darkness completely discredited Serapis as an impotent fraud. Substituting him for Jesus, as was done in Alexandria, would prove to be contentious and ultimately unsuccessful. A more mystical reinvention was necessary to disarm avid Christians and supersede their original faith.

However, in retrospect, the Egyptian and Babylonian myths can be said to have equally contributed to the ultimate formula for Good Friday / Easter Sunday. Serapis provided the exact coincidence in time, April 25, while Ishtar / Tammuz / Marduk added to it the identical method of death between Jesus and the gods (crucifixion), and a three-day time frame to replace the one-day Passover. The Adonis - Osiris faiths added the notion of a joyous resurrection to the mournful death of Tammuz.[898]

C. How Good Friday was Invented

Once it becomes apparent that the maze of differing resurrection festivals we see in hindsight today did not pose an impossible barrier to the formation of Good Friday, we need to consider what lines of thinking and what portions of ritual the Gnostics used to bridge the differences between known Christianity and Paganism and define a new day in response to the eclipse omens.

When such information can be specified with a high degree of certainty, it becomes difficult for the critic to dismiss the true origin of the day.

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[897] Ibid, pps 317-318

[898] See Sayce, A H , Hibbert Lectures, p 230, for indications of this

C.1. Taking the Best from all the Myths and Creating a Fit in the Passover Week: What were the Lines of Reasoning Available to Gnostic Theologians?

We have reached the point in our survey of 3,000 years of Tammuz worship where we can now apply the Mesopotamian mythos of a three-day long hanging from a stake to the intellectual exercises of Gnostic thinkers in 50 A.D.

I showed earlier that Gnostic philosophy revolved around certain basic modes of thought. There were several primary dictums by which the savants developed their doctrines: 1) the intellectual primacy of Plato, Pythagoras and Philo, 2) the mystical unity of Osiris and the other gods, regardless of time, place, or ritual, 3) allegory must be used in order to mystically interpret literal historical events such as the crucifixion, 4) all nations have some truth, and 5) the Solar Logos, ratio and number-religion are the underpinnings of mystical understanding.

These are all general Gnostic principles of theology, applicable to virtually any and every doctrine that hodgepodge of thinkers ever devised, but what was the world of ideas in the cultural climate of 50 A.D. and what were the specific esoteric reasonings that the Gnostic used to synthesize this new mystical day of Good Friday?

There are additional "inspired" lines of resigning that Gnostics referenced in their writings, that we can draw upon and directly relate to the invention of Good Friday / Easter. We have verifiable traces of them both in the historical record of Egyptian society and in Gnostic writings, which will be cited for the doubter. There was even a full, spurious gospel created in Alexandria before 100 A.D., to legitimize the heresy, called today "Clement's Secret Gospel".[899]

Additional Lines of Reasoning in Gnostic Writings Related to the Development of Good Friday:

a) Passage of the stars through the Zodiac signs over the centuries mystically guided the development of resurrection religion from the time of Osiris to its ultimate fulfillment in Jesus.

b) Roman revisions to the ancient Egyptian calendar allowed Gnostics to form mystical analogies between festival dates in old Egyptian months and modern Roman months and therefore move festivals around the year.

c) The coincidence of Jesus' Crucifixion falling on the celebration of Serapis was a divine act that authorized and sanctified merging Osiris-Serapis with Jesus in one Gnostic theology.

d) Mystical ideas of the Hellenic age, such as 1) a spirit being called Iao, whom Plato personified as "divine love crucified in the heavens", around 400 B.C., and 2)

[899] See Appendix 4 - "Clement, Origen, Astrology, and More of the Hermetic Theology Behind Easter", for a full discussion of Clement's Secret Gospel, and how it antedated Good Friday

numbers, applied as a mystical ratio that unified the guiding spirits of the Babylonian and Roman calendars, drove Gnostic thinkers to justify a Good Friday.

e) It therefore became perfectly permissible for Gnostics to take the Osiris festival of November and flawlessly engraft it into Christ's April Crucifixion week, making Osiris the authentic resurrection god and Jesus merely a mystical "re-incarnation" of Osiris.

Since so many of these new points revolve around the influence of astrology over Gnostic thinking, the first order of business now is to consider the development of astrology's hold over the Gnostic mind in the age of Jesus.

C.1.a. Gnostic Technique One: Shifting Ceremonies from Fall to Spring via the Zodiac and the Celestial Year of Plato

The book, Pagan and Christian Creeds, by Edward Carpenter, has excellent material depicting the deep role of the Zodiac signs in pagan religion and at the Spring Equinox. As a general statement, Carpenter wrote:

> The Vernal Equinox has all over the ancient world, and from the earliest times, been a period of rejoicing and festivals in honor of the Sun god. It is needless to labor a point which is so well known.[900]

Elsewhere he describes how all the Christian festivals from Christmas to Easter can be related to Zodiac interpretation, but he claims the chief festival in Zodiac symbolism is Easter (or Good Friday).[901] To explain his point he devotes one full Chapter, some 32 pages, to: "The Symbolism of the Zodiac", as it relates to Easter. I will discuss a few of his points later on in this Section. I recommend reading his entire explanation.

Not just once or twice, but many times in the three thousand year history of Egyptian religion, the Priests of the Pharaohs turned to Babylon for insight and doctrine. There is a well-documented trend in Alexandrian civilization in the centuries immediately before Jesus, involving the proliferation of Zodiac astrology and even magic. This cultural infusion from Babylon to Egypt, forms a significant intellectual backdrop for later Gnostic reasoning about Christ and Good Friday.

When scholars such as Franz Cumont studied the Hellenistic and Gnostic ages, they described the flourishing of a new synthesis of astrology and religion in Alexandrian Egypt that went beyond earlier Egyptian borrowings from Babylon. For all the science of their age, the Alexandrian's superstition of the stars firmly superseded any rational bent towards nature as is now held in the Western world. Astrology was the ancient venerable tradition of its time. We can now trace the impact of this phenomenon upon the men who preceded Clement.

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[900] Carpenter, op cit , p 36
[901] Ibid, pps 34 -35

Astrology is ancient to Egypt, but in Hellenistic times it was enriched with foreign concepts and exalted to a higher intellectual status. The process involved the importing and merging of advanced Babylonian astronomy / astrology into the formal religion of Greek Egypt, including Osiris worship. It seems to have started about 150 B.C. The process began with a text (a bible of sorts) and ended with a temple.

If the Ptolemy Greeks had been expropriating Babylonian science into rival Egypt since Berosus' time, (ca. 270 B.C.), why would there be a sudden merging of Babylonian astral-faith, notably the Zodiac, into the Egyptian religions around 150 B.C.? The case has been made by Cooke and others, that Osiris' religion was based in an elementary form of Sun and star worship since perhaps 2400 B.C.,[902] or even much earlier. Sayce and Lockyer both argued that this aspect of Sun worship came from Babylon. Egyptian religion and its temples, like Babylon's, was always oriented towards literal star positions and mystical star worship.[903] Egyptians told horoscopes with sky genii called decans, but not with the Zodiac.[904] The Greeks probably introduced that formalism into Egypt culture before 150 B.C.[905] (The first Zodiacs had 18 constellations, not 12 and before that, 36 decans were used in place of the Zodiac.[906]) So why do we see Babylonian Zodiac signs and symbols first introduced into Egyptian temples, after 150 B.C.?[907]

Perhaps the answer can be found in the fact that Athens and the Greek peninsula finally was annexed by Rome in 164 B.C., in effect ending the independence and ravaging the pride of the Greek spirit. Astrology, horoscopes, astral-faith, while a part of Ptolemaic society, was catapulted forward with the appearance of a secret text on the subject, just after Athens lost its freedom, leaving Alexandria, on the African continent, the remaining independent citadel of Greek civilization in the Mediterranean. As with Tammuz in Assyria and Babylon, the changes of national fortunes, engendering a national upsurge after Greece had vanquished the Persians and triumphed across the world under Alexander, spurred an embrace of spiritual power in the heavens in time of defeat.

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[902] P 20 of Cooke, Osiris. Cooke dates Osiris with the symbol of Ares the Ram, because ram was prevalent in Egyptian architecture, and the Sun entered into the part of the heavens associated with Ares constellation, in 2410 B.C

[903] I will discuss this in much detail in volume ii For now, refer to Cooke, Osiris, A Study in Myths, Mysteries, and Religion (see Cooke's Introductory remarks, and the full text) Also Lockyer, The Dawn of Astronomy For a more recent bibliography on Egyptian Astrology, see Claggett, Ancient Egyptian Science, vol ii, bibliography

[904] Budge, E.A., Egyptian Magic, p 229 Citations for both a Greek Zodiac - horoscope for Alexander the Great, and Egypt as the inventor of horoscopes appear on this page The book also gives descriptions of unlucky day calendars, and other fate-related beliefs of the native Egyptians Gleadow, The Origin of the Zodiac, p 162, says personal horoscopes do not exist in the archeological record before 410 B.C

[905] Budge says: "It is however, quite certain that the Greeks borrowed the Zodiac from the Babylonians, and that they introduced it into Egypt, probably during the Ptolemaic period" (p 314, The Gods of the Egyptians, vol. ii) This time frame is 311 - 31 B C)

[906] Gleadow, ibid.

[907] See Evans, p. 40, The History and Practice of Ancient Astronomy, for a side-by-side comparison of three Egyptian and Babylonian Zodiac figures (Sagittarius, Capricorn, and Aquarius) The Egyptian figures are dated to 25 A.D, the Babylonian to 1200 B C. Budge gives all 12 Egyptian Zodiac figures on: p 315 of vol ii - The Gods of the Egyptians

According to Cumont, the spurious document first appears in the still-free Greek-Egyptian society, probably penned by scholars in Alexandria. It harkens its readers back to a time of Greek independence and creativity. The document is supposedly written by a wise and ancient Greek king and his minister (King Nechepso and his official, Pet-Osiris). It honors the past and legitimizes the Zodiac astrology of the Chaldeans. The text merged known Babylonian principles of astrology into the Greek-Egyptian culture in a spectacular fashion. It created a surge of interest in astrology and mysticism that borrowed from both Syria, Assyria and Plato, Pythagoras and others. This Hermetic mix grew to have great influence over Alexandrian and Roman thinkers of the following centuries[908], especially the religionists. Writing about the priestly penchant to absorb foreign ideas into the Egyptian religion that prevailed throughout the first, second and third centuries A.D, David Frankfurter stated:

> This fundamental drive to synthesize [foreign and Egyptian religion together] was largely responsible for Egyptian priestly culture's tremendous capacity to assimilate foreign words, gods, and ritual methods like astrology ...."[909] (comment and emphasis added)

Various scholars recognize the growth of astrology in Egyptian religion as a key element in the origin of Egyptian Gnosticism and have debated its exact role for decades.[910]

Again, according to Cumont and corresponding to Frankfurter's words above, a second wave of hermetic doctrines developed in Alexandria between 50 B.C. and 150 A.D. These Gnostic or pre-Gnostic doctrines came from the old Assyrian astro-religions, filtered through Syria and Egyptian cultures.[911]

For a second and a third time in classical Greek history, we find a correlation between the spread of hermetic knowledge in the Greek-Egyptian world and major setbacks to Greek civilization. Rome conquered Ptolemaic Egypt in the decades 50 - 30 B.C. and Christianity loomed as a rival to Alexandria from the moment the eclipses were reported. (The evangelist Mark brought Christianity to Alexandria about 60 A.D.) So there is the likelihood that a civilization of ideals, under continuing and demoralizing siege over the centuries, became reactionary and struck back at its final rival through "sophia", "gnosis" and secret gospels, eventually creating Good Friday as an integral part of the backlash for its own survival.

Earlier, I traced the origins of the "triduum", Latin for "three-day", the three day observance which Clement and Origen first publicly broached as the enlargement

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[908] Cumont , Astrology and Religion Among the Geeks and Romans, p 76, and p 2.

[909] Frankfurter, D , Early Egyptian Christianity, p 244

[910] See Petrement's discussion of the origins of Gnosticism and its debt to astrology, Persia, and Babylon on pps. 51 - 74 of her book, A Separate God Her point of view is different from mine, but she validates the subject, and cites the evidence that I would use

[911] Ibid, pps. 76-77

of the Christian Passover. Easter, in their hands, was a three-day gnosis, a secret knowledge, or passage into the spirit world, which ordinary Christians did not understand and had to be guided into.

The phenomenon of turning the original Nisan 14 Passover into a one-day Sunday Passover and then later re-inventing that "Passover" into a three day celebration, must be viewed as a part of this backlash. Allow me to expand this a little further.

This very stratagem, as exercised by Clement and Origen in 180 - 200 A.D., was consistent with the ancient intellectual traditions of both the Egyptian and Babylonian priesthoods. Both had a proven track record of adapting the mythology of the gods to their own needs and expanding holidays for priestly control, IF IT ADVANCED THEIR WORSHIP AND CAPITOL CITY. This is exactly the same situation the religious leaders in the great city of Alexandria found themselves in the years immediately after Christ. They had been the center of Egyptian worship since the Greeks founded their city in 330 B.C.; their cult religion of Isis and Serapis had spread to Rome and the farthest parts of the Empire, now the upstart Christian religion was removing this pivotal role from them, so they offered to Christians NEW DOCTRINE WHICH ONLY THEY HAD, (it was their old festivals repackaged) AS HIGHER CHRISTIAN THOUGHT, in order to regain the ascendancy that they were losing all over the empire. For quite some time this did succeed. For centuries and even after 325 A.D., Alexandrian priests calculated the date of when to observe the older one-day Easter event, the Sunday Pascha that preceded the Triduum, for the entire Roman empire, effectively dictating the most sacred day of the Christian year, and harboring the prestige that went with it. It was only decades and centuries later that this predominance shifted west to Rome from Alexandria.

The astral thinking that enlarged Osiris in 1400 BC, enlarged Tammuz in 900 B.C. and re-invented Marduk in 600 B.C. was brought to and found fertile ground in, the land of Serapis and the Gnostics; indeed, this was true in the entire Roman world. Consider one example of this universal acceptance involving Babylonian astrology, Roman elites and Greek philosophers from the age right before Jesus.

The Roman philosopher, lawyer and statesman, Cicero, in the first century B.C., quoted a famous Greco-Egyptian named Zeno, who in turn said that "divine power" moves in "the stars, ... years, months, and seasons".[912] (emphasis mine.) Notice how he connects together spirits, stars, calendars and the times of nature's ebb and flow into one concise statement. The divine powers referred to here are the guiding spirits behind the stars, the same powers that guided the Assyrian months we studied earlier. So we have proof from one of the most educated of Romans that intellectual elites in the Roman world shortly before Jesus, accepted the presence of spirits guiding the lunar and solar cycles in Roman times, just as they had in more ancient Babylonian ages. There is in this, a continuity of thought about spirits, new and full moons, equinoxes, solstices and seasons of the year that was very much still in vogue when Gnostic sat down to explain the cosmic darkness surrounding the death of the young Jew in Palestine.

[912] See Cumont, op cit , p 108, for the quote and the references in both Cicero and Zeno's works

Further, the fact that a learned Roman aristocrat such as Cicero would converse in the subject, is a clear indication of its widespread acceptance by general society in the decades before Jesus.

So, according to public statements preserved from the Roman world well before Clement's time, seasons are as influential over men as the stars, they are both guided by spirits and the signs of the Zodiac are their advertisement. J.H. Hill's book, Astral Religion gives further understanding of the exact role the four seasons would play in later Gnostic meditations. Hill plainly states that the four spirits which guided each of the seasons were viewed as angelic beasts, or creatures and that these spirits represented four signs of the Zodiac--Leo, Taurus, Aqurius, and Aquila (a flying eagle) Further, these spirits were believed by pagan--Christians to also appear at the throne of the Christian God, as described in the book of Revelation. So the seasons were directly controlled by Pagan spirits that emanated from the Christian God.[913]

Hill further explained that these four Zodiac-spirits were called "corner-keepers" of the heavens. They were considered to be "witnesses of God Sol in his apparent annual revolution" and messengers of the four Gospels from God to Christians (Matthew, Mark, Luke and John). With some overlap, Jesus' twelve apostles became associated with the twelve signs of the Zodiac. (Guilt by numbers.) Further, these SAME four spirits were known to and had transmitted knowledge to, the ancient Babylonian priests. We thus have, according to Hill, a clear-cut correlation between the spirits of the seasons, hermetic knowledge, Babylonian religion and Christianity, all extant in the time of the Gnostics. All this was done in a very crude manner, using simple analogy and allegory.

With this as a backdrop, we can move on to considering plain statements about astrology, seasons and the Zodiac from both Clement and Origen. First, lets look a little deeper at the temples that were standing when both Clement and Origen were alive.

The Zodiac, as a means of spreading the power of season-spirits over men's lives was also inculcated into the formal temple worship of Osiris in Roman times. The temple Zodiac at Dendorah is stark proof of this evolution in Egyptian religion.[914] It is a great edifice dedicated to Hathor (Isis) and Osiris. On one of the ceilings of a second floor chapel dedicated to Osiris, is an immense and ornate circular map of the heavens. It combines in one context the known stars, the known constellations, the seasons of the year, the Zodiac figures and Osiris, Isis and other Egyptian gods.[915] Its carvings are unprecedented in Egyptian temple motif.

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[913] Hill, J.H., op cit, p. 60-63.

[914] Claggett, op cit, p 479 gives the age as Pre 30 B C, Evans says circa 25 A D, and Gleadow (The Origin of the Zodiac, says 17 A D (p 181)

[915] For line drawings and discussions of each of the elements in the Zodiac, see Neugebauer and Parker, Egyptian Astronomical Texts, vol iii, plate 35, and its discussion, and Claggett, vol. ii, figures iii-76a,b,c, with comments.

Further, in another part of the Osiris chapel, there are twenty-three scenes of the funeral bier and resurrection of Osiris.[916]

In the ceiling at Denderah we have nothing less than the Egyptian adaptation of the astrology behind Tammuz' resurrection, transferred to Osiris, his counterpart along the Nile. Forgive the oversimplification, but if Clement or his Gnostic predecessors wanted a reason for borrowing the November Osiris myth and transferring the meaning of the festival from Fall to Spring, they simply had to look upon the ceiling of the temple at Denderah to see it.

There is other direct temple evidence. Clement wrote that all worshippers who wished to enter into the temple of Serapis, in Alexandria were forced to wear a badge having the name of Iao[917], the Greek Sun-spirit who ruled over the twelve spirits of the Zodiac, whom I will describe shortly. So Clement, and indeed all Gnostics of Alexandria, were eyewitness to astral-symbols used daily in conjunction with Osiris worship.

Yet another statement from Stromata, proves such thinking was indeed in vogue with the Gnostic contemporaries of early Christianity; we looked at it briefly before. Clement wrote about astronomy, the hand-maiden of astrology, in veiled words that are easily deciphered. Lets take a more incisive look at it.

> astronomy .... lead[s] the soul nearer to the creative power [i.e. God Sol], it teaches to quickness in perceiving the seasons of the year .... makes the soul in the highest degree observant, ... of discovering correspondences and proportions, so as to hunt out for similarity in things dissimilar.[918] (emphasis mine)

Allow me to give an "astral" interpretation of this quote from Clement.

Notice he starts by saying astronomy leads the soul "nearer to the creative power". These words have special meaning to Clement and his fellow Gnostics. Elsewhere in Stromata, Clement wrote: "the worship of the heavenly bodies .... was the way given to the nations to rise up to God".[919] Via transmigration of souls, Clement means this literally. The "creative power" one is "led nearer to" is actually "Iao", a Greek invention of the spirit world, second in the trinity, who rules in the Sun, proclaimed, but not invented, by Plato.

According to the Greeks, Iao was an ignorant Spirit Power (the "Demiurge" was another name for him) that was manipulated by greater spirits into creating the physical world and now directs it.[920] After creating the universe, Iao became the Sun-spirit that dwelled in the physical Sun and sustained all his creation from

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[916] See Budge, E A, Gods of the Egyptians, vol ii, pps 131-140, for all 23 line drawings. It would be interesting to speculate that they are related to the new and full moons of the calendar, or the 24 hours of the day, but I have no analysis or proof to offer at this time Perhaps a reader

[917] See Morris, op cit, p 123

[918] Roberts, A., op. cit., vol. ii, p. 501

[919] Ibid, p. 505.

[920] Fideler, D., op cit, p 130.

there[921]. According to Plato, Iao was the soul of the universe[922], yet he was NOT the greatest of all spirit beings; others inhabited the heavens beyond the physical universe. In blasphemy, men like Clement associated this ignorant being with YHVH, the Supreme God of Judeo-Christianity. Lets return to our analysis of the above quote.

Clement's above remark about "quickness in perceiving the seasons of the year" bears some reflection. Seasons are apparent, they arrive at equinoxes and Solstices, so where is the need to perceive them? Mental dexterity in discerning the seasons really relates to perceiving the four "corner-keeper" spirits of Hill's statement above, via astrological charts. Stated differently, perceiving the seasons meant understanding the "higher truths" revealed by the "corner-keeper" spirits of the Zodiac, spirits that actually inspired the four Gospels of the New Testament. Of course, there is no "corner-keeper" truth to be interpreted out of the four Gospels.

Clement next says that astronomy makes the soul "observant of discovering correspondences and proportions", another veiled expression. Proportions and correspondences are another name for Ratios in Pythagoras' geometry and Ratios in turn are a part of the Greek definition of the Spiritual Logos, the power behind the Sun and the revelator of knowledge to man. According to Plato, the fabric of the universe was separated out into proportions that mimic the harmonies of a stringed instrument. These proportions relate to literal spirits that underpin both the orbit paths of planets and stars and physical forces in general. (It is a curious fact of modern physics that the latest theories to attempt to explain the unification of all matter and energy are called Superstring theories. They deal with levels of tiny vibrational energy points. Plato was wrong, but his ideas were .... well, perceptive.)

David Fideler makes an exceptionally concise comment on this subject that summarizes Plato and reveals Clement's intent completely: "it will be found that certain numbers are based upon the .... *logoi*, ratios, or "Aeons" [spirit beings] which underlie the structure of the manifest universe."[923] (my comment) To further substantiate this interpretation of Clement's words, we should note that Clement calls the Chapter in which his above quote is found, "The Mystical Meanings in the Proportions of Numbers, Geometrical Ratios and Music."[924] Fideler thus shows that to a Gnostic, the structure of the physical creation, spirits like "Iao" and astronomy are all characterized in number ratios which underlie the forces of nature, exactly what Plato taught centuries before.

Clement is further saying astronomy heightens one's mind to perceive the Logos-Proportion-Spirit between dissimilar things in the material world. It is a hidden Logos that must be hunted for, searched out, PERHAPS one that would unite Tammuz and Christ into the spirit that sustains the universe? In any case, we have a line of thought in Clement's theology.

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[921] Ibid, p. 62
[922] Lee, D., op. cit., pps. 42-43
[923] Fideler, D., op. cit., p. 130.
[924] Roberts, A., op. cit., p. 499

Since the seasons reflect different states of Iao's power, or the Sun's light in the physical world, Gnostics readily tied the spirits of the four seasons and "IAO", to Jesus, their Christian Sun-god, who would rule over the seasons.

> .... in the *Pistis Sophia,* [an important Gnostic document] the resurrected Jesus leads the [12] disciples in a ritual based on the mystic name [IAO] .... "And Jesus cried out as he turned to the four corners of the world with his disciples .... and he said, IAO, IAO, IAO. ...."[925] (comments and emphasis added)

We have here in one Gnostic text, four references that intermingle Christ's resurrection with Greek astral religion: 1) the resurrected Jesus proclaiming his new nature as IAO, the creator Sun God, or Solar Logos, 2) IAO spoken as a triplet, reminiscent of the trinity of the godhead, 3) the four corners of the earth / world-system, indirectly referencing the four spirits behind the four seasons (the equinoxes and solstices) and finally, 4) the twelve disciples, suggesting the twelve spirits of the Zodiac.

All this hollow symbolism is supposed to constitute some great spiritual truth predicated upon astronomy, that supersedes the Bible. Nevertheless, Gnostics such as Clement would be eminently conversant with it, since Pistis Sophia was an important Gnostic compilation of its time.

C. W. King, in his book, The Gnostics and Their Remains, wrote that the Gnostics claimed the twelve spirits of the Zodiac, which include the four "corner-keepers", created man's soul out of their tears and their sweat.[926] Origen, the disciple of Clement, "published a text called 'The Scheme of the Orphites', ... which details the prayers to be addressed to the Seven Planetary Powers by the released soul, in its upward flight."[927] These Powers are the Sun (Iao), Moon and five known planets of Origen's day.

So Clement lauds astronomy as bringing us closer to God Sol and Origen makes public the greetings for souls to use as they whiz by the Sun, the Moon and Mars, on their path to Nirvana.

Let me consolidate the above. Clement wrote that "astronomy teaches quickness in perceiving the seasons of the year". We can view this statement as meaning the following: the Gnostic who is versed in astronomy, who knows how to calculate the exact start of each season, including the Spring equinox, will also be skilled in hunting for analogies between different SPIRITUAL things. Presumably one such person would have been Origen, Clement's greatest disciple. It is interesting to note that Origen was praised after his lifetime as being one of the most expert calculators of heavenly positions in Alexandria, a man of supreme skill.[928]

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[925] Ibid, p. 368.
[926] King, C W., op cit , pps 348-349
[927] Ibid, p. 332
[928] Roberts, A., op cit , vol. vi, p. 145.

With such entrenched astrology evident in the writings and lives of these two "Christian Fathers", Gnostic study into the mystical relationships between Fall and Spring festivals should not surprise us.

It is exactly the sort of abstract thinking necessary to turn an ancient pagan Fall festival of Osiris into the source for a Christian Spring holiday--Good Friday. The eclipses of April 25 were profound astronomical omens, demanding an immediate interpretation from the Gnostics, astrologers and magicians of the day. The necessary reasoning is rooted in how one applies both astronomy and astrology to Jesus, the very tools by which the Assyrians expanded Tammuz into a Sun god of the entire year.

But did it happen that way?

There is much more damning evidence to indicate it did. Allow me a few lines to sketch the general argument, before I prove it. I think the reader will find the conclusion quite astounding.

We can next speculate that Gnostics of 50, 100, or 200 A.D. surely tried to relate the Zodiac and star positions of Tammuz or Osiris' day (say, 3000 B.C.) to the positions of the stars in Jesus' time or their own and struggled to perceive a cosmic connection between the horoscopes of both ages.[929] This is hardly speculation. Rather it is the staple of their investigations and teachings.

Harold Cooke, in his study on Osiris, gives a totally astrological explanation for the Osiris myth as told by Plutarch in 90 A.D. He shows that Plutarch retold events of Osiris' death as astrological occultations, alignments and proximities of the Sun and constellations, notably the Zodiac signs. Specifically, he demonstrated that Plutarch linked Osiris death with the Sun when it appeared in the constellation Taurus at the Spring equinox, roughly 2200 B.C. - 4400 B.C.[930]

Clearly, Taurus was important in Babylonian astrology at this same time. (Everyone saw the same sky.) In this epoch, the brightest star within the constellation Taurus, Aldebaran, rose above the horizon immediately before the Spring Sun, acting as a harbinger for the Spring equinox and the Sumerian New Year.[931] The Sumerians used this star as the symbol for Nabu, Son of Marduk / Tammuz, messenger of the gods and the scribe of men's fates. Recall that Nabu plays a role in the resurrection of Marduk as well and he is his father's reincarnation on earth. The Zodiac astrology of Sumeria in 3000 B.C. therefore links Tammuz or Marduk with a "rising" before the Spring equinox, as much as Plutarch links it with Osiris. In astrology, as

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[929] There is strong evidence that since at least 523 B C the Chaldean priests were able to track and predict the motions of the planets and constellations Therefore, it is virtually certain that Clement, or Alexandrian astrologers 700 years later, could also work backwards in time to the locations of stars and planets 3500 B C. as well See Appendix 2 - The State of Greco-Roman Astronomy in the Time of Christ, Luke, and the Caesars)

[930] Cooke, H , op cit , pps 38-40.

[931] See Langdon, S , Babylonian Menologies, p 68., and Gleadow, op. cit., p. 171

in earthly religion, Tammuz and Osiris are one interchangeable entity. This can be viewed as a missing dimension in Plutarch's explanation of Osiris' death.

Given Cooke's analysis, we have Plutarch couching Osiris' death in an astral "mystery" that was invented somewhere around 3000 B.C. Since Plutarch is the only public authority to write on Osiris before Clement and he is a contemporary of first generation Christian Gnostics, we now have evidence for an astrological speculation on the subject in the generations contemporary and following Plutarch, that is, in Clement's time.

According to the Gnostic tradition that moderns attribute to Plato, both Tammuz and Osiris were gods that anticipated Jesus. All three were personified in the Sun, all three were manifestations of an invisible spirit embodied in the Sun, called "Iao", or Jehovah, that was the soul of the universe and ruled over day or diminished it, in the presence of the all-familiar Zodiac-spirits.

> 'The Divine Love' [Iao]... was the 'First-Begotten Son' of the Platonists. Plato, ... in philosophizing about the Son of God says : 'The next power to the Supreme God was ... figured in the shape of a cross on the universe.' .... certain Christian heretics Gnostics] .... maintained that Jesus was crucified in the heavens.[932]

The explanation for this "celestial crucifixion" comes from a discussion of Egyptian astrology and the Sun's movements at the Spring and Fall equinoxes. .

> At the spring equinox, the sun undergoes a "second birth" as the length of the day exceeds that of the night. Moreover, the sun at this time, on its .... path, "crosses", (or "passes over") the celestial equator. The ecliptic and the celestial equator form a point of crossing, i.e., a "cross". At that point, the sun is fixed on a celestial cross, hence it is "crucified".[933]

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[932] Morris, C., op cit, p 123 Morris is actually quoting a passage from vol I of Higgins' book Anacalypsis, p. 218. Higgins says the quote comes from the early Gnostic Church father, Justin Martyr Higgins explains that Plato took the concept of "cross on the universe" from Pythagorus, it is not to be taken literally If we study Plato's Timeaus, the reference to the cross on the universe is there, but veiled. (see Lee, p. 49) Plato is discussing the design and creation of the universe He says the "First cause", which he calls the Father, made the universe as an image of the unseen. The universe is a Living God, with both matter and spirit soul, (Iao) that has from its "fabric" two strips taken, which cross each other and are would into huge celestial circles. One circle represents the daily motions of the Sun and Monn we see, the other is the path for monthly and yearly motions Plato's "cross" in the universe comes from the very organization of motion in the heavens, it is reached at the equinoxes, and it defines the motions and fates of god-soul-spirits that move the Sun and planets Plato's cross is PURE ASTROLOGY, and it is "Iao". Higgins relates the Egyptian cross, the "ankh" with a cross on the circle of the universe He also compares it to Venus, "Divine love", in the circuit of the heavens (see p 217) Higgins explanation of Justin Marty's "divine love" reference to Plato, is the most thorough this writer has seen. The explanation for "celestial crucifixion" that I next give in the text, although from another author is in full harmony with the present explanation

[933] Finch, in Van Serima, Nile Valley Civilizations, p 186 See also Finch's discussion of Zodiac motions on p 187 Higgins, op cit, vol. I, p. 789, says the same as Finch--The celestial crucifixion of Plato and Justin Martyr is the Sun crossing the celestial equator, as it travels along its normal path, the ecliptic

Hill, in his book Astral Worship, is even more direct:

> The last seven days of Lent is called Passion Week, in reference to the apparent passage of the Sun across the celestial equator at the Vernal Equinox or 21st of March ; the ancient astrologers ... conceived the idea that the sun stood still for ... three days at each of the cardinal points and making it represent the figurative death of the genius [spirit] of that luminary [this is Iao - Plato's genii of the Sun][934] (comments and emphasis added)

So according to astrology, Iao is crucified, he hangs immobile in the sky, for three days at the Spring and Fall equinoxes, as a result of the Sun's "passage" across the heavenly equator.

At the Fall equinox, the Sun "descends down" across the heavenly equator into a shorter day and into the netherworld of Winter. This would be the time of spiritual death. In the Spring equinox, the Sun "Passes Over" the heavenly equator to a longer day, or greater "life". Thus the three-day death, descent and resurrection cycle of Osiris is acted out in the Fall and in the Spring equinoxes by the Sun, the spirit Iao, which "hangs" in the heavens for three days, like Inanna and Tammuz on the stake. Therefore, through Iao, Osiris' November death is directly tied to a Spring resurrection. The Sun, Iao, acts out in six months of the year, what literally happened in three days in November and Jesus becomes part of this process. Clearly Osiris precedes Jesus in history, so if we take his Fall festival first and follow it with Jesus' Passover, we get a death and resurrection "play" in the heavens that starts 3000 B.C. with Osiris and ends 31 A.D. with Jesus. This is the link the Gnostics used to merge Osiris into the Crucifixion Week. It is really no different in essence than the philosophy behind yearly Assyrian festivals for Tammuz, in which he dies at the Summer Solstice and revives at the Winter.

The justification for shifting Osiris' Fall festival into the Passover Week now becomes immediately obvious--Plato's "Crucified god in the heavens", effectively makes Fall and Spring equal and opposite sides of spiritual enlightenment--darkness and light. By moving Osiris' Fall festival to Spring, the Gnostics were simply casting Christ as a "greater light" of the ancient Tammuz myth, but BOTH were truth.

We can also see the justification for a "Passage" interpretation of the Passover, that both Clement and Origen stressed so adamantly. As the great and lesser lights of heaven, the Sun and Moon, "pass" into greater luminance at the Spring, so the Christian grows.

Again, is this idea merely unprovable speculation, or did the Gnostic elites reason in these terms? What is the evidence?

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[934] Hill, J H , op. cit , p. 44.Kersey Graves, in The World's Sixteen Crucified Saviors, p 142, bottom, also echoes this idea.

Clement's writings, always the grab bag, give only circumstantial evidence for such thinking, but Origen, more focused, yet more secretive in his discourses, actually tips his hand more completely than his master on this hidden Gnostic doctrine. Origen, writing as the venerable Christian theologian, demonstrates he is also a student of the astral seasons and the Zodiac. Lets look at more of his written record and relate it to finding similarities in the dissimilar.

In a treatise called the Philocalia, he discussed this very subject. It certainly is not anything we find in scripture. Origen explains the astronomy behind astrology with firm knowledge of an expert. He elaborates upon the gradual movement of the Zodiac constellations across the sky over centuries of time and claimed that there were two locations in the sky for divining astrologies: the place where one saw the constellation in the sky in one's own lifetime, and the place where it used to be located centuries before at some pre-defined epoch in history before it moved to where we now see it. We have the literal position and the ancient "ghost" position. To Origen, the invisible ghost position of the Zodiac constellations was the one where the guiding spirits still resided and affected men, not the present visible location.[935]

In other words, according to Origen, the Zodiac entity controlling the meaning of an event such as Jesus' crucifixion, would have been the position of the Sun and the Zodiac constellations in a prior time, such as when Osiris died.

Closely related to these two locations where powers of the heavens resided, both Origen and the Gnostics believed in the notion of the "Platonic month", a period of time of some 2,100 years in length, that could be used to monitor the passage of events in the heavens.[936] Origen openly wrote that this concept was well known among intellectuals of his day.[937] The idea was astrology mixed with fact, and it enabled them to count these 2100-year-long "months" either forwards or backwards in time, bringing events of different millennia into a common reference frame of the stars. (See footnote for more details.[938])

Moreover, since astrology was both ancient and widespread, the rulers of each age, constellations Taurus, then Ares, then Pisces, were known from history to be the ones to track in the heavens. Following Origen's insight on " true" positions of

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[935] Fideler, D , p 345, note 12 give the Origen quotation, and references Philocalia, 191

[936] Fideler, D , op cit , pps 160-163

[937] Ibid, p 161

[938] Because the Sun began each Spring in a slightly new position compared to the fixed constellations that shined behind it in the sky, roughly every 2,100 years, a new one of the twelve Zodiac constellations became the sign that was "behind" the Sun when it dawned on the first day of Spring, (This slow progression of the Sun across the Zodiac constellations is called in technical parlance "the precession of the equinoxes" It takes the Sun some 26,000 years to move full circle through all 12 Zodiac constellations in the heavens and return to the place in the sky in front of its "original" constellation) There is evidence from archeology and astronomy that the ancient priests understood that every 2,100 years the Sun shifted its yearly staring point into a new Constellation on the equator of the sky. The sign that the Sun has appeared in front of, during recorded history, are Taurus the Bull (ca. 4000 - 2000 B.C.), Ares the Ram (2000 B.C.- 0) , Pisces the Fish (0 - 2000 A.D), and most recently, the "age of Aqurius" has begun (2000 - 4000 A.D.). In this way, a Platonic month lasts 2100 years, and starts anew when the Sun moves in front of a new constellation of the Zodiac

powers in the sky and using the notion of the "Platonic months" progressing from Taurus to Ares to Pisces, Gnostics could definitely in this way work backwards from their present age (Jesus' age) which was "Pisces", and return back to the age of Ares, or even further back to Taurus, hunting for similar cosmic events or omens in the different times of Osiris or Tammuz to compare with the Crucifixion eclipses of Christ (see Clement's quote above). An omen in the Fall of 3000 B.C. while Osiris' Sun was descending the Fall equator into Winter, could be matched with an omen in the Spring of 31 A.D. in "Pisces", when the Sun was "arising" to "life". Even though the seasons were different, if the omens were similar, because the events occurred in separate "Ages", the deaths of Osiris and Christ could now be made to be mystically the same, via the invisible signs of the Zodiac.

But did it happen that way?

Based on Origen's public discussion of such specialized knowledge, it becomes extremely plausible for other Gnostic scholars, also versed in the "Platonic month", ancient Egyptian religion and astrology to bridge centuries and even more deeply connect the Sun at Osiris' Fall festival in 3200 B.C. with the Sun at Jesus' Spring death in 31 A.D.

Kersey Graves wrote in his book, The World's Sixteen Crucified Saviors:

> In the case of Osiris of Egypt, Mr. Southwell says, "As his birth was attended by an eclipse of the sun, so his death was attended by a still greater darkness of the solar orb."[939] (emphasis added)

Plutarch, a self-admitted priest of Osiris, confirms this when he writes in 90 A.D., "There are some who would the legend [of Osiris death] an allegorical reference to matters touching eclipses."[940] (emphasis added) He further explains that Osiris death can be compared to a Lunar eclipse and Isis' vengeance upon Set, his murderer, to a Solar eclipse. These two omens, of course, are exactly what I will prove from astronomy, occurred at Jesus' death. If the reader is willing to accept my premise before they see the detailed data from astronomy that is given later in this chapter, then, the mythology of Osiris' death precisely matches the facts of Jesus life and death. Further, Plutarch admits that he has contemporaries who believe in and taught Osiris' "eclipse death" in 90 A.D. Who might those contemporaries be? New Testament Christians? Hardly. They, like Plutach, were initiates into Osiris' system and as we know, the Osiris-Serapis system was indistinguishable from Alexandrian Christianity by the time of 120 A.D.

Perhaps now the next quote, repeated from earlier in this section, will be more meaningful.

[939] Graves, K , The World's Sixteen Crucified Saviors, p 136.
[940] Babbit, F., op. cit , p. 107

> In the second century the syncretisitc sects that had sprung up in Alexandria, the very hotbed of Gnosticism, found ... in Serapis a prophetic type of Christ ....
>
> The early Christians were charged with being a sect of sun-worshippers. The Emperor Hadrian could see no difference between them and the followers of Serapis, WHO WAS THE SUN.[941] (Paragraph order reversed and added emphasis.)

It was Gnostic application of Plato's astrological year and Christ as "Iao", the universal essence behind the Sun, that made the two religions equivalent, not the Bible. The fact that Christianity had been turned into a Sun-worship system by 120 A.D. shows that the original motivating force for this trend HAD to be an earlier Sun worship system, such as we have just discussed, centered upon "Iao".

The omens of both Osiris and Jesus' death are the same; one Platonic month of 2,000 regular years would bind these two eclipse events into a common mystical reality for the Gnostic priesthood.

We have just demonstrated from the existing record that the Gnostics of 50 A.D. and later did indeed have all the information necessary to merge Osiris' Fall festival into the Crucifixion week via astrology and common omens that occurred thousands of years apart.

A more critical reader may claim that I have my facts wrong. The standard Osiris myth says he was either entombed in a coffin and drowned in the Nile, or personally killed by his enemy Set who took on the form of a wild boar, under a full Moon. There is no mention of either Lunar or Solar eclipses here. Is Mr. Southwell wrong? Not at all. The Egyptian myth hides a very basic symbolism, one that meshes with Plato's doctrine of Tammuz and Osiris being forms of the spirit "Iao", an angel or "demi-urge" that ruled behind the Sun and was made out to be 'divine love' crucified in the heavens.

Plutarch explained this riddle in the quote we just examined from Isis and Osiris as "an allegorical matter touching eclipses."[942] Very simply, in the Egyptian myth, Set, the enemy of Osiris, is considered the power of darkness, Osiris is the power of the Moon. When Set killed Osiris under a full Moon, darkness overshadowed the Moon's light - a lunar eclipse. When Isis sought revenge upon Set, she, as the Moon, as Osiris' agent, obscured the powers of Set, without destroying him completely. The darkness of a Solar eclipse is analogous to Isis obscuring Set. This analogy, while weak, is precisely the Gnostic's Solar eclipse, as stated by Plutarch.[943]

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[941] Morris, C., op cit., p 107
[942] Ibid, pps 103, 105, 107
[943] Ibid, p 107.

Using astrology, with Iao as a unifying factor, Fall translates into Spring as a spiritual equivalent, but how could the day Jesus died be converted into the day Osiris died?

If the various Gnostic groups could agree on the literal dates both Jesus and Osiris died, they could have their Gnostic triumph over Christianity and universal harmony among themselves. Since the calendar of Egypt progressively shifted its New Year across the seasons throughout the centuries, no one in Alexandria in 50 or 200 A.D., knew exactly when Osiris died, whether it was in 4000 B.C. or even 2400 B.C. Only legend remained, knowledge of precise eclipse dates in 2400 B.C. would have verged upon mere speculation. While Gnostic "calculators" had a method, inconsistencies and inaccuracies in their knowledge made them all disagree among themselves, although Alexandria was acknowledged as the leader.[944] The November 13 date for Osiris' Fall festival was introduced only perhaps in 30 B.C., when the fixed Greek calendar became the official timekeeper for Egypt.[945] Since knowledge about Osiris was a matter of pride and speculation, the Gnostics could never synchronize their dates among themselves, even though they carefully calculated the positions of the stars. It did not happen simply, as we will see, but of all the contending Gnostic groups, Clement's predecessors in Alexandria had access to the best astronomical records, the greatest hermetic texts and the best astronomical science, to calculate dates.

C.1.b. Gnostic Technique Two - Shifting Osiris' Ceremonies from Fall to Spring as a Consequence of Roman Revisions to the Egyptian Calendar

Since much of Gnosticism was based in Egypt, it should not be surprising that Gnostic thinkers were influenced by the Egyptian calendar system. The Egyptian calendar It slipped throughout the years and centuries. Festivals that were anciently celebrated in the fall, through no one's fault, gradually moved into the summer and spring, due to the crudeness of Egyptian timekeeping.

> .... it is necessary to bear in mind that on account of the movable year of the old Egyptian calendar the true .... dates of the official festivals must have varied from year to year ...[946]

> ... rustic ceremonies [of the Egyptian farmer continued] .... year after year at the same season, while the solemn festivals of the priests continued to shift, with the shifting calendar, from summer through spring to winter and so backward through autumn to summer.[947]

This translation of festivals across the seasons continued for centuries, up until 30 A.D. creating a huge historical precedent in Egypt that was very similar to the Assyrian exaltation of Tammuz throughout the calendar. In both lands, for differing

[944] As an example ONLY of this kind of fumbling date calculations, see Bradshaw, op. cit., p. 92.
[945] Fraser, J G., The New Golden Bough, p. 397.
[946] Ibid
[947] Ibid, p. 391.

reasons, the rule existed that the god's festivals were universal travelers of the seasons, not limited to a mere fixed date, but part of the entire year. In the case of Egypt, one might say it was "mysticism through poor calendar-making". Although this sliding cavalcade of festivals was stanched in 30 B.C., it could readily be tapped into by Gnostic theologians such as Clement, who were eager to merge all differences of pagan religion into the greater body of "truth".

This backdrop offers a plausible argument as to how Gnostics approached the problem of legitimizing Good Friday as a Christian-Pagan "mystery". The matter of picking the exact day in Christ's Crucifixion week, or determining when this "Jesus-Osiris" crucifixion occurred, has yet to be discovered in our quest. Its solution comes from taking a closer look at the calendars the priests and general public used.

Since the calendar was constantly shifting backward each year in the centuries before 30 A.D., even though Osiris festival was celebrated on Athyr 17 in the public calendar, that date moved from Fall backwards into summer and Spring over the centuries.

When Plutarch wrote in 100 A.D. that Osiris died on Athyr 17, or November 13, he was using the fixed calendar of 30 B.C. as his standard. Since he was a priest of Osiris, he could intelligently correlate the ancients festival with the current monthly system of his day. In other words, the priests of Osiris had to make a judgment call, based upon knowledge of the old "shifting" calendar, where to place ancient festivals into the new Egyptian calendar of 30 B.C.

Various Gnostic groups had differing understanding of the old Egyptian mysteries and calendars. How good were these groups' calendar skills in 100 A.D., when they were all striving to take an old Osiris festival from 3000 B.C. and merge it into the Spring of 31 A.D.? The record shows these various Gnostic groups produced quite different opinions on when the crucifixion occurred. No one today seems to know why there is so much disagreement. By understanding their various mystical approaches to the calendar and the calendar systems they used, we can begin to break through Gnostic secrecy and ALSO uncover the final method that produced the exact day of Good Friday. We do know one method they used for transferring festival from the old Egyptian to the new Greek calendar. Most likely, similar thinking contributed to how they arrived at the exact date for the "Jesus-Osiris" crucifixion. Lets see where this line of inquiry leads us.

When the Egyptians began to officially use the Greek (Demotic) calendar in 30 B.C., they shifted holidays that fell on the 25th of the old Egyptian months to the 25th of the nearest Demotic month. The Demotic calendar was based upon the Moon and Sun, like the Babylonian-Hebrew calendar; it preserved the relative days of the Moon's phases in each month.[948] It was not like the Roman calendar where the 25th of a month may have nothing whatsoever to do with a particular phase of the Moon. Literal dates were not important to these people, only the festivals place in

[948] See Finnegan, J., Handbook of Biblical Chronology, pps 50-51 for a passing comment on this fact, plus some exotic references.

the month. A wide variety of dates can be created by this method, or variations on it. In the present case, the two months are different; the holiday could fall weeks closer or farther from Winter or Spring, but the position of the festival in the new month is preserved.[949] We have here nothing less than a re-invention of a festival date, based upon a rule that preserved the festival's relative position in the month, at the cost of losing the literal day it was observed. As in the old Egyptian calendar, festival dates now "float" from the Egyptian to Greek calendars. The Roman system is definitely NOT used.

The ancients observed their festivals primarily in relation to the phases of the Moon--new or full--rather than simply keeping them on a fixed day of the month, so they were more likely to transfer the festival to an equivalent time in the moon's cycle for the new date.[950] Recall the Old Babylonian poem, ca. 1800 B.C., that said Dumuzi is "reborn every month like the moon".[951] If the 17th was intended to be two days after the full moon, then the Alexandrian Gnostics would have moved the Tammuz or Osiris festival from the 17th of Tammuz or Athyr, to the 17th of the lunar month that occurred around April, which begins with the new moon. That is, they would have moved it to Nisan 17, instead of moving it to the Roman date of April 17, since April 17 is counted by marking off so many days after the winter solstice, regardless of when the new moon fell in April. In short, in the eyes of Alexandrian Gnostics living in the Roman Empire, Nisan 17 more accurately corresponded to Tammuz 17 or Athyr 17 than April 17th, because of the lunar cycles.

In The Stromata, Clement described the Gnostic squabbling over the "true" Crucifixion date of Jesus[-Osiris]. We can see some of the calendar problems that it posed. He claimed that some Gnostics used "great accuracy" to determine this date. What kind of accuracy, astrological or literal, his does not say. He notes at least three differing opinions among the groups: the twenty-fifth of Phamenoth [March 21][952] the twenty-fifth of Pharmuthi [April 20] and the nineteenth of Pharmuthi [April 14].[953]

Clement, of course had his own, fourth, opinion, which he does not reveal in this passage. He expressed it when he spoke of "four becoming six". The answer to this "great accuracy" conflict among the Gnostic fathers is simple astrology.

The first date mentioned by Clement was March 21, the Roman date for the Spring equinox--Iao's crucifixion in the heavens, or Christ's crucifixion in the clouds, which some Gnostics taught. If all Gnostic groups were using the same accuracy, all should have arrived at March 21, since this is one date of astronomy all would find the same. Clearly, they were all not simply calculating astronomy. We have

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[949] See Finnegan, op cit., paragraph 622 on p 364 for mention of this way of transferring festival dates

[950] Roberts, A , op. cit , vol ii, p 513

[951] van der Toorn, op cit , p 830.

[952] The dates March 21, April 20, and April 14, are those calculated by Finnegan in his book, Handbook of Biblical Chronology, p. 364. The ancient equinox was not March 21 but March 22, 23. Finnegan may be updating the old date into modern timekeeping here.

[953] Roberts, A , op, cit vol ii, p 333

here no random selection. Surely the reader has been badgered enough with the astral significance of that date.

Remember the quote from a Gnostic of Clement's time on this very subject, how it was impossible for Gnostics to merge together the fourteenth of Nisan, Sunday, the vernal equinox and Christ's resurrection all at one time, in order to keep Passover on a Sunday? [954] This admission demonstrates that the real issue behind the "accurate determinations" was the astrology of meshing all these dissimilar dates into one unique day in history, somewhere around 30 A.D.

