



**"Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved."
... Acts 4:12 ...**

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Did Jesus Die On "Good Friday" or Wednesday?

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"For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also 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." **1 Corinthians 15:3-4**

Let there be not doubt that Christ died for our sins, was buried and He rose again! That is a 100% sure thing. But, I have to tell you, from the time I was a youngster, I could never figure out the "Good Friday" timetable, but I liked the day. Why? It was a holiday and we either had just a half-day of school or the entire day off, because, they said, Good Friday (Great Friday to the Greek Orthodox; Charfreitag or Sorrowful Friday in German) was the day of the crucifixion and death of Jesus Christ. However, I knew about Matthew 12:40 which says, "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." Try as I would, I could not get three days and three nights using the "Good Friday" reckoning. After trying to count it out on my fingers without success, I brushed aside the problem, figuring the adults knew something I didnt.

Now, as an adult, I decided to look into the matter much more seriously. There are several reasons I reject "Good Friday" as the day of death of Christ. Here is a brief account of my findings.

- **"Good Friday" Was Not Celebrated In The Early Church**

Jewish Christians in the early church continued to celebrate the Passover, regarding Christ as the true Passover lamb (1 Corinthians 5:7 "Christ our passover is sacrificed for us."). This naturally developed into a commemoration of the death and resurrection of our Lord because he was the true Passover sacrifice. But, while this Pascha or Passover celebration lasted three days, commemorating the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, I must point out that this Passover celebration was a moveable celebration like Pentecost. It occurred on different days each year. There was NOT a "Good Friday" under this scheme! In fact, another encyclopedia stated this -- prior to A.D. 325, Easter was variously celebrated on different days of the week, including Friday, Saturday, and Sunday. So, obviously there was no "Good

Friday" before this time, because Easter could be celebrated on any day and from time to time, was celebrated on Friday.

All that changed in 325 A.D. when the Emperor Constantine convened the Council of Nicaea, which issued the Easter Rule, which states that Easter shall be celebrated on Sunday, but did not fix the particular Sunday. It was left to the Bishop of Alexandria to determine the exact Sunday, since that city was regarded as the authority in astrological matters. He was to communicate the results of his determination to the other churches. But there was disagreement among the churches about doing it that way. It was not until the 7th century that the Easter matter was settled. Easter was to be on the first Sunday that occurred after the first full moon, on or after the vernal equinox. However, there is still a twist I need to mention here. The "full moon" in the rule is the ecclesiastical full moon, which is defined as the fourteenth day of a tabular lunation (whatever that is), where day one corresponds to the ecclesiastical New Moon. It does not always occur on the same date as the astronomical full moon. However, I do know this. The ecclesiastical "vernal equinox" is always on March 21. Therefore, Easter must be celebrated on a Sunday between the dates of March 22 and April 25.

Now, back to the key issue "Good Friday!" Historians can trace the development of "Good Friday" to the 4th century Catholic festivals held in Jerusalem. "Good Friday" was an evolution out of the early Pascha celebrations that took place at Jerusalem that I mentioned earlier. A procession was staged from Gethsemane to the Catholic Church Sanctuary of the Cross, in Jerusalem. The assembled group then heard readings about the death of Christ.

Let me review briefly what I have just told you. "Good Friday" is a man-made invention. It evolved after 325 A.D. because prior to that, there was no set day for Easter and therefore there would not have been a "Good Friday." It is the invention of the Roman Catholic Church. So where did Rome come up with the idea? It comes from a misunderstanding of **Mark 15:42** "And now when the even was come, because it was the preparation, that is, the day before the Sabbath" We will unravel the mystery a bit later in this article.

- **A "Good Friday" Death Conflicts With What Christ Said**

The second reason I reject the "Good Friday" view of the death of Christ is because of what Christ said in Matthew 12:40. I must tell you that I do not believe Christ was mistaken. I believe in the inspiration of the Scriptures. Therefore, what the Bible says, I deem to be wholly true. So, when our Lord said, "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" I believe that is true! And, no matter how you slice "Friday" you cannot get three days and three nights from late Friday afternoon until early Sunday morning? At the most, there could only be two nights, 1 day, and a part of another! If Christ had only said three days, I could have understood Him to mean PART of three days, since both in and out of the Scriptures we use the word to mean only a portion of a day. However, the Lord Jesus Christ specifically said, "**three days and three nights**," and thus verbal inspiration demands three twenty-four hour days.

