

Bible Detectives

Case 1

“The Case of the Jewish Rabbi”

The Mystery

On what day was Jesus crucified?

Timeline of Events (To Be Completed by Detective)

	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Midnight to 6:00am						
6:00am to Noon						
Noon to 6:00pm						
6:00pm to Midnight						

Just the Facts (To Be Completed by Detective)

- 1. Tradition.** According to tradition, Jesus died on which day of the week? _____
- 2. Fact:** The Jewish day started at twilight (in the evening), so the day roughly began at 6 pm, so the first day of the week (Sunday) began at what we could call Saturday evening and ended at Sunday evening. Keep this in mind as you consider days.
- 3. Luke 24:1-10.**
 - **Who** are the eye witnesses? _____
 - **Who** else was present? _____
 - **What** is missing? _____
 - **What** did the “men” say had happened? _____
 - **When** did this occur? _____

- **Where** did this occur? _____
- **Why** did the “men” say it happened? _____

4. **John 19:31-33.**

- **Who** died? _____
- **When** did he die? _____
- **What** did they do because the next day was a Sabbath? _____
- **What** day of the week is always a Sabbath day? _____
Mark all four six-hour periods on the timeline.
- **What** is the day before that? _____
- **Theory** (to be examined against other evidence): Jesus died on _____.

5. **Matthew 12:40.**

- **Who** is speaking? _____
- **What** does he predict? _____
- **When** was he resurrected (from previous facts)? _____
- If this is true, then using simple math, **what** are the possibilities for his death? There may be multiple answers depending upon whether you count full or partial days.
 _____ Sunday (Resurrection Morning)
 _____ Saturday
 _____ Friday
 _____ Thursday
 _____ Wednesday
 _____ Tuesday
 _____ Monday
- **Conflict:** No matter how you count, it’s hard to get three days and three nights between Friday afternoon and Sunday morning.

6. **Leviticus 23:1-4.**

- **Who** is talking? _____
- **Who** is being talked to? _____
- **Who** does this apply to? _____
- **What** is being talked about? _____
- **What** is another term that also means “Sabbath”? _____

7. **Leviticus 23:5-7.**

- **When** is the Passover? The _____ day of the first month.
- **When** does the Feast of Unleavened Bread start? The _____ day of the first month.
- **What** kind of special day is the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread? _____

- **When** is the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread?
 The day before Passover
 The same day as Passover
 The day after Passover
- **When** is a special Sabbath?
 The day before Passover
 The same day as Passover
 The day after Passover
- **What** meal did Jesus share with his disciples at what we call “the last supper?” _____
- **When** was the Passover meal?
 At breakfast
 At lunch
 At dinner
- **When** was the Passover meal? By examining the Jewish calendar, we can be fairly confident of when Passover was. The Passover meal is commonly believed to have been on what we call Tuesday night. Mark this meal on the timeline.
- **When** was Passover? Mark all four six-hour periods on the timeline.
- **When** was the special Sabbath, the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread? Mark all four six-hour periods on the timeline.

Conclusions

- Using these facts discovered above:
 - Jesus was raised from the dead by early morning on the first day of the week (Sunday).
 - Jesus died on a day before a Sabbath day, on a day of preparation.
 - Jesus said that he would be in the grave for three days and three nights.
 - The Passover meal was probably on Tuesday night.
 - The day after Passover is a Sabbath day, so Passover is a day of preparation.
 and your timeline, when do you conclude that Jesus was crucified and buried? _____
- Is this different than the traditional view of Friday? YES NO
- If yes, does this bother you? YES NO

The Inspector’s Conclusions (To Be Verified by Detective)

- Luke 24:1-10.** Jesus had arisen from the grave by early morning on the first day of the week (Sunday).
- John 19:31-33.** Jesus died on the day before a Sabbath day.

3. **Matthew 12:40.** Jesus was to be in the grave for three days and three nights. Depending on whether you count full or partial beginning and endings, there is some ambiguity. Death on Wednesday or Thursday both meet this criteria, but Friday does not.
4. **Leviticus 23:5-7.** The day after Passover is a Sabbath. According to the Jewish calendar, Passover would *probably* have been on Wednesday, with Thursday being a Sabbath. (It's possible that Passover was on Thursday, not Wednesday. The facts would fit crucifixion on Thursday afternoon also.)
5. Jesus shared the Passover Meal with his disciples on what we call Tuesday night and was crucified on Wednesday afternoon. By Wednesday evening, he was dead and buried in the grave. He was in the grave Thursday, Friday, and Saturday. By Sunday morning (possibly as early as Saturday night), he was resurrected.

However, we must remember that our theology does not rest upon the day the Jesus was crucified and buried. When all is said and done, it's much less important to know that it was Wednesday or Thursday or Friday than it is to simply know that Jesus was crucified, buried and resurrected so that our sins may be forgiven. In other words, the fact that he did die – regardless of the day of the week – and that he was raised from the dead is most important.

Timeline if Passover Meal was Tuesday Night

	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
		Passover	Special Sabbath	"Good Friday"	Sabbath	"Easter Sunday"
Midnight to 6:00am		Passover	Special Sabbath		Sabbath Day	
6:00am to Noon		Passover	Special Sabbath		Sabbath Day	Women come to grave in early morning; Jesus has already risen
Noon to 6:00pm		Passover Ends Jesus dies and is buried before the special Sabbath begins.	Special Sabbath Ends		Sabbath Day Ends	
6:00pm to Midnight	Passover Begins Jesus eats Passover Meal with disciples	Special Sabbath Begins (First day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread)		Normal Sabbath Day Begins		
		One Night	One Day One Night	One Day One Night	One Day	

Timeline if Passover Meal was Wednesday Night

	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
			Passover	Special Sabbath	Sabbath	"Easter Sunday"
Midnight to 6:00am			Passover	Special Sabbath	Sabbath Day	
6:00am to Noon			Passover	Special Sabbath	Sabbath Day	Women come to grave in early morning; Jesus has already risen
Noon to 6:00pm			Passover Ends Jesus dies and is buried before the special Sabbath begins.	Special Sabbath Ends	Sabbath Day Ends	
6:00pm to Midnight		Passover Begins Jesus eats Passover Meal with disciples	Special Sabbath Begins (First day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread)	Normal Sabbath Day Begins		
			One Partial Day One Night	One Day One Night	One Day One Partial Night	