The second date Clement mentions, April 20, is most curious. I explained above that the Egyptians took the 25th of an old calendar month and "translated" it into a new, Greek or Roman calendar month, in order to preserve its position in the lunar cycle. Notice what happens if we apply this rule to the 25th of the Egyptian month Pharmuthi. Its literal Roman equivalent is April 20, but by the rule just given, it becomes April 25th, which is the actual day Jesus died. So Pharmuthi 25 could be considered a mystical gloss for the actual day, but with a subtle astrological difference thrown in: Pharmuthi 25 always occurs <u>after</u> the first full moon after the Spring Equinox, April 25 <u>does not</u>. Pharmouthi becomes an astrological "improvement" upon the historical day Jesus died. In 31 A.D. the Passover was postponed one month because of a leap month. April 25 occurred after the <u>second</u> full Moon after the equinox that year. While there are still issues to be resolved, we are beginning to see in this Gnostic date the outline of the official formula for calculating Easter.

Notice also the days which the arguing Gnostics picked for the literal Crucifixion are either the 25th or the 19th of the month. These numbers are not random. They relate to the mythology of Osiris, "Lord of the Festival of the Sixth Day" of the New Moon, the Moon overcome by Darkness, the Dead Moon waiting to be resurrected back to the complete and perfect light of the Full Moon.

The underlying pattern to these two choices of 25 and 19 is the number "6". Six was the number of days the Egyptians waited before they proclaimed the first quarter of the Moon. It also represents Friday. Six days represented the time necessary for Osiris' powers to be evident in the growing Moon. Subtracting 6 days subtracts Osiris' powers from the Moon. Recall that there were 30 days in all of the Egyptian months.[955] In Egyptian reckoning, the first day of the following month was the day when the Moon was blank, or new. So six days back from the new Moon, the "lifeless Moon", would be 3<u>1</u> - 6 = 25. A crucifixion on the 25th of the lunar month would represent the final draining of all the Moon's powers. If we use the 19th as the Crucifixion date, we get a contrary or conflicting point of view. 25 - 6 = 19, which happens to be the day of the month Osiris was resurrected. If Jesus died on the 19th, he died when Osiris was <u>restored</u>, able to fill Jesus, as the true power behind Jesus' death and resurrection. None of these explanations were ever officially adopted.

[954] Roberts. A., op. cit., vol. vi, p. 148
[955] See Parker, R A , The Calendars of Ancient Egypt, p 7

Notice that the dates the Gnostics are using reverse the order of things. We have the 25 as a midpoint between a resurrection (19th) and a death (the 1st of the next month) of the Moon god. The idea is that Christ throughout his lifetime was empowered by the spirit of the resurrected Osiris and it was Christ-Osiris who died and was resurrected. Thus, by Clement's account, three or more camps of priests in Alexandria and the ancient world were haggling amongst themselves, struggling to make sense of all this in light of Jesus' Wednesday Passover death on the 25th of April. They were trying to tie the symbolism of Sun worship, Moon "death" and Moon "resurrection", into the date of the Crucifixion and they couldn't develop a universal truth for all mystics to accept. This is the aspect Clement conceals from his public, but other Egyptian astrologers would know the true issues.

There is other evidence of this bizarre Gnostic impulse to observe Christ's death AFTER the actual day He died. It comes from in the Paschal Canon by Anatolius, which we looked at earlier. Anatolius gives an astrological explanation of why the Passover must be made to fall AFTER the fourteenth day of the lunar month. (Note that he calls it Passover, not Good Friday, even in 270 A.D.) He explains that because there is no spiritual darkness in Christ, the Passover must occur when both the Sun and the Moon's light is greater than night. Notice this linking of Christ's spirit with the Sun and Moon. THAT is the essence of Iao, a spirit behind the Sun's rays. This maximum light occurs only when the Sun shines longer than 12 hours (after the Spring equinox) and when the Moon illuminates the full night, which is the 15th day of the lunar month.[956] (The reasoning is of course, false. Jesus DID die when the world was in darkness. It is Osiris who is illuminating the heavens at this moment in the Spring. He, not Jesus, must be accommodated with a festival that occurs AFTER the Sun and Moon light things up.) Gnostics taught that as the days grew longer than 12 hours, righteousness increases over planet Earth and the moral power within the rays of the Sun's beams actually increases in its effect upon men's actions.[957] Longer days make for more moral men.

> .... at the time of the new moon in the month of Phamenoth, they celebrate a festival ..... "Osiris's coming into the Moon," and this marks the beginning of the spring. Thus they make the power of Osiris to be fixed in the Moon, and say that Isis, since she is generation, is associated with him.[958]

Then Anatolius says something curious. He jumps from religion to explaining why the 17th, 18th, 19th, and 20th days of the lunar month are also proper days for the Passover to fall on, even though by the time of the twentieth day the Moon DOES NOT light up the whole night with light. He therefore makes a quick reversal in his whole argument. Why does he do this? Look at his numbers. If we count up all his acceptable days for the Passover to occur, we get: 15th, 16th, 17th, 18th, 19th, and 20th. THE TOTAL IS SIX DAYS, the six days AFTER the Passover, that Egyptian Christians used to fast on. Anatolius was validating the six days after the Passover as days of Osiris that also match Christ's spiritual illumination of evil. He was

[956] Roberts, A. op cit., vol vi, p 147.
[957] Ibid
[958] Babbitt, F C. (trans.) Plutarch Moralia, Vol V., p 107.

attempting to merge the astrology of Osiris with the Crucifixion week theology of Christ.

This explains why Egyptian Christians in 300 A.D. would fast both before and AFTER the Passover. Fasting before the Passover was to hold to the Gnostic Christian tradition, fasting AFTER the Passover was purely to honor Osiris, the power of the Moon behind the Passover of Christ.

The fact remains, people with "very accurate calculations" in Egypt, were fishing about for the day Jesus died, struggling with Roman, Greek, and Egyptian calendars, while Victorinus and his flock in Europe were worshipping the Crucifixion on a WEDNESDAY and Christians in Britain were observing it on the fourteenth of Nisan. The Egyptians did not succeed. How could they? They were attempting to merge Light and Darkness into one theology. It could not have worked. These dates which they advertised, along with fasting AFTER the Passover, were eventually discarded from the Easter debate. We have evidence of the Alexandrian theologians striving to come up with a substitute scheme for the Wednesday Crucifixion that included Osiris worship.

Why weren't the Alexandrians willing to follow Victorinus? The differences were known since the Quartodeciman controversy in 165 A.D., decades before. Alexandria had its Gnostic secrets to further, which it fervently believed, and it would not abandon them.

What we have shown is that Wednesday observance of the Crucifixion did persist for hundreds of years after Jesus and the Apostles; it was written about. The different dates picked for the Crucifixion were of Egyptian origin, and they relate to Osiris mythology, which in turn goes back to "Ishtar's Descent into Hell" and ultimately to the death and resurrection of Tammuz the Babylonian Osiris.

How were the differing dates resolved and Osiris (or Tammuz) finally engrafted into the invisible Egyptian theology of Christ's Crucifixion? Yet more details and insights can be added onto what has bee said here to finish out the story even further.

C.1.c Gnostic Technique Three - Bel in the Spring Pulls Osiris INTO the Passover Week

Alexandrians could find further justification for their desires to merge Osiris' Fall festivals into Spring events from the myths of rival Babylon.

The twelve day long Babylonian New Year festival was a microcosm of the civil year that fixed the fates of men and the nation for the next twelve months. There was a proportion, a Ratio, between the twelve days of the Babylonian New Year and the twelve <u>months</u> of the actual year. Clement would call this a "mystical Ratio of twelve". The Egyptian year was composed of three seasons, each of four months. The Babylonian New Year festival is also broken up into three equal parts of four days each, by putting the Bel story on the fifth through eighth days. Bel takes of the middle third of this twelve-day span of time. This proportion was a "gnosis", a

concept, a Gnostic tool for bridging the seasons between Osiris in the fall and Bel in the Springtime.

Look at the timing of Bel's Spring festival more closely. Using this Gnostic Ratio, the fifth day of Nisan actually refers to the fifth month of the Babylonian civil year and the eighth day of the festival, when Bel is resurrected, refers to two things: 1) the eighth month of the Babylonian year, and 2) the Sun, because eight is the same as the number of the Sun. In the Babylonian calendar system, the eighth month fell the same time as the Roman October-November, which in turn is the precise time when Osiris is resurrected IN THE FALL. So, if we apply our previous analysis of Gnostic thinking, to Babylonian feast days and calendars, Bel's resurrection on the eighth day of Nisan in the Spring has a mystical relationship to Osiris's resurrection in November, the eighth month. Tammuz and Osiris are resurrected in the middle third of the year, just as Bel is resurrected in the middle third of the twelve-day festival. This "ratio" between days and months bridges the Spring and Fall festivals together. By having this number eight in common, the two events can be interchanged in Babylonian and Gnostic thinking. It becomes perfectly justifiable for Gnostics to apply all the meaning of Osiris' fall festival to the month of Nisan in the Spring. The Greek Gnostics of Alexandria saw a "gnosis" in this, a "divine truth" from their god Hermes that was greater than the Bible.

So now, via the Spring festival of Bel, we can again mystically justify placing Osiris into the Crucifixion season. The evidence for the Gnostic is greater still, it extends to the very calendar systems of both modern Rome and ancient Babylon.

C.1.d Gnostic Technique Four - Iao, The Numbers Four and Six, Demand a Friday Resurrection

I need once more to return to Plato's concept of Iao, the spirit of divine love that ruled behind the literal Sun. In addition to his solar nature, Iao was the Second person of Plato's Godhead. Christian Gnostics subscribed to Iao extensively, as we already saw. Iao provided them with a ready made divinity, hundreds of years old, that combined the "Son of God", Tammuz, Adonis, Serapis and a "crucified Sun", all at the Spring equinox.

Although "Iao", the god essence, is perhaps least known today of all the Tammuz variants, in its heyday, Iao was a "god of gods", widely publicized. As mentioned earlier, Clement personally reported that one had to wear a badge with Iao's name written on it, in order to enter into the great Serapium at Alexandria, to worship Serapis. Further, when the Serapium was finally demolished by the Church in the centuries after Clement, a foundation stone was discovered, having a cross engraved on it.[959] Thus, Iao's Temple built perhaps two hundred and fifty years before Jesus, is founded upon Jesus' symbol, the cross.

In fact the more we study Iao, the more we will see that Iao was the true unifying essence between ALL Pagan resurrection mythology and Jesus, regardless of what season or god we discuss. Now for a basic proof-text.

[959] Morris, C., Aryan Sun Myths–The Origin of Religion, p 123, and Higgins, op cit , vol I, p. 219

> The crucified Iao .... IS THE CRUCIFIED ADONIS OR TAMMUZ, ... THE SUN, who was put to death by the wild boar of Ares--one of the twelve signs of the Zodiac.[960]

This is exactly what was symbolized on the foundation stone of Serapis' celebrated temple.

Higgins, in his massive work on the origin of all religions, Anacalypsis, devotes a full eight pages to proving from ancient and modern sources that "Iao" is "Jesus" and Jehovah, the Sun god. He outlines common ties between Iao and the sun-gods of the Greeks, Persian, Romans and Egyptians--Bacchus, Dionysus, Apollo, Mithra, Jupiter, Pluto, Krishna, Osiris and others. He concludes by saying all the Sun gods of the Heathen are Iao, the Sun.[961]

One classical writer of Jesus' generation, said that Iao was the supreme god, who manifested himself in roles of lesser Sun gods, such as Jove or Pluto, the Winter Sun.[962] According to the important Gnostic text, the Pistis Sophia, Iao was ruler of the "middle sphere" of the universe, who was the Savior or liberator of men whose souls were in hellfire.[963]

The connection with Jesus is even stronger than this. It cuts to the heart of why there had to be a Friday Crucifixion. According to C.W. King, writing in The Gnostics and Their Remains, Origen taught that Iao was also the spirit that ruled and moved the Moon, "who shines in the night-time, holding the second rank, the First Lord of Death ...."[964] Plutarch said that Osiris entered into the New Moon in March of every year, empowing its light, and Osiris-Serapis is Lord of the Dead, god of Hades. Moreover, the ancient Babylonian god Nergal was guide of the Sun Lord of the Dead.[965] Iao appears to be little more than a Platonic aggrandizement of Osiris in his resurrected state, inspired by Babylonian mythology. Thus we can see from yet another perspective that Iao truly is the unifying factor between Jesus and ALL the Pagan resurrection gods. (Coincidentally, we can see that the first initials of Isis, Anu and Osiris, or I, A, and O, form the very name IAO, leaving the possibility open that the word, among other things, may simply be a Greek anagram for the triplet, Isis, An, and Osiris, powers of the Moon and Sun, chief lights of the ancient universe. Granted, most scholars relate Iao to Alpha and Omega, the Hebrew Jehovah or Jah.)

It is also possible to relate Iao to some of Clement's more esoteric statements concerning Good Friday, in particular, the enigmatic: "four becomes six".

If we seek to use astronomy to find similarities in the dissimilar, we can ponder the following sets of facts: Osiris or Iao enters into the Moon in early March - April.

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[960] Ibid, pps. 131-132. I will cover this subject more fully in the Appendix
[961] Higgins, op. cit., vol. I, pps. 323 - 331, esp. pps. 324,326, and 330
[962] King, C., op. cit., p. 321
[963] Ibid, p. 325
[964] Ibid, p. 332.
[965] Gleadow, op. cit., p. 168

Christ dies in April, the fourth month of the Roman year. Tammuz died in June - July, the sixth month of the Roman year. Tammuz is also the fourth month of the Babylonian calendar. By this month association scheme between the Roman and Babylonian calendars, April events in the later Roman calendar of Gnostic times become Tammuz-events (June) in the earlier Babylonian calendar. Modern fourth month becomes ancient sixth month. Saying it in reverse, Tammuz' June death and resurrection becomes one with Jesus' April resurrection.

From Plato's perspective, it would be said that Iao, the Sun-god, divine love crucified, transforms into Jesus when the fourth month in the Babylonian system becomes the fourth month in the Roman.

The interlocking relationship between Christ and Osiris / Tammuz that was created by Plato's prophecy becomes richer still for the Gnostic to contemplate.

According to Langdon[966], Venus, or Aphrodite, is the Roman protector goddess who guides April the fourth month, just as her equivalent Ishtar is the Assertion protector goddess of the sixth month of the Assyrian calendar - Ilulu. Once more four becomes six - but this time in a complementary reverse. The Babylonian sixth month for Ishtar becomes the Roman fourth month for Venus. Since Osiris and Isis form a pair, the two transformations - Babylonian four to Roman six and Roman four to Babylonian six, are complete.

Clement's original quote was about the enigmas of the fourth and sixth days of the week, of Aphrodite and Hermes, the purveyor of knowledge. We can now see the full astrological import of what he was referring to in that statement. It reduces to the following mystical ratio or "gnosis": the Roman fourth month is to the Babylonian sixth month, as the fourth day of the week is to ??. The solar death of Tammuz in July is mystically transferred into the month of April, at the Passover. Because the four-six ratio applies to BOTH months of the year and weekdays, THE FOURTH DAY CRUCIFIXION EVENT OF JESUS MUST ALSO SOMEHOW BE TRANSFORMED INTO A SIXTH DAY CRUCIFIXION EVENT OF ANOTHER GOD: Passover Wednesday MUST somehow become a Crucifixion FRIDAY. By this reasoning, Tammuz' / Osiris' death goes into April through the Babylonian form of the festival and Jesus' Wednesday Crucifixion goes into Friday.

This then is the driving force behind the Alexandrian quest to legitimize Friday. What is still missing is the last piece of evidence from Osiris' liturgy, a tangible justification for the Friday.

Numbers, astrology, Plato's doctrines and eclipse signs have provided us with much insight on how Christianity was turned into a sun-worship system, but they still do not give the final evidence to document how a Friday - Sunday observance for Osiris came to be associated with the Passover week. The keystone remains to be inserted into this riddle.

So, how did they get the exact dates to match for Osiris and Jesus?

[966] Langdon, S Babylonian Menologies, p 114

C.1.e Gnostic Technique Five - Placing Osiris into the Friday After Passover in 31 A.D.

Alexandrian theologians were attempting to match the "literal" death and resurrection of Osiris, which occurred on the 17th and the 19th of a month in the Fall, with the Wednesday Crucifixion death of Jesus. They already had the mystical tie between Serapis, Osiris' "eclipse death", Tammuz and Jesus; now they struggled to usurp upstart Christianity and its Savior God with a "more perfect spiritual" holiday. Clement's secret Resurrection gospel proves this behavior became official Gnostic doctrine early on, perhaps as early as 70 A.D.[967]

Look at what happens when we use all the techniques just described above to put the two sets of dates, one for Jesus and one for Osiris' death, into the same week. Jesus died on the fourteenth of the lunar month of Nisan, which was a Wednesday. Osiris and Tammuz died on the 17th and were resurrected, in the literal accounts, on the 19th. If the 14th of Nisan was on a Wednesday in 31 A.D, then the 17th of Nisan, in 31 A.D., FELL ON A SATURDAY and the 19th of Nisan FELL ON A MONDAY. If we want to match this with Good Friday and Easter Sunday, we are off by one day. But REMEMBER, the ancient EGYPTIAN MONTHLY CALENDAR STARTS ONE DAY EARLIER THAN THE HEBREW OR BABYLONIAN CALENDAR.[968] The Egyptians start the month when there is no Moon in the sky, the Hebrews wait an extra day for the first sliver of the Moon to appear before they begin the Month. So we have:

[967] See Appendix 4

[968] See Parker, R.A , The Calendars of Ancient Egypt, pps. 10-13, and Clagget, M., Ancient Egyptian Science - A Source Book, Vol. II - Calendars, Clocks, and Astronomy pps 280-284 for proof that the Egyptian month began when the Moon was new, or invisible. We have spent much time showing how the Rabbis calculated and observed the first crescent of the Moon to start the Hebrew month

Combined Dates for Jesus and Osiris in the Crucifixion Week of 31 A.D.

Day of the Week in Nisan in 31 A,D.					Wed.	Thur.	Fri.	Sat.	Sun.
Event in Crucifixion Week					Christ Dies Late Afternoon		Osiris Dies	Christ Resurrected Late Afternoon	Osiris Resurrected with the Sunrise
Day of the Hebrew Month		1	2		14	15	16	17	18
Day of the Egyptian Month	1	2	3		15	16	17	18	19

So, IF WE MATCH UP THE DAYS OF THE MONTH WHEN OSIRIS DIED AND WAS RESURRECTED WITH THE WEEKLY CALENDAR FOR NISAN IN 31 A.D., WE GET A FRIDAY DEATH AND A SUNDAY RESURRECTION FOR OSIRIS AT THE TIME WHEN JESUS CHRIST DIED ON A WEDNESDAY. Osiris, "Lord of the Sixth Day", also dies on the day of Aphrodite and Adonis, his alter ego.

With this merging of calendars, ALL the comments of Clement on four, six, Hermes, Aphrodite, rotating seasons, ad infinitum, can be explained.

Now contrast this curiosity with the historically known fact which we discussed earlier:

> It was ... a well-established tradition for Christians to keep every Wednesday and Friday throughout the year as days of fasting, usually up to the ninth hour of the day (about 3 P.M.), [which was the time that Jesus died] [969] (emphasis and comments are mine)

The tradition becomes a supporting pillar of the fact that early on, Gnosticism, attempting to smother original Christianity, inveigled to celebrate BOTH Jesus and Osiris' deaths in the same week. Clement's statement which we quoted so often, that "four becomes six", can be viewed in yet another light now. What this presumed Christian father was actually saying was that Christ's literal resurrection becomes Osiris', when both are viewed as "Iao", the divine essence behind the physical Sun.

This Osiris death and resurrection myth, as filtered through the Greek god Serapis, as matching the story of Adonis, as harkening back to Inanna and Tammuz and as manipulated by mystical Gnostic reasoning, is the origin of Good Friday / Easter Sunday.

[969] Bradshaw, P , op cit , p. 85

In 31 A.D., the mythology of several of the resurrection gods came together in the Passover Week.

Allow me to summarize the Gnostic approach to merging Osiris and Jesus.

The process was rooted in the ancient myth of Inanna and Tammuz, the greatest myth of ancient Mesopotamia.[970] In retrospect, Tammuz' religion actually involved two death and resurrection cycles: literal and figurative. His literal death and resurrection as a demi-god was three days and three nights, originally held in the fall. Mystically, it was a yearly solar cycle of death, consignment to Hades and return to Earth as the power behind each year's new life. His return to earth from the Netherworld began in December. His spiritual rebirth or emergence was as the spring Sun. His mystical death was in June, when the light failed and days shortened.

In the age of Christian Gnosticism, Tammuz, recast as the Greek "Iao", a Comforter and Sun god, became a philosophical template for Jesus to be fashioned after. Like Tammuz, Jesus could now be viewed or preached in two totally different ways--literally and mystically. Literally, men like Origen and Clement talked of the facts of the crucifixion like any other Christian. They were, in fact, speaking of Christ the way they would speak of Tammuz the literal shepherd-King. Figuratively, Christ was Iao, God of Celestial Light, who ascended to the Sun, the way Tammuz was later considered. So the Gnostics, using Tammuz as their precedent and Osiris as the factual basis, did for Jesus, what centuries of evolution had done for the religion of the two pagan gods. They gave him a mystical cycle that began in the Spring and had to be calculated by a formula every year, in addition to what the Bible or first generation Christianity, taught. This is the basis for "calculating" Easter. The literal facts of the Crucifixion could not be changed, but the "higher" aspects of Christianity were imported from Osiris' spiritual cycle to the Christ story. Therefore, the seasons for worshipping Tammuz / Osiris and Jesus could be different, but the mystical truth was the same because all were "Iao" and Tammuz / Osiris died on the Friday of the Crucifixion week.

The close similarity among the stories allowed the Gnostic ideologues of 50 A.D., to borrow any details from any one of the three versions they needed to best fit the Ishtar myth into the Crucifixion Week, piecing the truth together like the torn body of Dionysus (or Osiris), exactly as Clement admitted.

[970] Langdon, S., Semitic Mythology, p 336

2.4.7 Strange Similarities Between "Ishtar's Descent into Hell" and the Gnostic Document "Christ's Descent into Hell" Prove the Origin of Good Friday

I have offered a highly detailed description of all the religious elements needed to create Good Friday from the Tammuz myth, but is there proof of this myth becoming the basis of Good Friday from the known facts of Church history?

There is.

Somewhere after 100 A.D.,[971] a false gospel, The Gospel According to Nicodemus, surfaces. In it, there is a lengthy aside, called "Christ's Descent into Hell", in which Jesus is made to go on a quest into the Netherworld during the three days between His death and Resurrection, to free some Old Testament saints.[972] The gospel of Nicodemus is never accepted, but it is a well-known fact of Church history that this idea of Christ going on a quest, exactly like Ishtar, to free souls from imprisonment behind the gates of hell, ultimately approaches the level of official Church doctrine. This raising of the tale from superstition to dogma occurs at a politically correct time.

The doctrine is deeply intertwined with the first appearance of Good Friday.

Although it originated before him, Clement both accepts and describes, without much proof, "Christ's Descent into Hell" in the Stromata,[973] around 190 AD. So Clement espouses both the "Descent" story and the Friday crucifixion. In discussing Clement's acceptance of the "Descent of Christ" as true, one author cautioned: "It is important to remember that Clement drew upon Pagan religion more systematically than any other Christian before or since."[974]

Critical historians candidly admit the "Descent" was derived from Pagan myth, but they miss the true source of it. They mention only later variants of the Inanna / Ishtar story as possible sources. They say it "seems really to have been borrowed from the Adonis religion and, ... other pagan religions also..."[975].

The "other pagan religions" that the Descent Myth appears in are our most familiar stable of Sun gods, with a few additions: "Herackles [Hercules], Dionysus, Orpheus, Osiris, Hermes, Krishna, Balder and others"[976]. All of them are derivatives of Tammuz. So Clement's sources for the "Descent", are no different than his inspiration for a Friday crucifixion, yet the modern author misses the fundamental point that all these myths were in turn derived from one common stock--Inanna / Ishtar's descent. A lapse of basic insight.

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[971] Brown, R., The Death of the Messiah, vol ii, p 1128, is not sure, he says the "Descent" myth was invented either before or after 100 A D.
[972] See Brown, R , ibid, for the ancient references to this, using the Old Testament
[973] Roberts, op, cit , vol. ii, pps. 490-491
[974] Ibid, p 255, note 3.
[975] Weigall, A , The Paganism in Our Christianity, p 119.
[976] Ibid

Robinson (Christianity and Mythology) confirms the pagan proliferation of the Descent story. He says "...the doctrine is universal, being obviously part of the myth of the death and resurrection of the Sun-god...."[977] He then explains the origin of the Descent myth in exactly the same terms as I did the origin of the Ishtar myth. Robinson says the myth originated either as a literal three-day affair, OR as a symbolic descent of the Sun-god into the Netherworld during the Winter season.[978]

As we saw earlier, Tammuz' memorial was first a literal three-day observance and then enlarged by the Assyrians centuries later into a more general, yearly astrological event that spanned the Winter season.

There is practical evidence that the Church flirted with the idea of making it official doctrine. Two formal expressions of the faith, "the Apostles Creed and the Athanasian Creed", designed by the ruling clergy for the faithful to recite, include statements affirming that Jesus visited the Underworld as a Spirit Being during the time His body was in the Garden tomb, that is, between the evening of Good Friday and Easter Sunday morning[979]

Question: When did the Descent story of Adonis, Dionysus and Osiris become adopted as a doctrine? "... it DID NOT APPEAR IN THE CHURCH AS A TENET OF CHRISTIANITY UNTIL LATE IN THE FOURTH CENTURY"[980] (emphasis added). We now have two sets of facts before us, seemingly unconnected in the modern Church history texts:

1) Good Friday, based upon Osiris and Ishtar, does not appear in Church worship until 370 A.D.

2) The apocryphal fable, "Christ's Descent into Hell", based upon the Ishtar Descent myth, does not appear as Church doctrine until 370 A.D.[981]

Evidence is lacking, at least to this author, that documents the motives behind this coincidence and the reasons could vary considerably. Nevertheless, we have a festival and a folktale, both integral parts of Ishtar's descent, appearing simultaneously in the official thinking of the Church. Both are Pagan and both are not historical Christianity. One is eventually rejected by official Church hierarchy for its obvious failings (Christ's Descent), the other (Good Friday) is preserved under a new theology as an acceptable re-invention of the original Passover.

The evidence is stronger than this. While various scholars may think the origin of "Christ's Descent" lies with Adonis or Hercules due to general similarities between these stories, a more detailed comparison with the Ishtar version shows the very words have been retained: we have here a fraudulent alteration. "Christ's Descent into Hell" is little more than a very thin plagiarism of the ancient saga of Queen

[977] Robinson, op cit, p 251
[978] Ibid
[979] Weigall, Ibid. Robinson, and Kersey Graves, op cit, pps. 140-142, also say much the same thing, with slightly varying lists of gods
[980] Weigall, A, Ibid
[981] Robertson, op cit, p 249

Ishtar--scene by scene, word for word. "Christ's Descent" is a direct offspring, a virtual replica of "Ishtar's Descent", with a first century Egyptian scribe as the midwife.

Comparing the Two Descent Stories

The "Christ Descent" document circulated in the early Church[982] is embroidered with many Christian motifs. Characters and circumstances from the Gospels are abundantly evident. It quotes from the Psalms and Revelation, it borrows its characters from the Gospels, but it does not skillfully reproduce the original context or circumstance of scripture. Rather, it plucks people and phrases out of their Biblical setting and thrusts them into improbable, incongruous passages. It has been called "a confused patchwork" containing "obviously alien elements".[983] One brief example: in the book of Revelation, a mighty angel, at God's command, binds Satan with a chain, for eternity. In the "Descent myth", Jesus personally does the exact same thing, but this time Satan is bound in 31 A.D. Perhaps we are to gather from this that evil has ceased to exist on earth for the last 2,000 years?

Such inconsistencies are apparent to any casual observer. The question becomes: Is there any compelling reason for such poor authorship? Why couldn't the writer have produced a more seamless, better orchestrated work? The answer is obvious, it has to do with discerning his true objective.

What the confused pistache of misplaced fragments does achieve, is to preserve, or leave untouched, the original framework of the ancient Ishtar myth. The actual intent of the exercise is to update Ishtar with "best fit" scriptures. The author's primary purpose is to preserve and promote Ishtar via a creditable Christian facsimile; to turn Christ into Ishtar. His second purpose is to integrate his story into the existing body of Christian literature.

He did this by taking as his basis a known manuscript of Ishtar's Descent, possibly from the Little Alexandrian Library, and working directly from it at a desk lit by an oil lamp.

The basic framework of the Christian Descent story is a tale within a tale, a recounting of the goings on in Hell written by one of the resurrected saints for incredulous listeners in Jerusalem to ponder and wail over.[984] A Christian envelope, the most original part of the story, has been placed around Ishtar's tale.

Perhaps this reflects how the scribe worked with his Ishtar scroll before him. He knew he had to Christianize the goddess' quest so he left Ishtar untouched, wrapped the story in a Christian Prologue and Afterward, and then transposed individual elements into the main body of the story, which was pure Ishtar. This

[982] I am using here the Second Latin Version of "Christ's Descent into Hell", appearing on pps 454-458 of vol viii of the Ante Nicene Fathers, edited by Roberts

[983] Robinson, A., op cit., p 255.

[984] Roberts, A., op cit., vol viii, p. 454-455, and 459 at the end of the story, the listeners "weeping bitterly, and cruelly beating their breasts."

would be the simplest and most direct way for him to solve his problem and manufacture a new revision for the Christian world.

In the saints' report, Christ forcibly invades Hell, binds Satan, conquers death, delivers the Old Testament saints and leaves in triumph. The pace or cadence of all this activity is a whirlwind of decisive deeds, virtually identical to that of the Ishtar story.

At the end of the saga, the listeners are "weeping bitterly, and cruelly beating their breasts."[985] This is not how first time listeners of Jesus Passion behaved in Biblical accounts; rather they are astounded, fearful and anxious to change their ways. The reconstructed conclusion of the ancient Ishtar myth contains advice to the listening audience for using it in funeral dirges. Perhaps our nameless scribe had this very material before him when he wrote. We saw earlier that most moderns agree Ishtar's Descent was an integral part of the "Wailing for Tammuz" ceremony observed on Tammuz 17. When professional mourners wept for Tammuz, beating of the chest accompanied by strong crying, is exactly how <u>they</u> demonstrated.

In the yearlong version of the Ishtar story, nature stops when she descends (in Fall) and it rebounds when she returns triumphant (at Spring). Although not directly stated in the text, the fragments we have today indicate her quest for Tammuz could ALSO be applied as a symbolic hope of a resurrection for <u>all</u> men imprisoned in Death. Indeed, that seems to be how the Descent myth was intended in Babylonia.[986] Professor Morris Jastrow speculated upon this enlarged view as holding "out a faint hope .... for the unhappy dead in their dark and gloomy <u>prison</u>."[987] (emphasis added)

We find Jastrow's 100 year-old speculation turned into reality in the 2000 year-old Christian Descent story. In the later account, freeing the suffering Old Testament saints from the incarceration of Hell is the prime objective of Christ's mission.

We have in both Ishtar and Jesus, an injustice in the natural or moral order that is resolved through the artifice of a heroic Descent and Triumph. One literal act by a demi-god reverses and solves cosmic problems for mankind in both sagas. The details within the frameworks agree as well. Consider a few:

<u>Ishtar's Descent</u> : Ishtar's decision to descend appears to be brash, imperial and angrily impulsive. She enters where others have rule and they in turn do not welcome her.[988]
<u>Christ's Descent</u> : Jesus appears in Hell as a sudden burst of Light, forcefully announced and invading Satan's realm, a hostile territory[989]. His demand to enter is also fiercely resisted.

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[985] Ibid, p. 458
[986] Jastrow, M , The Civilization of Babylonia and Assyria, p. 453 See also his <u>Religion of Babylonia and Assyria</u>, p. 565
[987] Jastrow, M op cit., p 461
[988] References to the Ishtar myth are based upon Jastrow, <u>The Civilization of Babylonia and Assyria</u>, pps 453-461, and Hallo, <u>The Context of Scripture</u>, vol I, pp 381-384, by Stephanie Dalley
[989] Roberts, A Ibid, pps 455, 457

Ishtar's Descent : The specific ruler of the Netherworld is a goddess, Ereshkigal, with a Gatekeeper at her service, her vizier.[990]
Christ's Descent : Satan is in charge of Hell with "Hades" as his surrogate gatekeeper.[991]

(A word about "Hades". There is no person of Hades mentioned in the entire Bible, rather, Hades is a place, the grave. Hades the person is invented for this tale, the grave personified. To achieve a match between the two stories, a character has been created. This suggests the compiler is more concerned with being true to the form and character set of the Ishtar story than he is with Christian doctrine.)

Ishtar and Christ : Both Hells have hinged gates; locked and with bars.

Ishtar : Approaches the gates of Hell enraged, demands entry from the gatekeeper, threatens to smash through the gate, lock and sidewalls, in order to get her way and descend into Hell.[992]
Christ : Must break through the gates to enter into Hell even though He has somehow died like all the saints who naturally entered into Hell at their death.[993]

The Gospels talk of a glorified Christ able to appear inside locked rooms after His resurrection, but here the author has Jesus smashing down doors, as if they were a legitimate barrier. This is utterly incongruous, it imitates no scripture, but it perfectly echoes exactly what Ishtar felt, spoke and did in her descent into Hell.

Ishtar : The gatekeeper and vizier, Namtar, warns the goddess of Hell, Ereshkigal, that Ishtar is demanding to Enter into Hell.[994]
Christ : At the very beginning of the Descent, Christ suddenly materializes as a Great Light before Hell's Gates and the voice of Christ warns Satan that He is about to appear.

Ishtar : Queen Ereshkigal of Hell is enraged that Ishtar would dare to force her entry into Hell.[995]
Christ : Satan reacts swiftly and resists the announcement that Christ is about to enter; he commands the officers of Hell to close each of the gates that they command.[996]

Ishtar : Ishtar (and Inanna) must pass through seven sets of locked gates to enter into Hell from the upper world.

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[990] Hallo, W.W., op. cit. p. 381
[991] Roberts, Ibid, p. 455.
[992] Hallo, W.W., Ibid
[993] If Christ is actually "Iao" the spirit of the Sun, then, as the Gnostics believed, He did not die like men, He merely changed states, and must enter Hell forcibly, AS Great Light. Therefore, sub rosa, the Descent myth is promoting the Gnostic view of Christ
[994] Hallo, W., Ibid
[995] Ibid
[996] Roberts, A., op. cit., p. 455

Christ : The cry is made seven times to open the gates and let Christ into Hell[997]. Although the exact number is not specified, we are told there are multiple gates, each with its own officer. It could be seven.

Even the cry that is made for Christ to be admitted is contrived from a scriptural theft. A quotation from Psalms, Chapter 24, about opening gates for the Messiah to enter into Jerusalem, is substituted for Ishtar's passing through the seven gates of Hell. The words in Psalms are similar to Ishtar's words--a direct demand to open gates, but the context of Psalm 24 has been completely sacrificed to find a Biblical phrase that matches the Pagan myth. In the Christianized version, both Jesus and David are made to parrot words that apply only to Messiah. To have Jesus announce Himself in this fashion is trite and contrived. Again we see, the author's priority was to maintain the structure of the Inanna myth while inserting crude matches from Scripture in all circumstances.

Ishtar : Then holy David, inflamed with anger against Satan, cried out aloud : Open thy gates, most vile wretch, that the King of glory may come in.[998]

(Christ's words are identical to these.)

David's actual words, written over 1000 years earlier:

Scripture : Ps 24:7
7 Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in.

The Place Where Christ is Crucified is Changed

Clearly, the place of Jesus' Crucifixion could never be translated to Hell, and yet, that is exactly what happens. At the end of the story, the saints pray Jesus that He moves the sign of his Cross there as an eternal fixture of His conquest of Satan.[999]

There is no precedent or rationale for such a migration of the cross from earth to Hell in Christianity. The reference is clear. The cross in Hell refers to the crosses of Tammuz and Ishtar, who were crucified in the Netherworld. The symbol of Christ's death is moved from Calvary in Jerusalem to Hell in order to transform it into an eternal mystical extension of Tammuz' sacrifice. Thus in both stories the memorial place of the protagonist's crucifixion becomes Hell, NOT earth.

The text of the "Descent" does not directly state that Christ is in Hell for three days and three nights. He dramatically comes to Hell as a Solar Orb with blinding Light from seemingly nowhere and bursts the gates of Hell, but the Saints He frees must wait an additional three days and three nights before they leave.

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[997] Ibid, pps. 455 (2), 457 (2 in col.1), 457 (3 in col 2).
[998] Roberts, A., Ibid, pps 457, and 455
[999] Ibid, p 458.

According to a general precept of Gnostic belief, Christ never died as a man dies, losing all consciousness, He simply was in the spirit world. This not so subtle change, which is also evidenced in the Descent story, is a very important insight into the Gnostic nature of Christ's Descent.

It is little more than an example of the Gnostic "Iao", the Sun deity, in action. Iao is the Great Light that descends to Hell, Iao never dies when the body is in the grave. If Christ's Blinding Descent into Hell is actually Iao descending below the Winter horizon, we have our Sun God--Tammuz, Osiris, or Dionysus, literally pictured as such by his Gnostic proponents in Christian documents.

This mix in Hell of spirits of dead men and a "dead" Gnostic Christ, a Sun god in the spirit world, demonstrates how the author was able to bridge the two belief systems of Egyptian / Greek Paganism (Gnosticism) and the more traditional Christian theology of his day. Clearly, he was attempting to palm off heretical ideas in traditional dress.

Resurrecting the Rest of the Dead to Life

Ishtar : Resurrected jointly with Tammuz and other dead.[1000]
Christ : Similarly, after binding "Hades", the gatekeeper, in Tartarus, Christ brings the dead saints back up with Him, some to heaven, some to the "upper world" of the earth.[1001]

The Ishtar myth and Christ's Descent are more alike in this area than are the Descent and Scripture. "The upper world" is the place to which Ishtar ascends, a mixture of earth and spirit. Scripture makes no reference to a "lower world" where sinning men reside in torment, that was Dante Alighieri, nor do souls rise to "an upper world" in the Bible. In the Bible, "Hell' is the grave, or a place of restraint for demons, or a lake of fire which covers the earth for a brief amount of time, but hell in the Bible is no underworld to be descended into or ascended out of.

Without explanation, Christ's resurrected saints are given a split mission: witness to man on Earth and serve in Heaven.[1002] Split missions for resurrected saints are simply fancy. The effect of all this scurrying about is to match the pattern of the Ishtar myth, where the activity occurs on two fronts as Ishtar returns back to the surface. 1) Life and reproduction are restored to the inhabitants of the earth, even as 2) Ishtar and Tammuz escape earthly bonds and return to heaven.

Because the copyist was too busy trying to emulate Ishtar's actions with Christ and the saints leaving "hell", he once more did not trifle with getting his Christian doctrine straight. He mixes elements of three events: 1) Christ's Resurrection at the start of the Church era, which included the physical resurrection of men around Judea, 2) the spiritual resurrection of saints that will occur at the Second Coming and 3) the binding of Satan at the end of the world, all into one event that happens

[1000]Hallo, W W., op cit, pps 383-384
[1001] See Chapter One, second paragraph of "Christ's Descent"
[1002] Ibid, p 454

on Easter. Speaking of the Second Coming only, Scripture says something quite different. It states Christ will descend from Heaven to Earth, all of the resurrected saints from their earthly graves rise to meet Him and they in turn will rule with Christ on Earth forever. Notice:

1 Thes 4:16-17
16 For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven [NOT arise out of Hell, as in the Descent myth] with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump[et] of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: [no gates are broken to permit this return]
17 Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

In sum, the Descent myth describes a fanciful resurrection whose particulars are the exact opposite of Scripture, but mesh perfectly with Ishtar and Iao.

The true source of "Christ's Descent into Hell" was not simply some variant of the Inanna / Tammuz tale, borrowed from one of the many other religions of the day. Textual comparison of the two stories proves a word for word, scene-by-scene correlation between them.

The fact that Inanna / Ishtar is the basis for the Christianized myth that ushered in the formal acceptance of Good Friday and Easter, proves the days are not historical fact, once and for all.

B. The Spectacle in the Sky and the Global Witness

We have reached the moment in time when all the preparations have been finished and we can address the central theme of this book with full force. We will now prove the very orbits of the Earth, Sun and Moon were in perfect alignment for a major event to occur in the Solar system with the minimal amount of disruption, BUT ONLY on the Passover of 31 A.D. No other Passover in that age contained such favorable conditions in the fabric of the Earth-Moon dance. Better than an astrologer's dream, the Solar system was aligned to announce the death of Christ the Creator.

We will also see first-hand evidence from around the world that peoples across the planet saw an event in the skies exactly matching the events that caused the Solar Eclipse over Jerusalem: they saw the Moon leave its orbit and travel towards the Middle East on an afternoon in the Springtime and then return within a few hours to its proper place in the sky. My science will be light but telling, once more, the most scholarly discussions will await you in the Appendices.

After reading so many experts say Luke was ignorant, senile, or confused, the first thing I would like to do in this section is to offer a drastically different assessment of Luke 23:45 to you.

Luke 23 is good science. Good, solid science of the real world and the literal solar system underlies the words in that verse; not stupidity, not senility, not ancient superstition, but solid modern science.

I want immediately to set this point aright for you. Before we address any other issue of astrophysics or the Eclipse, lets use Luke 23:45 as a statement of science. What does it have to say about the astrophysics of the heavens while Jesus was dying in Jerusalem? Do the implications of this verse "fit" with other facts of known science, or has Luke given us a gloss, some shabby words that break down when we put them under the microscope of modern physics?

We can break Luke 23 down, word by word for critical information, and then apply that information to the latest, most rigorous scientific calculations known today concerning the minute-by-minute positions of the Sun and Moon on the day Jesus died. We shall see how authoritative that one little verse in Luke actually is when we compare it with the best science our modern world can produce. We will not have to conclude it was overcast and raining that afternoon.

Dissecting Luke 23:44-45 for the Surprising Science it Conceals

Since we have seen in Chapter 1 that the original word Luke wrote was indeed "eclipse", the reader will not fault me for using the Moffat translation of Luke 23:45 as the basis of our little inquiry into Luke's science. Moffat translates "became dark" as "eclipse" without any embarrassment or prodding. Now look at both verses 44 and 45 as he translates them:

> By this time it was about twelve o'clock, and darkness covered the whole land till three o'clock owing to an eclipse of the sun;

Four important pieces of information are buried within these two verses. The Passover Eclipse is impossible but the surrounding information in these verses is very, very plausible to a physicist. All of what Luke wrote is completely consistent with the real science that would have to underly any "impossible" event. Luke's words can be used to show the other laws of physics were not being broken. In Luke's narrative, whether he realized it or not, we have a harmonious use of the laws of natural physics along with the intervention of greater powers of the supernatural. Luke is not a describing an overthrow of order in nature. We will see consistently throughout Luke's science science that the events in the heavens conspired to make the Eclipse occur in the simplest, least disruptive manner possible.

Not only is there harmony between the natural and the supernatural in what Luke reports, there is also an economy of the force applied to perform this event. This idea of using the minimal amount of force in nature to accomplish the greatest possible action is a thing of beauty that all modern physicists automatically expect to find in any new revelation from nature.

We can glimpse the fingerprint of an Act that was Powerful, tightly Controlled, utterly Peaceful and majestically Harmonious with the known laws of Physics as we presently understand them. There is nothing clumsy, violent, or chaotic in anything that was effected that day. Luke's words point us to magnificently sublime Physics, skillfully employed by the One who invented it all; exactly what one could only dream to find from the Hand of a Peaceful, Gentle, All-Powerful Being. A Masterwork of an event effortlessly carried out in an orbit of the Earth that had to have been picked billions of years ago. One might say we are walking on holy ground.

This is what we are about to uncover.

Let me briefly describe these four points before I explain the science behind them.

1. The eclipse had to have occurred minutes before "twelve o'clock", not on it. This is a slight detail that most authors would reject as bad storytelling. In a myth told by some storyteller, we might expect the Sun to darken exactly at noon, not a few minutes early. The reason why Luke is so insensitive as to give us an "early" Eclipse, is that 34 days after the Spring equinox, (April 25) Jerusalem would not be in place for the Eclipse shadow to be seen until a few minutes before "twelve o'clock". Pure science.

2. Even though a Solar eclipse can be seen in one spot on Earth for a maximum of 71/2 minutes, the longest the Moon and Sun can stay together in the heavens to cause that Solar eclipse is actually 3 1/2 hours. The rotating Earth only allows a person fixed at one spot 71/2 minutes of the 3 1/2 hour "full show". Luke wrote the Eclipse lasted slightly less than 3 hours; not four, or five, or six. This 3 hour time

is completely consistent with the facts of how the Sun and Earth would have moved, once the Moon positioned over Jerusalem. How did Luke know to pick the scientifically correct number of hours for his miracle?

3. Luke's statement that darkness "covered the whole land" refers to the whole region of Judea; it only explained by the size of a Solar eclipse shadow falling over the entire province of ancient Palestine.

4. The final point comes from the date of April 25. By carefully examining the position of the Earth after the Spring equinox, it becomes apparent that the later we are in the Spring season when the Eclipse is staged, the less disruption there will be to the entire Solar system. Most of the counteracting force needed to maintain normalcy would be applied to the Earth-Moon system directly.

These insights into Luke 23, along with the spectacular science they induce, have not been considered by commentators. Lets examine these four points of science within Luke 23 more closely. (Some may wish to skip this part.)

The Scientific Details of Luke's Words Go Beyond His Age or Understanding

1. First, we saw Moffat says Luke wrote the time the darkness began was "about twelve o'clock", not "at twelve o'clock".[1003] Moffat is actually translating the old Roman system of counting time into modern parlance. In the Roman world of 2,000 years ago, time was marked by breaking night and day into 2 equal 12 hour parts. hours were not always 60 minutes long. They were variable because the daylight lasted longer in the Summer than in the winter. In the Summer there were long daytime hours and "short" nighttime hours. In the winter, things reversed, there were short daylight hours and long nighttime ones. The original Greek Luke actually wrote uses the old Roman system of counting time, where 6 A.M. is "the first hour", 12 noon is called the "sixth hour" and 6 P.M. is the "12th hour". Something else to keep in mind: the Hebrew prophecy of this event, in Amos 8:9,

[1003] The casual reader may think that the phrase "about twelve o'clock" is an invention of Moffat, and I am being sloppy in my choice of translation in order to prove a moment in time that does not exist After all, he uses the word "eclipse", which was not normally translated in the past This is untrue "About" is the English translation of the literal Greek word "hosei" (Strong's New Testament word number 5616) All commentaries this author has examined, and all translations, admit Luke used this word in the original manuscript, probably adding "about" to the phrase in Mark 15:33, where it says "And when the sixth hour was come, there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour " (See Holland, Luke 18:35-24:53, p. 1156, for this opinion.) Raymond Brown wrote "As in Mark the darkness is timed as coming about the sixth hour" (The Death of the Messiah, vol. ii, p. 1038). Fitzmeyer translated the verse as stating the time slightly AFTER 12 noon He rendered it as: "It was already about noon " (The Gospel According to Luke X-XXIV, p. 1517). Green translates, "It was now about noon. " (The Gospel of Luke, p 823) "About" is exactly what Luke meant In English, one may presume that the phrase "about noon", refers to minutes BEFORE the hour, rather than minutes after, but this is a matter of opinion, and not rigid grammar About" can refer to time either before or after, it merely means, "approximately" This is also the case in the Greek syntax. I should add, that Matera, (The Death of Jesus According to Luke: A Question of Sources, Catholic Bible Quarterly, vol 47, p 472) argues from Luke's other usage of the word "about", that this is merely a consistent property. I claim, based upon Christ's words in Matt 5:17-19, that each use of "about" stands on its own merits, all of it is jot and tittle, inspired of God, none of it is "filler", we should not make Luke into a man of inflexible mental artifice. Regardless of WHY Luke uses the word, it is there, and it is significant. For the sense that Luke is referring to a time just minutes after noon, see above references

uses the expression, , "the Sun will go dark at noon," In science, noon refers to the moment when the Sun is directly overhead. Shadows are their shortest and fall straightest at the moment of literal noon.

So the Bible has made a problem for itself. Noon is NOT the same as the "sixth hour" of the Roman system that Luke uses to count time. So how could both Amos and Luke be right when they describe the same event using two different time systems that are slightly out of sync with each other? It is all resolved in Luke's expression, "about 12 o'clock", or "about the sixth hour".

This simple statement proves to be uncannily exact when we do the calculations for the heavens on April 25, 31 A.D. Based upon the latitude of Jerusalem on the globe and the tilt angle of the Earth towards the Sun on April 25, the numbers show the Sun was directly overhead Jerusalem--that is, true noon occurred--almost 4 minutes before the ancient clocks said "the sixth hour" had arived.[1004] The Sun becomes dark at this moment, at Solar noon. Amos is correct. The Sun darkens "about the sixth hour", because the sixth hour occurs four minutes later. Luke is correct.

How does such precision occur when Luke knows none of these details? We saw in Chapter 1 that much of what Luke wrote contains phrases borrowed from Greek versions of the Old Testament, as well as Hebrew taken from the general society. The normal expectation would be for Luke to simply copy over Amos 8:9. He does not do this. Instead, he picks the time expression of his day, modifies it for no obvious reason with "about", and produces an incredibly accurate statement of astronomy. How accurate?

