

The Passion Week of Christ

“Then certain of the scribes and of the Pharisees answered, saying, Master, we would see a sign from thee. But he answered and said unto them, An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign: and there shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas: 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.” (Mat. 12:38-40)

Day (6 pm to 6 pm)	Date Month of Nisan	Old Testament Feasts and Observances	New Testament Fulfillments
Tuesday	13 th	Traditional Day of Preparation for the Passover and Feast of Unleavened Bread until Tuesday sundown, the beginning of Passover.	Jesus' disciples ask Him where he wants them to prepare the Passover. (Mat. 26:17, Mark 14:12, Luke 22:7)
(Tues. eve.) Wednesday	14 th	<p><u>Evening</u> - All the families of Israel would kill their Passover lamb, put the blood on the doorposts, and eat their feast. (Ex. 12:6-14)</p> <p><u>Night</u> – The death angel passed through Egypt, killing all the firstborn, except where the blood of the Passover was on the doors. (Ex. 12:12-13, 29-30)</p>	<p><u>Evening</u> – Jesus washes His apostle's feet. (John 13:1-20)</p> <p>Jesus eats the Paschal Meal with His apostles. (Mat. 26:20, Mark 14:17-18, Luke 22:14-16)</p> <p>Jesus points out His betrayer. (Mat. 26:21-25, Mark 14:19-21, Luke 22:21-23, John 13:21-27)</p> <p>Jesus warns the Apostles against deserting Him, and predicts Peter's denial. (Mat. 26:31-35, Mark 14:27-31, Luke 22:31-38, John 14:36-38)</p> <p>The memorial of the Lord's Supper is instituted. (Mat. 26:26-30, Mark. 14:22-26, Luke 22:17-20)</p> <p>The Upper Room Discourse. (John 13:21-14:31)</p> <p>They depart for Gethsemane, and the Intercessory Prayer. (Mat. 26:36, Mark 14:26, Luke 22:39-40, John 15 – 17)</p> <p>The agony in Gethsemane as the Apostles sleep. (Mat. 26:36-46, Mark 14:32-42, Luke 22:39-46)</p> <p><u>Night</u> – Jesus is arrested and tried before the high priest, Caiaphas, the scribes and the elders. (Mat. 26:47-68, Mark 14: 53-65, Luke 22, 66-71, John 18:12-14, 19-24)</p> <p>Peter denies Jesus. (Mat. 26:71-75, Mark 14: 69-72, Luke 22:58-62, John 18:25-27)</p>

<p>Wednesday</p>	<p>14th</p>	<p>Pharaoh calls for Moses and Aaron, setting Israel free. The Israelites spoil the Egyptians for silver, gold and raiment. (Ex. 12:31-36)</p> <p><u>Morning</u> – The traditional “Day of Preparation” before the High Day that begins the Feast of Unleavened Bread. (Luke 23:54)</p> <p><u>6 pm</u> – The first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread begins.</p>	<p><u>Morning</u> – Jesus is taken to Pontius Pilate, then to Herod, and back to Pilate. (Mat. 27:1-2, 11-14, Mark 15:1-5, Luke 23:1-12, John 18-28-37)</p> <p>Pilate offers to free one prisoner, the Jews incite the crowd to ask for Barabbas. (Mat. 27:15-16, Mark 15:6-15, Luke 23:13-25, John 18:39-40)</p> <p>Jesus is mocked and sentenced to die. He carries His cross through the streets of Jerusalem and arrives at Calvary. (Mat. 27:27-31, Mark 15:16-22, Luke 23:26-33, John 19:17)</p> <p><u>Noon</u> – Jesus is nailed to the cross and remains there for three hours as the earth is covered in darkness. The soldiers cast lots for his garments. (Mat. 27:33-56, Mark 15:33-41, Luke 23: 44-49, John 17: 18-30)</p> <p><u>3 pm until 6 pm</u> – Joseph of Arimathea, receives permission from Pilate to take the body from the cross and - along with Nicodemus - lay it in a nearby, unused sepulcher. The Roman Centurion pierces the side of Christ, blood and water spill out. (Mat. 27:57-61, Mark 15:42-47, Luke 23:50-55, John 19:38-42)</p> <p><u>6 pm</u> – Jesus is wrapped in linen and laid in the tomb just as the High Day Sabbath begins. (Mat. 27:57, Mark 15:42, Luke 23:54)</p>
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<p>(Wed. eve.) Thursday</p>	<p>15th</p>	<p>The first day of the seven-day Feast of Unleavened Bread, a “high day” or special Sabbath, a “holy convocation.” (Ex. 12:15-20, 13:6-10, 23:15, Lev. 23:6-8)</p>	<p>The High Day is observed from sundown Wednesday night until sundown Thursday night. No servile work is done as the day is “hallowed.” (John 19:31)</p> <p>Jesus remains in the tomb the night of Wednesday and the day of Thursday – one night, one day.</p>
<p>(Thurs. eve.) Friday</p>	<p>16th</p>	<p>The traditional day of preparation for the weekly Sabbath.</p>	<p>The women buy burial spices to anoint Jesus’ body ‘when the Sabbath was past,’ i.e. the Passover Sabbath, not the weekly Sabbath, which was the next day. (Mark 16:1)</p> <p>The chief priests and Pharisees meet with Pilate and persuade him to give them guards to watch the tomb until the third day, to prevent the disciples from stealing the body. The watch is given and the tomb is sealed. (Mat. 27:62*-65)</p> <p>Jesus remains in the tomb the night of Thursday and the day of Friday – two nights and two days.</p>
<p>(Fri. eve.) Saturday</p>	<p>17th</p>	<p>The weekly Sabbath Day. (Ex. 16:25-26, 20:8-11, 31:13-15, Lev. 23:3)</p> <p><u>Sunset</u> – The Feast of Firstfruits begins.</p>	<p>The weekly Sabbath is kept. (Luke 23:56)</p> <p>Jesus remains in the tomb the night of Friday and the day of Saturday – three nights and three days.</p> <p>After sunset on Nisan 17th, our Lord rose from the dead.</p>
<p>Sunday</p>	<p>18th</p>	<p>The Feast of Firstfruits, on the first day of the week during the seven-day Feast of Unleavened Bread. (Lev. 23:10-11)</p>	<p><u>Just before daybreak</u> – The women arrive at the tomb and find it empty. The stone is rolled away and an angel announces that Christ is already risen. (Mat. 28:1-10, Mark 16:2-11, Luke 24:1-9, John 20:1)</p>

