

Was Jesus crucified on Wednesday or Friday? - <http://www.wednesdaycrucifixion.com>

The argument for the Wednesday crucifixion theory primarily stems from [Matthew 12:40](#) which states. *"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 proponents of this argument say that in order for Jesus to prove that He is the Messiah that He must have met this condition or He could not be the Messiah. We will be covering a prophecy that is greatly abused by the enemy because it is not understood by the majority, which is that Daniel 9:24-27 proves beyond doubt that Jesus was in fact the Messiah. This is the most powerful and perfect Messianic prophecy in the Word of God proving that Jesus was the Christ. So regardless as to how long Jesus was in the grave, we need not have any doubt that Jesus is the One.

The proponents of the Wednesday crucifixion theory say they have back tracked the Jewish calendar and established that the Passover Sabbath occurred on the Thursday of the week of Christ's crucifixion and that the Sabbath referred to is not the weekly Sabbath but the Passover only. Before establishing if there is any truth in this statement, observe the following table for an understanding of this entire event.

Passover (Leviticus 23:5)	Feast of Unleavened Bread (Leviticus 23:6)						21st
	14th	15th	16th	17th	18th	19th	
Paschal Lamb Slain	1st Day Feast of Unleaven Bread	The Omer (First Fruits)	-	-	-	-	7th Day Feast of Unleaven Bread
Not a Sabbath (Luke 23:54)	A Sabbath (Leviticus 23:6-7)	Not a Sabbath	-	-	-	-	A Sabbath
Unleaven Bread Eaten							
All Leaven Removed From the House (Exodus 12:19)							
Crucifixion	In the tomb	Resurrection	-	-	-	-	-
1st Day	2nd Day	3rd Day					

Note that the beginning of Passover when the lamb was slain is not the Passover sabbath but this day occurs on the 15th of Nisan the following day. Jesus became our Passover lamb and died at the exact time the Passover lamb would have been sacrificed. Matthew, Mark and Luke all record that Christ died at the ninth hour (9 hours after the sun had risen, 3:00 p.m.)

[Matthew 27:46](#) *"And about the NINTH HOUR Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? that is to say, My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"*

This is the same time that Josephus records the slaughter of the Passover lambs commenced. Christ fulfilled the symbolism of the Passover lambs exactly by giving his life just as the unblemished Passover lambs began to be slain on the 14th of Nisan.

Jesus was placed in the sepulchre before sunset as they were in a hurry to bury Jesus because the Sabbath would begin at sundown. Note that a preparation day is the day before a Sabbath and so called because it is the day used to prepare for the Sabbath which is going to occur on the following day.

[Luke 23:53-54](#) *"And he took it down, and wrapped it in linen, and laid it in a sepulchre that was hewn in stone, wherein never man before was laid. 54 And that day was the preparation, and the sabbath drew on."*

The Hebrew day begins and ends at sunset as the Bible makes plain and Jews practice even today.

[Genesis 1:5](#) *"And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And the evening and the morning were the first day."*

[Leviticus 23:32](#) *"It shall be unto you a sabbath of rest, and you shall afflict your souls: in the ninth day of the month at even, from even unto even, shall you celebrate your sabbath."*

So Jesus died at 3pm and was buried on the preparation day (the day before the Sabbath) before sunset, which would begin *THE* Sabbath day, but which Sabbath day, the first day of Unleavened Bread or the Seventh day (Saturday) Sabbath or was it both? It was in fact both which we will now set out to prove.

[Luke 23:52-56, 24:1-3](#) *"This man went unto Pilate, and begged the body of Jesus. 53 And he took it down, and wrapped it in linen, and laid it in a sepulchre that was hewn in stone, wherein never man before was laid. 54 And that day was the preparation [Friday], and the sabbath drew on. 55 And the women also, which came with him from Galilee, followed after, and beheld the sepulchre, and how his body was laid. 56 And they returned, and prepared spices and ointments; and RESTED THE SABBATH DAY ACCORDING TO THE COMMANDMENT. [Seventh day Saturday Sabbath] 24:1-3 Now upon the first day of the week [Sunday], very early in the morning, they came unto the sepulchre, bringing the spices which they had prepared, and certain others with them. 2 And they found the stone rolled away from the sepulchre. 3 And they entered in, and found not the body of the Lord Jesus."*

The women viewed the sepulchre and the body of Jesus on the preparation day (Friday evening before sunset) and then rested according to the fourth Commandment, on *THE* Saturday Sabbath. When the Saturday Sabbath had past, the women returned to the tomb at sunrise, and that day was the first day of the week (Sunday). [Luke 23:55-56](#) says, "*the women ... beheld the sepulchre, and how his body was laid. And they returned, and prepared spices and ointments; and RESTED THE SABBATH DAY ACCORDING TO THE COMMANDMENT.*" After viewing the body of Jesus they had only enough time to prepare "*spices and ointments*" and then rested on *THE* Seventh day "*Sabbath according to the Commandment.*"

Luke would never refer to Passover as *THE* Sabbath or "*according to the Commandment*" and so can only be referring to one of the Ten Commandments of God being the fourth Commandment, the Sabbath of the Lord. This being the case, the woman would on the next available chance return to embalm the body of Jesus. Which day was this? "*And very early in the morning the first day of the week.*" The first day of the week is Sunday which follows the Seventh day of the week which is the Seventh day Sabbath.

