

The sign of
Jonah-solved

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Introduction

A sign, a sign – the Pharisees asked for a sign. Then, when Jesus replied, speaking of His impending death and resurrection, He said no sign will be given except that of Jonah the prophet.

This is Jesus own statement about His coming - so we do well to carefully consider just what He meant.

We will resolve the seeming contradiction –

Three days and three nights in the tomb or rose on the third day?

The answer will surprise some and challenge long held beliefs.

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Chapter 1 The sign of Jonah - the sign to Israel.

Ninevah

God instructed Jonah to go to Ninevah to preach His word to that Gentile city. Being a devout Jew he was horrified at the idea – knowing that God was full of grace, Jonah could not accept God's grace being shared with the Gentiles. So he ran in the opposite direction!

We know the account – he takes a ship going to Tarshish. A great storm puts the ship in peril. The ship's captain questions Jonah who admits to being the problem as he is being disobedient to God. Jonah tells the sailors to throw him in the sea and all will be well. Finally, after struggling against the storm all day the sailors do throw Jonah in the sea which then calms.

Jonah is swallowed by a great fish which eventually vomits Jonah onto dry land and God again tells him to go to Ninevah - this time he obeys.

In this story there is a 'shadow' or 'type' of something to come in future – a prophetic statement regarding the coming Messiah.

The sign to Scribes and Pharisees.

'For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.'

Matthew 12:40

This is the sign.

(Jonah is describes as being in the 'heart of the seas,' so Jesus has to bring an adjustment necessary to interpret the sign. So Jesus uses the expression 'in the heart of the earth' instead. Jesus body is in the 'heart of the earth' (grave) for three days and three nights. His Spirit was committed into the hands of His Father (Luke 23:46.) Peter tells us He (this would be His soul) went to preach (proclaim victory) to the spirits in prison in the power of the Spirit. (1 Peter 3:19))

Like Jonah, after three days and three nights Jesus will be released from the 'heart of the earth.' Although the bible tells us Jesus came primarily for the Jews, it also records their rejection of Him. His resurrection will lead to the gospel being spread to all people, as we read in the 'Great Commission.' Like Ninevah countless gentiles will respond to the gospel.

'Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.'

Mark 16:15.

Just as the people of Ninevah responded to the word of God spoken to them by Jonah, so myriads of Gentiles have become believers in

the Lord Jesus Christ, such that today there are many more born again believers from the Gentiles than there are from the Jews.

In the future.

There comes a time when the born again believers are removed from the earth, leaving behind unbelievers who must endure the Tribulation.

Towards the end of this seven year period of judgement, described for us in the book of Revelation, the Jews look upon Him who they pierced (Jesus) recognising Him as the promised Messiah.

Important fulfilment of prophecy.

For the Jews at that time, it will be important that they can see the Messiah as fulfilling the sign specifically given to them – by being in the tomb three days and three nights.

Chapter 2 The sign of Jonah – different church interpretations.

Immediately a great difficulty arises.

The current view of churchianity* is that Jesus was crucified on Friday and rose on Sunday giving no way of accounting for three nights.

* I am using 'churchianity' to mean the established church which would include Catholic, Anglian, Baptist, Methodist etc. It does not mean the born again body of Christ.

The great divide

Back in the second century a great divide arose between the churches in Asia and the church in Rome.

The Asian church kept the third day after the paschal supper (called The Passover in Judaism) as the day on which Jesus rose from the dead. This meant that the day of His resurrection could be any day of the week.** The church in Rome found this unacceptably inconvenient and correctly 'fixed' the day of resurrection as Sunday, and then incorrectly holding their paschal feast the night before the resurrection as a matter of further convenience.

The Asiatic churches were following the pattern laid down by Jesus, and passed on to them by both John and Phillip, whilst Rome was

adopting something more convenient without reference to biblical precepts and truth and not following the format previewed in a shadow at Passover.

