

Fundamentals of Belief
#9A: Christ's Resurrection

Edited Sermon Transcript
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Brethren, this afternoon, we want to continue on this series of the Fundamentals of Belief of The Church of God, The Eternal. We have gone through eight fundamentals and we are up to number nine. Last time, we went through the significance of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, the meaning of His death, and what the willingness of His sacrifice meant to us.

Today, fundamental number nine, we are going to talk about Christ's resurrection and its significance. I can already tell you that this is going to take more than one sermon. I have scheduled this for two sermons to get through all of the concepts that we have. The fundamental itself is not very long in its reading compared to others. However, the amount of depth of the material that we want to cover is going to take some work. Let me begin by reading the fundamental.

We believe that Jesus Christ was raised from the dead after His body reposed three days and three nights in the grave, thus making immortality possible for mortal man; that He thereafter ascended in to heaven where He now sits at the right hand of God the Father, as our High Priest and Advocate.

That is fundamental number nine. We are only going to get through the first half of that today, because we are going to leave the topic of Christ's role now—the ascended Christ as High Priest and Advocate—for its own sermon. What we want to cover today is the concept of Christ's resurrection, what it means for us, the

significance of His resurrection to us. We also want to go through the technicalities of our belief that He, literally, was in the grave three days and three nights.

First, we believe Jesus Christ was raised from the dead. This is one that is very easy to take for granted because even the churches that claim to be Christian—the Catholics, the Protestants and all of their offshoots—accept this. Anyone who believes anything about, or claims to be a Christian, accepts the concept that Christ was raised from the dead. Let's look at the specific scriptures that certify this very fact and look at some of the complications that arose, even in the early church, over the issue of the resurrection of the dead.

Let's begin in Matthew 16:20–21:

Then charged he his disciples that they should tell no man that he was Jesus the Christ. From that time forth began Jesus to shew unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day.

So, yes, Jesus taught His disciples even before it occurred that His mission, His goal, His purpose, was to die and that He would be resurrected.

Acts 2:22–36:

Let's notice what Peter said. This was his first great sermon that he gave when so many were converted and baptized.

Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know: Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain: Whom God hath raised up [So the apostle said.] having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it. For David speaketh concerning him, I foresaw the Lord always before my face, for he is on my right hand, that I should not be moved: Therefore did my heart rejoice, and my tongue was glad; moreover also my flesh shall rest in hope: Because thou wilt

not leave my soul in hell [meaning, the grave], neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.

Peter was quoting directly from Psalm 16:8–11.

Thou hast made known to me the ways of life; thou shalt make me full of joy with thy countenance. Men and brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day.

Was David, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, saying that he, himself, was not to see corruption, that he was the one who was going to be immediately resurrected? No, he was prophesying about someone else who was to come, who was to fulfill that very prophecy.

Men and brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day. Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne; He seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell [or, the grave], neither his flesh did see corruption.

So, Peter, recounting the very prophecy that was spoken by the mouth of David and recorded for the church, preached this sermon to those who became fundamental members of the body of Christ and received the gift of the Holy Spirit.

"This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses." Peter was a witness. He, as well as the other eleven, was taught at the very feet of Christ during that three and one half year ministry. Remembering that even the apostle who was selected to replace Judas also had to be a witness. He had to be one who was with them, who was taught, who saw those things, because they were being sent out to preach that gospel to the world. The significant factor that was involved in that gospel was the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

They were witnesses to the ministry; they were witnesses to the prophecies even spoken by Christ Himself, about what He would fulfill. They were witnesses too, of the fulfillment of all those things that occurred. Then they spent the

remainder of their lives preaching and teaching others about the things that they had seen and those things that they had been given the responsibility to proclaim.

This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses. Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the Promise of the Holy [Spirit], he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear. For David is not ascended into the heavens: but he saith himself, The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, Until I make thy foes thy footstool. Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.

It was, brethren, by and through His resurrection from the dead that He became Lord and Christ, fulfilling that office of the High Priest, our Advocate. You would think that, with all of the witnesses at that time who had evidence of the very resurrection of Jesus Christ and all those circumstances that occurred, there would be no doubt He had been resurrected. He had fulfilled all of those prophecies to show that He was who He claimed to be. The apostles who spoke were those who were sent by Him to fulfill that mission; and yet, there were those who, very early in the game, began to doubt and question the foundation of their calling.

The Apostle Paul had to fight and fight again and fight once more to re-clarify the foundation of the truth—a foundation which he was given as a revelation, being taught in the wilderness directly from Jesus Christ; and it matched in every way that which came through those first twelve.

Turn with me to 1 Corinthians 15 which is often called the resurrection chapter, and notice what must have been going on in the Corinthian church at that time. This was a church that Paul was responsible for raising up. These were people who would not have known the truth, except for Paul who was the servant that God used to teach them. What did he teach them? He taught them the resurrection of Jesus Christ. It was, fundamentally, a part of the faith once delivered; but here, he had to defend that very fundamental doctrine.

1 Corinthians 15:1–8, 11–20:

Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye

have believed in vain. For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received . . .