This subtle fact of astronomy was not fully appreciated until the 1800's. Astronomers today call this phenomenon "the equation of time".[1005] It involves calculating the difference between when the Sun is directly overhead (true noon time) and when our clocks say "12 noon" for every day of the year, down to the correct second. In turn, these differences between Sun and clocks are constantly varying over the centuries. The clocks today are 3-31/2 minutes closer to true noon than they were 2,000 years ago; they will change again over the following

[1004] Compare the values in Meeus' Table 56.C on p 343 of Mathematical Morsels, with Table A.1 "The Equation of Time" on p. 205 in Waugh's Sundials, for April 25, and do two linear approximations to get the value of 4 minutes. first, estimate the value of April 25 as a linear approximation to the time difference between February 6 and May 200 in the year zero, which is 25m, 11 s this gives the time difference for April 25, 00 A.D. as 1 min 40 sec But since this is a linear approximation, we know it is too low. Next, notice that on Meeus, p 343 Meeus shows the maximum difference in the first 6 months of 00 is 7 min, 4 secs. Therefore the true value for April 25 must lie in between these values Next, do a linear scaling for the values on May 20, 00 (Meeus) and May 20 1972 (Waugh) Also note that Waugh says on p 205 that the value for April 25, 1972 is 1 min, 56 secs The ratio of 5/20/00 to 5/20/72 is 2.0599 Multiply the 1872 value of 1 min 56 secs. by 2 0599 to get 3 min 58 9 secs. This last value fits perfectly between the linear approximation of 1 min 40 secs and 7 min 4 secs. The difference in this value between 4/25/00 and 4/25/31 is negligible; perhaps a few seconds at most.

[1005] For discussions of "the equation of time", see Waugh, Sundials, pps 8-12, and J Meeus, Mathematical Astronomical Morsels, 337-346. Meeus does the calculations for the exact values 2,000 years ago on pps 340-342

centuries. All this gradual variation in the moment of true noon, from 2,000 B.C. to 5,000 A.D. has been calculated and archived.[1006]

The four minute difference between the Sun and the clocks 2,000 years ago could not have been understood or known by anyone in Luke's society except perhaps a maker of sundials. Yet Luke has this tiny detail completely right when he describes an Eclipse that moderns call "impossible". Why is that?

2. Second, notice that Luke states the supernatural Solar eclipse lasted almost three hours, but not four hours or five hours or six hours. This simple statement is also very good eclipse science.

We know that a three hour blackout in one fixed location is physically impossible for a Solar eclipse; all natural Solar eclipses last less than seven minutes and thirty seconds,[1007] but this impossible event is far more difficult to achieve than may seem at first glance.

The seven and one half minute limit for total Solar eclipses is due to the relative speed of the Moon's shadow racing across the surface of the rotating Earth as both objects turn in space. Seven and one half minutes actually refers to how long the Moon's moving shadow is seen from a fixed spot on the ground. People in one location will see the Moon pass in front of the Sun, cover it and then separate from the Sun after less than 7 1/2 minutes, but that whole sequence of events only applies to their location. If you could take an airplane, position yourself directly under the eclipse shadow and race along its path with it as it passed over the turning Earth, the shadow would continue to exist and block the sun for several

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[1006] See Meeus, op cit., p 339 for a chart that breaks out the separate contributions of these two behaviors from the net equation.

[1007] As with all the religious issues in this book, there is controversy, this time among astronomers, as to how long a Solar eclipse can last over one spot on Earth. Again, lest I be though amateurish on this point, let me rehearse the various opinions the interested reader may find. Guillemier, P, and Koutchmy, S Total Eclipses - Science, Observations, Myths, and Legends, p. 63, and discussion on p 66, give a maximum time of 7 minutes 58 seconds at the Earth's equator, instead of 7m 32s. This incorrect value was apparently taken from Camille Flammarion's 1880 book, Astronomie Populaire. Flammarion in turn got this erroneous value from two other authors, Arago, and du Sejour The full story of this misconception can be found at the end of Jean Meeus' paper, "Maximum Duration of a Total Solar Eclipse", (Mathematical Astronomy Morsels III, pps 55-66, especially p 65). Meeus gives an authoritative analysis to show the maximum duration is actually 7 minutes 32 seconds (p. 59). In actuality, a Solar eclipse will occur on July 16, 2186 lasting 7m 29s (Table 10B, p 64) One dated opinion, which appears frequently in literature you may discover, comes from Isabel M Lewis, who eventually published a maximum value of 7m 31s in 1931 after an address in 1929 (Publications of the American Astronomical Society, vol 6, 1931). Other modern authors the reader may encounter are Brunier, S, and Luminet, J.: Glorious Eclipses - Their Past Present and Future (see p. 80) Writing in 1999, these two authors gave the maximum as 7 m 30 s, but they correctly do not refer to an eclipse at the Earth's equator. (As Lewis did. Meeus and they both explain, the Earth's equator is not the closest point to the Moon, which is the one that will see the longest shadow The closest point on Earth to the Moon is the point that lies on a line connecting the center of the Earth to the center of the Moon. The two authors give a good, but compared to Meeus, hardly exhaustive breakdown of the conditions necessary for an observer on Earth to see the longest possible Solar eclipse: 1) The earth is at its farthest from the Sun, 2) the Moon is at its closest to the Earth, and 3) the observer is located at the tilted part of Earth that is nearest to the Moon. For the full story, with the best data, see Meeus. One last note. Meeus wrote in 2003: "It is incomprehensible that some authors repeated that old [7m 58s] stuff in 1995" (p.66). Really

hours as it raced across the surface of the Earth. Let me stress this point. In a natural eclipse of the Sun, the Moon's shadow does not simply fall on one spot on the Earth and then suddenly disappear; rather, because the Moon is orbiting around the Earth and the Earth is rotating on its daily journey, the eclipse shadow moves across hundreds of miles of the Earth's surface, passing in a west to east direction while it travels from region to region and nation to nation. Finally, when the Sun-Moon alignment that causes the shadow is lost, the easternmost people on the path see the "final" separation of Moon and Sun in the sky. No people east of them will see any further eclipsing.

This total time the shadow travels along the surface of the Earth is far longer than 7 1/2 minutes at one spot. The total elapsed time for the Sun-Moon system to be in alignment to produce the moving shadow over the Earth is four hours and thirty minutes at the equator, and some three hours and thirty minutes if you are at latitude 45 degrees on the Earth.[1008]

Jerusalem is at a latitude of roughly 31 degrees,[1009] so if a natural Solar eclipse shadow raced across the latitude of Jerusalem, traveling due West from Israel to Baghdad, it would actually last for no more than three hours and thirty minutes as it moved from West to East, even though it would be seen at any one spot for less than eight minutes.

In other words, we know from natural Solar eclipses that the normal paths and the natural relative speeds of the Earth and Sun are adequate to produce a shadow that lasts over three hours at the Jerusalem latitude on Earth. Simple math shows this time is closer to three hours and forty-five minutes at Jerusalem. The natural Sun-Earth velocities create alignment conditions that last long enough in the heavens to produce eclipse shadows on Earth for more than three hours and less than four hours at Jerusalem's latitude.

Therefore, if only the Moon were moved by the Hand of God and if the Almighty maintained both Earth and Sun in their normal motions, then physics tells us the normal motions of the Earth an Sun would definitely allow for Luke's three-hour-long supernatural eclipse at Jerusalem.[1010]

By making the Eclipse last three hours and no longer, no direct change in the normal rate of rotation of the Earth around its axis is needed. If Luke had said the Eclipse lasted 4 or 5 hours, then the only way for it to happen would have been if

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[1008] Loc cit., p. 66 From Guilemier's numbers, as stated above, I have crudely estimated a maximum viewing time of three hours and fifty minutes at Jerusalem, if we suppose a latitude of 31 degrees North of the equator for that city I did not take into account the north-south curvature of the Earth. I suspect if that is done, the value will be closer to three hours and thirty minutes, by perhaps 5 minutes.

[1009] A more accurate number is 31 degrees, 47 minutes see The National Geographic Atlas of the Middle East for this number.

[1010] For this to be accomplished, the gravitational space-time metric, or the local energy-momentum tensor for the Solar system would have to be infused with corrective energy to "keep everything else" unchanged in the Solar system and beyond; but we agree God would know how to do this, since He invented both the Universe and Physics and the Scripture claims God "upholds all things [the Universe] by the Word of His Power"--Hebrews 1:3 It would be fun to calculate the energy input needed to do this (Wait for the second edition.)

the Earth was slowed down. That would have had a catastrophic effect on the planet and people. Instead Luke's number of 3 hours allows for a completely normally turning Earth, even while the Moon is doing something very different. The natural spin rate of the Earth permits Luke's miracle to be staged with the minimum amount of disruption in the world of puny man. Pretty clever, don't you think?

As we will see in detail later, the record from peoples all over the South Pacific is that one night, only the Moon changed its speed; all other activity, the length of day and night, the motion of the stars, stayed the same. What the physics stipulates--keep the Earth fixed in its normal orbit around the Sun, move only the Moon and a three-hour Solar eclipse can be generated over Jerusalem, all this matches Luke's number AND IT ALSO MATCHES ACCOUNTS FROM HALF-WAY AROUND THE WORLD. More precisely, the three-hour time figure matches three separate accounts from three separate sources--Luke, science and ethnic traditions from the South Pacific.

How did Luke know enough to pick a number that just happens to be consistent with reality? He could have written four or five hours, or two hours. He did not. This is just the tip of the evidence from physics we are about to uncover.

Additional evidence from modern Lunar positioning programs, will give the exact alignment distances between the Earth and Moon at twelve noon the day Jesus died. That, plus the Lunar eclipse record, will prove the Moon was naturally in position for it to be so moved that Passover AND ONLY THAT PASSOVER.

In sum, when the Moon was brought over Jerusalem some nine hours before what should have been the start of a normal full Moon, the conditions that make for a natural Solar eclipse over wide areas of the Earth were in motion to create the three-hour-long supernatural Solar eclipse at that one spot.

Think for a moment also about the immense amount of orchestration needed to keep the Moon's shadow fixed over Jerusalem while everything else--Earth, Moon, Sun and planets, is being "propped up" to continue moving in the heavens at its normal rate and in its normal trajectory.[1011] The bulk of the energy needed to sustain this Event went into maintaining the normal forces at play in the solar system while only one factor, the Moon's motion, was being perturbed.

3. Third, Luke says, "darkness covered the whole land", meaning the whole nation of Judah, or the larger countryside. This is another phrase modern Bible commentators try to modify because it embraces too much land area for them to explain with a natural darkness such as a dust storm.[1012] They want to dismiss Luke's words here as exaggeration. For them, Luke is wrong a second time in one sentence. Their preferred explanation for the darkness, a Khasman dust storm, while large, certainly does not cover the whole nations, which is Luke's true scale of activity. What then, are we to make of this problem in areas?

[1011] Of course, excepting the Moon, for three hours

[1012] I cover the dust storm, with modern references, elsewhere I give none here.

Recall that a Solar eclipse is simply the Moon's shadow falling upon the Earth. The size of that shadow is easily calculated from the diameters of the Sun and Moon and their distances to the Earth. It is found to be a maximum circle of 168 millers across at the equator, but north of the equator, the circle will stretch north-south into a long ellipse, due to the curvature of the Earth. The modern state of Israel is a land roughly 70 miles wide by 280 miles north to south. An eclipse shadow hovering over Jerusalem could easily cover two-thirds or more of the modern nation. Luke's language is scientifically flawless when we admit to a supernatural eclipse occurrence.

4. Finally, recall that the Passover was exceptionally late that year, due to an added leap month in the calendar; Passover fell on April 25 instead of late March or mid-April. A late Passover, one that falls as many days after the Spring equinox as possible, arrives after as much change as possible has occurred in the Earth's orbit since the Equinox. The farther the Earth is past the Spring Equinox, the farther the Earth's distance is from the Sun. This means the Moon's orbit also is farther from the Sun. Under these circumstances the Earth-Moon system is more isolated from the Sun and therefore there is less energy needed to correct any contrary influences on the Sun. (More of it is on the Earth-Moon combination.) In that sense only, this kind of late Passover makes a supernatural eclipse of the Sun much easier to bring about in the Solar system.

All these different issues, which devolve out of reading Luke 23:45 scientifically, are completely corroborated in the actual orbits that Spring day. The ancient "forensic" evidence from the Solar system corroborates Luke in a unique and powerful fashion.

A. Completing the Story of the Crucifixion Signs - the Moon Turning to Blood

There is another scripture from Luke's pen that completes the Biblical description of the impossible celestial events that surrounded Christ's death. In this second account, the Apostle Peter, giving the very first sermon of his career, a mere fifty-four days after the Crucifixion, refers his listeners back to what had transpired that day, adding a critical detail to the picture we found in Luke 23:45:

> But Peter, standing up with the eleven, raised his voice and said to them, "Men of Judea and all who dwell in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and heed my words.
> " ... this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel:
> The sun shall be turned into darkness, and [simultaneously] the moon into blood, before the coming of the great and awesome [the NIV translation renders this word as glorious"] day of the Lord [that is, Jesus' Resurrection].[1013]
> (Acts 2:14,16, 20 taken from the NKJ version; comments are mine)

[1013] F F. Bruce's commentary on the Greek text of Acts, The Acts of the Apostles - Greek Translation with Introduction and Commentary, which is more of a set of supplemental comments to the original Greek than it is an English translation, makes this point very clear. He shows that Peter is directly referring to the Resurrection immediately following two heavenly Signs See pps 121-122, commenting on Acts 2:19-22.

I take all this at face value. You may by now be concluding the majority of commentators today have other explanations for this oratory. They do but I will not document them. When we do the unthinkable and combine Luke 23 with Acts 2 as two factual statements, my burden of proof becomes even heavier; now two signs must be proven in the skies. Peter gives the order of events as a blackened Sun followed by a blood-red Moon. Solar eclipses must occur at day, Lunar usually at night. The order of events from Peter's statement is: a Solar eclipse occurs first. The Moon travels out of its normal position and covers the Sun about noontime. It is then followed by a natural Lunar eclipse at night, where the Moon has somehow returned to its proper position in the sky by the time night falls over Jerusalem. Since Lunar eclipses occur at or near the full Moon, we might expect a Lunar eclipse occurred either the first or second night Jesus' body was in the tomb. It fell either a mere hours after He was buried or possibly one night later. Modern almanac data for April 25, 31 A.D. states a natural Lunar eclipse occurred the first night; the entire set of events occurred within a 12 hour period of time. This is important to note because eyewitness testimony from peoples around the world follows this rapid, "Moon goes away-Moon returns" pattern in one day.

Since the Lunar eclipse after the Crucifixion was natural, it was something fixed in the infinite dance of the Earth and Moon's orbits millennia before Jesus ever walked the Earth. By coincidence or serendipity, the year Jesus died there was a natural, bright-red eclipse of the Moon over Jerusalem better than any other year in Jesus' adult lifetime.

Two signs, literally realizing the words of Peter, Luke and a Hebrew prophet named Joel, who first spoke them six centuries before Jesus; all of it happening in less than 12 hours.

Tightening My Case - Weaving All the Threads into An Unbreakable Knot

We have previously covered many pages of text that demonstrate from the Bible, and only from the Bible, that Jesus actually died on a Wednesday. We then took this "irrational" claim and corroborated it with evidence from known history. We also saw that Jewish calendar counting was competent enough for us to confidently select a unique date for the Crucifixion - Wednesday, April 25, 31 A.D. This Wednesday date also happens to match the circumstances of Jesus' life and birth better than any other. We have seen that Good Friday has no historical credibility; it was a Gnostic invention, concocted to preserve and propagate the astrological thinking of the ancient world as it survived in Alexandria Egypt. Good Friday-Easter Sunday is a memorial service of sorts; it is not the literal anniversary of anything that happened in history.

Everything thus far locks in April 25, 31 A.D., as the day, yet none of it proves April 25 was a special day in astronomy to the scoffer. As you know, the hard-headed rejections of the scoffer have a special place of honor in these pages, they must be graciously addressed.

What do the labored calculations of bygone scientists, hidden away in obscure astronomy tables and the innards of arcane computer programs, have to say for this day? Take another deep breath, dear reader; we are about to submerge ourselves into the most exotic and breathtaking details of this entire wondrous journey. Like astronauts on a Moon walk, we are about to stand in the middle of the heavens and watch the Moon and Earth merge together from afar, in a rendezvous of brilliant beauty and cosmic consequence.

B. Invoking Modern Astronomy to Prove the Eclipses of Luke 23 and Acts 2

Predicting the Moon's Position in Our Modern Age

All Solar and Lunar eclipses from 1200 B.C. to 2160 A.D. were calculated by a team of Austrian physicists in the 1880's under the direction of Theodore von Oppolzer, who was court astronomer to the Austro-Hungarian Emperor. With one key correction,[1014] modern scholars acknowledge this compendium of Solar and Lunar eclipses has stood the test of time, subject to refinement.[1015] Several more modern almanacs have been published to reflect this increasing accuracy. In 1971, Manfred Kudlek and Erich Mickler published a subset of von Oppolzer's compendium, devoted only to Solar and Lunar eclipses that had been calculated to appear over key Middle Eastern cities such as Jerusalem both before and during the time of Jesus.[1016] In 1992 Liu and Fiala published their Lunar eclipse almanac; Fred Espanek of the American space agency NASA produced two (Solar in 1987, Lunar in 1989) and the renowned Belgian astronomer Jean Meeus reworked the original book of von Oppolzer in 1983 (Solar eclipses only). These works, while more extensive and more precise, simply fine-tune von Oppolzer for the space age.[1017]

With regard to calculating the exact positions of the Earth, Moon and Sun for every minute throughout recorded history, a tremendous accuracy has been developed over the 20th century, especially in the last few decades. It is only this modern

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[1014] It was not until about 1920 that astrophysicists recognized the need to adjust the 1887 calculations by the slowing of the earth's rotation due to its own inertia and the tides The errors amounted to roughly 2 1/2 hours difference between when the Austrians said an eclipse began and when it actually occurred, some 2,000 years ago See the Introduction by D Menzel and O Gingerich in the Dover, 1962 edition of von Oppolzer's Canon of Solar Eclipses, and Stephenson, F R Historical Eclipses and Earth's Rotation for a full treatment of the subject.

[1015] See p vi of the 1962 edition of the Canon of Solar Eclipses Although I must admit some of the more modern eclipse calculators promote the superiority of their work over the Austrian's, more than others I will not name names

[1016] Kudlek, M , and Mickler, E., Solar and Lunar Eclipses of the Ancient Near East From 300 B C to 0 with Maps

[1017] I have used Canon of Lunar Eclipses 1500 B.C. - A.D. 3000 by Liu and Fiala, and its companion computer software, of the same name, by D Eagle, both published by Willmann-Bell, and Bryant Tuckerman's somewhat dated, but still valuable 2-volume work, Planetary, Lunar, and Solar Positions published by the American Philosophical Society (1976). Jean Meeus and H Mucke produced a Canon of Lunar Eclipses -2002 to +2526 in 1979 (Belgian) and 1983 (English). Their Canon of Solar Eclipses appeared in 1989. I also reference Fred Espanak, who has produced a Fifty Year Canon of Lunar Eclipses 1986 - 2035 under the auspices of NASA, the American Space Agency He produced a similar Canon for Solar eclipses: Fifty Year Canon of Solar Eclipses: 1986 - 2035 By most recent accounts (see Guillermier, P , and Koutchmy, S, op cit , p 61), they have excelled von Oppolzer in accuracy, although the old master covered a far longer range of years–over 3,300

accuracy that enables us to precisely reconstruct the eclipse events of Jesus' death. Earlier attempts at discovering the astronomy of the day Jesus died, made in 1872 and reviewed in 1896, dealt only with a possible Lunar eclipse the night after he died. They gave a false result for even that partial event, due to a miscalculation in time of some 30 minutes over 2,000 years.[1018] Today we can eliminate this kind of problem.

The French astronomers, Chapront-Touze and Chapront, produced the current standard model for Lunar motion, called "ELP", in 1991, which gives the exact positions of the Moon compared to the Earth for any minute from 4000 B.C. to 8000 A.D.[1019] Liu and Fiala's Lunar eclipse listings were produced the following year. We will both of these works, as well as their companion software programs to develop an authoritative track of how the Moon was positioned over Jerusalem. (Excepting, of course, the time it hovered over Jerusalem at the Solar Eclipse; this part of the journey did not correspond to any known behavior.)

[1018] See Chambers, The Story of Eclipses, p. 110, for the original statement and Humphreys and Waddington, op cit., 1983, p. 746, for the revision I believe Liu and Fiala's 1992 data further revises both of these attempts See Appendix A 5 4 - Recalibrating the Color of the April 3, 33 A D Eclipse over Jerusalem

[1019] Chapront-Touze, M., and Chapron, J Lunar Tables and Programs from 4000 B C to A.D 8000, Willmann-Bell

2.5 The Proof from Astronomy

Is What We Are About to Discover Truly Original? - What Others Have Done to Chase Down the Crucifixion Eclipses

Although some few authors before me have argued for both a Solar and Lunar eclipse on the day Jesus died,[1020] they certainly did not give precise evidence from modern astronomy to prove Luke 23:45 describes one of the great events in human history. They took their readers on no survey of the Solar system the day Jesus died. How could they? The Enlightenment has unclouded our infantile logic; we have become too rational to pursue such reasoning to the point of historical or scientific proof. Thus we have the modern confusion over what Luke 23:45 really says and which day Jesus died.

Earlier Attempts at Resolving the Astronomy Surrounding the Crucifixion

The eclipse references in Luke and Acts have not gone unnoticed over the years. I have already mentioned the scientific attempts of 1872 and 1896. In the 1920's and 30's John Fotheringham, the Oxford scholar, leaned upon these results when he proposed a calendar solution for the day Jesus died. Others, most recently the British scholars Colin Humphreys and W.G. Waddington,[1021] have tried to explain the astronomy behind Luke and Acts. They too, referenced the work of Fotheringham and his forebears. Confined by the norms of conventional scholarship (Good Friday), they took a different approach than this book. They did not propose to prove God exists. Their purpose was only to discover the date of the Crucifixion; eclipses were only a secondary means to discovering that date. These man are certainly very capable scholars, yet they resoundingly repudiated the idea of a miraculous Solar eclipse at the Crucifixion.[1022]

Using only Good Fridays as possible dates, they found only a weak, partial match between their best choice and a blood-red Lunar eclipse. Their eclipse was ending just as Good Friday was beginning. The overlap was perhaps 30 minutes. The eclipse we will investigate was seen over Jerusalem for over four hours, from start to finish, in full display. Humphrey's and Waddington's choice led them to conclude Friday, April 3, 33 A.D. must be the correct date. In their estimation, any literal Solar eclipse over Jerusalem had to have been the one on November 29 A.D., which they readily admitted occurred years before Jesus died.[1023] They explained the Solar darkness as a dust storm,[1024] an idea which various scholars subscribe to; it had to be anything but a second eclipse the same day.

It wasn't a dust storm.

[1020] See Brown, R., The Death of the Messiah, pps 1350-1377 for a very good survey of all the struggles

[1021] See their article, "Dating the Crucifixion", in the December 1983 issue of 'Nature', and their paper "Astronomy and the Date of the Crucifixion", in Chronos Kairos, Christos, pps 165-182, which we referred to earlier in this chapter

[1022] See Chronos, Kairos, Christos, pps 179-180

[1023] Ibid, p 180

[1024] Ibid

That is the state of Crucifixion eclipse-matching today. It is noteworthy and competent, but unable to address all of what Luke 23:45 and Acts 2:20 state. You will see far more information in this section.

Our Method for Uncovering Secrets in the Ancient Eclipses

Rather than fixing our attention only on Good Friday Lunar eclipses, we will start by looking at all known Lunar Eclipses in Jesus' adult life. We will examine these eclipses quite differently than prior authors. First, we will discover the best possible Lunar eclipse during the years 27-37 A.D. By best, I mean reddest, longest-lasting and most directly centered over Jerusalem. Faint eclipses that lasted 20 minutes near the horizon will not be prime candidates for us. We will not force the best eclipse to fall on any day of the week or in any year. Once we have identified it as the most spectacular Sign seen over Jerusalem in Jesus' lifetime, we will look for an "eclipse-limit" partner; that is, we will see if a Solar eclipse fell either two weeks before, or two weeks after this "best" Lunar eclipse. (I will explain this feature of the Solar system shortly.) Either this Solar eclipse occurred 2,000 years ago in tandem with a graphic Lunar eclipse over Jerusalem, or it did not. If it did not, this book is over. If it did occur, we will use the scientific data from this "related" Solar eclipse to discover if a noontime Solar eclipse could possibly have been favorable over Jerusalem the same day as the "best" Lunar event.

I break these two inquiries--finding the best Lunar eclipse and identifying the factors for a supernatural Solar eclipse--down further into six questions that the astronomers' exotic numbers have to satisfy. (Relax, I am doing this to break down and simplify the explanation of all this for the other readers.) Only when all six tests are passed, will I claim to have authenticated the Solar and Lunar eclipses at the Crucifixion.

What happened on Earth the day Jesus died is matched by what was transpiring in the orbits of the Earth, Sun and Moon, naturally and supernaturally, 2,000 years ago. The evidence is still there in the modern equations of their ancient positions.

Focusing in On the Scientific Evidence for a Supernatural Solar Eclipse - More About "Eclipse Seasons"

Solar eclipses occur when the Earth Sun and Moon are within distances of each other that astronomers call "eclipse limits". Because we a dealing with very large bodies, there is a certain amount of "play" involved with how far they are from each other and where their shadows fall. These opportune distances last for two or more weeks at a time. The time when eclipse limits are in effect is called "eclipse season". All three bodies have to be hovering "close" to one another in a rendezvous for an eclipse event to take place.

The Lunar eclipse that shone the night Christ was in the tomb is plainly listed in modern catalogues. Other information in other catalogues directly links this Lunar eclipse to a natural Solar eclipse which occurred two weeks AFTER the true Passover. The "eclipse season" for this very special pair of natural eclipses also contains the exact alignment information for both a natural Lunar eclipse and a

supernatural Solar eclipse to occur within the same day. This information can be scrutinized to the satisfaction of any critic.

The bond that exists in the two-week long "eclipse season" can be turned back in time into a spot that falls over Jerusalem about 12 noon the day Jesus died. The basic math of predicting eclipses automatically produces this result. If we "role the tape" backwards two weeks from when a natural Solar eclipse did occur, the ideal spot falls over Jerusalem two weeks earlier. The two weeks timeframe comes from the fact that Lunar eclipses occur at full Moon, while Solar occur at new Moon. There is roughly a 14 3/4 day time lag between every full Moon and new Moon. so the eclipse alignment lasts from one phase of the Moon to its opposite. Such pairings of eclipses over a two-week period are not unusual in the Earth's history, but this particular bonding of positions for the Earth, Sun and Moon in the Spring of 2,000 years ago is truly astounding. It contains all the facts necessary to prove the Earth was in place for the Crucifixion Eclipse to occur on the true Crucifixion date and ON NO OTHER.

This is the overall concept we will work from as we descend into the exact details of the ancient heavens. The numbers are either there or they are not and there are quite a few details that have to mesh.

The best Lunar eclipse of 27-37 A.D., the true day Jesus died, the correct time on Passover night, the exact position of the Sun and Earth so that we can role back the tape and actually find the eclipse spot falling over Jerusalem: all these totally unrelated factors must come together sublimely in perfect harmony, like poetry from the hand of God, or there is no Crucifixion eclipse. I will keep the details as simple as possible, but we are about to look at real numbers and you will see how remarkable all this actually is.

Setting the Celestial Stage - The Criteria for A Supernatural Event

Lunar eclipses can be seen by all of the nighttime Earth simultaneously. The audience covers one half of the Earth's surface.[1025] Solar eclipses are quite different; they are much more precisely targeted events. They are by comparison, a minuscule oval shadow that casts a swath of perhaps one hundred sixty-seven miles as it swiftly moves along the Earth's rotating surface.[1026]

[1025] Espanek, op cit , p. 199, Liu and Fiala, op. cit., p 197 For fascinating visual proof of this, using actual eclipses, see the extensive diagrams in Espanek, op cit , pps 33-78. Brunier and Luminet, op cit., has watercolor maps on pps 176-185, which are very pleasant Liu and Fiala, op cit., pps 197-201 - "Appendix, Using the Horizontal Locator to Determine the Visibility of Eclipses", shows its readers how to manually determine the visibility for all of the eclipses in their book Of course, any modern Lunar Eclipse software that can be downloaded from the Internet will most likely give earth-maps for terrestrial viewing areas.

[1026] Dyson, F., and Wooley, R , Eclipses of the Sun and Moon, (1937), p. 7, give the maximum width of a Solar eclipse shadow on the surface of the Earth as 167 miles across for a total eclipse Guillermier, P , and Koutchmy, S, op cit , p 63, the most recent source I could find, gives it as 168 1/4 miles. The difference is due to a more precise measurement of the Earth's shape, the Moon's diameter and its distance from the Earth

Merely for a Lunar eclipse to be seen at Jerusalem does not qualify it as the "best pick" in our survey. Since Lunar eclipses are seen by the whole nighttime half of the Earth, how can any one place on Earth see a "better" Lunar eclipse than any other? One way is that the eclipse is beginning just as the viewing location enters into the evening. Such a location will see the whole eclipse from beginning to end. Or, the eclipse could be ending just as some location enters into dawn. In both cases, the full play of the eclipse has been observed. We are interested in Jerusalem eclipses where the entire Lunar eclipse, from its beginning to end, was seen in the night sky. This is a spectacle of several hours' length.

There is another, very key criteria to consider. Lunar eclipses progress from a silvery light at initial contact with the Earth's shadow to ever-darkening colors, finally slipping away from the deepest shadows and returning to the normal Lunar appearance. The moment of brightest color or deepest shadow is called the "totality" of the eclipse. We want to look for an eclipse where the moment of richest shadows happened to occur while Jerusalem was directly under that peak performance, in the center of the audience, if you will. More scientifically we are looking for a Lunar eclipse where Jerusalem was on a shotgun-straight line connecting the centers of the Earth and the Moon, at the very moment when the eclipse was at its reddest, its most intense color of the evening. In this way, we have an alignment in the heavens that makes Jerusalem the focal point for the best part of the best eclipse in Jesus' age. Aren't we asking for too much? The numbers buried in the catalogues that you are about to see conclusively show this is what happened.

Once we have this "best pick" Lunar eclipse, the geometry of "eclipse seasons" immediately comes to our assistance. A Lunar eclipse that is as close as possible to being directly overhead Jerusalem is also a Lunar eclipse that favors a natural Solar eclipse to occur two weeks after this Lunar eclipse, at the next new Moon. This time, the Solar eclipse will occur somewhere else on Earth, due to the fact the Earth is constantly spinning during those two weeks. In other words, we have discovered a special alignment between the Earth, Sun and Moon, lasting two weeks or more, (the "eclipse season") which produces both a natural Lunar eclipse over Jerusalem at the Passover AND a natural Solar eclipse somewhere else on Earth, two weeks later. Everything thus far is completely normal, natural, predictable and present in the record of ancient eclipses we calculate today. This double, "back-to-back" occurrence of two natural eclipses gives us an exceptionally tight alignment between the Earth, Sun and Moon during this particular "eclipse season". Not all eclipse seasons, or times of alignment, are so tight that we can get this kind of double-eclipse occurring over fourteen days. Sometimes it occurs; sometimes it does not. It all depends upon how perfectly the particular orbits of the Earth, Sun and Moon are converging at each other at new and full Moon, as seen from someone standing on the Earth.

If and when it did happen, the geometry of this exceptionally "tight" natural alignment would also put Jerusalem near dead center for any supernatural Solar eclipse on the very first day of the fourteen day "eclipse season", with the LEAST amount of disruption in the natural order. Jerusalem being at dead center of the

Lunar eclipse also puts it at dead center for a supernatural Solar eclipse the same day.

Let me consolidate all this into a few simple sentences: Our hunt for the starry evidence of the Crucifixion Eclipse involves the following sequence of events:

1) On the first day of a two-week-long eclipse season, a Supernatural Solar eclipse is seen directly over Jerusalem during the day.

2) Later the first day, a natural Lunar eclipse is seen over Jerusalem at night. Its greatest moment is also directly over Jerusalem.

3) On the fourteenth day of this eclipse season, when the Moon is new, a natural Solar eclipse is seen somewhere else on Earth.

By knowing how "tightly" the Earth, Sun and Moon are aligned for each of the Lunar eclipses that occurred in Jesus' lifetime, we can pick the best possible eclipse season for a supernatural Solar eclipse to occur. This may or may not coincide with the "best" Lunar eclipse that was seen over Jerusalem because of its color. There is no reason why the most blood-red Lunar eclipse over Jerusalem and a "tight eclipse season" should occur precisely on a Passover, let alone the one on which Jesus died. Why should they? All this is really a very, very, remote possibility.

Bear this in mind as I show you the actual numbers from modern computer programs.

The resultant list of Lunar eclipses we will obtain from this search is actually very short. There is ONLY ONE pair of Lunar and Solar eclipses that occur over a two-week time frame in Jesus' life, that fit the above circumstances, match our date for the Crucifixion and also perfectly match the science in Luke 23:45. The fact that any exists is shocking, BUT IT EXISTS. Let me reiterate the above comments. Why should such an eclipse be present in the scientific ledger of the Solar system if the Bible is just pious heresy written by ignorant amateurs? What are the odds of such an astounding coincidence occurring in a verse of the Bible that everyone today calls "ignorant", "senile", or "spiritual poetry"?

Therefore, analysis of the scientific data in the eclipse almanacs of both Liu and von Oppolzer shows that the alignment of the Sun, Earth and Moon that Passover was unique in Jesus' lifetime.

Others, to my knowledge, including Humphreys and Waddington, have not made so stringent a demand upon the data, nor have they discovered this fact of the Solar system. Perhaps they would reject the suggestion of such a search as improbable fantasy, I do not know; it is not.

Laying Open the Evidence for the Greatest Event of All

Since the Passover can only occur during the months of March or April and immediately before a full Moon,[1027] we run our selection rests against all the March-April eclipses that occurred in the rule of Pontius Pilate, Procurator of Jerusalem, under whom Jesus died.[1028]

The six simple tests for uncovering this secret of the Crucifixion are:

1) Were there any Lunar eclipses seen anywhere on Earth on or near any Passover between 27 and 37 A.D.?

2) Were one or more of these Lunar eclipses also seen from Jerusalem?
If there were,

3) Were there also any Solar eclipses associated with these Jerusalem Lunar eclipses, either two weeks before or two weeks after?

4) On which Passover between 27 and 37 A.D. was the Jerusalem Lunar eclipse the most perfectly blood-red in color? (Corroborates Acts 2:20)

5) Was that blood-red eclipse merely seen over Jerusalem, or was it also nearly "centered" over Jerusalem in location and time?

6) On which Passover between 27 and 37 A.D. were the heavens most perfectly aligned for a Solar eclipse to supernaturally occur directly over Jerusalem at noontime? (I use here any Solar eclipses two weeks before or two weeks after the special Passover to confirm the "tightness" of the alignment.)

These tests must all produce the same Passover day as their answer, in order for two eclipses, Solar and Lunar, to have occurred as stated in Luke 23:45.

To make the demands upon my solution even more stringent, the common date the six tests produce should also agree with the date we found in Part A of this Chapter. That date, April 25, 31 A.D., came solely from the Bible and from the history surrounding ancient Jerusalem. If both the ideal alignment in the sky and the date it occurred match with the historical record of events on Earth, then no one can dispute the accounts from history of a great World-Event.

Like two independent witnesses, heaven and earth agree.

[1027] Finnegan, Handbook of Biblical Chronology, p. 354, says this, although elsewhere he gives a May date in a table. H Hoeh, op cit., pps 21, 44-45, explains that the Rabbis had strict rules of calculating the dates, called "Rules of Postponement". The rules that apply in Jesus time were those before 142 A.D.

[1028] Perhaps the great majority of scholars believe Pilate ruled in Judea 26-36 A.D I am using the dates as explained by H. Hoeh, in his booklet, The Crucifixion was Not on Friday, pps. 30-31. The highly respected Jesuit scholar Raymond Brown, agrees with 37 A.D (See Death of the Messiah, vol. ii, p. 1042, note 26) This will in no way affect any of my results compared to those who subscribe to the 26-36 time frame

I have set the stage for you to personally analyze the hard, unchallengable numbers of science that will follow. I am now going to give you the most detailed, intriguing, number-crunching evidence that a Supernatural, three-hour-long eclipse of the Sun did indeed occur on April 25, from approximately 12 noon until 3 P.M., followed by a blood-red eclipse of the Moon over Jerusalem that same night, peaking in color at approximately 9:40 P.M.[1029]

[1029] More general information on the motions of orbits and converging of eclipses, with technical terms, and concepts revealed, can be found in the Appendix

2.5.1 The Candidates - All the Passover Eclipse Pairs During the Reign of Pontius Pilate

We have arrived at the fascinating business of proving from modern astrophysics which day in the decade 27-37 A.D. the eclipse Signs fell, if they fell at all. From the most compatible Lunar eclipse on record, we will then determine from the data if a noontime Solar eclipse was possible, using the calculated distances and angles between the orbits of the Earth, Moon, and Sun for that day.

Question 1: Were there any Lunar eclipses seen anywhere on Earth on any Passover between 27 and 37 A.D.?

According to Liu and Fiala's 1992 Lunar eclipse listings, there were a total of 27 Lunar eclipses that were seen on planet Earth from 27 to 37 A.D., the time when Pontius Pilate, the Roman judge at Jesus execution, ruled in Judea.[1030] Of those 27 only four were seen in the months of March and April, the only two months when the Passover can occur based upon Exodus 12, the Hebrew calendar and the rabbinical "Rules of Postponement".[1031] According to both Jack Finnegan's Handbook of Biblical Chronology,[1032] and Parker and Dubberstein's Babylonian Chronology,[1033] three of these dates are also the dates the Passover fell in those four years. The four eclipse dates are:

Passover Eclipse Dates	Day of Week[1034]	Liu and Fiala Catalog Numbers
April 25, 31 A.D.	Wednesday	3720
April 14, 32 A.D.	Monday	3722
April 3, 33 A.D.	Friday	3724
March 23, 34 A.D. (Passover was April 22, 34 A.D.[1035])	Wednesday	3727

Based upon the evidence that only a Wednesday Passover could be correct, we might be tempted to immediately eliminate the two other dates, but I will not do so. Since so many in the present academic regime believe that Friday April 3, 33 A.D. is the correct date, I would like to include it in this analysis. Lets subject it to all the tests and see how well it really fares. I want to demonstrate its limitations to the

[1030] These are eclipse numbers 3706 through 3733, listed on pages 90-91 of that book I see no reason to identify them any further here.

[1031] Finnegan, Handbook of Biblical Chronology, p 354, and Hoeh, op cit , p 21

[1032] Ibid, p 363

[1033] Page 46

[1034] Both the dates and the days of the week are derived from Finnegan, Handbook of Biblical Chronology, p 363, and Hoeh, op. cit., p 21

[1035] According to differing Gentile scholars, the Passover fell on EITHER on March 23 or April 22 in 34 A.D. I believe, based upon the rules of Postponement in force at the time, that the correct date is April 22 The applicable postponement rule would be that the Passover must not fall less than 6 days AFTER the Spring Equinox. To avoid objections by modern Gentiles, I will use April 22 here, but I will also include March 23, 34 A D in all my Passover eclipse evaluations

largest possible readership in order to resoundingly discredit it compared to April 25, 31 A.D. Note too that another favored date, 30 A.D., immediately fails muster; there were no eclipses on that Passover.

I will continue to show calculations for the Monday Passover of 32 A.D., even though it is no longer a candidate, in order to highlight how extraordinary the results of our screening truly are.

Question 2: Were one or more of these four Passover eclipses also seen from Jerusalem?

The data from Liu and Fiala's Lunar almanac gives beginning and ending times for all these eclipses. Both the April 25, 31 A.D. and the April 3, 33 A.D. eclipses were seen in Jerusalem[1036], but as I mentioned earlier, all sightings are not the same. Visibility presumes certain variables.

The Moon is visible from the Earth for most of the day or night, that is, for ten or more hours at a time. I mentioned earlier that an eclipse of the Moon might be visible in one location anywhere from scant minutes to two or four hours. Since I have stated that the currently accepted date of April 3, 33 A.D. corresponds to an "inferior" eclipse, let me explain this science more completely. It relates to the various motions at play as we see the Moon in transit each night and day.

Like the Sun, the Moon "rises" by appearing above the horizon line and sets hours later by rotating past the opposite horizon. This effect is due to the combined movements of both the Earth and Moon. The Moon orbits the rotating Earth from West to East in roughly 29 1/2 days. It passes through some 13 degrees of arc across the sky each 24 hours.[1037] The Earth is rotating on its axis in the same direction as the Moon overhead; that is, from West to East. The Earth completes a full rotation, 360 degrees in one day, so the Earth is rotating nearly 30 times faster than the Moon.[1038] The differences in the Moon's position in the sky each night are due to this "speed difference" between the two bodies.

An eclipse of the Moon is completely independent of when the Moon appears above the horizon for any spot on Earth. Eclipses have to do with when the Moon passes through the Earth's shadow; this is unrelated to the daily rotating of the Earth on its axis. In every Lunar eclipse, there will be locations on Earth which rotate into the view of the eclipsing Moon at times before, during and after the main spectacle. In the case of the April 3 eclipse, the event had already started and was nearing completion, when it first appeared above the horizon line for Jerusalem to see. In this case, the turning earth rotated Jerusalem into a spectator position at

[1036] Humphreys and Wadington, who do a similar analysis, say there was only one Passover eclipse seen from Jerusalem, the April 3, 33 A.D. eclipse. (See their remarks in "Astronomy and the Date of the Crucifixion", Chronos, Kairos, Christo, p. 176.) This is because they disallow a Wednesday Passover, as I show history disallows a Friday Passover.

[1037] Liu, B., and Fiala, A., op. cit., p. 6.

[1038] The alert reader will notice I have omitted the effect of the Earth's month-long rotation around the Sun, which does complicate exact alignment times and positions between a spot on Earth and the Moon. That reality, while significant, is not critical to my overall point as I present it here.

the last moments of an ongoing event. Such an eclipse would obviously not be at its richest red or darkest black when it came into view over Jerusalem, because its greatest totality had past before the city had the chance to see it.

Conversely, the Moon can first suffer eclipse after it appears above the viewer's horizon line. It all depends upon where the viewer is, relative to when the eclipse begins. For our "best" Jerusalem eclipse candidate, we require the eclipse to be well up in the sky over Jerusalem, nearly centered in the heavens, when its most intense colors materialize.

Here are all the Passover Lunar eclipses during in the reign of Pontius Pilate.

Passover Eclipses in 27-37 A.D.[1039]

Lunar Eclipse Date	Seen From Jerusalem?	Time Eclipse Began (Jerusalem Time)[1040]	Time of First Sighting in Jerusalem	End of Eclipse Partial Phase (When Moon stops Being Red)[1041]	Duration of Red Eclipse Phase as Seen in Jerusalem[1042] (Approx.)
April 25, 31 A.D.	Yes	8:26 P.M.	8:26 P.M.	11:46 P.M.	2 hrs 4 min
April 14, 32 A.D.	No	8:44 A.M.	Not Visible	1:30 P.M.	0 min
April 3, 33 A.D.	Yes	2:31 P.M.	6:20 P.M. (at dusk)	6:45 P.M.	25 min
March 23, 34 A.D.	Yes	4:19 P.M.	6 P.M. (at dusk)	7:10 P.M.	1 hr. 10 min

If we look at the last column on the right, we can immediately see that the 31 A.D. eclipse was observed for the longest amount of time over Jerusalem. The 32 A.D. Lunar eclipse is immediately eliminated from being a possible candidate, since it was not even seen in Jerusalem.

According to Liu and Fiala, the red phase of the April 3, 33 A.D eclipse was seen for only some 25 minutes at Jerusalem. The redness had ended, turning to a rose color

[1039] All data in this table was taken from Liu, B, and Fiala, A., op cit , p 91.

[1040] Times were originally reported as Greenwich Mean Time in Liu and Fiala. I added a correction of 2 hrs. 21 minutes to these times, to account for a Jerusalem longitude of 35 degrees 14 minutes East of Greenwich.

[1041] This time represents the Moon's initial contact with the outer shadow of the Earth, the penumbra, until its final contact Umbral eclipse times are not given, they would be some 50% shorter, since they only involve the Moon's contact with the inner, darkest core of the Earth's shadow, the umbra

[1042] The method for arriving at these values was:

and yellow, and the Moon was pulling away from the Earth's shadow, as Jerusalem was just turning into the night side of daily rotation. In short, only the last faint hues of the eclipse were still visible as Jerusalem turned into a viewing position. Such a brief time virtually guarantees that the eclipse was nowhere near blood-red in color when it rose over the Jerusalem horizon. Since Peter said the Moon was "turned to blood" in front of an audience of thousands of eye-witnesses, this reality virtually extinguishes April 3 as a proper choice, IF we agree to take Peter's words literally.

On the other had, the April 25 eclipse was seen from beginning to end, at night and at an hour that many would still be awake. It is the longest Passover eclipse seen from Jerusalem in the list. The red phase of this eclipse lasted over two hours, providing a spectacular display of the Moon shifting deeper and deeper into its full color gamut and then returning to normalcy. That night was the Jewish Passover Seder. Visitors and residents would be up, talking of the days' events (Jesus' death, earthquake damage to the Temple), eating their ceremonial meal and reflecting on how God had led ancient Israel out of Egypt with signs and wonders, all while the Moon was turning color. The effect would have been to heighten alarm and spread the word of the eclipse throughout the nation like some wild fire. One could easily imagine people either at the Passover table, or walking to their hostels, watching the Moon turn color before their eyes and giving the shout for everyone to "Look at the Moon". Others would be waking their sleeping friends or associates, spreading the news of the celestial event.

Of all three possible eclipses, the April 25 eclipse fits the series of events described in Joel, Luke and Acts better than any other. It naturally harmonizes with the most powerful fulfillment of these accounts one could hope for. Why should it even exist at all?.

Question 3: Were there also any Solar eclipses associated with these Jerusalem Lunar eclipses, either two weeks before or after them?

Yes there were; examination of von Oppolzer's Solar eclipse listings shows all the candidates have associated Solar eclipses.[1043]

[1043] These Solar eclipses are von Oppolzer's eclipses numbered: 2960, 2962, 2963, 2966, and 2958 respectively

Two-Week Solar and Lunar Eclipse Pairs in 27-37 A.D, Seen Over Jerusalem

Jerusalem LUNAR Eclipse	Related NATURAL SOLAR Eclipse	Sequence of Related Solar Eclipse(s)	Place on Earth of Maximum Solar Eclipse	Which Hemisphere on Earth Saw It?
April 25, 31 A.D.	May 10, 31 A.D.	Two weeks AFTER	North Korea	NORTH
April 14, 32 A.D.	March 29, 32 A.D. April 28, 32 A.D	Two Weeks BEFORE and Two Weeks AFTER	More than 30 degrees below the Equator; not visible in the N. Hemisphere	South South
April 3, 33 A.D.	March 19, 33 A.D.	Two Weeks BEFORE	South Indian Ocean, midway between Australia and S. Africa	South
March 23, 34 A.D.	March 9, 34 A.D.	Two Weeks BEFORE	N. Australia, east of New Guinea	South

Notice that of all the five eclipse pairs, only the Solar eclipse on May 10, 31 A.D. occurred in the northern hemisphere. In all the other years, 32-33 A.D., the Solar eclipses occurred in the WRONG HEMISPHERE FROM JERUSALEM. There is no way a Solar eclipse in the Southern hemisphere could give us a "sweet spot" that could be turned into a Solar eclipse in the northern hemisphere within two weeks' time. We must start with a natural eclipse in the Northern hemisphere, for a potential Solar eclipse to be staged over Jerusalem. So even though there were Lunar and Solar eclipse pairs at Passover time in various years, four out of five times the eclipses were events that could not possibly be used to prove a Supernatural eclipse of the Sun occurred in those years. Only the Lunar eclipse of 31 A.D. lends itself to our objective, the other natural Solar eclipses are on the wrong half of the Earth from Jerusalem.

Not only was the 31 A.D. Lunar eclipse seen at the appropriate time, and for the longest amount of time but it also had the only viable "partner" Solar eclipse. Acts 2:20 clearly couples two eclipses together as One Sign: First there is a Solar eclipse, immediately followed by a Blood-Red Lunar eclipse.

Acts 2:20-21 : The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the coming of the great and awesome day of the Lord. (Peter ties this directly to the Resurrection of Jesus, when he then says,
21 And it shall come to pass that whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.'

Two eclipses, falling back to back to back before the Resurrection. Only April 25 has the literal astronomical conditions for such an event to be orchestrated by the hand of God.

Two more tests must be passed by April 25. How red did the Moon appear in the nighttime sky and was it truly centered over Jerusalem?

2.5.2 The Jerusalem Lunar Eclipse of April 25, 31 A.D. was the ONLY Eclipse in Ten Years to be Perfectly Blood-Red in Color

By the time the eclipsing Moon rose majestically over Jerusalem on April 3, 33 A.D. it had to be a pale, rose-colored orb, or even a yellow disk; there was so little time left to see it in eclipse above that city. The fleeting spectacle provided only a trace of celestial wonder. And what of the April 25, 31 A.D. eclipse? What was its "best" color? Mud? brick brown? Black? Or was it marginally red, slightly orange, perhaps a dull copper color?

Question 4: On which Passover between 27 and 37 A.D. did the most perfectly blood-red Lunar eclipse appear over Jerusalem?