If Jesus was crucified on Wednesday and this was Passover (Nisan 14) then Thursday would be the Passover Sabbath (Nisan 15) and 72 literal hours would take us to sunset on *THE* Sabbath, the Seventh day of the week. What would have been the first available time for the woman to return with their "*spices and ointments*" and embalm the body of Jesus? Their first available chance would have been EARLY Friday morning, the preparation day before the Seventh day Sabbath, but as we have seen this was not the case because we are told that their first chance was on the "*first day of the week [Sunday], VERY EARLY IN THE MORNING, they came unto the sepulchre, bringing the spices which they had prepared.*"

If Jesus was crucified on Wednesday, there is absolutely no way the woman would have procrastinated two days before opening the tomb on Sunday to embalm His body as it would have stunk of decay as this would have been the fourth day in the tomb. This is what Martha said of her own brother Lazarus.

[John 11:39](#) "*Jesus said, Take you away the stone. Martha, the sister of him that was dead, saith unto him, Lord, by this time he stinketh: for he has been dead four days.*"

To make the Wednesday theory fit, we would have to come up with all sorts of excuses as to why they did not take opportunity on Friday to embalm the body of Jesus and find ways of manipulating the Word of God to explain "*resting on THE Sabbath according to the Commandment.*" It does not fit and becomes a stretch of the imagination to try and force this theory into place that we will see soon is impossible.

A Double Sabbath

If Friday was the day of crucifixion then this day would have to be a preparation day for not only Passover but also for the Seventh day Sabbath of the Lord and would therefore be a double Sabbath. Can we prove this from the Word of God for even further evidence? In the Bible, Passover is "*always*" called Passover and the Seventh day Sabbath is "*always*" called the Sabbath. John 19:31 below says "*THE* Sabbath" with the word "*THE*" being the definite article, that is, not "A sabbath" but "*THE* Sabbath." Hence this is and can only be the weekly Sabbath. John 19:14 confirms it is a double sabbath. This day is not only the preparation for "*THE* Sabbath" but also the preparation for "*THE* Passover" and why it is called a high day.

[John 19:14](#) "*And it was the preparation of the Passover, and about the sixth hour: and he saith unto the Jews, Behold your King!*"

[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.*"

And so the Gospel of John informs us this double preparation day was in fact before a "*high day*", that is a double Sabbath. This is what "**The People's New Testament (1891) by B. W. Johnson**" quotes: "**John 19:31 - That sabbath was a high day. A double Sabbath, both the weekly Sabbath and a passover Sabbath.**"

For those who believe the Wednesday crucifixion theory, let's just clarify these facts one more time so there can be no misunderstanding. Passover is ALWAYS called Passover and Passover is NEVER called "*THE SABBATH*" because obviously "*THE SABBATH*" is and can only be "*THE SABBATH.*" When the word "*THE*" is the definite article and hence exists in the original Greek text, then we know that when it literally says, "*THE SABBATH*" it is ALWAYS and can ONLY be the Lord's Seventh day Sabbath. So the evidence of this being a double Sabbath and hence a HIGH Sabbath is undeniable in the book of John as it states very clearly in John 19:14 that this is the "*Preparation of the Passover,*" which we know it has to be as Jesus becomes our Passover Lamb. And John 19:31 says it was the preparation also for "*THE SABBATH.*" The word "*THE*" is definitely the definite article and DOES exist in the Greek text. It is "*THE SABBATH*" and therefore can ONLY be referring to the Lord's Seventh day Sabbath. So here is 100% conclusive proof that this is the Preparation day for Passover and the Preparation for "*THE SABBATH*" and hence beyond ALL doubt proves also that the Passover Sabbath and the Lord's Seventh day Sabbath did fall on the same day. This is why it is called a "*HIGH SABBATH*" and why ALL past theologians and their Commentaries such as Albert Barnes, Adam Clarke, John Gill and Wesley all state this is a double Sabbath, i.e., a weekly

Sabbath and Passover sabbath. Passover is "A SABBATH" and can NEVER be called "THE SABBATH." This evidence is 100% conclusive and cannot be debated and alone ends the Wednesday crucifixion argument.

While on the topic of the phrase "THE SABBATH," let's cover another misunderstanding of the proponents of the Wednesday crucifixion theory. They further try and prove that the Passover sabbath and "THE SABBATH" were on separate days using the following flawed argument. They insist that the Sabbaths had to fall on different days because of what Mark 16:1 and Luke 23:56 says in regards to the issue of the spices used to anoint the body of Jesus. Here are the two verses in contention.