How did Paul know about the resurrection of Jesus Christ? How did he know all of the doctrines that he taught and proclaimed? He received them. He didn't make them up. He didn't read the scriptures. It wasn't because of his scholarly aptitude. It wasn't the fact that he was schooled as a Pharisee and knew multiple languages. It was because he received it as a gift and a responsibility to proclaim.

For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received [What was it that he received?], how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures: And that he was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve: After that, he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep. After that, he was seen of James; then of all the apostles. And last of all he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time.

Yes, Paul was a witness too. Not at the very time of the twelve, but Jesus Christ revealed Himself miraculously to Paul in the initiation of his own ministry on His behalf.

Skipping down to verse 11:

Therefore whether it were I or they [Meaning, whether it was the ministry—the preaching—of Paul, or one of the original twelve.], so we preach, and so ye believed. Now if Christ be preached that he rose from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead?

Now who would have thought that, this early in the game—in the first century church—anyone who had been called, within just a few short years, would now be questioning whether that resurrection really took place. These were people who had heard the preaching of those apostles, who believed initially and obviously had become baptized—believing in the resurrection of Jesus Christ. What voice was it that they were listening to that began to say, "He didn't really rise from the dead; He wasn't really a man at all; He wasn't human"? Or any of the other rationales that have come out of the minds of men to justify doubting the original revelation.

Maybe that is one of the things that is easier to accept two thousand years later, for those who want to call themselves Christian, because it is a fundamental belief. Yes, we believe that Christ rose from the dead. That is what makes our religion special. Of course; so everyone grabs onto it. Remember, at that time, Christ was a contemporary of those people. It was very hard for them to believe that someone in their day truly was significant and was the Son of God in the flesh. Really? He died and was truly resurrected from the dead? Boy, that is awfully hard to believe.

How would we treat it if it happened among us today? Would it really be so easy to believe? So, why is it hard for us to believe how this could have become an issue and a sticking point? We seem to stick on so many other doctrinal issues today, as we have seen the church fall apart on the doctrine of Pentecost and the corruption of marriage along with so many others. Well obviously, a major sticking point at this time within a few decades after the death of Christ was the validity of His resurrection.

"Now if Christ be preached that he rose from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead?" They doubted the future. They doubted what they had been promised. Part of that preaching was the fact that they had the opportunity to be raised from the dead.

But if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen: And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain. Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God; because we have testified of God that he raised up Christ: whom he raised not up, if so be that the dead rise not.

So, those who wanted to contend with the very fundamental premise of the resurrection of the dead and the hope of salvation, were criticizing and, by default, attacking the very resurrection of Christ. Paul was saying, "Hey, we have preached to you the whole doctrine. It is all a part of the fundamental, foundational teaching that you received and you accepted. You accepted us as the teachers. You received that Christ was resurrected from the dead and that He was the forerunner that gave us, each one of us called and chosen, an opportunity to be resurrected to immortality and eternal life." Yet, by taking away, casting doubt and questioning that fundamental doctrine, they were undermining the entire foundation of their faith.

Paul was pointing out explicitly what they were doing. ". . . if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain." Those apostles put

everything on the line to certify that Christ was resurrected. If He wasn't, then they were liars, or else, very deceived.

Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God; because we have testified of God that he raised up Christ: whom he raised not up, if so be that the dead rise not.

How many today, in like manner, have said, "Marriage is not really marriage. God doesn't bind marriages, or else, He unbinds marriages. The church had to change Pentecost from Monday to Sunday in order to make it right. The church has the authority to change that doctrine." If you had carried it out far enough and waited until the early nineties, you would have been around to hear them say, "No, we really do have an immortal soul. God really is a trinity. All these churches that we were taught originally were separated from God, truly are all of our brothers and sisters of the faith."

If those things be true, brethren, then those through whom we heard that original way of life were lying and were deceived and we have no foundation for faith. The only reason that we have any certification or confidence that those things that we were taught led us into the body of Christ, to fellowship with Christ and the Father, is that they were absolutely true from the beginning. That includes the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God; because we have testified of God that he raised up Christ: whom he raised not up, if so be that the dead rise not. For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised: And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins.

If Pentecost had to be changed to Sunday to be right and if marriage had to be changed to be right, then we are also keeping those doctrines in vain. Anyone who has corrupted or allowed the corruption of that which they originally received, kept, and were baptized into, have made their faith in vain and they have called Jesus Christ a liar.

"Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished." There is no hope. If those things we received from the beginning were not true and were not faithful, then none of us have any hope.

Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished. If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable. But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept.

What is the significance, brethren, of the resurrection of the dead—specifically the resurrection of Christ? The very fact that Jesus Christ was resurrected from the dead is our hope that we too, can share in a resurrection to eternal life.

That is why Christ's resurrection is important to us. That is why we care. We are to follow in His footsteps—He, being our elder brother. Only if He were resurrected, do we have hope of a resurrection. Christ was the first of the first fruits—the forerunner. Those things that occurred to Christ are those things that we have an opportunity to receive as well. Only if He were resurrected from the dead, do we have any hope of a resurrection at all.

For now, we are going to skip over the next part of our fundamental that says, ". . . after His body reposed three days and three nights in the grave . . ." because we want to talk about this subject of immortality and our hope of salvation.

