

The Day of Christ's Death and the Day of His Resurrection

Scripture gives us a lot of details about the day of Christ's death, burial and resurrection. It doesn't take a person of faith to sit down with pencil and paper to see that the popular Christian notions of a Friday death and a Sunday resurrection are easily contested. However, it does take faith to hope in Christ and to understand what God did for His people at this time through His only Son. (Provided below is a linear graph detailing the time and days which precede Christ's arrest through to the day after His resurrection.)

Now in this vein of thought there are two specific prophecies which need thorough consideration. First, Christ must be in the *heart* of the earth for three days and three nights. (Mt.12.40; cf. Jonah 1.17) And, second, He must rise from the dead the third day. (Mk.10.34) Some suppose that these two prophecies present a contradiction because it is impossible for Christ to be in the heart of the earth for three full days and three full nights and yet rise the third day; that once three days and three nights are fulfilled then He begins the fourth. Therefore if Christ was truly in the heart of the earth for three days and three night then He cannot be said to rise *the* third day. So it is contended that either Christ was not three days and three nights in the heart of the earth, or He was not raised from the dead in the third day. Both propositions cannot be true. But the truth is, both are true of our Lord Jesus. So, why do some think that there is here a seemingly unresolvable problem? Well, we should all agree that the problem is not with the word of God, but with our understanding of the facts. If we would discern these two things this matter begins to be resolved:

1. The time *when Jesus died* on the cross, and,
2. The time *when His body* was put in the tomb.

At death our Lord Jesus immediately entered the heart of the earth, which was said to be about the 9th hour of the day (our 3:00 p.m.). His body was laid in a tomb sometime shortly before the Feast of Unleavened Bread began, which was a high day, a Sabbath. So sometime before 6:00, just before the observance of the Feast of Unleavened bread began the body of our Lord Jesus was put away in a tomb. Let's follow through with the facts that we have in the Bible of Christ's death and resurrection.

The Bible says that our Lord was crucified *the third hour*. (Mk.15.25) This means Christ was crucified anytime between 9:00a and noon. The gospel of John gives a time which is a little more specific to the time of Christ's death. John informs us that that when Pilate delivered the Lord to be crucified it was *about the sixth hour*. (Jn.19.14) That was just before the noon hour. We also read that it was *near* this same hour that a darkness covered the land *about* the sixth hour *until* the ninth hour, or from just before noon *until* 3:00p. (Mt.27.45; Mk.15.33; Lk.23.44) Darkness covered the land (probably referring to the land of Israel during the entire time that the Lord was crucified, until he died. (Lk.23.43-46) Jesus died almost at the noon hour of the day. After some time, because the high day, a Sabbath of the Feast of Unleavened Bread was nearing (Nu.28.16-18) it was necessary to speed the deaths of those three men crucified (Deu.21.23), so soldiers came to break their legs. (Jn.19.31) It was then they found that Jesus was dead. So, to prove that He had truly died, rather than breaking His legs (Ex.12.46; Nu.9.12; Jn.19.36) they pierced His side. (Zec.12.10; Jn.19.34) Joseph of Arimathea, hurriedly begged Pilate for leave to receive the body of Christ for burial, which Pilate granted. (Jn.19.38) Christ was laid in that tomb

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sometime just before the beginning of the Sabbath, not the 7th day Sabbath, but of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, which was to begin at 6:00 p.m. It was the next morning that the Jews petitioned Pilate for a guard to be stationed at the tomb to prevent anyone from stealing away the body of our Lord until the third day. (Mt.27.62) This guaranteed the tomb was sealed and guarded until past our Sunday morning. (Mt.27.64-66)

