

Resurrection Sunday 2023

Are you prepared?

This is a question I will keep asking. It is a question you should be asking yourself. Do you have a vital relationship with God the Father? Do you walk by faith, claiming promises or appealing to the essence of God?

Hebrews 4:1 Therefore, let us fear if, while a promise remains of entering His rest, any one of you may seem to have come short of it.

Hebrews 4:2 For indeed we have had good news preached to us, just as they also; but the word they heard did not profit them, because it was not united by faith in those who heard.

First, only a believer is going to understand doctrine and be able to use faith to apply it. Believe in Jesus Christ as your savior. Then you to depend (faith) on the Holy Spirit for His teaching ministry. As L. S. Chafer said, He has to reveal His word to you.

Jesus whole life was lived to arrive at the cross in perfect righteousness. It was there that He was judged for the sins of the world. As a result He died spiritually and once judgment was complete, He died physically. The celebration of Resurrection Sunday, called “Easter” in pagan culture, celebrates Jesus’ victory in the Angelic Conflict. He lived a perfect life, was judged for the sins of the whole world, died and was resurrected.

We are currently studying Christian doctrine concerned with the work of Jesus on the cross. Redemption. Propitiation. Reconciliation.

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But there is a part of this that is hotly disputed even among conservative Christians. That is, on what day of the week was Jesus crucified? The popular choices are Friday, Wednesday and Thursday.

Each view has a tendency to highlight a single Scripture to prove the point. It usually starts with Matthew 12:40. The problem is that there are apparent flaws in each argument. I have sided with each of the views at different times. I was brought up as a Catholic, so the Friday crucifixion was taught. When I came to Spring Valley Bible Church Herman taught the Wednesday crucifixion. I began to think that there were issues with both the Friday and Wednesday crucifixion so I began to think maybe the Thursday view was correct. But, as I will show, there are apparent flaws in the logic of each view. I say apparent flaw because one of the views is correct and the “apparent” flaw has a valid explanation. It is a puzzle. One of the views is correct, but each view has an apparent flaw. I only want to know the truth. I don’t care which it is. I suspect from something I read recently, that Robby Dean has been in the same situation. In the following quote, I am cutting into a lesson he gave on this previously, “That question always comes up, and I spent a lot of years in my life—let’s say decades—trying to demonstrate that it was not on a Friday. But again and again, the evidence just kept coming back that you just don’t have enough time in the week to fit the chronology; the terminology doesn’t fit.” So it appears that Robby Dean sides with the Friday view, Herman with the Wednesday view and John Hintz with the Thursday view. All believers who study and teach. This highlights the fact that no one knows everything about the Bible. There are still issues unresolved. Yet, all agree on the key doctrines which are not affected by any of the different views.

From a salvation viewpoint, it really doesn’t matter in which day of the week Jesus was crucified and died. The important point is the events

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themselves: crucifixion (the work of Jesus Christ on the cross on behalf of mankind) and resurrection.

And the important point of this lesson is two-fold. First, it is to cause you to think about Scripture. Think. Didn't Herman emphasize that, thinking about Scripture? What do you believe and why do you believe it? The goal is not an attempt to convince you of the rightness of one viewpoint or another. See how different viewpoints use Scripture. Secondly, to aid in the thinking process, I want to identify key verses that set criteria that must be met by the correct view. So, please do not be offended if I go through arguments that criticize the view that you take. I am only looking for truth. Like many doctrines we believe today like the deity of Jesus Christ, the Trinity and others, it took time for theologians to get it right. It is perhaps also a study in how believers can have differing views on non-essential details and still sit down and have a Coca-Cola together.

I used a book that deals with the "Chronological Aspects of the Life of Christ" by Harold Hoehner. He was a revered professor at Dallas Theological Seminary. He personally favors the Friday crucifixion. In reading his book it seems evident to me that this belief is embedded in his arguments.