"We believe that Jesus Christ was raised from the dead . . . thus making immortality possible for mortal man . . ."

That is what this whole plan—this whole way of life—is about, brethren. That is why we are here, doing what we are doing. That is why we fear God and why we keep His commandments—because we have hope of a resurrection. We want immortality. We do not want to be left to live in these physical lives until our physical death and then have that to be the end. No, we have a hope of something much greater, something that is a part of God's perfect plan for our salvation.

Continuing in 1 Corinthians 15:52–58. Notice what our hope is in following Christ:

In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in

victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.

No, brethren, if we are holding on to the faith once delivered and those things which we were first taught through the chosen servant that God used in these last days, then our faith is not in vain either. We have something that we can hold on to, something that we can carry on into the future. No matter what the future holds, no matter what trials or tribulations, no matter what will be required of us, we can have confidence because our faith isn't in vain. We believe that God didn't lie. We believe that He gave us the truth.

Who else but that original servant understood and taught that the hope of salvation was for us to become part of the God family? What other religion taught it? Who else in these last days—the last seventy, eighty, hundred years—taught that the hope of salvation for mankind was to be born into the God family? It is all proven here, right in the scriptures and who else understood it? Who sat down with their Bible and figured it out for themselves? What minister did you hear proclaim it, out of what church? You didn't; because for all of their scholarly aptitude, they didn't know. They couldn't know, they couldn't see because God hid it.

However, you were called and chosen for that special purpose. Your minds were opened; you understood these things and you heard the voice of that servant and those whom he taught to carry forward. You heard the resurrection of Jesus Christ proclaimed in this age, just as the apostles proclaimed it in that first generation of the church. You heard the promise of immortality that was given as the hope for salvation. No, not as the world's churches teach it—to become an angel, sit on a cloud and play a harp. What you heard was something unusual. You heard the resurrection of the dead which is based on the very resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Notice that hope further explained in Romans 2:6–7. What is going to happen when God judges the people of this world?

Who will render to every man according to his deeds: To them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life . . .

That is the promise that He offers to those who are faithful. That immortality is not something that we already have; it is something that is promised to those who are faithful. Immortality coming through the resurrection of the dead, following that very process that Jesus Christ went through Himself—dying in the flesh and being resurrected to immortality.

"Who will render to every man according to his deeds: To them who by patient continuance in well doing . . ." Holding onto the things which we had from the beginning. That is what continuance is, brethren. It doesn't mean change; it doesn't mean fixing that which was wrong because you believe God revealed a lie or that it came out of the minds of men. No, ". . . to them who by patient continuance in well doing . . ." Why? Because we know what we received was truth.

". . . seek for glory and honour . . ." Isn't that what we want? Is that why we are here? We want that glory, that honor, and we want that immortality. He has promised that eternal life.

If we don't believe that Christ was raised from the dead, then our labor is in vain, brethren. That was fundamentally a part of the message that we heard from that servant in the last days, just as it was the message that was given by Paul and the other apostles in that first generation.

Let's talk about how long Jesus Christ was in the grave. A lot of technicalities are involved here, but it can be very inspiring when we understand it. Our fundamental says, "We believe that Jesus Christ was raised from the dead after His body reposed three days and three nights in the grave . . ."

This is one of the significant distinctions between this way of life that we received and that which is taught by the majority of so-called Christian churches. Our belief is that Christ meant what He said. These other churches don't believe that Christ meant what He said. They believe that when Christ said, "I am going to be in the grave three days and three nights," what He really meant was one day and two nights.

Jesus Christ gave one proof and one proof only to substantiate His claim as the Messiah. What was the substantiation of Christ as the Messiah? Was it the fact that He was resurrected? Is that what He said? Did He say, "I am going to be resurrected from the dead; and therefore, that is going to be the proof that I am the Messiah"? Is that what He said? No, the proof that He was the Messiah, believe it or not, is not that He was resurrected.

Here is the only proof; let's read it in Matthew 12:38–41:

Then certain of the scribes and of the Pharisees answered, saying, Master, we would see a sign from thee. But he answered and said unto them, An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas: For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. The men of Nineveh shall rise in judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: because they repented at the preaching of Jonas; and, behold, a greater than Jonas is here.

I often think about that. What was it that compelled those pagan people of Nineveh, at that time, to respond to Jonah? What was it that made them hear? The people of Israel would not hear the prophets that God sent and here were these pagan people that responded to Jonah. They believed what he said and they repented. What an indictment of God's own chosen people—so stiff-necked and so rebellious that they would not hear. Throughout history, they have rejected the servants that God has sent, believing all the while that they are right, religious and righteous. The whole time, they have been totally separated from God, rejecting the very ones that He has sent to proclaim that truth and to tell them His instructions.

The men of Nineveh shall rise in judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: because they repented at the preaching of Jonas; and, behold, a greater than Jonas is here.

So, here is Christ in His own flesh, standing before them in His ministry, proclaiming the truth and certifying everything that He said. They had no reason to doubt, but they rejected Him totally. So, He called them evil.

. . . an evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas . . .

