

HIDDEN IN PLAIN SIGHT

HOW NEARLY 2,000 YEARS OF CHURCH
TRADITION POINTS UNEQUIVOCALLY
TO A THURSDAY CRUCIFIXION



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Introduction

The debate over the precise day of the crucifixion of Jesus Christ has occupied biblical scholars and theologians for centuries. The position today of most of Christendom is that Christ was crucified on Friday and resurrected on Sunday morning. A significant minority position, supported by a comprehensive analysis of Scripture and the biblical calendar, holds that Christ was crucified on Thursday and resurrected on Sunday. A third position is that the crucifixion occurred on Wednesday and the resurrection on Saturday.

What has gone largely unnoticed in all of this debate is a remarkable body of historical evidence that has been hiding in plain sight for nearly 2,000 years. That evidence does not come from obscure manuscripts or disputed texts. It comes from one of the earliest Christian documents ever written, from the practice of the Eastern Orthodox Church, from the Roman Catholic observance of Holy Week, and from a living liturgical tradition observed to this day. And it comes from something else as well — something that has never before been clearly articulated. Catholic and mainstream Christian sources themselves place the meeting in which Judas struck his deal with the chief priests — betraying Jesus for thirty

pieces of silver — on a Wednesday, thereby sealing the case for a Thursday crucifixion with their own words.

The Didache: The Earliest Documented Evidence

The starting point of this argument is the Didache, also known as *The Teaching of the Lord to the Gentiles by the Twelve Apostles*. The Didache is one of the oldest surviving Christian documents outside of the New Testament itself. Scholars date it broadly between 50 AD and 120 AD, with a growing consensus placing its core content as early as 50 to 70 AD — making parts of it potentially contemporaneous with some of the New Testament writings themselves.

The Didache was lost to history for many centuries, known only through quotations in the writings of early church fathers. It was rediscovered in 1873 by Greek Orthodox Metropolitan Philotheos Bryennios in a monastery in Constantinople, in a manuscript dated 1056 AD. It was published in 1883 and immediately recognized by scholars as one of the most significant early Christian documents ever recovered.

One essential fact must be established at the outset: the Didache was written in Greek — not Latin. This is not in dispute. Every major scholar of patristics affirms it. The original language is therefore the Greek of the first-century Jewish and Christian world, the very same language in which the New Testament was written. This matters enormously, because the key word in the Didache fasting instruction is a Greek word with a precise and universally understood meaning.

Some observant Jews chose to fast twice a week, on Monday and Thursday, which we know from Jesus' parable of the Pharisee and tax collector (Luke 18). The Pharisee congratulates himself because,

among other things, he “fasts twice a week” (v. 12). Why Monday and Thursday? It was based on the tradition that Moses went up Mount Sinai on a Thursday and returned on a Monday.

The fasts that made their way into Christian practice first were adaptations of Jewish practice. The earliest Christians were Jewish Christians, and they continued to pray and fast with their brethren in the synagogue and the Temple because they understood that the Christian way was a continuation of the Jewish way — specifically the Torah-observant Jewish way of life, fulfilling and completing it rather than replacing or abolishing it.

As conflict arose between the Jewish community and Christians, the Didache instructed Christians to fast on Wednesday (the day Judas made the deal with the chief priests to betray Jesus for 30 pieces of silver) and Friday (the preparation day for the weekly Saturday Sabbath day) rather than Monday and Thursday, to differentiate from the "hypocrites."

In Chapter 8 of the Didache, the following instruction appears:

“But let not your fasts be with the hypocrites, for they fast on the second and fifth day of the week; but fast on the fourth day and the Preparation.”

The “fourth day” is Wednesday. The “Preparation” is Friday. But what does “Preparation” mean here, and preparation for what? This question is decisive — and the Greek text answers it with perfect clarity.

The Greek Word Proves Friday Before the Saturday Sabbath

The Greek word translated “Preparation” is *paraskeuen*. This is the standard, universally recognized Greek term for Friday —

specifically, the day of preparation before the seventh-day Saturday Sabbath. It is the identical word used throughout the New Testament in every reference to the day before the Sabbath:

Matthew 27:62 — “the day of the Preparation” (the day before the Sabbath).

