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CHRONOLOGY OF THE LIFE OF CHRIST

FOLLOWING HIS STEPS

An Effort to Harmonize the Gospels

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Jewish Months, Days, Hours and Holy Convocations or High Sabbaths

Scriptures: John 12:1 and various others

In order to follow this chronology of the Life of Christ it is extremely important to understand Jewish months, days, hours and their special “holy convocations” or “high Sabbaths” that were part of their Feasts. Most people in the Western world use what is known as the Gregorian calendar and a time keeping system to account for years, months, weeks, days and hours which is similar but different from the Jewish calendar and time keeping system. I will briefly compare the two Calendars and time keeping systems.

YEARS: The Gregorian calendar uses the BC/AD method of dividing YEARS. The letters BC indicate years “before Christ” and AD (Anno Domini) are letters used to indicate the specified number of years after the traditional date of Christ's birth. Since the Orthodox Jews do not recognize the birth of Christ as a dividing point they do not officially use the BC/AD method. The Hebrew calendar begins with an estimated moment of the world's creation. Hebrew tradition has placed this moment at 3,760 years and 3 months before the birth of Jesus Christ. To find a year in the Hebrew calendar, we must add 3,760 to the date in the Gregorian calendar. By the Jewish

calendar we are not living in the year 2003 AD – we are living in the year 5,763 since creation. MOST modern day Jews use both the Gregorian and the Jewish calendar and a dual system for accounting for time.

MONTHS: The Gregorian calendar has 12 months, January through December, ranging in length from 28 days to 31 days. The lengths of our calendar months have no relation to astronomy. The Hebrew calendar year is based on the moon and normally consists of 12 months. The modern Hebrew names of the months are: Tishri, Heshvan, Kislev, Tebet, Shebat, Adar, Nisan, Iyar, Sivan, Tammuz, Ab, and Elul. They are alternately 30 and 29 days long. Seven times during every 19-year period, an embolismic or extra 29-day month, called Veadar, is inserted between Adar and Nisan. At the same time, Adar is given 30 days instead of 29. These additions keep the Hebrew calendar and holidays in agreement with the seasons of the solar year.

According to Scripture the first month of the Jewish year, in which the Passover was to be observed, was Abib – see Exodus 13:3-4, 23:15, 34:18, Deut 16:1, (Abib was changed to Nisan after the captivity) and the twelfth month was Adar – see Ester 3:7, 3:13, 8:12. The third month of the year was Sivan – see Esther 8:9. The modern day Jewish calendar has departed from this Biblical order. There are only five of the 12 names for Jewish months found in the KJV of the Old Testament and they are Abib (which was changed to Nisan), Adar, Sivan, Elul and Tammuz. Tammuz is another name for the Accadian sun-god (the Adonis of the Greeks), the husband of the goddess Ishtar. In the Chaldean calendar there was a month set apart in honor of this god at the beginning of the summer solstice. At this festival, which lasted six days, the worshippers, with loud lamentations, bewailed the funeral of the god, they sat "weeping for Tammuz" – see Ezekiel 8:14 This name was borrowed from Chaldeans for one of the months of the Hebrew calendar. In my chronology on the Life of Christ I have used the "after captivity" name of Nisan for

the month in which the Passover was observed and Christ was crucified.

WEEKS: The Gregorian calendar months and the Jewish calendar months are divided into weeks of seven days from Sunday through Saturday, with Sunday being the first day of the week. Some weeks carry over into the next month, etc. This is based on the Biblical principle of “seven days in a week” – i. e. “For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day, and hallowed it” (Exodus 20:11).

DAYS: Each day of both the Gregorian and the Jewish month is assigned a number starting with 1 (first) and ending as high as 30 for the Jewish month and 31 (thirty first) for the Gregorian month. The names of the days of the week are not found in Scripture. Many of the names of our Months and Days of the weeks came from Roman Caesars, mythological or astrological gods. The days were first known as Sun's-day, Moon's-day, Mars'-day, and so on. The English names for the days Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday were derived from the names of Norse gods. Most names used in both systems were taken from Babylonian paganism.

HOURS: Each day of the week has 24 hours. The difference between the Gentile and the Jewish method of accounting for these hours is the starting and ending time. Both systems work on the Biblical principle of an evening (night) and a morning (day) making a 24 hour day – i.e. see Genesis 1:5, 1:8, 1:13 etc. “The evening and the morning were the first day”. Western days start at 12:00:01 AM, right after midnight, and end at 12:00:00 PM at midnight. 12 O'clock noon divides the hours from AM and PM. Each Jewish day starts at 6:00:01 PM (Gentile time) in the evening and end at 6 PM (Gentile time) 24 hours later. It is said the Jewish day is from Sunset to Sunset.