Three days and three nights in the heart of the earth was the one and only sign Christ gave that He was the Messiah. The Good Friday, Easter Sunday tradition denies this very sign. The majority of people on this earth who call themselves Christians, believe absolutely in a Sunday morning resurrection. A Friday crucifixion and a Sunday resurrection—a total denial of the one sign that He said He was going to give to prove that He was the Christ. What better evidence is there of calling Christ a liar than to refute the one and only sign that He gave to prove who He was?

You see, there are only one and a half days from Friday sunset to Sunday morning. How can you get three days and three nights from that? If He was buried on Friday evening and supposedly resurrected at sunrise on Sunday morning, how can you get three days and three nights? What are some of the explanations? Read the commentaries; they are full of very "cute" explanations and rationalizations of men who try and show you what He really meant.

"No, Christ didn't really mean three whole days and three whole nights. See, we count parts of days." So, you have all of these crazy concepts that come from defining a day. They will say, "So, the daylight portion is a day and the nighttime portion is likewise a day. You have Saturday, the daytime, as one and then Saturday night is another day." They even try to go back and say that the time He was hanging on the cross was part of a day. He wasn't even in the tomb then.

All of the convoluted explanations to try and support preconceived ideas when the answer is already in the back of the book. Then, they try to make the scriptures support those idiotic concepts. It is an absolute denial of Christ. Well, let's go through some of the technical concepts and see what the basis of our faith is. We received it by faith and confidence and yet, the Bible absolutely supports it and allows us to see the truth.

How does God define a day? Let's begin there. What is a day to God? Genesis 1:5 tells us. "And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And the evening and the morning were the first day."

OK, well that could be a little bit confusing because first, He called the light portion day; then, He called the evening and the morning together, the first day. So, which is it? Is a day a twenty-four hour period or is a day the light? Yes, it is both. It depends on how it is used. It can either be referring to the daytime portion of a twenty-four hour period or it can be referring to the entire twenty-four hour period.

Let's notice Genesis 2:2:

And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made.

The seventh day which is the Sabbath Day. How long is the Sabbath Day? Is it just the daylight portion in this case, or are we talking about a twenty-four hour

period? The seventh day of creation was like unto the first six. It had a specific, defined length of time. How then, do we define that seventh day further and recognize how God reckons time?

Leviticus 23:32:

It shall be unto you a sabbath of rest, and ye shall afflict your souls [referring to the Day of Atonement]: in the ninth day of the month at even, from even unto even . . .

Now here, we find specifically how long we are going to keep this Holy Day. How are we going to know what God means when He says, "the Sabbath of rest"? How long is the Sabbath? Maybe it is only a part of a day. Maybe it is only the daylight portion. How long do we afflict our souls?

". . . in the ninth day of the month at even, from even unto even . . ." There is your definition. ". . . from even unto even, shall ye celebrate your sabbath." Here, that day is defined absolutely, brethren, as a full twenty-four hour period, beginning at sundown and ending at sundown the following day. That is what a day is. That is how God determines a day.

Next, the sign of Christ's entombment corresponded to that of Jonah. Isn't that what he said? Isn't that what we just read? As Jonah was in the heart of the whale, that great fish, for three days and three nights, so Christ was going to be in the heart of the earth. So, whatever happened to Jonah was exactly what was going to happen to Christ, as far as the length of this time.

Therefore, how long was Jonah in the belly of that fish? Let's look at Jonah 1:17. "Now the Lord had prepared a great fish to swallow up Jonah. And Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights."

"Three days and three nights." So, here, we are talking about the same specific definition that Christ used. How did Jesus Christ use it? Is this the same day as the Sabbath? The Sabbath in itself, called a day, is twenty-four hours. However, here, by definition—so that there is no doubt—we have a very specific delineation that tells us that we are talking about both the daylight and the dark portion. It is a full twenty-four hours, which is why it says, "three days and three nights."

Notice how Jesus Christ, Himself, defined it specifically. What did Christ say?

John 11:9:

"Jesus answered, Are there not twelve hours in the day?" He is not talking about the entire twenty-four hour period, or that which we refer to as a day. No, He is talking specifically about the daylight portion. How does He define that daylight portion? What do we think Christ was talking about when He said, "three days and three nights"? He said that there are twelve hours in a day; does that not also imply that there are twelve hours, on average, in the night—making up the total twenty-four hour period that we commonly call the day?

Christ said that each daylight portion is approximately twelve hours and each nighttime portion as well. When we are talking about three days and three nights as Jesus Christ defined it, how long are we talking about? We are talking about a seventy-two hour period, no less and no more—not the way these scholars try to define parts of days. Three days and three nights; daylight portion, nighttime portion; seventy-two hours.

There is no wresting of the Hebrew or the Greek by interpretation of idiomatic expressions, which will justify any other conclusion. However, you can read as many of them as you would like because they are all out there to support their Friday crucifixion and Sunday sunrise resurrection.

Jesus Christ's own prophecy helps us see exactly the support for that which we were originally taught. Let's notice first Mark 9:31. We are going to look at a number of the prophecies that Christ gave, Himself, for the length of time that He would be in the tomb.

