

WHAT DAY OF THE WEEK WAS CHRIST CRUCIFIED?

FRIDAY?

THURSDAY?

WEDNESDAY?

Dr. Bob C. Green

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A Brief Study of Scripture

By

Dr. Bob C Green

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PREFACE

As a young preacher, I often struggled with certain inconsistencies that I had found in the teachings that I had received at church. Please do not misunderstand. I am grateful for all of the positive and correct teachings that I received as a child and teenage preacher. Due to the godly influence of my parents and the sound preaching of the Bible by our pastors, the Lord saved me at a very early age, called me into the ministry of His Word, and instilled in my heart a love for HIM, for the Bible and for the Holy Spirit.

One of the matters that concerned me was the fact that most mainline churches, including ours, taught their members to believe that Christ had died on “Good Friday.” Though I must admit that my knowledge of the Scripture was very limited, I could not reconcile this teaching with what I read in the Bible. I am grateful to the Lord for having established my faith in His Holy Word. In my heart I knew that if there was a problem, it was not with the Word of God.

My young faith was strengthened and I was definitely encouraged when I heard a scholarly Biblical explanation of the facts related to Christ’s death, burial and resurrection. It thrilled my heart to realize that there was someone with sufficient knowledge of the Old and New Testament Scripture to present an accurate account of the Lord’s death, burial and resurrection. I was challenged to a more thorough study of the Bible by the teaching of Evangelist Ed Vallowe. A portion of what will be presented from the Scripture in this study was gleaned from Dr. Vallowe’s exposition of the Bible.

Though I have been greatly blessed in the past fifty-three years as HE has graciously allowed me to minister His

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Word, I have also been blessed by the constant discovery of truth that has come by continual study of the Bible. The Holy Spirit has opened my understanding to so much truth that needed to be applied and practiced in my life. The most important fact in this hour is that "Christ died for our sins according to the Scripture, that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day... in order to provide the greatest need and the greatest blessing to mankind, eternal salvation.

Jesus died for you and for me. HE lives today. Do you know Him?

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THE QUESTION

ACCORDING TO THE SCRIPTURE, ON WHICH DAY OF THE WEEK WAS OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST CRUCIFIED AND BURIED? ON WHICH DAY OF THE WEEK DID HE COME FORTH FROM THE GRAVE?

Many non-believers attempt to discredit the Scriptures using the confusion about which days of the week were involved in the death, burial, and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is critical that we use the Bible to correct the erroneous teachings and traditions that have resulted from inaccurate interpretation of the Scriptures. Please understand that I recognize that many of those that have accepted the traditions taught concerning His death, burial and resurrection are indeed sincere believers.

What the Bible teaches about the death, burial and resurrection of Christ is foundational to our Christian faith and practice. It is also the foundation for our salvation. The Bible as God's holy, divinely inspired and preserved Word is a "precise" book, and every word is faithful and true. There is grave danger when the "traditions of men" supplant or negate the Word of God. The Lord warned His disciples of this problem. Any time there is a difference between what the Bible says and what is taught by the "tradition of men", the Bible should be believed and followed. Bible truth does not contradict Bible truth.

What seems to be a contradiction can often be resolved by simply "comparing Scripture with Scripture." The teaching that Christ died on Friday is an example of "religious tradition" contradicting Scripture. If Christ were to remain in the tomb three days and three nights, as He said (Matthew

12:40), how could He possibly have died on Friday before resurrection Sunday?

In our study we will deal with the strongest argument presented in favor of His death on Friday. This is found in John 19:31 and will be explained in good time.

Biblically, the Lord Jesus Christ died on what we call Wednesday. Before dismissing this statement please take time to review the study of this little booklet; comparing Scripture with Scripture. For centuries it has been taught that Christ died on Friday. The main line denominations of Christianity have accepted this teaching which has roots in the traditions of Rome. It is strange that in many other issues it is demanded that the teachings be clear and consistent, but in this matter many have been willing to accept a teaching that in reality contradicts the very words of the Savior. Let us begin by considering the following verses:

*“Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you **the gospel** which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that **Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures**; And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures; And that he was seen of Cephas,...”* I Corinthians 15:1-5a

*“...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.”* Matthew 12:40

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In the first few verses of I Corinthians 15, the Apostle Paul says that that Christ died according to the Scripture, that he was buried and that he rose again according to the Scripture. It is for us to know just what the Scriptures say concerning his death, his burial and his resurrection. It should be remembered that the "Scriptures" to which Paul referred were the Scriptures of the Old Testament. The New Testament did not exist as of yet or might we say, "it was being written."

A. JESUS AND JONAH AND THE SCRIPTURES...

In Matthew 12:40 the Lord Jesus says to his disciples that he would be **three days and three nights** in the heart of the earth. If Jesus had intended to say three days or only a portion of three days and one night, that is what he would have said. It is not difficult to believe that Jesus always said what he meant and meant what he said.