Wednesday crucifixion

Harold Hoener starts with an examination of the Wednesday crucifixion. He states the view:

"Those who hold the Wednesday crucifixion view believe that Jesus died around sunset on Wednesday, and He arose exactly seventy-two hours later. The most well-known exponent of this view of recent days is Scroggie. He states that there are two main reasons that support the Wednesday crucifixion date."

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“The primary support for this view is the literal interpretation of Matthew 12:40 where Jesus states: “For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the whale, so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.” The proponents of this view feel that although it is recognized that the Jews reckoned any part of a day as a whole day, when nights are mentioned as well as days, then it ceases to be an idiom. Therefore, one must accept it literally as three whole days. There are not three *whole* days between Friday evening and Sunday morning.”

In other words, Hoener is pointing out the difference between the Wednesday view and the Friday view.

“The second support for a Wednesday crucifixion is that in the Friday view there are too many events (Scroggie lists twenty) between Christ’s death at 3 p.m. and His burial at 6 p.m. Scroggie proposes that Jesus was buried on Wednesday evening, the body remained in the tomb during Thursday, Nisan 15, the Passover Sabbath, and then on Friday, the day between the Sabbaths, the body was embalmed.”

Here is a list of events following the Wednesday crucifixion from Herman’s notes which starts a week prior to the resurrection. The most important dates are Nisan 10, the Triumphal entry typologically related to the selection of the lamb to be killed on Nisan 14 and the Passover day of rest on Nisan 15.

Each year Nisan 10/Nisan 14/Nisan 15 might fall on a different day of the week. But the Hebrew days of the month remain constant as far as the events occur.

Friday: begins 6 PM on Thursday to 6 PM on Friday: Nisan 9.

1. Jesus Christ ate supper in Bethany about 4 PM Friday: John 12:1-9; Matthew 26:6ff; Mark 14:3-9.

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Saturday: (6 PM Friday to 6 PM Saturday). This was the weekly Sabbath. (Nisan 10)

1. Preparation for the Triumphal entry; late morning. Luke 19:29ff.
2. Triumphal entry, late afternoon John 12:12-19.

Sunday: (6PM Saturday to 6: PM Sunday) (Nisan 11)

1. Cursing of the fig tree, in the morning hours. Mark 11:12ff.
2. Cleansing of the Temple in late afternoon. Luke 19:45-46; Matthew 21:12-13; Mark 11:15-17.

Monday: (6PM Sunday to 6 PM Monday) (Nisan 12)

1. Jesus Christ delivers the Prophetic discourse in the morning. Mark 11:20.
2. Teaching in the Temple, late morning. Mark 11:27.
3. Jesus Christ delivers the Olivet discourse, in early afternoon. Matthew 24-25.

Tuesday: (6 PM Monday to 6 PM Tuesday) (Nisan 13)

1. Preparation for the Passover, in late afternoon.

Wednesday: (begins Tuesday evening at 6 PM to Wednesday evening 6 PM). (Nisan 14)

1. Last supper, also called Passover - around 6 PM Tuesday Evening. High Day—special Passover –John 19:31.
2. Jesus Christ washes the feet of the disciples John 13.
3. Jesus Christ gives NEW COMMANDMENT John 13:34.
4. Jesus Christ gives the upper room discourse in John 13-15.

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5. Jesus introduces the first Communion Matt. 26:26ff.
6. Judas leaves to betray Jesus Christ for 30 pieces of silver.
7. Jesus tells of the sending of the Holy Spirit John 14:16ff.
8. The Lord's Prayer John 17.
9. Jesus Christ moves to Gethsemane, later Tuesday night. Matthew 26:36; John 18:1ff.
10. Jesus Christ is betrayed by a kiss, from Judas; arrested and taken to His 6 trials John 18:2ff.
 - A. Before Annas - John 18:13.
 - B. Before Caiaphas - John 18: 24.
 - C. Before the Sanhedrin - Matt. 27:1.
 - D. Before Pilate - John 18:25.
 - E. Before Herod - Luke 22:7.
 - F. Before Pilate - John 19:14.
11. Jesus Christ is taken to be Crucified at 9 AM Wednesday morning Matt.27; John 19.
12. Jesus Christ is taken from the cross at 3 PM Wednesday afternoon.
13. Jesus Christ is buried by 6 PM. John 19; Luke 23 Resurrection Fulfillment of Jesus Christ words that in Matt. 12:40 (3 days and 3 nights).