The first two or three that we are going to look at use a particular expression. What you are going to see as we look at these is that there were three different expressions that were used for that time—any one of which, by themselves, would not be enough for us to be absolutely sure. Putting them all together, however, completes the harmonious picture that was intended by the scripture to let us know absolutely what was intended. It is incredible and marvelous, the revelation of Jesus Christ, the recording of His Holy Scripture in that which we have in regard to this very issue.

Mark 9:31:

For he taught his disciples, and said unto them, The Son of man is delivered into the hands of men, and they shall kill him; and after that he is killed, he shall rise the third day.

"He shall rise the third day." Let me ask you, if we only had this scripture to go by, if this were the only one that we used, could we tell exactly? Would we know for sure how long He was in the tomb? Maybe, maybe not.

You see, "the third day" is the same as saying "on the third day." ". . . after that he is killed, he shall rise the third day." What does this tell us? "On the third day" could have been any time after the first two days. All this is doing is giving us the limit of the minimum. It could not have been any earlier than the beginning of the third day; but "on the third day" could have been anywhere in the twenty-four hour period on day three, isn't that true?

Let's look at two other scriptures that use the same phrasing.

Luke 13:32:

And he said unto them, Go ye, and tell that fox, Behold, I cast out devils, and I do cures to day and to morrow, and the third day I shall be perfected.

When was that going to be? By the phrase that Christ used here, it could have been anytime on day three. The only thing that we can absolutely conclude is that it could not have been in the first forty-eight hours. It had to be sometime after the forty-eighth hour, from the time He was put in the tomb.

OK, let's look at the other scriptures that narrow it down. John 2:18–19—here, a totally different expression is used:

Then answered the Jews and said unto him, What sign shewest thou unto us, seeing that thou doest these things? Jesus answered and said unto them, Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.

He didn't say, "the third day" or "on the third day"; He said, "in three days." Well, what difference does that make? "It doesn't sound much different to me," you

might say. This term means the same. You can say, "in three days," or just as appropriately, "within three days."

Now, what does the term "in" or "within" tell you? "Within three days" gives us the maximum limit that it could be. What "within" or "in" tells you is that it could not have been any longer than the end of day three. You see, "in three days" could have meant any time after the second day. The third day could mean the beginning of the third day or anytime after; but when you say, "in" or "within" three days, you have specified the maximum that it could be. It had to have fallen specifically within day number three sometime. In three days, no longer than three days, that resurrection had to occur.

Then, the final piece of the puzzle that helps us fit it all together and points to a single point in time is in Matthew 27:63:

"Saying, Sir, we remember that that deceiver said, while he was yet alive, After three days I will rise again." This is a totally different term. "After three days I will rise again."

In Mark 8:31, the same term is used:

And he began to teach them, that the Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected of the elders, and of the chief priests, and scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again.

Well, what does the term "after" mean and how does that change the equation for us? "After three days" does something very unique. It defines the minimum, as opposed to the maximum time. It defines the minimum as not less than the completion of three full days or seventy-two hours.

With this scripture alone, if you had the prophecy that said, "after three days," all that would tell you is it certainly couldn't have been earlier than three days; but it could have been anytime—one day, week, or year—following. It just tells you the minimum amount of time, doesn't it? However, when you put it together with the other two, "within three days" and "on the third day," what do you get?

There is only one point in time, when you put all of these prophecies together, that defines the moment of Christ's resurrection. The time of the resurrection was "on" the third day, it was "within" or "in" three days and it was "after" three days.

When is the one point in time when all of those can be true? Only one time fits that criteria and it is exactly seventy-two hours after being placed in the tomb, not a minute earlier and not a minute later. Exactly seventy-two hours is the only way that you can have it on the third day, within three days and after three days—one specific point in time. It is a seventy-two hour period and none other.

When Christ said He would be in the heart of the earth three days and three nights and when you put that together with all of the other prophecies, there is no doubt that He meant a seventy-two hour period. Anything else is calling Jesus Christ a liar.

Now, the next question is, when did this seventy-two hour period start? When did it end? When do we apply it? So, let's first ask the question, what time of day was Christ placed in the tomb? We are going to get to the particular day later. First, let's just verify what time of day we are talking about. Whatever day it happened to be, whatever day of the week, what time of the day did this process start, that He was put in the tomb?

We know it had to be somewhere between 3 PM and sundown. How do we know that? Let's turn to Matthew 27:45–46, 50:

"Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land unto the ninth hour." When was the sixth hour? That was noon. We know that as Christ hung on that stake—beginning about noon, the sixth hour—is when that incredible darkness that was interpreted as an eclipse covered that whole area.

Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land unto the ninth hour [a three-hour period until 3 PM. Then what happened after 3 PM?]. And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? that is to say, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? (Verse 50) Jesus, when he had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the [spirit].

So, we know it was after 3 PM when He died. Now, keep your finger there, but turn over to Luke 23:50–55:

And, behold, there was a man named Joseph, a counsellor; and he was a good man, and a just: (The same had not consented to the counsel and deed of them;) he was of Arimathaea, a city of the Jews: who also

himself waited for the kingdom of God. [So, he was a believer.] This man went unto Pilate, and begged the body of Jesus. And he took it down, and wrapped it in linen, and laid it in a sepulchre that was hewn in stone, wherein never man before was laid. And that day was the preparation, and the sabbath drew on.