COUNTING JEWISH HOURS:

The word HOUR in the scriptures often means just a period of time. The word "hour" appears in the O.T. only in the book of Daniel. It seems that counting hours was a modern N.T.

custom. The Jewish Day is divided into two twelve hour segments – (1) twelve hours of night – from 6 PM (Gentile time) to 6 AM (Gentile time) and – (2) twelve hours of day - from 6 AM to 6 PM (Gentile time).

The following illustrates Jewish terms as found in the scriptures and how they compare to our terms:

1. Night Hours - Even = 6 pm ; 3rd hour = 9 pm ; 6th hour = 12 am / midnight

2. Day Hours: 3rd hour = 9 am ; 6th hour = 12 noon; 9th hour = 3 pm ;

3. Other terms: Midnight = 12 PM; Cock-crowing = 6 am ; Morning = 9 am

See Mark 13:35

4. Watches: Second watch of the night (9 PM to 12), Third watch of the night

(12 AM to 3 AM) – see Luke 12:38.

Specific hours: Occasionally we find a specific hours or time spoken of.

1. The “eleventh hour” of the day would have been 5 PM – see Matt 20:6, 9.

2. The tenth hour of the day would have been 4 PM – John 1:39

3. “Evening” was the period of time right after Sunset when the new Jewish day

had begun. See Exodus 16:20, 12:6, Lev 23:5, Mark 13:35

4. “Eventide” could be the time between 3 and 6 PM of a day or after 6 PM until

dark of a new day. See Mark 11:11, Acts 4:3

CONSIDERING THE HOLY CONVOCATIONS or HIGH SABBATHS

The DAY called PASSOVER was followed by the Seven Day Feast of Unleavened Bread - Please read Exodus 12:1-6. There was a preparation - v.3 -6. The lamb was to be selected on the tenth day - v. 3 and kept until the fourteenth day - v.6 – at which time it was to be killed in the evening (that night) or at the beginning of the fourteenth day. They were to “let nothing of it remain until the morning; and that which remaineth of it until the morning ye shall burn with fire” (Exodus 12:10). It was “the LORD’S Passover” – who said, “I will pass through the land of Egypt this night, and will smite all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment: I *am* the LORD. And the blood shall be to you for a token upon the houses where ye *are*: and when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy *you*, when I smite the land of Egypt” (Exodus 12:12-13).

It seems obvious from the scriptures in the N.T. that "customs and traditions" had narrowed this time to the one day called the "preparation of the Passover" and that this day was the 14th or the Passover day. See Mark 14:12, Luke 22:7-8.

There was to be a “Seven Day Feast of Unleavened Bread” AFTER the Passover Lamb was killed (Exodus 12:15-17). Notice - The first and seventh days of the feast were to be "Holy Convocations" -- HIGH or HOLY DAYS, just like Sabbath Days. See Exodus 12:16, Lev 23:4-8 - Read carefully Leviticus 23:23 - 39

Note: There can be more Sabbath Days than just the regular Seventh Day Sabbath in a Seven day Feast with the First and Seventh Day as Sabbath IF the Regular Seventh Day Sabbath falls somewhere in between the First and Seventh Day. (This is not double talk to confuse anyone).

Illustration: The regular Sabbath comes every SEVENTH

DAY but there was also a Sabbath on the 10th day in the Seventh Month. See Lev. 23: 26-32 and 23: 38-39

**** Observation: DURING A SEVEN DAY FEAST WITH TWO SPECIAL SABBATH DAYS, ONE ON THE 15th DAY AND THE OTHER ON THE 21st DAY (AND THE 14th DAY OF THE MONTH IS A DAY OTHER THAN FRIDAY) THE REGULAR SEVENTH DAY SABBATH MUST OCCUR SOMEWHERE IN BETWEEN THE 15TH AND THE 21ST. THIS HAS HAPPENED 75% OF THE YEARS SINCE 30 AD. IT HAPPENED IN 30 AD AND IT HAPPENED IN 2003 AND 75% OF THE YEARS IN BETWEEN.**

**** According to the Modern Day Jewish Calendars that I examined, which only go back about 400 years to 1583, the 14th day of Nisan falls on Friday ONLY about 25 percent of the time. For the past 400 years the Jewish Feast of Unleavened Bread, which they simply call the Passover (which always begins on the 15th of Nisan) began on Wednesday about 30 % of the time; Monday about 30 % of the time; Saturday about 15 % of the time; and Friday about 25 % of the time. These percentages have been rounded off. However, for the past 100 years, the 14th of Nisan fell on a Friday exactly (according to my count) 25 times.**

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