Mark 15:42 — “it was the day of Preparation, that is, the day before the Sabbath.”

John 19:31 — “the Jews therefore, because it was the day of Preparation...”

This word *paraskeuen* had one fixed, universally understood meaning in the Jewish and early Christian world: Friday, the day before the Saturday Sabbath. It was never used in ancient Christian writing to mean preparation for Sunday worship or any other day. That concept does not exist in the text, in the Greek language, or in the historical context of the *Didache*.

The foremost modern scholar of the *Didache*, Aaron Milavec, whose translation is widely regarded as the most literal and authoritative, renders *Didache* 8:1 explicitly with the phrase “Sabbath preparation day” — making the meaning unmistakable. Wednesday and Friday. The day of the betrayal of Christ, and the day before the Saturday Sabbath. No other interpretation is linguistically possible.

Some have suggested that the “Preparation” in the *Didache* might refer to preparation for Sunday, as if the early church wasn’t keeping the seventh-day Sabbath. But this is not even a possibility, as true Christians have always kept the seventh-day Sabbath and continue to do so today. Even the “Christians” who departed from the truth of the Bible and who eventually adopted the pagan day of worship, Sunday, instead of God's true Sabbath day, did not do so until at least the mid-third century. And not only that, but the Greek text eliminates that possibility entirely. *Paraskeuen* is Friday before the

Saturday Sabbath. Period. The Greek cannot be made to mean anything else.

The Quartodeciman Controversy

Plus, we have the evidence of both Polycarp (the disciple and successor of the apostle John) and Polycrates (the heir apparent to Polycarp) in the second century. These two bishops of Smyrna and Ephesus were willing to stand toe to toe with the bishops of Rome (both Anicetus in ~155AD and Victor in ~190AD) over which to observe (in the well-documented Quartodeciman Controversy): Passover each spring on the 14th of Nisan OR Easter on the Sunday after the full moon in the early spring? And they did so fearlessly.

Both Polycarp and Polycrates insisted that we must keep the Passover (as Jesus and all of the apostles had done so and had commanded Christians to do likewise). But the bishops of Rome insisted on propagating Easter as a replacement for Passover.

Yet neither Polycarp or Polycrates disputed Sunday worship as a point of controversy. If Rome had already replaced the seventh-day Sabbath with Sunday worship, men of their courage and conviction would unquestionably have addressed it. But they did not. Why? There was no reason to, as the Roman churches in the second century were still keeping the seventh-day Sabbath!

The silence of Polycarp and Polycrates is itself powerful historical evidence that the seventh-day Sabbath was still being kept in both the first and second centuries throughout the Christian world.

Also, neither man disputed the Roman claim that Jesus rose on a Sunday. Their argument with Rome was simply that followers of Christ should keep the biblical Passover on the 14th of Nisan — and that it should never be replaced with some man-made annual Easter

celebration, as the Bible commands genuine Christians to keep the Passover in commemoration of Christ’s sacrifice for the sins of the world, and never does it command the keeping of Easter.

It was a dispute about which to honor: the death of Christ or the day in which He was resurrected. And if Polycarp and Polycrates had thought for a second that Jesus was resurrected on a day other than Sunday, they would have surely brought it up. But neither of them said a word about the day of Christ’s resurrection when they confronted the Roman bishops about Rome’s Easter Sunday worship. Why? Because they knew that Jesus did rise on a Sunday, therefore there was never a reason to bring it up!

So, the silence of Polycarp and Polycrates clearly shows that not only were Christians still keeping the seventh-day Sabbath in the second century, but that the resurrection of Jesus was indeed on a Sunday (contrary to what a few are teaching today), as their silence speaks volumes.

But Rome did not heed the warning of either Polycarp or Polycrates in this matter, and eventually in the 3rd century it would begin to evolve into not only an ANNUAL celebration of Christ’s resurrection but a WEEKLY celebration of His resurrection on each Sunday of the year — ultimately replacing the seventh-day Sabbath with Sunday worship.

