

Timeline of Christ's Death, Burial & Resurrection

by Phil Wagner

Background facts

- This analysis is focused solely on the period beginning with the Passover and ending on the day of the resurrection of Jesus.
- Jerusalem standard time zone (IST) is UTC+3. US standard time zones range from UTC-8 to UTC- 5. For example, Central standard time is UTC-6. Jerusalem's "clock" is **eight hours ahead** of Houston time.
- All references to times, days of week, evenings or mornings are using Jerusalem time, unless otherwise noted.
- The periods where light is prevalent are referred to in scripture as days. The periods where darkness is prevalent are referred to as nights.
- The day of Passover is the first day of the seven-day feast of Unleavened bread. (See Exodus 13:6-10)
- The Passover feast and subsequent days of Unleavened Bread begin around sunset and end around sunset the next day, seven days total.
- The Passover feast always begins on the 14th day of the first month (Abib, or Nisan) of the Jewish calendar at evening, regardless of the day of week. (See Leviticus 23:5, Deuteronomy 16:1)
- This timeline is pieced together from the four Gospels in the Bible (Matthew, Mark, Luke, John.) The four Gospels each provide details that fit together to provide the essential information.
- All scripture verses are from the King James Version of the Bible.

Timeline promised by Jesus – Three days, three nights

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.

Mark 8:31 And he began to teach them, that the Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected of the elders, and of the chief priests, and scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again.

John 2:19 Jesus answered and said unto them, Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.

Preparations

There are two preparations mentioned in the Gospel accounts of this particular feast of Unleavened Bread. The first refers to the preparation of the Passover celebration, up until the evening when Passover ends.

Matthew 26:17-18 Now the first day of the feast of unleavened bread the disciples came to Jesus, saying unto him, Where wilt thou that we prepare for thee to eat the passover? (18) And he said, Go into the city to such a man, and say unto him, The Master saith, My time is at hand; I will keep the passover at thy house with my disciples.

Mark 14:12 And the first day of unleavened bread, when they killed the passover, his disciples said unto him, Where wilt thou that we go and prepare that thou mayest eat the passover?

Luke 22:7-8 Then came the day of unleavened bread, when the passover must be killed. (8) And he sent Peter and John, saying, Go and prepare us the passover, that we may eat.

Joh 19:14 And it was the preparation of the passover, and about the sixth hour: and he saith unto the Jews, Behold your King! This is the sixth hour of the day of the Passover, just before Jesus was crucified..

The second preparation, the preparation of the Sabbath, will be mentioned later.

Finding the reference point

This timeline was pieced together starting with the time of Jesus' resurrection as the end point, and working backward to the beginning of the Passover, using only Scriptures as the source of information. The end point is the first day of the week early Sunday morning. The beginning point of the "Three days and three nights" is the day and time of the death and burial of Jesus. Let's work through this now from evening to evening of each day.

The Passover

On this particular year, after the daytime preparations mentioned earlier, the Passover began on the evening of the fourteenth day of the first month, Wednesday evening, when Jesus sat down with his twelve disciples to celebrate with a supper.

Matthew 26:19-20 And the disciples did as Jesus had appointed them; and they made ready the passover. (20) Now when the even was come, he sat down with the twelve.

Mark 14:17-18 And in the evening he cometh with the twelve. (18) And as they sat and did eat, Jesus said, Verily I say unto you, One of you which eateth with me shall betray me.

John 13:2 And supper being ended, the devil having now put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray him;

Luke 22:14-15 And when the hour was come, he sat down, and the twelve apostles with him. (15) And he said unto them, With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer:

Jesus was persecuted and tortured all night long after the mob, led by Judas Iscariot, came to lead Him to His "trial".

Luke 22:63-65 And the men that held Jesus mocked him, and smote him. (64) And when they had blindfolded him, they struck him on the face, and asked him, saying, Prophecy, who is it that smote thee? (65) And many other things blasphemously spake they against him.

The Passover continued the next morning (Thursday) until evening.

Luke 22:66 And as soon as it was day, the elders of the people and the chief priests and the scribes came together, and led him into their council, saying,

John 18:28 Then led they Jesus from Caiaphas unto the hall of judgment: and it was early; and they themselves went not into the judgment hall, lest they should be defiled; but that they might eat the passover.

