



שְׁאַלְוּ שְׁלוֹם יְרוּשָׁלַם יִשְׁלִיךְ אֲהַבְיָךְ *Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: May they prosper who love you. (Ps. 122:6)*

Crucifixion Week Chronology

by

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In the “Things That Make the Rabbi Go ‘Hmmm’” Department

For something like 1,500 years or more, the Church has taught us that Messiah was crucified a bit before noon on “Good Friday”, died sometime around 3:00 PM, and was resurrected at about sunrise (approximately 6:00 AM) on Easter Sunday morning. Yet Yeshua said that He would fulfill the “sign of Jonah” by being in the grave for “three days and three nights.” On every clock that I have been able to find, “three days and three nights” is a period of 72 hours, and there simply are not 72 hours between 3:00 PM on Friday and 6:00 AM on Sunday.

The Church justifies this discrepancy by (incorrectly) proposing that on the Jewish calendar, any portion of a day is counted as a full day and any portion of a night is considered a full night. Even if this were true (and it is not), between 3:00 PM on Friday and 6:00 AM on Sunday there are 39 (not 72) hours, and only two nights: Friday night and Saturday night. No matter how you trim and whittle, it is mathematically impossible to cram three days and three nights, or any portions of three days and three nights, into 39 hours.

So how can we resolve this problem? (I encourage you to be good Bereans, and actually look up and read the Scripture references and see what the Word actually says.)

Two things that we can know with absolute certainty:

1. Yeshua was totally Torah-observant. He simply would not — could not — violate the Passover. To do so would make him “a sinner” and an unsuitable sacrifice for our redemption.
2. The Scriptures are always correct! When Scripture disagrees with Scripture, or when the Scriptures are “wrong”, it is we who have arrived at the wrong interpretation.

With those two working pre-suppositions, we have a very interesting challenge in unraveling the chronology of the crucifixion week.

These are the facts as we know them.

1. Passover was given to Israel as a foreshadow of Messiah’s atoning sacrifice.

2. Passover is on 14th day of Nisan (formerly called Abib), and the lamb is to be slain “at twilight” (literally, “between the evenings”). (Exod. 12:6; Lev. 23:5)
3. The Passover Lamb is to be brought into the house for extensive examination on the 10th day of Nisan. (Exod. 12:3)
4. To fulfill the prophetic picture of Passover, Messiah had to enter Jerusalem and the Temple (be taken into the “House” — a Hebrew appellation for the Temple, from “My house shall be called a house of prayer”) on Nisan (Abib) 10 (on no other day), and be killed “between the evenings” on Nisan (Abib) 14 (on no other day).
5. The “sign of Jonah” was to be literally fulfilled: As Jonah was “in the belly of the fish” for three days and three nights (72 hours, Jonah 1:17), so Messiah was to be “in the heart of the earth” for three days and three nights (72 hours, Matthew 12:39-41). [Sorry, but that “any part of a day counts as a whole day” theory just won’t fly. “Three days and three nights” is English for a Hebrew phrase which means “three days and three nights.”]
6. First Fruits was literally fulfilled by the Resurrection (1Cor. 15:20,23), and therefore had to occur on the Day of First Fruits. But Yom HaBikkurim (the Day of First Fruits) is the first day of Shavuot (Exod. 34:22), seven weeks after Passover. However, there are two “First Fruits,” the barley first fruits and the wheat first fruits. Barley is the first of the winter planting to be harvested in Spring (Lev. 23:9-10); wheat isn’t harvested until almost two months later (Exod. 34:22).
7. On the Hebrew calendar, the day begins and ends at sunset, not at midnight. On Nisan 13 and 14, sunset occurs at approximately 6:30 (give or take a few minutes).
8. The three Synoptic Gospels confirm that Messiah’s last meal before He died was Passover (Matthew 26:17-20; Mark 14:12-16; Luke 22:7-12), yet his “trial” before Pilate occurred the next day on “the Day of Preparation”, which is the day before Passover.
9. Yeshua was in Bethany six days before Passover (“Jesus, therefore, six days before the Passover, came to Bethany where Lazarus was, whom Jesus had raised from the dead.” — John 12:1)
10. Yeshua’s teaching regarding Torah (but not the “Oral Tradition”) is consistently in line with the teaching of the Pharisees.
11. The Sadducees, who rejected all things supernatural, accepted only the five Books of Moses as inspired, and disagreed with the Pharisees on just about every issue, were in firm control of the Temple and the Priesthood, and therefore controlled the “Temple calendar.”

The known facts present a number of challenges to be resolved.

