

– Additional Notes –
Sequence of Events Surrounding Passion Week

February 8, 2005

Hi Bob,

I do not find that Ellen White makes any hint regarding which day of the week the supper took place in the upper room. She makes one statement that seems quite odd at first impression when she writes: “He Himself was the true paschal lamb, and on the day the Passover was eaten he was to be sacrificed.” This needs an explanation.

This statement taken at its face is contrary to the instructions in Exodus 12. The paschal lamb is killed on the day before the Passover is eaten. The lamb is NOT eaten on the same day it is killed. The lamb is killed on the 14th of the month and eaten that night. In scripture the day changes at sunset, so “that night” would be the next day and the 15th of the month.

But I would like to presume that there is some sense in which her statement is true. The only way I can think of to interpret her statement as true is that the Passover meal He was eating with His disciples was being eaten on the day He was to be sacrificed. This is literally what she wrote and it is true only in this limited sense. It would have been easier to understand if she had written, “...and on the day He ate the Passover with His disciples He was to be sacrificed.”

What day was this supper on? It was on the evening that began the fourth day of the week – the same day He was crucified. Here's how to figure it out. Jesus was resurrected at the close of Sabbath just after sunset. Counting backwards three days and three nights brings us to sunset that ends the fourth day of the week. The fifth day of the week (roughly what we call Thursday) was the Passover -- the 15th of the month. The day before (roughly what we call Wednesday) was the preparation day – the 14th of the month. The Lord’s Supper was eaten after sunset on what we would call Tuesday night, which would be the 14th of the month. Midnight begins what we call Wednesday which is the day on which He was arrested, tried, and crucified. This is why it is referred to as the Wednesday crucifixion.

I was looking earlier today for the info on Marian Davis and found it. I was looking for it today because on Sabbath, the SS teacher stated several times that he was following Mrs. White's chronology in the description of the events of Passion Week. I only wish that were true. By her own admission, she had a poor sense of the sequence of the events of the life of Christ and did not receive any special revelation regarding it. When she was writing the manuscript for the “Life of Christ” which became the *Desire of Ages*, she requested that her literary assistant, Marian Davis, find some histories of the Bible that would help her understand the order of events. Ten years later, she was still struggling with the sequence of events. Following are two quotes in support of this:

“Tell her I have just one minute ago read the letters in which she has specified the improvements to be made in articles for volume 1. I thank her. Tell her that she has a point about Zedekiah's having his eyes put out. That needs to be more carefully worded. Also the rock, when the water flowed--something in reference to this. I think I can make the articles [chapters] specified more full, and as I am famous for moralizing, this will be no cross. Tell her to write to me, as I prize her letters as if she were my own child. . . . Tell Mary [Marian] to find me some histories of the Bible that would give me the order of events. I have nothing and can find nothing in the library here. It is getting dark and I am resolved not to use my eyes or brain by candlelight.”--Ibid. {3BIO 338.4}

“The Sequence of Events”

“As the materials were assembled and arranged into chapters, careful attention had to be given to the sequence of the events in the Saviour's life. To what extent and in what detail visions provided the sequence in ministry and miracles in Christ's life and work is not [385] known. It is known that a decade earlier she made a significant request: “Tell Mary to find me some histories of the Bible that would give me the order of events.”--Letter 38, 1885. The Gospel writers in their accounts did not help much in the point of sequence. In the absence of direct instruction from Ellen White, or clues in the materials themselves, Miss Davis consulted carefully prepared harmonies of the Gospels, and as the work progressed made considerable use of S. J. Andrews' *Life of Our Lord Upon the Earth*, which as noted on the title page took into account “Historical, Chronological, and Geographical Relations.”” {4BIO 384.5}

Notice that Mrs. White said she has nothing and can find nothing on the sequence of events of the life of Christ. From this I hope one can see that the chronology of Mrs. White is not a revelation given her in vision, but an understanding developed from careful study of scripture itself and trusted writers who had already published their views of these events. She gives us no indication that she received any special revelation on the issues of the sequence of the events of Passion Week when she started her project on the *Life of Christ*, nor ten years later when she was finishing it. Neither did she have any Greek-English lexicons or Interlinear Bibles to turn to for help. We probably mislead others when we tell them that we rely on her understanding of these events, which implies that she did have some special revelation regarding these events when she did not.

Those who present the traditional teaching of the events of Passion Week while claiming to follow Mrs. White's chronology, fail to point out that she places the context of John 12:1 on Friday and the feast at Simon's house on Friday evening. Here are her words from Chapter 62 of *Desire of Ages*, entitled “The Feast at Simon's House,” page 557, par. 3:

“The Saviour had reached Bethany only six days before the Passover, and according to His custom had sought rest at the home of Lazarus. The crowds of travelers who passed on to

the city spread the tidings that He was on His way to Jerusalem, and that He would rest over the Sabbath at Bethany. Among the people there was great enthusiasm. Many flocked to Bethany, some out of sympathy with Jesus, and others from curiosity to see one who had been raised from the dead.”