Jesus Christ rose from the grave sometime after 6 PM Saturday.

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Wednesday evening 6 PM to Thursday Morning at 6 AM 1st night.
(Nisan 15)

Thursday Morning 6 AM to Thursday Evening 6 PM 1st day. (Nisan 16)

Thursday Evening 6 PM to Friday morning 6 AM 2nd night.

Friday Morning 6 AM to Friday evening 6 PM 2nd day. (Nisan 17)

Friday Evening 6 PM to Saturday morning 6 AM 3rd night.

Saturday Morning 6 AM to Saturday evening 6 PM 3rd day Jesus Christ rose from the grave sometime after 6 PM Saturday. (Nisan 18)

Here is a summary of Hoener's critique of this view.

1. Jesus rose on the 3rd day, not the 4th day. The logic is that 72 hours represents 3 days ($24 \times 3 = 72$). So if Jesus was in the ground 72 hours, then it only follows that He arose on the 4th day. "However, if one looks at other New Testament passages referring to Christ's resurrection, it will be immediately obvious that Jesus rose on the third day and not on the fourth (cf. Matt. 16:21; 17:23; 20:19; 27:64; Luke 9:22; 18:33; 24:7, 21, 46; John 2:19-22; Acts 10:40; 1 Cor. 15:4)."

2. Jesus rose on Sunday, not Saturday. "...if one takes Matthew 12:40 as referring to a seventy-two hour period, Christ must have risen no later than 6 p.m. on Saturday evening. Otherwise, He would have risen on the fourth day. But Christians celebrate it on the first day of the week (Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 16:2) and not on the Sabbath.

3. This point deals with the number of events that occurred between the crucifixion and the resurrection. It is merely defending the Friday view by saying those events could have fit into the Friday view.

4. The Triumphal entry, in this view, occurred on the Sabbath. This would have violated the Sabbath. "This is unlikely for two reasons: (1)

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Since Jesus was riding on an animal, He would have been breaking the Mosaic Law which states that even animals were not to work on the Sabbath (Deut. 5:14). (2) Since the people were cutting down branches from the trees (Matt. 21:8; Mark 11:8), they would have also violated the Law (cf. Deut. 5:14; Num. 15:32-36). Certainly if Jesus had violated the Sabbath and caused others to do so, it seems that His enemies would have mentioned something of this during the Passion Week.”

Thursday Crucifixion

“As with the previous view, those who hold to a Thursday crucifixion date base their opinion on Matthew 12:40. They think the Friday view has three days but only two nights.

Outline of the calendar events:

1. “Sunday, Nisan 10 triumphal entry would fulfill the Old Testament typology of a Passover lamb selected, namely Christ Himself.”
2. “Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday Jesus appeared in Jerusalem several times and had the Last Supper on Wednesday evening.”
3. “Thursday, Nisan 14, Christ the Passover Lamb was slain.”
4. “The next day, Nisan 15, was the first day of Unleavened Bread, and this was a day of holy convocation on which no one was to work (Lev. 23:7). Hence, it is concluded that this day of rest is a Sabbath. Thus, when Nisan 15 fell on any other day than the weekly Sabbath, it was called the Sabbath of the Passover. It is felt that John 19:31, which reads: “The day of the Sabbath was a high day” was not the weekly Sabbath but the Passover Sabbath. In the year of our Lord was crucified, the Passover Sabbath (Nisan 15) fell on Friday, and then the weekly Sabbath fell on the next day. Also, the advocates point out that the Passover Sabbath on Friday followed immediately by the regular weekly Sabbath is supported

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by Matthew 28:1. One will notice in the Greek text the plural form of the word “Sabbath” is used, and thus it should be translated “at the end of the Sabbath.”