Mark 16:1 *"And when the sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome, had bought sweet spices, that they might come and anoint him."*

Luke 23:56 *"And they returned, and prepared spices and ointments; and rested the sabbath day according to the commandment."*

The argument is that since Luke 23:56 says they "*prepared spices and ointments*" and then "*rested the sabbath day according to the commandment,*" that this was done *before* the Sabbath, which of course is true. And Mark 16:1 says "*when the sabbath was past*" they "*bought sweet spices*" and so therefore this was done *after* the Sabbath, which is also true. So their argument is that how could the women have bought spices after the Sabbath, and also prepared spices and rested before the same Sabbath unless there were two Sabbaths involved with a day between them.

This firstly has one very serious problem. Passover is ALWAYS called Passover and both of these verses actually say "THE SABBATH" with the word "THE" being the definite article. In other words, the word "THE" is in the original Greek text and so both verses are referencing "THE SABBATH," that is, what can ONLY be the Seventh day Sabbath. So this argument does not prove at all that the Sabbaths fell on different days as BOTH of these verses are referring to the same Seventh day Sabbath. But based on their argument, this would now bring in a second serious problem, which is that we would have a contradiction of scripture or is there another explanation, which also reveals what they overlooked in the first place?

Luke 23:56 says they "*prepared spices and ointments,*" which means they had some spices and ointments already, which they prepared. Mark 16:1 on the other hand, says that they "*bought sweet spices.*" So as one would expect, there is no contradiction of scripture. They prepared what spices they had before the Sabbath and no doubt, there would not have been time to buy more before the Sabbath commenced, so if they needed more spices, then they would have had to wait until Sabbath was over before they could purchase however much more spices were required. They "*prepared*" what spices they had before Sabbath and "*bought*" more spices when Sabbath ended so everything is harmonious.

I typically find that the proponents of the Wednesday crucifixion theory are forever clutching at straws to try and prove what it is they have chosen to believe. The following argument they also use illustrates this well. They say that the fact that two Sabbaths are involved is confirmed by Matthew 28:1, where the women went to the tomb "*after the Sabbath*" and that the word "Sabbath" used here is actually plural in the original Greek and should be translated "Sabbaths." This part is in fact true and there are some Bible versions such as Young's Literal Translation and others that make this clear. But they use this plural argument to insinuate that the Sabbaths once again fell on separate days. As ridiculous as this may seem, in their deception and desperation, they actually prove the opposite and show that these Sabbaths DID fall on the same day. Whatever it was that was done, was done "*In the end of the Sabbaths,*" meaning it was done as both these Sabbaths ended. You cannot say this unless both Sabbaths ended simultaneously.

Matthew 28:1 *"In the end of the sabbath[s], as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the sepulchre."*

The proponents of the Wednesday crucifixion theory have become so desperate lately to convince the world of known cult leader Herbert W. Armstrong's erroneous belief that they have resorted to abusing a messianic prophecy. I am not sure if this is just plain ignorance on their part or a deliberate attempt at deception in hope that most do not understand the prophecy and so will believe their deception and convert to their way of thinking. In any case, this argument just causes them to lose all credibility.

Daniel 9:27 says "*in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease*" and so the argument is that since the middle of this week refers to the crucifixion of Jesus then it had to be a Wednesday crucifixion as Wednesday is in the middle of the week. The problem is that this is symbolic prophetic time and so a day equals a year here. The start of this week was the baptism of Jesus and the middle of the week is not 3.5 days but 3.5 years and of course was the length of the ministry of Jesus. So this week is not 7 days but **7 years** and also where the *supposed* seven year tribulation comes from. See also [Secret Rapture](#). Below is the prophecy in detail so the truth is perfectly clear and the deception seen.

In Daniel 9:24-27 God gave a prophecy concerning the probation of Israel. **Daniel 9:24** reads, "*Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy."*

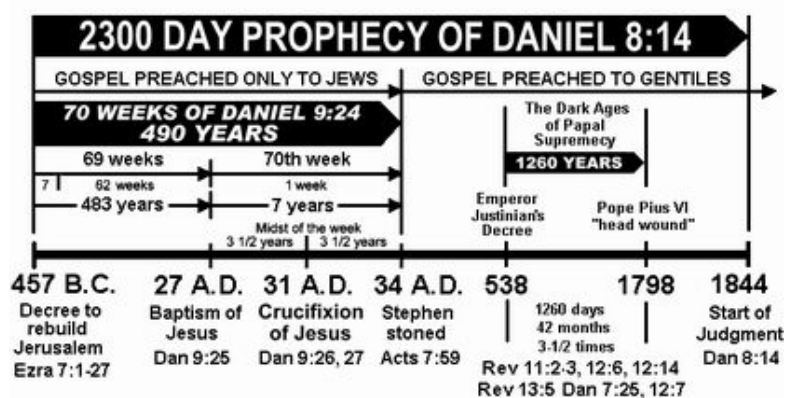
God gave Daniel's people seventy weeks to end their rebellion against Him but if they failed, Israel would be rejected as His chosen nation. The seventy weeks are symbolic prophetic time and so each day represents a literal year (See Ezekiel 4:6 and Numbers 14:34). So the seventy weeks would actually be a literal 490 years after which the Israelites were no longer God's chosen people. The seventy prophetic weeks began with the decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem.

Daniel 9:25 "Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times."