The various modern students of Crucifixion astronomy give themselves a certain leeway in interpreting the expression "blood-red". As long as they can produce even a pinkish-yellow Moon on some Passover night, they claim a victory. This is not exacting enough for me.

The imagery used by the Hebrew prophet Joel and again in Acts 2:20, says the Moon would be "turned into blood". It forces one to see before his eyes a graphically colored Moon of startling red color standing in sharp contrast against the starry sky. Why then, should we trivialize this term?

What Does the Original Expression, "Turned into Blood" Mean and What Was the Color of The April 25 Eclipse?

Modern readers, unaccustomed to such quaint language as Joel originally used, might give pause to wonder if this phrase is even referring to a Lunar eclipse. The words might mean anything. Perhaps Joel was describing the end of creation, when the planets might dissolve into some liquefied state and Peter in turn was ignorantly quoting him? The majority of modern Bible commentators do explain the phrase as a Lunar eclipse of bright red color. This is true both for Joel in the Old Testament and Peter in the New.

The expression "the Moon turned into blood" was used in Jewish language and culture for many centuries before Jesus. After Luke wrote Acts, the phrase was used by the Apostle John in the book of Revelation.[1044] We saw in Chapter 1 that other, Gentile writers such as Quintus Curtius, also used the term "blood" when describing Lunar eclipses.

The NET Bible, which emphasizes original text meanings, explains that the Hebrew of Joel literally means "the Moon is turned to blood", but this phrase only refers to color. Any idea that Joel meant the Moon somehow transubstantiates and liquefies into literal blood misses the point completely.[1045] Additional confirmation comes from a rabbinical commentary on the Book of Joel:

[1044] See Revelation 6:12

[1045] NET Bible, p 1856, translator's note (tn) 4

> .... the Sun will cease to give forth its light, and the moon will turn blood-red thereby humiliating all those who worship these celestial bodies.[1046]

To clarify this even further, the author adds: "When the moon is fully eclipsed it is blackened; when it is only partially covered it appears red like blood ...."[1047] (emphasis added)

If you have seen a Lunar eclipse, you may have seen this phenomenon first-hand. Photographs of copper, red and blood-red eclipses are documented on Internet websites, in astronomy books and journals and in sleek coffee table publications.[1048]

How Does this Reddish Color Come About and What Were the Conditions on April 25, 31 A.D.?

> Eclipses of the moon are caused by the shadow of the earth falling upon the moon. .... No two lunar eclipses look the same. ... The coloring in the center of the shadow is generally a faint copper red, surrounded by a grayish edge.[1049]

Notice several things here. Eclipse colors change with every eclipse. We cannot presume the Moon was blood-red on any Passover unless we carefully investigate. Second, whatever color the Moon appears to be is actually due to the Moon passing through the shadow of the Earth.

The reddish light we see coming from the Moon during a Lunar eclipse is actually the Earth's shadow, somehow turned into a red color, which the Moon "collides with" in the empty vastness of space. Since all shadows, whether they are cast on Earth, or in the heavens, have a fixed length; they are so many miles long and no longer. If the Moon were farther away from the Earth than the length of the Earth's shadow, the Moon would pass in front of empty space. Even though everything was aligned, no eclipse would be seen, because the Earth's shadow fell short of striking the Moon. Mere alignment between the Earth, Sun and Moon is not enough to guarantee a Lunar eclipse. There is a distance problem that has to be broached if any eclipse colors can be seen.

Further, according to this author, not only does the color vary from eclipse to eclipse, but the color is not necessarily a bright red. It will range over some range, from black-gray to yellow, but that spectrum will be mostly a murky copper, a dull gray, brown brick, or some other uninviting hue. Bright blood-red Moons are seen only when certain very specific conditions are met. They are rarer than eclipses.

[1046] Roberts, M , Trei Asar - The Twelve Prophets, Vol 1, pp 173-174

[1047] Ibid

[1048] I can offer the reader examples of this in Lumiere's book, op cit., on pps. 76, 77, 91, 172, 173, 175, and in watercolor maps that appear on pps. 176-185.

[1049] Minnaert, Light and Color in the Outdoors, p 316

The mechanism for making a blood-red Moon had to have been at play the night Jesus was in the tomb. Was it?

> .... a red Moon .... [occurs] because the Earth's atmosphere refracts [that is, it gently bends] some of the light from the Sun [out of its normal path and] onto the lunar surface.[1050]

We have all heard that light travels in a straight line. We are all familiar with prisms, pyramids of glass that turn light into a rainbow of color. During a Lunar eclipse, the atmosphere of the Earth acts like a prism, creating a spectrum of red light from Sunlight that grazes along the edges of the Earth's blanket of air.

Imagine you are far out in space, able to see the Sun, Earth and Moon, lined up in a straight line from left to right, with the light of the Sun traveling from left to right.

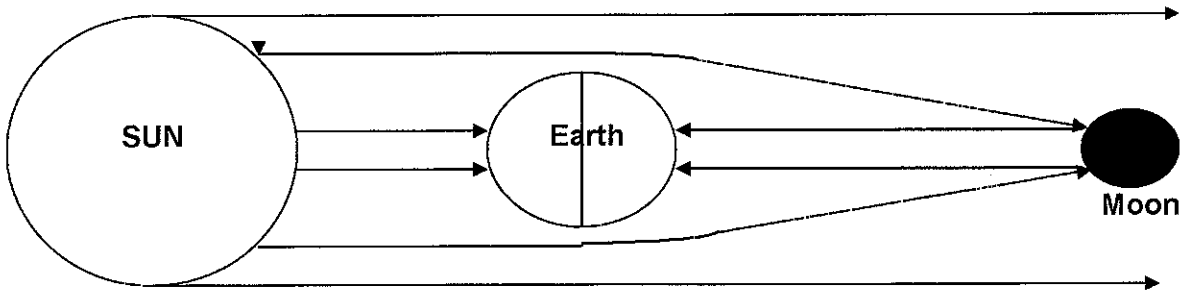


Diagram - How the Earth's Atmosphere Turns Sunlight into a Red Moon

The prism-light is the sunlight that passes just slightly above and below the circle of the Earth and continues on its path to the Moon. This grazing light is now bent slightly closer together as it travels to the Moon. Because this light was so close to grazing the Earth, it skimmed through the atmosphere and the air we breathe "bumped into it", slowing it down and absorbing the blue colors, while allowing the waves of red light to continue on to the Moon in a this slightly altered path that now focuses the light together towards a bull's-eye rendezvous in space with the Moon.

If the distance of the Moon from the Earth is less than, or the same distance as the length of the Earth's shadow, then the Moon will pass directly into the red shadow and we will see the Moon "turning red". The exact color we see depends upon other factors as well, such as the clarity of the Earth's atmosphere during the eclipse. Dust in the sky will actually cause the skimming sunlight to become redder than if the atmosphere is clear. If these conditions are right, and the Moon is in the right part of the Earth's shadow, then and only then will we see a blood-red Moon. This is why blood-red Moons are not always guaranteed at every Lunar eclipse. Notice:

[1050] Brunier, S, and Luminet, J., op. cit., p. 78

> Dust and smoke particles suspended in the [Earth's] atmosphere accentuate this effect: the more [of them] there are at the time of the eclipse, the more bright blood-red color covers the disk of the Moon.[1051] (comments and emphasis added)

These colors and the way they change, show that we are not dealing with an ordinary shadow.[1052] A universal scheme that attempts to grade Lunar eclipses by their color was developed by the French astronomer Danjon in the 1930's. It involves breaking down the entire range of colors the Moon could assume during an eclipse into five major bands. Danjon started with a darkened, totally colorless Moon, and called that "Class 0", probably because there was zero color. He continued to range his list all the way through Classes 1, 2 and 3, going from blackness to a fully bright full Moon. He labeled the brightly shining Moon as "Class 4". We should immediately note one hard fact about this system's limitations.

> Although Danjon devised his scale to match EVERY lunar eclipse, it is rare for an eclipse to match one of his descriptions exactly. Instead, most seem to FALL SOMEWHERE BETWEEN TWO VALUES...[1053] (emphasis added)

Lets look at Danjon's classes of colors; they will lead us to the proof for what the Moon looked like during the nighttime eclipse of April 25, 31 A.D.

The Danjon Scale for Lunar Eclipse Colors:[1054]

Danjon's Class Number	The Color Range for This Class
0	VERY DARK, moon almost invisible;
1	DARK GRAY, or maroon, hardly any details visible;
2	DARK RED, rust-colored, center very dark, border edge fairly bright;
3	BRICK RED, bright or grayish yellowish border edge;
4	ORANGE-RED, border edge bluish.

Notice that bright blood-red is not an obvious color in Danjon's scale; it is buried in between the classes.

[1051] Brunier, S, and Luminet, J , loc. cit.

[1052] Minnaert, loc. cit.

[1053] Harrington, op. cit., p. 66

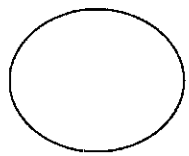
[1054] Minnaert, p. 317. I also used terminology from Harrington, op. cit., p. 66, and Guillemier, op. cit., p. 72. Since this is a scale used by astronomers, it constitutes official data more than author's language. I believe it is appropriate therefore to preserve original phrasing from each of these sources, although I have edited them together in a more compact fashion

Relating Danjon's Modern Scale to Ancient Eclipses

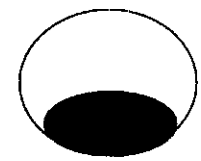
Danjon's scale was originally intended only for observation of total lunar eclipses. You saw the color of the fully eclipsed Moon and compared it against his scale. We cannot go back in time and literally view the colors of ancient eclipses as they unfold, so is Danjon's method really useful for investigating historical eclipses, some of which may not even be total, but only partial? Yes. There is a second scale, used for identifying both modern and historical eclipses, which does not need someone watching the Moon for it to work. This method is called the "Magnitude" of the eclipse. We are now going to relate this Magnitude scale to Danjon's color classes and find out what color the eclipses of Jesus' age truly were.

The Magnitude scale works off of properties of the eclipse that are mathematically calculated by astronomers for every eclipse, ancient or modern. The Magnitude is reliable no matter when the eclipse occurred.

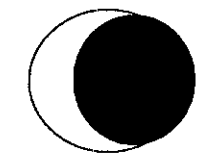
The "Magnitude" scale is based upon the amount of the Moon's surface or diameter that was covered in shadow during the eclipse compared to a fully lit Full Moon. The more the Moo is covered in shadow, the larger the value scientists give for the Magnitude.



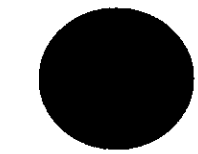
Fully Lit Moon - Magnitude = "0"



Moon in Partial Earth Shadow - Small Magnitude = ".3"



Larger Magnitude = ".6"



Moon in Complete Shadow - Magnitude = "1.0"

Magnitude is <u>indirectly associated</u> with the color of a Lunar eclipse. Since it is the per cent of the Moon's surface covered by shadow,[1055] and since the color of an eclipse comes from the shadow pattern for that eclipse, Magnitude has to be related to color. Depending on how the shadow falls, this relationship between Magnitude and color is either very, very good, or somewhat less exact.[1056] We would assume magnitudes are in the range of 0% to 100% (or between 0 and 1), but

[1055] Technically, Magnitude is the percent of the Moon's diameter, not surface, covered by shadow, but eclipses are all about area, they are not confined to diameters There is a simple way to convert diameters to areas that shows the area relationship Area = pi x radius squared The area covered in shadow = pi x Magnitude squared This area is <u>roughly</u> a linear function of total lunar area

[1056] Eclipse lighting phenomena are not simple, linear functions. They can involve the evaluation of mathematical functions, called hypergeometric sires, which give all the subtle nuances of the light and dark. See the book by Kopal, <u>Language of the Stars</u>, for perhaps the most authoritative and complex treatment of this fascinating subject as it applies to SOLAR eclipse lighting effects

they can actually run greater than 100%, if the Moon passes through the dead center of the Earth's shadow, and the shadow is larger than the Moon. So "Magnitude" does not truly equal eclipse color, but it strongly indicates a range of eclipse colors, all other factors being equal. This is very useful to us, since Danjon's color scale ALSO works with ranges, or classes of eclipse colors.

Strictly speaking, we know today all the exact magnitudes of the eclipses that passed in Jesus' lifetime, not the color the eyewitnesses saw. We can however, closely approximate the color from the Magnitude and then refine our result further by adjusting the color from any known atmospheric conditions, such as dust in the sky.

Blood-Red on the Danjon Scale

Where would a blood-red eclipse fall on Danjon's color scale? The way Danjon listed his scale, the colors start with black at the top, then gradually get brighter as one traverses the scale downward from Class 0 (black or invisible Moon) to Class 4 (bright yellow-orange). We can wind our way down this scale to see where "blood-red" would fall among the five groups. Starting with Class 0 at the top we come to Class 3. Class 3 is for a brick red color. Blood-Red is brighter than brick red, so it has to be lower on the scale, closer to Class 0, than brick red. Blood-Red is also darker than orange red (Class 4), so it has to be higher on the scale than Class 4. This places blood-red color somewhere in the middle of Class 3 of Danjon's scale.

What eclipse Magnitude would a color in Danjon's Class 3 correspond to? We need to find a simple rule that bridges the gap between Danjon's colors and Lunar Magnitude.

Danjon's scale has five increasing classes of brightness to it. Remember that Magnitude is just a percent that ranges from 0 to 100. If we divide 100% (the magnitude for a total eclipse) into five equal bands from 0 to 100% and lay them next to Danjon's scale, we get the following matchup between the two systems:

PerCent of Moon Covered by Shadow (Magnitude)
Vs.
Color of Eclipse (Danjon Scale)

Per Cent of Moon's Diameter Covered by Earth's Shadow During an Eclipse (Magnitude)	Corresponding Danjon Class for Brightness	Color Range of Eclipse (According to Danjon)
80 - 100%	0	very dark to gray-black, moon almost invisible
60 - 80%	1	dark, gray, hardly any details visible
40 - 60%	2	brick red to dark muddy, or smoky red, border edge fairly bright
20 - 40%	3	ORANGE-RED TO BRICK RED, BRIGHT OR YELLOWISH BORDER EDGE
0 - 20%	4	Normal moonlight to orange-red, border edge bluish

When we place them side by side, these two systems, Magnitude and Color, become quite similar. A blood-red Moon would fall in the fourth row, the one marked "20 - 40% Magnitude" , but closer to the 40% end. This is also Class 3 in Danjon's Color Scale.[1057]

Now we can examine modern computer-calculated Magnitudes for the Passover eclipses in Jesus' lifetime and compare them with the colors in our new table. The results for four Passover eclipses are as follows.

Color of Lunar Eclipses Visible from Jerusalem, A.D. 27-37[1058]

Date	Amount of Lunar Diameter Covered at Maximum (the "Magnitude")	Color at Maximum Eclipse, Based On Danjon's Scale
April 25, 31 A.D.	34.5%	BLOOD-RED
April 14, 32 A.D.	167.4%	Completely Black
April 3, 33 A.D.	58.0%[1059]	Brick Red to Dark Muddy Brown
March 23, 34 A.D. (not a Passover)[1060]	31.5%	Dark Orange Red

[1057] Born and Wolf, Principles of Optics, p 185
[1058] All Magnitude values taken from Liu and Fiala, op cit , p 91
[1059] The 33 A.D eclipse was NOT seen at its maximum in Jerusalem The Moon did not rise over Jerusalem until 20 minutes before the eclipse ended, well after the peak , when the Moon was only in the faintest part of the Earth's shadow I t would have looked a pale copper from Jerusalem

There are no surprises here at all. At its peak, the eclipse of Wednesday, April 25, 31 A.D. was indeed the most blood-red of all those that were seen in Jerusalem. But there is more to consider: the dust that hung over Jerusalem that night.

The Danjon scale for a 35% eclipse indicates we would see a Moon with a blood-red center and yellow-orange fringes. Although very close to Joel's and Peter's words, this is not quite the same as a perfectly colored blood-red Moon. One would expect, if a Supreme Being is orchestrating an event, that it be as flawless as He is. We've just noted that dust in the air would alter, or enhance the eclipse color to a bloodier red. A little dust in the air would cause slight darkening, a volcanic cloud, even richer coloring of the red Moon. What was the condition of the air the first night Christ was in the tomb, at roughly 9:40 PM? Was the sky clear that night, or was it dusty? The answer is in the Gospels. According to Matthew, there was violent geological activity occurring at the time Christ died at 3 P.M.

Matt 27:50-52
50 Jesus, when he had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost.
51 And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent;
52 And the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept arose,

When rocks fall, when the earth quakes, tons of dust ARE THROWN INTO THE AIR. Phlegon the historian wrote, "at the same time [of the Crucifixion], an earthquake caused much damage in Niceae". [1061] Niceae is in the vicinity of Greece, hundreds of miles from Judea. If there was earthquake activity in both Judea and the eastern Mediterranean, perhaps there were tremors and dust elsewhere, say in Turkey, or Iran. Regardless of that speculation, six hours later there definitely would have been DUST slowly circulating in the Earth's upper atmosphere, precisely where the most bending of sunlight headed for the Moon was taking place. The air currents would have carried this dust upward, far and wide, into the first five miles of the Earth's atmosphere, many miles away from Jerusalem.

Another point to note: At 9:40 P.M., the dust in the air directly over Jerusalem would not have bent the sunlight streaming towards the Moon, because It was night in Jerusalem. Rather, it would have scattered the blue light out of the already reddened sunlight that was now returning back from the red Moon onto the Earth. The Jerusalem dust was effectively filtering out any muddiness in the Moon's appearance, precisely making the Moon a more vivid red; enough to turn the yellow-orange fringes of the Moon into a bright blood-red spectacle over Jerusalem, the crucial spot on earth where the prophecy had to be fulfilled.

Of the four eclipses listed, March 23, 34 A.D. comes closest to being blood-red in color after April 25, NOT the eclipse of 33 A.D. But March 23 was not even a

[1060] The Passover fell on April 22, in 34 A.D., the eclipse fell one month earlier. This eclipse is included for completeness
[1061] Bishop, J., op cit., p. 303.

Passover. As I pointed out earlier, when we have the right day, so many different issues simply evaporate and the truth shines forth in glorious clarity.

It was a perfect blood-red Moon over Jerusalem that night, the best.

Question 5: Was that blood-red eclipse merely seen over Jerusalem, or was it also nearly "centered" over Jerusalem in location and time?

Let me recapitulate the critical data for the April 25 Lunar Eclipse Sign. It began at 8:26 P.M. Jerusalem time. The Moon was centered over the Indian Ocean and south of the equator, slightly west and very south of Bombay, India but remember, a full half of the Earth sees a Lunar eclipse. It was seen by all of Africa, West Europe, the Middle East, India, Russia, China, the Far East and most of Australia. So Jerusalem was in the midst of this viewing audience, if not at "dead center". The eclipse ended 4 hours and 36 minutes later, with its center point now over Eastern Africa, which is on a line almost directly due south from Jerusalem. At its end, the rotating Earth put Jerusalem virtually at the epicenter of the viewing area, which now included two thirds of the Atlantic Ocean, all of Africa, Western Europe, the entire Middle East, and the other continents that saw its beginning.[1062]

So the Eclipse of April 25 was not "spot on" centered over Jerusalem. It was South and slightly to the East when it started, but it ended almost directly on the same line as Jerusalem. Nevertheless, all of it was well within the center portion of the Jerusalem sky that entire night. One might say it was almost "perfectly centered" over Jerusalem, but not exactly.

Once more, the answer is yes. The bold-red eclipse of April 25 was virtually centered over Jerusalem by the time it finished, but not quite.

Why wasn't it perfectly centered?

Would a Supreme Being orchestrate such a gaff? The answer to this, which we will next examine in detail, is that this slight difference in position between what actually happened in the sky and what we might hope for, this "imperfect spot" is actually what makes it possible for the supernatural Solar eclipse to have occurred precisely on time and exactly over Jerusalem earlier that day.

Said another way, when the line of sight between the Earth, Moon and Sun is calculated for noontime on April 25, it naturally leads to the Moon being slightly off-center when the Lunar eclipse occurs that night. The geometry of the heavens has all this built into it. We will see that the supernatural Solar eclipse began at 11:56 A.M. and the Sun went completely black at 12:07 P.M., some 11-12 minutes later. The Earth-Moon-Sun alignment becomes perfect at 12:07 when the eclipse is total. This circumstance also forces the Moon to be slightly "off-center" later that night when it is seen from Jerusalem.

[1062] Liu, B., and Fiala, A., op. cit., p. 91

Instead of finding an "error" with the Lunar eclipse, we have found a more spacious Mind, capable of controlling all aspects of this double Sign from beginning to end and making everything work out to true perfection.

The exact position for the April 25 Lunar eclipse is important to note; we will using the numbers in the next Section and in the Appendix to prove the exact times for the noontime miraculous Eclipse. In particular, make a note of these numbers: 69 and 39 degrees East longitude. They refer to the spot on Earth where the Lunar eclipse was first and last seen on April 25. They will have a critical part to play in proving the Solar system was fully aligned over Jerusalem at 12:07 P.M. earlier that day.

Time Lunar Eclipse Started	Time Lunar Eclipse Ended (All Phases)	Longitude on Earth of Central Audience at Eclipse Start	Longitude at End	Latitude on Earth of Central Audience at Eclipse Start	Latitude at End
8:26 P.M.	1:02 A.M. (on 4/26)	69 degrees West of Greenwich (West of Bombay)	39 degrees West of Greenwich (Eastern Africa)	11 degrees south of the Equator	12 degrees south of the Equator

2.5.3 The Korean Solar Eclipse of May 10, 31 A.D. was the ONLY Eclipse in Ten Years to Prove the Heavens Were Aligned Over Jerusalem

Only the Lunar Eclipse of Wednesday, April 25, 31 A.D. had a true blood-red color at its maximum and was seen at Jerusalem in full display from beginning to end. As we saw in Section 2.5.1, this Lunar eclipse is naturally "paired" with an eclipse of the Sun that occurred two weeks later, on May 10, 31 A.D. and was seen from India to Alaska. Total darkness was seen over Eastern China and North Korea. Since the two eclipses have common orbit geometry during those two weeks, we should expect that if the April 25 eclipse is important to the Crucifixion story, the May 10 eclipse also is. In fact, the details of the May 10 eclipse fix in place everything that happened at noontime over Jerusalem two weeks earlier. This latest "scuba-dive" into the details of ancient history, while technical, produces the richest treasures of all--the proof of the Crucifixion eclipse from astronomy.

Any supernatural Solar eclipse that I propose to you must be backed by more facts than just: "It happened at noon on April 25, the details are irrelevant because it was miraculous." The normal course of events of the Solar system on April 25 cannot be ignored or denied when we try to prove Luke 23:45. Either they lend themselves to a supernatural eclipse, or they complicate and resist it.

My "imaginary" Solar eclipse must be a direct consequence of the known scientific record of 2,000 years ago. The facts must show everything was "in the ready" for the Solar eclipse to take place, or they will oppose it. Astronomy will resist my Solar eclipse the way history resists 30 and 33 A.D. as the correct dates. The only puzzle piece that should be missing from the arrangement of the Earth and Sun at 12 noon that day, should be the Moon--it was on the night side of the Earth from Jerusalem that morning. Even then, if the Moon did move across the heavens that day, traveling in an hour a distance that normally took 141/2 days and then returning to its proper position three hours later, there ought to be evidence from people halfway around the world, who knew nothing of Jesus, that something incredible happened with the Moon one Spring day long ago. Such a story should be told by all the nations halfway around the world from Jerusalem

It is.

We will see that proof after the heavens speak to us. Now we can let the geometry of the solar system reveal its ancient secrets.

Question 6: On which Passover between 27 and 37 A.D., IF ANY, were the heavens most perfectly aligned for a Solar eclipse to supernaturally occur directly over Jerusalem at noontime?

There are actually two conditions that must be met to completely answer this question. First, just as the Moon has to be close enough to the Earth for the Earth's shadow to cause a Lunar eclipse, so the Moon has to be close enough to the Earth for the Moon's shadow to fall on the Earth and cause a Solar eclipse. Second, the alignment must be a straight line from the center of the Sun and Moon to Jerusalem and the center of the Earth. The Moon's orbit around the Earth

constantly changes in size and distance, and so does the Earth's orbit around the Sun, so nothing can be casually assumed about this alignment without proof.

Even though the Earth, Sun and Moon may be in a straight line, the Moon can be too far away from us for it to completely cover the Sun's disk. We would see an eclipse of the Sun, but it would not be total. We would not see a perfect eclipse of the Sun at these times unless some major shifting was done in the orbits of the Earth, the Moon and even the planets. That would cause a ripple-effect of other disruptions in the Solar system which would have to be addressed by the higher Power to hold everything together in the Solar system.

There is no reason for anyone to accept a very clumsy, chain-reaction collapse of order in the Solar system as the way this World-Event was worked out, simply because I claim something must have happened. Fiat is hardly good science, even when you are talking about miracles. The idea here is that the miraculous is actually the imposition of higher powers AND LAWS into the physical realm we inhabit. The miraculous does not destroy order, it imposes greater power and order, to effect things that are not possible in our natural world.

It would be far more convincing if the orbits of the Earth and Moon naturally converged that day in a way that automatically lent itself to such an Event. Lets make the wild speculation that The Supreme Being is lawful, orderly and efficient, and has infinite foreknowledge of events in the Solar system, shall we? Lets "speculate" that He has the Mind Power to contain the parameters of every orbit of the Moon around the Earth for the last 4 billion years in His head, to use the anthropomorphic idea of God looking like a man. Could Such a Being do anything He wants, disrupting planets and abrogating the natural order in a violent way to achieve such a Passover Eclipse? Not if He is an Orderly Being who invents and lives by laws. No. Besides don't you think somebody would notice all this celestial confusion? The record from both history and the Book of Acts, which we are now proving, is of a Passover day as normal as any other, except for the Heavenly Signs. The Earth rotated as normal, the Sun did not change its size on that day, the stars did not swirl around in the heavens like bees around a hive (although they DID lose their light), and the hours of the day were marked as usual. Noontime was still Noon, dusk was still dusk and the Sun rose and set on time. I take all this literally. If anything, these restrictions on "Anything could have happened in the heavens", are not arbitrary of capricious, they actually make the job of proving the Event much more difficult and its proof all the more amazing. Yet you will see, the facts of astronomy bear out all of this ORDERLY Orchestration. No, God did not do anything He wanted to in the heavens that day; He followed His own laws. (Wouldn't it be great if wild, do-anything-they-want humans, followed his laws too?) Therefore we will look for an orderly set of circumstances in the orbits of the Moon and Earth that virtually forces a Solar eclipse upon us.

Therefore, the first part of Question 6 we must answer is:

A) Was the Moon even close enough to the Earth in its natural orbit on any Passover, for its shadow to reach the Earth, or would the shadow simply have ended in empty space, falling short of even striking the Earth's surface?

IF, and only IF, the actual data shows the Moon's shadow was close enough, do we have the right to address the second and third questions. Otherwise, stop reading.

The second part has to do with the Eclipse season of April 25-May 10 31 A.D., when the Moon's orbit was in a line with the Earth and Sun to make eclipses possible.

B) If we "rolled the tape backwards" from the moment of maximum Solar eclipse on May 10, 31 A.D. and watched the Earth and Moon rotate backwards in time to two weeks earlier, to noon on April 25, where would that maximum alignment spot between the Moon and the Earth fall? Would it be far from, near, or even directly over Jerusalem? We could ask this same question in a slightly different way: At what time would the maximum eclipse spot from May 10 wind up over Jerusalem two weeks earlier? Would it be there at all? If it were, at what time? 12 noon, 8:55 P.M., or 4 A.M. the next morning?

And if all of this should also happen in the only year in Jesus' lifetime when the Passover Moon was even close enough to for an eclipse shadow to fall on Earth, then we have an utterly unique event in human history proved from four totally different directions: the Gospels, Jesus' life, astronomy and secular history.

A. The Moon Wasn't Even Close Enough to the Earth for a Solar Eclipse to Be Staged on the Passover, Except in 31 A.D.

The diagram on the next page gives an overview of how the Moon moves around the Earth at the Eclipse seasons. It also explains the way the Moon and the Earth were moving on April 25, 31 A.D. Before we examine it, let me make some general comments.

We usually assume the Earth, Moon and Sun travel around each other in the same flat surface in space. This idea is false; reality is more complicated and more majestic than this. As a rule most of the time the Moon is not even in the same plane with the Earth and Sun. (All of the following facts appear in the diagram on the second following page. You may want to compare what you read here with that picture, or simply jump ahead to view it now.)

The orbit of the Moon around the Earth is actually slanted above and below the Earth at an angle of some 5.8 degrees. For roughly half of the month the Moon is orbiting above the line connecting the Earth and the Sun, and for the other half of the month it is underneath this line. The place where the Moon crosses over the Earth-Sun line is called a "Node". It is an imaginary point in space, a "placeholder" scientists have invented for describing where everything comes into alignment. There are two nodes, one for when the Moon crosses below the Earth on the far side of the Earth-Sun line, the other when the Moon crosses above the line and in between the Earth and the Sun. These points exist opposite from each other, on far sides of the Moon-Earth orbit. The Nodes actually spin slowly around the Earth, making a complete revolution every 18.6 years. So two things are going on. The Moon is dipping above and below the Earth every two weeks, and the dipping

points are also slowly shifting around in a circle. There is actually more motion going on between the Earth and the Moon, but this is enough to explain why we don't see eclipses every two weeks: everything is moving and alignments only occur when the Moon passes through the Earth-Sun plane and the point of passing through also happens to line up with the Earth and Sun. When all this comes together, the alignment actually lasts for several weeks. It then dissipates as everything moves out of position. But during those precious weeks we get the Lunar and Solar eclipses. It is these few weeks that are called "eclipse seasons". The exact distances between the Earth and Moon are called the eclipse limits. So eclipse seasons last 14-28 days but the Moon can participate in an Eclipse only for the first day, the fourteenth, or the twenty-eighth day, because it is a constantly moving target. Only at these three days is the Moon at one of the crossover points, or slightly above or below it. Nevertheless, the alignment effect lasts a full fourteen or twenty-eight days. The eclipse seasons last long enough, and the crossover points are in line with the Earth and Sun long enough for the Moon to be Full at the beginning of the eclipse season, and for it to be new at the end of the season, or the middle of the season. In between New and full Moon, the Moon is circling in its orbit away from the all-important node points and the alignment is lost. But when the Moon once again reaches the crossover point two or four weeks later, the imaginary node points are still in place, so we have a possible second or even third eclipse two or four weeks later. The pattern is

1. The Moon draws near to the Full Moon node position, traveling in a downward direction, but still above the Earth. (A Lunar eclipse will soon be possible.)

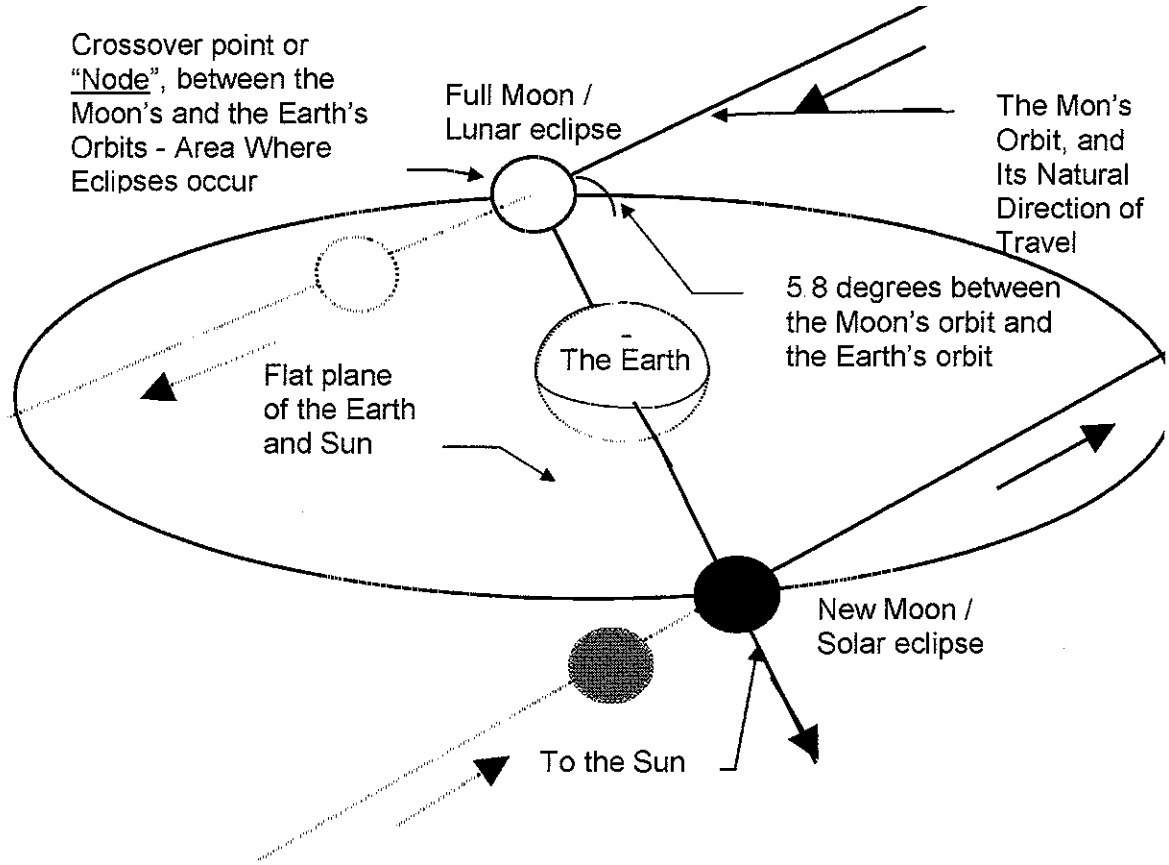
2. The Moon passes through the Full Moon position, descending down below the Earth for 10-12 days and swinging around to return.

3. Ten days later, the Moon is now on the other side of the Earth, in between the Earth and the Sun, ascending back up to the level of the Earth and Sun.

4. At the twelfth day, the Moon is now approaching its New Moon position.

5. One-two days later, the New Moon crosses over at the New Moonnode position (A Solar eclipse is now possible).

All this is depicted in the following diagram.



The Natural Direction of the Moon, Showing How It Crosses the Earth's Orbit at the "Nodes" and Eclipse Seasons

All the never-ending variations in the Moon's motion over the centuries have been precisely modeled in sophisticated mathematical formula and modern computer programs. Using these programs today, we can calculate the exact positions and distances between the Earth, Sun and Moon to the minute, and even their alignment angles for any day in human history, including the day Jesus died. We can also create a minute-by-minute "tape" of how the bodies moved 2,000 years ago, and accurately "play it backwards". These programs provide all the alignment information we need to identify the optimum moment when a supernatural Solar eclipse could have occurred.

But Would the Moon's Shadow Reach the Earth?

Three are other common fallacies about how the Moon moves. Not only is the Moon traveling in a different plane from the Earth and Sun but it does not orbit the Earth in a perfect circle, the way you might expect from viewing some mechanical model of the Solar system in a planetarium. It actually travels around the Earth in a somewhat oval-shaped pattern due to the pull of the Sun on the inner side of its journey. This unequal pull creates an orbit that is stretched, or elongated, on the side closer to the Sun and all this affects whether or not the Moon's shadow ever

reaches the Earth. If the Moon's shadow never reached the Earth on a Passover, then Luke can be conclusively proven wrong.

The closest the Moon and Earth ever come to each other is 356,000 kilometers; the Moon can orbit as far away as 406,800 kilometers.[1063] The farthest the Moon's shadow falls out into empty space is 377,600 km,[1064] so there clearly are many times when the Moon is pulled farther away from the Earth than its shadow can reach. What were the distances 2,000 Passovers ago?

The next table proves without question that a two-eclipse Passover could only have occurred on April 25, 31 A.D. That was the only day in which the Moon's shadow was in range for a Solar eclipse to be orchestrated by the hand of God AND a natural Lunar eclipse to occur. Pay close attention to columns 3 and 4 of the following Table, for April 25.

[1063] Meeus, J., Mathematical Astronomy Morsels, Table 3c on p 17 See also Zirker, Total Eclipses of the Sun, p. 28

[1064] Zirker, J., loc. cit Zirker notes that the length of the Moon's shadow is not 377,000 km all the time. It too varies between 364,800 and 377,600 km This is due to the changes in the Earth's distance from the Sun

Distances Between the Earth and Moon
at Every Passover in the Reign of Pontius Pilate

Passover Date	Distance from the Moon to the Earth at 12 Noon[1065]	Would the Moon's Shadow Naturally Reach the Earth and Facilitate a Supernatural Solar Eclipse?	Was There Also a Lunar Eclipse on that Day?
April 10, 27 A.D. (Thursday)	390,397.0	No	No
April 28, 28 A.D. (Wednesday)	381,167.7	No	No
April 18, 29 A.D. (Monday)	364,727.0	Yes	No
April 7, 30 A.D. (Friday)	357,685.8	Yes	No
APRIL 25, 31 A.D. (WEDNESDAY)	364,259.1	YES	YES
April 14, 32 A.D. (Monday)	381,500.2	No	Yes
April 3, 33 A.D. (Friday)	401,203.9	No	Yes
April 22, 34 A.D. (Thursday)	405,538.5	No	No

As you can see, only one year, 31 A.D. has YES in both columns 3 and 4. The Moon was naturally close enough for its shadow to strike the Earth on that Passover, if it could somehow be moved halfway around its orbit into the New Moon position that day. There also was a natural Lunar eclipse that night.

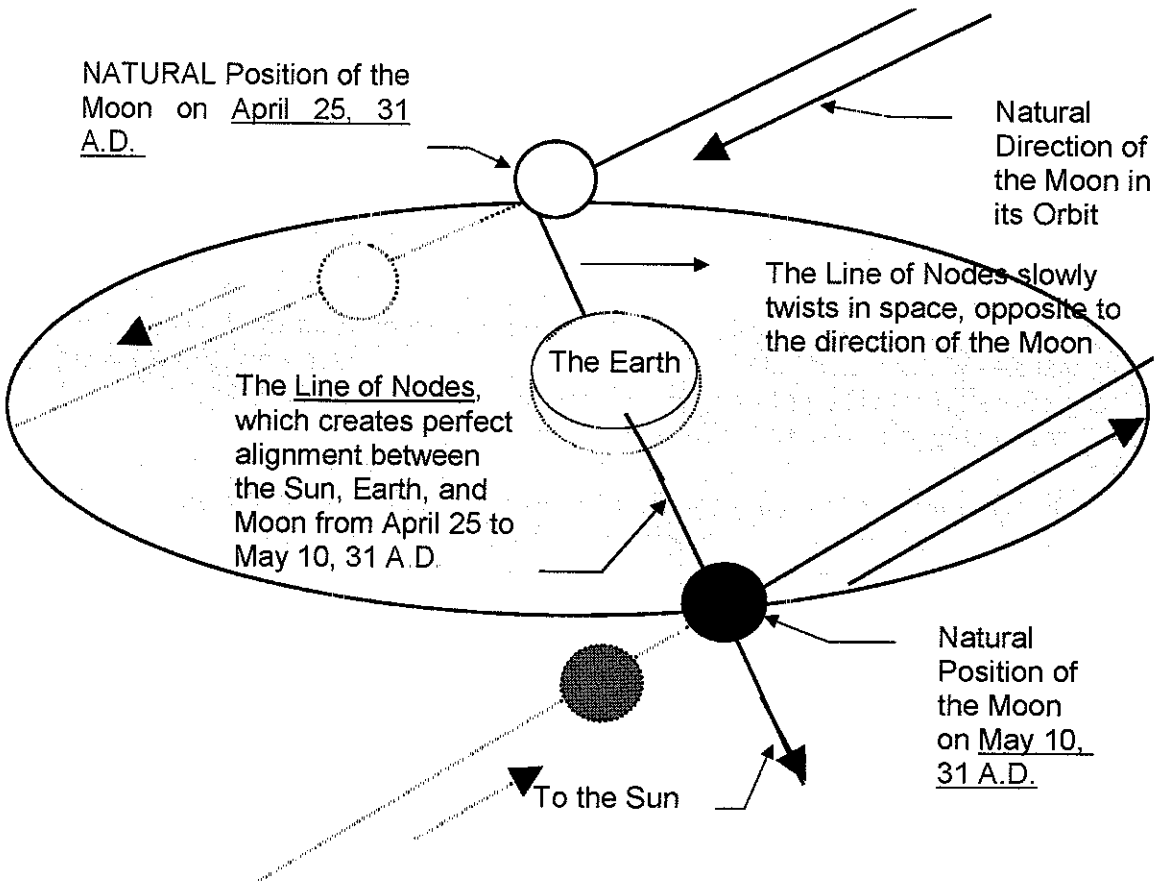
What of the two favorite candidates of modern scholars, 30 A.D. and 33 A.D.? How well do they hold up to the demands of Luke 23:45 and astronomy? The Moon was simply too far away from the Earth in 33 A.D. for an eclipse of the Sun to be "easily" staged and there was no Lunar eclipse at all in 30 A.D. Once more, the traditional Friday dates for 30 and 33 A.D are discredited when we take Luke 23:45 at face value. As the brilliant Jesuit scholar, Raymond Brown remarked in his landmark work, The Death of the Messiah, "Neither date [30 or 33 A.D.] fulfills every detail in the Gospel evidence about Jesus' birth and ministry." (comment added) Nor His death, I might add. In sum, these dates misfire on all points, yet uncompromising faith in a Good Friday Crucifixion forces modern scholars to cleave to them. Unfortunate.

[1065] Data from Chapront-Touze program using mean ecliptic and actual equinox parameters

So the data from modern astrophysics proves April 25, 31 A.D. was unique in Christ's adult lifetime for yet another reason: ***Even the shape of the Moon's orbit that day corresponds with what the Bible claims; it is the only Passover where the orbits match what some people call the Word of God.***

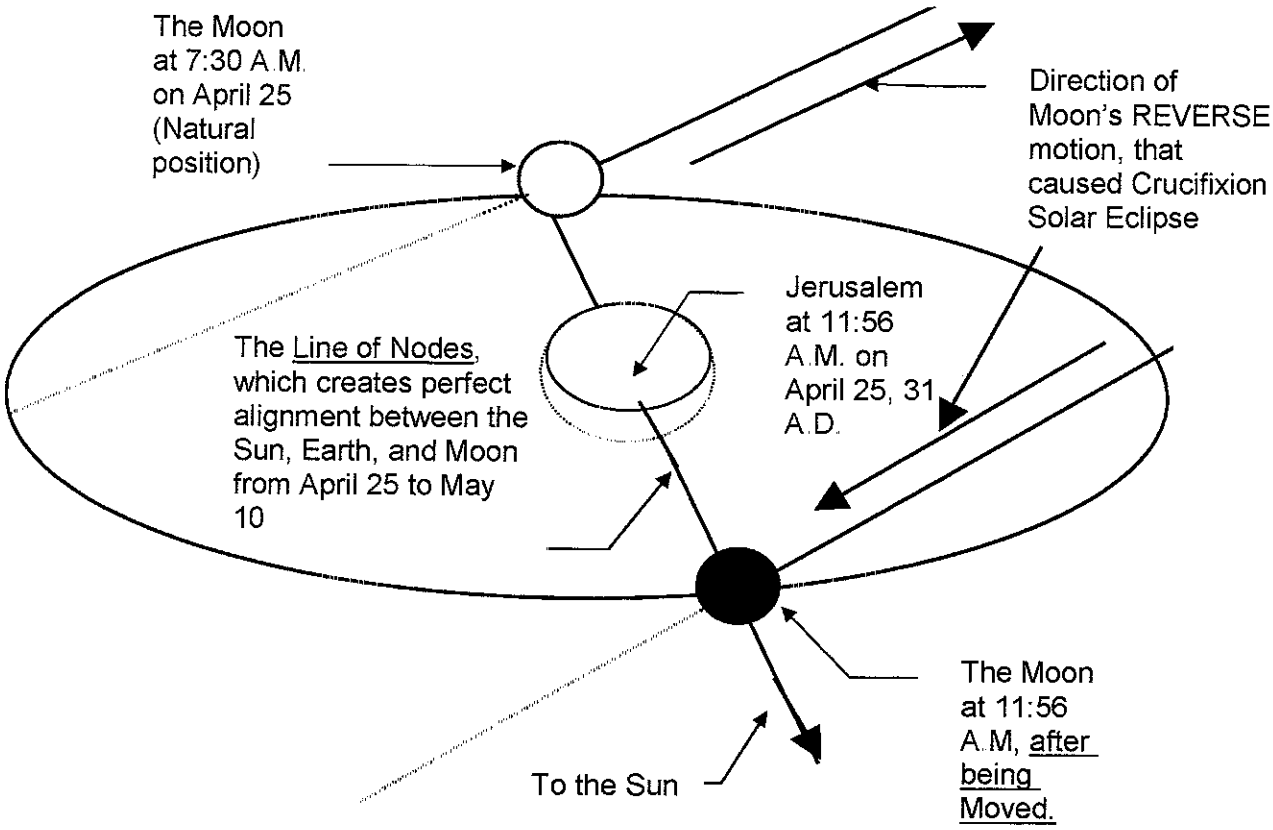
B. Revealing The "Impossible" Solar Eclipse

As I have described it, staging a supernatural Solar eclipse over Jerusalem that takes advantage of the natural positions of the Earth, Sun and Moon to simplify its execution is somewhat like hitting a moving celestial bull's eye over a brief moment in time. The Nodes have to be falling into alignment with the Earth-Sun line and the Moon needs to be at the right distance from the Earth for anything to be seen on Earth. Having proven the orbit of the Earth and Moon was uniquely suited for the Sign that Passover day, we need to advance to the deepest details of how the "dance' of the Earth and Moon played out between April 25 and May 10. Because of two-week "eclipse seasons", as I explained above, the Earth-Moon alignment of the May 10 Solar eclipse creates a vicegrip over all the events that naturally happen on April 25, through the slowly moving Line of Nodes. Lets take the last diagram and apply it directly to the circunstances of April 25-May 10.



How the Natural Positions of the Moon on April 25 and May 10 Were Related Because of the Slowly Turning "Line of Nodes"

Now we can carefully compare the above Diagram with the one below to see how the common nature of the April 25 Lunar eclipse and the May 10 Solar eclipse makes possible the supernatural Solar eclipse on April 25.



The Reverse Motion of the Moon on the Morning of the Crucifixion

Based upon accounts from the South Pacific which we will look at later, the Moon reversed its normal direction at dusk, South Pacific time. What happens when we accept this time as a working explanation for how the Crucifixion Eclipse was staged?[1066] It is equivalent to roughly 7:30 A.M. Jerusalem time on the morning of April 25. The Moon stays in its orbit pattern as it goes backwards to rendezvous with Jerusalem at 11:56 A.M, on the "wrong" side of its orbit. (See above diagram.) The displaced Moon at 11:56 A.M. is now in the identical position as the Moon that causes the May 10 Solar eclipse fourteen days later. By being moved halfway around in its orbit, the Moon automatically "slipped into" a natural Solar Eclipse position on April 25. The fact that the Line of Nodes virtually does not move during the two weeks it is aligned with the Sun (April 25 - May 10) makes all this

[1066] Please do NOT accuse me of circular reasoning. I am developing a case for plausible explanation, and then making it so tight, it squeaks.

possible.[1067] My earlier contention that an Orderly Being would work in this fashion completely fits with these facts of the Moon's orbit geometry.

But the above diagram is crude, compared to fixing a 167 mile long Eclipse shadow directly over the city of Jerusalem for three hours. Would this alignment work out to the exact time and mile? We can examine the detailed astronomical data for both April 25 and May 10 to conclusively prove the natural alignment of the heavens on these two days created the backdrop for the greatest miracle of all.

Technical Discussion: The Sub Lunar Point Explained.

The bull's eye, or the exact spot on Earth that marks where a total Solar eclipse is seen, is called the "Sub Lunar Point", or "SLP" for short. It is the point on Earth directly below the center of the Moon and the center of the Moon's shadow, where the Sun and Moon appear to be in a perfect line and the Solar eclipse is at its darkest. At a Solar eclipse, people standing where the Sub Lunar Point is passing will see a completely blackened Sun, hidden behind a full circle of darkness. People anywhere else will see a partially covered Sun, or, no darkness at all. Wherever the eclipse shadow travels, the SLP is at its center. If the Moon's shadow stops moving for three hours, then the Moon above must be "marching in time" with Jerusalem as the city turns around the Earth's axis on its daily journey. Once the rendezvous was achieved, the velocity of the Moon in the sky had to be adjusted to keep the eclipse shadow fixed over Jerusalem for three hours. This "small" shadow, staying fixed over Jerusalem while both the Earth and Moon are moving, is the traveling bull's eye of April 25, 31 A.D.

So the Crucifixion Eclipse was really a very small shadow of the Moon, that normally lasts for very brief moments in time, stretched into a three-hour spectacle. Normal Solar eclipses do not stand still over any one spot on Earth. They travel in an arc across hundreds and thousands of miles. Think of taking a ball point pen and drawing a line from left to right around the middle a baseball that you are carefully turning around in your other hand. The tip of the pen is the SLP and the spot where the total Solar eclipse is seen at ant moment. The Sub Lunar Point, however, does not vanish with the end of an eclipse, any more than the Moon suddenly disappears from existence at the end of a Solar eclipse. As the Moon keeps traveling in its orbit above our eyes, the SLP continues to move across the surface of the Earth, tracing invisible paths across the Earth, day after day, year after year, no matter what.