1. If the crucifixion occurred on “Good Friday” and the Resurrection occurred just before dawn on “Easter Sunday morning” there is absolutely no possible way to account for “the Sign of Jonah.” Assuming that Yeshua died shortly after 3:00 pm and was buried before the onset of the weekly Sabbath shortly before 6:30 pm, there is an absolute maximum of only 39 hours between His death and resurrection. Therefore, this interpretation must be discarded as intellectually untenable.
2. The Synoptic Gospels (Matt. 26:17, Mark 14:12, and Luke 22:7) all clearly affirm that the Talmidim prepared “the Passover” on “the first day of Unleavened Bread on which the Passover lamb had to be sacrificed.”

3. In order to fulfill the prophetic sign of the Passover, it was essential that Messiah die at exactly the same time that the Passover Lamb was being sacrificed in the Temple! If the Talmidim prepared “the Passover” on “the first day of Unleavened Bread on which the Passover lamb had to be sacrificed,” and they ate the Passover Seder that evening after sunset, how is it possible for their Paschal lambs to have been sacrificed 24 hours before those which were being sacrificed at exactly the time that Yeshua died?
4. When the Sanhedrin “led [Yeshua] from Caiaphas into the Praetorium, and it was early; and they themselves did not enter into the Praetorium so that they would not be defiled, but might eat the Passover” (John 18:28). They were Sadducees, the chief priests of the Temple, and they did not enter the Praetorium because it was their Day of Preparation for the Passover, which would begin at sunset that evening. Yet Yeshua and His Talmidim ate their Passover Seder after sunset the previous evening (about 14 hours ago); therefore, on Yeshua’s calendar His trial was clearly being conducted on Passover!
5. The Sadducees calculated First Fruits as the day after the seventh-day Sabbath (the first day of the week) that comes after Passover (Lev. 23:9-10); apparently the Pharisees held that “the sabbath” referred to in Lev. 23:10 was Passover itself, and they celebrated “First Fruits” 50 days later as the first day of Shavuot, or Pentecost (Exod. 34:22).

The only possible way to resolve these glaring discrepancies, and for the Scriptures to be accurate, is to assume that Yeshua and the Pharisees had a different calendar than the Sadducees and the Sanhedrin. Right or wrong, since they controlled the Temple, the Sadducees also controlled the Temple’s calendar.

The day-names on the Hebrew calendar were in relation to Shabbat (not names in honor of pagan gods, as is our western calendar):

- *First Day of the Week:* After Havdalah (approximately an hour after sunset) Saturday night until sunset Sunday night.
- *Second Day of the Week:* Sunday sunset to Monday sunset.
- *Third Day of the Week:* Monday sunset to Tuesday sunset.
- *Third Day Toward Shabbat:* Tuesday sunset to Wednesday sunset.
- *Second Day Toward Shabbat:* Wednesday sunset to Thursday sunset.
- *Erev Shabbat:* Thursday sunset to 18 minutes before sunset on Friday.
- *Shabbat:* from 18 minutes before sunset on Friday until three stars can be seen on Saturday night. This makes Shabbat almost 25 hours long.

So here is my interpretation (refer to the timeline chart):

Based on the known facts, I developed the following chronology of the crucifixion/resurrection week. In order to accommodate for numerous “discrepancies” in the Gospel accounts, I have been forced to assume that the Pharisees and the Sadducees were operating on different calendars. I have not been able to find anything anywhere to support that assumption. Remember that on the Hebrew calendar, the day begins and ends at sunset, not midnight.

8 Nisan - Second Day Toward Shabbat (Thursday, which began Wednesday night at sunset)

Yeshua spends the day, and possibly the next, in Bethany with Lazarus, Mary, and Martha. (John 12:1-2)

10 Nisan - Shabbat (Friday night and Saturday)

Contrary to the Christian “Palm Sunday” tradition, Messiah’s Triumphant Entry into Jerusalem occurs on Shabbat (Saturday), not Sunday (Matthew 21:1-10; Mark 11:1-10; Luke 19:29-38). The Paschal Lamb is taken into the “House” (a Hebrew euphemism for the Temple) where He is carefully observed for defects until the 14th day of the month. Yeshua spends the 10th, 11th, 12th, 13th, and 14th of Nisan in the Temple being “examined” for any spiritual defect.

11 Nisan - First Day of the Week (Saturday night and Sunday)

Yeshua cleanses the Temple (Matthew 21:12-16; Mark 11:15-18; Luke 19:45-47; John 2:13-16) and spends the day teaching in the Temple and being examined by his “family,” the people, and the priesthood.

12 Nisan - Second Day of the Week (Sunday night and Monday)

Yeshua spends the day teaching in the Temple and being examined by his “family,” the people, and the priesthood.