That well known starting date is 457 B.C., when Artaxerxes sent out the decree. (Ezra 7:13) From that date the Jews would have exactly 490 years to end their rebellion towards God. The 490 year probation ended in A.D. 34 and the Jews ceased to be God's chosen race. Daniel 9:25 says that the Messiah would be anointed after the total of 69 (7 + 62) of those prophetic weeks had passed. That would be 483 years from the decree date of 457 B.C. It takes no mathematician to figure the end of that prediction. It brings us to the year A.D. 27, being the exact year that Jesus was baptized by John and the Holy Spirit anointed Him for His ministry. Since "Messiah" means "Anointed One," this can only be the fulfilment of Daniel's prophecy that the Messiah would appear in A.D. 27. Seventy weeks were allocated to the Jewish probation but Christ appears as the "Messiah" after sixty nine weeks. So that leaves the seventieth and final week for Christ to minister before the Jews probation ended. So what happened in this final week?

Daniel 9:27 tells us, "And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease."

The "midst of the week" of course is three and a half prophetic days, which is actually **3.5 literal years** from His baptism to His crucifixion, and according to the Bible, the ministry of Jesus lasted for exactly that, three and a half years. In the spring of A.D. 31 Jesus was crucified and the veil of the temple was



rent (Matthew 27:51), signifying the end of sacrifices. By His death He caused the "sacrifice and the oblation to cease." Another three and a half years would lead up to the end of the seventy weeks and the end of the Jewish probation. During that three and a half years the disciples laboured mainly for the Jews but in A.D. 34 the seventy weeks ended; Stephen was stoned after his immense speech before the council in Acts chapter 7 and the Gospel began to go to the Gentiles (Acts 8:4). The Jews had rejected the gospel message and were no longer God's chosen people just as the

book of Daniel shows. Now the Jews could only be saved as individuals in the same way as the Gentiles.

The seventy weeks or 490 years was the time God gave His chosen nation to end their rebellion where He would then forgive them for their transgressions. Notice how Jesus refers to this prophetic time period here in His conversation with Peter. Seventy times seven is of course 490.

Matthew 18:21 "Then came Peter to him, and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? Till seven times? **22** Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but, Until seventy times seven."

Regardless of all the current facts, the proponents of the Wednesday crucifixion theory still say, "But one cannot get three days and three nights from Good Friday to Easter Sunday. This is only one day and two nights, what about the other two days and one night? Friday can't possibly be the day Jesus died."

This is the result of trying to use literal, secular thinking and applying it to the text, implying that there must be a full 72 hours between the crucifixion and the resurrection. But that is not the intent of the passage. For proof let's look at what the Gospels and other books have to say about the matter and then we will look at inclusive reckoning, which most know nothing about and explains all.

Matthew 16:21 "From that time forth began Jesus to show unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again THE THIRD DAY."

Matthew 17:23 "And they shall kill him, and THE THIRD DAY he shall be raised again. And they were exceeding sorry."

Matthew 20:19 "And shall deliver him to the Gentiles to mock, and to scourge, and to crucify him: and THE THIRD DAY he shall rise again."

Matthew 27:64 "Command therefore that the sepulchre be made sure until THE THIRD DAY, lest his disciples come by night, and steal him away, and say unto the people, He is risen from the dead: so the last error shall be worse than the first."

Mark 9:31 "For he taught his disciples, and said unto them, The Son of man is delivered into the hands of men, and they shall kill him; and after that he is killed, he shall rise THE THIRD DAY."

Mark 10:34 "And they shall mock him, and shall scourge him, and shall spit upon him, and shall kill him: and THE THIRD DAY he shall rise again."

Luke 9:22 "Saying, The Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be slain, and be raised THE THIRD DAY."

Luke 13:32 "And he said unto them, Go you, and tell that fox, Behold, I cast out devils, and I do cures to day and to morrow, and THE THIRD DAY I shall be perfected."

Luke 18:33 "And they shall scourge him, and put him to death: and THE THIRD DAY he shall rise again."

Luke 24:7 "Saying, The Son of man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and THE THIRD DAY rise again."

Luke 24:21 "But we trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel: and beside all this, to day is THE THIRD DAY since these things were done."

Luke 24:46 "And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead THE THIRD DAY:"

John 2:1 "And THE THIRD DAY there was a marriage in Cana of Galilee; and the mother of Jesus was there:"

Acts 10:40 "Him God raised up THE THIRD DAY, and showed him openly;"

1 Corinthians 15:4 "And that he was buried, and that he rose again THE THIRD DAY according to the scriptures:"

All these scriptures prove Jesus was resurrected ON "the third day" day after His death and burial, not after three literal days. If Jesus rose after 72 hours, then all the above verses would have to read on "the fourth day."

Can we be sure which day was the third day? You will note that the following passage says that on Sunday the "FIRST DAY OF THE WEEK" (verse 1), the two angels said He would rise "THE THIRD DAY" (verse 7), and on the same day on the road to Emmaus the two disciples stated "**TODAY IS THE THIRD DAY**" (verse 21), and that Jesus said He would rise "THE THIRD DAY" (verse 46). This passage shows that Sunday was the third day that the angels and Jesus spoke of in which He rose from the grave.