Counting the Days and Nights of Christ's Death, Burial and Resurrection

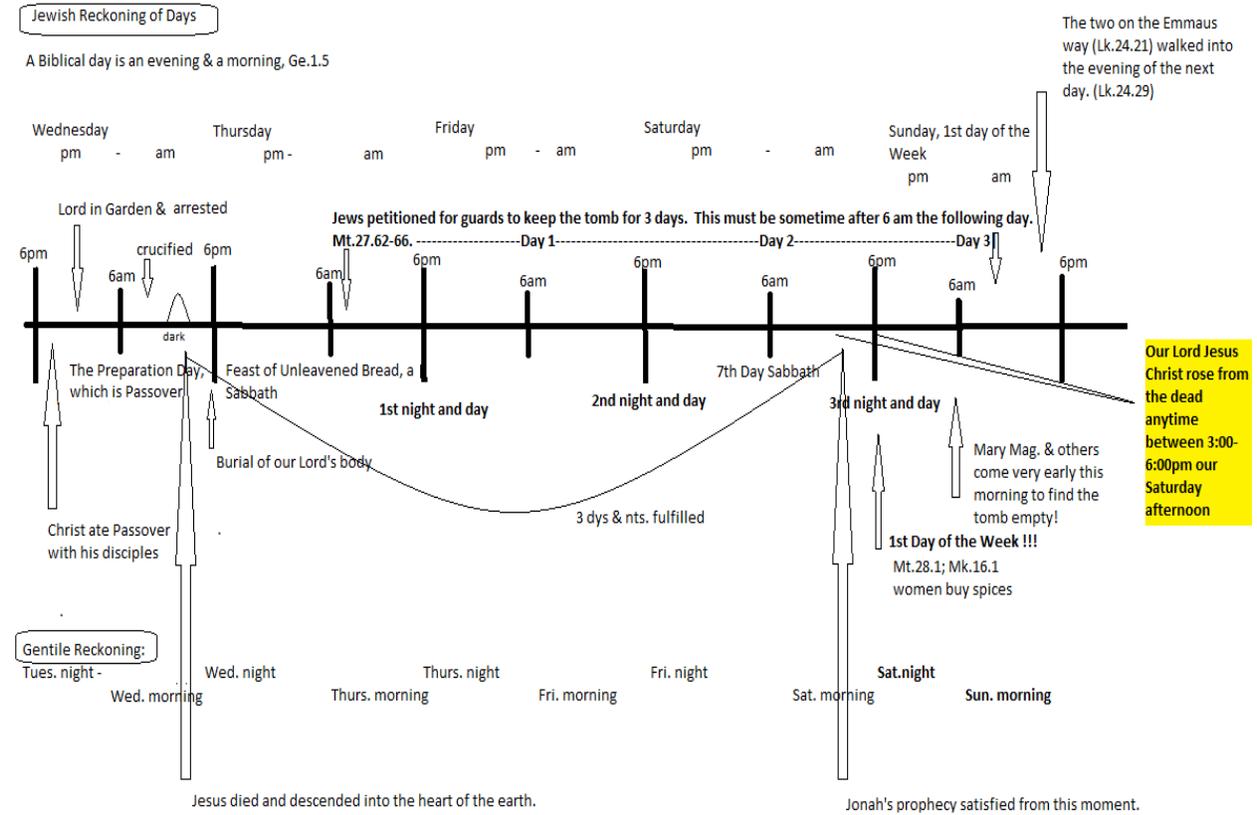
The Biblical accounting of days is an evening and a morning. This constitutes a day. The Sabbath observance of Unleavened Bread came at 6:00 p.m. and continues to 6:00p the next evening. The disciples could not come to the tomb because of the Sabbath and because of the guards. **(End of Day 1, a Thursday [our Wednesday] evening and a day)** Another evening and a morning goes by, and the guards will not allow access to Christ's body which lay in the tomb. **(End of Day 2, a Friday [our Thursday] evening and a day)** Now, comes the 7th day Sabbath. The guards are still at the tomb and access to the body of the Lord is not denied. **(End of day 3, a Saturday [our Friday] evening and a day)** As already stated, Christ died on the cross at or about the 9th hour of the day (or at or about 3:00 p.m.). That means He came into the heart of the earth at the time of His death, not when His body was placed in the tomb. Jonah's prophecy of three days and three nights in the heart of the earth begins at death. (Mt.12.40; 27.63) Our Lord's body was placed in the tomb just before 6:00p. If our Lord exits this tomb before 6:00p He has raised *in* the third day. (Mk.14.58; Lk.18.33; 24.46; Jn.2.20; 10.40; 1Co.15.4, and many others)

The disciples were prevented from coming to the tomb to tend to the body of our Lord Jesus until at least the first day of the week, which begins in the evening. The first day of the week according to the Biblical counting of days begins in the evening. So, this was on our Saturday evening. Before the disciples had come to the tomb our Lord Jesus was already risen! In fact, sometime late Saturday afternoon, *in the end of the Sabbath* referring here to the 7th day Sabbath (also translated, *at even* in Mk.13.35), there was an earthquake, and the guards became as dead men when they saw an angel roll the stone away and sit thereon. (Mt.28.1-4) The words, *in the end of the Sabbath*, tells us that anytime between the hours of 3:00-6:00p our Lord Jesus came bodily out of that tomb. When women came to the tomb it was *as the day began to dawn* (Mt.28.1), *while it was yet dark* (Jn.20.1) and the stone was already rolled away and the tomb was already empty. They *witnessed* the fact of Christ's resurrection on the first day of the week, very early in the morning, but the truth is that He had already raised *in the end of the Sabbath*.

By carefully examining the facts given in the word of God we can accurately detail the times of the Day of Preparation (Passover), the Feast of Unleavened Bread, the crucifixion, death, burial, and resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and the time when the disciples began to discover that themselves. He was crucified early on our Wednesday, just before noon, and died just a couple of hours later. (Mk.15.44, the marvel that He had died so soon) He raise out of the heart of the earth and came from the tomb sometime between 3:00-6:00p our Saturday afternoon, *in the end of the Sabbath*. What else do we learn from this? If you believe the truth which is according to the word of God, you will stand virtually alone many times. Christendom has believed a lie about our Lord's crucifixion on a Friday and a resurrection on a

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Sunday morning. Does it matter? Truth always matters. Every believer should believe the word of God regardless of what others, many, most say to the contrary. God is always right. The real question for you is, 'Does it matter to you?' The Lord leads His children into all truth, and His children walk after it. (Jn.16.13; Ps.26.3; 86.11)



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