13 Nisan - Third Day of the Week (Monday night and Tuesday)

Pharisaic Day of Preparation for Pesach?

Messiah spends the day teaching in the Temple and being examined by his “family,” the people, and the priesthood. The Pharisaic priests perform their Paschal Sacrifice.

3:00-6:00 pm: The Pharisees sacrifice their Paschal lambs "between the evenings."

3:00-6:00 pm: Yeshua’s Talmidim prepare the Passover Seder.

14 Nisan - Third Day Toward Shabbat (Tuesday night and Wednesday)

Pharisaic Pesach?; Sadduceean Day of Preparation for Pesach?

The day of 14 Nisan begins at sunset Tuesday evening, but by Hebrew reckoning, it is now the fourth day of the week, or the Third Day Toward Shabbat.

6:30-10:30 pm: Yeshua celebrates the Pharisaic Passover Seder with his Talmidim in the evening (beginning just after sunset).

10:30-11:30 pm: Yeshua prays in the garden while the Talmidim sleep.

11:30 pm: Yeshua is arrested in the garden.

12:00-7:00 am: All night long he is “examined for defect” by the Jewish Supreme Court (Sanhedrin), the secular court of Herod, and no defect (fault) was found in him. He is declared an acceptable sacrifice by both the Sanhedrin and Herod’s court.

7:00 am: Early in the morning Yeshua is taken before the court of Rome, where no defect (fault) was found in him. He is declared an acceptable sacrifice by Rome, the highest secular court in the world.

7:30-10:00 am: Yeshua is mocked, beaten, and scourged.

10:00-11:30 am: The Roman execution squad takes him to Golgotha, where He is crucified sometime before noon.

12:00-3:00 pm: Darkness covers the land from noon until 3:00 pm (Matthew 27:45; Mark 15:33; Luke 23:44).

3:00-4:00 pm: Messiah's last few minutes. He breathes out His spirit shortly after 3:00 pm, at the same exact time that the Sadduceean Paschal Sacrifice begins in the Temple (between the evenings); the earthquake tears the temple veil from top to bottom.

4:00-5:30 pm: The execution squad confirms His death with a spear thrust. Yeshua is taken from the cross and is sealed in the tomb before sunset (which occurs approximately 6:30 pm).

15 Nisan - Second Day Toward Shabbat (Wednesday night and Thursday)

Sadduceean Passover?

6:30-10:30 pm: The Sadducees eat their Paschal Seder in confusion, wondering why the earthquake tore the Temple veil from top to bottom during their sacrifice.

6:30 pm-6:30 am: Messiah is in the tomb; the first night.

6:30 am-6:30 pm: Messiah is in the tomb; the first day.

16 Nisan - Erev Shabbat (Thursday night and Friday)

6:30 pm-6:30 am: Messiah is in the tomb; the second night.

6:30 am-6:30 pm: Messiah is in the tomb; the second day.

17 Nisan - Shabbat (Friday night and Saturday)

6:30 pm-6:30 am: Messiah is in the tomb; the third night.

6:30 am-6:30 pm: Messiah is in the tomb; the third day.

6:30-6:45 pm: The resurrection occurs almost exactly 72 hours after Messiah's burial, within minutes after sunset, just as the First Day of the Week begins. Remember that Havdalah delays the end of Shabbat by almost an hour after sunset, until the first three stars can be seen. Technically, for that hour, it is both Shabbat and the First Day of the Week.

18 Nisan - First Day of the Week (Saturday night and Sunday)

Sadduceean First Fruits (the First Day of the Week following the seventh-day Shabbat that follows Passover).

Right or wrong, and regardless of how the Omer is "correctly" counted, the Sadducees control the Temple calendar, and for them it is First Fruits.

6:30-6:45 pm: Messiah's resurrection occurs Saturday evening during Havdalah, almost exactly 72 hours after His burial, within minutes after sunset, just as the First Day of the Week (First Fruits) begins. Remember that Havdalah delays the end of Shabbat by almost an hour after sunset, until the first three stars can be seen. Technically, for that hour, it is both Shabbat and the First Day of the Week. (The "Sign of Jonah" is that Messiah will be "in the heart of the earth" for three days and three nights, so the time of His Resurrection needs to be calculated not from the time of His actual death, but rather from the time of His burial.)

6:45-7:00 pm: Within mere moments after the Resurrection, the women arrive at the tomb only a few minutes after sunset, as it was just becoming dark (perhaps only one star could be seen in the evening sky), the first possible possible

opportunity to do so that Torah permitted, and discover the Resurrection has occurred: the tomb is empty.