Luke 24:1-46 "Now UPON THE FIRST DAY OF THE WEEK, very early in the morning, they came unto the sepulchre, bringing the spices which they had prepared, and certain others with them. ... two men stood by them ... they said unto them, ... He is not here, but is risen: remember how he spoke unto you ... Saying, 7 The Son of man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and THE THIRD DAY rise again. ... 21 But we trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel: and beside all this, **TODAY IS THE THIRD DAY** since these things were done. ... 46 And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead THE THIRD DAY:"

Those who advocate the Wednesday crucifixion theory must adhere to a Saturday afternoon resurrection since this is "THE THIRD DAY" and the following verse in Mark that could not state more plainly that Jesus did in fact rise from the grave on the first day of the week. The first day of the week being Sunday.

Mark 16:9 "Now **when Jesus was RISEN early the FIRST day of the week**, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom he had cast seven devils."

The typical response given to try and undermine this overwhelming proof is that Matthew 28:1 says that the women first came to the tomb late on the Sabbath (Saturday) near sunset.

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."

These contradictory words are clarified and made consistent with the previous texts on Mark's account.

Mark 16:1-3 "And when the sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome, had bought sweet spices, that they might come and anoint him. 2 And very early in the morning the first day of the week, they came unto the sepulchre at the rising of the sun. 3 And they said among themselves, Who shall roll us away the stone from the door of the sepulchre?"

The end of the Sabbath and dawn are 12 hours apart. So why the apparent contradiction? The answer is found in the translation of this passage. The original Greek texts contain no chapters, verses or punctuation and were added later by the translators for obvious reasons. By reorganizing that last verse of Matthew 27 and the first verse of Matthew 28, the apparent ambiguity completely disappears.

Matthew 27:62-65 "Now the **next day** [Sabbath], that followed the **day of the preparation**, [Friday] the chief priests and Pharisees came together unto Pilate, 63 Saying, Sir, we remember that that deceiver said, while he was yet alive, After three days I will rise again. 64 Command therefore that the sepulchre be made sure until the third day, lest his disciples come by night, and steal him away, and say unto the people, He is risen from the dead: so the last error shall be worse than the first. 65 Pilate said unto them, You have a watch: go your way, make it as sure as you can."

Note in verse 62, a request for a guard on the tomb was made on the Sabbath (the day after the preparation) and that the request was for a guard until the third day. The following is how the KJV translates these two verses.

Matthew 27:66 *"So they went, and made the sepulchre sure, sealing the stone, and setting a watch."*

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."*

By simply moving the beginning of verse 28:1 to the end of 27:66 which is obviously where it should have been placed when punctuation and chapters and verse were added, we would have the following.

Matthew 27:66 *"So they went, and made the sepulchre sure, sealing the stone, and setting a watch in the end of the sabbath."*

Matthew 28:1 *"As it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the sepulchre."*

It was the watch guarding the tomb that began at the end of the Sabbath. Now we find that Matthew and Mark agree completely as to when the women came to the tomb, which was just before the rising of the sun at dawn, on the first day of the week being Sunday.

Since Jesus was to rise the third day, the Roman guards were put in place immediately at the end of the Sabbath because they anticipated that the body of Jesus would be stolen by the Jews sometime on Sunday, the third (and next) day. Had they anticipated the theft on Saturday, then the guard would have been in place by Friday evening the preparation day.

Jesus was crucified on Friday and died at 3:00 P.M. He rose from the dead somewhere between Saturday after sunset and sunrise on Sunday morning. There is absolutely no way to push the crucifixion back to Wednesday and fit scripture. A Wednesday crucifixion once again is clearly impossible.

Inclusive Reckoning

These following verses are appealed against the already overwhelming evidence to make an attempt to propose a full 72 hours in the grave. They do seem to say a full three days but if you believe the Bible cannot contradict itself, then these verses MUST be harmonized with the rest of scripture on the subject.

Matthew 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."*

Matthew 27:63 *"Saying, Sir, we remember that that deceiver said, while he was yet alive, After three days I will rise again."*

The only way we can harmonize these apparently contradictory statements is to understand them in the light of inclusive reckoning of time. This was the method used throughout the Bible in computing time. Jesus and His friends spoke and wrote in harmony with the common literacy used those days, and that usage recognized inclusive reckoning of time. In simple language, this means that any part of a day was counted as a whole day. The Jewish Encyclopaedia states. *"A short time in the morning of the seventh day is counted as the seventh day; circumcision takes place on the eighth day, even though, of the first day only a few minutes after the birth of the child, these being counted as one day."* Vol. 4, p. 475. Any small part of a day was reckoned as the entire twenty-four hour period. Scores of contradictions would appear in both Old and New Testament if this principle were ignored. We must compare Scripture with Scripture and use the idiom of the language in which the Bible was written. Inclusive reckoning was taken for granted by all the writers of the Scriptures.

These examples are only a few of the many which could be cited to establish this important point. The Hebrew usage requires only that some part of each of the days should be involved in the time period.