** This is because the Passover was celebrated on the 14th day of Nisan. Because the Jewish calendar was based on Lunar months of 29.5 days, with a correction every two or three years by adding in an extra month to re align with the solar calendar, it meant that the 14th day of Nisan fell on a different day each year and could fall on any day of the week.

The ongoing row

The dispute between Rome and Asia was finally solved in the fourth century. So until the fourth century the western church followed today's pattern, Friday crucifixion and Sunday resurrection, whilst the eastern church held their traditional view of Jesus in the tomb three days and three nights.

In the middle of the second century a meeting between Anicetus, Bishop of Rome, and Polycarp, Bishop of Smyrna, took place in Rome. Anicetus was endeavouring to persuade Polycarp to follow the Roman way. However, the Asiatics believed that their way had been handed down to them by John and Phillip and would not budge.

Towards the end of the second century Victor, Bishop of Rome, was of the opinion the Asiatic churches should be forced to follow Rome. Letters flew back and forth. Polycrates, Bishop of Ephesus, declaring they would not depart from the tradition they had received. Victor

excommunicated them from any association with Rome. Irenaeus, Bishop of Lyons, was able to bring agreement that each party would follow their own understanding.

In the fourth century the Council of Nicea put an end to the dispute in favour of the position of Rome.

The difference between the western and orthodox celebration of Easter is now broadly to do with the Gregorian and Julian calendars which are a number of days apart. Western churches follow the more astronomically accurate Gregorian calendar whilst Orthodox follow the Julian calendar date.

The sign is Lost

The result is that now the sign specifically given by Jesus has been lost. (The aspect that the gospel would go to the Gentiles has not been lost - but the requirement for three days and three nights in the tomb has been lost.)

The church celebrates crucifixion Friday and resurrection Sunday following the way of Rome, which was brought in just as a convenience and not as being biblically accurate!

Chapter 3 - Restoring the sign

Sunday resurrection.

Correctly allowing for the fixing of the day of resurrection being Sunday, (that is the day after the Sabbath when Mary goes to the tomb to find it empty,) then how can we reconcile His crucifixion being Friday and comply with the sign requiring Him to be in the tomb three days and three nights?

Friday crucifixion?

The understanding that Jesus was crucified on Friday has become ingrained into the fabric of the church even though it is impossible to reconcile with the sign specifically given by Jesus, Himself. It is not possible to have three nights between Friday and Sunday – though there are some who try to avoid the problem by declaring an extra ‘night’ when the earth was in darkness whilst Jesus was on the cross and other fabrications.

However, we should ask the question – why should we try to defend the doctrine of Rome regarding this issue? Rome has many doctrines that have no biblical basis.

It would be much better to seek the biblical truth!

Just because the church has followed the doctrine of Friday crucifixion since the Council of Nicea, does not mean it is correct. There are many doctrines accepted by various churches which are not biblically correct. For example the bread and wine do not turn into the literal body of Christ (Catholic doctrine), a baby is not regenerated during infant baptism (Anglican doctrine.)

Almost everyone accepts that Jesus was not born on December the 25th, although universally that day is used to remember His birth. (The error of which becomes more and more obvious as 'Christmas' becomes more and more secular.)

Restoring the sign will require a change of thinking.

To restore the one sign given by Jesus, Himself, we will need to adjust our thinking to accommodate the three days and three nights as proclaimed in the sign of Jonah.

Chapter 4 - defining a biblical day

In order to reconcile the problem it is necessary to see how the Lord God defines a day.

We have to go right back to the beginning and examine the account of creation where it all started. When we ask ourselves what came first, so far as the earth is concerned, we find only darkness. (Genesis 1:2)

What did God do? - He proclaimed '*Let there be light and there was light*' (verse 3) And there was light. Darkness came first, then came the light.

What did the Lord God call the thing He had just created? - '*So evening and morning were the first day.*' (Verse 5)

...and so evening and morning were the second day and so evening and morning were the third day and so on through the account of creation.