While the *Didache* confirms that the earliest Christians memorialized Wednesday as the day Judas betrayed Jesus to the Jewish religious authorities for money, we do not have to rely on tradition alone. The Gospel of Luke provides the ‘legal’ chronological anchor that locks this meeting into the daylight hours of Wednesday. As established in Luke 22:1–7, the Bible creates a structural boundary: the agreement with the chief priests is recorded while the feast “was approaching” (v. 1), but the narrative explicitly

shifts only in verse 7, stating, “Then came the day of Unleavened Bread.” Since the Jewish day begins at sunset, Luke’s precise sequencing proves the betrayal was a completed contract before that Wednesday sun went down. This sets the stage for the events that followed after the sun went down — most notably the arrest of Christ which took place well after midnight on Thursday morning. And then the crucifixion of Jesus later that day.

CATHOLIC ANSWERS MAGAZINE

What makes this distinction so powerful is that it is *not* drawn by a Thursday-crucifixion advocate. It is drawn by the Catholic sources themselves. *Catholic Answers Magazine*, one of the most widely read Catholic apologetics publications in the world, explicitly states that the “**Spy Wednesday**” betrayal occurred on Wednesday, and the arrest occurred on Thursday, calling it “**Maundy Thursday**.”

CHRISTIANITY.COM

But they are not the only ones! Christianity.com makes the following key points:

- **Spy Wednesday** is the Wednesday of Holy Week and commemorates the day Judas Iscariot agreed to betray Jesus for thirty pieces of silver. It is called “Spy Wednesday” because Judas began acting as an informant against Jesus, setting in motion the events that would lead to the arrest and crucifixion of Christ the following day.
- **Maundy Thursday** is the Thursday when Jesus was arrested in the Garden of Gethsemane, leading to His crucifixion later that day.

Their own Holy Week timeline lists:

Holy Wednesday — Judas agrees to betray Jesus.

Maundy Thursday — Jesus arrested in Gethsemane.

So, Christianity.com itself places the Judas agreement on Wednesday and the arrest on Thursday!

The "Sunset Wall": Locking the Agreement into Wednesday

To understand why the agreement happened on Wednesday, we must look at the **narrative wall** the Bible builds in Luke 22. In the Jewish calendar, the “Day of Unleavened Bread” begins at sunset, (as a new day always began at sunset). Therefore, any event recorded *before* that day arrives must have happened while the sun was still up on the previous day.

1. **The Pre-Sunset Window (Luke 22:1–6):** Luke records Judas making the deal for thirty pieces of silver. At this point in the story, the feast is only “drawing near” or “approaching” (v. 1). It hasn't started yet.
2. **The Sunset Marker (Luke 22:7):** Luke then writes, “**Then came the Day of Unleavened Bread.**” This is the precise moment the sun goes down and the new day begins.

The Logic is Airtight: If the “deal” is in verse 6 and the “sunset” is in verse 7, the deal **must** have been completed before that sun went down.

LUKE 22 (NLT)

JUDAS AGREES TO BETRAY JESUS

¹The Festival of Unleavened Bread, which is also called Passover, **was approaching**.

²The leading priests and teachers of religious law were plotting how to kill Jesus, but they were afraid of the people's reaction.

³Then Satan entered into Judas Iscariot, who was one of the twelve disciples,

⁴and he went to the leading priests and captains of the Temple guard to discuss the best way to **betray Jesus** to them.

⁵They were delighted, and they promised to give him money.

⁶So he **agreed** and began looking for an opportunity to **betray Jesus** so they could arrest him when the crowds weren't around.

THE PASSOVER

⁷Now the Festival of Unleavened Bread **arrived**, when the Passover lamb is sacrificed.

⁸Jesus sent Peter and John ahead and said, "Go and prepare the Passover meal, so we can eat it together."

The Arrest of Jesus: A Critical Distinction That Closes Every Door

At this point a distinction must be drawn that is essential to the argument — and that Catholic and Protestant sources themselves have now made unmistakably clear.

The arrest of Jesus did not occur on Wednesday night. It occurred in the early hours of Thursday morning — after midnight for sure, and probably 2AM at the earliest and 5AM at the latest — after the Passover/Lord’s Supper had concluded and after Jesus had spent an extended period in prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane.