Just as the Moon had a very specific path in the sky during the weeks between April 25 and May 10, the SLP, its image on Earth, made a particular path across the continents on May 10, that can be traced backwards in time, minute-by-minute, to an exact spot on Earth on April 25. Wherever the SLP goes, that is where people would see a total eclipse of the Sun. Remember, at true noontime in Jerusalem, the Moon and the SLP should have been somewhere over the South Pacific or even

[1067] Jean Meeus wrote in his book, Mathematical Astronomy Morsels, "The line of nodes is almost stationary when it is directly towards the Sun " (p. 11) This is exactly the condition we find on April 25, - May 10, 31 A.D

Peru. Instead, my claim is, by moving the Moon halfway around the heavens, the SLP would now be on the Jerusalem side of the Earth. The question is, how close to Jerusalem would the SLP be, after it was moved, if we assume the Moon was moved backwards along its natural orbit that day. If what I have been saying is true, then the well-known details of the May 10 eclipse will force the SLP to be over Jerusalem on April 25.

End of Technical Discussion on the Sub Lunar Point

The May 10 Solar eclipse began over southern India, moved in a north easterly arc across Asia, covering China, reached total darkness near North Korea and then continued on into the North Pacific, finally ending near western Alaska.

How well do the facts of the May 10 eclipse correlate with a possible Solar eclipse on April 25?

Heart of the Matter: Rotating the Sub-Lunar Point Backwards in Time From May 10 to April 25, 31 A.D.

We already saw that this particular eclipse was the only Springtime Solar eclipse to be seen in the same hemisphere as Jerusalem, but the mutual locations of the SLP on May 10 and April 25 are far closer that simply the same hemisphere. Notice how the boundaries of where and when this eclipse began and ended also seem to "bracket" the location of Jerusalem:

Jerusalem has a latitude (how far north or south of the Earth's Equator) of almost 31 3/4 degrees north,[1068] which is about a third of the way from the Equator to the North Pole. The May 10 Solar eclipse was seen over a line that moved through all the latitudes from 4 degrees North (southernmost India), to 52 degrees north (the Bearing Straits and Alaska). This path gives it an average north-south position of about 28 degrees latitude, or just 3 3/4 degrees south of the place it would have to be two weeks earlier. The average latitude of the May 10 eclipse is virtually centered over Jerusalem.

In miles, this difference is about 265 miles[1069] on planet Earth, which has a diameter of nearly 8,000 miles.[1070] Using Solar eclipse calculations first made in the 1880's we have found that a 167 mile wide Eclipse shadow falls 265 miles away from dead center on an 8,000 mile wide bull's eye. The odds of hitting this at random are about 1 out of 1,800.[1071] I have no doubt that with better calculations, the difference would be much smaller.

[1068] The best number I could find was 31 degrees and 47 minutes, from The National Geographic Atlas of the Middle East, p 56

[1069] Compare the scales on any good Atlas My Atlas of the Middle East, pps 28-30, the map of Israel and Jordan, shows 1 degree of latitude to be about 68-70 miles 4 x70 = 280 miles. But degrees of latitude and their equivalent in miles change with haw far away you are from the Equator, (the Earth is slightly flattened at the Poles), so this number is a reasonable approximation

[1070] 7,972 9 miles at Equator. (Cuifolini and Wheeler, Gravitation and Inertia, p 495)

[1071] Assume equal probability based upon the area of the eclipse shadow compared with the area of the earth's disk. The radio of the two circles is 28,224 / 15,889,196 = 1 / 1818

Allow me to repeat this amazing fact. The average north-south position for the May 10 Solar eclipse falls about one eclipse shadow south of where it needs to be two weeks earlier, in order to create a supernatural eclipse over Jerusalem. When videotape of the rotating Earth and Moon is rolled backwards two weeks earlier from May 10 to April 25, the spot for maximum darkness in the Korean eclipse now falls mere miles from Jerusalem, when we compare it with the size of the Earth.

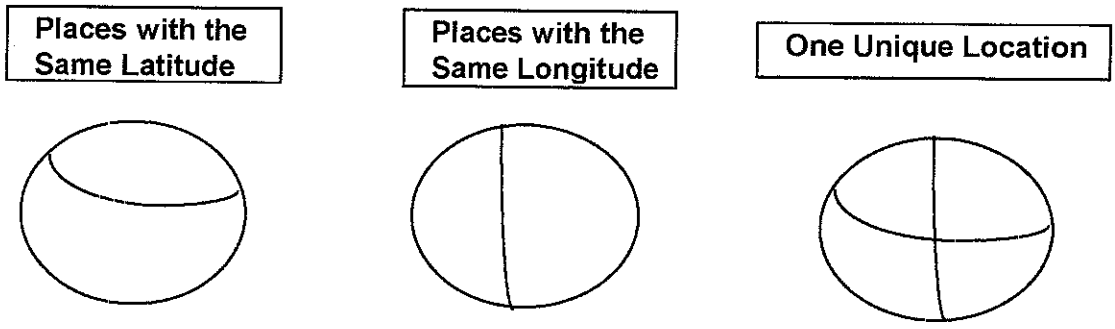
The circumstances of the May 10 eclipse truly match what is needed for a Solar eclipse to fall over Jerusalem two weeks earlier.

Even with the old data, It is really an amazing correlation, of near pinpoint accuracy. No other Solar eclipse, whether it fell near the Passover, or at any other time of the year, comes anywhere close to creating this exact match of locations between Lunar and Solar eclipse pairs in the same Spring "eclipse season". The word "unique" truly belongs here.

Consider all the places on Earth where Solar eclipses were seen in the years 30-33 A.D. Of the 10 Solar eclipses that were seen in those four years[1072], only 2 were in the same latitude range as Jerusalem, One was in 33 A.D. (this one did not occur at Passover time, its average position was over 60 degrees north latitude, coiled around the North Pole). The other was the May 10 eclipse. The other eight Solar eclipses were seen all over the planet--one or two more were visible in the northern most regions, others were seen over the southern hemisphere, while the majority occurred over the South Pacific.[1073] Yet the average latitude of the May 10 eclipse falls about one shadow away from Jerusalem.

One last point: With Two Ways Needed to Pinpoint Its Location - Longitude and Latitude, The May 10 Eclipse Should Make Both Match On April 25

The only way to locate a spot on the globe is to know both its latitude and longitude. Latitude gives all the places with the same North-South location on the Earth. Longitude tells you all the places with the same the East-West location. Put the two together and you will find one unique location on Earth.



[1072] Von Oppolzer, op cit., p 120 The Nov 24, 29 A D. Solar eclipse was seen at Jerusalem, but we now know Luke was not confusing this eclipse with anything at the Passover of 31 A.D.

[1073] Since most of the Earth is covered by water, we should expect most Solar Eclipses to fall over the oceans

The May 10 eclipse provides an extraordinarily close match with the North-South latitude of Jerusalem. What about the East-West measurement from May 10 to April 25? It is actually even better.

Remember that the Nodes, the two points in space where the Moon's orbit crosses above and below the Earth-Sun plane, are what defines the moment of a Solar eclipse. From May 10 to April 25 the Moon travels from one node to the other, but the nodes hardly move. All the while, the Earth keeps spinning around on its axis, day and night during these 14 days. When we "bring back" the Moon to its April 25 position, ANY point on Earth that is at true non, be it London, Rome, Athens, Memphis, or Jerusalem, will be at the right Longitude for the Moon to supernaturally block the Sun, because the Earth is spinning at the alignment point. It is the Nodes and the natural orbit for April 25 that automatically transfers the "perfect" longitude from May 10 to all places on Earth, as they pass through their noontime position under the Sun. The orchestration of events on April 25, the timing of when to return the Moon back to its New Moon node in space, determines whether London or Jerusalem will be at the right longitude. for a supernatural eclipse. The location that has the perfect longitude is under the control of the One orchestrating the Event.

There was no other day in Jesus' age, with so much astronomy lending itself to a Supernatural Eclipse of the Sun, as April 25. The skeptic will say I have not proven the Eclipse occurred. No, there is no photograph of the sky the day Jesus died. There is however, incontrovertible evidence from astronomy everything was aligned for the Event to occur over Jerusalem. The ancient skies reverberate, almost shout with their testimony.

That I have proven.

2.5.4 Tracing the Moon's Path - South Pacific Moon Lore Confirms Everything

The Ancient Global Witness Matches Perfectly With What the Bible and Astronomy Say

So many have argued, following the renowned English historian Edward Gibbon, that if a World-Event of cosmic proportions truly happened in classical times, why is there no major statement about it from history? There is Its just that over the decades and centuries the mass of accounts has been ridiculed, devalued and rejected. Human beings naturally reject anything that is incongruous to the wiring patterns that are fixed in their brains. By embracing one set of values, most minds reject all the others. All of the known witness will be presented in this book. I break this vast and ancient testimony into four broad categories:

1) Christian accounts
2) Gentile historians within Rome
3) Roman Writers and Intelligentsia
4) Society outside the Roman world

Professionals reject the Christian testimony of Luke as flimsy and untrustworthy. We have seen it is not. The Gentile record begins in 52 A.D. and continues until 1790. It is simply dismissed as second-hand hearsay. Since the Roman account seems to be missing, Edward Gibbon's intellectual descendants claim final victory; the Eclipse never occurred because the Romans don't say so. Mr. Gibbon's individual arguments will be addressed on a personal basis later on; they deserve no less. In short, the Eclipse never happened because no one in Rome that we can discover, admitted it did. Let me take a quick swipe at that idea.

The evidence from Rome has been under our noses for 2,000 years.

What no one seems to have realized is that Tiberius Caesar himself is the greatest witness to the Crucifixion eclipses anyone could hope to find. I will devote all of Chapter 3 to proving from well-known Roman history, that Tiberius Caesar went mad, for no reason historians know today, immediately after the time of the true Crucifixion. The details of Tiberius' life can be woven together into an intimate tapestry that proves he was profoundly affected by the Crucifixion Eclipse. This insight is being presented for the first time. He immediately instigated a massive, furious purge of Roman society, effectively silencing all writings by the upper classes on this subject. The proof exists not in Roman writings, but in Tiberius' actions, which are well documented. Well documented, but never fully understood, that is. A detailed study of Tiberius' life from early youth onward and his lifelong obsession with the pronouncements of astrology makes this insight incontrovertible.

We should expect a World-Event to effect a World-Ruler. The record shows it did; much, much more of this in Chapter 3.

In those parts of the world where Rome held NO sway, notably the South Pacific and East Asia, we have faithfully preserved folklore and legends that say the Moon

reversed itself one night in the springtime, went past the horizon, in the direction of Jerusalem and returned the same night. Nighttime in the South Pacific is NOONTIME IN JERUSALEM. All the nuances of the folktales match the facts of the Crucifixion eclipses---time of day, season of occurrence, direction of the Moon, track of the Moon. All this corroboration, from half a world away, faithfully interlocking with the stupendous event merely noted in Luke 23:45. All this substantiation comes from many different peoples, spread over vast areas of ocean, including the Japanese, as well as the land-based Siberians and Mongolians.

Why does it exist? Happenstance?

What They Saw Half a World Away

In 1885, Timothy Harley, an English cleric and a Fellow of the Royal Astronomical Society, published a little volume entitled Moon Lore. In this text Harley transmits a folk tale of the Samoans, a Pacific Island people that have lived in the South Pacific for approximately two thousand five hundred years, well before the Crucifixion.[1074] The tale was originally published in 1861 by another cleric, George Turner, in his book, Nineteen Years in Polynesia. Harley's quote of Turner is a Rosetta Stone for confirming the events of the Crucifixion Solar eclipse. The tale that follows has many telling facets that speak of reality rather than myth.

> Passing on to Polynesia, we come to Samoa, where "we are told that the moon came down one evening, and picked up a woman, called Siva, and her child. .... in the evening twilight .... The moon was just rising, and it reminded her of a great bread-fruit. Looking up to it she said, 'Why cannot you come down and let my child have a bit of you?' The moon was indignant at the idea of being eaten, came down *forthwith*, [reversed its direction] and took her up, child, board, mallet, and all. The popular superstition is not yet forgotten in Samoa .... The same belief is held in the adjacent Tonga group ....[1075] (emphasis added)

There are at least seven key points submerged in this account that directly relate it to the literal astronomy of the Crucifixion eclipses. Bear in mind that the above story is an ancient belief firmly held by peoples living nowhere near Jerusalem, having no knowledge of the events that the Bible claims occurred and yet their story can be shown to uniquely match the events of the day Jesus died. Let me express the point this way: If the Crucifixion eclipses *literally* occurred as stated in

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[1074] According to the present knowledge of South Pacific population movements,

> the Polynesian communities sprang from a common ancestral culture, which entered the island world from the west in the first millennium before our era. The islands of Western Polynesia, Tonga and Samoa, were the first to be settled and they constituted the point of departure for the settlement of Eastern Polynesia

See J Poulsen, Early Tongan Prehistory, p 1

[1075] Harley, T., Moon Lore, p. 59

hours or more[1077], to return to its proper position in orbit shortly before the blood-red Lunar eclipse of that night. We have a total elapsed time of four hours going, three hours being stationary and four hours returning, which equals 11 hours. If we start at 7:30 A.M. Jerusalem time, and add 11 hours, we move forward to 6:30 P.M. on April 25 of 31 A.D. According to the eclipse almanacs, the Lunar eclipse of April 25, which was seen from beginning to end at Jerusalem, started at 6:05 P.M. London time, which was 8:26 P.M. Jerusalem time. Even if the Moon took longer than four hours to return back to its natural position, the times work out seamlessly for each event, Noon Eclipse, and Evening Eclipse to occur right on time. All of this is based upon the information contained in the Samoan folktale. How did they know to make their legend work out to within hours of what the Bible says happened?

Either the time the Moon left Samoan skies fits with the time it needed to do all these things in an orderly fashion, or it does not. Two eclipses, and a very small window of opportunity to move the Moon in position for BOTH of them to happen, and yet everything falls into place effortlessly. Only a Supreme Being could do all of that It fits.

The witness from History for the Crucifixion Eclipse is corroborated by the witness from Astronomy. The witness from Astronomy is corroborated by the witness from Folk History. As the Bible says, "A three-fold cord is not easily broken."

We are not yet finished. There is still more evidence from the sagas of ancient Pacific nations.

[1077] Since the Moon would have been traveling in the same direction as the Earth when it returned back to its normal place in space, it should have taken longer than 4 hours to return back, if it traveled at the same speed as when it left ;

2.5.5 Tracing the Moon's Path - New Zealand, Japan and Siberia - The Moon Draws Near

The skeptic will probably assure himself that there are so many different folktales in the ancient world that any one of them could lend itself to corroborating any scatterbrained idea anyone might hatch. But the larger the area that held to the same story, the more diverse the group of peoples that all told the same account, the less likely this excuse becomes. After all, we can agree that not every folktale is the same in every country. Drastic differences among peoples do exist; nations DO differ in the majority of details they tell their children. Tribal beliefs definitely contain a degree of commonality that individual beliefs do not. Still, when tribes across thousands of miles of ocean and continent agree, we must ask ourselves why? Is it the migration of ideas, a universal gullibility, or have we found a testimony to a common event? Once more, let the reader be the judge.

If, in fact, this reverse motion of the Moon occurred at the Passover, in view of the whole world, then there should be accounts from many peoples and nations around the world along the path from Tonga to Jerusalem. The tale should not be local to Tonga or Samoa, and the tale told by those other peoples on the line of the path should have most, if not all, of those seven common features I referred to above. As we progress from Tonga to Jerusalem, the local folktales should occur earlier on in the day, because as the Moon moved from Tonga back to Jerusalem, the time of day changed from twilight in Tonga back to noontime in Jerusalem. We should not find Phillipinos with a story that says the Moon zigzagged across the heavens in a slow motion during the early morning and we probably should not find any record of this in Western Africa - it was the wrong time of day for them to see anything. Of course, the Moon is visible from fully one half of the Earth facing it. Further, we should expect to find additional stories only from societies on the correct viewing side of the planet at the time the event occurred. This would be the South Pacific, New Zealand, Japan, Australia, China, Mongolia, Central Asia, India, Saudi Arabia and finally Jerusalem. We are limited to societies that are old enough to have witnessed this event, and have either written or oral traditions which they have preserved.

New Zealand

The Maori people of New Zealand have the same tale as the Samoans, which they tell with only slight modifications. (Since New Zealand is sufficiently close in time zones to Samoa, this tale also occurs in the early evening, as we will shortly discover.) Johannes C. Andersen, in his book, Myths and Legends of the Polynesians, written in 1928, recounts the exact Samoan story which we have been reviewing. He then recounts the Maori version of a woman the Maori called Rona:

> .... who one BRIGHT MOONLIGHT NIGHT went to fetch water from the stream for her children. .... On the way the moon suddenly disappeared behind a cloud ; and .... she kicked her foot against a root. [and] cursed the moon ..... These words displeased the moon who came down to earth and seized her. ....

> the moon .... *flew away*, taking Rona, ... up onto the sky. [1078]
> (emphasis and comments mine)

Notice that the Maori account occurred under a bright moonlight night, or a full Moon. April 25, 31 A.D., the Moon was near full. Notice also that Rona is going to fetch water for her children, so that while it is dark, it is not so late that she and her children would be sleeping. No, it is early evening, possibly even dinnertime or twilight, the time to eat and drink. Mother is still working for her family. This timing agrees with the basic timing in the Samoan account. Rona curses the Moon; In the Samoan account, Siva shrieks at the Moon, demanding food for her starving family. In both cases, the Moon comes down at her voice, implying a rapid reverse motion. The Moon then flies away, both reversing its motion and traveling at an unnaturally rapid speed. Once again, speed and direction of the Moon are highlighted in the two accounts. Finally, Rona "leaves" with the Moon, suggesting a tragedy involving human life is bundled up in all this behavior of the Moon.

Curiously, in both cases no one heard the uprooting of the tree or the crying of a baby, no one saw the woman and tree in flight to the sky or mother and bread utensils, no one was roused by the clamor and ran after her; they had to look for her, not knowing any of what had happened. This lack of storyteller's detail in both accounts about the doings of the rest of the tribe, suggests the role played by Siva / Rona is a poorly inserted embellishment which occupies both stories. The real fact of the matter is the actions of the Moon, which is identical both times.

After a little while, Rona is finally discovered with the Moon, ascending up into the heavens, not yet at the Moon's summit, but still rising, returning with it to its place. In real terms, this again describes a multiple-hour lapse between the time the Moon descends and the time it returns to its natural position, matching the time frames in the Jerusalem Solar eclipse schedule.

Japan

As mentioned earlier, when the Moon reversed direction, it moved from East to West. After Samoa, Tonga and New Zealand, as the Moon traces its path to Jerusalem, we reach the Philippines and Japan. As the Moon hurtled backwards in space, the time of day on Earth became earlier and earlier in the day, going from night in Tonga to noon in Jerusalem. Any other folktales or legends next along the path of the Moon to Jerusalem should probably occur during the late afternoon daylight hours. The Phillipinos do not have a rich tradition of folk lore that is easily accessible in English, but the Japanese do. The next folktale, from Japan, does indeed occur while the Sun is shining. It comes from the book, Myths and Legends of Japan, by F. Hadland Davis, written in 1913.

In this particular tale, the Moon-Lady, or the Light of the Moon, leaves the sky and descends to Earth, immerses herself in the sea beyond the horizon and then returns back up to the skies, restoring the Light of the Moon to the sky, symbolized by a fabulous robe of pure white feathers, which she wears.

[1078] Andersen, J.C , Myths and Legends of the Polynesians, pps 262 -263

> It was spring-time, and along Mio's pine-clad shore there came a sound of birds. The blue sea danced and sparkled in the sunshine, and Hairukoo, a fisherman, sat down to enjoy the scene. As he did so he chanced to see, hanging on a pine-tree, a beautiful robe of pure white feathers.

At this point, a beautiful maiden, the Moon-Lady, who arises out of the sea, out from the horizon, interrupts Hairukoo. She contests with him over the Robe of feathers. She claims it as her own, and vigorously pleads that he not take it for himself, for it is in fact her own. He refuses to heed her imprecations. But the Moon-Lady has very serious reasons why she must have it returned.

> "Oh," cried the maiden pitifully, I cannot go soaring into the sky without my robe of feathers, for if you persist in keeping it I can never more return to my celestial home. ...." ,,,

After further bickering, the fisherman agrees to restore the robe provided the maiden dance for him. She replies by agreeing to dance the dance that makes the Moon turn round in its orbit She puts on her robe, plays a harp-like instrument and begins to dance and sing for the fisherman:

> ... She sang of the mighty Palace of the Moon, where thirty monarchs ruled, fifteen in robes of white when that shining orb was full, and fifteen robed in black, when the Moon was waning. As she sang and played and danced she blessed Japan, "that earth may still her proper increase yield!"
>
> ... very soon.. [s]he rose into the air, the white feathers of her robe gleaming against the pine-trees or against the blue sky itself. Up, up she went, still playing and singing, ... until she reached the glorious Palace of the Moon. [1079]

This charming tale, when deciphered, extends and confirms all that has been said in the other myths and offers new insights that speak directly to the passage of the Moon overhead that day.

The story takes place in Springtime, in the Northern hemisphere and that is exactly the time of the Passover. It occurs during the daylight hours, which as we noted earlier, is the time of day the Moon would appear in a reverse direction over Japan. Notice however, a difference between this story and the earlier ones: at this juncture, the Moon is returning to its home, going from West to East, back into its proper orbit. No mention is made here of seeing the Moon change its direction in the sky.

Notice that the maiden says she cannot return to her celestial home, without the Robe of brilliant feathers. Clearly then, she had left her celestial home, in order to

[1079] Davis, F H , Myths and Legends of Japan, pps 127 - 129

go into the sea, submerged below the horizon. This implies the reverse direction of the daylight Moon in the Japanese sky, traveling west past the horizon, on its way to Jerusalem. This also matches the other stories in that the Light of the Moon has gone away from its natural location, only to reside, unnaturally below the line of the sky and the sea, that is, beyond the horizon.

When the fisherman, the figure of Japan, arrives on the scene, the maiden has already entered into the sea. The Moon has already vanished over the horizon towards Jerusalem. No scene of reversal or explanation for reversing its motion is given. We are presented in this story with a fait accompli, the Light of the Moon has already gone away from Japan, on into the seam beyond the horizon. The legend could have had the fisherman see the maiden fly down from the Moon and then enter the sea, just as the earlier stories of Samoa and Maori tell of the Moon coming down to earth, but it does not do so. The Japanese legend IS NOT a duplication of the Western Samoan story; rather, it is an independent account containing its own unique information of an event that impressed itself upon the nation centuries ago.

The Japanese *story is true to the facts of what happened over the skies of Japan*, just as the other stories are true to the facts of what happened over the South Pacific. Different locations on earth produced different stories, *yet* these different stories mesh among themselves and with the time sequence needed for the Moon to miraculously eclipse the Sun in Jerusalem.

I have noted that the maiden's fabulous robe of feathers represents the Light of the Moon as seen in daytime over Japan. There is internal evidence from the tale itself to substantiate this. The white robes of the fifteen Monarchs represent the fifteen increasing crescents of the Moon, leading to the full Moon in its greatest brightness. Thus white robes are representative of the Moon's light and black robes lunar darkness.

It is also significant that the maiden is portrayed in the story as temporarily losing her robe of maximum light, but not as being clothed in black. In other words, the maiden, or the status of the Moon, is one of Light that is missing over Japan and restored; it is not at all an eclipsed Moon of ominous darkness. The gleaming reflective feathers of the maiden's robe are the brightest light of the Moon, seen in daytime. Therefore, if we put all the discussion together, this missing Light of the Moon represents a daytime *full moon that is missing from the Japanese sky. It has set backwards over the horizon of Japan into the sea and is now returning exactly from whence it was, restored to its natural position only after first revealing the secret of how the Palace of the Moon turns in the sky. Further, this event occurs in the springtime.*

We can add weight to this analysis by connecting it to the Samoan story as well. The Lady of the Moon blesses Japan with a promise of productive crops that year. Why is this important? Because in the original Samoan tale, there was a famine in the southern hemisphere at the time this event occurred. The Fall harvest in Samoa had to have either just passed, or be in progress; otherwise there would be no reason to claim a famine. It was Summer-Fall in the Southern hemisphere when the

Hina tale took place. This corresponds with Spring in Japan and the time of the Passover in the Northern hemisphere. The promise of good crops in Japan at Springtime would imply a drought in the Spring of Japan. Both the Samoan tale and the Japanese story therefore contain evidence that they occurred at the same time of the year. It is possible that weather patterns that same year shifted rains from their normal fall over Japan and Samoa, while Japan received extra rain later on in the remainder of the year. The promise of a bounteous Japanese harvest and the Samoan famine provide meteorological linkage for the two stories, and place them both at the time of the Passover. It would be interesting to know what the weather patterns were over the Pacific in the Spring of 31 A.D. At this juncture, I have not been able to discover this fact, although I imagine tree-ring or sediment core data may hold the answer.

Mongolia and Siberia

There are yet more accounts from the nations of a Moon that reverses itself and descends to Earth to interfere in the affairs of men.

> The Yakuts .... in northeast Siberia, and the Mongolic-speaking Buryats of southern Siberia also blame the rain on a girl in the moon. The Yakuts say she went out for water one frosty night. Swooping down on her, the moon swept her away. She can be seen there now with a yoke on her shoulders ... [1080] (emphasis added)

Admittedly, the story here occurs on a frosty night, rather than a frosty afternoon. And yet the similarity to that of Rona, going out on a mission to acquire staples for her family, persists. The motif of a Moon hurtling back to earth to uniquely touch the life and physical presence of an unsuspecting human, no doubt striking terror by its forceful proximity, spans thousands of miles, from the Pacific to Siberia and Central Asia, and covers many different peoples. Exchange of tales by interacting traders on a snowy night, or the spread of one peasant's fanciful conjecture is a poor stimulus for acceptance of so universal a tale. Rather, all this points to a common cause of great persuasion and a willingness of so many tribes that lived across thousands of miles of sea, earth and mountain, to embrace it generation after generation.

[1080] Krupp, E C., op, cit., p 75

2.5.6 Tracing the Moon's Path - Han Dynasty Portents

The greatest civilization of the ancient Far East, with the most advanced record-keeping, is China. One would expect that if a cosmic event occurred some time in China's ancient past, records would survive. At this juncture, I must admit, I have made the search, but my ignorance of the Chinese language has hampered my quest for results: most of the key documents I sought after no longer exist, those that do remain are only published in Chinese. However, there is some tantalizing data in an ancient Chinese document that has been translated into English, which should be shared with you.

As with Rome, 2,000 years ago heavenly signs were of the utmost political importance to the Imperial Throne of China. The notion of Portent, be it heavenly or Earthly, was presumed to direct the course of all life in China. A vast array of oddities and events were looked upon as being the harbingers of fate for beast, man, and King.

Two thousand years ago, China was ruled by a succession of Imperial Dynasties, some of which reigned for centuries, a few for mere decades or less. After each Dynasty's demise, the court historians took decades to compose a chronicle of all pertinent events that occurred in the prior regime. These massive, multi-volume works were organized according to fairly rigid outlines of proper material. Among the topics all histories included were Signs, Portents and what the Chinese call the "five elements" of material existence. Most often, the Histories were written from earlier works that had been composed during the actual reign. The final history was a highly edited, politically slanted treatise on events that had happened perhaps 100 or more years earlier.[1081]

The official history for 31 A.D. belongs to what is called the Later Han Dynasty. The Hans ruled China from roughly 200 B.C. to 220 A.D. and were contemporaries of Rome. Almost in the middle of this long reign, civil war broke out among various factions, with multiple rulers having a brief tour in power for less than one year. One Emperor called himself the "Emperor of a New Beginning", so the name became a matter of sensitivity with the power-grabbing groups who followed close after him. After two years of unstable rule, this Emperor of New Beginnings was ignominiously defeated and superseded by a man named Guang Wu. This was in 25 A.D. Guang Wu had in turn secured his own New Beginning. Guang Wu's new beginning was only six years old when the Crucifixion, with its terrible Signs, filled the heavens. Perhaps as many as 14 histories of the Later Han dynasty were written in the first millennium, but they are all lost to us.[1082] One can only speculate how many of them were destroyed for political reasons. If the revisionist history of Communist China gives us any valid clue, then history was a spineless creature, adapted to every whim of powerful elites. The later histories which we do have were written by members of the Royal family. It is the 14 lost histories that would prove most valuable. Nevertheless, a curious fact has survived all the politics, propaganda, and infighting of the centuries.

[1081] For overview and details on all these points, consult B.J Mansvelt Beck, The Treatises of Later Han

[1082] Mansvelt Beck, op cit , pps 17-18

Chinese Emperors were considered as demi-gods. They were revered as "holy kings of antiquity", who presided in righteousness and fell only when their evil reached heaven. Histories were written as monuments to morality and truth, but of course, in reality the Throne was taken and kept by Blood and guile. Omens and portents became the lightning rod for dissatisfied, vociferous critics of the Regime. Many such diatribes against official authority by historians have survived. What we know about the year 31 A.D. and the Later Han Dynasty is as follows:

Guang Wu, to commemorate his triumphant victory as Supreme Emperor of China, erected an Altar to Heaven and sacrifices to the gods were offered in 26 A.D. Surely his "New Beginning" was sanctified by the gods of heaven itself. There are no significant sacrifices recorded until May of 31 A.D., mere days after Christ's Crucifixion and at the time of the May 10 Solar Eclipse.[1083] At this precise moment, the striking reason given in the histories for this particular ceremony is that there was some sort of exceptional problem with one of the assistants at the Altar of Heaven, which had to be atoned for by the priests. The co-ruler of the Altar has somehow blasphemed the King or the Altar a few days after the Crucifixion Signs. Presumably he was executed or banished for his crime and the Altar and King rededicated as sacred entities. A few years later, a greater, grander Altar to Heaven was built by Guang Wu, thereby solidifying his reign with pomp, religion and the gods; endorsement.

What might we make of all this? Someone with a high responsibility and a sense of the sacred objected to sacrifices that Guang Wu planned and held at the Altar of Heaven, in May of 31 A.D. This man in turn had to be eliminated, probably as a threat or an offense to those in power, and his impiety atoned for. Something has provoked a holy man to react forcefully, violently, against King and Regime. If the Moon moving across the heavens were interpreted as a Sign that the "New Beginnings" of Guang Wu must be ended by the very gods to whom this Altar was built, then a "force majeur" move by the Emperor to quash any such rebellion would need a sacrificial lamb--the priest at the Altar of Heaven. Like Tiberius Caesar, Guang Wu would not allow the literal heavens to take power from him.

The rest of the story resides somewhere in the 14 lost histories of the Later Han Dynasty, or in archives this author has yet to see in English.

[1083] Ibid, p. 90 for all the facts in this paragraph

3. The Heavenly Signs and the Romans - The Assault Upon the Authority of Tiberius Caesar and The Imperial Cover- Up

How could worldwide events have occurred in 31 A.D., without affecting the Roman Empire and its rulers? They could not. Yet our present understanding of history is that a dust storm swirled over a cross in a tiny corner of the world in 31 A.D and put religious awe into the hearts of a few thousand or so Jews and Gentiles; the unshakable monolith of Rome carried on as normal. Later, an energetic Jew named Paul single-handedly induced thousands of people all over the Empire to believe him by sheer oratory and example and planted the seeds that changed the course of human history. Really? Consider this first person admission by Paul concerning his abilities to sway men:

For his letters, say they, are weighty and powerful; but his bodily presence is weak and his speech contemptible. (emphasis added) (Second letter from Paul to the Corinthian Church, Chapter 10, verse 10.)

Paul says again in II Cor. 11:6 - But though I be rude in speech, yet not in knowledge....

This then, is the orator who single-handedly changed the minds of thousands to Christianity? Unlikely. However, an eclipse of the Sun that turned day into night for three hours and was talked about until the 1700's in Europe, would fit the bill.

Oratory can garner only so many ears; eventually it fades with the man. The deeper we go into the ancient sources, the more we see a discrepancy between what they say truly did happen, that is, the Passover eclipse and darkness over the whole Earth and what the official histories of Rome *seem to say*. If the course of human history was profoundly affected by awe-inspiring events in the heavens, there needs to be corroboration between these claims and the official histories. If no corroboration exists, then an explanation of the discrepancy has to be given. That is what will be addressed now. In the process of explaining history, we will uncover the true meaning of the events to Rome and the Gentile world.

Overview - The Silence of Rome in 31 A.D.

Jim Bishop, a popular writer, made an all-inclusive summary of the events surrounding the Crucifixion in his book, The Day Christ Died:

> .... Phlegon wrote that .... there was a great darkness over Europe, surpassing anything that had ever been seen. At midday, he said, the stars could be seen. .... Tertullian said later that he had found in the records of Rome, a notation of worldwide darkness, which the statesmen of the Empire could not explain.[1084] (emphasis added)

[1084] Bishop, J., op cit, p 303, note 35

In 312 A.D., over one hundred years after Tertullian, the martyr Lucian also claimed Roman archives held accounts of a "supernatural darkness [that] had prevailed at the time of Christ's death".[1085] How is it then that the existing works of standard Roman historians, such as Tacitus, Suetonius and Dio Cassius, do not refer to these events? Edward Gibbon, the British historian, claimed no eclipse could have happened because other Roman writers, Pliny and Seneca in particular, made no mention of this event, yet it should have occurred in their generation. Are the Christians reciting fables, or is there some other reason? The more carefully we look, the more the answer becomes "Yes".

Consider: The Roman Senator Tacitus wrote a history of the Caesars that spanned decades during the time of Christ, yet his account is missing (censored?) for 31 A.D., the year Christ was crucified. Why? Almost the entire original document is preserved; the beginning, middle, and end of it are intact. Only one or two internal sections are gone.

The two eclipses seen in Jerusalem were also visible in Rome. We saw earlier how Roman society and culture was steeped in the lore of omens and eclipses. Great and small, the Roman populace considered heavenly signs as portents of future disaster, serious events that should be politically interpreted against the ruling regime.

Astrology was viewed as a potent political device in Imperial Rome. It had been embraced by the elites as a viable view of life perhaps only fifty years earlier, but in varying degrees of subscription; Roman pragmatism was not dead. The official government posture was to publicly minimize signs as irrelevant, while spreading propagandist stories about good omens that favored the Caesars.[1086] The Roman leaders knew well first hand the difficulties of amassing and maintaining the greatest political power ever seen at that time, "ordering it", as Augustus said. They appreciated the uncertainties and tragedies of life as well as the need to counter and master events, disasters and circumstances. Though many in the elites were far too political to embrace astrology in earnest, many more pretended to it. Regardless of personal conviction, mastering and countering fate, through reinterpreting portents and signs, was all a part of the political jockeying of that age.[1087] There also was the popular belief that fate was inescapable.[1088] Once the stars were determined, the common man believed all mortals were without recourse to change life's circumstances; all men, that is, except perhaps a Caesar. He believed he might be able to both discern and betray the fates.

[1085] Chambers, G F , op cit , p. 110

[1086] See Wildfang, R.L. and Isager, J. op cit , in particular, Chapter 3 by Wildfang - The Propaganda of Omens: Six Dreams Involving Augustus

[1087] Ibid

[1088] I want to repeat this point: The aristocracy did not hold to the fates of astrology, though it was spoken of routinely as a political device See Tester, A History of Western Astrology, p 50, and Cramer, F H , op cit , p. 80

Caesar was viewed, like Pharaoh, as the temporary incarnation of the Sun.[1089] Since the Sun was the Royal Star, any portent involving that body was tantamount to decreeing Caesar's Fate. For the Sun to suffer supernatural eclipse would be to negate the man on the Throne of the World. If such foreboding signs were seen in Rome in 31 A.D. we might expect political opportunists to be greatly encouraged by them to act out their plots and Tiberius in turn to be highly erratic and reactionary. According to lesser men, the fates were demanding the ritual sacrifice of Caesar; according to Caesar, he was as great, or greater than the gods, he would survive.

We know that a coup against Caesar was indeed formed in 31 A.D. It was viciously thwarted and then, beginning that year and continuing into 32 A.D., Tiberius began a massive reign of terror throughout Roman aristocracy that included pillaging, trials and summary executions.[1090] If one reads Dio Cassius, or others, they will see the cruelty never subsided until the day Tiberius died. Suetonius wrote that Tiberius' character, already given to frequent executions, permanently changed for the worse in 31 A.D.[1091] Based upon all this, all scholars will concede 31 A.D. was a watershed year in the life of a violent man. There is no reason for them to probe for a deeper cause than what they already know. Tiberius simply "snapped", according to the existing record.

Such circumstances routinely occur in the lives of despots without the need of eclipses, but this counter-coup by Tiberius contained many curious elements that we will examine under a microscope, and resolve.

Records of the Roman Senate plainly show Tiberius was of a mental state verging on madness in late 31 and on into 32 A.D., claiming God was "destroying" him. Whole Roman histories of Tiberius' age and later, have also been lost or deliberately destroyed. Tiberius was well known for destroying histories and summarily executing authors he did not like.[1092] There is much more. Tiberius' counter-coup was based upon astrology and based upon Jesus' crucifixion.

As we will examine further, a crisis in Tiberius' personal life led him to exile himself from Rome and live in the Greek island of Rhodes for seven long years, well before he ever became Caesar. In fact, Augustus, left with no heirs, agreed to call Tiberius back from exile, in order to secure Imperial succession.[1093] In that faraway island, the Caesar in whose reign the Eclipses would occur, also became the first ruler of Rome to actively study astrology. He did so under a very gifted priest originally from Alexandria, Egypt, who became his lifelong adviser and companion. Tiberius in turn became a lifelong practitioner of the art and perhaps even black magic; his

[1089] Cumont, F , The Mysteries of Mithra, p. 101

[1090] Dio Cassius, p. 219, writes of a great violence that befalls Rome with Sejanus' death, and goes on to show how universal it was, and how many of the nobles were affected by the mob terror. He says the number of unaffected nobles was "Very small indeed. " (p 219)

[1091] Suetonius, op. cit., p 395

[1092] See Dio Cassius, op. cit., p. 249, Suetonius, op, cit., p 395-396 speaks of a poet and a writer who were both executed, and their works destroyed simply because Tiberius thought it appropriate, even though these same writings had been known personally to Augustus Caesar, and approved by him.

[1093] Baker, G P., Tiberius Caesar - Emperor of Rome, pps 76-77.

was not a casual acquaintance with the subject.[1094] Training in the fates was of great practical value to a politician in exile.

The leader of the insurrection against Tiberius, a nobleman named Sejanus, was abruptly slain just hours before the October full moon of 31 A.D., which fell at the Jewish Feast of Tabernacles. It was exactly six months after the Crucifixion Eclipses had occurred. They too, had appeared immediately before another full moon, that of the April Passover[1095]. And of course, the Passover was another Jewish observance. These similar circumstances are not coincidental, they are linked through astrology. They speak of using the seasons of Spring and Fall, of life renewed and life in decay, to effect a reversal of bad fate into good fate.

It was done through a substitute sacrifice of the conspirator Sejanus to the fate the stars had decreed for Caesar. This stratagem was known and practiced in Babylon for thousands of years. In one of its forms, it was called the Sacaea.[1096] Only a well-versed astrologer such as Tiberius' counselor Thrasyllus would be conversant with it. The circumstances of Sejanus' death are the construct of a master spellcaster, grappling with cosmic powers to reverse impossible odds against Tiberius.

A purge was initiated in response to the immediate threat the Roman aristocracy posed to Tiberius and a de facto gag was placed upon all writers of position in the hierarchy of society. Christianity had but a few thousand followers, primarily in the distant city of Jerusalem, in 31 A.D. It was the religion of the God that drove Tiberius to the brink of insanity and nearly toppled him from power. Better to leave the new faith alone, and watch it, than risk a worse fate from that God. The God of the Christians, working heavenly signs to prove His Son Messiah-King, had almost caused the fall of the Roman Prince by the most threatening personal portent an astrologer-king could ever have thrust into his own face. God Himself was dealing with Caesar on his own level.[1097]

This is the flow of history that I will prove has been hidden from men for some 1,900 years. I claim it is the true explanation for the sudden Public Advent of a new World-religion through completely non-violent means. It is the insight that could have also convinced modern critics of Luke 23:45 they needed to examine the Crucifixion eclipse story more carefully. Rome was not silent on a non-existent matter concerning Jews in Palestine; Rome was gagged by a man of unlimited power that had been driven to the brink by some unknown Cause.

All the above is just the briefest outline of an absolutely mesmerizing conspiracy of circumstances that suffused the life of Tiberius. There are many, many fascinating details, twists of fate and circumstances in the life of Tiberius, yet to be revealed, that revolve around the events of April 25, 31 A.D. One could almost say that God

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[1094] Durant, W., op. cit., p. 231.

[1095] I am using "Passover" in the enlarged sense of an eight-day observance. The full Moon fell on the 15th of Nisan in 31 A.D. Christians observe the Passover on the 14th of Nisan.

[1096] Frazer, J.G., The New Golden Bough, p. 287.

[1097] This is a theme that runs through the entire Book of Daniel - God Almighty confronting the Gentile Kings. See Appendix 3 for a full development of this theme

Himself fashioned the web of events of Tiberius' life in preparation for this one cosmic confrontation with the New Religion of the Ages.

In this chapter, our understanding of Rome and Christ, will be recast in a dramatic new light, where the God of the Christians is supreme, Caesar is only a man, supernatural Eclipses are real and power politics perpetuate the state, erasing history. As G.P. Baker wrote, "The reign of Tiberius was a political battlefield on which great issues were lost and won. More were lost than were won...."[1098] I would amend these words to say the battlefield was cosmic and eternal.

[1098] Baker, C P , Tiberius Caesar - Emperor of Rome, p vii

3.1 Signs, Portents and Political Power of Caesar in Rome

In Sections 1.3.1 and 1.3.2, I covered the cultural ties Rome had to signs, portents and eclipses, so there is no reason to repeat it here. Rather, we need to realize that there were fabricated stories and literal omens in the decades leading up to 31 A.D., that set the stage for the personal torment awaiting this brutal Caesar.

Solar and Lunar eclipses were present as omens at both the death of Augustus and the ascension of Tiberius to the throne. In a matter of months, Tiberius would twice be confronted with heavenly signs and the sway they held over the general population.

Tiberius was co-regent under Augustus for approximately three years. Before Augustus' death in 14 A.D., Dio Cassius wrote that many spectacular omens occurred in the skies, announcing the old man's coming end.[1099] One of the chief was a total eclipse of the Sun. A fiery sky and a bloody comet that many claimed was the journeying of Augustus' soul to the gods attended his death. Whatever the actual cause of these events it was impressed upon Tiberius that heavenly omens were part of the lore of his reign even before he became sole ruler.

The very first days of Tiberius' reign were marked by a dramatic eclipse of the Moon that saved his reign from potential civil war. It happened on this wise: After Tiberius assumed the throne on August 19, 14 A.D.[1100], the news was sent to all armies in the Empire. Two of them mutinied in the latter days of that same month. They had hoped to air long-standing grievances (greater wages) to the new Emperor, and so gain his acquiescence, while he was unsure of his power and still vulnerable to such pressures.[1101]

Tiberius sent his son Drusus as an emissary to the army that controlled the Danube River, near modern Austria and Slovenia. While Drusus was attempting to maneuver the situation, in the morning of September 26, 14 A.D., a Lunar eclipse filled the night and early morning. The eclipse proved to be an intimidating factor to the troops that ultimately led to their surrender, punishment and resumption of duties, without any injury to Drusus. An eclipse of the Moon, a mere thirty-eight days after Tiberius took office, had come to his aid to prevent a possible breach in the ranks and overthrow in Rome. Far from being a threat, the eclipse served to secure his position. Astrology had augured a good fate for him.[1102]

We have here an example of yet another signal event in Tiberius' life that would ultimately come undone in 31 A.D.

[1099] Dio Cassius, op cit., p. 67.
[1100] Finnegan, Handbook of Biblical Chronology, pps 334-336
[1101] Dio Caassius, op cit., p. 121
[1102] See Baker, op cit., pps 146-156, especially p. 154.

3.2 Tiberius - Victim, Astrologer, Caesar

Tiberius had a most tenuous relationship with Augustus Caesar, his stepfather and later father-in-law. Augustus had commanded Tiberius mother, Livia, "a great beauty" from his father. She was six months pregnant, probably with Augustus' child, at the wedding.[1103] Afterwards, Tiberius was sent back to his true father to be raised by the broken man but it only lasted a few years until his death, and then Tiberius gave his first funeral oration as a child.[1104] At this point, the histories give indications of Tiberius' growing tendency towards violence. It is a lamentable psychosis.

Once more, when Tiberius was a man, Augustus would demand that he give up the wife of his heart, to marry, Julia, his half-sister. He was forced to reject his first wife, who also was with child, in order to become the Imperial son-in-law.[1105] But his second wife / half-sister, made all this maneuvering of no avail by turning adulterous in a pretentiously principled household. Tiberius, unable to appeal to his step-father / father-in-law, after repeated insults, banished himself to Rhodes, preferring silence to controversy. Besides, Augustus had two very young grandsons, who were obviously eager for their natural birthright.[1106] Rhodes was idyllic study and intellectual stimulation, as well as seclusion from the emissaries and spies of Rome. Augustus was clearly alienated by all this[1107], but in time his daughter's sins were revealed[1108] and his grandsons both died[1109]. There was no one left to turn to but the shipwrecked Tiberius. And so the castoff soul was adopted as Augustus' heir and restored to his life's obsession.[1110] But for seven years Tiberius' mind was formed and shaped and succored in Rhodes, Island of astrology and the Sun God. The indications are Tiberius wholeheartedly applied himself to such knowledge while in exile.[1111]

Tiberius had been a very masterful and successful general who knew how to use cunning invention and strategy to work his will over peoples and submit them to himself. In the court of Rome, his cunning, aloofness and insight did not work against Julia's whims. A politically strategic marriage to Caesar's daughter brought him torment and pain, but not success. Having such supreme position in society and then losing it all at the character of the Emperor's daughter, he brooded over both his own fate and the ways to manipulate the fates of enemies.[1112] The General had not died in exile; he was merely regrouping his fortunes away from the fray, learning the weaponry of the spirits.

[1103] Baker, G P , op cit , pps 5-6.
[1104] Levick, B , op. cit , p 15
[1105] Suetonius, op. cit , p 323
[1106] Op cit , p. 331
[1107] op. cit , p. 327
[1108] Baker, G P., op. cit., p. 78, Suetonius, op cit , p 329
[1109] Suetonius, op. cit , p. 337.
[1110] Baker, G P., op cit , p. 86.
[1111] Op cit , p. 76
[1112] Dio Cassius, op cit , p. 167. shows how once Tiberius became Emperor, he based all his decisions regarding the men around him, on their personal horoscopes. Noblemen with blessings from the stars would be killed.

Rhodes, Tiberius chosen home, had a much greater lure for the General struggling to learn astral warfare. Tiberius had not chosen this island of exile casually. He had spent a few weeks there in study as a young man of twenty,[1113] perhaps the equivalent of finishing school, or a Grand Tour for a Roman of the age, so he knew exactly what the island had to offer him in exile. Julius Caesar, his legal grandfather through two adoptions, had also studied at Rhodes, nearly seventy years before him. In fact, Caesar's circumstances were the virtually the same as Tiberius'; he too, was out of favor in the Roman aristocracy, fleeing for sanctuary, when he devoted himself to the skills of Empire Rhodes could provide.[1114] Tiberius was imitating the exact road to power that had been taken by the first Caesar.

Rhodes is the easternmost of all the Greek islands, and as such, the first Greek land upon which the Sun dawns. Its proximity to Turkey and Syria made it key to trade with the East. Its basic north-south geography made sightings of the rising Sun more true during the circuit of the seasons.[1115] Rhodes from earliest times has always been an island dedicated to the Sun, and the worship of Sun Gods. There were several explanations for how the island was the property of the Sun god.[1116]

One Greek legend was that Helios, God of the Sun, chose it as a last resort when Zeus apportioned the rest of the Earth to all the other gods.[1117] Every year, a Festival was staged; it was dedicated to Helios with pageantry, chariot races and celebration.[1118] Every fourth year, on a leap year, the holiday was expanded to include special games and other ceremonies.[1119] The famed Colossus of Rhodes was an immense statue in Rhode's largest harbor, representing the Sun god in manlike form, lighting the way to the harbor for errant ships.

Hipparchus, the greatest Greek astronomer before Jesus, studied the heavens and wrote his tracts at Rhodes, no doubt in consultation with inquiring priests of the Sun gods. He too, was an astrologer.[1120] He could very well have been a priest; most all priests were astrologers and astronomers, although the opposite is not always stated. Our modern separation of roles between astronomers and priests was not known in those days; present-day authors often omit that part of the story as unessential.[1121]

It was at Rhodes that Hipparchus had cataloged all the known eclipse and Lunar data from the ancient Babylonian priests and extended it on to his own day. He had developed precise methods for measuring the distances and sizes of the Sun and

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[1113] Levick, B. Tiberius the Politician, p. 17

[1114] Durant, W., op. cit., p. 168.

[1115] See any map of the island, or Torr, frontispiece, opposite p. 1

[1116] See Frazer, J.G., Worship of Nature, pps 481-487. Frazer quotes Diodorus Siculus explanation, and one other. I have used a third.

[1117] Torr, C., Rhodes in Ancient Times, p. 151

[1118] Torr, C., op. cit., pps. 63-64.

[1119] Frazer, J.G., op. cit., pps. 483-484

[1120] Tester, J., A History of Western Astrology, p. 18

[1121] For a discussion of how Romans of Augustus and Tiberius' time astronomers and astrologers, see Cramer, op. cit., pps. 89-90

Moon, and the exact duration in seconds, of one month.[1122] He was also able to improve the value for the nineteen-year timespan that marks exact conjunctions of the Earth, Sun and Moon.

