

THE DAY OF THE CRUCIFIXION

There is not a lot of discussion or contention that Friday is, and has been for twenty centuries, regarded by the Church as the Day of Crucifixion. No more than Sunday is assumed to be the Sabbath Day over Saturday.

But we all need to be a little leery of anything that comes from the churches because those institutions are full of traditions, many of which are not founded on the truth.

Church traditions always seem to become something that we assume to be the truth because, over the centuries, they are repeated over and over again to the point that they soon become a part of our daily existence.

On that account, I think it would do us well to look into Friday being considered as the day of Crucifixion and see if it is the truth or just another religious custom.

There are really two different sets of Hebrew idioms that relate to this.

One set contains the words: *“the third day”, “until the third day”, “within three days”, “after three days”, and “in three days”.*

Common usage of these idioms during their time didn't mean **specifically a period of three full days**.

It bears reminding that the Jews reckoned that **“part”** of a day would be considered a **“full”** day. This thought becomes quite clear when years are substituted for days when determining the length of the reign of a particular king. Serving as king for part of a year made the entire year inclusive at the beginning or the end of the reign.

So, it makes good sense, based upon this usage above, to figure that if Christ died on Friday afternoon then **Friday would be considered a full day or the first day**.

Saturday would be a full day and the second day.

A resurrection sometime on Sunday would make it the third full day and this confirms our celebrating the Crucifixion on Good Friday and His Resurrection on Easter Sunday.

However, the words that Christ Himself used were;

*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.*

Throughout all of the New Testament, **this is the only place that these exact words are used** so we must give special attention to them.

Dr. Bullinger gives this explanation of this idiom;

*“But when the number of **“nights”** is stated as well as the number of **“days”**, then the expression **ceases to be an idiom, and becomes a literal statement of fact.**”*

Also, from Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown, Biblical scholars/commentators;

*“**Three days and three nights**. Probably, like the antitype Christ, Jonah was cast forth on the land on the third day (*Matthew 12:40*); **the Hebrew counting the first and third parts of days as whole 24-hour days.**”*

Why would our Lord use the occasion of Jonah in the whale's belly to describe His time in the **“heart of the earth”**? I think that we need to understand what Jonah was up to at the time.

The Israelites had thumbed their noses at our Father to the point that He decided to destroy them and use the people of Nineveh to accomplish that goal. Nineveh was an ancient Assyrian city on the banks of the Tigris River and the capitol of the Neo-Assyrian Empire.

Nineveh was the center of worship of **Ishtar**, the Babylonian goddess of fertility, and although **Dagon**, the fish-god, was worshipped by the Philistines, it was also worshipped by the Ninevites.

Jonah loved his people, the Israelites, and he knew what our Father was fixin' to do to his people; use the Ninevites to chastise and destroy them, and that's the last thing that Jonah wanted to see.

So, when our Father spoke to him, he knew what His intentions were and he thought that if he just went away it would change the situation and he could save his people from certain destruction.

Not so fast, Jonah.

Jonah jumped on board a ship and as soon as it left the harbor our Father caused a great storm to come up and the captain and all the sailors began to fear for their lives and they blamed Jonah for their predicament, and rightly so.

Rather than letting them throw him overboard Jonah decided to jump over himself.

Not so fast, Jonah.

Before he could hit the water, our Father caused a great fish to open his mouth and he swallowed Jonah, lock, stock and barrel.

If Jonah wasn't going to Nineveh on his own accord our Father would do it for him and He had the whale spit Jonah onto the shore in sight of all the residents of Nineveh, **after Jonah spent three days and three nights in the whale's belly.**

Jonah 1:17 Now the Lord had prepared a great fish to swallow up Jonah. And Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights. KJV

When Jonah stood up on the shore the Ninevites worshipped him, as they thought that the fish god, **Dagon**, had put him there. But with just a little preaching from Jonah and guidance from the Holy Spirit, every soul in that town was turned to our Father.

The point of this story is that Jonah was a "**type**" of savior, a precedent to the real Savior yet to come. And it was by Divine intervention that Jonah spent "**three days and three nights**" in the belly of that great fish.

Through the workings of the Holy Spirit, Jonah "**came forth**" from that whale's belly and converted every soul in that town, an example of what the intentions of the true Savior would be; to save the world from their sins if they just believed on Him.

Quite the reason that our Lord used that example of Jonah and the whale to prophesy His resurrection from the "heart of the earth", the grave.

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. KJV

Did our Lord just lie in that sepulcher for three days and three nights just passing time until He came out? Not at all.

1st Peter 3:18 For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit:

1st Peter 3:19 By which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison;

Every human being that had died since our Father created them, before our Lord's death on the cross, was being held awaiting final judgment. Of all the sacrifices performed during the times of the Old Testament, not the first sin was forgiven by those acts of killing animals or offering the fruits of their labors;

Hebrews 10:4 For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins.

