**TRUTH VS. TRADITION:**

**CHRIST’S DEATH**

(Which will you follow?)

God is restoring the truth of His Word in these last days because He desires His people to worship Him in Spirit and in Truth.

***23****But the hour comes, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeks such to worship Him.* ***24****God is a Spirit: and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth* (John 4:23-24 KJVER).

Before His return Jesus is preparing a Church – “His Bride” who will be without spot or blemish washed in the cleansing truth of His Word.

***25****Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave Himself for it;* ***26****That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word,* ***27****That He might present it to Himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish* (Ephesians 5:25-27 KJVER).

Unscriptural man-made religious tradition is one area that causes Christians to compromise and stray from the truth. Jesus warned of the peril of following tradition rather than the truth of His Word.

*1Then scribes and Pharisees who were from Jerusalem came to Jesus, saying,****2****“Why do Your disciples violate the tradition of the elders? For they do not wash their hands when they eat bread.”* ***3****But He answered them, “Why do you also violate the commandment of God by your tradition?****4****For God commanded, ‘Honor your father and mother, and, ‘He who speaks evil of father or mother, let him be put to death.’[*[*b*](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+15%3A1-9&version=MEV#fen-MEV-23638b)*]****5****But you say, ‘Whoever shall say to his father or his mother, “What you would have profited from me is a gift to God,”****6****will be free from honoring his father or his mother.’ So you have made the commandment of God of no effect by your tradition.****7****You hypocrites, Isaiah well prophesied of you, saying:* ***8****‘These people draw near to Me with their mouth, and honor Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me.* ***9****In vain they do worship Me, teaching as doctrines the precepts of men* (Matthew 15:1-9 MEV).

One example of modern-day religious tradition, which causes God’s people to compromise the truth, is the celebration of Good Friday and Easter Sunday. First of all, Jesus’ resurrection is joined to a pagan spring fertility festival, which is the actual true “Easter” celebration. The term “Easter” is nowhere to be found in scripture. It is an unscriptural tradition developed by the early Roman church (300 – 400 AD) during the reign of Emperor Constantine. Constantine had declared Christianity the state religion of Rome. In order to bring the mainly pagan Roman population into the Christian fold, the Roman Church adopted certain key pagan festivals and transformed them into Christian holidays. The spring fertility festival became the Good Friday and “Easter” celebration and was associated with Jesus’ death and resurrection. This in itself is reason enough for Christians to disassociate themselves from such a practice. However, in conjunction with these facts is the falseness or lie of Jesus’ death being on Friday or “Good Friday.” Scripture reveals that our Lord could not have died on Friday as tradition teaches.

***40****For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth* (Matthew 12:40 KJVER).

Jesus Himself clearly declared that He would be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth after His death as revealed in Matthew 12:40. If you try to fit three days and three nights from Friday to Sunday it does not work. The following chart is the true timing of these events as revealed in scripture:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Thursday at 3 PM | Jesus’ death | The 1st day in the heart of the earth |
| Thursday night | Jesus’ burial in the Garden tomb | The 1st night in the heart of the earth |
| Friday | Jesus’ second day in the tomb | The 2nd day in the heart of the earth |
| Friday night | Jesus’ second night in the tomb | The 2nd night in the heart of the earth |
| Saturday | Jesus’ third day in the tomb | The 3rd day in the heart of the earth |
| Saturday night | Jesus’ third night in the tomb | The 3rd night in the heart of the earth |
| Early Sunday morning | Jesus arose | After 3 days and 3 nights |

Early Sunday morning the first day of the week Jesus had risen from the dead (Matthew 28:1-7). In the Good Friday scenario Jesus is only two days and two nights in the heart of the earth, which is not true. The truth of the matter is that Jesus was crucified on Thursday. The failure by many to recognize the falseness of the traditional “Good Friday” scenario is due to the fact that they wrongly assume the Sabbath that follows the day after Jesus’ death is the regular Saturday Sabbath. It is not as the following scripture reveals:

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

In this scripture we see that this particular Sabbath was a “special Sabbath” or a special “high day.” The day following the Passover when Jesus died was the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread which was a special Sabbath day of rest, no matter what day of the week it fell upon as the following scripture confirms.