The purpose of all this cataloging, measuring and refining was to divine some sort of highly accurate pattern that could be of use in future eclipse prediction. Hipparchus had succeeded. His successors at Rhodes would have continued and extended the practice up to Tiberius' day. To achieve his results, Hipparchus had invented sighting devices to position the stars and methods in trigonometry to precisely figure the measured values. All this wisdom awaited Tiberius at Rhodes.

Hipparchus' work was the leading exposition of astronomy of its age (140 B.C.), studied and used by the priestly astrologers of Alexandria, Egypt. One of them, Thrasyllus, would be born and educated there[1123], only to travel to Rhodes to become Tiberius' mentor and lifelong friend. We are told Thrasyllus spent his time in Alexandria studying the philosophy of Plato and organizing the master's books[1124], perhaps also learning Plato's thoughts on astrology. Recall, Plato was considered far more of a mystic in those days, than we view him today.

Plato had, after all, taken the Egyptian mysteries and reworked them into staples of Greek culture. Although Greece had absorbed much from Babylon, its astrology was quite different in nature than the more ancient practices of other lands, due largely to the underlying mathematics that Greece had nourished. Thrasyllus needed to expand his expertise in Rhodes. Plato's works, rooted in Egypt, were not treatises on practical Babylonian astronomy.[1125] But, "When Tiberius was living in .... [Rhodes] there were many Chaldeans [Babylonian astrologers] there who gained a livelihood by casting horoscopes and teaching astrology."[1126] And so Tiberius and Thrasyllus' mutual desire for greater enlightenment in the fates, made their lives coincide.

One belief system we know both Tiberius and Thrasyllus were exposed to in Rhodes, was the religion of Serapis, the supreme conjoining of Greek and Egyptian Sun gods. The cult of this god had existed on Rhodes for over one hundred and fifty years. Serapis had two known temples in the island; his consort Isis had her own temples there as well. They were in the two largest cities, Rhodes, which was in the very north of the island, and in Lydos, in the southeastern quarter of the island.[1127] Both cities, however, were situated on the eastern shore of the island, on capes that jutted out into the sea forming natural harbors. As noted earlier, the island of Rhodes is the easternmost of all the Greek lands. Serapis' priests sought to catch the first rays of Sun that broke the morning horizon and fell upon Greek soil, from the land of Babylon.

[1122] Heath, G., History of Greek Mathematics, vol ii, pps. 254-255. For some of Hipparchus' exact values for the different types of months, see Cumont, Astrology and Religion Among the Greeks and Romans, p. 61

[1123] Cramer, F.H., op. cit, p. 93

[1124] Ibid

[1125] Ibid, pps. 27-28

[1126] Ibid, pps. 91-92

[1127] Torr, C., op. cit., pps. 79-80

We also should not forget that Thrasyllus was originally schooled at the great Museum-Serapion complex in Alexandria I have talked about so much. Science and astrology all revolved around the Sun god Serapis-Osiris in those days. Having lived in both Alexandria and Rhodes, there was no way Thrasyllus could not be familiar with the April 25th Festival to Serapis, as well as the Festival of Helios.

Thus Rhodes was a center of astronomy and astrology that had strong ties to Alexandria Egypt, the religion of Serapis, April 25 and Solar eclipse science. Tiberius had gone into exile in the Greek equivalent of Heliopolis, the Egyptian City of the Sun, or, Alexandria itself.

Thrasyllus was a scholar of note in his own regard, who wrote scientific treatises that were used around the ancient world for over 100 years.[1128] His fame extended for centuries.[1129] It is virtually certain that Hipparchus' exact sighting charts and eclipse tables would have been available to a man of Thrasyllus' competence and achievement, either at the Libraries in Alexandria, or at the Temple to Serapis in Rhodes. He could have even paid for copies to be made with his earnings. Such scrolls would have been in his possession while he was teaching arcane astrology to Tiberius. Surely the highly advanced astronomical works of Hipparchus were packed and taken to Rome when Tiberius returned there with Thrasyllus; the Emperor-to-be had need for such excellent information.

Tiberius' best friend was becoming well able to advise him on the meaning of a Solar eclipse on April 25th of 31 A.D. One might say Thrasyllus was acquiring all the markings of a priest of Serapis. More fate.

Tiberius' involvement in astrology has many additional elements of fate and irony involved with it, and bears further discussion. They profoundly molded his psyche in preparation for the Crucifixion day.

[1128] Cramer, F.H., op cit., pps.92-93
[1129] Ibid, p 93

3.2.1 Tiberius' Character - God Prepares the "Perfect Man" to Face the Crucifixion Eclipses

The Sum of the Parts -- What Known History Reveals of Tiberius' Nature

In addition to the fickle cruelties Augustus had put upon him, Tiberius' personal endurance, in and out of Imperial pursuits (some called it stoicism), also caused him to be subjected to extreme honors and humiliations. These opposite and intense experiences were like a coppersmith's fire, that both galvanized and polarized his mind. At that time, to be exiled from Rome was to lose one's Roman citizenship.[1130] For the stepson of the Emperor to do so, was tantamount to treason. Tiberius would return as a disenfranchised pariah of the Roman fatherland. Contempt for Tiberius' exile had grown so great across the Empire, that scornful men sought to assassinate him in Rhodes. Some said he was forced to request a return to Italy under these circumstances.[1131] Cuckoldry and rejection by Julia, Augustus' daughter, became a matter of public record when she was banished for her repeated immoralities. That, plus his disgrace as an exile, fostered a sense of inferiority and betrayal, ever lurking beneath the outward pomp of supreme self-exaltation, taste and aloofness. Further still, lurked the violent cruelty of his youth, and the psychic scares of Augustus' mental abuse. The confluence of these elements forged a brittle and immoral character, tempered and skewed like the Pharaoh's in the Exodus.

The unique elements of Tiberius' life, of his rejection, denial, success, reversal, and counter-reversals in the Imperial household, of final Imperial acceptance and popular rejection, of temples and tutors and time in exile at Rhodes, also forged a self-convicted spirit of being able to master the fates at their bloody game; he brought it to the Imperial palace in Rome in uneasy conviction. What great Roman had ever come a breath away from the Throne, lost it, fled, and then regained it all through circumstances beyond his physical efforts? Marc Antony? Pompey? The Gracchi brothers? None of them. Tiberius' destiny exceeded all theirs. Tiberius the victim as a child, was now Tiberius the savaged master of men and fate. Tiberius had to be the favorite of the gods, and now after all his suffering, the adopted son of the divine god Augustus. But was it son or bastard?

Pomp and prestige are grand delusions with a broad sweep. The grasp of Power is never certain. To say Tiberius was consummate in his newly won Imperial vanity is to say virtually nothing. The events of his life are far better spokesmen than that.

A. Tiberius' Image of Himself -- He was the Sun God who Lived on the Island of the Sun

Additional evidence above and beyond what was just covered clearly shows that both Tiberius and the Romans thought of him as a literal Sun God. He did not simply live and learn astrology on Rhodes. In all minds he was the personification of all that Rhodes represented in astrology. Lets trace through the proof of this.

[1130] Suetonius, op cit., p. 390
[1131] Suetonius, op, cit., p. 333

According to Roman tradition, youth of the aristocracy ascended to manhood in their teenage years, usually before or after their fifteenth birthday.[1132] The ritual was called "taking the toga", or "taking the gown"[1133]. Tiberius was formally inducted into Roman manhood on April 24th of 27 B.C.[1134] The day memorialized the formation of his adult identity, and by being one day before April 25, it inexorably intertwined Tiberius' psyche with Serapis and Christ. More fate.

This date of April 24, 27 B.C., has come down to us in a carved inscription on a monument.[1135] Tiberius' destiny was literally carved in stone, to be honored by all citizens of the Empire who saw it. Such a prominent display of vanity publicly commemorated his manhood for all time; we cannot say today that the ancients forgot it.

Serapis was understood to be an alternative identity for Zeus, supreme god of the universe. He was also viewed as another form of Neptune, god of the underworld and the grave. As Osiris, Serapis represented the Judge of the Dead and the Resurrector of all men to the life beyond. Osiris was the antithesis of Jesus Christ, and Tiberius was coalescing into Serapis-Osiris by the providential timing of his youthful inauguration into manhood.

Tiberius, soon to become a type of Jesus Christ as the Son of God, was tutored in the fates in an island that housed the false type of Jesus as Judge of Mankind and Resurrection God.

We should also note that well before he ever heard the name Jesus, Tiberius had aligned his own identity with Serapis. A man of Tiberius' vanity would presume the fateful similarities of his life with Serapis' religion as a mystical union between the supreme Sun god of death and the universe, and himself. "By virtue of the fates, I, Tiberius, am the Sun god Serapis on earth; Serapis lives in me. His festival is my manhood. He who rules the Universe as the Sun star has decreed against all opposition, that I shall indeed be Caesar." Could we also postulate that Tiberius' manhood eclipsed the glory of Serapis in his own eyes?

The problem was, he returned to Rome as a humiliated husband, a Caesar's choice of last resort, the universal object of doubting eyes. The gods of the spirit world might be with him, but external appearances were not. Thus the public world of assassin's daggers and Senator's secret conversations became a polarizing influence upon his every waking thought. A divisive force was permanently laid upon his psyche the day he was summoned back to Rome.

Is all this fanciful speculation on my part? Read on.

[1132] Suetonius, op. cit , pps. 159, and 321
[1133] Ibid
[1134] Levick, B , Tiberius the Politician , p 16
[1135] Op cit, p, 230, note 28

B. Astrology, Caesar and the Eclipsing of a Sun God's Powers

Manilius, an unknown today, wrote the earliest treatise on astrology in the classical world of which we presently have record. It is called Astronomica. He began writing his work in the time of Augustus and completed it while Tiberius was Caesar.[1136] Manilius may well have been a companion to Tiberius and Thrasyllus, in the Imperial palace. In the Astronomica, Manillius discusses all aspects of the heavenly scheme and astrology, but the work is written as a long poem with indirect allusions to people and places. In the fourth Book, he speaks in symbols about Tiberius Caesar, student of Astrology, living in Rhodes, the island of the Sun.

> .... the chaste maid Rhodes prospers on land and sea, the erstwhile abode of him who was to rule the world as emperor: the whole island is consecrated to the Sun, and Rhodes was in very truth its house at the time when it received into its care the light of the mighty universe in the person of Caesar.[1137] (emphasis added)

We have here a clear record of a Roman astrologer comparing Tiberius to the Sun (and Serapis) in the first known book on astrology. Opinions vary, but one author has flatly stated that Manilius' book was dedicated to Tiberius during Tiberius' reign,[1138] and before the death of Christ. Manilius exalts Tiberius to the level of the philosopher's Solar-Logos, during the time Tiberius studied astrology on Rhodes, the island of the Sun. In this aspect alone, without even considering other factors such as Tiberius' role in Roman religion as Pontifex Maximus, or his relation to the now-deified Augustus, he is firmly and publicly associated with the sun itself. If anything should happen to obscure or destroy the powers of the Sun, ALL MEN would immediately associate it with Tiberius directly.

Franz Cumont, a noted French historian of Classical religion, totally reinforces this point. He writes about the duality between Caesar and the Sun in his book, The Mysteries of Mithra. The passage perfectly captures the mindset to which Tiberius ascended.

> ... For all the astrologers, the Sun, ... was the royal star, ...
>
> .... the Caesars .... were divine for there were in them some of the elements of the Sun. Descended from the starry heavens, they returned there after their death to pass eternity in the company of the gods, their equals. [1139] (emphasis added)

[1136] Manilius, Astronomica, see p. xii. Goold, the translator ties together Tiberius, his birth sign of Libra, and the time Manilius wrote the reference to him, all very nicely.

[1137] Manilius, op cit , p 283.

[1138] Levick, in Note 27 on p. 30 of Tiberius the Politician plainly states that Manillius' work was dedicated to Tiberius. Referring to the Manilius dedication and two others, she writes: "These last dedications clearly suit Tiberius preoccupation with astrology and a stoic outlook."

[1139] Cumont, F , op cit , pps100-101

Tiberius' innermost thoughts, as I have postulated above, become frighteningly real with these words. There is also proof from his own mouth that Tiberius kept this image of himself as the Sun in the forefront of his thoughts till the day he died. Tacitus reports that in the last days of his life, while pondering a successor, Tiberius accused a politicking subordinate named Macro, of "abandoning the setting [sun] for the rising sun."[1140] Coming from a dying Caesar, it was no slight metaphor.

Yet look at how Caesar's ultimate demise is also hidden in this glorious proclamation of his Solar divinity.

If, as the above passage says, the Sun protects Caesar and the Sun loses its powers in an eclipse brought about by an act of the Christian God, then Caesar is exposed to the whole world, vulnerable beyond all men. God has decreed that Tiberius is to be extinguished like the light of the Sun. There simply was no place for him to turn that year to escape the public censure. He could not flee to Rhodes a second time to remove this onus from himself, though he tried. Capri, west of the Italian mainland, was his island refuge. There, in that island fortress of sublime beauty, he would remain throughout the cataclysm.[1141]

Eclipse omens were the staple of ancient astrology, due to their spectacular effect upon the sky and psyche. Starting 1800 B.C.[1142], Babylonian eclipse omens, and the magic to counter them, was catalogued in hallowed texts the priests piously consulted. The collection was enlarged over some 600 years in Old Babylon. It was called the Enuma Anu Enlil, or the "Illumination of Bel".[1143] The work was a standard in Mesopotamia, something like a Webster's Dictionary of Sky Omens. It consisted of at least (that is all we have today) seventy clay tablets, densely written upon both sides.[1144] Its sole purpose under the Assyrian kings was to divine the fates of the Assyrian king and nation.[1145] The Enlil was used in Mesopotamia well into the age of Greece and Rome. It was the primary document of Babylonian astrology, and therefore it was a standard reference for Thrasyllus and the others to consult. Probably they had parts of it memorized, as an indispensable part of their craft.

Now look at what the Babylonian astrologers, the Chaldeans who taught in Rhodes and later in Tiberius' court, had in their sacred texts for well over twelve hundred years before the day turned into night when Jesus died: "... the month Nisan [March-April], the 14th day, an eclipse of the Moon takes place. .... the king dies."[1146] Elsewhere, it says, "If, in the month of Nisan, ... there is an eclipse of the sun--the

[1140] Grant, op cit , p. 224
[1141] Suetonius, op cit., p. 403
[1142] Botero, J , Everyday Life in Ancient Mesopotamia, p. 191
[1143] Oppenheim, A., Ancient Mesopotamia, p 308 Sayce, who translated the original, has the name "Illumination of Bel" in line 89, p 268 of Astronomy and Astrology of the Babylonians
[1144] Ibid, p/ 225.
[1145] Ibid, pps. 308-309
[1146] Sayce, A , Astronomy and Astrology of the Babylonians, p. 258, line 90

king will die in that same year."[1147] An eclipse of the Moon, an eclipse of the Sun -- both are mentioned in the Enlil, both have the same fate for the King. Not one, but both occurred on that impossible day. The prediction was sure, there could not possibly be another fulfillment of the Omen than the death of Tiberius.

The Man who died during the eclipses had been called the King of the Jews. Ancient Babylonian astrology had therefore confirmed who He was. One King had indeed died in the very day the Omens said He would, another remained. Two eclipses, two Kings. One eclipse would have been enough to kill both, but two on the same day were unthinkable. The indication was clear to the astrologer: double death for Tiberius, double curse from the stars. Thrasyllus, the astrologers and indeed all Romans, knew this was a double, terrifying Sign of the Highest possible order, having the gravest consequence for Caesar, Empire and man.

Some may think that this is unlikely. No one in Tiberius' age knew anything of Babylonian astrology omens, the Enlil was not the greatest storehouse of omens in Tiberius' time. To such a foolish idea, there is another, more universal, answer.

One retelling of the battle of Pydna, that great battle between the Greeks and Romans in 168 B.C., says the lunar eclipse that terrorized the night before that conflict was viewed by the Roman legions as a sure sign the Greek King Perseus was about to die. If you do not believe that Babylonian Omens ever reached the court of Tiberius, there is still proof that the Romans knew eclipses, be they Solar or Lunar, meant the death of a King.[1148] It was a part of their national march to Empire.

The implications of such a mix of alarm, pride and paranoia in Caesar's mind was incendiary.

Pure and simple, it meant a personal undoing of the most severe nature imaginable. The divinity, the office, the manhood, the mind and the very life of Tiberius Caesar were all being assaulted by the Gods in the most spectacular double Omen ever seen.

The very moment Tiberius grasped this overwhelming reality, he might very well have concluded the hand of Fate had destined him for this colossal portent even from early manhood. Fate was no lifelong ally; rather it was a deeply treasonous persecutor, the ultimate enemy to be fought. In sum, all of the gods and all of the fates had rejected all of his life and meaning. Yet the hardened soldier obdurately held on to a thin semblance of legitimacy.

Now counterpose this herculean distress with Tiberius' affinity for the speculative arts.

[1147] See The Birth of Astrology, in Everyday Life in Ancient Mesopotamia, by Bottero, p. 192 for the eclipse quote.

[1148] See Lewis, G C , Historical Survey of the Astronomy of the Ancients, pps. 227-229, and his notes.

To say that Tiberius was a lifelong devotee of astrology is to miss the mark. Tiberius was not simply a student of the fates, rather he became their creature, dominated and controlled by them.[1149] Suetonius reported Tiberius was "firmly convinced everything was in the hands of fate[1150] (my emphasis). Elsewhere, he is less respectful of the Emperor. He reports the gossip that Tiberius, through contact with spirits, could foresee the future unfold years in advance of events.[1151] We will see that he constantly used horoscopes to divine his subject's fates. He was said to have prophesied to Claudius, that he too, would one day become Caesar.[1152] In one of the last audiences Tiberius had with his young grandson, he is said to have suddenly grasped the boy in a fit of inspired grief and prophesied that his young cousin, standing immediately next to him, would one day kill him and a third kill the cousin. His frenzied outburst proved to be completely true.[1153] They are the kind of stories, fanciful, or real, that Tiberius' life provoked. Perhaps now we all know why. Fraternizing with the spirits was all that was left to his troubled mind.

[1149] Levick, op. cit., p. 224.
[1150] Suetonius, op. cit., p. 407
[1151] Suetonius, op. cit., p. 405.
[1152] Dio Cassius, op. cit., p. 167.
[1153] Grant, loc. cit.

3.2.2 The Collapse of the Heavens and the Plot Against Tiberius in 31 A.D.

The way the events of Tiberius' life are told today, various milestones occur across the year of 31 A.D. Each is fairly well understood in its own moment, but there is no overarching genii or spirit that gives us insight to the whole. Tiberius was steeped in magic and astrology, he kills men based upon their horoscopes, but when he engages in a protracted scheme to outwit and cast out the rival for his throne, the modern scholars will not trouble to look for any trace of magic or astrology in those events. Such a whitewashing of Tiberius' character at such a crucial moment in his life is unthinkable. The moderns limit themselves to the self-evident. The supremely obvious fact that Tiberius is under siege and all may be lost, is all that they report as driving the events of 31 A.D. Who would be so foolish as to expect to see any deeper and learn any more? We have a stream of episodes from the life of a tyrant. Should we expect any more than this? Most do not. Nipping around the edges of what we know is a silence, and breakdown of logic. Why does Tiberius do the outlandish things that he does in 31 A.D? An unstable mind is the cause, no other. No reason to venture into those questions, there is nothing more to learn.

There was a plot afoot to undo and overthrow Tiberius. It was fomented by a man who had been an eager servant of Tiberius for some eleven years, his closest and most trusted lieutenant, a man who had been favored and honored with exceptional acumens for many years. The details of that plot, and its cast of complicitors were lost in the blood-bath which followed their failure. Few, if any, would ever want to recite their now dead dreams. One day in 31 A.D. both plot and counter-plot surface, and grip the stage of history. Ultimately, the tide reverses itself with brutal and sickening treachery. The story of Sejanus, his planned coup against Tiberius, and Tiberius' savage destruction of his former favorite, still stuns the senses after 2,000 years.

We do not need to recount the whole story. Suffice it to say Sejanus was the son of the man who ruled Tiberius' personal bodyguards, the Praetorian Guards, the best of all the Roman soldiers.[1154] He inherited his father's role, in 20 A.D., and became the willing, voracious instrument of Tiberius' will upon all enemies.[1155] Sejanus, in turn, goaded by his fortune and youth, used his position to systematically form an incursion into Tiberius' royal sphere, to the point of killing Drusus, possibly the next Caesar, adulterating with all the wives of the aristocracy, and nearly becoming the Imperial son-in-law. The unending interplay between the aging Tiberius, and his young, willing assassin, went on for eleven years, then abruptly ended in the horrific destruction of late 31 A.D. Most scholars recognize in hindsight that the mixture of these two men's personalities was only waiting the right moment for its explosion.

> Up to a certain point, which was not yet in sight, Sejanus was the perfect servant. .... Exactly how far .... Tiberius .... gauged .... that point of peril, is a problem beyond our power to answer.[1156]

[1154] Dio Cassius, op. cit., p. 169
[1155] Dio Cassius, op. cit., p. 167.
[1156] Baker, G.P., op. cit., p. 235

But why did it happen in 31 A.D?

An eleven-year balancing act of treacherous acrobatics between two driven men could have gone on for an unknown amount of time. Instead, it ends in the true year Jesus died. No modern scholar ever asks if there was anything unusual about 31 A.D. Could Caesar's struggle have been part of a larger tapestry? Might an external force have precipitated this foregone holocaust? Could the stars have goaded Sejanus to reveal and unleash his long-silent intentions in 31 A.D? Such a though is "beyond our power".

What we have today for the history of 31 A.D. is the retelling of a counter-plot by Tiberius in deliberate tones. You are now going to see that the true meaning of those events, and their aftermath, can only be appreciated in light of the Crucifixion.

From the matrix of Tiberius' trauma, will come the survival of the infant Church. It was written in the stars by the hand of God.

3.2.3 The Greater Astrology Behind Sejanus' Death

If the twists and turns of Tiberius' life are astounding, the magic and astrology that was used to deliver him from Sejanus will prove to be no less so. The counter-plot against Sejanus was all about fate, and reverse magic. I have made the point repeatedly that Tiberius lived to fraternize with spirits that gave him power over men, and triumph over destinies. In astrology, those destinies are revealed in star maps called horoscopes.

Horoscopes show how spirits in the stars will influence the lives of men on earth. The positions of the Sun, Moon, and planets, when merged with those of the twelve Zodiac constellations, form a spiritual mix of powers that shine down upon the Earth. As the positions change in the sky, their cumulative powers over men change as well. Favorable powers at a man's birth would be manifested as ability, opportunity, or destiny. It is all called fate.

Tiberius relied upon casting horoscopes as a basic part of his rule. They were essential in order to remove all potential rivals. He would constantly find out the exact moment of each nobleman's birth, so as to be able to cast accurate horoscopes for the man's life. If there were any promise of favorable fortune whatsoever in the man's stars, it was reason enough to execute him. Apparently Tiberius did this for decades.[1157]

For his part, Thrasyllus was continually casting horoscopes for his master, thereby constantly assuming the inalterable role of the Sun and Moon in guiding the hand of fate. The Sun was the Royal Star. Tiberius was the Sun on earth, the Power around whom all horoscopes revolved. Clearly, Caesar and sage relied upon the Sun and the Moon as instruments for the perpetuation of their own power.

In particular, all horoscopes were cast with the Sun (day) or Moon (night) at their center. In a sense, these two bodies were the focal point from which all fates emanated. Shake or eclipse these two great lights and ALL fates of all men are ruined, not just Caesar's. All this is plainly stated in Manilius' astrology book.[1158]

As we already saw, divining eclipse omens goes back to Mesopotamia and perhaps 2200 B.C. The eclipse omens had one other aspect to them that I have not mentioned, they almost always speak of someone seizing the throne. In short, conspiracy, war, overthrow of government and the will of the gods go hand in hand with the Portent for the King's execution. Through their studies of the Enuma Anu Enlil, Thrasyllus, the Chaldean astrologers who practiced in Tiberius' court, and indeed all astrologers throughout the Empire, would have been very familiar with this sinister aspect of the Nisan eclipse omen.[1159] The very first omens listed in the Enlil deal with eclipses, the death of the King on an eclipse day and men "seizing

[1157] Dio Cassius, op. cit., p. 167

[1158] Manilius, op. cit., p. 177

[1159] See Lenarmant, Chaldean Magic, p. 327, for the codification of the astrology texts in the time of Sargon I. Since he was writing in 1874, his date is certainly approximate. The same comments apply to my primary source for the Enlil text, The Astronomy and Astrology of the Babylonians, by Archibald Sayce, also written in 1874. See p. 150 for Sayce's reference to Sargon I.

the throne".[1160] Later on in the text, omens are listed for the entire year, starting with the first month, Nisan and proceeding until the end. The very first omen listed for the entire calendar is the Lunar eclipse on Nisan 14 that causes the death of the King.[1161] I have examined only a partial translation of the Enlil into English and I have counted some 18 examples of eclipse omens, the King's death and the throne being seized.[1162] Nothing was more important in Babylonian astrology than eclipses, the overthrow of government and the death of the King. Nothing. This relationship to Sejanus' plot is once more, very striking.

Thrasyllus also knew how the Babylonian King delivered himself from fate's decree of death and preserved his government: he slayed a substitute king. In Babylon, there existed the ritual of inserting a sacrificial victim, usually a common criminal of no ability whatsoever, into the office of the constituted king and then killing him. In one of its forms, it was called the Sacaea.[1163] The actual king removed himself from governing his realm and the surrogate literally moved into the King's life. At some auspicious time, possibly determined as a part of the rite, the false king was ritually murdered and the doomed monarch returned to office, once more secure in his throne. The Fates had been placated. It is documented that one Babylonian king, named Esrahaddon, outlived an incredible twelve eclipses in his reign by promoting that number of substitutes to their slaughter.[1164]

Since this was a formal ritual of Babylonian astrology and religion that had been practiced for centuries in Mesopotamia, and since Babylon was indeed considered the hallowed origin of astrology, we need to realize that a supremely competent magus like Thrasyllus would have mandated it as the only way of escape for Tiberius. A modern Sacaea, tailored to the unique circumstances of 31 A.D., was to be staged in order to save Tiberius' life. As we will see, the record of known actions by Tiberius, as reported by Suetonius, Dio Cassius, Juvenal and other existing historians, conclusively demonstrates this was indeed the turn of events. The more carefully we consider the known details of Sejanus' fall, the more astounding the true set of events becomes. The literal events of Sejanus' accusal and reverse fortunes were in reality an enactment of the ancient Babylonian custom of substitute King sacrifice, slightly modified and directly orchestrated by Tiberius.

It was accomplished via a six-month long plan of subterfuge that few in Rome would recognize as an astrologer's trap, although all would see Tiberius' treachery

[1160] Sayce, A., The Astronomy and Astrology of the Babylonians, p 239

[1161] Ibid, p 258

[1162] Ibid, p. 239, lines 12, 13 p. 241, lines 18, 19, p. 245, lines 36, 37, p 247, line 45, p 248, lines 46, 49, p 250, line 56, p. 253, line 69, p 255, lines 77, 80 (implied), p. 257, line 87, p 258, line 90, p 272, line 153, p 285, line 207, p 286, lines 209, 210 (one incident). Clay, writing in his book, The Origin of Biblical Traditions, on a footnote on p. 12, quotes one Babylonian omen text as saying: "If there was an eclipse of the sun on the 16th day, the king of Akkad will die, and the king of Amurru [Syria] will seize the throne"

[1163] Frazer, J.G., The New Golden Bough, p 287. I cover the more amazing aspects of the Sacaea in volume ii of this present book.

[1164] See Sasson, J M, Civilizations of the Ancient Near East, vol. ii, p. 953, for a detailed discussion of this Lenarmant, op. cit., pps 7, 11, in turn, gives examples of incantations to extend a man's life under the benevolence of the Sun These examples are important to note, because they give a documented way in the Babylonian magic for Tiberius to reverse his fate

and cunning, after the coup was complete. Suetonius flatly admitted that Tiberius had relied more on plotting and trickery in his overthrow of Sejanus, than the power of his office.[1165] No one knew how deeply the plotting had to go for it to reach fruition.

Tiberius constructed the timing of events to execute the Sacrifice on a Full Moon in the Fall, when the powers of the Sun, Moon and stars were exactly the reverse of what they were in the Springtime. Reversed, to the day. Just as he cast the horoscopes of his victims to the exact day and hour, so his master-spell would require no less precision with the stars.

In addition to the official Omen texts, other texts exist today, containing the original Babylonian incantations for the removal of evils caused by eclipses.[1166] They too, would be part of Tiberius' library of ancient scrolls. There was also a rich tradition in Greek astrology, of witches "praying down" the Moon during an eclipse, which Thrasyluus, a Greek, also would have known. It was originally believed in Greece that an eclipsed Moon was "bewitched" and that counter-incantations could reverse its magic, or even its course in the sky, thereby undoing the unwelcome sight. Various Greek women had attained great fame for their magical abilities to predict and "reverse" the effects of eclipsed Moons in the centuries before Tiberius.[1167] We can be sure that various incantations to the Moon, both Greek and Babylonian, were recited by Thrasyllus and Tiberius in the villa at Capri that night.

The Babylonian texts had decreed that first a Solar eclipse must occur and then the King would die. But in Jerusalem, the King's death produced the great three-hour-long eclipse; highly irregular, terrifying in the extreme. It made the man in Jerusalem a God. This was no ordinary King or eclipse and Tiberius was caught in its fate. The literal circumstances of the Jewish Messiah's death would form the key part of the reverse magic needed to release Tiberius from his own, identical, fate.

For some peculiar, and I would say fortunate, reason the day Tiberius' counter-conspiracy was executed, along with the pitiable Sejanus, has been preserved in the histories for us. Many men were destroyed without this modicum of information noted down. This tiny, innocuous piece of information proves Tiberius was patterning his entire scheme around the astrology of the Crucifixion eclipses.

Sejanus was killed in the afternoon of the 18th day of October, 31 A.D.[1168]

[1165] Suetonius, op. cit., p 401.

[1166] As one example, see King, Babylonian Magic and Sorcery, pps 5-6, and 118-129, for incantations relating to breaking Lunar eclipse omens On p. 120, the incantation is addressed to the Sun god Shamash, for relief from a Lunar eclipse On pps 122 and 129, reference is made to prayers for King Assurbanipal of Assyria from astral or eclipse-related distress This is just one set of fragments.

[1167] See Sir George C Lewis, Historical Survey of the Astronomy of the Ancients, pps. 230-231, especially note 72 on p. 230. Lewis gives some 13 references from ancient writings to validate this point.

[1168] I have three references for this date, and realize there are more See G Ramsay, Juvenal, p. 198, note1, Baker, G.P., op cit., p 265, marginal note, and Levick, B., op. cit., p 177.

Reversing the Fates, through Opposite Seasons

Tiberius and Sejanus had been co-consuls, co-administrators of the Empire, at the start of 31 A.D., at Tiberius request.[1169] But we know from recorded history that a little over five months before October 18 Tiberius forced Sejanus to resign.[1170] What is the significance of this peculiar circumstance? Everything. Count the days. Five months before October 18, 31 A.D., brings us back to May 18. More than five months, brings us to early May, or even late April. The Solar eclipse announcing Tiberius must die was on April 25.

The man closest to the throne is removed from office immediately after this date and forced to wait until October 18, before Tiberius will kill him. Why? And what is the significance of October 18, 31 A.D.? Why not execute an enemy in May or June? or immediately? The effect of the Jewish King's Eclipse upon the fates must be taken into account and reversed at the exact star time, if Tiberius is to live beyond the year. If we can discover a deeper astrology behind October 18, 31 A.D., then we will have the evidence of Tiberius' true plotting. Only an absolutely overpowering "magic" in the heavens could have moved Tiberius the astrologer to wait six months to slay his enemy. Tiberius routinely killed enemies and rivals upon whim. Yes, Sejanus was powerful and protected, but the eventual destruction which Tiberius used against him, did not, of itself, need to be delayed for six months. It could have been done sooner. On the other hand, a simple re-enactment of the original Babylonian substitute sacrifice was inadequate to resolve this extreme circumstance, where two eclipses affected the powers of both the Sun and Moon in the same day. Consider the problems Thrasyllus and Tiberius faced.

The extraordinary events surrounding Jesus' death were not anticipated in the Babylonian eclipse ritual. In the rite, we have one eclipse and one death, that of the substitute king, perhaps a few weeks later or less. One eclipse, two men, one death satisfies the fates, life returns to normal, that is all. In Tiberius' case, the need was greater. The supernatural eclipse of the Sun and the death of the Jewish King had to be worked into the reverse astrology that would liberate Tiberius from long term weakening of power, but the ritual sacrifice also had to be fulfilled. We return to the question of why Tiberius waited for October 18 to act. Again, the answer is in the dates.

As the story played out, there was absolutely nothing happenstance or arbitrary about October 18. Tiberius deliberately sent his agent, Macro, the new head of the Imperial bodyguards, to Rome the night of the 17th, on a pretext.[1171] The actual set of events began when Macro met with Sejanus at daybreak on the 18th. Tiberius concealed his astrology for 2,000 years, but look now at what the dates reveal. There is nothing astrological in April 25, or October 18, when we use the Roman

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[1169] Dio Cassius, op cit , p 171, Suetoniuis, op cit , p. 401 Note 111 on p 400 gives the year as 31 A D

[1170] Some modern scholars think Sejanus did so voluntarily (Levick, op cit., p 177. But Suetonius writes (op cit., pps 401-403) that Tiberius gave Sejanus the Consulship in order to remove it and thereby dishonor him in a spectacular way. Dio Cassius, on p 237, rather completely describes how Tiberius repeatedly gave and repossessed the office of Consul at will, in order to reassert his pre-eminence It was a tool of his political largesse, and the string by which he jerked his political puppets.

[1171] Dio Cassius, op cit , p 209, and Levick, op. cit., p 177

system. But when the dates are converted to the Hebrew-Babylonian calendar for 31 A.D., which is based upon the days of the Lunar cycle, there is indeed a pattern.

April 25th, 31 A.D. was the 14th of Nisan, the first month of the Hebrew Year, when the spiritual new year was celebrated.

October 18th, 31 A.D was the 14th of Tishri[1172], the seventh month of the Hebrew Year, when the Kings were officially installed into their office in Babylon and Israel.[1173] The light of the Moon, or its "power" would be identical on both occasions, because both fell on the same day of the Lunar month, the 14th.

The Babylonian Omen texts have more to say about this. I started this discussion with the 3,800-year-old Omen text regarding Nisan 14 and the death of the king, but the coincidence becomes even more incredible. There is also an Omen text for Tishri 14. Even though it was written some 1,800 years before Sejanus, it fits the circumstances of his undoing perfectly. Look at what Archibald Sayce, the Oxford scholar, translated from ancient clay writings in 1874:

> In the seventh month (Tishri), the 14th day, soldiers from a hostile land, the heart (of the country) overpower.[1174]

Overthrow of Government by Armies on Tishri 14

Tishri 14 was identified in the Omen texts as the day regimes fell. Sejanus had many supporters in the Legions who would assist in the revolt. Instead, on the very day the text predicted his soldiers would have found success, Sejanus is slain and the entire revolt reversed.

To kill Sejanus in the astrological month he would have been "coronated", on the astrological day his soldiers should have triumphed, was to reverse the whole Kingship of Sejanus, the fate behind it and restore the government to Tiberius. To sacrifice Sejanus to the fates on the same day of the Month the Jewish King died, was to reverse the effect of the Solar Eclipse at the Crucifixion. In truth, Tishri 14 becomes a battle-day of cosmic proportions, written in magic texts nearly two millennia ahead of its time.

But that Tishri 14 was even more astoundingly critical to Tiberius' survival. There would be a Lunar eclipse and a full Moon near that day, just as there had been the day Jesus died six months before.

The timing of events in this reverse scheme was as close as possible to the happenings of April 25. The following times are not identical to the minute, they

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[1172] See Parker and Dubberstein, op cit p 46 for the Hebrew-Babylonian calendar dates in 31 A.D. On page 26, the authors explain that the dates given in their tables, are Roman dates, which begin at midnight and end at midnight, as opposed to the Hebrew convention of starting the day at dusk of the previous day. Bear, op cit , pps 8,9,and 21, shows that October 18, 31 A D was a Thursday.

[1173] Recall that the early Babylonian calendar once began on the seventh month, then shifted to the Springtime, creating two New Years, one civil, and one religious.

[1174] Sayce, A., Astronomy and Astrology of the Babylonians, p. 265.

could not be, but they are as exact as one could hope for, if someone wished to reproduce the astral circumstances of Jesus' death six month later. As I show shortly, the events of October 18 that Tiberius could control, match those of April 25, even more perfectly.

A Lunar eclipse commenced about 6:55 P.M. Rome time on Nisan 14 (April 25) of 31 A.D..
A Lunar eclipse commenced about 1:43 A.M. Rome time on Tishri 15 (October 19).[1175] that same year

The full Moon arrived at 9:04 P.M. Rome time on Nisan 14. (April 25). Christ's body had been buried for about four hours at that time.[1176]

The full Moon arrived at 4:12 A.M. Rome time on Tishri 15 (October 19). Sejanus' body had been thrown on the Gemonium Stairs for about eight hours at that time.

The timing of Sejanus' removal from power in late April, his appointed day of execution in October and the omens associated with October 18, strongly demonstrate Tiberius was using astrology to react to greater astrology, by first ridding himself of a co-ruler who would be very eager to fulfill the Solar Omen with the blade of a sword and take the crown, precisely at the moment of Christ's Solar eclipse. It also proves a pre-meditated plot by Tiberius, rooted in astrology, keyed to the day of the month Jesus died, using mirror-eclipses of the Moon, that fell in late April and mid-October, to fulfill and reverse fate. There is yet other additional evidence for his complicity with the stars. It comes from Tiberius' actions during the six month interval between these two months, while he was risking his life.

Dio Cassius plainly states that Tiberius was in seclusion on the isle of Capri, repeatedly feigning near-death collapses and spectacular sudden recoveries, throughout the six months between April and October of 31 A.D.[1177] Both Sejanus and the overall population were constantly being fed "contradictory reports", in an absolutely dizzying fashion.[1178] Tiberius was recovering, and soon would arrive in Rome. No, Tiberius was failing, and near death's door. Why such pathetic behavior on the part of the World ruler? Astrology, and only astrology, gives sense to it.

Tiberius was pretending the Solar Eclipse omen <u>was indeed working;</u> he was dying of a curse, or sudden natural causes, in the days immediately following April 25. No daggers need be unsheathed to kill him; the fates were powerfully at work and had almost completed the task for Sejanus. Although no longer Consul with Tiberius, Sejanus was still extremely popular, people worshipped at golden statues erected

[1175] Liu and Fiala, op. cit. p. 91, eclipse numbers 3720, and 3721
[1176] See Goldstine, op cit., p.86 for the times of the full moon in April and October of 31 A.D. The April 25 full moon is listed as number 12755, occurring at approximately 20:04 PM Rome time. The October 19 full moon is listed as number 12764, occurring at approximately 4:12 A.M Rome time Goldsrine times are based on an observer in the city of Babylon I have assumed Rome is two hours earlier than the times in Goldstine's table
[1177] Dio Cassius, op. cit., pps. 203, 205
[1178] Ibid, p. 205

to him[1179] and he would benefit greatly from a sudden natural death of Tiberius. One might even say the gods had given Tiberius' death as a sign that all Rome should elect Sejanus Caesar. But the feigning and recovering was all a ploy by Tiberius that attests to the reality of Christ's Eclipse. It bought precious time until the stars could be turned upon Sejanus, ridding Tiberius of the whole fate. The reign of terror could not begin in April or May, something far greater had to be dealt with, or Caesar would die, regardless of how many Romans he killed in May of 31 A.D.

Tiberius' submission to the ironclad rule of starry fate showed itself in yet another way during the year of 31-32 A.D. Suetonius reported that Tiberius stayed in his self-imposed imprisonment at Capri for nine more months after the death of Sejanus.[1180] What, if any, is the magical significance of nine months? Once more the answer lies in the seasons, dates and reverse astrology of the age. Seasons change every three months for the astrologer, as the Sun moves through the four quadrants of the Zodiac. Nine months from October 18, 31 A.D., brings us to mid-July, 32 A.D.; from Fall to the heat of Summer, when the Sun is at its most powerful radiance. Most modern astrology discussions point out that the Sun in Summer is a "dying" Sun. True enough, but the Sun on a particular day, namely the Summer Solstice, would be the most powerful Sun of the entire year and a good augur for the "Coming out" of Tiberius from his "darkness" on Capri. The day the Sun's rays first diminished ever so slightly, Tiberius, the Sun Incarnate on Earth, would replace its dwindling radiance with his own secure powers, once more radiating over the world of men.

The time of the Summer Solstice, has profound significance in astrology. In the Roman calendar, which is what Suetonius used, nine months from October 18, brings us to July 18, 32 A.D. July 18 was actually Tammuz 20 in the Hebrew-Babylonian calendar for that year[1181], and this brings us directly to the death and resurrection astrology of Tammuz, the Babylonian Sun god. Tiberius' release from Capri was aligned to the day with the resurrection of the Sun god Tammuz. As I show in Chapter 2, Tammuz was universally said to have died on the 17th day of the month named for him. The most ancient of myths said he was crucified for three days and three nights in the underworld. Three days and three nights, whether 72 hours or just parts of three days, would bring us to Tammuz 19 - Tammuz 20, which is exactly the time that Tiberius was said to have left his island lair. As Tammuz emerges from the grave, Tiberius emerges from Capri to renewed life and power. Thrasyllus was using all the "good" magic he could, to re-inforce the return and career of Tiberius.

There can be no doubt--Tiberius' every action was influenced by the astrology of the Sun god and the need to enact it in order to live.

[1179] Dio Cassius, op. cit., pps. 187, 217 speaks of Sejanus' statues being worshipped. For the "golden" statues, see Suetonius, op. cit., p. 401.

[1180] Suetonius, op. cit., p. 403.

[1181] See Parker and Dubberstein, op. cit., p. 46, which shows that Tammuz 1 (Dumuzi 1) fell on June 28 of 32 A.D. Therefore Tammuz 20 was July 18, 32 A.D.

His actions were masterful, frightening and diabolical. They prove Jesus died under a Supernatural Eclipse and Caesar himself knew very well about it. Tiberius Caesar is the greatest witness from history that Jesus Christ is indeed the Son of the Living God who moves the universe. How fitting.

Let me now reprise what we have just covered, "recasting" it as greater astrology with a complete set of "starry" details.

Most scholars acknowledge Tiberius executed his vengeance upon Sejanus in a highly controlled, surgical manner. It involved an orchestration of events worthy of an emperor. Sejanus was accused, condemned and executed, all on October 18.[1182] He had been expecting, even at that late date, to be given further honors that would bring him yet closer to absolute rule, as soon as Tiberius was cold. The day had multiple astrological meanings to Tiberius. Obviously, it was the day of a mirror-eclipse to April 25 (Lunar, not Solar). It was also the first day of the eight-day long Jewish Feast of Tabernacles in 31 A.D. Tabernacles was a harvest festival which mirrored the eight-day Passover-Unleavened Bread festival in April. In other words, it was a high Feast of the God associated with the two eclipses that plagued Tiberius on April 25. That God was also in October 18. Christians would be keeping the Festival of Tabernacles to the same God. Their difference was in whether Jesus was Messiah, or a fraud, but they kept the same Holy Days. To Tiberius, it was all One God. The forces of fate, which that God had unleashed in April, had to be countered with the "superior" gods of Babylon, Greece and Egypt in October.

Sejanus was condemned to die by decree in the Senate during the daylight part of October 18, before or around noon, and executed by strangulation, before "that very night."[1183]

I will cover in detail the similarities between events on the two days in the next Section, but the events of April 25 and October 18 also form a study in celestial and political opposites; opposites which reverse one another:

1) The full Moons of Spring and Fall, which hosted each death, occurred exactly half a year apart. Six months' time splits the yearly cycle of the Sun precisely in half, into two segments of opposite starry power. By picking this date, Tiberius was balancing the opposite astrological forces of Spring and Fall against each other, to neutralize them and reverse his overall fate from evil to good.

2) In the days following the Spring equinox (March 22), the length of day exceeds that of night. To the astrologer, the extended day signifies that the powers of light (righteousness) have overtaken those of spiritual darkness. The exact opposite situation occurs in the heavens six months later, after the Fall equinox (September 22). Tiberius had to wait until after September 22, for opposite astral conditions to be present in the sky.

[1182] Baker, G.P , op cit , p. 265 , and Levick, B., op cit , p 177
[1183] Durant, W , op cit , p 264.

The increasing spiritual powers of the Sun in the Spring were diminished by the April eclipses. The failing powers of the Sun in the fall were reversed by the incantations over Sejanus' body and fleeing spirit;, they were transformed by Tiberius into the extended powers of his reign.

3) Death to Caesar was ordained in the Springtime, when life is just being renewed. It was countered and turned back into his life in the decay of fall; an exact reversal of impact.

4) Jesus' death augured for Tiberius' death. Sejanus' death was intended to imitated the timing of the Jewish King's death, in all its major details; Sejanus' death became Tiberius' life.

5) Tiberius, Sun god, was usurped of his powers and authority on the day of the Jewish God in April. Tiberius, Sun god, would be restored on the day of the Jewish God in October, proving his pre-eminence.

Reasserting himself as Sun-god on earth, Tiberius would enforce his political prestige by this time showing himself in control of events very similar to those of April 25. On October 18 (Tishri 14), Tiberius would be controlling events leading up to another Lunar eclipse; he would be godlike in his control of Sejanus' fate and in orchestrating the events before the appearance of another Sign in the Moon. He would not be the unwitting victim of a disastrous eclipse this time; now he would appear to be the one administering an eclipse to mankind.

Long Term Consequences of the October 19, Eclipse - The Reign of Terror

So the full Moon of October 18 was critical, and the sacrifice of Sejanus must occur at the Holy Day of the Jewish God, but the overarching element in all this was the eclipse, the one that Tiberius had to appear to be controlling.

It occurred in the early part of October 19, 31 A.D., mere hours after his successful strike against Sejanus. An eclipse of the Moon, as nearly identical to the one of April 25 as could be hoped for was waiting to be seized. No doubt Thrasyllus had spent days calculating the exact event with Hipparchus' methods. The ancients called it "scientific astrology". Tiberius was most likely up late that night at his majestic villa on the isle of Capri, conferring with Thrasyllus, issuing instructions, receiving reports and waiting for it to happen with his own eyes. Conventional history appears to confirm this, down to the very hour.

Suetonius explains that Tiberius had employed a series of signalmen, stringing a line from Rome to Capri, probably ending in boats along the Bay of Naples, to "telegraph" the successful completion of each step in his plan as it unfolded on October 18.[1184] Ships had been manned off his villa in Capri to immediately shuttle him off to loyal legions in the East, at the first false signal.[1185] Tiberius seated himself at a vantage point high on the island, no doubt with Thrasyllus at his side,

[1184] Suetonius, op cit , p 403
[1185] Baker, C P , op cit , p 266

so he could watch each signal as it was received that day. The time to receive the report from Rome at Capri by semaphores would have been at most an hour. If Sejanus was executed by 6 P.M., then Tiberius would have known all details well before midnight. Scholars presume he went to his villa to relax and rest after the last signal was received.[1186] I do not believe it was so. There was one more Signal, one from the Heavens, that Tiberius would stay up all night frantically watching, while praying his incantations to the spirits.

Historical records of eclipses describe how seven or eight hours after Sejanus was slain, there was an eclipse of the Moon, in the early hours of October 19, 31 A.D., turning it orange-red. This eclipse was visible throughout the Empire, from Rome and Jerusalem and even beyond.[1187] The population's reactions would have to be speedily managed.

Insurgents would yet interpret the orange Moon to their own purposes, but Tiberius would squelch them. They would pretend yet another omen against the power of Caesar was given in the heavens, just minutes after he regained his grip on the Imperial throne. Base men would think the gods were speaking contrary to him, for all of the Empire to see. Tiberius' soothsayers would pontificate differently. They would decree that the orange Moon must foreshadow Caesar's victory in a coming war with the insurgents, not his defeat.

The orange eclipse put yet another task upon Tiberius. The very color gave the former general his commission. The Moon that night was slightly paler than the one six months earlier, but it was still inflamed. Thrasyllus could interpret it as meaning the intensity of war was subsiding, Tiberius' plot was working. Nevertheless, the threat of an overwhelming war was not over, only lessened.

Interpreting the colors of eclipses was raised to the status of a science by astrologers at that time. Claudius Ptolemy, author of the astrology book Tetrabiblos (160 A.D.), explained at length how the color of an eclipse, whether it is Solar or Lunar, affects the interpretation of the omen and the results it augurs upon men. He taught that if the colors of the eclipse were reddish, then the consequences of the portent would be of a nature similar to that of Mars, the red god of war. If the color were black, events would parallel Saturn's character.[1188] Mars was the war god of the Roman Empire who blessed the legions as they forged into conquest. Rome fought centuries of wars to obtain its realm and Tiberius, of course, was a highly crafty general, a consummate practitioner of Mars' art, a son

[1186] Ibid, and Levick, B , op. cit., p. 178.

[1187] See Von Oppolzer, op cit , p 344, lunar eclipse numbered 1911, with maximum eclipse at 3:21 AM Universal Time or approximately 5:21 AM Rome time on the night / morning of October 18 -19, 31 A.D. See also p 91, eclipse number 3791, also for the night of October 18 - 19, 31 A.D. in Liu and Fiala, op. cit Liu and Fiala give the eclipse as staring 12:53 AM on October 19, and lasting until 5:54 A.M. Universal Time (Greenwich Mean Time). Assuming Rome is two hours later than Greenwich, England, this would be 2:53 AM and 7:54 AM Rome time Liu and Fiala give a magnitude for this eclipse of .237, which is an orange-red color, slightly more yellow than the blood-red eclipse of April 25, which had a magnitude of .354 Magnitudes are measured according to the Danjon scale (All Lunar eclipses are seen by the entire half of the Earth facing the Moon at occultation.)

