

# ***The Good Friday Myth!***

**TIME:** 7 PM **TITLE:** *The Good Friday Myth*  
**TEXT:** Gospels  
**THEME:** Good Friday Crucifixion  
**THRUST:** The Authenticity of Jesus' Words.

## INTRODUCTION

According to tradition, Jesus was crucified on a Friday;  
hence, the Friday before Easter is termed *Good Friday*.  
Dr. M. R. DeHann, author of the book *Jonah, Fact or Fiction*  
called Good Friday the *Good Friday Myth*.  
He was convinced it was a myth because:

- It was a long-established *tradition*, and
- It didn't match-up with Jesus' words about Himself.

We need to refresh our understanding about Christian tradition;  
and we need to exercise caution,  
whenever an activity or belief in Christianity becomes *traditional*.  
*Tradition* must be examined very closely *by* Scripture  
and always be in agreement *with* Scripture.  
If the *Good Friday* timing is true,  
it will stand the test of Scripture.  
If, on the other hand, it does not,  
then we must regard it as a *myth*!  
Christian tradition that is *not* rooted in Scripture is susceptible to error.

We have a *tradition*, called Communion,  
that has lasted for almost 2000 years,  
and *that* tradition is rooted in Jesus' words,  
"This do in remembrance of me, until I come" ~Luke 22:19.  
In implementing that tradition in most churches,  
another tradition took root, that is,  
Communion is on a specific Sunday of the month.  
*That* tradition is *not* rooted in Scripture.  
Yet, there are some that would give the *second* the same weight as the *first*!

So too, the *tradition* we call Good Friday.  
The question is raised:  
*Does it really matter when Jesus was Crucified?*  
The reasoning goes something like this:

“After all, what is important is that He *was* crucified;  
and, of even greater importance is the fact of His resurrection.”

In many areas, that reasoning would suffice, but not here!

Why? Because *this* historical event  
was what Jesus used to **prove** His authority!

How did this *tradition/myth* begin?

There are three areas of misunderstanding that have cemented the *Good Friday* belief:

**First**, all the incidents that are recorded in the Bible about Jesus' last week  
have taken place in the time between Palm Sunday  
and the crucifixion and need at least five days,  
or more information to make them fit in a smaller time frame.

The bottom line here, is that we are faced with  
using our understanding of the timeframe of the *events* of those last few days,  
or the time frame referenced by the words of Jesus,  
we'll look at that in more detail in our third reason.

**Second**, the Scripture states in **Lk 23:54**:

“And it was the preparation day, and the Sabbath was about to begin...”

Much the same is stated in **Mk 15:42-43**:

<sup>42</sup>And when evening had already come, because it was the preparation day, that is, the  
day before the Sabbath, <sup>43</sup>Joseph of Arimathea came, a prominent member of the  
Council, who himself was waiting for the Kingdom of God; and he gathered up courage  
and went in before Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus.

In these two passages,

we have a clear statement that the day following the crucifixion was a Sabbath day.

But **nowhere** is it stated that it was the **regular weekly Sabbath**.

That then is the **second error**:

an *assumption* was made that the *Sabbath* referred to  
was the **weekly Sabbath** – i.e. Sat.

**Third**, not enough weight has been given to Jesus' words  
regarding His own death and burial.

This *third* error, although more subtle than the first two,  
is far more damaging.

We have seen in other studies,

the great length Jesus went to  
in fulfilling prophecies concerning Himself,  
**literally** fulfilling them,  
so that there would be no mistakes  
regarding His person and His purpose!

Many of our modern Bibles print the Words of Jesus in red – rightly so,  
but we are often guilty of not give those words  
their proper weight and authority in our lives.

So, What was it that Jesus said?

In a debate with the Pharisees over signs:

An evil and adulterous generation craves for a sign; yet no sign shall be given to it  
but the sign of Jonah the prophet; for **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 ~Matthew 12:39-40 (emphasis added).

**As Jonah ... so the Son of Man.**

**Three** days and **Three** nights – both occurrences  
are underscored in the Greek.

I don't recall a controversy over Jonah's time  
in the belly of the whale.

To understand *why* there is a controversy over Jesus' time in the tomb  
we need to better understand the Jewish and Biblical concept of *time*.

The Jewish 24-hour day was broken down into two parts:  
12 hours of light-*day* and 12 hours of dark-*night*.

