

Did Jesus Die on Friday or Wednesday?

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Question: Jesus said, “Just as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the sea monster, so shall the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth” (Matt. 12:40). **If He died on Friday, how could He be in the grave for 3 days and 3 nights?**

Answer: Christians have celebrated “Good Friday” as the traditional day Jesus died. But He could not have stayed in the grave 3 days and 3 nights if He died on Friday and was raised on Sunday. Some scholars teach that partial days are counted as a day (which would account for the 3 days) but this would allow for only 2 nights. He had to be crucified on Wednesday not Friday.

The tradition of a Friday crucifixion comes from John 19:31 which says, “The Jews therefore, because it was the day of preparation, so that the bodies should not remain on the cross on the Sabbath (for that Sabbath was a high day), asked Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away.” **This was a special Sabbath on Thursday because of the Passover, not the weekly Sabbath on Saturday.**

The Jews counted 12 hours in a day. Jesus said, "Are there not twelve hours in the day?" (John 11:9). Hebrew calendar—days begin at sundown (not midnight—night first, then day). Jesus was crucified on Wednesday 3 pm and placed in tomb just before 6 pm. It looked like this.

Jesus died Wednesday 3 pm. Placed in tomb 6 pm.	Wednesday 6 pm till Thursday 6 am Night 1	Thursday 6 am till Thursday 6 pm Day 1	Thursday 6 pm till Friday 6 am Night 2	Friday 6 am till Friday 6 pm Day 2	Friday 6 pm till Saturday 6 am Night 3	Saturday 6 am till Saturday 6 pm Day 3
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THE BIBLICALLY ACCURATE CHRONOLOGY OF THE MESSIAH'S DEATH, BURIAL AND RESURRECTION

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TUESDAY

Hebrew Calendar
(Days begin at sundown)

NIGHT DAY

WEDNESDAY

(1) The "Day of Preparation"

NIGHT DAY

THURSDAY

High Sabbath

(2) The first day of Unleavened Bread.
(3) Which follows the day of Preparation.

NIGHT DAY

FRIDAY

NIGHT DAY

SATURDAY

Weekly Sabbath

NIGHT DAY

SUNDAY

First Fruits
(13) (the Feast of Weeks)
Overlaps Unleavened Bread.

NIGHT DAY

3 DAYS AND 3 NIGHTS IN THE GRAVE

(4) The Last Supper

(5) Yeshua arrested and brought before the High Priest.

(6) Yeshua is crucified at approx. 9am.

(7) Yeshua dies at approx. 3pm.

(8) Yeshua's body placed in tomb.

(9) The women purchased and prepared spices for anointing Yeshua's body after the High Sabbath (10) and before the weekly Sabbath.

(10) They rested on the weekly Sabbath "according to the commandment."

(11) Yeshua rose on the 7th day. Exactly 3 days and 3 nights in the tomb.

(12) The women brought the spices while it was still dark. (11) But Yeshua had already risen. (14) He did not want to be touched as he was to present himself as the first fruits wave sheaf offering to the Father.

'Good Friday' to 'Resurrection Sunday' does not amount to 3 days and 3 nights. Christ was crucified on Passover as our Passover Lamb.

1) Luke 23:54, Mark 15:42, John 19:31	6) Mark 15:25
2) John 19:31, Leviticus 23:4-7	7) Matthew 27:46-50
3) Matthew 27:62	8) Matt. 27:57
4) Matthew 26:20-28	9) Mark 16:1
5) Matthew 26:47-57	10) Luke 23:56, Exodus 20:8-11
	11) Matthew 28:1-6, Mark 16:2-6, Luke 24:2-3, John 20:1
	12) John 20:1, Luke 24:1
	13) Numbers 28:26
	14) John 20:17, 1 Cor. 15:20

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Jesus was resurrected before dawn on Sunday “after three days” (Mark 8:31). Mary Magdalene came to the tomb on early Sunday, while it was still dark and He was already resurrected (John 20:1). Jesus had been in the tomb 3 full days and nights.

Chuck Swindoll says, “Jesus was not crucified on Friday, but on Wednesday. We need to think through our position. There is no way it could be 3 nights if He died on Friday.” (radio broadcast 4/2/96)

Finis Dake writes: “However, the next day was a ‘high day’, a special Sabbath of the feast (John 19:31), not the ordinary weekly Sabbath, which was two days later. He was put in the grave Wednesday just before sunset and was resurrected at the end of Saturday at sunset. (*Dake’s Annotated Reference Bible*)

M. R. DeHaan says: “It is my conviction that Christ was crucified on Wednesday, and arose right after sundown on Saturday night, which was the beginning of the first day in the Jewish calendar. In no other way can we account for three days and three nights. ‘Good Friday’ is an unscriptural tradition only.” (*508 Answers to Bible Questions*, p.55)

Oliver B. Greene writes: “Was He crucified on the day known as Good Friday? If so, how could He have been in the tomb for three days and three nights? Passover that year began on Thursday, therefore Jesus was crucified on Wednesday, not Friday. The Jewish day began at six o’clock in the evening, so the body of Jesus was placed in the tomb just before six o’clock on Wednesday evening. (*The Gospel of Matthew*, pp. 301-303)

Dr. Howard Estep states: Luke 24:21 is a strong argument for a Wednesday crucifixion. If the Friday crucifixion is held, it is impossible for the first day of the week to be “the third day since these things were done.”

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