[1188] Ashmand, J M , op. cit., p 62.

of the god. All this lore of his life was now thrust into Tiberius' face, by the orange eclipse, as a second challenge for survival.

The experience of a call to arms by Mars to protect his rule as Caesar, unleashed all the instabilities of Tiberius' persona that we have already considered, whirling them into a heightened state of frenzy. In the ensuing months, Tiberius may be said to have become deranged. Will Durant expressed it this way in 1944: "Probably his mind was now disordered; only on this supposition can we explain the incredible cruelties attributed to him."[1189]

There were also greater, longer-term effects of the eclipse to burden Tiberius. The basic teaching from Manilius, his contemporary and ardent admirer, is that eclipses, by causing light to fail, weaken the powers that the Zodiac signs display over man and fate.[1190] (The power is in the light.) Good omens no longer will prevail under an eclipse. Those signs and planets that are associated with Sun or Moon at the time of the Eclipse are most directly weakened. More than this, an eclipse can cause long term weakening of astral powers over men; it can actually deplete the influence of the stars over men for a year or more. Each eclipse, according to Manilius' astrology, can truly rend the powers of heaven and keep it that way.

What then was the net effect of multiple eclipses in the Spring and Fall of 31 A.D., when the earth was at opposite sides of the heavens? The omens had decreed was for Tiberius, weakening upon weakening, in season, out of season, year upon year. A counterblow against the enemy, the Aristocracy, had to be prepared. Surely all of this too, must have flashed into Tiberius' mind like lightning when Thrasyllus first told him there would be a third eclipse. It had to have been intractable for him; the start of an impossible downward spiral into deep and lingering insanity.

Look at Manilius' text, describing the devastation of eclipses over the normal forces of life, yourself. It was written probably 15 - 20 A.D. Come and read the words that echoed in the ears of a threatened Emperor two thousand years ago. Recall that these words were dedicated to Tiberius as the Sun on earth, studied by him and relied upon for their wisdom. The words were in Tiberius' library in 31 A.D. He certainly discussed them incessantly with both Manilius and Thrasyllus.

> .... whatever signs have seen the Moon eclipsed, ... and plunged into the darkness of night, ... those signs too become .... stricken. .... [D]eprived of their customary powers .... sometimes a whole year is spent in this condition, ... all these changes are caused by the proximity of the eclipse.[1191]

Tiberius' direct reign of terror lasted about one year, although his cruelty was permanent. In the full text Manilius makes another important point which I will paraphrase. Signs are affected in pairs, on opposite sides of the heavens. Here is an example: If an eclipse occurs in or near the Zodiac sign of Sagittarius, then

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[1189] Durant, W., op. cit., p. 264.
[1190] See next quote
[1191] Manilius, op. cit., pps. 289, 291, and note "c" on p. 290.

Gemini, the constellation across the heavens from Sagittarius, is also weakened in the horoscopes it casts.[1192] Why is this critical to Tiberius' scheming? Because when the Moon eclipsed the Sun that Day, it moved from one side of the heavens to the other to create the Solar eclipse, then returned back across the sky to its normal position, before the Lunar eclipse occurred. . In other words, the signs of heaven on both sides of the Zodiac were weakened by the two eclipses, and doubly so. We might say that God's act was a lesson to astrologers that He was enfeebling all powers of heaven. Christ's words describing the Second Coming apply here as well:

25 And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring;
26 Men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken.
(Luke 21:25-26)

It is no exaggeration to say perplexity and fear still surrounded Tiberius on October 19, 31 A.D. In victory, he realized the ever-present uncertainty of each step he executed to regain his grip on power and he knew the Empire, with its anxious lieutenants, was watching. There was no more Sejanus, but there were many who would aspire to follow him. Julius Caesar was slain by a mob of Senators, so that no one man would be held responsible. Tiberius would have to slay the mob before it slayed him. It would be at least one year before the powers of the signs would be renewed. He would fill that time as only a successful General could - with bloodshed.

Yet one more revelation, this time from a woman, confronts Tiberius in the throes of all these struggles and torments. Apicata, the first wife of Sejanus, writes Tiberius a letter after Sejanus' execution, then commits suicide. In the letter she explains that years earlier Sejanus had poisoned Tiberius' son and heir, Drusus, destroying the old man's legacy.[1193]

[1192] See How to Read Your Star Signs by Susan Fenton, for a general background in Zodiac readings, the stars and horoscopes
[1193] Baker, G.P., op. cit., pps 268-269

3.2.4 Linking Sejanus' Death to Jesus Through the King Sacrifice of Babylon

Contrasting the Sequence of Events on the Days Jesus and Sejanus Die.

Tiberius never actually asked for Sejanus' death on the morning of October 18; the tide of events that he orchestrated led a fearful Senate to act as a mob and draw that conclusion itself. Pontius Pilate did not intend to execute Jesus from the first, either. The Gospels say the mob brought that change about. The progression of events for each step of the trials and executions of the men also match.

Suetonius says Sejanus was "escorted to the Senate at dawn"[1194] of October 18, the day of the Full Moon. Six months earlier, Christ had made his appearance before the Sanhedran, the ruling Council, in the early morning of April 25, also at about dawn.[1195] He was scourged, then crucified about 9 A.M. On the morning of October 18, Tiberius had an envoy read a long and tedious letter to the Senate with Sejanus present that systematically heaped an ever-growing set of charges and failures against the doomed man. It was done to give time to Tiberius' agents to go about Rome and systematically bribe the soldiers, destroying any support for Sejanus, while he was secure in the Capitol, listening to the letter being read. When the Senators realized what Sejanus was accused of, they mocked and insulted him[1196], in a manner similar to the mocking and ridicule Christ received, both by the crowd and the Roman soldiers.[1197] The Solar eclipse was seen at noon in Jerusalem, but at Rome, it would have been earlier, perhaps 10:15 A.M. Thus, the final accusation against Sejanus would have been cast exactly at the same time on October 18, as the Solar Eclipse was seen on April 25. By noon, Sejanus was temporarily imprisoned. Then the Senate reflected upon the matter, while the angry mob incited it and worked the Empire's will: capitol punishment to be administered that same day.[1198] As the Senate hesitated, considered and finally condemned Sejanus, so exactly did Pontius Pilate.[1199] Jesus died at 3 P.M. and was buried just before dusk. Sejanus was condemned to die in the afternoon; the record says he was in prison for just "a few hours"[1200]. He was executed before evening. If we form a time line of Sejanus' actions from dawn, until the time he dies, it is very possible that he was killed as early as 3 P.M. At dusk, his body had already been thrown upon the Stairs of Mourning, where disgraced corpses were discarded. The stairs were his "resting place" for three days. Such promptness was very unusual in Roman executions. It took nearly seven days to kill Sejanus' oldest son; his two other children were not executed for another six or eight weeks.[1201]

[1194] Suetonius, o cit , p 215

[1195] See Luke 22:66. Jesus had been taken in the night while He was praying, and interrogated several times before the dawn, but according to Plummer (op, cit p. 517), the convocation of the Sanhedrin at dawn was the official meeting that legalized what had gone on in the night Pilate would have only been concerned with the legal meeting of the Sanhedrin, and he would have reported to Tiberius that Christ had been first accused at a Jewish convocation that had begun at dawn.

[1196] Dio Cassius, op. cit., p. 215

[1197] See Luke 23:35-37

[1198] Dio Cassius, op cit , p 217.

[1199] Compare Sejanus account in Dio Cassius, above, with Matthew 27:17-24

[1200] Levick, B , op cit., p 284, note 58

[1201] Levick, B. op cit , p 178

Three P.M. would have been the "witching hour" for the incantations that linked Sejanus to Christ in death. At twelve noon there would have been an immersion of Sejanus into the magic of the Solar eclipse. His imprisonment would have been a type of the "imprisonment" of the Sun under its eclipse. At three, his fate was sealed and the link between Jesus' death and Tiberius, which was formed on April 25, was transferred onto the head of Sejanus. As Jesus was the sacrifice for the sins of all mankind, Sejanus was the sacrifice that prolonged the physical life of a murderous despot.

Dusk has meaning to an astrologer as well. It is the time the powers of the Sun have ceased to exert influence over men. The tradition of practicing astrology at dusk was very old. The Babylonian astrologers had a an ancient magic text that went back to 1700 B.C., which was devoted to sky omens that occurred at dusk.[1202] Since the King is the Sun on earth, dusk magically symbolizes the loss of a King's powers over men. It would be important to recite whatever incantations at dusk, to reverse the effects of the Death that augured Tiberius fate on April 25. Incantations and magical prayers to sky gods and planets are recorded as early as 2200 B.C. in sumeria, the forerunner and mentor of Babylon.[1203] There is no evidence it ever stopped; only that it flourished at night, at morning, at noon and at dusk. This long tradition of "dusk magic" and the fact that both Jesus and Sejanus were "interred" at dusk and also "removed" from their "graves" at dusk, only supports the idea that a ritual was indeed being effected. In this way, we find an astrological linkage between the deaths of Jesus and Sejanus that points to a deeper plot, one involving the minute-by- minute actions of the Sun and Moon.

The Greek historian Dio Cassius makes a point of telling us Sejanus' body was left for "three whole days"[1204] in public view, on the staircase of ignominy at the Capitol. Sejanus was in his "holding place" for seventy-two hours. The report from Jerusalem was that Jesus was resurrected to glory as God after three nights and three days in the tomb. Both periods for both men begin and end at the same time, and last the same amount of time: seventy-two hours. Thrasyllus' scheme would be to have Sejanus' "interment" reverse and contrast with Jesus' own. Jesus' body was buried and resurrected by "God"; Sejanus' body was exposed and discarded before the gods.

The length of time for abusing Sejanus' body was excessive. It appears the Praetorian Guards pillaged his home that same day[1205], but the body was not disposed of with the possessions. The fact that Tiberius' soldiers would have engaged in crowd control and could have removed the body at any time they chose, suggests the three days was not a random time. We have to ask if this three day spectacle wasn't controlled by Tiberius' agent on the scene, the new Consul Macro, since he orchestrated everything else that happened at that time.[1206]

[1202] See Oppenheim, A , Ancient Mesopotamia, p 308, and note 21 on p 386 We call the text today "the Venus tablets of (King) Ammizaduga

[1203] Oppenheim, A , p 308

[1204] Dio Cassius, op. cit., p. 217.

[1205] Levick, B., op cit., p. 178, Dio Cassius, op. cit., p. 219.

[1206] Dio Cassius, op. cit., p 209, 211, ff., and Levitt, B., op cit , p 178.

More usually, the body was cast down the steps, dragged to the river Tiber with hooks and then thrown into the river to float out into the Mediterranean on the same day. Suentonius reports that as many as twenty corpses were handled in the same day during the reign of terror that followed.[1207] But not Sejanus.

Three days would be a public warning, but it also could be a dangerous affair, fomenting rebellion. All of Rome knew Sejanus, Tiberius had not set foot in the city for years. Why then would a crafty politician, in jeopardy of his life, risk it? Only for greater self-interest. The Stars had to be appeased by an exact reverse sacrifice to the one of April 25. True, Sejanus was not crucified, but there were reasons. Such a death as by crucifixion would normally take days or even longer, thereby missing the Lunar eclipse of October 19 completely, and stir up yet other possible problems for Tiberius. Uncertainty was to be avoided.

There is a more basic reason why Sejanus did not need to be crucified. We have to look at the requirements of Astrology for this answer. The important ingredient in the spells was that events be carried out at the exact same times of the day, as they were in the Spring. Events had to occur when the Sun and Moon were in the same relative positions on October 18, as they were on April 25. That indeed was done. It was the energies of the Sun, Moon and stars, and the bodies and souls of the victims that mattered to Thrasyllus' spells, not how they perished. This was, afterall, a substitution death.

And then there is the matter of Tiberius labeling Sejanus as anti-Semitic in the days after Jesus died. Experts debate the cause and timing of this curious concern by the brutal Tiberius. We will return to that point shortly.

The similarities between Sejanus and Jesus are striking and deliberate; Tiberius acted immediately after April 25, by demoting Sejanus, then waited months to finish the deed. This combination of swift action and long patience proves he was acting according to a plan based upon Lunar eclipses and reverse astrology. What we have is a three-fold relationship between Christ, Tiberius and Sejanus, formed by three eclipses, and a "reverse" plot by Thrasyllus that was intended to undo All Fate against Tiberius.

[1207] Suetonius, op cit., p. 397.

3.3 Tiberius Caesar and His Demons: "The Gods are Destroying Me Every Day."

After hurling all these strokes of treachery and fate against his enemies, in the days following October 18 Tiberius' tortured character dramatically deteriorates and it does not return.[1208] Modern historians fully grasp this change, but they cannot fully explain its depths. One author wrote that after Sejanus' death, Tiberius "seemed to be infused with a demonic nature".[1209]

> It seemed as if all men and all things had conspired together to crush the lord of the world; and the lord of the world had set his back to the wall and struck back at all men and all things.[1210] (emphasis added.)

Indeed. With the added insight of the Crucifixion Eclipses that plagued Tiberius in 31 A.D., the above words ring more true than when they were first written. The accounts of his behavior after this event are simply shocking. Tiberius becomes nearly as mad as the ancient King of Babylon, Nebuchadnezzar, who also exalted himself against the God of Israel.

In 32 A.D.[1211], Tiberius was asked for his opinion on a lawsuit that was brought before the Roman Senate concerning a personal friend, who was accused of disparaging the "divine family" of Tiberius. It was no doubt political mayhem by personal enemies, but the Senate could chance no misstep; Tiberius must show his mind on the matter. Tiberius showed more than that. He could not so much as compose a rational reply to them, his mind was so far wrenched out of normalcy. The historian G.P. Baker wrote vividly of Tiberius' mental state. Tiberius' condition was alarming and exceptional; the man was laboring under a burden that had virtually placed him into a state of ongoing insanity and manic frenzy.[1212] What was written and sent to the Senate, was without question the most exceptional outburst of a Caesar ever recorded in Rome's archives.[1213] Judge for yourself.

> If I know what to write to you, fathers of the Senate, or how to write it, or what to leave unwritten at present, may all gods and goddesses visit me with more utter destruction than I feel I am daily suffering.[1214]

If we take Tiberius word's literally, he imagines the Gods are literally warring against his psyche, grinding him down into insanity. Normally, I would agree that it is unwise to use the protests of a profoundly disturbed man for deciding reality. However, it is instructive to weigh these words for their full meaning. As I suggested above, the ritual or astrological execution of Sejanus on the festival of the Jewish God, would mean Tiberius was flouting that Deity. The juxtaposition of

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[1208] Suetonius, op cit., p 399.
[1209] Baker, G.P., op cit., p. 272 (I have paraphrased the exact words into my own.)
[1210] Ibid
[1211] Suetonius, op. cit., p. 404, note 116.
[1212] Baker, G.P., op. cit., p. 273, Note 2.
[1213] Ibid
[1214] Suetonius, op cit., p 405 See also Tacitus, Book 6, line 6, p 202

the two scenarios, Tiberius flouting the God of Israel and Tiberius crying out at His perceived destruction, seems to me a fitting proof of my argument.

Tiberius' statements may prove nothing to a septic, but they corroborate everything in my case. I began this book having no idea I would ever find anything remotely like this, coming from the mouth of Tiberius mere months after Jesus died. Lucky coincidence for me?

In the weeks and months that followed the execution of Sejanus, Tiberius perfected the reign of terror and purge of the state. The verdict of all historians is as total as Tiberius' dark change. Yet this behavior occurred after Tiberius had successfully deposed conspirators and secured his position. One might suppose the stress was greatest when his crown was less certain. Was there indeed an external Agent afflicting Tiberius mind?

Whispered stories claimed Tiberius was engaged in highly unseemly acts against both friend and innocents at Capri. We have to wonder if they served as a relief for his furies. There ought to have been some degree of perverse stability in this, but instead we see a sicker, driven man with depression unchecked to the point of continuous nervous breakdown.

One might think It was the third eclipse in October which produced this effect upon him, but it was not an eclipse that tormented Tiberius, it was the living God he thought to surmount. Tiberius attempt to master fate was only partial. In the end, as always, he was both victor and victim.

The most prideful, powerful man of the West, who with his astrology presumed to rule the fates and best the gods, had become a mental rag-doll in the hands of the Almighty, who had a yet bigger plan to unfold. Based on his letter to the Senate, in Tiberius' mind it was Caesar versus God in 32 A.D., and God had won. But Peter had announced on the day of Pentecost in 31 A.D. that God's new age for the Church was just beginning.[1215] God would let Caesar live, to plot and scheme and slay and fulfill yet other future designs he could not see. Now, Caesar would begin the suppression of this terrifying and threatening series of portents, thinking he could yet survive, but actually beginning the long course of history that would ultimately result in global Christianity.

By Suetonius' account, condemned men of all stripes, at the moment of their deaths, publicly denounced Tiberius as a monster, not fearing greater tortures. The moral outrage against him became international. Even the king of the Parthians, (near modern Iraq) castigated him directly, and implored Tiberius to commit suicide.[1216] To this author's mind, only an outrage against Heaven itself could produce such cries for redress. Did all this outcry temper Tiberius in any small way? Perhaps so.

[1215] See the Book of Acts, Chapter 2
[1216] Suetonius, op cit , p 403

There is yet another curious behavior on the part of Tiberius which modern historians attempt to decipher. Jack Finnegan, in his book, Handbook of Biblical Chronology, specifically states that after the final weeks of 31 A.D., following the death of Sejanus, Tiberius instructed his authorities in Palestine to show an increased favor to the Jewish nation. The dead Sejanus was officially presented as an anti-Semite,[1217] thereby making Tiberius' execution of him ever more virtuous in the aftermath of the Great eclipse omens. Tiberius thus presented himself to the Jews as friend and deliverer from Sejanus, their persecutor.

Twelve years earlier in his career[1218], Tiberius was no friend of the Jews in Rome. They were growing in their converts and he wished to stop the spread of their religion[1219], so he persecuted and devastated them, ultimately driving them from the city. He abolished the practice of the religion, publicly burned vestments of the elders, conscripted young Jews and sent them to fight in far away lands. It is clear he considered Judaism a "superstition" that must not gain converts in Rome, well before 31 A.D.[1220] Why then the dramatic about face? Why permit the new Jewish sect to dramatically grow all over Jerusalem, Syria, Ponutus, and other areas? Only power politics, astrology, and the survival of Caesar can satisfactorily explain it.

Consider the anatomy of the moment. Tiberius, reeling in depression and lashing out in every direction against the aristocracy surrounding him, reverses himself and takes the time to show human kindness to a small people in the corner of his empire. It truly was a last-ditch effort by a man taken beyond his limits, to regain part of his sanity. It was done through paying homage to the God of the Jews, Whom he could not fight.

There would be no persecution of Jews or of Jewish Christians now by Rome.

And so Christianity begins at the hand of God in front of all humanity, not at the voice of the Apostle Paul.

Once more, the critic would probably judge this claim as speculation, but there is even some very tangible evidence that other Caesars maintained a lenient or hands-off policy towards the Jews and Christians in the early years of Christianity. It alternated with the eclipses Rome could see. It was not until much later, after the next eighteen-year eclipse cycle, in 49 A.D., that persecutions would commence on an unprecedented scale. The next set of similar eclipses (in 49 A.D. under Claudius), would be benign, there would be relief, and then they would be forgotten. But remember, Claudius Caesar was terrified for his throne when a Solar eclipse appeared on his birthday in 45 A.D. In retrospect, that concern by Claudius becomes an extension of all that happened in 31 A.D. Later, Nero, far enough removed from 31 A.D., not to fear, and fancying himself as another Sun-god incarnate, would revisit Christianity's threat to Caesar with a superior attitude and savage persecution not held by his predecessors.

[1217] Finnegan, J , Handbook of Biblical Chronology, p 362

[1218] Dio Cassius, op cit , p 163 has a marginal annotation of 19 A.D , by Earnest Cary, the translator.

[1219] Ibid

[1220] Suetonius, op cit , p 363

Claudius' fear of eclipses in 45 A.D., is also buttressed by another strange behavior of his. I mentioned earlier a quote attributed to Claudius Caesar shortly after he had attained the throne in 41 A.D., just ten years after the horrific signs in the sky. Look at it now in full, in the context of Tiberius' forced restraint against Christians and Jews in 31 A.D. It becomes another piece of information to slip smoothly into the pattern of a literal historic eclipse dominating the Roman mind.

Claudius is writing to the successful Jewish citizens of Alexandria Egypt, who had lauded him on his accession to power. He is afraid they may use their accumulated wealth in Alexandria to hire mercenaries and begin revolt, yet he only cautions, he engages in no suppression. However, he gives them some very carefully worded advice, almost fatherly and conciliatory, followed by a vehement warning with a puzzling hidden reference. He warns them if they will not diligently heed these words, he "will by all means take vengeance on them as fomenting a general plague for the whole world."[1221]

Nothing the Jews were doing in 41 A.D could have literally been on that grand a scale as the whole world, yet Claudius claims the Jews of his day have brought a "general plague upon the whole world." Either Claudius was using very striking hyperbole, or he was referring to something very real, very troubling to him and very great indeed. As before, with Tiberius' sudden kindness to the Jews he had previously persecuted, various scholarly opinions on this matter have been given, but there is no agreement on what Claudius was talking about, or why Caesar would have some sort of check upon his behavior.

The great omen of the Crucifixion eclipses explains it all quite nicely. Claudius' above words must be viewed from the standpoint of astrology. Claudius, like Tiberius, had his own court astrologer, counselor and companion. Thrasyllus' son, Basilides, had returned from his own exile to advise Claudius in 41 A.D.[1222] It most likely was Basilides who counseled Claudius to go public in 45 A.D. and explain the true nature of eclipses to the masses, lest they revolt at the Solar eclipse that fell on his birthday that year.[1223] Claudius too, would have horoscopes regularly cast, so that he might know the fates of himself and those around him. Claudius understood that to eclipse the Sun and Moon was to bring a plague upon all horoscopes, all fates of all men. If necessary or provoked by any seditious actions in Egypt today, he would personally exert the full force that could have been justified ten years before by the troubled Tiberius. Caesar would show restraint in 41 A.D., but citizens beware, past events were not forgotten.

It is possible to view Claudius' words as part of Roman awareness of the Eclipse. A second Caesar is giving testimony that the events of Christ's death are real.

Without the Eclipse, Claudius' words are a puzzling none-event; an empty over-statement by a flippant tyrant. With it, we have a sound, rational explanation for a

[1221] Griggs, C.W., op cit., p 19.
[1222] Cramer, F H., op. cit., p 113, 114
[1223] Ibid, p 114

serious pronouncement by a very responsible ruler of Empire, reacting to a grave matter that had threatened the lives of all men, as best as he knew how.

Take your pick.

3.4 Tacitus' History of Imperial Rome Was Censored for 31 A.D. Why?

There is still more curious data surrounding Tiberius and 31 A.D. that has not been unconnected together in the modern view. It does not concern his mental state or personal actions and it belongs to a later generation, but in light of all that has been covered, it appears to confirm the notion of Imperial censorship and cover-up. It is found in a work by the historian Tacitus: The Annals of Imperial Rome. I will refer here to the edition translated by Michael Grant, a noted scholar of classical Rome. Tacitus' work was written many years after Tiberius' reign (about 110 A.D.) and yet it seems to contain the fading echo of an older, sterner voice Tiberius once used.

The Annals cover the reigns of Tiberius, Claudius and Nero. The text in Grant's translation runs almost four hundred pages. The material concerning Tiberius' reign alone covers pages 31 to 227 of the edition used by the present author. It is detailed narrative history which describes in a lucid flow the reign and life of Tiberius from the time of his sole regency as Emperor in 14 A.D, until his death in 37 A.D. Tacitus writes something about every year in this period, one year after the next, *with the exception of a sudden break in the history for the years 30 to 31 A.D.* Nothing for these two years is contained in the preserved text, although other historians, such as Suetonius, Juvenal and Cassius Dio, do provide some information for this time period.

Grant admits the present text of Tacitus has "a gap of two years".[1224] G.G. Ramsay, who also translated Tacitus' Annals, says that Tacitus did indeed write about events in 30 and 31 A.D., but they are "unfortunately lost".[1225] The circumstances support these opinions.

Tacitus' words at the start of Book Six make direct reference to Sejanus and the immediately prior events of 31 A.D., so we know he is referring to earlier material. It is impossible that he wrote the introductory words of Book Six, referring to nothing.

Ancient texts have been lost in fires, enemies and vandals have cut them in pieces and some have simply been damaged through neglect, but others have been extinguished by government. Sometimes when manuscripts are damaged or torn, the break occurs in mid-sentence, or in mid-paragraph. None of that kind of abrupt, random, break is apparent in Tacitus. No, not only is the break apparent from the abrupt change in subject matter, it is also a clean removal that fits with the plan of the book. This is true at both the start and end of the omission. This clean break in the subject matter makes it far more probable that the loss is calculated and the material deliberately selected.

Both Grant's and Ramsay's words allow for this. Grant says it is "our manuscript", that is missing the key years, not Tacitus' original work. The internal evidence supports both men's conclusions.

[1224] Grant, M., Tacitus - The Annals of Imperial Rome, p 197.
[1225] Ramsay, G G., Juvenal and Persist, p 198.

When Tacitus recounts a matter of comparable or even greater significance elsewhere in his text, namely the failed conspiracy to overthrow Nero in 65 A.D., his history fully describes the people, places and vendettas of that cataclysmic year.[1226] Yet for the events of thirty-four years earlier, we have a complete omission.

No, Tacitus appears to have prepared and published a complete account of the events of 31 A.D., but we do not have it today.

Why? and who did the omitting? If it is unlikely that the author did so, we are left with Censor or circumstance. Tiberius had a reputation for destroying literature and killing authors that did not please him.[1227] Later Caesars would be no different. It was a matter of good statecraft. That is the short answer, but we are rewriting history in these pages, I must prove what I say fits with all known details, so we must be more detailed in even this area. Perhaps the deeper answer lies in the nature of the missing material. Would we gain any insights into the cause, if we understood Tacitus' tone or attitude towards Tiberius?

Tacitus was no admirer of Tiberius Caesar, he did not shrink from casting Tiberius' deeds in a most unsavory light. The historian Will Durant said of Tiberius: "Almost every misfortune had come to him during his life; and after his death he fell upon the pen of Tacitus."[1228] This painful point is important to consider, because it provides an entry into the partisanship and politics that surrounded Tacitus' description of Tiberius.

Tacitus wrote the Annals some eighty years after Tiberius.[1229] Did some government agent in the second century censor the history for 31 A.D.? I now marshall the evidence to prove this indeed was the case.

Tacitus considered himself the instrument of high moral purpose. He was not simply relating facts; he was a representative of morality who judged upon the sins of men as a god in judgment. Grant notes Tacitus' approach to his vocation as a historian, then adds:

> To him, and many others, decline and disaster seemed due to vice. Virtue and vice are continually contrasted and emphasized.[1230]

Was there a factual basis for such reproach? Today we might presume that Tacitus was simply posturing, based upon some inner prejudice, but when we include the Eclipse of 31 A.D., it is indeed clear that Tacitus was simply expressing a moral truth. Like Claudius referring to "a plague upon all mankind", Tacitus is talking to real events of that earlier generation, which still lingered in men's mind's.

[1226] Grant, M., op. cit., pps. 367-381
[1227] Suetonius, op. cit., p. 395, 397, also cited in Cramer, F.H., op. cit., p. 96, note 134.
[1228] Durant, W., op. cit., p. 265
[1229] Grant, M., op. cit., p. 18
[1230] Ibid, p. 16

If we speak only in general terms, then we obscure what it was like to write a history in the age of the Caesars. Tacitus, as a Roman Senator, had lived first-hand through brutal oppressions under Domitian, Caesar from 81 through 96 A.D. Immoral and ruthless behavior by such absolute rule, directed against the Senate and Aristocracy, had assaulted his sensibilities. Grant believes that Tacitus saw Tiberius Caesar, as the greatest source of evil in Rome's history up to his own day. He was the precedent and role model for Domitian's later evils.[1231] Grant calls him "the stock tyrant of the ancient literature".[1232] According to Tacitus, a fundamental change to evil occurred with the advent of Tiberius to the throne.

Suetonius takes a similar turn in his history. He writes of the deified Julius Caesar, the deified Augustus and the tyrant Tiberius. There is no deification of the adopted son of Augustus. Violence and excess has replaced Caesar's virtues, although the system continues on the backs of the administrators, magistrates, and common people.

Domitian's crime was to persecute the Roman Senate and the people of the Christ. Tiberius was mad, committed foul crimes against innocents and authored a reign of terror against the aristocracy. What, if any, is the common threading which Tacitus saw in all this perversion of Julius Caesar's throne?

A partial answer lies in yet more eclipses of the Moon on other October 18's in the decades that followed Tiberius. In essence, omens and Tiberius' day of Terror would continue to plague the mind of the Caesars every 19-years, down until the time of Domitian, as the Moon returned to its same relative position in the sky between the Earth and Sun. Tiberius' eclipse nightmare would be relived over and over again , on into Domitian's reign. Few scholars have ever reflected upon the role of the October 18th eclipses in the persecutions of Domitian, but I claim they were a profound, driving force in his character.

Domitian's family was the next dynasty to rule Rome after the lineage of Julius Caesar had ended. The family had come to power under Vespasian, the Roman General entrusted with conducting the war against the Jews, which led to the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D., by Titus, Domitian's brother. Domitian's fate was intertwined with that of the Jews, Christians and Jerusalem. The year that his father took power Rome was racked by multiple attempts to secure the throne. There was an eclipse of the Moon visible in Rome on October 18, of 69 A.D. Nineteen years later, during Domitian's reign, there was another eclipse of the Moon visible on October 18, 88 A.D. These events gave the leaders reason to pause and incited an Imperial backlash. Thus the facts of science prove the tremors of Tiberius' omens returned to plague new regimes in Rome and provoke an open war against the God of the Jews, Jerusalem and Christians by the Caesars.

[1231] Grant, M , op cit., pps 18-19
[1232] Ibid, pps 18-19

In light of the series of Solar and Lunar eclipses that was over the Empire in 31 A.D., 45 A.D., 69 A.D. and 88 A.D., we can now make a very small conjecture concerning what Tacitus wrote in his censored history.

Suppose Tacitus the moralizer, in his missing history of 31 A.D., discussed Tiberius as the Caesar who turned Rome from piety towards the Gods of heaven (they would consider Him only one of the gods), to the perpetuation of selfish human power at any cost. Tiberius was a stoic halfway through his life; presumably of strict, old-fashioned Republican ideals, but suppose Tacitus cast him as the man who took Rome from the morals of Republican days, from Julius Caesar and from Augustus Caesar to rank "will to power", even at the price of defying the Gods and destroying the families that made the Empire work. Suppose all this moralizing is contained in discussions of the portents of 31 A.D. and the course of Rome's direction since that time. Whatever moralizing Tacitus made in the missing pages had to be worse than what was left.

Would something as this hypothetical indictment against the sins of Caesar, effectively debasing the integrity of Rome against a "God", thereby damning Rome irrevocably for posterity, would something such as this, escape a censor's knife, especially in light of the eclipse of October 18, 88 A.D.? No. Tacitus' expression of moral outrage and invective against the folly of power, would glare at the jaundiced eye of a censor, bent upon glorifying the status quo of his own day.

We have seen that the Annals of Tacitus is an edited history, we know the Caesars destroyed or edited contrary works and we know the memory of the Eclipses could not be forgotten in Rome. I have offered here for the first time an explanation, within the perimeters of known facts, that explains all of it in light of the events of the day Jesus died.

3.5 Why Don't Contemporary Roman Writers Mention the Eclipse of 31 A.D? - Did Tiberius' Reign of Terror Silence Later Elites?

Why isn't there more contemporary Roman evidence for the solar eclipse of April, 31 A.D.? Why aren't the Roman histories filled with references to such a cosmic event? A part of the answer has already been given, but we also need to answer the modern questions concerning why great Roman writers like Pliny and Seneca never mention Christ's eclipses. I have already shown that this event was a direct threat to the government of Tiberius and noted that the Emperor, in flippant shows of absolute political power, routinely censored historical works. We need to appreciate the full weight of the routine butchery Tiberius daily perpetrated during the hysteria he created after Sejanus was killed. Next, we need to consider its consequences in the lives of individual writers such as Seneca and Pliny.

Tiberius killed scores of the most able, affluent and prominent Senators and aristocrats of Rome, men who gave him wise counsel on how to rule the Empire.[1233] Informers and accusers of every sort and stripe were paid handsomely for destroying other men's lives, and all crimes carried a death penalty. Accused members of the nobility often committed suicide, sometimes in their homes, sometimes in front of the whole Senate, in dramatic displays of anguish.[1234] He enjoyed having condemned wretches pushed to their deaths from the high cliffs of his estate on Capri.[1235] Once, he punished and then executed a friend by mistake, simply because he was pre-occupied with arranging other executions and he could not separate killings on paper from killing in person in his frenzied state of mind.[1236]

With such horrors issuing daily from his palace, there is no doubt the whole Empire was glazed with over-awed obedience. Whole families could be killed and their entire wealth confiscated by the state, leaving any living heirs penniless.[1237] Tiberius made one rather ghoulish exception to this. If an accused person committed suicide before sentencing, their heirs were safe. Naturally, suicide rates increased.[1238] For the others, fortunes could be reversed in a day. Such intimidation could not help but produce a rigid code of silence in the educated ranks on matters such as the Eclipses. Modern authors are wrong to think these Eclipses were mere matters of nature that could have been routinely reported with impunity by men like Pliny. No, they were treasonous events that none could raise in public.

How long did such fear persist among Roman aristocracies? Facts indicate it fluctuated with the Emperor. Claudius was more tolerant than Nero, but the threat would revive and recede almost for a century. Emperors were known to avenge decades old trespasses.

[1233] Suetonius, op cit., p 387, and Dio Cassius, op cit , p. 237.
[1234] Ibid, pps 395, 397
[1235] Ibid, p 399
[1236] Ibid
[1237] Dio Cassius, op cit , p 227
[1238] Ibid.

There exists rather striking and very personal evidence from the late first or early second century A.D. corroborating the Roman tendency to instill self-censoring fear in writers of any stature. It originates far away from Rome, from a Gentile writer, Mara ben Serapion, who wrote a letter of fatherly advice to his son, named Serapion ("Temple of Serapis"), near or after 73 A.D. This wise and poetic letter is the only statement of him that exists. "Mara's city had been destroyed in a war with Rome, and he with others had been taken prisoner." [1239] "Mara .... was in prison at the time, but he wrote to encourage his son in the pursuit of wisdom, and pointed out that those who persecuted wise men were overtaken in misfortune." [1240] "At the end of his letter, Mara hints that the Romans who occupy his land out of a 'vice for empire' will 'receive disgrace and shame' for their actions." [1241] In the course of admonishing his son on the need for wisdom to deal with life's difficulties, he mentions, as an object lesson, the folly of peoples who kill their own wise men: Athens with Socrates, Samos with Pythagoras and most recently, the Jews with "their wise king". Singularly, he does not name Jesus. The text is clear, this last matter can only be given indirect reference, plain facts are not appropriate. The reason for this self-censoring silence, as given by one scholar, is all too familiar:

> Perhaps the reason .... he does not mention Jesus [is] because .... he does not want to offend his captors, the people who hold his loved ones. [1242] (comment and emphasis added)

The question becomes: what are the differences between a man in prison writing about life's wisdom to his son, and a Roman aristocrat using wisdom to hold onto family lands and wealth that an unapproving state could confiscate after killing an offender? When the issue is blood, gold, and bone, I say it is very little.

The other side to this discussion is that there does indeed exist a small body of writings from non-Romans which mentions the Eclipse, as was already discussed in Chapter 3. Again, both the times these works were written (during years of safety), and their later censorship cannot be ignored. Most of the works that remain today were written no sooner than 120 A.D., almost one hundred years after the Eclipse. These works in turn reference earlier works which are lost. Most of these earlier works, which did report the Eclipse, were not written by rich Romans, but by Greeks, some of whom may not have lived under Caesar's nose. Once more we are drawn into the question of why these original works of the first century have been lost.

As a prime example, fragments of a lost history by Thallus, a Greek, writing circa 52 A.D., are referenced in a work written in 221 A.D. When was Thallus' history lost, and why? Was Thallus' history kept in circulation only among Greeks far away from Rome? Was Thallus ever persecuted or imprisoned for his writings? We do not know.

[1239] Van Voorst, R.E., Jesus Outside the New Testament, pps. 53-54
[1240] Bruce, F.F., The New Testament Documents, Are They Reliable, p. 114
[1241] Van Voorst, op. cit., p. 54
[1242] Ibid, pps. 55-56

A second example involves Phlegon, once more a Greek writer, who produced his Chronicles of history about 120 A.D. Once more, his text is lost. Once more, we only know of it because Julius Africanus, far from Rome, referred to it in a polemic written in 221 A.D.[1243] Was Phlegon ever persecuted or imprisoned for his writings? We do not know.

What we do know, is that with the exception of Luke's one word account, all original works of the first two centuries that refer to the Eclipse are lost. The idea, however, never died.

The account of the Christian writer Tertullian has an interesting twist to it. He is a Christian writer who claims knowledge of the Crucifixion eclipse has been suppressed within the archives of the Roman government, secreted away from public scrutiny, but knowable by the rulers of Rome.[1244] In sum, the closer we are to the power center, in both geography and time, the less likely it is that information about the Crucifixion Eclipse was publicly circulated.

Tertullian was an African from the City of Carthage on the northern coast, highly educated, who practiced law, and wrote in an irrepressible, aggressive, biting, sarcastic, challenging fashion, even to the Roman Senate.[1245] He throws the gauntlet in the face of the Senate by charging that the eclipse was mentioned in the official archives of Rome. From his work, the Apology, speaking to the Roman Senators:

> .... though the sun was in mid sky, day was withdrawn. An eclipse, of course, they supposed it, who did not know that this too was predicted of Christ ; yet that cosmic event you have in your archives, it is told there.[1246] (emphasis added)

Some modern writers have tried to speak for Tertullian and say he did not research this claim, he simply made it. They offer no proof for their speculation. The point here is that we have in Tertullian's words a claim for Roman awareness of the Eclipse over one hundred and seventy years after it occurred. If it was not in their Annals, they were hearing that it was, from the mouth of Tertullian. People still spoke of it a century and a half later and even centuries longer than that, as was described in Chapter 3. Clearly, Tertullian was not risking his life to taunt the

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[1243] McDowell, J., The New Evidence that Demands a Verdict, pps 122-123.

[1244] This statement needs some clarifying. Van Voorst, in his book, Jesus Outside the New Testament, p. 50, has pointed out that there were two primary types of archives in Imperial Rome, those of the Emperor (*Commentarii Principis*), and those of the Senate (*Acta Senatus*). The Emperor's records were not strictly secret, but they were subject to executive privilege, while the Senate's were open. Tertullian, in the introduction to his work, the *Apology*, addresses the Roman Senate, so he definitely refers to Senatorial proceedings, when he says "you have it in your records." These were clearly open, as Tertullian shows, but the point is, which of the public accessed this information? None. It lay available, unknown, and untouched. F F Bruce, in The New Testament Documents, Are They Reliable, p. 114, refers to a third class of records - "police records", as a lost source of information about early Christianity. He also points out on p. 115 that various writers, including Tertullian, believed they could access the *Commentarii Principis* archives. Nevertheless, the information lay buried to the majority.

[1245] Glover T.R. op cit. p xxvii

[1246] Ibid, p 111, 113,

Roman Senate with tales of a large dust storm in Jerusalem. Tertullian's charge is pleasantly compatible with the censoring of Tacitus and other first century Roman histories.

It became a capital offense, that is, punishable by death, to be a Christian in the first century, well before Tacitus wrote. Why? Rome tolerated many religions. As persecution of Christians grew, so did acceptance of the Sun gods of the East. The God of the Christians had shaken and almost overthrown the Empire; His followers, who also healed the sick and worked wonders, were as much a threat to Rome as He. It reduced to a war of real-politic survival. Better to exalt the Sun and kill Christians, than submit to their God. Ultimately of course, the Empire lost completely, and it did submit to a form of Christ.

Tiberius' reign of terror in 31 A.D., did several things. It ferreted out residual members of the first conspiracy, it put a check on further seditious activities and it defined a new public reality for members of the state to embrace. Caesar and the signs of heaven were not to be discussed, under pain of the extreme penalty. Why then would wealthy aristocrats like Seneca and Pliny, living so close to Caesar's troops, traverse that road? Only if they felt politically secure in the time they wrote. Otherwise, it was most unlikely for them to do so.

What is the stance of scholars today? Do they consider the possible role of state censorship in Roman history? Only in passing. Their investigations may or may not be as penetrating as the present attempt. Raymond Brown, eminent author of The Death of the Messiah, whom I have quoted earlier, discusses the possibility of a literal supernatural eclipse of the Sun occurring while Christ was on the cross, but at the last minute he begs off. He then makes the point, and I paraphrase: "The Roman writers such as Seneca and Pliny, who should have reported this wonder, are silent, so the eclipse can't be true".[1247] This is as far as he goes in addressing the apparent silence of Roman historians.

Brown does not proceed to ask the question "Why?", and he certainly does not consider the potential danger to these authors. It is not that the Eclipse did not occur; rather it was so immense in its impact that Rome reacted by suppressing it and discouraging all imitators of Sejanus, the arch-conspirator.

Michael Grant, in his introduction to his translation of The Annals of Rome, points out a basic fact: The majority of histories written by first century Roman writers have been lost. Not some, not scattered works, but most of them. Notice what Grant writes:

> In the three-quarters of a century following the deaths of Augustus and Livy (A.D. 17) there were a number of historical writers. Most of their works, however, are lost, ... [One exception is] Pliny the Elder (ca. A.D. 23-79), whose *Natural History* we

[1247] Brown, R E , op cit, p 1040

possess, though his account of his own times is lost. [1248] (emphasis added)

Once more, Pliny, close to Tiberius in time and geography, writes a history of his age, which no doubt includes the events of 31 A.D., and it has disappeared. So Brown and Edward Gibbon, whom Brown echoes in his opinion, may be both right and wrong: Pliny may very well have noted the eclipse of 31 A.D., or he may not, but one of his works is preserved today, the more politically sensitive one is lost, leaving us to speculate why this is so.

F. F. Bruce, the New Testament commentator and historian, offers a plausible explanation of why there is so little official Roman record of Christianity in the decades after Jesus. It too harmonizes with a cover-up engaged in by Tiberius and his successors. Bruce's point was that Christianity was viewed as a beggarly religion of have-nots, a "vulgar oriental superstition", that would only be noted in police actions: arrests, imprisonment, trials and the like. Since those administrative accounts are gone, Rome's record of Christianity is non-existent today.[1249]

The only acceptable place for Christ to be mentioned was in police records, or the Senate's private archives. What Bruce describes is exactly the official position of a Roman backlash smear campaign against a threatening Christianity - it is: a) obscure, b) disreputable and c) vulgar. Therefore, it must not be spoken of in the public record.

I mentioned Pliny's incomplete written legacy. What of Seneca? Did he also have any reason to be careful of what he wrote about Caesar or Christianity? He lived in the time of Nero, when Christians experienced severe persecution and the Apostles Peter and Paul were martyred. Writers have speculated Seneca was a Christian, but how plausible is this idea? "St. Paul wrote: 'All the saints solute you, chiefly they of Caesar's household.' And was Seneca not of Caesar's household?"[1250] (emphasis added)

Indeed he was. Is it then likely Seneca was an admirer of Christianity, or even a convert? From the passage in Phillippians, we know there were indeed Christians in the very extended family of Nero, but Paul names no names, discretion prevails. The circumstances of such individuals were highly delicate and rested upon the grace of God and the whim of Caesar. Whatever Seneca believed about Christianity, whatever he knew about Christianity, he would have concealed it. We do know there were precedents during, and examples after, the life of Seneca, for the fate of prestigious Romans who embraced Christianity against Nero's wishes.

In 57 A.D. the wife of the Roman general who conquered Britain was accused of engaging in a "foreign superstition". Michael Grant thinks it must have been

[1248] Grant, M., op. cit., p 15
[1249] Bruce, F F , The New Testament Documents - Are They Reliable?, p. 114, for both argument and quoted words
[1250] Sorensen, V , Seneca, the Humanist at the Court of Nero, p 208

Christianity. Domitian, in 95 A.D., killed his own cousin and banished the man's wife from Rome, probably for being Christians.[1251]

I would add that the public revelation of notables' police records also made for public examples and stigmatized the individual aristocrat. This too, corroborates the point that the God of Christianity was considered the political enemy of Rome, to be denied and resisted by the Empire. In light of the role played by Vespasian, Titus and Domitian in both the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. AND the extreme worship of Isis and Serapis by all three of them[1252], Domitian's murder of his cousin on religious grounds takes on an even greater meaning. In a sense, Domitian is acting as the agent of Serapis against the followers of the God who had humiliated him decades earlier.

Why slay one's cousin unless he, or his circumstances, posed a political threat to Caesar's regime? What was it that polarized Rome's highest echelons of society into opposing camps? Conscience? Religious conviction? Political survival? That is the time-worn reason Caesars excised their entourages, starting with Tiberius and Sejanus. In the equation of power, for Domitian, the Christian religion equaled political threat. How were they a threat? After all, the Christians were known as pacifists. Their Leader had died innocently, refusing to go to arms to protect Himself. And yet the most powerful military leader on earth considered them a threat to be feared and removed. Where does the rational component of such fear reside? Only in something greater than Rome: Eclipse omens of the Gods. The scheming and cunning of the Caesars, displayed as they experienced decades of eclipses first hand, is a witness to the reality of the Crucifixion eclipses. Nothing less would have gotten their attention for so many generations and spurred the reactionary denial, cover-up and Isis-worship of the Flavian dynasty, with its persecution of Christians.

There is yet another oddity in documents from the age of early Christianity. One of the great treatises on science in Western civilization, the Almagest, by the Alexandrian astronomer Ptolemy, is also missing any references to eclipses from the time of Christ.[1253]

Granted, Ptolemy may have simply chosen small clusters of eclipse sightings from Babylon and Alexandria to analyze. He scatters 19 eclipse events over some 800 years of history. There are gaps, on average, of 100 to 180 years between his choices. Critics would be quick to point out that Ptolemy may have used eclipses picked out of Babylonian history by his predecessor Hipparchus; he simply took what was already given. Fair enough, but we know the eclipse records from Alexandria, where he lived and worked, were available for 280 B.C. onwards. Yet Ptolemy simply does not use them as fully as one might expect. The gap of missing years surrounding the Crucifixion is the largest of his entire group - 265 years.

[1251] Bruce, F F., op. cit., note 1 on pps. 114 and 115

[1252] For father Vespasian's involvement with the faith, see Witt, R E., Isis in the Ancient World, pps. 23, 51, 191, 196, 233. Domitian's devotion is described in Barbara Levick's book, Vespasian, p 189. Wit, op cit., p 51. Titus' worship followed after his father. See Witt, op. cit., p. 191

[1253] Steele, J.M., Observations and Predictions of Eclipse Times by Early Astronomers, p 94 - 95, for all the Ptolemy-related data in this paragraph

Why? Some enterprising astronomer might attempt to prove a common thread of science that runs through Ptolemy's set of eclipses and no other collection from the age, but I will be slow to accept such mongrelizing of data. Has censorship been proven here? No, only discretion by a very wise man. Nevertheless, the omission can be readily viewed as consistent with the curious pattern of suppression that I have demonstrated here.

There is also the modern affliction of calling men like Ptolemy astronomers, when they were really priests of Serapis, or astrologers, or magicians, and also astronomers. The sanitizing of ancient astronomy and astronomers makes us overlook the fact that Ptolemy, living in Alexandria, was probably on the side of Serapis, Gnostics and secret gospels of Mark, as compared with original Christians. Why then would he highlight Omens that had disgraced the great god of the Serapium, the patron god of Alexandria and the god of Greek-Egyptian culture? He was well aware of all the controversy that surrounded these peculiar Christians and their doctrines over the decades. No need to engage in it. Once more, self-censoring comes into play here, not so much as to protect one's family or personal wealth, as to protect one's culture, nation, city and identity.

And what of Luke? When he wrote the keystone text of this book, Luke 23:45, he was very sparse in his words. "Due to an eclipse of the Sun", is all he said. The Evangelist Mark simply said the Sun was darkened. Were even Luke and Mark self-censoring their words to the absolute minimum, so as to not bring greater persecution upon themselves? Jesus had told the disciples to be "wise as serpents and harmless as doves." Was the burden of this present book, proving the stupendous nature of Luke 23:45, created by early Christians' desire to downplay a global event in the face of impending persecution? Perhaps so.

In sum, the position of the Roman government towards public acknowledgment of Christianity's primacy, is clear: The Caesars noted carefully what was written about themselves and earlier rulers. Anything that had excessive political impact upon the viability of the state would have been dealt with harshly and definitely suppressed. There was a conflict of conscience in the Roman hierarchy that produced both aristocratic men and women of the Christian faith AND scathing denunciations and persecution. The dividing line between these two camps was always clear. The disciples were always individuals, the persecutors always the Imperators. The wedge that cleaved Rome's highest social strata was the Crucifixion eclipse. When it came to power politics, Rome was as forceful and modern as any totalitarian regime today.

[End of Volume I of The Darkness at The Crucifixion]

Volume II continues the telling of the Greatest Event in History. It includes the story of the Eclipses and the Later Caesars, the Testimony from 52 A.D. to Edward Gibbon and more new material on the origins of Christianity.