**Genesis 1:5** And God called the light day, and the darkness He called night  
Jesus said in **John 11:9** are there not 12 hours in the day? If anyone walks in the day,  
he does not stumble...

The Jewish 24 hour day was from *sundown* - *sundown*.

**Gen. 1:5** And there was evening and there was morning, one day.

This method of reckoning time is still practiced by Orthodox Jews.

*Sundown* – *Sundown* unlike  
the Greek or Western method of *midnight* - *midnight*.

So, according to Jesus:

Three light periods of 12 hours equal 36 hours,  
plus, three dark periods of 12 hours equal 36 hours...  
36 plus 36 equals 72. Therefore, 72 hours!

*Our tradition* says approximately 40 hours plus or minus.

Because of the time frame of those numerous events  
and because the day following the crucifixion was the Sabbath,  
it is *traditionally* believed that  
Jesus was *crucified* on Friday and  
arose slightly before sunrise on Sunday morning.

There is no way to get 72 hours into that span of time.

This problem was evidently solved by information from the Jewish Talmud  
(a compilation of Tradition & Scripture that came  
years after the death and resurrection of Jesus)  
stating that Rabbis considered *part* of a day as a *whole* day.

That left everything in a neat package  
except for Jesus' words – and since those words  
were not to be explained literally,  
they were taken in a figurative sense.

Let's follow the reasoning of this tradition:

Jesus was crucified on Friday at about 9 AM  
and died about 3 PM.

The Jewish day began at Sunset - let's say about 6 PM.

In that space of time several things had to happen:

- Permission had to be given to break the legs of prisoners in order to hasten their death; but, Jesus was already dead.
  - Soldiers had pierced His side.
- After death was established, Joseph of Arimathea gained audience with Pilate to take Jesus' body for burial. Mark 15 tells us Joseph of Arimathea also purchased supplies to bury Jesus with.
- Then they had to prepare Jesus' body for burial and finally, transport His body and bury Him.

**John 19:42** Therefore on account of the Jewish day of preparation, **because the tomb was nearby**, they laid Jesus there. (Emphasis added)

All in the space of less than three hours!

No phones to make arrangements

No cars to make transportation easier

All of that to get in a few minutes to satisfy Talmudic tradition  
that part of that Friday constituted a whole day.

Are we honestly prepared to state that is what Jesus meant  
to constitute one of His *days* in death?

It doesn't fit... especially when we see Jesus literally fulfilling the prophecies concerning Himself.

It does not fit either when we use the *day/night* descriptions of Jesus' time in the tomb.

The most we can come up with is two dark periods and one light period.

Now, if we were to be very generous and consider a few minutes of light on Friday evening... we would *still* only have two of each.

The reason there are only two dark periods is because the Bible states that Mary came to the tomb while it was still dark – and He was gone!

Evidently then, Jesus rose, not at *Sunup* on that first day of the week, but sometime shortly after *sundown* on Saturday. Remember, we are dealing with what *Jesus said!* **three days and three nights... 72 Hours.**

If you backtrack 72 hours from Saturday, 6 PM, you arrive at **Wednesday 6 PM.**

But our problem of time or events still isn't solved. We must also deal with the problem of the *Sabbath*. Remember, nowhere does it state that this was a *regular weekly Sabbath*. In fact, quite to the contrary:

**John 19:14** 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. (Emphasis added). **“That Sabbath was a high day” ... a special Sabbath!** v.14 tells us what that *high day* was: “the day of preparation” was preparation for the **Passover...**”

The *Passover Sabbath* was the most celebrated *Sabbath* in the calendar of Israel. So, here is the scene if we use Jesus' words instead of tradition.



- ◆ The 13<sup>th</sup> day of that month was the day of preparation:
- ✧ While the Priests were slaying the lambs in the Temple,

Our Great High Priest was offering Himself  
as the Lamb of God for the sins of the World!



- ◆ On the 14<sup>th</sup> day of the first month – Passover.  
In that particular year, if our premises are correct,  
from *Wednesday* sundown until *Thursday* sundown.  
The ***Passover Sabbath*** was a remembrance  
of Israel's deliverance from Egypt (a type of the world)  
and was to be eaten in the ***evening***... (see Exodus 12).  
Remember *evening* and *morning* constitute a day.