It would take the death of Christ on the cross to forgive those sins.

That is the reason that our Lord quoted from the book of Jonah in the Old Testament. The written experiences of Jonah would be the precursor and teacher to all of us of how our Lord would implement His resurrection.

Now, if the phrase *"three days and three nights"* is indicative of **three full days and nights**, the crucifixion could not have occurred on a Friday, if He were to rise on the Sabbath. It had to happen on the preceding **Wednesday**.

The timeline of events leading up to the crucifixion are well documented within the Scriptures and to save us all a remarkable amount of time in doing the research ourselves, I'm going to use the works of Dr. Bullinger and give you a brief overview of his tremendous efforts on this subject.

His work is called **"Six Days Before the Passover"**.

(The month of Nisan covers part of March and part of April).

- **On the 6th day before the Passover, the 9th day of Nisan.**

Our Thursday sunset to Friday sunset.

- ✧ The Lord approaches Jerusalem from Jericho. *(Luke 19:1-10)*
- ✧ The Lord passes our Thursday night at the house of Zacchaeus *(Luke 19:5)*
- ✧ The Lord delivers the Parable of the Pounds. *(Luke 19:11-27)*
- ✧ The Lord proceeds towards Jerusalem. *(Luke 19:28)*
- ✧ The Lord sends two disciples for an *"ass"* and a *"colt"*. *(Matthew 21:1-7)*
- ✧ The Lord makes His first entry from Bethphage *(Not Bethany)*. *(Matthew 21:8, 9)*
- ✧ The Lord is unexpected, and they ask; *"Who is this?"* *(Matthew 21:10, 11)*
- ✧ The Lord cleanses the Temple. *(Matthew 21:12-16)*
- ✧ The Lord returns to Bethany. *(Matthew 21:17)*

- **On the 5th day before the Passover, the 10th day of Nisan.**

Our Friday sunset to Saturday sunset.

✧ The Lord passes the Sabbath at Bethany; and after sunset (on our Saturday), the first of three suppers was made, probably at the house of Lazarus, in Bethany. *(John 12:2)*

✧ At this supper the first of two anointing's took place. *(John 12:3-11)*

- **On the 4th day before the Passover, the 11th day of Nisan.**

Our Saturday sunset to Sunday sunset. (The Gentile “Palm Sunday”.)

- ✧ The second, or triumphal entry into Jerusalem. He sends two disciples for a colt. *(Mark 11:1-7)*
- ✧ The Lord starts from Bethany and is met by multitudes from Jerusalem. *(Luke 19:36-40)*
- ✧ The Lord weeps over the city. *(Luke 19:41-44)*
- ✧ The Lord enters the Temple, looks around. *(Mark 11:11).*
- ✧ The Lord returns to Bethany. *(Luke 11:11)*

- **On the 3rd day before the Passover, the 12th day of Nisan.**

Our Sunday sunset to Monday sunset.

- ✧ In the morning (our **Monday a.m.**) the Lord returns to Jerusalem. *(Matthew 21:18).*
- ✧ The Fig tree cursed. *(Matthew 21:19-22).*
- ✧ The Temple, further cleaning. *(Mark 11:15-17).*
- ✧ In the Temple, further teaching, “*Certain Greeks*”. *(John 12:20-50).*
- ✧ Opposition of rulers. *(Luke 19:47-48).*
- ✧ The Lord goes out of the city (*probably to Bethany*). *(Mark 11:19).*

- **On the 2nd day before the Passover, the 13th day of Nisan.**

Our Monday sunset to Tuesday sunset.

- ✧ In the morning (our **Tuesday a.m.**), on the way to Jerusalem, the question of the disciples about the Fig tree. *(Mark 11:20-26).*
- ✧ In Jerusalem again, in the Temple. *(Matthew 21:23-27).*
- ✧ In Jerusalem teaching parables, and questions. *(Mark 12:1-44).*
- ✧ The first great prophesy, in the Temple. *(Luke 21:5-36).*
- ✧ *(Parenthetical statement as to the Lord’s custom during this last week.)* *(Luke 21:37-38).*
- ✧ The second great prophesy on the Mount of Olives. *(Mark 13:1-37).*
- ✧ The second great prophesy continued. *(Matthew 25:1-46).*
- ✧ “*After two days is the Passover*”. *(Mark 14:1-2).*
- ✧ The Lord returns to Bethany and is present at the second supper in the house of Simon the leper. The second anointing. *(Mark 14:3-9).*

- **The day before the Passover—the 14th day of Nisan—“The Preparation Day”—Crucifixion Day.**

Our Tuesday sunset to Wednesday sunset.