This chronology, and the “dual calendar” theory it represents, resolves each of the interpretive “challenges” noted:

1. The “Good Friday/Easter Sunday” theory was discarded as simply intellectually untenable.
2. It demonstrates how Yeshua and His Talmidim ate their Passover 24 hours before the Sadducees ate their Passover.
3. It demonstrates how Yeshua literally fulfilled three key Messianic prophet pictures:
 - a. The Paschal Lamb (taken into the “House” on 10 Nisan and sacrificed on 14 Nisan)
 - b. The Sign of Jonah (a full 72 hours “in the heart of the earth”)
 - c. First Fruits (the first fruits of the resurrection)

It’s certainly not perfect, but it agrees with all of Scripture and allows for a literal fulfillment of these three critical prophetic signs.

Reconciled Timeline of Messiah's Final Week, Crucifixion, and Resurrection

Hebrew Day and Date =>	Shabbat 10 Nisan		1st Day of the Week 11 Nisan		2nd Day of the Week 12 Nisan		Pharisees' Preparation Day? 3rd Day of the Week 13 Nisan		Sadduces' Preparation Day? 3rd Day Toward Shabbat 14 Nisan		2nd Day Toward Shabbat 15 Nisan		Erev Shabbat 16 Nisan		Shabbat 17 Nisan		1st Day of the Week 18 Nisan		
	DAY	NIGHT	DAY	NIGHT	DAY	NIGHT	DAY	NIGHT	DAY	NIGHT	DAY	NIGHT	DAY	NIGHT	DAY	NIGHT	DAY	NIGHT	DAY
	Friday		Saturday		Sunday		Monday		Tuesday		Wednesday		Thursday		Friday		Saturday		Sunday
	~10:00am Crucifixion †														Resurrection Within Minutes After Sunset				
	3:00pm Death										5:30pm Burial								

- 9 Nisan** Erev Shabbat. Yeshua spends the day in Bethany with Lazarus, Mary, and Martha. (John 12:1-2)
- 10 Nisan** Shabbat. Contrary to the Christian “Palm Sunday” tradition, Messiah’s Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem occurs on Shabbat. The Paschal Lamb is taken into the “House” (a Hebrew euphemism for the Temple) where He is carefully observed for defects until the 14th day of the month. Yeshua spends the 10th, 11th, 12th, 13th, and 14th of Nisan in the Temple being “examined” for any spiritual defect.
- 11 Nisan** First Day of the Week (Sunday). Messiah spends the day teaching in the Temple and being examined by his “family,” the people, and the priesthood.
- 12 Nisan** Second Day of the Week (Monday). Messiah spends the day teaching in the Temple and being examined by his “family,” the people, and the priesthood.
- 13 Nisan** Third Day of the Week (Tuesday). Pharisaic Day of Preparation for Pesach. Messiah spends the day teaching in the Temple and being examined by his “family,” the people, and the priesthood. The Pharisaic priests perform their Paschal Sacrifice. Yeshua celebrates the Pharisaic Passover Seder with his Talmidim in the evening (beginning at twilight), and is arrested approaching midnight. All night long he was “examined for defect” by the Jewish Supreme Court (Sanhedrin), the secular court of Herod, and the court of Rome, and no defect (fault) was found in him. He is declared an acceptable sacrifice.
- 14 Nisan** Fourth Day of the Week (Wednesday). Sadducean Day of Preparation for Pesach. Messiah is crucified sometime before noon. Darkness covers the land from noon until 3:00 PM. Messiah dies at 3:00 PM, at the same exact time that the Sadducean Paschal Sacrifice begins in the Temple (between the evenings), and is sealed in the tomb before sunset (approximately 6:30 PM). The Sadducees eat their Paschal Seder in confusion, as the Temple veil was torn from top to bottom during their sacrifice.
- 15 Nisan** Second Day Toward Shabbat (Thursday) — Messiah is in the tomb the first night (6:30 PM to 6:30 AM) and the first day (6:30 AM to 6:30 PM).
- 16 Nisan** Erev Shabbat (Friday) — Messiah is in the tomb the second night (6:30 PM to 6:30 AM) and the second day (6:30 AM to 6:30 PM).
- 17 Nisan** Shabbat (Saturday) — Messiah is in the tomb the third night (6:30 PM to 6:30 AM) and the third day (6:30 AM to 6:30 PM). The resurrection occurs exactly 72 hours after his burial, right at sunset, just as the First Day of the Week (First Fruits) begins.
- 18 Nisan** First Day of the Week (Saturday evening immediately after sunset). First Fruits begins. The women go to the tomb immediately after sunset, as it was just becoming dark, the first possible possible opportunity to do so that Torah permitted, and discover the resurrection has occurred.