So in biblical terms God's day starts in the evening. We see this in Judaism today. Saturday is regarded as the Sabbath - but it starts at 6pm on Friday and ends at 6pm on Saturday.

Count days starting in the evening.

We have established a principle - start counting a 'day' in the evening 'before.' Can we see any further biblical evidence of this in practice?

Esther

The Jews were in danger of being wiped out in the reign of Ahasuerus, King of the Medes and Persians. He was tricked by Haman into giving a decree for the destruction of all Jews. The Jew, Mordecai, counsels Esther (the Jewish wife of Ahasuerus – his favourite wife) to seek some way of safety for the Jews. If she approaches the King without being summoned she risks her life. So she decides that she and her maids will fast for three days and she asks Mordecai to gather all the Jews in Shushan to do likewise.

When Esther specifies her three day fast she says she will fast ‘night and day.’ So three days is night and day 1, night and day 2, and night and day 3. On the third day Esther goes before the King.

The decree given by Ahasuerus cannot be revoked under the laws of the Medes and Persians so he gives authority to Mordecai to issue another decree in his name. This decree allows the Jews to defend themselves and to kill anyone who would assault them. Haman was hanged and the Jews were saved.

The Feast of Purim is established as a memorial of these events.

(Refer to the Book of Esther for the full account.)

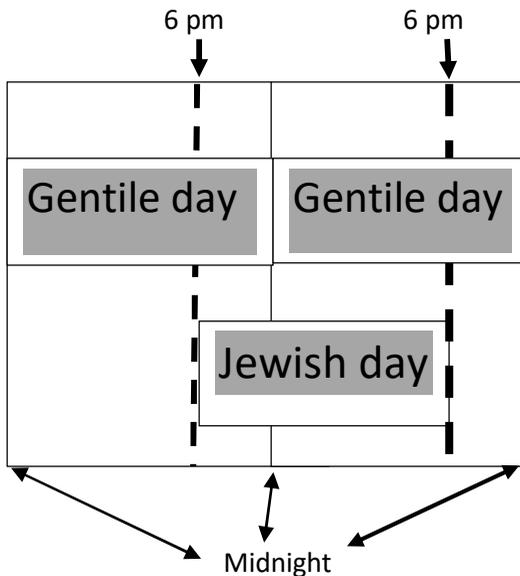
Start counting the day in the evening.

So that is it – Jesus was speaking to Jews who asked for a sign. The Jews would know that you account for the day starting in the evening – in our Gentile terms that is the night before.

This straight forward understanding is a key to reconciling one of Christianity’s conundrums – how could Jesus be in the tomb three days and three nights and rise on the third day. Now it is simple. Count the days starting in the evening. Night one is followed by day one, is followed by

night two, is followed by day two, is followed by night three finally followed by the third day on which Jesus rose.

Diagram showing the difference between the gentile reckoning of a day and the Jewish, or biblical way:



So we can see that for Israel the day starts at 6pm in the evening until 6pm 24 hours later.

Chapter 5 Christ our Passover Lamb

John exclaimed - *'Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.'* John 1:29

Paul teaches – *'For indeed Christ our Passover, was sacrificed for us,'* in his first letter to the Corinthians. (1 Corinthians 5:7) Going on to say – *'let us keep the feast.'* The very early church did exactly that – they kept the Passover, now completed with Jesus being the Passover Lamb. Later, when all Jewishness was being purged out of the now predominantly Gentile church, reference to Passover was dropped.

Opposition

In the very early days of the church the unconverted Jews were very anti the new 'sect' known as The Way. – persecuting believers in Jesus. The account of the stoning of Stephen and of Paul at Lystra are examples. Everywhere Paul went there was strong opposition from the Jews. All recorded in the book of Acts.

Then the church, now made up of multitudes of Gentiles turned against the Jews. History has been plagued by antisemitism ever since.

Then the early church did everything they could to distance themselves from the Jews and Jewish customs.

So now we don't easily recognise our Easter as being based on the Jewish Passover. When we look again at the Feast of Pesach (Passover) we will see it is a shadow of the glory to come as Jesus becomes our Passover Lamb.