*** Closing note:** Some confusion has come about as the result of an errant comma. In the King James Version, Matthew 27:62 reads -

“Now the next day, that followed the day of the preparation, the chief priests and Pharisees came together unto Pilate.”

Of course, the day “that followed the day of preparation” is the Sabbath Day. It seems very odd that Matthew would refer to the Sabbath in such a manner. The Sabbath is always referred to by that specific title – The Sabbath. In fact, Matthew uses the word “Sabbath” ten times in his gospel, never referring to it as “the day after the day of preparation.”

This odd bit of phraseology has helped support the notion that Jesus died on a Friday, and the day after His death was the Sabbath. Then, He rose on Sunday morning. While some would argue that part of Friday, all of Saturday, and part of Sunday constitutes three days, it certainly does not equal three nights.

Jesus’ words in Matthew 12:40 would therefore be an error.

Plus, if the above rendering is correct, then the chief priests and Pharisees profaned the Sabbath by leaving their homes on the day of rest and meeting with unclean Gentiles. Knowing how closely their movements were being observed, and the overflow of Jews in Jerusalem for the feast, it hardly seems probable that they would have risked their collective reputations in this way.

And, Jesus had only been in the grave one night and part of one day if He died on Friday and the priests met with Pilate on Saturday. Given their concern, “Sir, we remember that that deceiver said, while he was yet alive, After three days I will rise again” (Mat. 27:63), they would surely have waited until the first day of the week to go to Pilate. They still would have had a day to spare, not being aware that He was going to rise on Sunday. They were counting three days, and Saturday constituted the first of those.

All of this confusion can easily be cleared up by simply moving the comma in Matthew 27:62. Remember that there is no punctuation in the Greek language. The translators added the punctuation and their grammatical decisions were influenced by their assumptions. Read the following version of Matthew’s words. No words or word order have changed. We simply moved the comma.

“Now the next day that followed, the day of the preparation, the chief priests and Pharisees came together unto Pilate.”

Now we see that the day that followed Christ’s burial was the day of preparation, and the priests were breaking no law at all when they met with Pilate. Jesus would have been in the tomb for two nights, and they were talking in the midst of the second day. The third day would be Saturday, the Sabbath, and the Jews were unable to guard the tomb against robbers on that day; they had to observe the Sabbath. That’s why it was so urgent that

Pilate post a Roman guard on the tomb, the Romans not being bound by the Sabbath requirements.

Meanwhile, the apostles, considered by the Jewish leaders as liars following a deceiver, might well have broken the Sabbath and stolen the body. Then, when the Jews were free to walk about on Saturday evening or Sunday morning, the grave would be empty and the preaching of Christ's resurrection would commence, "so the last error shall be worse than the first." (Mat. 27:64b)

Of course, when the women arrived at the tomb early in the morning, it was indeed empty, but not due to any deception.

- Jesus died on Wednesday afternoon, the 14th of Nisan, which was also the day of preparation for the "high day" Sabbath.
- He was buried on Thursday (Wed. evening) the 15th, as the Unleavened Bread "high day" began.
- The next day was Friday the 16th, the day of preparation for the weekly Sabbath.
- The next day was Saturday the 17th, the Sabbath day.
- At sundown on Saturday night, the beginning of the first day of the week, Jesus had been in the tomb 72 hours, three days and nights, and He rose from the grave.
- Sunday morning, while it was still dark, the women came to the tomb and found it empty.

Jesus told the truth!