The timing of the arrest in the early morning hours of Thursday — well after midnight — is not a claim made only by Thursday-crucifixion advocates. *It is confirmed by five completely independent sources spanning five different religious traditions:*

(1) A Catholic Bible study source (agapebiblestudy.com) states explicitly that arresting Jesus “after midnight on the Mt. of Olives” was a deliberate strategy by the chief priests to avoid interference from the crowds.

(2) The Jehovah’s Witness official website (jw.org) states plainly: “It was after midnight” when Jesus and the apostles arrived at the Garden of Gethsemane.

(3) An independent Protestant Bible study source (biblestudy.org) states directly that “the arrest of Jesus occurred after midnight.”

(4) An independent scholarly timeline (swcs.com.au) places the arrest of Christ occurring between 2AM and 5AM.

(5) The BYU New Testament Commentary, drawing on the Gospel accounts and the Jewish Mishnah, concludes that Jesus’ suffering in Gethsemane lasted until around four o’clock in the morning — with the arrest necessarily following after that period of prayer had concluded.

Five sources. Five different religious traditions — Catholic, Jehovah’s Witness, Protestant, secular scholarly, and LDS. All five

place the arrest of Jesus in the early morning hours of Thursday, well after midnight. No critic can dismiss this as the product of denominational bias.

The Catholic and mainstream Christian world, in its own publications and its own words, without any prompting from a Thursday-crucifixion argument, has placed:

The agreement of Judas — Wednesday daytime, before sunset.

The arrest of Jesus — early Thursday morning, around 2AM or later.

The crucifixion — the morning and afternoon of Thursday, following the arrest.

That is a Thursday crucifixion. Not a Wednesday crucifixion. Not a Friday crucifixion. A Thursday crucifixion — established by the testimony of Christendom's own sources, in their own words.

Why the Roman Church Changed Thursday to Friday: The Hislop Revelation

If the crucifixion occurred on Thursday — as the evidence of nearly 2,000 years of church history demands — then the question must be asked: Why does the Roman Catholic Church observe Good Friday? Why Friday? Where did Friday come from?

The answer is found in the work of Alexander Hislop, the nineteenth-century Scottish minister and historian whose landmark book *The Two Babylons* documented with painstaking historical detail how the Roman Catholic Church systematically replaced biblical practice with the ancient paganism of Babylon, giving each pagan custom a Christian name and a Christian veneer. Hislop

documented that Rome's consistent strategy was deliberate and calculated: "To conciliate the Pagans to nominal Christianity, Rome, pursuing its usual policy, took measures to get the Christian and Pagan festivals amalgamated [blended into one]."

What Hislop documented is that Friday was already the sacred day of mourning for the pagan god Tammuz, who died on a Friday. And Hislop identifies Tammuz as the Babylonian reincarnation of Nimrod. The Babylonians wept for Tammuz on what they called their equivalent of "Good Friday." The forty days of weeping for Tammuz — which became the forty days of Lent in the Roman Catholic calendar — culminated in that Friday mourning. Friday was not a Christian discovery. Friday was a Babylonian institution, centuries old, already embedded in the pagan religious calendar of the ancient world long before Jesus Christ was ever born.

Hislop further documents that Rome did not merely adopt pagan practices accidentally or innocently. The amalgamation was intentional, systematic, and relentless. The Saturday Sabbath was changed to Sunday — the day of sun worship. The biblical holy days of Leviticus 23 were replaced with Christmas and Easter — both of pagan Babylonian origin. Baptism by immersion was replaced with sprinkling. The dietary laws of Scripture were abolished. Each and every one of these changes followed the same pattern: the biblical truth was removed, and a pagan substitute bearing a Christian name was installed in its place.

The change of the crucifixion day from Thursday to Friday follows this identical pattern exactly. Thursday was the true, historically documented day of the crucifixion. Friday was the already-established pagan day of mourning for the dying god. Rome needed no new theology to make the change. The pagan world already knew what Friday meant. All Rome had to do was transfer the mourning from Tammuz to Jesus — and Good Friday was born.