Passover - the pattern

The feast of Passover speaks directly of the coming sacrifice of Jesus at Calvary. Just as Passover remembered the miraculous deliverance of Israel out of Egypt, so it also looked forward to the miraculous deliverance out of sin and darkness for all those who place their trust in Jesus unto eternal life.

Jesus celebrates the Passover.

So when Jesus comes to celebrate the Passover He is the Passover Lamb. John 1:29 and 1 Corinthians 5:7

How did it start? Israel captive in Egypt

For 400 years Israel were slaves in Egypt – until Moses. The Lord God saw their plight as conditions became harder and harder and planned their deliverance. Various plagues were sent over Egypt, necessary to soften Pharaoh's heart to allow Israel to leave. The last plague was to be death of every first born.

Israel were to be exempt from the plague but had to follow instructions.

Every man was to set aside a lamb for his household on the 10th day of the month of Nissan – a male, spotless without blemish. On the 14th day of the month it was to be slaughtered literally 'between the evenings.' (Here the literal Hebrew has been translated as 'at twilight,' which has obscured the full meaning.) Between the evenings means after 6pm on the 14th and before the next evening starting at 6pm on what will be the 15th. Later we

will see this perfectly fulfilled when Jesus is crucified starting at noon and concluding at 3pm on the 14th Nissan.

Having killed the lamb it was to be roasted and eaten with unleavened bread – this is now the next day once we realise the day starts at 6pm. So the lamb is killed on the 14th Nissan before 6pm, roasted and eaten on what by then is the 15th Nissan. On the very same day (15th Nissan) the Lord's Passover takes place as the angel of death sweeps through Egypt.

Israel escapes the angel of death.

Each house was to be marked with the blood of the lamb, and that night the angel of death visiting Egypt would 'passover' the houses with blood on their doorposts. Thus Israel was delivered from the death that swept through Egypt. And so Israel left Egypt commencing their journey, that same day, to the promised land. The redemption of Israel required their obedience to the God given instructions and was determined by two things:

- 1 They had to apply the blood of the lamb to the doorposts and lintel of their door. (They had to pass through the door to enter the house. Jesus said, '*I am the door.*' John 10:9)
- 2 They had to eat the lamb with unleavened bread.

This day becomes the 'Feast of unleavened bread.'

Israel's redemption is on the 15th Nissan – the process having started on the 14th with the slaying of the lamb.

Eat My flesh, drink My blood. John 6:66

When Jesus said this many who were following Him turned away.

Our redemption follows this pattern. Jesus is slain to deal with the penalty of our sin. However, we have no redemption until we 'eat His flesh and drink His blood.' When Jesus initiated what we call the Lord's Supper He took symbols – bread and wine to illustrate the point that we must eat His

body and drink His blood. Jesus demonstrates that our redemption comes when we take advantage of His sacrifice. *'Jesus said to them, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in you.'* John 6:53. Redemption for us was bought and paid for in Jesus sacrifice but it only comes into effect as redemption when we take it into our selves by placing our trust in what He has done. Hence our redemption, just like the redemption of Israel, is the (a) day after His actual death – that is the day we believe and are born again - transferred from death to life. The physical shadow shown in Passover now becomes a spiritual reality for us as the Holy Spirit brings rebirth to our human spirit.

We have the same two steps to redemption as Israel had at Passover-

- 1) Israel placed their trust in having the blood on the doorposts and lintel. We place our trust in the efficacy of the blood spilt at Calvary.
- 2) Israel had to eat the lamb, after which the Angel of death passed over. Similarly we have to take Jesus into our innermost being. For us this happens when we are born again and the Holy Spirit takes up residence within our reborn human spirit.

Jesus is the Passover lamb.