It is interesting to note that **Jesus** in the process of stating how long he would be in the tomb **confirms the validity of Jonah and his experience in the belly of the whale**. If one denies the fact that Jonah was a prophet and that God had prepared a big fish to swallow him, he/she must also deny Jesus Christ. Jesus said Jonah was a prophet and used his experience in the belly of the whale to prefigure his own experience with death and the grave. Whoa be to the person who would suggest Jesus was deceived, delusional or just telling a bold faced lie. **If Jesus had said Jonah swallowed a whale...We would be obligated to believe it, because He is the truth... John 14:6.** With that said, let us proceed to see the significance of Jonah's experience.

Jonah had been commanded to preach repentance to the people of Nineveh. He rebelled against God and refused to preach, as a Hebrew, to the people of Nineveh, a gentile city. He attempted to flee from the presence of God by boarding a ship bound for Tarshish. The mariners soon realized that the Lord had sent a fierce storm because of Jonah's sin. The sailors feared for their lives and cast Jonah into the sea. The Bible then states that the "sea ceased from her raging" (Jonah 1:15). In verse 17 of Jonah Chapter One it is also stated, "...the Lord had prepared great fish to swallow up Jonah."

Jonah finally accepted God's will and prayed. The whale "vomited out Jonah upon the dry land." He ultimately went and preached to the people of Nineveh. They repented and God withheld judgment.

In Matthew 12:38 we are told that, "certain of the scribes and Pharisees answered, saying, Master, we would see a sign from thee." Jesus responded to their demand for a sign by saying that the only sign that would be given was "the sign of Jonah the prophet."

*"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.**"* Matthew 12:40

Three days and three nights would add up to seventy-two hours total. Unless these words are "spiritualized" and given some fabricated meaning, Jesus must have been indicating that he expected to spend three periods of daylight of 12 hours each and three periods of darkness, also 12 hours each. Three (days) plus three (nights) equals six. Six times 12 (hrs) equals seventy-two. The word "day" that is used by the Lord is used in other passages to refer to the hours of daylight of a day. The word "night" is used elsewhere to refer to the hours of darkness. According to the Lord, Jonah spent three days and three nights, or a total of seventy-two hours in the whale's belly. Since the Lord stated that he would spend three days and three nights in the heart of the earth, we can believe that he was to remain in the grave seventy-two hours.

To know when Christ died, we only have to subtract seventy-two hours from the time he came forth from the grave. We know from the testimony of Matthew that he was already risen "very early in the morning", because "it began

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to dawn toward the first day of the week” when Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to see the sepulchre (Matthew 28:1). If Christ came forth from the tomb at 6:00 A.M. on Sunday morning then we subtract seventy-two hours from that moment. If he died Friday afternoon at 3:00 P.M., then we can figure this way:

TRADITIONAL THINKING	BIBLE TRUTH/JEWISH DAYS
Saturday night = 12 hours	Saturday (12 hrs of light, 12 hours of darkness) = 24 hours
Saturday/day = 12 hours	Friday (12 hrs of light, 12 hours of darkness) = 24 hrs
Friday night = 12 hours	Thursday (12 hrs of light, 12 hours of darkness) = 24 hrs
Friday/day = 3 hours	(This takes us back to Wednesday @ 6:00 PM)
A grand total of 39 hours	Total = 72 hrs

Following Traditional Thinking (see table) we lack 33 hours. According to Scripture (see table), we are right on target.

It is possible that Jesus did not really mean that he would be **three days and three nights in the grave... really?**

B. OLD TESTAMENT TYPES, THE FEASTS OF THE LORD

Not only do we have the words of Jesus, we also have the “types” found in the Old Testament. The Passover Feast is one such type of Christ. Remember, a type is a figure or symbol of something. These types portrayed Christ in some way or fashion.

We must take into consideration that the only “Scripture” Paul had was the Scripture found in the Old Testament. When he stated in I Corinthians that Christ died, was buried and rose again according to the Scripture he must have been referring to the Scripture of the Old Testament. He, of course, could not be referring to the New Testament Scripture.

In the Old Testament book of Leviticus, chapter 23, we are given a list of the “feasts of the Lord” that were to be observed by Israel. The feasts are also called “holy convocations.” God commanded Israel to do no “work” on those days.

*Six days shall work be done: but the seventh day is the sabbath of rest, **an holy convocation**; ye shall do no work therein...”*

Leviticus 23: 3

Please note that in verse three, the sabbath is called a holy convocation. This is important because this fact will contribute to the understanding that **there can be more than one “sabbath” in a week; more than just the seventh day sabbath or Saturday.**

A. The Passover is the first of the feasts of the Lord. It signaled the beginning of the Jewish religious year.