***4****These are the feasts of the Lord, even holy convocations, which you shall proclaim in their seasons.* ***5****In the fourteenth day of the first month at evening is the Lord's Passover.* ***6****And on the fifteenth day of the same month is the feast of unleavened bread to the Lord: seven days you must eat unleavened bread.* ***7****In the first day you shall have a holy convocation: you shall do no servile work therein.* ***8****But you shall offer an offering made by fire to the Lord seven days: in the seventh day is a holy convocation: you shall do no servile work therein* (Leviticus 23:4-8 KJVER).

Look at any Biblical chronology of Jesus’ final week of His human ministry and you will discover a great mystery. There are no events recorded for Wednesday. During the most critical week of His life did Jesus take a holiday? No! in order to hold to the “Good Friday” tradition the translators had to skip one day to make it work with the actual historical chronology of the week. However, the truth is that Jesus did not take a mysterious day off on Wednesday. The fact is that Friday was a “special Sabbath” the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread. This special Friday Sabbath is the missing day the translators failed to account for in this final week. Let us review what actually occurred starting on Wednesday evening:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Wednesday Evening at Sunset: | Passover begins and Jesus partakes of the “Last Supper” with His disciples. |
| Late Wednesday Evening: | Jesus is arrested in the Garden of Gethsemane. |
| Very Early Thursday Morning: | Jesus’ trial and condemnation to death by crucifixion takes place. |
| From approximately 9 AM to 3 PM Thursday on the day of Passover (Mark 15:25-37): | Jesus suffers His agonizing death upon the cross. |
| Thursday from 3 PM to Sunset: | Jesus’ body is placed in Joseph of Arimathea’s tomb. Jesus’ first day in the heart of the earth. |
| Thursday after Sunset begins the Special Sabbath the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread: | Jesus’ first night in the heart of the earth. |
| Friday morning until sunset: | Special Sabbath of the Feast of unleavened Bread observed. Jesus’ second day in the heart of the earth. |
| Friday after Sunset until Saturday morning: | Regular weekly Sabbath begins. Jesus’ second night in the heart of the earth. |
| Saturday morning until Sunset: | Regular weekly Sabbath observed. Jesus’ third day in the heart of the earth. |
| Saturday evening until early Sunday morning: | Jesus’ third night in the heart of the earth. |
| Sometime early Sunday morning on the first day of the week: | Jesus triumphantly arose victorious over death and the grave – the resurrection of Christ. |

Some may question this scenario documented above due to the fact that the scriptures also declare that Jesus would arise on the third day (Luke 24:7, 46). When calculating from Thursday to Sunday would that not make it the fourth day and thus violate these other scriptures? No, it does not, and let me explain why. There are 24 hours in a single day and 72 hours in a three-day time span. Jesus died at approximately 3:00 PM on Thursday afternoon. 72 hours after His death would bring us to 3:00 PM on Sunday afternoon. Therefore, in this scenario Jesus did arise within three days or within 72 hours after His death. In fact, He arose on the third day or within the third 24-hour day period following His death, exactly as the scriptures declare (Luke 24:1-7).

What we have shared in this outline is a scriptural and chronologically accurate account of Jesus’ final week. Consequently, it exposes the traditional account as scripturally and chronologically false. The sad reality is that due to man’s tradition many in the church today are continually participating in a festival, which is rooted in paganism and lies. Satan loves this because he is able to use these traditions to defile our worship to God, which he knows needs to be done “in Spirit and in Truth.” Some may think that all that matters is that in our hearts we are practicing this as unto the Lord. To those I would warn that God’s Word clearly commands us to separate ourselves from unclean pagan practices and from anything that involves practicing a lie.

***16****And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? for you are the temple of the living God; as God has said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people.* ***17****Wherefore come out from among them, and be you separate, says the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you.* ***18****And will be a Father to you, and you shall be My sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty* (2 Corinthians 6:16-18 KJVER).

***14****Blessed are they that do His commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.* ***15****For outside are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loves and makes* (practices) *a lie* (Revelation 22:14-15 KJVER).

If we are to complete the spiritual race that the Lord has set before us and be ready for His coming, we will need to lay aside every weight, including the weight of man-made tradition, which hinders us from truly worshipping Him “in spirit and in truth.”

***12****Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which does so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us* (Hebrews 12:1 KJVER).

July 17, 2004 (updated March 2021) Rev. Michael LeClair