This is not speculation. It is the direct and unavoidable conclusion drawn from Hislop's own documented research — research confirmed independently by some of the greatest historians and scholars in Western history, including Edward Gibbon, Will Durant, Sir James George Frazer, Franz Cumont, and Dr. Samuel Angus. Hislop proved that Friday was the pagan day of mourning for Tammuz. The historical record proves that Thursday was the true day of the crucifixion. The Roman Church's own pattern of systematically replacing biblical truth with Babylonian paganism proves the motive and the method. The conclusion is inescapable: the Roman Catholic Church changed the crucifixion from Thursday to Friday because Friday was already the sacred pagan mourning day — and Rome, as it always did, simply baptized the paganism and called it Christian.

The Logical Inference: What the Evidence Demands

The argument is now simple, ironclad, and requires nothing beyond connecting the dots that Christendom itself has laid down for nearly 2,000 years:

Fact One: The Didache — written in Greek, dating to the first century, the earliest surviving Christian church manual — establishes Wednesday as a Christian fast day because of the betrayal of Christ by Judas to the high priests for 30 pieces of silver. The Greek word used for the companion fast day, paraskeuen, identifies it as Friday, the day before the Saturday Sabbath — not Sunday.

Fact Two: Victorinus, the Eastern Orthodox Church, the Roman Catholic Church, the Methodist tradition, and every Christian body that has addressed the question agree without exception that Wednesday is the day of the betrayal.

Fact Three: Christianity sources themselves — including Catholic Answers Magazine and Christianity.com — distinguish between the Wednesday agreement and the actual arrest of Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane in the early morning hours of Thursday, after the Passover/Last Supper. Five independent sources from five different religious traditions confirm the arrest occurred well after midnight.

Fact Four: The arrest was followed immediately by the trials before the Sanhedrin and before Pilate, and then by the crucifixion — all in the same continuous sequence, in the morning and afternoon hours of Thursday.

Fact Five: Alexander Hislop’s documented research (along with many others) establishes that Friday was the ancient Babylonian day of mourning for the dying god Tammuz — and that Rome’s consistent, deliberate policy was to replace biblical observances with Babylonian pagan counterparts bearing Christian names. The change of the crucifixion day from Thursday to Friday is the direct and inevitable product of that policy.

The conclusion is unavoidable: the crucifixion occurred on Thursday, and the Friday tradition was born not from Scripture or history, but from Babylon.

The Significance of the Discovery

The argument presented here draws on a convergence of independent witnesses, each historically documented and individually verifiable:

The Didache (first century) — the earliest surviving Christian church order, written in Greek, establishing Wednesday as the day that Jesus was betrayed by Judas to the chief priests for thirty pieces of silver. And confirming Friday as the Sabbath preparation day.

The Eastern Orthodox Church — maintaining the Wednesday fast as a canonical requirement to this day, specifically identified with the betrayal of Christ for money between Judas and the leading priests.

The Roman Catholic recognition of Spy Wednesday — the Wednesday of Holy Week — as the day Judas agreed to betray Christ, with Catholic sources themselves placing the arrest of Christ in the early morning hours of Thursday.

The Methodist tradition — formally requiring Wednesday fasting in memory of the betrayal of Christ by Judas for silver.

Five independent sources from Catholic, Jehovah's Witness, Protestant, LDS, and secular scholarly traditions — all confirming the arrest of Jesus occurred after midnight, in the early morning hours of Thursday.

Scripture itself — Luke 22:1–8 placing the agreement before the Passover.

Alexander Hislop's Two Babylons — documenting that Friday was the ancient Babylonian day of mourning for Tammuz, and that Rome's deliberate policy was the systematic replacement of biblical truth with Babylonian paganism under Christian names.

Not one of these sources is obscure. Not one of them has been seriously challenged on its specific point. When taken together, they form a case that is not merely persuasive — it is conclusive.

Conclusion

The historical and scriptural case for a Thursday crucifixion does not rest on one argument or one source. It rests on a convergence of evidence so complete, and witnesses so independent of each other, that the conclusion admits of no reasonable alternative.

The Didache, written in Greek in the first century, established Wednesday as the day Judas met with the chief priests to betray our Savior for silver, and identified Friday by its precise Greek name — *paraskeuen*, the Sabbath preparation day — as the companion fast. The Eastern Orthodox Church has observed this without interruption since the earliest centuries. The Roman Catholic Church calls the Wednesday of Holy Week “Spy Wednesday” and commemorates it as the day of Judas’s agreement with the priests.