The Bible indicates these same Eclipse Signs, a Solar and a Lunar Eclipse occurring in One Day, will precede the Second Coming of Christ. The facts surrounding this next World-Event will be examined with new insights as well.

Bibliography and Supplemental Reading for Volume I

To assist the reader in accessing these materials, I have organized the Bibliography into seven categories:

I. Ancient Astronomy, Astrology, Science and Magic
II. Astronomy of the Solar System and Calendars (Modern)
III. Biblical Commentaries, Textual Criticism, Lexicons and Bibles
IV. Life of Jesus
V. Ancient and Classical History - Secular and Religious
VI. Early Church Fathers, Philosophy and Gnosticism
VII. Folk Tales and Star Lore

This author found the bibliographies of most of these volumes to be a useful source for yet further study.

I. Ancient Astronomy, Astrology, Science and Magic

Abusch, T. and van der Toorn, K. (eds.) Mesopotamian Magic, Styx Publications

Ashmand, J.M. Ptolemy's Tetrabiblos, The Aries Press, 1937 edition (The standard work on classical astrology, by the West's greatest astronomer for some 1400 years.)

Bielenstein, H. "Han Portents and Prognostications", The Bulletin of the Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities, No. 56, 1984, The Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities

Brier, B. Ancient Egyptian Magic, Quill (A look from the outside, but with many valuable details.)

Budge, E.W. Egyptian Magic, Dover Publications (Reprint of original 1901 edition.)

Claggett, M. Ancient Egyptian Science - A Source Book, (3 vols.). Vol. II - Calendars, Clocks, and Astronomy, American Philosophical Society (Classic compendium of rich detail found nowhere else. A gateway to the best scholarship extant at its writing. The other two volumes of this set are essentail as well.)

Claggett, M. Greek Science in Antiquity, Dover Publications (originally published in 1955) (Claggett explains how to connect the geometry of the ancient's Earth-centered univers with the modern scheme of the Solar system. He also gives a good, if brief, description of the state of medical science in the time of the Evangelist Luke, who was known as "the beloved physician".)

Cramer, F.H. Astrology in Roman Law and Politics, American Philosophical Society, vol. 37, 1954 (Facsimile Edition by UMI Books on Demand) (An example of a poor title. This book is actually a very comprehensive, detailed and authoritative study of astrology in the Roman political elites from 250 B.C. to 235 A.D. It is more about men and deeds than rulings and laws. Critical to anyone's primary education on how the ruling class of Rome thought and operated.)

Cullen, C. Astronomy and Mathematics in Ancient China: the Zhou bi suan jing, Cambridge University Press

Cumont, F. Astrology and Religion among the Greeks and Romans, Kessinger Publishing Company (Cumont's incisive intelligence in this volume has guided scholars over the decades.)

Dionysius the Areopagite The Mystical Theology and the Divine Names, Dover Publications

Dreyer, J.L.E. A History of Astronomy from Thales to Kepler, Dover Publications

Evans, J. The History and Practice of Ancient Astronomy, Oxford University Press (An historical textbook on the ancient art. With only slight exaggeration, after mastering this book, the reader will be fit to become court astronomer to the Pharaohs or the Kings of Babylon. Recommended highly.)

Gadalla, M. Egyptian Cosmology, Bastet Publishing

Gandz, S. (trans.) The Code of Maimonedes, Book Three - The Book of the Seasons, Yale Judaica Series, vol. XIV, Yale University Press

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Gillings, R.J. Mathematics in the Time of the Pharoahs, Dover Publications

Gleadow, R. The Origin of the Zodiac, Dover Publications

Goold, G.P. (ed. and trans.) Manilius - Astronomica, Loeb Classic Library, Harvard University Press (Possibly the premier work on astrology in the time of Christ, and before Ptolemy. Tiberius Caesar probably had a dedicated copy on his bookshelf or next to his bed.)

Hazelrigg, J. Metaphysical Astrology, Kessinger Publishing Company (Interesting only as an example of its genre.)

Heath, T.L. A History of Greek Mathematics (2 vols.), Dover Publications (first published in 1921 by the Clarendon Press, Oxford) (All of Heath's works are essential backdrop for the scholar of ancient atronomy. Anyone who seeks to master this subject without consulting Heath is cheatring himself.}

Heath, T.L. A Manual of Greek Mathematics, Dover Publications (first published by Oxford University Press in 1931)

Heath, T.L. Aristarchus of Samos - The Ancient Copernicus, Dover Publications (Reprint of 1913 Oxford University Press edition)

Heath, T.L. Greek Astronomy, Dover Publications

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Hill, J.H. Astral Worship, Kessinger Publishing Company

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King, L.W. Babylonian Magic and Sorcery, Samuel Weisner, Inc. (2000 facsimile reprint of 1896 edition.) (It may be mistitled. More of a collection of prayers and cuneiform tablets, but it reads like you're living there long ago.)

Knorr, W.R. The Ancient Tradition of Geometric Problems, Dover Publications

Langdon, S. Babylonian Menologies and the Semitic Calendars, The British Acadamy, 1935 (A major repository of both information and trivia about Babylonian and Jewish Calendar systems in the ancient world. Concise and pithy.)

Leighty, E., Ellis, M., and Gerardi, P. A Scientific Humanist - Selected Essays in Memory of Abraham Sachs, The University Museum

Lenormant, F. Chaldean Magic - Its Origin and Development, Kessinger Publishing Company (Reprint of 1877 edition, translated and expanded into English from the French. The book was written at an early stage in the development of this subject. Therefore it is rich in understanding that is currently ignored, and shaky in some of its dates and details. I would not rely on its facts without the buttressing of other, more modern works, but it is insightful, and crudely correct, virtually every time I put it to the test.)

Lewis, G.C. Historical Survey of the Astronomy of the Ancients, Kessinger Publishing Company (We have an early (?) work - 1862 - at the peak of its erudition for its age. Many facts, but short on analysis. Sir Lewis recounts many traditions, legends, customs and doctrines that moderns have simply dispensed with. This book provides a dimension missing from the more technical tomes of Heath and Lockyer, and it certainly is not on the technical level of moderns such as Kugler, Neugebauer, Swedlow or others, but they have almost none of its regalling qualities either. Valuable.)

Lockyer, J.N. The Dawn of Astronomy, Kessinger Publishing Company (An intelligent mix of archeology, ancient history, and scientific analysis. However, Lockyer, it seems to me, sometimes pushes his ideas beyond the facts he has at hand. As with other works of that time, it is valuable for insights and lines of thinking, if not always correct. A modern recasting of Lockyer's themes is in order, and probasbly has been attempted.)

Meyer, M., and Mirecki, P. Ancient Magic and Ritual Power, Brill

Morgenstern, J. "Additional Notes on 'The Three Calendars of Ancient Israel", Hebrew Union College Annual, (3), 1926, Hebrew Union College

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Neugebauer, O. (ed.) Astronomical Cuneiform Texts, (3 vols.), Springer-Verlag (Like holding the clay tablets in your hands immediately after they were excavated. Exhaustive and primary astronomy. Neugebauer is a master of his field, but for all his breath of material, he can sometimes become parochial in his passion for squeaky-clean details.)

Neugebauer, O. Astronomy and History - Selected Essays, Springer-Verlag, 1983 (Original research papers from the career of the master, spanning the years 1932 - 1979, and covering Egypt, Babylon, Greece, Rome, and the Renaissance. Most of these papers are classics, still referenced in the modern literature. Essential.)

Neugebauer, O. The Exact Sciences in Antiquity, Barnes & Noble Books

Neugebauer, O. A History of Ancient Mathematical Astronomy, three vols., Springer-Verlag (Massive, erudite, and authoritative.)

Neugebauer, O., and H.B. van Hoesen Greek Horoscopes, Memoirs of the American Philosophical Society, vol. 48, American Philosophical Society

Newton, R.R. Ancient Astronomical Observations and the Accelerations of the Earth and Moon, The Johns Hoplins Press

Newton, R.R. Ancient Planetary Observations and the Validity of Ephemeris Time, The Johns Hopkins University Press (Emphasis is on the Planets, not the Moon and Sun, BUT he shows how accurate our reference time scale is for 2000 years ago, and THAT is important.)

Pannekoek, A. A History of Astronomy, Dover Publications (Valuable for insights that extend beyond the usual recounting of the progress of scientific thought.)

Parker, R.A. A Vienna Demotic Papyrus on Eclipse- and Lunar-Omina, Brown University Press (Facsimile Edition by UMI Books on Demand)

Parker, R.A. The Calendars of Ancient Egypt, University of Chicago Press (Facsimile edition by UMI Books on Demand) (The book that actually explains what others omit. Get it.)

Plunkett, E. Calendars and Constellations of the Ancient World, Senate

Reymond, A. History of the Sciences in Greco-Roman Antiquity, E.P. Dutton and Company, 1924

Rose, L.E. Sun, Moon, and Sothis - A Study of Calendars and Calendar Reforms in Ancient Egypt, Kronos Press (Chatty, but scholarly and in-depth. Good bibliography.)

Sarton, G. Helenistic Science and Culture in the Last Three Centuries B.C., Dover Publications (Reprint of the work first published by Harvard University Press)

Sayce, A.H. Astronomy and Astrology of the Babylonians, Wizards Bookshelf

Schiaparelli, G. Astronomy in the Old Testament, Oxford University Press (A light, little book for the general reader pepered with exotic, out of the way facts. Still valuable on its own terms. This is the 1905 translation from the Italian)

Smith, D.E. A History of Mathematrics, Dover Publications (reprint of 1923 edition)

Staal, J.D. Stars of Jade, Merit Press

Staal, J.D. The New Patterns in the Sky, The McDonald and Woodward Publishing Company

Steele, J.M., Observations and Predictions of Eclipse Times by Early Astronomers, Kluwer Academic Publishers (Extensive bibliography. Introduces all the issues. Essential.)

Steele, J.M. Under One Sky - Astronomy and Mathematics in the Ancient Near East, Ugarit-Verlag

Swerdlow, N.M. Ancient Astronomy and Celestial Divination, Massachusetts Institute of Technology Press (Modern-day physicists converse with the ancient Babylonian records, and make them speak. First rate effort by the leading experts of our day, with a wonderful bibliography. A worthy successor to Neugebaurer.)

Tester, S.J. A History of Western Astrology, The Boydell Press

Thomas, I. Greek Mathematics, 2 vols., Loeb Classic Library, Harvard University Press

Thompson, R.C., The Reports of the Magicians and Astrologers of Nineveh and Babylon in the British Museum - Part Two, Kessinger Publishing (1900 work giving the English translations of some 280 brief texts taken from the original clay. Part One is the catalogue of all the recto and verso faces.)

Thurston, H. Early Astronomy, Springer-Verlag

Toomer, G.J. Ptolemy's Almagest, Princeton University Press

van der Waerden, B.L., Science Awakening - Egyptrian, Babylonian, and Greek Mathematics, Science Editions (A useful complement to Neugebauer's works, by a respected physicist)

Wacholder, B.Z., and Weisberg, D.B. "Visibility of the New Moon in Cuneiform and Rabbinic Sources", Hebrew Union College Annual, (42), 1971, Hebrew Union College

White, G. The Moon's Nodes and their Importance in Natal Astrology, Kessinger Publishing Company

Wiesenberg, E. "Elements of a Lunar Theory in the Mishnah, Rosh Hashanah 2:6, and the Talmudic Complements Thereto", Hebrew Union College Annual, (33), 1962, Hebrew Union College

Wildfang, R.L., and Isager, J. (eds.) Divination and Portents in the Roman World, Oxford University Press (A slim sampling of the complete subject. Useful nonetheless.)

II. Astronomy of the Solar System and Calendars (Modern)

Bear, Magdalen Days, Months and Years, A Perpetual Calendar for the Past, Present and Future, Tatquin Publications

Born, M. and Wolf, E. Principles of Optics - Electromagnetic Theory of Propagation, Interference, and Diffraction of Light, Pergamon Press (The physics of light by one of the Nobel Prize-winning inventors of Quantum Mechanics. Classic and standard.)

Boulet, D. Methods of Orbit Determination for the Microcomputer, Willmann-Bell, Inc.

Bretagnon, P., and Simon, J., Planetary Programs and Tables From -4000 to +2800, Willman-Bell, Inc. (Book and software. A second set of software for calculating equinoxes, solstices and positions, by David Eagle, will be referred to by its name Newcomb, or Gnewcomb.)

Birunier, S., and Luminet, J. Glorious Eclipses Their Past Present and Future, Cambridge University Press

Chambers, G.F. The Story of Eclipses, D. Appleton and Company (1912 popularization of both eclipse basics and the eclipse in history, told by a sure hand. Recommended.)

Chapront-Touze, M., and Chapron, J. Lunar Tables and Programs from 4000 B.C. to A.D. 8000, Willmann-Bell

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Chauvenet, W. A Manual of Spherical and Practical Astronomy, 5th ed. (2 vols.) J.B. Lippincott Co, (1900 printing of original 1863 work. Encyclopedic in scope. Chauvenet's Chapter X, 165 pages of pure solar and lunar eclipse calculations, is exhaustive and unique in the literature this author has seen. Anyone who masters this material should be able to calculate all the times and viewing positions on earth for any eclipse. P.S. Most of the modern experts have studied Chauvenet, but they will not advertise that fact.)

Danby, J.M. Fundamentals of Celestial Mechanics, Will,ann-Bell, Inc. (Contains a useful introductory / intermediate treatment of the mathematics describing the motion of the Moon's nodes, the landmark criteria for eclipses)

Dershowitz, N. and Reingold, E. Calindrical Calculations, Cambridge University Press. (Good introductory bibliography. Mathematical formulae and LISP program listings for calculating ten different calendars: Gregorian, ISO, Julian, Coptic, Islamic, Persian, Bahai, Hebrew, Mayan, and Hindu.)

Doctrinal Committee of the United Church of God, "Summary of the Hebrew Calendar - Doctrinal / Study Paper", United Church of God, An International Association

Dyson, F., and Wooley, R. Eclipses of the Sun and Moon, The International Series of Monographs on Physics, Oxford University Press (Facsimile Edition by UMI

Books on Demand of original 1937 printing) (A sturdy, slim book of brief, though telling mathematics. Emphasis is on the behavior of eclipsed light, the Chromosphere and the Corona during Solar eclipses. Sir Frank chased eclipses in order to prove the prediction of Einstein's General theory of Relativity, that gravity bends light. Because it is a monograph, this book has no bibliography, A shame. The interested reader should have first become familiar with the works of Delauney, Hill, Chauvenet, Brown, and others before looking too closely at this volume. Professor Dyson seems to have habitually practiced turning the simplicity of eclipse geometry into some fearsome esoterica. It is not. Read Dyson with Chauvenet, Zirker, and Liu open, and Sir Frank has feet of clay.)

Espanak, F. Fifty Year Canon of Lunar Eclipses: 1986 - 2035 NASA Reference Publication 1216 (Valuable for the eclipse trajectory maps. Also useful for those who think they will discover the date of the Second Coming.)

Feldman, W.M. rabbinical Mathematics and Astronomy, Third Corrected Ed., Sepher-Herman Press (Originally published in 1931 by Oxford University Press, this text by Rabbi Feldman gives the mathematically-inclined reader and under-the-hood understanding of the practical nuts and bolts of how the Rabbis calculated the calendar centuries ago. It delivers fully, although there is the uneasy felling that everything your are studying has historical roots which are simply being passed over. On whole, a marvelous, original, one-of-a-kind book.)

Fowles, G. Analytical Mechanics (4th ed.), CBS College Publishing (A good staring point for the math-physics necessary to master modern Lunar theory. A good companion to Pollard's book.)

Goldstine, H. New and Full Moons, 1000 B.C. to A.D. 1651, American Philosophical Society The authority for popular usage; superceded by Chapron;s accuracy, but this book has all its material in one place.

Guillermier, P., and Koutchmy, S. Total Eclipses - Science, Observations, Myths, and Legends, Springer-Praxis (Wise and multi-faceted. Most recent of all the texts. Contains text of a BASIC program for giving any Solar and Lunar Eclipse dates. Has a useful, if only modern, bibliography, including eclipse web-sites. Recommended in conjunction with Dr. Krupp's book, Beyond the Blue Horizon.)

Harrington, P. Eclipse! The What, Where, When, Why, & How Guide to Watching Solar & Lunar Eclipses, John Wiley & Sons

Herget, P. The Computation of Orbits, Privately Printed, (Facsimile Edition by UMI Books on Demand of original 1948 work)

Hermann, K.C. God's Sacred Calendar 1966 - 1967, Ambassador College

Kopal, Z. Language of the Stars - A Discourse on the Theory of the Light Changes of Eclipsing Variables, D. Reidel Publishing Company (Highly mathematical treatise by a leader in this specialty; a chestnut for the advanced Graduate student who is comfortable with hypergeometric functions of applied Physics. Otherwise .... .)

Kopal, Z. Physics and Astronomy of the Moon, (2nd ed.) Academic Press (For physicists, and senior undergraduate students.)

Kopal, Z. The Mathematical Theory of Stellar Eclipses, (A streamlining and further abstraction of the earlier work, Language of the Stars. Professional and graduate level only.)

Krupp, E.C. Beyond the Blue Horizon - Myths and Legends of the Sun, Moon, and Planets, Oxford University Press (Don't be fooled by the title. Erudite, wide-ranging and engaging survey with fine illustrations, good pop-science, and a fabulous 30 page bibliography.)

Kudlek, M, and Mickler, E.H. Solar and Lunar Eclipses of the Ancient Near East From 300 B.C. to 0 with Maps, Verlag Butzon & Berker Kevelaer (The title is slightly erroneous. This study continues to 59 A.D., well past Jesus' time, and well into the time Luke was composing his Gospel. Unlike other studies, its ancient data has been custom-calculated for the city of Jerusalem, as well as Babylon and Thebes, Egypt.)

Liu, B., and Fiala, A. Canon of Lunar Eclipses 1500 B.C. - A.D. 3000, Willmann-Bell

Liu, B., and Eagle, D. Computer Canon of Lunar Eclipses 1500 B.C. - A.D. 3000, Willmann-Bell (Computer program which accompanies the text. graphics of eclipse areas are adequate.)

Maunder, M., and Moore, P., The Sun in Eclipse, Springer

Meeus, J. Astronomical Algorithms, Willmann-Bell (Astronomical observation by an acknowledged master. Cautionary note: Meeus does not pretend to teach underlying concepts in his works. He keeps his understanding private.)

Meeus, J. Astronomical Tables of the Sun, Moon, and Planets, Willmann-Bell

Meeus, J. Mathematical Astronomical Morsels, Willmann-Bell (Has fascinating sections with arcane facts concerning the periodicity of eclipses and stellar occultations, among other things. Chestnuts of curiosities abound.)

Meeus, J. Mathematical Astronomy Morsels, III, Willmann-Bell (Contains, among other things, over 150 pages of esoterica on all manner of eclipse anomalies, including the most comprehensive explanation of why a solar eclipse cannot be more that 7 minutes 29 seconds.)

Minnaert, M.G. Light and Color in The Outdoors, Springer-Verlag (This book is a classic text on the atmospheric phenomena of rainbows, sunsets, solar haloes, etc. It has a section explaining the physics of how Lunar eclipses can turn blood-red in color.)

Mitchell, S.A. Eclipses of the Sun, Columbia University Press (An intermediate - level tome, written 1923, with English glosses in place of advanced physics and mathematics. Valuable, nevertheless, for its comprehensiveness as well as a discussion of the newly developed General Theory of Relativity by Dr. Einstein.)

Moulton, F.R. An Introduction to Celestial Mechanics, Dover Publications

Murray, C.D. and Dermott, S.F. Solar System Dynamics, Cambridge University Press (A rigorous mathematical treatment of the motions and perturbations of all the objects in the solar system: Sun, planets, moons, and asteroids. Gives orbital calculations of moons and their wobbles, and a brief discussion of the Julian Calendar. Applies Chaos theory to the periodicity of the Solar system. A first rate text for the mathematically adept.)

Plummer, H.C. An Introductory Treatise on Dynamical Astronomy, Dover Publications (reprint of the 1918 ed.) (Highly mathematical, contains two very nice chapters on the theory of the motion of the moon. One notch below Brown.)

Pollard, H. Mathematical Introduction to Celestial Mechanics, Prentice-Hall (On the graduate - senior undergraduate physics level. Basic, sound, insightful and brief. Better sharpen your pencils.)

Rigge, W. The Graphic Construction of Eclipses and Occultations, Loyola University Press (1924 work that gives insight into the parameters for plotting eclipse paths on the earth. Very useful for the interested reader.)

Ritter, C. The Comparative Geography of Palestine and the Sinaitic Peninsula, (4 vols.), Haskell House Publishers, Ltd. (1969 reprint of 1865 original work. I have used his longitude and latitude values, albeit approximate to the minute, when I calculate Sun positions over Jerusalem.)

Rodgers, D.F., and Adams, J.A. Mathematical Elements for Computer Graphics, Second edition, McGraw-Hill Publishing Co. (Has a rigorous treatment of perspective / parallax, useful for understanfing some of the Solar eclipse calculations for Jerusalem.)

Roy, A.E. Orbital Motion, Institute of Physics Publishing (An advanced undergraduate schmorgasbord of theory and techniques on orbiting bodies, space probe trajectories, and multi-stellar systems. For the serious mathematical student.)

Sachau, C.E., (trans.) The Chronology of Ancient Nations, Kessinger Publishing (An 1878 translation of the tenth century classic by the Arab scholar al-Biruni. Explains the thinking behind the Calendars and timelimes for all the Western world in that age. Reader beware, al-Biruni's small talk, and many of his dates, are soft; his strength lies in the descriptions of the schemes the ancients used for their calendar-making. The book is a fascinating look into another age, another worrld, and valuable on that basis alone.)

Smart, W.M., Textbook on Spherical Astronomy, Sixth edition revised by R.M. Green, Cambridge University Press (Rigorous and thorough; only for the mathematically adept.)

Spier, A. The Comprehensive Hebrew Calendar, Feldheim Publishers

Stephenson, F.R., and Clark, D.H. Applications of Early Astronomical Records, Oxford University Press

Stephenson, F.R. Historical Eclipses and Earth's Rotation, Cambridge University Press (A big, authoritative book by one of the leaders in the field)

Taff, L.G. Celestial Mechanics - A Computational Guide for the Practitioner, Wiley-Interscience (Contains a mathematical discussion of the Newtonian physics for calculating the path of penumbral and umbral shadows of an eclipsed Sun upon the surface of the Earth.)

Trumpler, R.J. "Eclipses", Encyclopaedia Brittannica, vol. 7, pp. 906-909, 1962 ed., Encyclopaedia Brittannica, Inc.

Tuckerman, B. Planetary, Lunar, and Solar Positions, (2 vols., I: 601 B.C. to A.D. 1, II: A.D. 2 to A.D. 1649), The American Philosophical Society (Authoritative statement of the positions of both the Sun and Moon in the heavens about the earth in 10 and 5 day increments, respectively. Second of two volumes, the first covering the years 601 B.C. to A.D. 1)

von Oppolzer, T.R. Canon of Eclipses, Dover Publications (Reprint of 1887 work - "Canon der Finsternisse". A magnum opus of physics and astronomy. Indispensable for historical research, but Meeus can be more accurate when they overlap. Stephenson's "Rotation" text, q.v., provides the necessary corrections to von Oppolzer's calculations.)

Watt, A., and Watt, M. Advanced Animation and Rendering Techniques, Theory and Practice, Addison-Wesley Publishing Company (Another book with useful

perspective formulas for calculating the fall of the Moon's shadow upon Jerusalem that day.)

Waugh, A.E. Sundials - Their Thory and Construction, Dover Publications, Inc. (Few, if any of the modern books on sundials give the full explanation of the orbital geometry and functions that underly sundial creation. this volume is useful for its tables of shadow parameters and lengths of days, especially with reference to Jerusalem. For the full theory of sundials, a book on spherical astronomy should be at your right hand.)

III. Biblical Commentaries, Textual Criticism, Lexicons, and Translations

Aland, K., and Aland, B., The Text of the New Testament, Wm. B. Erdmans Publishing Company (A comprehensive textbook written on an introductory college level, that codifies all the known manuscripts. Rich in its details. Both text and tables are of interest. Basic tool of the trade.)

Allen, L.C. The Books of Joel, Obadiah, Jonah, and Micah, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament, W.B. Eerdmans Publishing Company

Anderson, F.I., and Freedman, D.N. Amos, A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary, The Anchor Bible, Doubleday (A marvelous book. Emphasis is on literary and textual commentary, but other areas are present as well.)

Barker, K., ed. The NIV Study Bible, Zondervan Bible Publications

Barrett, C.K. Luke the Historian in Recent Study, The Epworth Press (A book report on the work of historians who think Luke was a fabricator of tales; that are forced to admit, well, Luke is not as bad as we think ghe is. Few facts, less logic. I include it for the opposition point of view.)

Beckwith, R.T. Calendar and Chronology, Jewish and Christian, E.J. Brill (Scholarly historical discussions of Sabbath versus Sunday, Passover versus Easter, Daniel's Seventy Weeks Prophecy of the Christ, the date of the Crucifixion, and more, by an Oxford graduate. Original and refreshing.)

Bernard, J.H. A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on The Gospel According to St. John, vol. II, vii-xxi, The International Critical Commentary, T&T Clark

Bloomberg, C. The Historical Reliability of the Gospels, Inter-Varsity Press (An intermediate level survey of the current scholarship and issues surrounding the writing of all four Gospels, individually and collectively. On a subject like this, however, the more detailed notes and bibliography become essential to the researcher. Only a first glance at a far wider ocean.)

Bock, D.L. Luke Volume 1: 1:1 - 9:20, Volume 2: 9:21 - 24:53, Baker Books. (Valuable, massive, and balanced work, but popular. Profuse scholarship, packaged lite. Also a detailed entry into the labors of others more esoteric.)

Brown, F., Driver, S., and Briggs, C. The Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon, Hendrickson Publishers

Brown, R.E. Epistles of John, The Anchor Bible, Doubleday

Brown, R.E. The Gospel According to John, I-XII, The Anchor Bible, Doubleday

Bruce, F.F. The Gospel and Epistles of John, Eerdmans Publishing Co.

Bruce, F.F. The New Testamant Documents, Are They Reliable?, Wm. B. Erdmans Publishing Co. (Cause for rejoicing for fundamentalists. Historically centered, facts are impeccable; some more liberal scholars may not be in full agreement with its conclusions.)

Cadbury,H.J. The Making of Luke-Acts, Hendrickson Publishers (Seminal work. Rasises all the issues, and addresses them in an intelligent, objective fashion.)

Childs, B. The New Testament as Canon: An Introduction, Trinity Press International

Cohen, A. Everyman's Talmud -- The Major Teachings of the Rabbinic Sages, Schocken Books, Inc.

Cohen, A. The Psalms, Soncino Press

Cohen, A. The Twelve Prophets, Soncino Press

Comfort, P.W. and Bartrett, D.P. (eds.) The Text of the Earliest New Teatamant Greek Manuscripts, Tyndale House Publishers (The source for understanding our present knowledge of the original manuscripts. Encyclopaedic.)

Coulter, F. The Christian Passover, York Publishing (The massive (500 pages), and comprehensive study on how Moses' original Passover was transformed over the centuries by the Kings and religious leaders of Judah into today's festival. Covers issues of rabbinical language, history, culture, and theology, brining the course of events up to Jesus' Last Supper. Authoritative, but on a very acessible level. Highly recommended.)

Creed, J.M. The Gospel According to St. Luke - The Greek Text with Introduction, notes, and Indices, MacMillan and Co, Ltd. (1953 reprint of the 1930 first edition by the original publisher)

Danker, F.W. Jesus and the New Age, Clayton Publishing House (A non-conventional look at Luke, with iconoclastic insights to challenge the traditional commentators.)

Fitzmyer, J.A. The Gospel According to Luke I-IX, Introduction, Translation, and Notes, The Anchor Bible, Doubleday

Fitzmyer, J.A. The Gospel According to Luke X-XXIV, Introduction, Translation, and Notes, The Anchor Bible, Doubleday

Gasque, W.W. A History of the Interpretation of the Acts of the Apostles, Wipf and Stock Publishers (2000 reprint of 1985 Hendricks edition) (A substantial survey of all the key authors and critics of Luke, from 1850 to the present.)

Green, J.B. The Gospel of Luke, The New International Commentary on the New Testament, William B. Erdmans Publishing Company (A commentary that focuses on explaining the background of ideas to each verse Luke wrote.)

Hartman, L.F., and Di Lella, A.A. The Book of Daniel, The Anchor Bible, Doubleday

Hemer, Colin J., The Book of Acts in the Setting of Hellenistic History, Eisenbrauns (By a Cambridge scholar; slightly misnamed. It is rather a critical re-assessment of Luke's historical accurcay and integrity in both his Gospel and Acts, which addresses all the extant objections against his writing of history of the last 120 years in great detail and intelligence. Anyone who desires a balanced, cutting-edge appraisal of Luke's integrity which dissects the common wisdom of our day should start with this volume. Central.)

Jeremias, J. The Eucharistic Words of Jesus, Basil Blackwell

Just, A.A. Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture - New Testament III - Luke, InterVarsity Press

Kaiser, W.C., Davids, P.H., Bruce, F.F., Brauch, M.T. Hard Sayings of the Bible, InterVarsity Press

Keil, C.F., and Delitzsch, F. Commentary on the Old Testament in Ten Volumes, Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1984 reprint edition of the 1900 work

The King James Bible

The King James Study Bible, Thomas Nelson Publishers

Kittel, G., and Friedrich,G. (eds.) Theological Dictionary of the New Testament (10 vol.s), W.M. Erdmans Publishing Company, 1976 English edition of the original German (Most extensive in the range of coverage for each word, but the simple Thayer's still has references this work omits.)

Lightfoot, J. A Commentary on the New Testament from the Talmud and the Hebraica, 4 vols., Hendrickson Publishers

Marshall, I.H. The Gospel of Luke, The New International Greek Testament Commentary, William B. Erdmans Publishing Co. (A commentary on the Greek text, which does not provide the text for easy reference! I consider it a complement to Green, see above, which in turn omits reference to most issues of the original Greek language.)

Marshall, I.H. Luke: Historian and Theologian, Academie Books, Zondervan Publishing House (A mixture of Luke interpretation and historical debate, which brings the case against Luke's competence up to the 1980's and attempts to paint an even-handed portrait of Luke as a religionist who slanted his Gospel for the glory of God, but with good taste. Tries too hard to be original.)

McDonald, L.M., and Sanders, J.A., (eds.) The Canon Debate, Hendrickson Publishers

McDowell, J. The New Evidence that Demands a Verdict, Thomas Nelson Publishers (A massive gateway into all the historical proof for the Christian faith, written on a popular / schiolarly level.)

Metzger, B.M. A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament, German Bible Society

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Index to Volume I

—A—

al-Biruni, 191, 195, 205, 492
Alexandria, 7, 10, 19, 29, 53, 61, 62, 72, 73, 76, 78, 79, 81, 99, 100, 101, 102, 184, 206, 232, 236, 237, 238, 239, 245, 247, 248, 257, 264, 265, 266, 268, 269, 270, 271, 275, 276, 277, 280, 286, 289, 299, 301, 302, 303, 304, 308, 309, 311, 328, 329, 330, 332, 333, 339, 340, 342, 343, 344, 346, 348, 354, 355, 359, 360, 361, 383, 436, 442, 443, 470, 481, 482, 499, 501, 502, 503
alignment, 21, 39, 142, 175, 219, 375, 380, 381, 387, 388, 389, 390, 391, 394, 413
Almagest, 102, 481, 488
Aphrodite, 10, 270, 271, 272, 274, 275, 276, 277, 278, 281, 282, 283, 284, 285, 286, 287, 288, 289, 292, 295, 304, 305, 363, 365
Apollo, 273, 279, 362
Apostle Paul, 72, 94, 107, 117, 166, 240, 244, 254, 262, 279, 294, 469
Apostle Peter, 93, 242, 382
April 25, 10, 149, 213, 215, 216, 230, 234, 236, 301, 303, 304, 305, 306, 307, 310, 311, 332, 339, 349, 358, 376, 377, 378, 382, 383, 391, 392, 393, 394, 395, 396, 397, 398, 399, 405, 406, 407, 408, 409, 414, 416, 428, 437, 443, 445, 455, 456, 457, 459, 460, 461, 464, 465, 466
Assyria, 199, 281, 288, 289, 292, 293, 294, 295, 301, 303, 308, 319, 320, 322, 324, 325, 326, 330, 335, 336, 338, 342, 343, 370, 454, 500
astrology, 77, 78, 80, 95, 100, 111, 112, 113, 134, 198, 200, 232, 243, 276, 287, 310, 312, 313, 316, 318, 319, 323, 326, 327, 328, 329, 330, 341, 342, 343, 344, 345, 346, 349, 350, 351, 352, 353, 354, 355, 357, 358, 360, 363, 422, 435, 436, 437, 440, 442, 443, 444, 446, 447, 448, 449, 450, 452, 453, 454, 455, 457, 458, 459, 460, 461, 462, 465, 466, 468, 469, 470, 485, 486
Attis, 139, 244, 246, 255, 276, 277, 280, 285, 289, 290, 297, 300, 308, 309, 311, 312, 327, 330, 333, 335, 336
Augustine, 177

—B—

Babylon, 11, 96, 98, 99, 100, 101, 135, 172, 173, 174, 183, 184, 186, 188, 191, 195, 197, 198, 199, 200, 202, 204, 206, 208, 209, 211, 246, 247, 250, 267, 272, 278, 281, 285, 288, 290, 291, 298, 299, 300, 301, 303, 309, 313, 315, 317, 319, 322, 324, 325, 327, 328, 330, 334, 335, 341, 342, 343, 360, 361, 437, 442, 447, 453, 456, 457, 459, 464, 465, 467, 481, 486, 487, 488, 491, 500, 501
Babylonian astronomy, 99, 100, 174, 193, 329, 342, 442
Babylonian New Year, 298, 334, 360
Babylonian Talmud, 166, 192, 196, 198, 203, 209, 210
blood-red Lunar eclipse, 386, 390, 399
Brown, 45, 52, 58, 68, 77, 78, 81, 85, 89, 92, 95, 98, 112, 137, 138, 143, 145, 146, 147, 161, 164, 165, 176, 177, 178, 183, 184, 186, 217, 223, 224, 225, 234, 259, 367, 377, 386, 391, 415, 479, 480, 488, 490, 491, 493, 497, 500

—C—

calculation, 181, 185, 192, 193, 194, 195, 199, 201, 206, 209, 210, 212, 268
Christ's Descent into Hell, 10, 272, 297, 367, 368, 374
Claudius, 96, 99, 102, 103, 104, 107, 110, 112, 113, 130, 449, 461, 469, 470, 472, 473, 476
Clement, 7, 10, 79, 238, 239, 242, 243, 245, 247, 248, 251, 252, 255, 256, 258, 263, 264, 266, 269, 270, 271, 272, 274, 275, 276, 277, 278, 279, 280, 281, 282, 283, 284, 285, 286, 287, 294, 295, 304, 305, 308, 310, 311, 323, 330, 340, 341, 343, 344, 345, 346, 347, 348, 349, 350, 351, 356, 357, 358, 359, 360, 361, 365, 366, 367, 502, 503
Constantine, 15, 56, 60, 176, 177, 311, 498, 501
Council of Nicea, 176, 499
Crucifixion eclipse, 30, 31, 42, 68, 78, 80, 87, 104, 107, 113, 114, 130, 133, 134, 387, 388, 437, 478, 482, 498
Crucifixion Eclipse, 8, 18, 43, 44, 47, 62, 95, 114, 129, 136, 388, 390, 422, 478

—D—

Dionysus, 278, 279, 280, 281, 284, 285, 287, 297, 309, 310, 327, 362, 366, 367, 368, 373

—E—

Easter, 7, 8, 10, 36, 80, 95, 147, 148, 164, 165, 216, 224, 231, 232, 234, 235, 236, 238, 239, 245, 246, 247, 248, 249, 250, 251, 254, 255, 257, 258, 263, 268, 276, 291, 295, 303, 305, 306, 318, 334, 339, 340, 341, 344, 358, 360, 364, 365, 366, 368, 374, 383, 493, 497, 498, 502
eclipse limits, 387, 412
Eclipse Pairs, 10, 393, 397
eclipse seasons, 387
ekleipontos, 52, 65
eskotos, 53, 54, 55, 57

—F—

Fitzmeyer, 44, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 58, 63, 64, 66, 67, 68, 71, 73, 74, 78, 85, 92, 94, 95, 108, 112, 119, 120, 122, 123, 259, 377
Fotheringham, 171, 179, 180, 195, 214, 215, 216, 386

—G—

Gnosticism, 77, 231, 237, 240, 241, 242, 244, 257, 287, 298, 302, 343, 354, 355, 365, 366, 373, 485, 502
Good Friday, 7, 8, 10, 27, 36, 132, 137, 139, 140, 142, 146, 147, 148, 151, 156, 157, 158, 160, 164, 165, 171, 176, 177, 178, 183, 217, 231, 232, 234, 235, 236, 237, 238, 243, 245, 246, 247, 248, 249, 250, 251, 253, 254, 255, 256, 259, 263, 265, 267, 269, 275, 283, 287, 288, 290, 291, 297, 298, 299, 301, 302, 303, 304, 305, 307, 310, 311, 312, 322, 323, 334, 339, 340, 341, 343, 349, 356, 359, 362, 364, 365, 367, 368, 374, 383, 386, 387, 497
Gospel of Luke, 9, 42, 43, 44, 51, 63, 120, 121, 377, 494, 495
Greek astronomy, 102, 172, 173, 190, 200, 203, 206

—H—

Hebrew calendar, 141, 143, 144, 145, 171, 174, 175, 176, 179, 180, 181, 182, 184, 185, 189, 190, 191, 195, 198, 199, 202, 205, 209, 230, 236, 305, 315, 356, 393
Hermes, 270, 271, 272, 273, 274, 275, 276, 278, 279, 281, 282, 304, 361, 363, 365, 367
Hipparchus, 100, 101, 102, 184, 196, 197, 204, 209, 441, 442, 443, 481

—I—

Inanna, 10, 269, 276, 288, 289, 291, 292, 293, 294, 297, 298, 300, 301, 304, 305, 307, 314, 317, 319, 325, 326, 337, 351, 365, 366, 367, 371, 372, 374
Inanna's Descent into Hell, 10, 231, 269, 289
Isis, 110, 113, 250, 251, 257, 265, 266, 267, 274, 276, 280, 283, 285, 288, 289, 294, 295, 296, 304, 322, 324, 331, 332, 333, 339, 344, 345, 354, 359, 362, 363, 442, 481, 501

—J—

Japan, 16, 30, 142, 428, 429, 430, 503
Jerusalem, 10, 16, 17, 18, 27, 29, 30, 38, 40, 45, 48, 62, 73, 76, 87, 88, 93, 94, 99, 112, 117, 120, 124, 127, 128, 132, 142, 144, 146, 150, 152, 159, 166, 169, 172, 173, 179, 184, 187, 192, 194, 197, 198, 202, 203, 206, 207, 208, 211, 217, 218, 219, 220, 224, 226, 229, 237, 239, 248, 257, 301, 317, 335, 369, 372, 375, 376, 377, 378, 380, 381, 382, 383, 384, 385, 386, 387, 388, 389, 390, 391, 392, 394, 395, 396, 397, 398, 399, 405, 406, 407, 408, 409, 423, 427, 428, 429, 430, 435, 437, 454, 461, 464, 465, 469, 474, 479, 481, 491, 492, 493, 497
Jewish calendar, 38, 143, 172, 173, 182, 183, 185, 188, 191, 195, 196, 197, 198, 199, 383
Jonah, 148, 157, 158, 159, 160, 161, 162, 165, 167, 169, 493, 495, 496

—L—

Logos, 266, 272, 273, 274, 275, 278, 279, 282, 284, 285, 298, 318, 340, 347, 348, 446
Luke 23:45, 43
Lunar eclipse, 39, 89, 97, 104, 142, 146, 381, 383, 385, 386, 387, 388, 389, 390, 391, 393, 394, 395, 397, 399, 400, 415, 439, 453, 454, 456, 457, 460, 463, 466

—M—

Maimonides, 174, 180, 183, 190, 195, 199, 203, 205, 206, 210
Marduk, 298, 299, 300, 301, 303, 305, 306, 307, 309, 313, 320, 321, 324, 325, 326, 329, 330, 334, 339, 344, 349
Mishnah, 145, 183, 187, 188, 192, 193, 203, 209, 489, 496
Mongolia, 16
Moon, 9, 10, 16, 17, 18, 19, 21, 27, 29, 30, 31, 38, 39, 40, 41, 43, 47, 48, 49, 54, 65, 66, 68, 69, 70, 72, 74, 83, 90, 93, 96, 97, 98, 100, 106, 110, 111, 114, 119, 133, 138, 140, 141, 142, 143, 156, 171, 172, 173, 174, 175, 179, 180, 181, 183, 184, 186, 187, 188, 189, 190, 191, 192, 193, 194, 195, 196, 199, 201, 202, 205, 206, 207, 208, 209, 210, 211, 212, 219, 221, 225, 243, 259, 266, 267, 268, 284, 288, 290, 299, 305, 310, 312, 313, 314, 315, 321, 323, 325, 327, 333, 348, 351, 354, 356, 357, 358, 359, 360, 362, 364, 375, 376, 379, 380, 381, 382, 383, 384, 385, 387, 388, 389, 390, 391, 392, 393, 394, 395, 396, 398, 399, 400, 401, 402, 403, 404, 405, 406, 407, 409, 410, 411, 413, 415, 420, 422, 423, 424, 425, 427, 428, 429, 430, 431, 437, 439, 442, 447, 452, 454, 455, 456, 457, 460, 461, 462, 463, 464, 465, 466, 470, 474, 486, 487, 488, 489, 490, 491, 492, 502, 503
Mylitta, 289, 290

—N—

Neugebauer, 97, 98, 99, 101, 137, 143, 171, 180, 183, 185, 195, 201, 204, 205, 206, 345, 486, 487
New Zealand, 427, 428
nineteen year, 191, 442
Nisan 14, 38, 56, 142, 144, 145, 147, 149, 150, 151, 165, 206, 235, 236, 238, 239, 245, 256, 257, 258, 266, 267, 281, 284, 290, 299, 339, 344, 453, 456, 457
North Korea, 397

—O—

observation, 37, 96, 136, 138, 172, 185, 199, 203, 208, 212, 294, 403, 491
Origen, 7, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 83, 114, 130, 134, 157, 238, 239, 242, 243, 245, 247, 248, 251, 252, 253, 254, 255, 256, 264, 269, 282, 284, 285, 286,

287, 290, 295, 307, 311, 340, 343, 344, 345, 348, 351, 352, 362, 366, 502, 503
Osiris, 10, 36, 139, 236, 238, 239, 243, 244, 245, 246, 247, 248, 249, 250, 251, 252, 253, 255, 256, 257, 265, 266, 267, 268, 269, 270, 272, 274, 275, 276, 277, 278, 279, 280, 281, 282, 283, 284, 285, 286, 287, 288, 289, 290, 291, 294, 295, 296, 297, 299, 300, 301, 303, 304, 305, 306, 307, 308, 309, 310, 311, 312, 313, 314, 315, 318, 319, 322, 325, 326, 327, 328, 329, 330, 331, 332, 333, 334, 335, 336, 337, 338, 339, 340, 341, 342, 343, 344, 345, 346, 349, 350, 351, 352, 353, 354, 355, 356, 357, 358, 359, 360, 361, 362, 363, 364, 365, 366, 367, 368, 373, 443, 445, 500
Osiris-Ra, 36, 249, 253, 256, 272, 275, 278, 279, 280, 282, 286, 290, 299, 303, 304, 329

—P—

P^{75}, 52, 53, 57, 58, 60, 61, 62
Passover, 9, 10, 15, 37, 38, 39, 41, 48, 53, 54, 56, 76, 78, 83, 89, 92, 94, 98, 117, 124, 140, 141, 142, 143, 144, 145, 146, 147, 149, 150, 151, 152, 156, 165, 170, 171, 172, 173, 177, 178, 179, 180, 181, 182, 183, 185, 186, 189, 190, 194, 200, 204, 206, 209, 210, 212, 213, 214, 216, 217, 218, 219, 220, 223, 224, 225, 226, 227, 228, 234, 235, 236, 237, 238, 239, 243, 245, 246, 247, 248, 249, 252, 253, 254, 255, 256, 257, 258, 260, 261, 262, 263, 264, 265, 266, 267, 268, 269, 270, 271, 272, 274, 275, 281, 282, 283, 284, 286, 287, 288, 290, 298, 299, 303, 304, 305, 306, 307, 308, 310, 311, 318, 339, 340, 344, 351, 358, 359, 360, 363, 364, 366, 368, 375, 377, 381, 382, 387, 388, 389, 390, 391, 393, 394, 395, 396, 397, 399, 405, 406, 407, 409, 411, 414, 415, 429, 431, 434, 437, 459, 493, 494, 498, 502
Phlegon, 31, 39, 130, 176, 177, 178, 186, 406, 434, 478
Plato, 19, 79, 80, 240, 271, 280, 281, 303, 323, 340, 341, 343, 346, 347, 350, 442, 502
Ptolemy, 99, 102, 130, 204, 206, 242, 243, 261, 262, 264, 329, 330, 342, 461, 481, 482

—R—

Report of Pilate, 31
Rome, 10, 11, 18, 19, 29, 31, 55, 56, 61, 96, 98, 100, 105, 107, 109, 111, 113, 117, 120, 128, 138, 140, 171, 176, 206, 218, 229, 236, 242, 254, 261, 264, 277, 278, 280, 288, 301, 311, 330, 332, 333, 342, 343, 344, 361, 422, 434, 435, 436, 437, 438, 439, 440, 443, 444, 445, 447, 453, 455, 457, 458, 460, 461, 464, 466, 469, 472, 474, 475, 476, 477, 478, 479, 481, 482, 485, 487, 498, 499, 501

—S—

Samoa, 16, 423, 427, 428, 430
Saturday resurrection, 284
Serapis, 280, 286, 301, 303, 304, 305, 306, 310, 311, 315, 329, 331, 332, 339, 340, 344, 346, 353, 354, 361, 362, 364, 365, 442, 443, 445, 446, 477, 481, 482
Siberia, 142, 431
Sumeria, 294, 313, 315, 317, 349
Sun, 6, 9, 15, 16, 17, 19, 21, 27, 28, 29, 30, 35, 36, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 47, 48, 49, 53, 60, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 77, 78, 80, 81, 90, 93, 96, 97, 98, 100, 101, 105, 106, 111, 112, 113, 114, 119, 129, 134, 135, 138, 139, 140, 142, 143, 151, 156, 174, 175, 176, 184, 187, 188, 189, 190, 191, 194, 201, 202, 205, 206, 207, 208, 209, 210, 211, 219, 236, 237, 238, 239, 240, 243, 244, 245, 246, 249, 250, 251, 253, 259, 263, 266, 269, 271, 272, 273, 275, 278, 279, 281, 282, 284, 285, 286, 287, 289, 290, 299, 301, 302, 305, 309, 310, 312, 313, 314, 317, 318, 319, 320, 321, 322, 323, 324, 326, 327, 329, 331, 341, 342, 346, 347, 348, 349, 350, 351, 352, 353, 354, 356, 359, 361, 362, 363, 365, 366, 367, 368, 371, 373, 375, 376, 378, 379, 380, 381, 382, 383, 384, 387, 388, 389, 390, 392, 393, 394, 400, 401, 407, 409, 410, 411, 413, 414, 415, 421, 428, 430, 434, 436, 439, 440, 441, 442, 443, 444, 445, 446, 447, 448, 452, 453, 454, 455, 458, 459, 460, 462, 463, 465, 466, 469, 470, 474, 479, 482, 487, 488, 489, 491, 492, 502, 503
supernatural Solar eclipse, 39, 92, 379, 381, 387, 388, 389, 390, 407, 409

—T—

Tammuz, 139, 197, 246, 248, 269, 275, 276, 278, 279, 284, 285, 286, 287, 288, 289, 290, 292, 293, 294, 295, 297, 298, 299, 301, 303, 304, 305, 306, 307, 308, 309, 311, 312, 313, 314, 315, 316, 317, 318, 319, 320, 321, 322, 323, 324, 325, 326, 327, 328, 329, 330, 331, 334, 335, 336, 337, 338, 339, 340, 342, 344, 347, 349, 350, 351, 353, 354, 355, 357, 360, 361, 363, 364, 365, 366, 367, 370, 372, 373, 374, 458
Thallus, 92, 113, 130, 477, 498
Thoth, 272, 273, 274, 275
three days and three nights, 148, 149, 151, 156, 157, 158, 159, 162, 163, 165, 166, 167, 168, 291, 292, 294, 295, 297, 300, 301, 305, 307, 319, 366, 372, 458, 497
Tiberius, 8, 10, 11, 15, 18, 27, 31, 37, 39, 56, 88, 95, 111, 112, 113, 114, 124, 140, 147, 177, 178, 222, 223, 225, 227, 228, 229, 422, 434, 436, 437, 438, 439, 440, 441, 442, 443, 444, 445, 446, 447, 448, 449, 450, 451, 452, 453, 454, 455, 456, 457, 458, 459, 460, 461, 462, 463, 464, 465, 466, 467, 468, 469, 470, 472, 473, 474, 475, 476, 480, 481, 486, 498, 500
Tosefta, 181, 184, 192, 193, 203, 496

—W—

Wednesday Crucifixion, 142, 148, 149, 155, 156, 169, 217, 220, 224, 225, 229, 231, 234, 260, 273, 274, 283, 286, 302, 360, 363, 364