

The Confusion of the Crucifixion, Part 1

I. Some people don't like celebrating Easter because it's been so tainted and adulterated by the culture.

- It is true there are certain celebrations that are completely acceptable for one person to hold and others to ignore.
- However, regardless of whether you celebrate or not, it must be wholly and completely so that the Lord be honored and glorified. There's no room for selfishness here.
 - Romans 14:5-6
 - In the end, your opinions about the celebration of the Resurrection must be because you believe that God is abundantly pleased with your participation or abstinence in that celebration.
- As we learned in our introductory episodes, God is a God of celebrations, memorials, and holy days. Though the Jewish people were given the majority of those, the New Testament church has a fair share just for them as well. To argue *against* holy celebrations is to stand against a divinely purposed and extremely valuable experience.

II. Some people don't like to celebrate Easter because they don't believe that it is, like Christmas, celebrated during the correct time of year.

- It's very possible that Christians can't know for certain what day of the year Jesus was born, but we can know with great certainty the day, time, and year of His death. Therefore, it wouldn't be difficult to declare with certainty the actual date that Jesus was raised from the dead.

III. Some people don't like to celebrate Good Friday because they don't believe Christ was crucified on Friday.

- Before grappling with this struggle, we have to acknowledge our own blindspots.
 - Most of us aren't Jews. In addition, we Gentiles don't truly understand all of the Jewish traditions the way we should. This adds some hurdles to our understanding of the course of events because the details God includes to help us navigate the Passion Week are foreign to us.
 - We have our own cherished traditions. I am confident to assert that the vast majority of you have observed Good Friday as the day of our Lord's death since you were very little. I've done the same. But though we may have our traditions and habits, we need to be willing to push those aside in light of the biblical material. Our traditions should no more supersede God's Word than our own opinions.
- The main argument for the Friday crucifixion comes from Mark 15:42, "*And now when the even was come, because it was the preparation, that is, the day before the sabbath.*" And then the passage goes on to describe Jesus being taken from the cross. This means that Jesus was crucified the day before the Sabbath, and everyone knows the Jewish Sabbath is on Saturday. That's why the majority of Christians observe the crucifixion on Friday.
 - Mark 15:42 says that Jesus was crucified on the day of preparation. Now, with that evidence alone, it would be easy to assume that Jesus was crucified during the day on Friday, the day of Preparation before the weekend Sabbath.
 - But, there are a number of issues with that, and it's those issues that will be the focus of the remainder of this episode and the next.

- **The Jews often had more than one Sabbath a week.**
 - Depending on the year, there were the 50 to 54 weekly Sabbaths, but there were also 2 sabbaths in the feast of Unleavened Bread, there's the sabbath of Pentecost, 1 Feast of Trumpets, 1 Day of Atonement, and 2 sabbaths during the Feast of Tabernacles. That's over 60 Sabbaths in one year!
 - If we assume that the Mark 15:42 Sabbath is Saturday, then a Friday Crucifixion makes partial sense. But what if there were another Sabbath that week that landed before Saturday?
 - The seven day Feast of Unleavened Bread is preceded by the Feast of the Passover, which was celebrated in remembrance of the Israelites being delivered from Egypt. This Passover falls on the 14th of Nissan and the Feast of Unleavened Bread officially started on the 15th. You can read more about these two events starting in Leviticus 23:5.
 - Nisan 15 can fall on multiple days just like December 25th can fall on any day of the week. But regardless of on what day it falls, the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread is considered a High Sabbath, called simply a High Day. As a High Sabbath, it too is preceded by its own day of preparation which would have been the 14th, also the Passover.
 - John 19:31
- **Jesus gave us the timeline of 3 days and 3 nights.**
 - Matthew 12:40
 - Jesus made it very clear that he would be "in the heart of the earth" for three days and three nights. And I know it may be weird to say, but it's completely appropriate to take Christ literally.
 - We know for certain that Jesus was raised from the dead on Sunday, the first day of the week. In order to have been in the heart of the earth for three days and three nights, Jesus would have to have been buried during the day on Thursday.
 - Matthew and John were very precise that Jesus raised before the daytime hours on Sunday. Had He risen after the sunrise, He would have been in the heart of the earth for four days and three nights.
 - Three days and three nights — in that order. His first day in the grave started it and His last night in the grave ended it.
- **Jesus also gave us the timeline of three *total* days.**
 - John 2:19-21; Mark 8:31
 - Jesus was not in the grave the entire day on Thursday nor every minute of the third night.
 - Technically, Jesus was in the grave all day on Friday and Saturday. That's two full days. But He was only in the grave half the day on Thursday and half the evening on Sunday (that would be our Saturday night).
 - Those two half days equal the third day.
 - This is consistent with the fact that Jesus said He would raise up His temple *in* three days.
 - This counting method counts each daytime period as one day, with the resurrection taking place "*after three days.*" The day was not over when Jesus died in the afternoon, so this begins with the day of the crucifixion.
 - Therefore, a Thursday crucifixion also fits with Jesus being raised up "*after three days.*"
 - The Bible clearly says that Jesus rose before the morning hours on Sunday. And Jesus said that he would be in the earth for three days and nights. The math is clear, the Jewish "Thursday" would have to be the day. There are not enough days or nights if Christ were crucified on Friday.