## Did Jesus Die on Friday or Wednesday?

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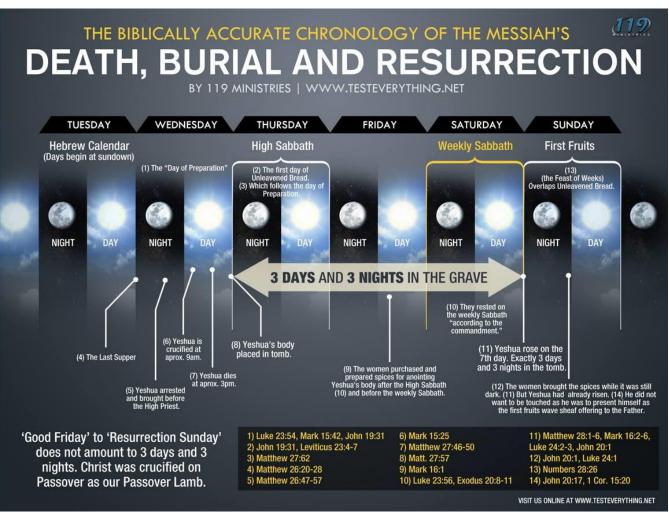
**Question:** Jesus said, "Just as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the sea monster, so shall the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth" (Matt. 12:40). **If He died on Friday, how could He be in the grave for 3 days and 3 nights?** 

**Answer:** Christians have celebrated "Good Friday" as the traditional day Jesus died. But He could not have stayed in the grave 3 days and <u>3 nights</u> if He died on Friday and was raised on Sunday. Some scholars teach that partial days are counted as a day (which would account for the 3 days) but this would allow for only 2 nights. He had to be crucified on Wednesday not Friday.

The tradition of a Friday crucifixion comes from John 19:31 which says, "The Jews therefore, because it was the day of preparation, so that the bodies should not remain on the cross on the Sabbath (for that Sabbath was a high day), asked Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away." This was a special Sabbath on Wednesday because of the Passover, not the weekly Sabbath on Saturday.

The Jews counted 12 hours in a day. Jesus said, "Are there not twelve hours in the day?" (John 11:9). Hebrew calendar—days begin at sundown (not midnight—night first, then day). Jesus was crucified on Wednesday 3 pm and placed in tomb just before 6 pm. It looked like this.

Jesus died	Wednesday	Thursday	Thursday	Friday	Friday	Saturday
Wednesday	6 pm till	6 am till	6 pm till	6 am till	6 pm till	61 am till
3 pm.	Thursday	Thursday	Friday	Friday	Saturday	Saturday
Placed in	6 am	6 pm	6 am	6 pm	6 am	6 pm
tomb 6 pm.	Night 1	Day 1	Night 2	Day 2	Night 3	Day 3



Jesus was resurrected before dawn on Sunday "after three days" (Mark 8:31). Mary Magdalene came to the tomb on early Sunday, while it was still dark and He was already resurrected (John 20:1). Jesus had been in the tomb 3 full days and nights.

**Chuck Swindoll** says, "Jesus was not crucified on Friday, but on Wednesday. We need to think through our position. There is no way it could be 3 nights if He died on Friday." (radio broadcast 4/2/96)

**Finis Dake** writes: "However, the next day was a 'high day', a special Sabbath of the feast (John 19:31), not the ordinary weekly Sabbath, which was two days later. He was put in the grave Wednesday just before sunset and was resurrected at the end of Saturday at sunset. (*Dake's Annotated Reference Bible*)

**M. R. DeHaan** says: "It is my conviction that Christ was crucified on Wednesday, and arose right after sundown on Saturday night, which was the beginning of the first day in the Jewish calendar. In no other way can we account for three days and three nights. 'Good Friday' is an unscriptural tradition only." (508 Answers to Bible Questions, p.55)

**Oliver B. Greene** writes: "Was He crucified on the day known as Good Friday? If so, how could He have been in the tomb for three days and three nights? Passover that year began on Thursday, therefore Jesus was crucified on Wednesday, not Friday. The Jewish day began at six o'clock in the evening, so the body of Jesus was placed in the tomb just before six o'clock on Wednesday evening. (*The Gospel of Matthew*, pp. 301-303)

**Dr. Howard Estep** states: Luke 24:21 is a strong argument for a Wednesday crucifixion. If the Friday crucifixion is held, it is impossible for the first day of the week to be "the third day since these things were done."

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