Obviously, if Jesus was going to spend Sabbath in Bethany, He had to get there before Sabbath. As I illustrated on my chart for Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread in the New Testament, Jesus’ arrival in Bethany on Friday afternoon is a perfect match for John 12:1 which states that He arrived there six days before Passover. Passover is the 15th of the month every year and six days before the 15th would be the 9th. That evening, on what we call Friday evening and now the seventh day of the week and 10th day of the month, is when the feast at Simon's house was held. This is a typical Jewish Erev Shabbat meal which begins the Sabbath celebration with the woman of the house lighting the candles at the dinner table moments before sunset and the recitation of traditional prayers while standing around the dinner table. The next day, still the seventh day of the week and 10th day of the month, is when the triumphal entry took place. According to Exodus 12, the Passover lamb was required to be selected on the 10th of the month and Jesus was selected right on time. He was anointed by Mary at Simon's house and Jesus recognized that she had done this for His burial. The crowds recognized Jesus as their Saviour at the triumphal entry. Jesus was selected both privately and publicly, just as kings Saul and David had been anointed privately and publicly. We can easily calculate that, according to Mrs. White, the triumphal entry was on Sabbath, not Sunday. It appears that she came to understand the time of Jesus’ arrival in Bethany on Friday by her own careful study and that of her assistant Marian. We should do the same.

I believe it is an injustice to both Mrs. White and our readers and listeners to present the events of Passion Week according to the traditional view while claiming to rely on Mrs. White. However, anyone who relies on the traditional view does this in good company as the entire world has followed the traditional pattern, including the SS quarterly and the SDA BC. Unfortunately, the whole world is following the message of the Little Horn in teaching these changed times.

Following is some additional quotes from Ellen G. White Estate sources:

Books Sought Giving Order of Events

Well, my dear Willie and Edson and Emma, let us draw very nigh to God. Let us live daily as we would wish we had lived when the judgment shall sit and the books shall be opened, and when everyone will be rewarded according to his works. . . . **Tell Mary to find me some histories of the Bible that would give me the order of events.** [Bold added.]

[IN THE PREPARATION OF THE DESIRE OF AGES SUCH WORKS WERE USED IN DETERMINING THE ORDER OF EVENTS. ON THIS POINT MARIAN DAVIS, WRITING TO THE MANAGER OF THE PACIFIC PRESS, STATED ON NOVEMBER 23, 1896, “IN THE

ORDER OF CHAPTERS WE FOLLOWED ANDREWS' HARMONY AS GIVEN IN HIS LIFE OF CHRIST. HE IS GENERALLY REGARDED AS THE VERY BEST AUTHORITY, AND IS QUOTED BY LEADING WRITERS. WE KNOW OF NO BETTER ARRANGEMENT THAN HIS." SAMUEL J. ANDREWS, THE LIFE OF OUR LORD UPON THE EARTH, FIRST PUBLISHED IN 1862. THE 1891 EDITION WAS IN ELLEN WHITE'S LIBRARY. HIS "HARMONY OF THE GOSPELS" APPEARS ON PAGES XXII TO XXVII.--COMPILERS.]

I have nothing and can find nothing in the library here [Basel, Switzerland].--Letter 38, 1885, p. 8. {3SM 122.1} [Bold added.]

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By this statement the compilers acknowledge that Ellen G. White's comments relating to the sequence of events of Passion Week are not the result of Divine inspiration from God to her, but that she relied on Marian Davis' judgment in selecting the religious writings upon which her comments are based. It is Marian Davis' statement that Samuel J. Andrews is generally regarded as the very best authority, is quoted by leading writers, and that she knew of no better arrangement than his. From this it can be positively concluded that Ellen White's statements regarding the sequence of events of Passion Week are not the result of Divine inspiration, but are the result of taking editorial liberties with the writings of a protestant minister. It should further be noticed that his description of the sequence of events is nothing more than a restatement of the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church.

I have in my possession a copy of the 1891 edition of the book *The Life of Our Lord Upon the Earth*, by Samuel J. Andrews. Most of what Andrews does is to review and analyze the writings of other scholars as they describe their understanding of the sequence of events of Passion Week. Andrews shows that these scholars differ widely in their beliefs regarding the sequence of events and that all of this is based on their bias from a Sunday keeping perspective. The only thing they share in common is that the resurrection was on Sunday morning. However, not one of them took the time to analyze the words in the Greek to determine the timing of these events. Taking all this evidence into consideration, the best conclusion one can make regarding Ellen White's understanding of the events of Passion Week is that Ellen White followed Marian Davis who was following those who believe in Sunday sacredness as the basis for the time at which all these events must have taken place.

The resources available to those interested in researching the words and phrases in the Greek texts of scripture is much more extensive and readily available today than at any prior time in history. There are at least ten Greek-English lexicons today where there was barely one when Andrews published his book in 1891. There are multiple electronic resources to assist in quick and accurate research today that were not even imagined in Ellen White's day. If we truly wish to correctly represent the character of the Father and the Son, we must take into account a detailed analysis of the words and phrases that describe the sequence of events of Passion Week. Anything

less is simply allowing the traditions of men to make of none effect the word of God, and that is irresponsible.

~ Gerald Brown, Ed.D.