

A CASE FOR THURSDAY CRUCIFIXION

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If all Christians were to vote, I would expect that Friday would be the overwhelming choice for the day of the week that Christ died on the cross. This day is commemorated each year on the calendar as "Good Friday", the Friday before Easter.

There is, however, a problem that causes question in the minds of those who would believe the inerrancy of the Bible. How can one reconcile His death on Friday if He rose before daybreak on Sunday? After all, wasn't there a prophesy that states that he would be in the bowels of the Earth three days and three nights?

Matt 12:40 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 Friday scenario can be, at most, three days and two nights (the day times of Friday, Saturday, and Sunday and the nights of Friday and Saturday). I, therefore propose to show that Thursday was the day He was on the cross. Thus he was dead on Thursday day and night, Friday day and night, and finally Saturday day and night, rising before daybreak on Sunday.

We need to understand the Jewish calendar (which was used by the writers of the gospels), and how they began each day. To the Jew, the day officially begins at sundown, called evening in the King James version of the Bible. For example, Friday evening begins the Sabbath (Saturday) to the Jew.

In the Bible, when it speaks of the evening of the 14th, it means the beginning of the 15th. Likewise, when it says to kill the Passover lamb on the 14th, and eat that evening, they are eating the meal on the 15th. (Leviticus 23:5-6, Exodus 12:6-8, 18-19)

Secondly, the text mentions the Sabbath as a high Sabbath. The high Sabbath is a special Sabbath attached to a feast, in this case the first day of the feast of unleavened bread.

First lets observe the logic as to why Friday is chosen as the day He was on the cross. This is fairly straightforward logic.

- It is stated that He died at the 9th hour, which is approximately 3:00 in the afternoon. (Matthew 27:46, Mark 15:34, Luke 23:44-46)

- It is stated in the scripture that it was the preparation day, which is the day before the Sabbath, (Mark 15:42, John 19:31).
- The resurrection occurred on the first day of the week, which is Sunday. (Matthew 28:1, Mark 16:2, Luke 24:1, John 20:1)
- He therefore rose on the third day, first day being Friday and the third day being Sunday.

The problem with this argument is that the prophecy states three days and three nights. From Friday afternoon to Sunday morning is three days and two nights.

The argument for Wednesday is the following:

- In John 19:31 it says that the Sabbath was to be a high day (John 19:31). Therefore, the assumption is that it was not an ordinary weekly Sabbath but that Sabbath that accompanies Passover.
- The orthodox Jews observe Passover two days, the 14th and the 15th. Therefore they needed to bury Him before the evening meal of the second day of Passover.
- A Wednesday crucifixion means that He would be in the grave just over 3 whole days before the resurrection. Thus making sure of fulfilling the prophecy.

The problem with this argument is that it is 3 nights and 4 days. Also, the burial had to take place very quickly since evening had already come before the body was given over (Matthew 27:57, Mark 15:42,43)

The argument for Thursday:

- He was buried between the evening sacrifice (approximately 3:00 PM) and sundown (approximately 6:00 PM) (Matthew 27:57, Mark 15:42,43).
- The preparation began at midnight prior to the crucifixion (Mark 15:42a, Luke 23:54, John 19:31a).
- The preparation is the day prior to a Sabbath (Mark 15:42b).
- Therefore Jesus was crucified on Thursday, not Friday.
- The soldiers wanted to allow time for burial. (John 19:31b).
- Joseph and Nicodemus had to perform the following tasks to bury him:
 1. Wait until even (Mark 15:42)
 2. Get permission from Pilate (Mark 15:44)
 3. Purchase burial linen (Mark 15:46)
 4. Bring 100 lb. Of myrrh and aloe (John 19:39)
 5. Wrap him with the linen and spices (John 19:40)
 6. Locate Joseph's sepulcher near the cross (John 19:41)
 7. Place him in the sepulcher and roll the heavy stone in place (Mark 15:47)

Those tasks were performed in less than 3 hours. (He died 3 hours prior to sundown. Matthew 27:46)

- He was removed from the cross immediately (John 19:31).
- He therefore fulfilled the prophecy of Jonah
 1. He was dead 3 days (Thurs., Fri., Sat.)
 2. And 3 nights (evenings of Thurs. - Sat.)
 3. He rose prior to sunrise Sunday (Matthew 28:1,4. Mark 16:1-5, Luke 24:1, John 20:1)

Bible verses containing the prophecy of Jonah (third-day resurrection)

- Genesis 1:15, 40:12-13
- Exodus 19:11
- Joshua 1:11
- Judges 19:5
- Hosea 6:2
- Jonah 1:17 - 2:4
- Matthew 12:40, 16:21, 17:23, 20:19, 26:61, 27:40, 63
- Mark 8:31, 9:31, 10:34, 14:58
- Luke 2:46-49, 9:22, 13:32, 18:33, 24:7,21
- John 2:19

MARK 15:42 And now when the even was come, because it was the preparation, that is, the day before the Sabbath, 43 Joseph of Arimathaea, and honorable counselor, which also waited for the kingdom of God, came, and went in boldly unto Pilate, and craved the body of Jesus. 44 And Pilate marvelled if he were already dead: and calling unto him the centurion, he asked him whether he had been any while dead. 45 And when he knew it of the centurion, he gave the body to Joseph. 46 And he bought fine linen, and took him down, and wrapped him in the linen, and laid him in a sepulcher, which was hewn out of a rock, and rolled a stone unto the door of the sepulcher. 47 And Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Joses beheld where he was laid.

LUKE 23:54 And that day was the preparation, and the Sabbath drew on. 55 And the women also, which came with him from Galilee, followed after, and beheld the sepulcher, and how his body was laid. 56 And they returned, and prepared spices and ointments; and rested the Sabbath day according to the commandment.

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. 32 Then came the soldiers, and brake the legs of the first, and of the other which was crucified with him. 33 But when they came to Jesus, and saw that he was dead already, they brake not his legs: 34 But one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came there out blood and water.

35 And he that saw it bare record, and his record is true: and he knoweth that he saith true, that ye might believe. 36 For these things were done, that the scripture should be fulfilled, A bone of him shall not be broken. 37 And again another scripture saith, They shall look on him whom they pierced. 38 And after this Joseph of Arimathaea, being a disciple of Jesus, but secretly for fear of the Jews,

besought Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus: and Pilate gave him leave. He came therefore, and took the body of Jesus. 39 And there came also Nicodemus, which at the first came to Jesus by night, and brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about an hundred pound weight. 40 Then took they the body of Jesus, and wound it in linen clothes with the spices, as the manner of the Jews is to bury. 41 Now in the place where he was crucified there was a garden; and in the garden a new sepulcher, wherein was never man yet laid. 42 There laid they Jesus therefore because of the Jews' preparation day; for the sepulcher was nigh at hand.