Those who insist that Christ was in the grave a full seventy-two hours contend that the three days and three nights must be taken in the fullest literal sense. But such a contention is absolutely contrary to the testimony of the Scriptures. An example of the way the Bible uses the term is found in Esther 4:16. We read these words of Queen Esther to Mordecai: *"Go, gather together all the Jews that are present in Shushan, and fast ye for me, and neither eat nor drink three days, night or day: I also and my maidens will fast likewise."* **Esther 4:16**. Do not overlook the fact that they were to fast three days and three nights. Yet almost the next verse tells us, *"Now it came to pass on the third day, that Esther put on her royal apparel, and stood in the inner court."* **Esther 5:1**. Here is a perfect example of how three days and three nights terminate on the third day.

In the next example using the book of 1 Kings, the people are told by the king to depart for three days but they return ON the third day and not on the fourth. Why? Because the king did not mean to be gone for a full 72 hours. The counting of days was inclusive in nature. The same day that the king told them to leave was the first day. The second day they stayed away, and then they returned the third day, as the king had intended. This is the exactly the same manner of counting used for the resurrection. It is inclusive in nature with whatever portion of the first and last days being counted as full days.

1 Kings 12:5 "And he said unto them, Depart yet FOR THREE DAYS, then come again to me. And the people departed."

1 Kings 12:12 "So Jeroboam and all the people came to Rehoboam THE THIRD DAY, as the king had appointed, saying, Come to me again THE THIRD DAY."

In the following passage the third day clearly means the day after tomorrow, *not* after 3 full days.

Luke 13:31-33 "The same day there came certain of the Pharisees, saying unto him, Get you out, and depart hence: for Herod will kill you. 32 And he said unto them, Go you, and tell that fox, Behold, I cast out devils, and I do cures today and tomorrow, and THE THIRD DAY I shall be perfected. 33 Nevertheless I must walk to day, and tomorrow, and THE DAY FOLLOWING: for it cannot be that a prophet perish out of Jerusalem."

We have just seen how Jesus explained the third day. In Luke 13:32 above, He said "today, and tomorrow, and the third day." When Jesus walked with the two disciples on the road to Emmaus on Sunday afternoon after the resurrection, Cleopas said, "Today is the third day since these things were done." Luke 24:21. Everyone knows this was on Sunday but if Jesus had been crucified on Wednesday afternoon, Cleopas would have had to say "Today is the fifth day since these things were done." Later the same day, the first day of the week, Jesus made stated, "Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day." Luke 24:46. So who was right? Jesus and Cleopas were both right. Those who claim the Wednesday crucifixion are wrong. Christ died on Friday, the preparation for the Sabbath which was the first day. He rested in the tomb on the Sabbath according to the Commandment which was the second day. He arose on the first day of the week which was Sunday and this was the third day.

The proponents of a Wednesday crucifixion use a devious argument to explain away the words of Cleopas on the road to Emmaus. They contend that he was not counting the three days from the time of Christ's death, but rather from the sealing of the tomb by the authorities the day after he was crucified. One could possibly reach back to those events from which to reckon the third day but by no stretch of the imagination could any point beyond the death of Christ be used in computing the three days.

In every related text the third day is counted from the time of His death on the cross. Matthew said He would "be killed, and be raised again the third day." Matthew 16:21. Mark wrote that He must "be killed, and after three days rise again." Mark 8:31. Luke's account reports that He must "be slain, and be raised the third day." Luke 9:22.

Repeatedly the Scriptures emphasize the death of Jesus as the starting point of the three days. To begin counting a full day after the crucifixion is not only unbiblical but grossly imaginary. The sealing of the tomb is never once referred to in connection with the period of time He was dead.

In light of all the evidence, Matthew 12:40 and 27:63 do not mean a full literal three days and nights or 72 hours, since Jesus clearly rose ON the third day. By Jewish understanding referred to as inclusive reckoning, "three days and three nights" and "after three days" means the same as ON the third day.

Passover Week Proves Resurrection

Now for the final proof positive that the resurrection of Jesus occurred on Sunday. It was to this that Paul turned in his persuasive Corinthian discourse on the resurrection. 1 Corinthians 15:3-4 says, "For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; 4 And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures."

It is very significant that Paul confirmed the death of Jesus, and also His resurrection on the third day on the basis of the Scriptures. Paul evidently understood that the Old Testament contained prophecies which set forth the time sequence of the crucifixion and the resurrection. According to Paul, Jesus had to rise on the third day in order to fulfil the word of God. Jesus also declared in Luke 24:46, "And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day:" Is there such a scripture in the Old Testament which can establish the actual day that Christ was raised from the dead? Yes! And it had to do with the annual observance of the Passover service.

In Leviticus 23:5-6 we read about the first two days of that solemn Passover week. "In the fourteenth day of the first month at even is the LORD'S passover. 6 And on the fifteenth day of the same month is the feast of unleavened bread unto the LORD: seven days you must eat unleavened bread."