When did the Sabbath begin? We already saw back in Leviticus that it was from even to even. If the Sabbath was drawing on, it was sometime in the late afternoon and it was getting close to the setting of the sun when the Sabbath—whatever Sabbath that was (we are going to see that later)—was going to begin.

And the women also, which came with him from Galilee, followed after, and beheld the sepulchre, and how his body was laid.

This tells us that the Sabbath was drawing on. The Sabbath had not started yet. That is the significant thing in this gospel of Luke. ". . . that day was the preparation, and the sabbath drew on." So, when all of this activity happened with Joseph requesting and getting the body of Christ, wrapping it in linen and placing it in the tomb, was as the Sabbath was nearing or drawing on.

Now, flip back with me to Matthew 27 and we are going to look at verses 57–60:

"When the even was come . . ." Now the next phrase tells you something that happens. If you just read this one by itself, it might appear that all of this was happening after sundown. We have already seen in Luke that it didn't happen after sundown, so let's put this one into context.

When the even was come, there came a rich man of Arimathaea, named Joseph, who also himself was Jesus' disciple: He went to Pilate, and begged the body of Jesus. Then Pilate commanded the body to be delivered. And when Joseph had taken the body, he wrapped it in a clean linen cloth, And laid it in his own new tomb, which he had hewn out in the rock: and he rolled a great stone to the door of the sepulchre, and departed.

How do we reconcile those things? The description of all that Joseph did, put in harmony with Luke's account, shows that those are activities that happened prior to

the setting of the sun. What was it that happened when even was come? Remember, we just read in verse 57, when the even was come then something happened. All of the next statement concerning Joseph's activities, is in fact a parenthetical statement. When you put verse 57 together with the end of verse 60, you see what happened.

When even was come, meaning, when the sun went down, what was it that was really taking place? "When the even was come . . . and he rolled a great stone to the door of the sepulchre, and departed." That is how you harmonize Luke and Matthew together and it makes perfect sense. All of those were activities that were leading up to the setting of the sun and rolling that stone over the tomb. It was the rolling of that stone over the entry of that tomb that denoted the time that Christ was officially in the heart of the earth. That was when the clock began to start on the time. When was that? We have already seen that it was either right before or right at sundown—the setting of the sun.

We know it was a seventy-two hour period. We also know that whatever day of the week it started on, it had to start near or at sundown from the time that the tomb was closed. Now, what day of the week was it? Can we know? You better believe we can know.

All agree that He was resurrected no later than Sunday morning. We will use that to our advantage. The scriptures are very clear that by the time the women, and ultimately the apostles, came and viewed that tomb, He was already gone. Let's notice it in Luke 24:1–6:

Now upon the first day of the week, very early in the morning [What is the first day of the week? Sunday—everyone accepts that. Sunday, very early in the morning], they came unto the sepulchre, bringing the spices which they had prepared, and certain others with them. And they found the stone rolled away from the sepulchre. And they entered in, and found not the body of the Lord Jesus.

So, on Sunday morning early, they entered in and the body was not there.

And it came to pass, as they were much perplexed thereabout, behold, two men stood by them in shining garments: And as they were afraid, and bowed down their faces to the earth, they said unto them, Why seek ye the living among the dead? He is not here, but is risen . . .

They did not say, "You just missed him; He rose 30 seconds ago." No, this is one time when you can use the validity of the Greek aorist tense to draw a conclusion. The term "is risen" is in the aorist. It is a statement, a fact, without relation to time. What did the angels say? They said to them, "Christ is risen." They are not making any reference, whatsoever, to the timing of when it happened. They did not say, "He was just now risen; you just missed Him."

Notice one other. Mark 16:1–2, 5–6—a parallel account:

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

When did they come? At the rising of the sun. If Jesus Christ was resurrected at the rising of the sun, they should have been witnesses, shouldn't they? I would think they would have been. They were there right at the right moment.

Verses 5–6:

And entering into the sepulchre, they saw a young man sitting on the right side, clothed in a long white garment; and they were affrighted. And he saith unto them, Be not affrighted: Ye seek Jesus of Nazareth, which was crucified: he is risen [Also aorist tense—fact without relation to time.]; he is not here: behold the place where they laid him.

What do we know so far? We know Christ was in the tomb three days and three nights and that meant seventy-two hours, not a minute less and not a minute later. We also know that He was placed in the tomb very near or at sunset.

Now, if we already know by these two accounts in Luke and Mark that by Sunday morning He was already gone, what is the nearest sunset that precedes Sunday morning? Isn't it Saturday evening at sunset? We know He was placed in the tomb no later than sunset, very close to, if not exactly at sunset. That is when the tomb was sealed and He was already gone by Sunday morning. When would He then have been resurrected? It had to be seventy-two hours from when He was placed in it. Seventy-two hours from a sunset is a sunset. What sunset precedes Sunday morning, when we know He was gone? It was Saturday night at sunset. That is your absolute proof that He was resurrected on Saturday, very near or exactly, at sunset.

When those people came to the tomb that next morning at sunrise, He was already long gone and He had been gone for hours because He had already been resurrected. What about the confusion that results from Mark 16:9? We are already there; let's just continue to read, starting in verse 7.