5. Christ was resurrected early Sunday morning, and thus He was in the grave three full nights and two full days and a part of the third day.

The critique:

1. Hoener says, “First, it is doubted that anyone would hold to either a Wednesday or Thursday crucifixion date if it were not for Matthew 12:40.” This appears to be a frustration for Hoener because it is the one verse that is a problem for the Friday view. I do not see this as a flaw in the Thursday view.

2. Hoener in this point is merely saying while Sunday is OK for the triumphal entry, it could also have been Monday. I do not see this as a flaw in the Thursday view. The point of this discussion is that Nisan 10 is the date on which the Passover lamb for each family is chosen. Commentators use typology to correlate Nisan 10 with the triumphal entry in which the Jewish crowd chooses Jesus. Nisan 14 is the day of the crucifixion and Nisan 15 is the day of rest associated with the Passover.

3. “Third, the argument that since Nisan 15 is a holy convocation on which no one works and thus conclude that it was a Shabbat is a non sequitur. There is no evidence for this anywhere. This is a creation of those who hold this theory only to fit their theory. Furthermore, to support their theory that John 19:31 (“the day of the Sabbath was great”) points to a Passover Sabbath rather than a weekly Sabbath is unlikely. The Friday crucifixion better explains this by seeing that Nisan 15 fell on the weekly Sabbath, and hence in the year of Christ's crucifixion, that weekly Sabbath was indeed great. Further, to think there is support for the Thursday crucifixion in the plural form of the Sabbath in Matthew

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28:1 (lit. "at the end of the Sabbaths"), which would indicate that the Passover Sabbath (Friday) and the weekly Sabbath (Saturday) were back to back is untenable. The term Sabbath is frequently (one-third of all of its New Testament occurrences) in the plural form in the New Testament when only one day is in view. For example, in Matthew 12:1-12 both the singular and the plural forms are used (cf. esp. v. 5),¹⁰

“There is then no real case for a Passover Sabbath which occurred the day before the regular weekly Sabbath.”

4. “Fourth, the Thursday view is forced to make the expression “the day of preparation (παρασκευη) refer to the preparations for the Passover rather than its normal usage referring to Friday, the day of preparation for the Sabbath. Those who hold to the Thursday view feel that John 19:14 supports their thesis. It states; “The day of preparation for the Passover” and would indicate the day before the Passover rather than Friday specifically. Hence, according to their view, “the day of preparation” was Thursday and not Friday. But this is unacceptable on three grounds: (1) It necessitates the unnatural meaning of παρασκευη. Both the Scriptures (Matt 27:62; Mark 15:242; Luke 23:54; John 19:14, 31, 42) and Josephus indicate the day of preparation is the day before the weekly Sabbaths, namely, Friday. Even Westcott, who holds to a Thursday crucifixion, concedes that the normal use of the phrase refers to Friday. (2) Mark 15:42 exclusively points to “the day of preparation” as being Friday when it states: “and when the evening had come, because it was the day of preparation” as being Friday when it states: “and when the evening had come, because it was the day of preparation, that is, the day before the Sabbath.” In reading Mark, one sees that he is speaking of the regular weekly Sabbath, and hence the παρασκευη refers to Friday. (3) The statement “the day of preparation for the Passover” in John 19:14 seems to have reference to the Friday in the Passover week rather than the day before the Passover. The reason for this is that there is no evidence that

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the day of preparation for the Passover is the day before the Passover; while there is evidence for παρασκευη as being Friday. This is also substantiated in the immediate context where it specifically states that the bodies should be taken off the cross on the day of preparation so that they would not remain on the cross on the Sabbath, and they put Jesus in the tomb on the “Jewish day of preparation” (John 19:31, 42). Certainly in these two verses παρασκευη is Friday, and the Sabbath refers to the weekly Sabbath.