We will not take time to establish the days of the week for these special observances right now as it is not essential to the proof we are seeking to establish. Just grasp these facts. The fourteenth day of the month was the slaying of the Passover, and the fifteenth day was the feast of unleavened bread.

The next question is what happened on the sixteenth day of the month? Firstfruits was offered on that sixteenth day and this service was first celebrated when the children of Israel came into the Promised Land. Leviticus 23:10-11 says, "Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When you be come into the land which I give unto you, and shall reap the harvest thereof, then you shall bring a sheaf of the

firstfruits of your harvest unto the priest: **11** And he shall wave the sheaf before the LORD, to be accepted for you: on the morrow after the sabbath the priest shall wave it."

What Sabbath is verse 11 talking about? The weekly Sabbath or the yearly Passover sabbath? The answer appears as we read the actual experience of their entrance into the land, recorded by Joshua. God told them that after entering the Promised Land they should offer the firstfruits to Him before eating of the first harvest themselves. Joshua described how the Israelites passed over the Jordan while the river was flooded at the harvest time. "For Jordan overfloweth all his banks all the time of harvest." **Joshua 3:15**. This is very important to understand because the grain was ready for reaping and they would more quickly be able to eat of the land and offer the first sheaf to the Lord.

After crossing dryshod through the flooded Jordan, after God rolled back the waters, the children of Israel camped at Gilgal. **Joshua 4:18-19** states, "And it came to pass, when the priests that bare the ark of the covenant of the LORD were come up out of the midst of Jordan, and the soles of the priests' feet were lifted up unto the dry land, that the waters of Jordan returned unto their place, and flowed over all his banks, as they did before. **19** And the people came up out of Jordan on the tenth day of the first month, and encamped in Gilgal, in the east border of Jericho."

Now for the next event that took place four days later. **Joshua 5:10**, "And the children of Israel encamped in Gilgal, and kept the passover on the fourteenth day of the month at even in the plains of Jericho."

In strict obedience to the Lord, the grateful and weary wanderers stopped to slay the Passover lamb on the fourteenth day of the first month. The next verse tells us what happened on the following day, **Joshua 5:11** "And they did eat of the old corn of the land on the morrow after the passover, unleavened cakes, and parched corn in the selfsame day."

Notice that they observed the feast of unleavened bread on the fifteenth day of the month, following the slaying of the Passover lamb on the fourteenth. They also ate the last of the old corn, because the new crop of grain was ready to harvest. The next day which was the sixteenth day of the month, "And the manna ceased on the morrow after they had eaten of the old corn of the land; neither had the children of Israel manna any more; but they did eat of the fruit of the land of Canaan that year." **Joshua 5:12**

14 Nisan	15 Nisan	16 Nisan
Passover	Old Corn and Unleavened Bread Eaten	Manna Ceased First Fruits of Canaan Eaten

The sheaf of firstfruits was to be offered to the Lord before they ate of the harvest of the land. Since they began to eat of the fruit of the land on the sixteenth day, following the feast of unleavened bread, it is certain that they offered the firstfruits also on that day. Please remember that the Lord had commanded them to offer the firstfruits of the harvest "on the morrow after the sabbath." **Leviticus 23:11**. It was indeed on the day following the yearly sabbath of unleavened bread that the wave sheaf was offered, and the new harvest began to be eaten by the people that selfsame day.

For even *more* evidence that the commonly accepted chronology is correct, one must really understand the principle of type and antitype. The sequence of days to be observed for Passover was set down in scripture as the "type". This sequence was symbolic of what was to come when the crucifixion of the Lamb of God actually took place, which is the "antitype." So the type and antitype must match precisely:

- 14 Nisan, Slaying of Passover lamb. The Lord's Passover is the type of the crucifixion day.
- 15 Nisan, 1st day of Unleavened Bread, is the second day.
- 16 Nisan, Firstfruits, is a type of the resurrection, and the third day.

By way of historical confirmation of these points, here is the testimony of Josephus, a contemporary of Jesus and a historian: "*Nisan ... is the beginning of our year, on the fourteenth day of the lunar month ... and which was called the Passover. ... The feast of unleavened bread succeeds that of the Passover, and falls on the fifteenth day of the month, and continues seven days. ... But on the second day of unleavened bread, which is the sixteenth day of the month, they first partake of the fruits of the earth. ... They also at his anticipation of the firstfruits of the earth, sacrifice a lamb, as a burnt offering unto God.*" Book III, Chapter X, par. 5, pp. 79, 80.

Christ was Our Passover

How do all these facts relate to the time of Christ's death and resurrection? Here is where the beauty of the Bible reveals itself. Jesus was the One to whom all those types and ceremonies pointed. He was the true Passover Lamb. That is why John cried out, "*Behold the Lamb of God!*" John 1:36. Paul showed how Jesus fulfilled the Passover, "*...For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us: Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, ... but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.*" **1 Corinthians 5:7-8**

This is precisely why Jesus died on the fourteenth of Nisan. He did it to fulfil the Scriptures. Paul declared that "*Christ died for our sins, according to the scriptures.*" **1 Corinthians 15:3**. Jesus had to die on the exactly the same day that the Passover lamb died in order to meet the prophetic type and to establish His identity as the true Passover Lamb.