Mark 16:7–9:

But go your way, tell his disciples and Peter that he goeth before you into Galilee: there shall ye see him, as he said unto you. And they went out quickly, and fled from the sepulchre; for they trembled and were amazed: neither said they any thing to any man; for they were afraid. Now when Jesus was risen early the first day of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom he had cast seven devils.

Uh-oh. This says, doesn't it, that Christ was raised early the first day of the week? Isn't that when it said He was resurrected? How can it be though? We have already seen all of these other irrefutable proofs that it was a seventy-two hour period that began at sunset. Therefore, seventy-two hours from a sunset is a sunset; that is when He had to have been resurrected, but this says He was risen early the first day of the week, doesn't it? Or, does it? It all has to do with the comma placement.

The thing you have to keep in mind is that the comma did not exist in this place in the Greek language. The comma was not there at all. It was the English translators of the King James that, based upon their already faulty conclusions and assumptions concerning a Friday crucifixion and a Sunday morning resurrection, coincidentally or otherwise, placed this to support their own concepts. Take out that comma and move it. The comma after the word "week" does not belong there; it belongs after the word "risen."

"Now when Jesus was risen . . ." This is strictly a phrase that is telling you something that already took place. You can just as easily say, "Now after Jesus was risen," meaning anytime—it could have been a minute, an hour, a day, or a week—after this occurred, something else happened. "Now when Jesus was risen," or "After Jesus was risen," then something else happened. What was it?

". . . early the first day of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene." What was it that happened early the first day of the week? Was it Christ's resurrection or was it His appearance to Mary? That is what the comma does. Depending on where you place the comma, it tells you whether that phrase is

referring to the resurrection or whether it is referring to the appearance to Mary. Place the comma in the right place and it totally harmonizes with all of the irrefutable things we have already seen. "Now when Jesus was risen, early the first day of the week he appeared first to Mary Magdalene." That is what happened early the first day—not the actual resurrection.

Therefore, if the resurrection was Saturday evening just before or at sunset, what day then was the crucifixion? Well, let's see; let's back up. It is exactly three days, a seventy-two hour period. So, we will start from Saturday evening at sundown; one day would be Friday evening at sundown; two days would be Thursday evening at sundown; and three days, seventy-two hours exactly, would be Wednesday evening at sundown.

When was Jesus Christ crucified? He was crucified on a Wednesday. When was He placed in the tomb? At or near sundown on Wednesday evening. Logic dictates, brethren, if you believe what the Bible says and if you are willing to believe the truth.

The misunderstanding about a Friday crucifixion comes from the failure to recognize that there was more than one Sabbath. More than just one Sabbath occurred during Passover week. When you are dealing with people who have no respect for God's Sabbath or His Holy Days, they do not even consider the Holy Days in their reckoning. Or else, they try to change and force circumstances, again to fit their pagan rationale.

Let's begin first with John 19:14. What was going on the day that Christ was crucified? What was going to occur soon thereafter, after the setting of the sun?

John 19:14, 30–31:

And it was the preparation of the passover [This was when He was tried, taken before Pilate and condemned to death to be crucified. It was the preparation for the Passover.] . . . (Verse 30) When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished: and he bowed his head, and gave up the [spirit]. The Jews therefore, because it was the preparation, that the bodies should not remain upon the [stake] on the sabbath day . . .

See the confusion here. The assumption is that this is the weekly Sabbath, so obviously this was a Friday; it had to be, didn't it?

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

How do they get around the fact that this was a High Day? It wasn't just a normal weekly Sabbath; it was a High Day, but that doesn't deter them. They just say, "Well, the High Day just happened to fall on the weekly Sabbath that year. It was still a Friday when this crucifixion took place, because the High Day fell on the weekly Sabbath." Is that true?

We already saw that if Christ truly spent three full days and three full nights in the tomb, was entombed at sunset and was resurrected before Sunday morning, then Wednesday at sunset was the starting point. There can be no other answer. Therefore, Thursday must have been the High Sabbath Day indicated and not the weekly Sabbath. There is no other conclusion. It was a preparation day for a Sabbath. If it was a Wednesday crucifixion, as we have already demonstrated, then preparation for what? A weekly Sabbath Day? No, this was a preparation for the First Day of Unleavened Bread which in that year fell on Thursday, beginning Wednesday at sunset.

Notice Matthew 28:1. There were two Sabbaths during Passover week, not just one. That is what everyone totally misses—two Sabbaths. Interesting enough, in 31AD, the year Mr. Armstrong always said was the year of Christ's crucifixion, that Sabbath was on a Thursday.

Matthew 28:1:

In the end of the sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the sepulchre.

"In the end of the sabbath . . ." Was that a proper translation from the Greek? "Sabbath" is the Greek word *sabbaton*. That word *sabbaton* can be translated in a singular or plural form. They chose to use the singular. It is appropriate here to say, "After the sabbaths." Which Sabbaths? The first High Day of the Days of Unleavened Bread which fell on Thursday, and the weekly Sabbath that came two days later. "After the sabbaths."