- **A "Good Friday" Death Does Not Take Into Account The Issue of Floating Sabbaths**

Before we look at the Sabbath issue, let's look at the different ways days are divided. While all cultures work on the basis of a 24-hour day, not all cultures begin and end their days at the same time. There are MAJOR difference in the Roman Day, the Jewish Day, and our Modern Day. The **ROMAN DAY** began at 6:00 A.M. and closed at 6:00 the next morning. The **JEWISH DAY** began at sunset and closed at the next sunset (or from about 6:00 P.M. to the next 6:00 P.M.). **OUR DAY** begins at midnight and closes the next midnight. Here is an example of what I am talking about.

The Lord Jesus was placed on the cross "the third hour" according to **Mark 15:25**. The context of this time

delineation is Roman. The third hour of the day in Roman time was 9 A.M., which was the time of the daily sacrifice of the morning.

We also know from verse 33 that "there was darkness over the whole land" from the 6th to the 9th hour (Noon to 3 p.m. our time). According to the account in Lukes Gospel, Christ "gave up the ghost" or died some time after that. I find it interesting that the evening sacrifice of the Jews took place at the 9th hour (3 p.m.). I contend that Christ died on Wednesday sometime after 3 p.m. and was buried before sunset or about 6 p.m., which would be their Thursday and still our Wednesday.

How can I say that? It has to do with fixed Sabbaths and floating Sabbaths. Heres what we know for sure. The Lord was taken down from the cross and placed in the tomb before sunset, before the beginning of the Sabbath. We read in John 19:31 "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 an high day,) besought Pilate that their legs might be broken, and *that* they might be taken away."

The parenthetical clause is the key to understanding the entire problem. While it is true that a normal weekly Sabbath begins on sunset on Friday (about 6 p.m.), did you know that there are seven other "High Sabbaths," all but one of which are floating Sabbaths? By "floating Sabbaths," I mean they could occur on any day of the week. Therefore, there could have been two Sabbaths in one week, a high or floating Sabbath and a weekly Sabbath.

Can this be true? The answer is "Yes." An example of this is found in **Luke 6:1** "And it came to pass on the second sabbath after the first, that he went through the corn fields; and his disciples plucked the ears of corn, and did eat, rubbing *them* in *their* hands."

In fact, Christ was Crucified on the day before an High Sabbath (floating Sabbath), not the day before the normal Sabbath! Which high Sabbath was it? It was the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, which was always held on the 15th of Nisan (see **Exodus 12:16; Leviticus 23:3-7; Numbers 28:17**). The first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread was an Holy Convocation or High Sabbath and though always on the 15th of Nisan, that High Sabbath might fall on any day of the week, depending on the year. And, do you know what the day before the Feast of Unleavened Bread was? PASSOVER (see Leviticus 23:5). Christ our Passover (1 Corinthians 5:7) was sacrificed for us on the day of Passover!

Now, back to specific biblical support for Christ being crucified just before the High Sabbath instead of Friday, the day before the weekly Sabbath. Consider 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." The Greek word for *Sabbath* in this verse is sabbatwn-sabbaton, which J. P. Greens *Interlinear Bible*, (1985; p. 766) says is **Sabbaths** "In the end of the Sabbaths" Likewise, my Schofield Bible notes that the grammatically correct reading, according to the Greek is, "the end of the Sabbaths." This indicates that Christ was not crucified on the day before the weekly Sabbath but the day before the "floating" Sabbath, which fell before the weekly Sabbath.

- **"Good Friday" Does Not Allow For Enough Time**

Those who claim a "Good Friday" death for Christ have another MAJOR problem. It just is not possible for all of the "red tape" and preparations to have been accomplished in less than three hours. I say less than three hours because we know that Christs death took place some time after 3 p.m. on Friday by their reckoning. The weekly Sabbath began at 6 p.m. Consider the list below. There is not enough time to do all those things. However, if Christ died on a Wednesday after 3 p.m. and arose Saturday after 6 p.m. there is ample time to do all of the things the Gospels list.