- ✧ While the people were partaking of the Passover lamb;  
The Lamb of God was, in the words of  
**Hebrews 2:9** *tasting death for every man.*



- ◆ On the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month... In that particular year  
From Thursday evening - Friday evening...  
The ***Unleavened Bread Sabbath*** was celebrated.  
Leaven (yeast) is a picture of sin!

- ✧ While the priests & people  
were celebrating the Feast of *Unleavened Bread*,  
*He who knew no sin* paid the ultimate penalty for sin... **death!**



- ◆ On the 16<sup>th</sup> day of that month...  
Friday evening - Saturday evening ...  
was the regular weekly *Sabbath* during which  
God's people rested from all their labors.

- ✧ While the priests and people were resting from their labor,  
The Son of Man was securing our Eternal rest!

Three *Sabbath days!*

Dr. M. R. DeHann stated: Had Jesus been crucified in any other year than the year in which He was crucified, these three Sabbaths would not have occurred in that particular order. ~meaning that one of them could have shared the regular weekly Sabbath or not at all.

Three Sabbath days.

It looks good from the standpoint of logic,  
but will it pass the test of Scripture?

*In the end of the Sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first of the week...*

~Matthew 28:1.

The word translated *Sabbath* in that verse  
is actually in the plural and should read:  
*Now in the end of the Sabbath days...*  
But that is not all... there is more:



- ◆ On the 17<sup>th</sup> day of the month,  
Saturday evening - Sunday evening, (the first day of the week)  
the Jewish people celebrated the *Feast of First fruits*.  
A celebration in anticipation of the coming harvest:

It was an acknowledgment that the land and all its products were the gift of Jehovah to Israel, and in thankfulness for His bounty, all the first fruits were offered to Him. ~I.S.B.E. (International Standard Bible Encyclopedia)

- ✧ So, while the people celebrated a future harvest  
Jesus Celebrated the finished work of redemption!

**1 Corinthians 15:20** But *now* Christ has been raised from the dead, the *first fruits* of those who are asleep. (Emphasis added)

These are the things we are to consider  
when we remember His death.  
As He instructed us His disciples *This do in remembrance of me...*

Let's briefly review:

- ☼ On the 13<sup>th</sup> - Our Tuesday:  
Jesus and His disciples celebrated the Passover early.  
At the conclusion of that meal,  
Jesus and His disciples went to the garden of Gethsemane for prayer...  
it was there that Judas led the soldiers  
to find Him and then led Him away to be scourged and tried.
- ☼ On the 14<sup>th</sup> - Our Wednesday:
  - \*Sometime around mid-morning Jesus was Crucified.
  - \*In mid-afternoon, Jesus gave His life as the Lamb of God while the Passover lambs were being slain by the Priests.
  - \**Before* evening, Jesus was buried in a borrowed tomb, evidently because they were pressed for time!
- ☼ On the 15<sup>th</sup> - Our Thursday evening:  
The Jewish community celebrated the Feast of Unleavened Bread...

☛ On the 16<sup>th</sup> - our Friday evening: The regular weekly Sabbath was in effect...

☛ On the 17<sup>th</sup> - our Saturday evening:

The *Feast of First fruits began*:

Sometime, shortly after Sundown,

Jesus rose from the grave!

Three days and three nights have been *literally* fulfilled!

**Mt 28:1** As it began to dawn (while it was still dark) towards the first *day* of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to see the tomb.

In all probability,

they made their way to the tomb

to anoint the body of their Lord

and found their Resurrected Savior!

They came as soon as the Sabbath days were over.

By Law they couldn't come any sooner!

Three days and three nights – Jesus' final *proof*

of Who He is and What He came to do!

Surely, He wouldn't have left this open for conjecture!

What is of greater importance:

The tradition of men, i.e. Good Friday?

Or the Words of Jesus?

Jesus told the Scribes and Pharisees

**John 2:19** Destroy this temple and in three days I'll raise it up.

He told His disciples ... *I'll rise again*.

**Special Music: *Rise Again***

## CONCLUSION: COMMUNION

Have you met the two Mary's Resurrected Savior?

He instructed His disciples

to remember His death until He comes again - As King of kings!

Part of our *tradition*? Yes!

Substantiated by Scripture? Yes!

**Bread** - *Body that is broken...*

**Cup** - *Blood that was shed...*

*This do in remembrance of me, 'till I come!*

**“He is Lord ... He is Lord,  
He has risen from the dead and He is Lord,  
Every knee shall bow, every tongue confess,  
That Jesus Christ is Lord!”**