

JESUS' FINAL WEEK

One possibility

Dating the Crucifixion

The work of John the Baptist began in the “fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judea,” Luke 3:1. If we count that fifteenth year from the time of the death of Augustus, then 28 or 29 would be correct. But, that doesn’t connect with other facts. If we count the fifteenth year from the time Tiberius became co-regent with Augustus, effectively taking control of the government from the aging Augustus, we arrive at the year 26. This corresponds with Luke 3:23 that Jesus was 30 years old at the time he began his work.

The first Passover of his ministry (John 2:13) was the occasion for Jesus’ statement about his resurrection that brought the response that “*Forty and six years was this temple in building....*” John 2:19-20. Since the temple was begun in 19 B.C., forty-six years would bring the time to 27 A.D. Jesus observed three other Passovers after this, John 5:1; 6:4; 12:1. That would bring events to the Passover of the year 30.

For his last Passover, Jesus came to Bethany six days before the Passover (John. 12:1). The events of the text show that the journey had to occur on Friday — they couldn’t have traveled there on the Sabbath, and the first day of the week would have been too late for the events of the following week. Six days later would be a Thursday. Passover always begins on the 14th of Abib, or Nisan, Exodus 12:6, Lev. 23:5. This is called the *Day of Preparation*. The High Sabbath (Passover day) begins at 5 p.m. that day — it is considered *Friday* (indeed it was *Good Friday*), the 15th of Nisan. Jesus’ resurrection would be the third day afterward, Sunday, the first day of the week.

To confirm this, the Mar 29, 1974 issue of **Christianity Today** carried a computer dating analysis, for the years 26-36 A.D. In those years, the 14th of Nisan only came on a Thursday in the year 30, April 6th of our calendar. So, the crucifixion was on Thursday April 6th, and the resurrection on Sunday April 9th, 30 A.D. Pentecost was fifty days later, Sunday May 28, 30 A.D.

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Nisan 10, Sun Apr 2nd — Jesus enters into Jerusalem riding the colt of a donkey (Mt. 21:7). Passover lambs, those without blemish, are being chosen throughout the city; they will be held until Nisan 14, Passover, when they will be killed in the evening (Ex. 12:6). Likewise, Jesus is being chosen by his followers who throw palm leaves in his path and cry out, “Hosanna to the Son of David, who comes in the name of the Lord.” (Mt. 21:9)

Nisan 11, Mon Apr 3rd — The unfruitful fig tree is cursed (Mk. 11:12-14). Jesus cleanses the temple (Mt. 21:12-13). A plot to kill him is delayed (Mk. 11:18). Children praise him (Mt. 21:14-16). Jesus reveals that his hour has come (Jn. 12:23); The Son of Man must be lifted up — you will have the light only a little while longer (Jn. 12:34-36). At evening he returned to Bethany where Lazarus lived (Mk. 11:11).

Nisan 12, Tue Apr 4th — The fig tree is withered from its roots (Mt. 21:20-22). His authority is questioned — is John’s baptism from man or God? (Mk. 11:27-33). Parable of the two sons (Mt. 21:28-32). Parable of the murderous tenants (Mk. 12:1-9). Parable of the rejected stone (Mt. 21:42-44). Chief priests and Pharisees look for a way to arrest him (Mt. 21:45-46). Parable of the wedding banquet (Mt. 22:1-14). Trap concerning taxes: “Render unto Caesar...” (Mt. 22:15-22). Resurrection questioned: woman marries/widowed seven times — “You know neither the Scripture nor the power of God... God is not the God of the dead, but of the living” (Mt. 22:23-33). Greatest Commandment (Mk. 12:28-34). No one dared to test him with any more questions (Mt. 22:41-46). Do what the Pharisees say, not what they do (Mt. 23:1-12). Woe to the teachers of the law: hypocrites and blind guides (Mat 23:1-36). Jesus weeps over Jerusalem (Mt. 23:37-

39). Widow's mite (Mk. 12:41-44). Prophecy of the destruction of Jerusalem (Mk. 13:1-2; Mt. 24:4-35). Parable of the talents (Mt. 25:14-30). Sheep and the goats (Mt. 25:31-46). "In two days... the Son of Man will be handed over to be crucified." (Mt. 26:1-2) Jesus is anointed at Bethany (Jn. 12:3). Priests and elders conspire to arrest him, but not during the feast (Mt. 26:3-5). Judas arranges to betray Jesus (Lk. 22:3-6; Mk. 14:10).