Can we prove that? Everything else adds up to it. Notice also Luke 23:52–56. This will substantiate this interpretation of the Greek:

This man went unto Pilate, and begged the body of Jesus. And he took it down, and wrapped it in linen, and laid it in a sepulchre that was hewn in stone, wherein never man before was laid. And that day was the preparation, and the sabbath drew on.

". . . the sabbath drew on." Does the Greek say "the sabbath"? Does it refer to the seventh day of the week, with the definite article that means "the Sabbath"? No, this particular use of the term *sabbaton* is without the definite article. The proper translation is "a sabbath." There is no definite article here. It is not the word "the." ". . . and a sabbath drew on." How can we be sure? Keep reading—verse 55:

And the women also, which came with him from Galilee, followed after, and beheld the sepulchre, and how his body was laid. [Now, verse 56.] And they returned, and prepared spices and ointments; and rested the sabbath day according to the commandment.

OK, now the ladies were there at the sepulcher. They saw where He was laid. They were there with Joseph when he rolled that stone in front of the tomb; and then here, we find that they returned at some point. They had to have left and they had to have come back, right?

"And they returned, and prepared spices and ointments; and rested the sabbath day according to the commandment." The Sabbath. Guess what? This Sabbath is not like the Sabbath we just read in verse 54 because it has the definite article. This, specifically in the Greek, refers to the weekly Sabbath. It is not a Sabbath, it is not the Holy Day; it is the weekly Sabbath.

If it were referring to the one and the same day, brethren, they would have had the same precursor. Either both of them would have said "a" or they both would have said "the." One of them says "a sabbath"; the other says "the sabbath."

When could they have returned to the sepulcher? If a Sabbath or the Sabbath, either one, was beginning right as that stone was put in front of the tomb, when could they have returned? They were very devout in keeping the Sabbath. The High Sabbath Day was already beginning; the sun was down.

Mark 15:47:

"And Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Joses beheld where he was laid." They beheld where He was laid because they were there.

Now, look at Mark 16:1:

And when the sabbath was past [That is the High Sabbath—the Sabbath that was just beginning as the sun went down.], Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome, had bought sweet spices, that they might come and anoint him.

Would they have done that purchasing on that Holy Sabbath Day, on that High Day—that Feast Day—the First Day of Unleavened Bread? Absolutely not; they had no time to go out and purchase. Now, maybe if they had already had the spices in their possession, they might have been able to do it. They might have been able to immediately prepare and come and anoint the body of Christ, but they didn't have them. It says here in Mark 16, "they bought." They would not have bought it on the High Sabbath Day.

Therefore, they had to have kept the First Day of Unleavened Bread, from sunset to sunset, and they could not have made this purchase at the store until sundown after the First High Day. If you believe what the Bible says, that it was a Wednesday crucifixion, that Thursday was the High Day, then you know that the High Sabbath Day was over Thursday evening at sundown. On Friday, the preparation day for the weekly Sabbath, was when they bought the spices.

Notice Luke 24:1:

Now upon the first day of the week, very early in the morning, they came unto the sepulchre, bringing the spices which they had prepared . . .

They brought the spices that they had prepared when? On Sunday morning. When you relate that back to the scriptures that we have already seen in Luke 23:56—" . . . they returned, and prepared spices and ointments; and rested the sabbath day according to the commandment . . ."—that tells you Friday was when they purchased it and prepared the spices. They rested again the weekly Sabbath Day, which was Saturday, and then early Sunday morning was when they actually brought that preparation of spices to anoint the body; but by that time He was already gone.

Do we have substantiation for what we believe concerning the three nights and the three days in the tomb of Jesus Christ—the fact that it was a Wednesday crucifixion? That He was put in the tomb Wednesday evening at sundown, that seventy-two hours later on Saturday evening He was resurrected, and then on Sunday morning they found the tomb empty? We absolutely have substantiation for our fundamental of belief, brethren.

It is also interesting to me—I was thinking about this recently in some of our conversations. I don't understand how those who have a distorted interpretation of Pentecost—who want to claim justification for a Sivan 6 Pentecost—account for Wave-Sheaf Day. They count their Pentecost, not from the weekly Sabbath that falls within the Days of Unleavened Bread, but from the First High Day. They believe what they used to believe concerning a Wednesday crucifixion of Christ. Therefore, if they believe that Pentecost is counted from the First High Day which would have been Thursday, not the weekly Sabbath which is the correct way, then when would the day following the Sabbath be, which is Wave-Sheaf day? Wave-Sheaf Day would have had to be a Friday, but when was Christ accepted?

We know that He appeared to Mary Magdalene on Sunday, did He not? He said, "Don't touch me; I have not yet ascended to my Father." When was He ascending to the throne of the Father, being waved before Him and then returning? It was all on a Sunday.

I went through that on the Day of Pentecost; I don't have time to go through that again. Those who believe in a Sivan 6 Pentecost cannot believe then that Christ was waved as the Wave-Sheaf, on Sunday.

It doesn't make sense, brethren. Any attempt to refute that which we received by revelation from the beginning, even if we didn't understand the technicalities at that time, runs into all kinds of trouble.

Next time, we will look at the final part of our fundamental concerning the role that the resurrected Christ plays as our High Priest and our Advocate.