So for Jesus to fulfil the type of the Passover lamb He must be set aside on the 10th Nissan and crucified on the 14th of Nissan having been set aside for four days. (This will be fulfilled in the Jewish calendar corrected by one day, explained later, – Jesus took the Passover one day before the Jews. His 14th Nissan was to the Jews the 13th Nissan)

'Set aside' 1

Peter tells us that 1 day represents 1,000 years (2 Peter 3:8). Here we see that Jesus was set aside for four 'days,' each of 1,000 years, from creation. 2 Timothy 1:9 tells us that grace in Christ Jesus was given to us before time began.

'Set aside' 2

Matthew***, Mark and John all tell us that a woman (Mary) came to Jesus while He sat at table and poured a flask of costly fragrant oil over His head and body. The disciples were indignant. However Jesus said to them, *'Why do you trouble the woman? For she has done a good work for Me. For in pouring this fragrant oil on My body, she did it for My burial.'* (Matthew 26:6-13).

We can see this in the gospel where it tells us of this anointing. After this day of anointing there are two more days and then it will be Passover and unleavened bread (see Mark's account) Passover for the Jews was a two day matter consisting of the Preparation Day when leaven is removed and the lamb slain and then the Passover meal which secured redemption.

So Mary anoints Jesus on 10th Nissan, then there are two clear days 11th and 12th Nissan, then there is the preparation day when Jesus is crucified 13th Nissan, then 14th Nissan the Passover celebration.

Passover was celebrated by the Jews on Friday the 14th day of Nissan.

As we have seen, the way the Lord God counts days they start in the evening - so the 14th starts in the evening of the 13th lasting until the evening of the 14th.

Jesus celebrated the Passover one day earlier as shown in the scripture.

Why did Jesus celebrate the Passover one day earlier than the Jews?

In order to number the days, the start of the month has to be determined. Israel's calendar was lunar based and they started the month on the first sighting of the new moon. That would be a very small crescent on the horizon. This is known as 'observation.' Jesus, being the creator of all things, however knew that the true astronomical New Moon started the day before it became visible. The true astronomical timing. Hence Jesus celebrated the Passover one day earlier than Israel.

(The Jewish sect known as the Essenes celebrated Passover on a different day than the main body of Israel. However, there is no evidence that Jesus was following the Essene timing which in AD 33 was one day later than Israel not one day earlier.)

Hence we have determined that Jesus was actually crucified on what we call the 13th Nissan but to Jesus was the 14th Nissan. Joseph of Arimathea asks Pilate for Jesus body which is buried in the grave that night – now the start of the 14th Nissan.

Preparation days.

When one looks up all the scriptures surrounding the crucifixion it can be very confusing. They don't seem to agree with one another – to some extent this is due to the 'preparation day' named in scripture.

Preparation day was the day before a Sabbath – Jews were required to search out all leaven from their homes. The confusion arises because there were two preparation days in view at the crucifixion.

First preparation day was before the Passover. Passover was Friday* so the next day was the Sabbath which also required a preparation day. So both Thursday and Friday were preparation days.

High Sabbath

* The Passover was considered by the Jews to be a 'High Sabbath.'

The early church did everything they could to distance themselves from the Jews and Jewish customs.

In chapter 2 we saw how the church in Rome moved the feast to a different day for convenience, but also to distance our celebration, now

known as Easter from the Passover. So now we don't easily recognise our Easter as being based on the Jewish Passover.

*** Matthews account (chapter 26:17) has a bad translation error. 'The text says, 'Now on the first *day of the feast of* unleavened bread the disciples came to Jesus saying, 'where do you want us to prepare for You to eat the Passover.' This translation does not agree with the other texts.

'*Day*' and '*Feast of*' are not in the bible text but added for clarity. Unfortunately here the opposite has happened. 'First' is a mis translation of 'protos' which means 'preceding'. So this text should read 'Now preceding unleavened bread the disciples came to Him etc.'

Jews saw 'unleavened bread' as starting on Preparation day when the house was cleared of leaven. The actual biblical instruction was that the 'Feast of Unleavened Bread' started on the 15th Nissan – the day of redemption.

In the next chapter we will put this together day by day.

