

Last Week of Christ Outline

- I. The Jewish calendar from the time of Moses and the conquest of Canaan.**
 - a. A lunar calendar following the Egyptian lunar calendar but with the beginning of the year moved to be Abib/Nisan. (30 days/month plus 5 added at end of the year)
 - b. Egyptians had a solar calendar determined by observations of stars, especially Sirius. They called Sirius Sothis and it would appear in the summer a few days before the Nile flooded, allowing them to get ready for planting crops.
 - c. The Egyptians counted 24 hour day cycles to begin at sunrise. This may be in view in Exodus 12.
 - d. 1 Samuel 30:15-18 seems to imply David counted days from sunrise. This shows Israel once counted days to begin at sunrise, not sunset. But this changed in the Babylonian exile.

- II. Calendars in use in Israel in the time of Christ**
 - a. Julian Calendar from Caesar, used in Roman empire
 - b. Official Jewish Calendar. Counted daily 24 hr cycle from sunset to sunset. Alternating 29 and 30 day months, with a leap month added some years. Sabbath on Saturday.
 - c. Qumran group tried to make a Jewish solar calendar. It would put Passover a few weeks after the official Passover date other Jews followed.
 - d. The Samaritans, Essenes, and Zealots followed a lunar calendar that counted days at sunrise. They tried to make the calendar like what Moses originally used. Passover would fall a few days before the official Jewish calendar.

- III. How the Babylonian exile affected Jewish calendars**
 - a. The Babylonian calendar was used by Assyria and Babylon and possibly other peoples.
 - b. It was a lunar calendar that alternated 29 and 30 day months and added a leap month at the end in some years when necessary.
 - c. It counted a 24 hour day to begin at sunset.
 - d. The Babylonian month name for when Passover happened for the Jews was Nisanu. The Jews shortened it to Nisan.
 - e. Some Jews stayed in Israel or Palestine through the exile and these people intermarried with others and became the Samaritans. The Samaritans tried to keep the original calendar. This is how Jews came to have multiple calendars.

- IV. Date of the Crucifixion**
 - a. Begin with possible range of years from the known years Pilate was in power and the time Caiaphas was the High Priest. This leads to a possible span of 26 A.D. to 36 A.D.
 - b. Determine in which of these years would Nisan 14 or 15 fall on a Friday by astronomical calculation. Mark 15:42 and John 19:31 say the crucifixion was on Preparation Day, which implies Friday.
 - c. Reduce the resulting few possible cases by considering Biblical information on when Jesus ministry started and how long it lasted. This leads to April 1, 33 A.D. Gregorian or April 3, 33 A.D. Julian for the exact date of the crucifixion.
 - d. I confirmed this year as when the crucifixion occurred by other historical info.

- i. There were references to the Roman historian Phlegon writing about the dark sky, and the earthquake, and connecting it to the 202nd Olympiad, which narrows it down to a period of several months including Spring of 33 A.D.
- ii. There are geological sources that reference a significant earthquake happening in Palestine in 33 A.D. This can be looked up in the database of significant earthquakes kept today by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. It is found on a website known as the National Geophysical Data Center. The only earthquake in this database from the years of 25 to 35 A.D. was in 33 A.D. It also had longitude and latitude of the epicenter of the quake.

V. Passovers, Calendars, and the Last Week of Christ

- a. The Samaritan calendar defined New Moon and the beginning of the month at what we would now call conjunction. This was the middle of the period in which the Moon was not visible after the old Moon disappeared below the morning horizon.
- b. In the official Jewish calendar, they counted the New Moon and beginning of the month by when the Moon first became visible after being invisible. This made the beginning of the month of Nisan earlier for the Samaritan calendar than in the official Jewish calendar by perhaps 2 or 3 days. In Nisan (April) of 33 A.D. this difference was two days.
- c. Passover was 14 days after the beginning of the month, at Full Moon. In 33 A.D. in the month of Nisan, Full Moon falls on a Saturday. This puts Passover on the same day as the regular weekly Sabbath.
- d. If Jesus and the twelve were following a calendar like the Samaritans and Essenes, the Passover meal would have been Wednesday evening. This would be two days before most Jews ate the Passover. Most Jews would have ate the Passover meal that Friday evening, which would have been right after the crucifixion.
- e. If this timeline is correct, then Jesus and the disciples had a true Passover meal but they did it before most other Jews Wed night. Also, this means Jesus died about the same time that the Passover lambs were being sacrificed in the Jewish temple, Friday afternoon.

VI. Jesus' Trials and the Jewish Legal Process

- a. Traditional time for the Last Supper and Jesus arrest is Thursday night. This would go against long-established Jewish legal practice.
 - i. This violates the principal of not sending someone to their death until there had been a second confirming trial the day after the main trial.
 - ii. This would probably violate the principle of trials being done in daytime. (What about Annas?)
 - iii. This would also violate the practice of not having a capital trial on the eve of a feastday.
 - iv. With the Last Supper and arrest Thursday night, how would Pilate's wife find out about Jesus seeing Pilate, so that she could have her dream?
- b. Annas was the father in law of Caiaphas. Annas had been the previous High Priest. He was respected as the elder more experienced High Priest. His verdict was not official.

While Jesus was interrogated by Annas, others were probably notifying Sanhedrin members and others who would testify that the main trial would be Thursday morning after sunrise.

- c. Thursday morning would have been before the eve of a Feast Day since it was before sunset. The main trial declared verdict but this verdict was not final until confirmed the next day (Friday morning) and until Pilate agreed to it. Someone must have contacted Pilate sometime Thursday, asking him to come out to meet the Jews and see Jesus Friday morning.
- d. Jesus would have been kept in prison Thursday night.
- e. Friday morning there was a quick vote by the Sanhedrin to confirm the death verdict, done right after sunrise.
- f. Jesus was put before Pilate, then sent to Herod, then back to Pilate, all before 9 AM.
- g. Jesus taken to be crucified about 9 AM (see Mark 15:25 in NASB)
- h. Jesus gives up his life and decides to die at about 3 PM (Friday, see John 10:18).

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Based on book "The Mystery of the Last Supper" by Colin J. Humphreys, by Cambridge University Press, 2011.