- At 3 p.m. Christ calls out "with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? that is to say, My

God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" **Matthew 27:46**. Yet, at this point there are still three other times Christ spoke "I thirst" (**John 19:28**); "It is finished" (**John 19:30**) and "Into thy hands I commend my spirit" (**Luke 23:46**). How much time elapsed after 3 p.m.? I don't know. But, it is safe to say that it was after, and I think well after 3 p.m.

- **John 19:31** The Jews went to Pilate and requested the legs be broken of those who were crucified to hasten his death.
- **John 19:32-33** Pilate accepted the request and sent a message to Calvary instructing the victims legs be broken but when they came to Christ, they found him dead. How long would all that discussion and implementation of orders have taken?
- **John 19:38** "After this, Joseph of Arimathea" travels to Pilate and begged for the body of Jesus. We are not told how much later this was.
- **Mark 15:44-45** Before Pilate would turn over the body of Jesus to Joseph of Arimathea he sends for the Centurion to be sure Christ is dead. Once that is affirmed, he gives the OK.
- **Mark 15:44** Joseph of Arimathea goes shopping and buys fine linen for the burial. Then he and friends take Christ down from the cross.
- **Mark 15: 46-47 & Luke 23:55** Christ is transported to Joseph's tomb, placed inside and the opening is sealed with a stone. All of this is done while the women watch.
- **Luke 23:55-56** The women return to the city and buy the supplies required for embalming our Lord. Preparing these things requires boiling and grinding and that took time.
- **John 19: 39-40** Nicodemus brings 100 pounds of embalming materials. The stone had to be rolled away. They washed and prepared the body for burial and then wound it in the linen packing in the 100 pounds of spices as they go.

All of the "red tape", procedures and preparations would have taken TIME! Advocates of a "Good Friday Crucifixion" must have all these things occur in less than three hours. All of these things could NOT have been accomplished in less than three hours! However, if Christ was crucified on the 14th of Nisan (Passover), on Wednesday and put in the grave before sunset of that day, (the beginning of the Jewish High Sabbath was at sunset on the 15th of Nisan, which was the Feast of Unleavened bread), there been all day Friday to fit in the many things that needed to be done before the weekly Sabbath (sunset Saturday) began.

When you understand that, you realize that Joseph of Arimathea arranged to get the body of Christ, wrap it and put it in his grave, all before sunset or about 6 p.m. on Wednesday evening when Jewish High Sabbath began (**Luke 23:52-54**). Therefore, at about sunset on Thursday He had been in the grave one day and one night. At about sunset on Friday, He had been in the grave two days and two nights. Then, on Saturday, just about sunset He had been in the grave three full days and nights. Then what happened? Some time after 6 p.m. (still Saturday by our reckoning until midnight) CHRIST AROSE!!! According to **Matthew 28:1** "In the end of the Sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week" the women came early Sunday morning, our time, but He was already gone.

Many have Sunrise services commemorating the resurrection. There's nothing wrong with that. But, perhaps we should have a Sunset service. Christ arose about sunset on Saturday. Then in the early morning hours according to **Mark 16:1-2**, the two Marys discovered the Resurrection. Praise God. He IS

RISEN!

In conclusion, I cannot accept "Good Friday" as the day our Lord died because

- **"Good Friday" Was Not Celebrated In The Early Church.**
- **A "Good Friday" Death conflicts with what Christ said.**
- **A "Good Friday" Death Does Not Take Into Account The Issue of Floating Sabbaths.**
- **A "Good Friday" Death Does Not Allow For Enough Time To Accomplish All The Things In The Gospels.**

I believe that Christ died on the Cross for our sins on Sorrowful Wednesday! But, regardless of what you believe, remember the most important thing is that He did die for our sins and rose again for our justification. Is Christ your Savior? If not, there is no better time to repent of your sins and believe on the Lord Jesus Christ than right now!

Resources consulted include: Encyclopedia Britannica; Catholic Encyclopedia; International Standard Bible Encyclopedia; Way of Life Encyclopedia of the Bible and Christianity; Connollys Life of Christ; Chuck Misslers Friday or Wednesday.

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"Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away." Matthew 24:35

"But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him."

... 1 Corinthians 2:9 ...

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