Matthew 27:1-2 When the morning was come, all the chief priests and elders of the people took counsel against Jesus to put him to death: (2) And when they had bound him, they led him away, and delivered him to Pontius Pilate the governor.

Mark 15:1 And straightway in the morning the chief priests held a consultation with the elders and scribes and the whole council, and bound Jesus, and carried him away, and delivered him to Pilate.

The death of Jesus (Day 1)

Jesus died in the afternoon after six hours on the cross, and stayed on the cross until about evening, the end of the Passover.

Mark 15:25 And it was the third hour, and they crucified him.

John 19:17-18 And he bearing his cross went forth into a place called the place of a skull, which is called in the Hebrew Golgotha: (18) Where they crucified him, and two other with him, on either side one, and Jesus in the midst.

Matthew 27:45-46 Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land unto the ninth hour. (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 hast thou forsaken me?

Luke 23:44-46 And it was about the sixth hour, and there was a darkness over all the earth until the ninth hour. (45) And the sun was darkened, and the veil of the temple was rent in the midst. (46) And when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, he said, Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit: and having said thus, he gave up the ghost.

The end of the Passover. The beginning of the day of preparation for the high Sabbath (Night 1/Day 2)

John 19:31-32 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. (32) Then came the soldiers, and brake the legs of the first, and of the other which was crucified with him.

Matthew 27:57-61 When the even was come, there came a rich man of Arimathaea, named Joseph, who also himself was Jesus' disciple: (58) He went to Pilate, and begged the body of Jesus. Then Pilate commanded the body to be delivered. (59) And when Joseph had taken the body, he wrapped it in a clean linen cloth, (60) And laid it in his own new tomb, which he had hewn out in the rock: and he rolled a great stone to the door of the sepulchre, and departed. (61) And there was Mary Magdalene, and the other Mary, sitting over against the sepulchre.

Luke 23:52-54 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, and the sabbath drew on.

John 19:42 There laid they Jesus therefore because of the Jews' preparation day; for the sepulchre was nigh at hand.

Mark 15:42-43 And now when the even was come, because it was the preparation, that is, the day before the sabbath, (43) Joseph of Arimathaea, an honourable counsellor, which also waited for the kingdom of God, came, and went in boldly unto Pilate, and craved the body of Jesus.

The continuation of the day of preparation for the high Sabbath (Day 2)

The next day, Friday, continued the day of preparation for the Sabbath until evening.

Matthew 27:62-64 Now the next day, that followed the day of the preparation, 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.

Pilate granted the watch that the Jews requested. The watch lasted two nights.

The Sabbath (Night 2/Day 3)

Nothing happened at the tomb on Saturday, the Sabbath

Luke 23:55-56 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.

The resurrection! (The end of Night 3. The fulfilment of “three days, three nights”)

Jesus was resurrected at the beginning of the first day of the week, Sunday. This is the end of the third day and the third night.

Mark 16:1-4 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? (4) And when they looked, they saw that the stone was rolled away: for it was very great.

Matthew 28:1-2 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. (2) And, behold, there was a great earthquake: for the angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it.

Mark 16:9-10 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. (10) And she went and told them that had been with him, as they mourned and wept.

Luke 24:1-3 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. (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.

John 20:1 The first day of the week cometh Mary Magdalene early, when it was yet dark, unto the sepulchre, and seeth the stone taken away from the sepulchre.

Reflection

The religious leaders in Jerusalem were obsessed with killing Jesus, so much so, that killing him took priority over the Passover and Unleavened Bread feast. Ironically, their obsession facilitated the fulfillment of the Passover and our “unleavening”.

Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us: (1 Corinthians 5:7)

Linear Chronology

Wed evening – Thu evening		Thu evening – Fri evening		Fri evening – Sat evening		Sat evening – Sun morning	
Wednesday Night	Thursday Day 1	Thursday Night 1	Friday Day 2	Friday Night 2	Saturday Day 3	Saturday Night 3	Sunday Morning
Supper	Crucifixion, death & burial		Tomb guarded	Tomb guarded	Tomb guarded	Tomb guarded	Resurrection!
Passover		Day of Sabbath preparation		Sabbath		First day of week	