But just as surely as Jesus died on a certain day according to the Scriptures, He also *"rose again the third day according to the scriptures."* [1 Corinthians 15:4](#). He not only was our Passover, but He was also the firstfruits! Paul ties it specifically to the resurrection. [1 Corinthians 15:20](#), *"But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept."* Again in [1 Corinthians 15:23](#), *"But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming."* No wonder Paul wrote so confidently about the resurrection on the third day according to the Scriptures. Christ rose from the dead as the firstfruits of those that slept. He was the antitype of the wave sheaf, and His resurrection took place on the very day that the wave sheaf was to be presented before the Lord.

Now we can understand why Jesus and His followers used the expression *"the third day"* more than any other to describe the resurrection. Prophecy had decreed hundreds of years earlier that He would be the fulfilment of the types and shadows surrounding the Passover observance. As the firstfruits, it was essential for Christ to be *"harvested"* and *"presented"* before the Lord *"on the morrow after the sabbath."* In the year of the crucifixion the Passover sabbath coincided with the weekly Sabbath, making it *"a high day."* [John 19:31](#). It was the next day after that Sabbath that Jesus arose from the grave on Sunday.

When Mary saw Him in the garden after His resurrection, Jesus said, *"Jesus saith unto her, Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God"* [John 20:17](#). Why did Jesus ask Mary not to hold or delay Him (as the Greek text implies)? Because Jesus had to ascend that same day to present Himself before the Father as the firstfruits from the dead.

The biblical proof of those three successive days during Passover week completely shatters the Wednesday crucifixion theory. Jesus had to die on Friday to fulfil the Scriptures concerning His death as the Passover lamb. He had to be resurrected on the third day after His death to meet the scriptural type of the firstfruits. Only three days can be involved in the time sequence or the Word of God is broken.

Friday Crucifixion Type Matches Antitype											
14 Nisan: Friday - Preparation Day				15 Nisan: Saturday - 7th day Sabbath				16 Nisan: Sunday - First day of week			
Lord's Passover				1st Day of Festival of Unleavened Bread				The Omer - Day of Firstfruits			
Matthew	Mark	Luke	John	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
26:20-27:61	14:17-15:47	22:14-23:56	13:1-19:42	27:62-27:66	16:1	23:56	---	28:1-28:15	16:1-16:13	24:1-24:53	20:1-20:23
NIGHT		DAY		NIGHT		DAY		NIGHT		DAY	
1st day unleavened bread is eaten		Passover Lamb slain in the evening (afternoon)		A High double Sabbath day				The Third Day (Luke 24:21)			
Lord's Supper Christ arrested in Gethsemane and put on trial		Crucifixion and burial before sundown Women prepare spices.		Rested in the tomb		Rested in the tomb Roman guard set by end of the day		Resurrection before sunrise. Tomb discovered empty just before sunrise			

The issues here are much deeper than most people realize. Had Christ not fulfilled every single Old Testament type and shadow pointing forward to His atoning death and resurrection, then how could He be the true Messiah. It was absolutely essential that every prophecy of the Messiah should be fulfilled in His life and death. In a special sense, the prefiguring of His victory over the grave was the capstone of hope for both Old and New Testament believers. Just as the sheaf of firstfruit grain held the promise and assurance of abundant harvest, even so our blessed Lord's glorious resurrection is the guarantee of a mighty harvest in the resurrection soon to take place. *"Because I live, ye shall live also."* [John 14:19](#).

Wednesday Crucifixion - Type Does Not Match Antitype									
Wednesday 14 Nisan		Thursday 15 Nisan		Friday 16 Nisan		Saturday 17 Nisan		Sunday 18 Nisan	
NIGHT	DAY	NIGHT	DAY	NIGHT	DAY	NIGHT	DAY	NIGHT	DAY
Lord's Passover		1st Day of Festival of Unleavened Bread A Sabbath day		Women prepare spices to anoint the body		7th day Sabbath		The Third Day? (Luke 24:21)	
				Day of Firstfruits?		Day of Firstfruits?		Day of Firstfruits?	
Crucifixion and Burial before sundown		Rested in the tomb Roman guard set?		Rested in the tomb		Resurrection late in the day before sunset		Tomb discovered to be empty at dawn	

In the light of this tremendous, undeniable evidence of the Word of God, we can positively affirm that Jesus was not, and could not have been, resurrected on the Sabbath. Neither could He have been crucified on a Wednesday or Thursday as this would have Firstfruits fall on the wrong day. With a Wednesday crucifixion and literal 72 hours in the grave, the resurrection would occur on a Saturday Sabbath, which should precisely match the day of Firstfruits (16 Nisan) but does not. With a Wednesday crucifixion, Firstfruits (16 Nisan) will fall on Friday, meaning that the resurrection should also be on Friday. It would seem to be clear that under the Wednesday crucifixion theory, Firstfruits (16 Nisan) can't be fitted in anywhere and remain harmonious with scripture. Therefore, this completely excludes the possibility of a Wednesday crucifixion and 72 hour theory that some would promote.