Chapter 6 Putting it together.

There are three things to bear in mind –

- 1 For Israel the day starts in the evening – so when we say the 14th the day starts at 6pm the evening of the 13th and ends at 6pm on the 14th.**
- 2 As already explained Jesus recognised an astronomically correct calendar under which the true 14th was to Israel still only the 13th - they were one day behind.**
- 3 When scripture refers to the third or sixth or ninth hour it is counting from 6am onwards. So the third hour is 8am to 9am. The sixth hour is from 11am to 12 noon and the ninth is from 2pm to 3pm.**

Jesus is crucified on the preparation day of the Passover

Wednesday evening (Start of Thursday 13th Nissan for Israel)

Jesus celebrates the Passover with His disciples. This is one day before the Jews celebrate it – this confirms that the Jewish calendar was one day adrift at this time. This is because the start of the month was determined by the sighting of the new moon – that is by observation. However in terms of proper astronomy the new moon starts the day before it is visible, as a tiny crescent on earth. Hence Israel was one day behind whilst Jesus knew the right day for the beginning of the month.

Judas leaves the Passover celebration to fulfil his betrayal of Jesus immediately after He hands him the bread.

Jesus and the disciples go to Gethsemane where He is arrested.

Jesus is then taken before Caiaphas.

Thursday – preparation day for the Passover.

Jesus appears before Pilate around 6am (early in the morning) and then before Herod and then again before Pilate.

Pilate asks the Jews if they would like to have their King released to fulfil the tradition of releasing one prisoner.

The Jews determine ‘Let Him be crucified.’

He is scourged and made to carry His cross to Calvary - this is the 6th hour – that is 11am to 12 noon.

We know it is preparation day for the Passover (itself a high Sabbath) from John 19: 14-16 - *‘Now it was the Preparation day of the Passover, and about the 6th hour (noon).’* Jesus is before Pilate and then led away to be crucified.

Around the ninth hour (3 pm) Jesus cried out with a loud voice it is finished and died. (Recorded in Matthew, Mark and Luke)

Mark states, *‘Now it was about the third hour and they crucified Him.’* This is stated as being after Jesus refused the drink and the division of His garments so it is likely to be a reference to the third hour on the cross rather than the third hour of the day – 9am – it could not be that as that does not fit with other gospels, and would not give enough time for all that happened that morning.

The process from dismissal by Pilate through to death on the cross took only about three to four hours – for most of which the earth was covered in darkness.

It is no wonder that Pilate was very surprised when told that Jesus was already dead by Joseph of Arimathea. *'Pilate marvelled that He was already dead.'* Mark 15:44 (because crucifixion usually lasted many hours, sometimes days.)

Some time later the soldiers come to break the legs of the men on the crosses. Jesus is already dead so His bones are not broken. Instead He is pierced in His side from where come water and blood.

Thursday after 6pm - **this is night one** and now it is the start of the Jewish Friday – Passover. To the Jew this is now the start of 14th Nissan. When evening had come - after 6pm - Joseph of Arimathea obtains Jesus body which is then put into the grave (heart of the earth) in haste.

Friday 14th Nissan - Jewish Passover and Preparation day for the following Sabbath - **this is day one.**

Friday night - **this is night two.**

Saturday – the Sabbath - **this is day two**

It is also the first day of the feast of unleavened bread.

Saturday night - **this is night three.**

Sunday – this is the third day.

Now, after the Sabbath, as day is breaking (6am) Mary Magdalene and the other Mary come to the tomb – but Jesus has risen it is the third day. This is known as 'First Fruits or the 'Feast of Harvest.' Jesus rises to the Father as the firstfruits. (1 Corinthians 15:23)

This is also the first of the festival of weeks which leads up to Pentecost.

Jesus said He would rise on the third day. FULFILLED

'Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up.' John 2:19

'From that time Jesus began to show His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised the third day.' Matthew 16:21

(Matthew 17:23; 20:19; Mark 9:31; 10:34; Luke 9:22; 13:32; 18:33; 24:7; 24:46; - all these scriptures refer to Jesus rising on the third day.)