- ✧ The plot of Judas Iscariot to betray the Lord. *(Mark 14:10-11).*

- ✧ The “**preparation**” for the Last Supper. *(Mark 14:12-16)*.
- ✧ ” **The even was come**”. (Our Tuesday after sunset), when the plot for the betrayal was ripe for execution. *(Mark 17)*.
- ✧ The Last Supper, commencing with the washing of the feet. *(John 18:1-20)*.
- ✧ The announcement of the betrayal & etc. *(John 18:21-30)*.
- ✧ The supper eaten, the “**New Covenant**” made, *(Jeremiah 31:31)*
- ✧ The Lamb abolished, bread and wine substituted. *(Luke 22:14-23)*.
- ✧ The first prophesy of Peter’s denials. *(John 18:31-38)*.
- ✧ The strife, who should be the greatest. *(Luke 22:24-30)*.
- ✧ The second prophesy of Peter’s denials. *(Luke 22:31-34)*.
- ✧ The final appeal to His first commission. *(Luke 22:35-38)*.
- ✧ The last discourse to the eleven, followed by His prayer. *(John 14:1—17:26)*.
- ✧ They go to Gethsemane. *(John 18:1)*.
- ✧ The third prophesy of Peter’s denials. *(Mark 14:30-31)*.
- ✧ The agony in the Garden. *(Mark 14:32-42)*.
- ✧ The apprehension of the Lord. *(Mark 14:43-50)*.
- ✧ The escape of Lazarus. *(Mark 14:51-52)*.
- ✧ The trials; continued throughout Tuesday night. *(Mark 14:53—15:19)*.
- ✧ About the sixth hour (**our Tuesday at midnight**). Pilot said “**Behold your king**”. *(John 19:14-15)*.
- ✧ Led away to be crucified. *(Mark 15:20-23)*.
- ✧ And “**let with Him**” two “**malefactors**”. *(Luke 23:32-33)*.
- ✧ Discussion with Pilate about the Inscriptions. *(John 19:19-22)*.
- ✧ The dividing of the garments. *(John 19:23-24)*.
- ✧ “**It was the third hour and they crucified Him**. (**Our Wednesday 9:00a.m.**). *(Mark 15:25-26)*.
- ✧ “**Then were there two robbers**”. *(Mark 15:27-28)*.
- ✧ The reviling of the rulers, both “**robbers**” and one “**malefactor**”. *(Mark 15:29-32)*.
- ✧ The Lord’s mother and John. *(John 19:25-27)*.
- ✧ “The sixth hour”, (**our Wednesday at Noon**), and the darkness. *(Luke 23:44-45)*.
- ✧ “The ninth hour”, (**our Wednesday 3:00p.m.**) and the expiring cry. *(John 19:28-30)*.
- ✧ Subsequent events. *(John 19:31-37)*.
- ✧ Buried in haste before sunset (**our Wednesday about 6:00p.m.**), before the “**High Day**” (the first day of the feast began}. **Passover**, (**our Wednesday sunset**). *(John 19:38-42)*.

- **The First Day of the Feast—the 15th day of Nisan—the High Day.**

Our Wednesday sunset to Thursday sunset.

THE FIRST NIGHT and THE FIRST DAY IN THE TOMB.

- **The Second Day of the Feast—the 16th day of Nisan**

Our Thursday sunset to Friday sunset.

THE SECOND NIGHT and THE SECOND DAY IN THE TOMB.

- **The Third Day of the Feast—the 17th day of Nisan—the (Weekly) Sabbath.**

Our Friday sunset to Saturday sunset.

THE THIRD NIGHT and THE THIRD DAY IN THE TOMB.

- **The First Day of the Week—the 18th day of Nisan**

Our Saturday sunset: “The Third Day” of *Matthew 16:21*, &c; not the third day of the Feast.

Why three days? Why not two or four or some other number?

The number three, in Biblical numerics, represents Divine perfection and completeness.

There are three that make up the Divine Triune; the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

The third day completes the fundamentals of creation-work.

On the third day the earth **rose up** out of the deep and fruit **rose up** out of the earth.

In the book of Numbers, our Father is giving Moses and Aaron some ordinances that the Israelites are to live by and how breaking them will make them unclean in their daily connection with our Father;

Numbers 19:11 He that toucheth the dead body of any man shall be unclean seven days.

Numbers 19:12 He shall purify himself with it on the third day, and on the seventh day he shall be clean: but if he purify not himself the third day, then the seventh day he shall not be clean.

So, there you have it. It has to do with purity.

The dates given by Dr. Bullinger are from the Hebrew calendar, translated into the Gregorian calendar, our calendar, our days of the week.

If you get nothing else from this lecture it should be that you have an excellent time-line of all the events leading up to the crucifixion in one concise group; it might give you a better sense of the overall picture of everything that happened during that week. I know that it did for me.

Wednesday or Friday. You decide.

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