Add to this the plain testimony of Scripture — Luke 22:1–8, Matthew 26:14–16 and 26:47, John 13:30 — and the picture is complete. The agreement was made on Wednesday, before the Passover. The arrest occurred early Thursday morning, around 2AM or so. The trials before the Sanhedrin and Pilate followed in the morning hours. The crucifixion took place on Thursday morning/afternoon.

And when we ask why the Roman Catholic Church teaches Friday instead of Thursday, Alexander Hislop supplies the answer from his own exhaustive research: Friday was already the sacred Babylonian day of mourning for Tammuz — the pagan dying god. Rome did what Rome always did. It took the pagan day, gave it a Christian name, and called it Good Friday. The truth was buried. The paganism was enthroned. Rome didn’t convert pagans to Christianity — it converted Christians to paganism.

Christendom has been teaching a Thursday crucifixion for nearly 2,000 years without realizing it. The evidence has been hiding in plain sight — in the fasting calendars, in the liturgical observances, in the very words of Catholic and Protestant publications, and in the pages of Hislop's own *Two Babylons* (as well as in the writings of many other biblical scholars and historians). When the dots are connected, only one conclusion is possible:

Jesus Christ was crucified on Thursday. Good Friday is the fingerprint of Babylon.

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Postscript

SATURDAY OR SUNDAY?

1. The Easter controversy — the Quartodeciman dispute — was the great flashpoint between Rome and the Eastern churches in the 2nd century.
2. Polycarp (died ~155 AD) and Polycrates (writing ~190 AD) argued fiercely against Rome replacing the Passover with Easter — but neither man addressed Sunday worship as a point of controversy, so it could not have been practiced yet in the Roman churches or elsewhere. (Plus, when the bishops of Rome said that they would continue to celebrate Easter on a Sunday in the spring each year, commemorating the resurrection of Jesus, neither Polycarp or Polycrates disputed their claim that Christ was resurrected on Sunday. And if Jesus would have been resurrected on a day different than Sunday, they of course would have spoken up. But their silence is deafening.)
3. If Rome had already been requiring Sunday worship as a replacement for the Sabbath, Polycarp and Polycrates — who were clearly willing to fight Rome on liturgical issues — would absolutely have addressed it. (And they would

have surely addressed Rome's claim that Christ was resurrected on Sunday if they had thought otherwise.)

4. Their silence on Sunday worship clearly proves it was NOT yet an established Roman requirement in their lifetimes. (And their silence on a Sunday resurrection also establishes the fact that Christ was resurrected on Sunday.)
5. Sunday worship evolved gradually OUT OF the Easter/resurrection celebration tradition — the *annual* Sunday observance first, then eventually a *weekly* one.

The Scriptural Proof

Jesus was resurrected on Sunday!

— Mark 16:9 —

[ERV](#) — Jesus rose from death early on the **first day** of the week...

[EASY](#) — Jesus became alive again early on the **first day** of the week...

[ICB](#) — Jesus rose from death early on the **first day** of the week...

[TLB](#) — It was early on **Sunday morning** when Jesus came back to life...

[NIRV](#) — Jesus rose from the dead early on the **first day** of the week...

[WE](#) — Jesus rose early on the **first day** of the week.

[DLNT](#) — And Jesus having risen-up early-in-the-morning on the **first day** of the week...

[NLV](#) — It was early on the **first day** of the week when Jesus was raised from the dead...

The Mathematical Proof

Christ was Crucified on Thursday

Luke 24 (NLT)

1 — But very early on **Sunday** morning...

13 — **That same day** two of Jesus' followers were walking to the village of Emmaus...

20 — But our leading priests and other religious leaders handed him over to be **condemned to death, and they crucified Him.**

Verse 21:

— This all happened **three days ago.** NLT

— Which happened **three days ago.** TLB

— Today is the **third day** since these things happened. NKJV

— All these things happened **three days ago.** CEB

— It has been **three days since he was killed.** ERV

— But it was **three days ago** when these things happened. NLV

— Today is the **third day since Jesus died.** EASY

— Anyway, on top of all this, just this morning — **the third day after the execution...** VOICE



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