The sign of Jonah. FULFILLED

The specific sign, given by Jesus, was the sign of Jonah. Here Jesus specified that He would be in the heart of the earth (idiom for the grave) for three days and three nights – and so He was.

Scripture is always exactly accurate when we fully understand it. Jesus said explicitly that He would be in the grave for three days and three nights.

Postscript

Even the Talmud (writings of Jewish Rabbi's) confirm Jesus was crucified on Thursday, not Friday. Ref: Sannhedrin V, 43a

Chapter 7 - The challenge

The bible is absolutely accurate.

We can put our trust in the truth as revealed by the scripture and so we should trust truth rather than church tradition. Many things were added into 'christian' beliefs just through tradition. This is no different than what happened to Israel - they added many things to the truth revealed through the Law and the Prophets. Jesus was very critical when the Jews upheld their traditions rather than the scriptural truth.

'Why do you also transgress the commandment of God because of your tradition?' Matthew 15:3 – Jesus to the scribes and Pharisees.

Their transgression was sin.

Change of thinking

Now that we have been able, by God's grace, to obtain a clearer picture. We can enhance our understanding of Easter by seeing the shadow presented by Passover. We may even break with tradition and see the Lord's Supper as a very special annual remembrance for which we examine ourselves – clearing out any leaven (sin) that may have crept in to our lives.

Church tradition, even though it is at odds with the truth, takes all thinking of the Passover out of Easter. The Lord's Supper, as we know the feast now, is firmly rooted in Passover Had we taken

more notice of the 'shadow,' we would in all probability, celebrate the Lord's Supper as an annual event.

Very challenging to our current thinking – unless you are one of the very few who realise what has happened as tradition has replaced truth.

Did Jesus intend the Lord's Supper to be taken whenever one likes?

Paul, in his instructions to the Corinthians – first letter, eleventh chapter and verses 23-26 says, *'For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you: that the Lord Jesus on the same night He was betrayed took bread; and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, "Take, eat, this is My body, broken for you; do this in remembrance of Me." In the same manner He also took the cup after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me." For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death till He comes.'*

There are two things here to take note of:

- 1 'As often as' is a translation of '*hosakis*' which literally means 'as many times as.' This has a rather different meaning than 'often.' It is not 'do this often.'
- 2 It is a memorial - it is done in remembrance.

This then becomes very suggestive that the Lord's Supper should be an annual event of remembrance.

(Think of it like this - 'as often as I send you a birthday card I do so to remember your birthday.' I definitely don't send you one every day, week or month – but just the once a year at the right time to celebrate with you.)

In Acts 2 verse 42 it is stated that the Apostles fellowshiped in the breaking of bread - this is sharing a meal together and not a reference to the Lord's Supper. There are accounts of breaking bread in Acts but none of them mention wine – so these are not references to the Lord's Supper but to meals.

The shadow.

'So let no one judge you in food or drink, or regarding a festival or a new moon or Sabbaths, which are a shadow of things to come, but the substance is of Christ.' Colossians 2:16-17

The thing about a shadow is that it is dark. You can see the outline but not the detail. The outline will exactly fit the shape of the object but you cannot see the reality and detail of it until you have light. Jesus said *'I am the light of the world.'* We have the light whereas Israel did not. (Though undoubtedly there would have been some, a remnant perhaps, who had sought and received light, appreciating that the shadows looked forward to the Messiah as a sacrificial lamb rather than an all conquering hero to get rid of the Romans.)

It can be useful to make sure our perception, of what we call reality, fits with the shadow we see in the Old Testament scriptures - a way of checking that our understanding and perception is indeed fully biblical.

Challenging? Yes! It is part of the process of growing into maturity.

Have you recognised Jesus, our Passover and the efficacy of His shed blood? This is 'Jesus the door'. Come right in and place your personal trust in Him as your saviour – you will be born again that instant.