Nisan 13, Wed Apr 5th — Jesus teaches at the temple (Lk. 21:37-38). Many still disbelieve; others are afraid; Jesus quotes Isa. 6:10 "they can neither see... nor understand." "When a man believes in me, he... believes in the One who sent me" (Jn. 12:38-50). In the afternoon, two disciples go to the upper room to remove any leaven in preparation for the Passover (Lk. 22:7-13). No leaven may be found in their homes from the 14th — 21st of Nisan (Ex. 12:19). After 5 p.m. they eat the Last Supper: washing feet; Judas then quickly leaves to betray him; promise to send the Holy Spirit (Jn. 13-14). Jesus ordains communion (Mt. 26:26-27). Prayer at Gethsemane (Mt. 26:36). Jesus' arrest in the Garden (Mt. 26:50). His initial trial and beating (Mt. 26:57ff). Peter's betrayal three times (Mt. 26:70-74).

Nisan 14, Thu Apr 6th — It is the *Preparation Day for Passover* (Jn. 19:14,31,42), and the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread (Ex 12:16; Lev. 23:6). At daybreak, the council of elders meet and by early morning they have condemned him (Lk. 22:66); Jesus is sent to Pilate (Mt. 27:2), to Herod (Lk. 23:8), and back to Pilate (Lk. 23:15) who has him flogged in hopes of saving his life (Lk. 23:22); just before noon Barabbas is released and Jesus is taken to Golgotha for crucifixion. The sky goes black at noon as he is crucified (Mt. 27:45). **At 3 p.m., Jesus dies on the cross**; there is an earthquake, the veil is torn in two in the temple, and many saints are raised from their graves (Mt. 27:51-52). The paschal lambs are slaughtered throughout the city from 3 p.m.-5 p.m. (Ex 12:6; also Josephus *Wars of the Jews*). Joseph of Arimathea asks for the body on this *Preparation Day* (Mk. 15:42). Jesus is buried before 5 p.m. — the women follow Josephus to see where the body is laid, and then go home to prepare spices and perfumes (Lk. 23:55-56). The Passover Meal is eaten on Thursday evening, which begins Nisan 15 (Ex 12:16) — it is celebrated after the slaughter of the lambs.

Nisan 15, Fri Apr 7th — "After the Preparation day", the chief priest and Pharisees ask Pilate for a guard for the tomb, thus violating the High Sabbath (Mt. 27:62-66), when no work may be done (Ex. 12:16); the women, by contrast, do not go to the tomb (Lk. 23:56).

Nisan 16, Sat Apr 8th — The regular Sabbath: Jesus is in the tomb.

Nisan 17, Sun Apr 9th — Jesus is resurrected at dawn on the 3rd day, the first day of the week; a violent earthquake occurs; the stone is rolled away (Mt. 28:2-4). The women come to the tomb and hear from the two angels of Jesus' resurrection (Mk. 16:1-9). Then they encounter two angels (Lk. 24:4-8). They flee the tomb (Mk. 16:8). They tell Peter and John who run to the tomb (Jn. 20:2-10). Mary Magdalene stays, and sees Christ (Joh 20.11-17). The chief priests cover this up, saying the disciples stole the body (Mt. 28:11-15).¹ The women tell the eleven what they saw and heard (Lk. 24:9-11). That afternoon, Jesus appeared to Cleopas and another disciple on the road to Emmaus, and again at dinner with them when he broke the loaf of bread and they recognized him (Lk. 24:13-32). They returned immediately to Jerusalem to tell the eleven (Lk. 24:33-35). That evening, Jesus came to the disciples — except for Thomas, "Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you.' And with that he breathed on them and said, 'Receive the Holy Spirit.'" (see Jn. 20:19; Lk. 24:36-44). Jesus opened the minds of the apostles so they could understand the Scriptures (Lk. 24:45).

¹This is circumstantially possible, since the body was laid in the tomb on Thursday, and the guard wasn't set till Friday. But it's unlikely that the Roman guards would place a seal on an uninspected tomb. It doesn't account for the women's expectation to find Jesus' body that Sunday morning, the wrappings left crumpled in the tomb, the various recorded appearances of Jesus over a period of forty days, and the complete turnaround in the courage of the disciples.

Epilogue

A week later, Jesus appeared to Thomas and the others (Jn. 20:26-29) and rebuked them for not believing the testimony (Mk. 16:14)

“Afterward” he appeared to six of them at the Sea of Galilee as they are fishing; Peter is restored (Jn. 21:1-17).

On a mountain in Galilee, Jesus commissions the apostles to disciple the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the HS, and teaching them to obey all that he has commanded (Mt. 28:16-20; Mk. 16:15-18).

Forty days after the resurrection (Ac. 1:3), Jesus instructed the eleven to go into Jerusalem and await the empowering of the Holy Spirit. (Lk. 24:50-51; Ac. 1:6-11). He **ASCENDS** into the heavens at the Mount of Olives across from the temple in the sight of more than 500 disciples (1Cor. 15:6).

Ten days later, the Holy Spirit comes upon the apostles with power at Pentecost (Ac. 2).