Friday Crucifixion

“Statement of the view. Jesus predicted that He would die and be raised on the third day (Matt. 16:21; Mark 8:31; Luke 9:22). When one reads these events in the Gospels, one clearly receives the impression that Jesus rose on the third day. Jesus' body was laid in the tomb on the evening of the day of preparation (Friday), the day before the Sabbath (Matt. 27:62; 28:1; Mark 15:42; Luke 23:54, 56; John 19:31, 42). The women returned home and rested on the Sabbath (Saturday, Luke 23:56). Early on the first day of the week (Sunday), they went to the tomb (Matt. 28:1; Mark 16:1-2; Luke 24:1; John 20: 1) which was empty. Furthermore, on the same day He arose from the grave, Jesus walked with two disciples on the road to Emmaus (Luke 24:13), and they told Him that their Master was crucified and "now it is the third day since this occurred" (Luke 24:21). This, then, points to His crucifixion as having occurred on Friday. With all this evidence, the only plausible conclusion is that Jesus was crucified on Friday and rose on Sunday.”

“This view also fits well with Old Testament typology. On Monday, Nisan 10, Jesus presented Himself as the Paschal lamb at the triumphal entry. On Nisan 14 He was sacrificed as the Paschal lamb (1 Cor. 5:7),

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and on Nisan 16 His resurrection was a type of the offering of First Fruits (1 Cor. 15:23).”

“In conclusion then, with the most natural reading of the New Testament, one would conclude that Jesus was crucified on Friday and was resurrected on Sunday. This is also the common consensus of the Church Fathers and scholars throughout church.”

“Having looked at the New Testament evidence, one must ask whether or not this was standard Jewish thinking. If one looks in both the Old Testament and Rabbinic literature, one sees that it would agree with the New Testament evidence. Therefore, the next piece of evidence to be examined is the Old Testament. There are several Old Testament references which show that a part of a day is equivalent to the whole day. In Genesis 42:17 Joseph incarcerated his brothers for three days, and then in verse 18 he spoke to them on the third day, and (from the context) released them on that day. In 1 Kings 20:29 Israel and Syria camped opposite each other for seven days, and on the seventh day they began to battle each other. In 2 Chronicles 10:5 Rehoboam stated that the people of Israel were to return to him in/after (cf. LXX) three days, and in verse 12 Jeroboam and the people came to Rehoboam on the third day. In Esther 4:16 Esther asks the Jews, "Do not eat or drink for three days, night or day," and then she would go in to the king, and in 5:1 Esther went in to the king on the third day. Finally, in I Samuel 30:12 an abandoned Egyptian servant had not eaten bread or drunk water for three days and three nights, and in verse 13 he states that his master left him behind three days ago. Thus, the Old Testament gives the picture that the expressions "three days," "the third day," and "three days and three nights" are used to signify the same period of time.”

There are some key verses that provide criteria in which to help decide which view is more acceptable. However, these verses are subject to

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different interpretations. And there in lies the issue. How do you interpret a passage?

Remember, a passage must be interpreted using language (vocabulary, syntax), history/culture.

I. How do you count time? Matthew 12:40.

Matthew 12:38 Then some of the scribes and Pharisees said to Him, “Teacher, we want to see a sign from You.”

Matthew 12:39 But He answered and said to them, “An evil and adulterous generation craves for a sign; and yet no sign will be given to it but the sign of Jonah the prophet;

Matthew 12:40 for just as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the sea monster, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.

The key phrase is “three days and three nights. The different interpretations of this phrase align with the three difference views.

A. Wednesday Crucifixion. Three days and three nights is literal, meaning that Jesus was in the ground for exactly 72 hours. This aligns with the Wednesday view. But note, this view does not start counting time when Jesus is interred. He is interred on Wednesday day before the supposed the Passover Sabbath (being different than the normal weekly Sabbath). It also does not count the time on Sunday morning prior to Jesus resurrection. It only counts full days and full nights.

