

# CHRIST WAS KILLED ON A WEDNESDAY

One of the interesting incidents of old which God Almighty used to illustrate salient divine truths to prepare man for the glorious reward of eternal life in His everlasting Kingdom is the story of Jonah. It is more than a story of obedience and God's mercy on repentant sinners. The story foretells the entombment and miraculous resurrection of Jesus the true Messiah mankind must look to for salvation. It also clearly attests to the authenticity of God's word contained in the Holy Bible.

## Three Days, Three Nights

Jesus Christ himself left no room for doubt as to the duration of his entombment. The account in Matthew 12:38-40 states as follows: "Then certain of the Scribes and of the Pharisees answered saying, we would a sign from thee. But he answered and said unto them. An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of the prophet Jonah: For as Jonah 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."

In the account just read, Jesus Christ said he will be in the grave for three days and three nights, which is 72 hours. His words in regard to the period of his entombment must fulfil to the letter. (Matthew 24:35) It should be pointed out that Jehovah being a God of exactness does all His things on schedule. For example the Jews left Egypt on the "self-same day" that completed the 430 years God had promised they will stay there. (Exodus 12:40,41; Galatians 3:17) Jesus Christ was born into the world "at the fullness of time" (Galatians 4:4) And he could only be killed at the time appointed by God. (John 7:8) The period Christ will stay in the grave must also be as the Lord had foretold.

It should be noted that when Christ was killed two of his disciples went to Pontius Pilate for permission to bury him while the chief priests and the Pharisees sought to properly secure the burial place of Christ "lest his disciples come by night and take him away". Now if he was killed on Friday the Chief Priest and the Pharisees could not have on the following day (Saturday) violated the more stringent law of the weekly Sabbath by going to Pilate to make their request. (See John 19:39-42; Matthew 27:62-66) Thus, Christ could not have been killed on Friday. Such an erroneous view gives the impression that he stayed in the grave for only two nights and one day and is derogatory of Christ's unassailable position as the Son of God.

## The Passover Sabbath

Many people confuse the day Christ was killed because of a misunderstanding of the "Sabbath" which the Jews were to observe on the eve of his death. According to St. John's account "The Jews therefore, because it was the preparation, that the bodies should not remain upon the cross on the Sabbath day, (for that Sabbath was an high day,) besought Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away." – John 19:31.

The text just cited spoke of a "Sabbath" that was an "high day". Which Sabbath was that? It should be noted that some days other than the seventh day of the week were also called Sabbaths. For instance, the Jews have Sabbaths for the Feast of Tabernacles, the Feast of Harvest, Festival of blowing of Trumpets, the Day of Atonement and the Passover. – Leviticus 23: 1-44.

Proof that Jesus was killed on Wednesday is the prophecy of Daniel the prophet that the

Messiah shall be cut off (or die temporarily) in the midst of the literal week of seven days which is Wednesday. -Daniel 9:27.

### The Day of Preparation

Under the old covenant, the day following the killing of Passover lamb was always designated a Sabbath. (Leviticus 23:5-7) Jesus Christ was killed on the fourteenth day of the first month of the Jews known as Nisan or Abib, the day on which the Passover lamb was slain. (Exodus 12:1-6) The day he was killed was the "preparation" for the Passover Sabbath to follow – which was "an high day". (John 19:31) Since the Passover Sabbath like a person's birthday could fall on any day of the week, the one for that year in which Christ was killed fell on Thursday, meaning that the "preparation" was Wednesday. Indeed, the Bible shows that he was killed on the day of preparation, "the day before the Sabbath" (Mark 15:42) "which was an high day" -John 19:14,31,42.

Christ had celebrated his last Passover on Tuesday evening (John 13:27-30; 1 Corinthians 11:23). He was arrested that Tuesday night and was harassed and judged throughout the night (John 18:1-6,27-39). He was nailed to the stake on the "third hour" – 9 am – and died at the "ninth hour" – 3 p.m. – on Wednesday (Mark 15:25,33-37). After Christ's death, Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus – two of his disciples – obtained permission from Pontius Pilate to inter the body in a new tomb because the "even was come" and "because it was the preparation", that is, the day before the Sabbath of the Passover and in line with God's injunction in Deuteronomy 21:22,23 to the effect that the body of a man hanged on the tree should be buried that same day.

### Saturday Resurrection

Among the Jews, 12 hours daylight (6.00 a.m. – 6.00 p.m.) was calculated as one day. (John 11:9) while the other 12 hours (6.00 p.m. – 6.00 a.m.) is taken as one night. Thus, Jesus was in the grave for three clear days – Thursday, Friday, Saturday, and three nights – Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday nights. He rose at the end of Saturday at sunset in fulfillment of Matthew 12:38-40.

That was why when Mary Magdalene and Mary, the mother of James (Luke 24:10) among others came to the tomb the night after the Sabbath, they found it empty – Matthew 28:1; Mark 16:1-9; John 20:1.

Another logical way of knowing the day Christ was killed is this: since he rose at the end of Saturday it is only plausible to then count three days backwards; Saturday, Friday and Thursday; and three nights; Friday night, Thursday night and Wednesday night – the day he was killed.

From the foregoing the idea of Sunday morning resurrection of Christ can be seen to be erroneous and Scripturally unacceptable. The understanding that he was killed on Wednesday makes clear to all the grand fulfilment of our Saviour's words, proves his sonship and confirms his stature as the greatest prophet of God for all ages.(Deuteronomy 18: 15; Acts 3: 23; 4: 10-12) There is therefore no biblical reason whatsoever to observe "Good Friday" or even "Easter" which most churches regard as "the greatest Christian festival".

It is the truth that give the people salvation as Christ himself said: "And ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free." – John 8:32.