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B. Thursday Crucifixion. Three days and three nights is an idiom allowing any part of a day to be counted as a full day and any part of a night to be counted as a full night. This aligns with the Thursday view.

C. Friday Crucifixion. Three days and three nights is an idiom which equates to “three days” which is shown to be used in the Old Testament. The issue becomes, does three days and three night equal three days. This aligns with the Friday view.

Harold Hoehner seems to be frustrated with this passage. He accepts the Friday view. “In fact, if one did not have Matthew 12:40, it is unlikely that the Wednesday theory would have been suggested.” All the views depend on how one interprets Matthew 12:40.

II. Vocabulary

A. What is a high Sabbath? Assumptions are made in each view as to what this means. There is no place I know of in the Old Testament nor in the New Testament that explains what this means. Is it the day of rest associated with the Passover or does it refer to the Passover day of rest and the normal Sabbath coinciding on the same day?

B. What does Sabbaths (plural) mean when compared to Sabbath (singular). Is there a difference? If not then is there any passage in the Bible that explains this?

III. Sabbath Laws

Sabbath laws come into play for the Wednesday crucifixion. The reason is that this view has the triumphal entry on a Sabbath. Hence, at least two laws would come into play as Hoener points out.

**Deuteronomy 5:12 ‘Observe the sabbath day
to keep it holy, as the Lord your God
commanded you.**

Deuteronomy 5:13 Six days you shall labor and do all your work,

Deuteronomy 5:14 but the seventh day is a sabbath of the Lord your God; in it you shall not do any work, you or your son or your daughter or your male servant or your female servant or your ox or your donkey or any of your cattle or your sojourner who stays with you, so that your male servant and your female servant may rest as well as you.

Numbers 15:32 Now while the sons of Israel were in the wilderness, they found a man gathering wood on the sabbath day.

Numbers 15:33 Those who found him gathering wood brought him to Moses and Aaron and to all the congregation;

Numbers 15:34 and they put him in custody because it had not been declared what should be done to him.

Numbers 15:35 Then the Lord said to Moses, "The man shall surely be put to death; all the congregation shall stone him with stones outside the camp."

IV. History

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I don't have a good reference to explain how the "Easter" celebration got started. In other words, was the Friday view the earliest and held by early church fathers? Hoener suggests that. If so, when were the other views developed?

V. Year of Crucifixion. There is another limiting factor. This deals with the year Jesus was crucified. In different years, the Passover fell on different days. Historical events documented in the Gospels would limit which years Jesus was crucified on Wednesday, Thursday or Friday. Harold Hoener shows that for the Friday crucifixion, it would have had to have been in 33 AD. I have not done the work to see what years would work for a Wednesday or Thursday crucifixion. There is a computer tool available on the internet that may help with this.
<https://www.hebcal.com/hebcal>

VI. Earthquake

There is a suggestion that geology indicates there was a great earthquake in AD 33 in Jerusalem. In that year Nisan 14, the day of the crucifixion, was on Friday.

Matthew 28:1 Now after the Sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came to look at the grave.

Matthew 28:2 And behold, a severe earthquake had occurred, for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven and came and rolled away the stone and sat upon it.

Here is what Robby Dean says:

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“Dr. Steve Austin, who I’ve been corresponding with this last week because, as you who know him know he loves seismic events. He’s a geologist for those of you who don’t know. He has his Ph.D. in geology from—I believe it’s—Penn State.”

“He has been working for several years on projects in Israel where he is digging around in the layers of mud—they’re solid now—by the Dead Sea, because seismic activity would leave evidence in the strata along the Dead Sea.”

“He’s confirmed there’s evidence of an earthquake that occurred in AD 31. You can tell where that’s centered by looking at the data, and it’s centered down by the Dead Sea. But there is another one that occurs after that, probably AD 33, that shows this great seismic activity, but it wasn’t centered at the Dead Sea, it’s centered in Jerusalem. This is this quake at the crucifixion that Matthew describes.”