

# Christ Was but Two Days and Two Nights in The Grave

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Christ Was to Be Three Days and Three Nights  
in the Grave  
(*Matthew 12:40; Mark 8:31*)

Christ Was but Two Days and Two Nights in the  
Grave  
(*Mark 15:25, 42, 44-46; 16:9*)

Those who claim that Christ was in the grave for only two days and nights are striking at the very sign used to confirm he was the prophesied Son of Almighty God (Mt. 12:22- 24; cf. 12:38-40). Therefore, if this accusation were correct, no sinner would have any hope of everlasting life because Christ's statement that he would die and be in the grave three days and nights would have been false (cf. Ex. 20:16). If Christ were a false witness, he would have sinned and his Father in heaven could not resurrect him to everlasting life.

And if Christ is not risen, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins (no hope of forgiveness)!<sup>18</sup>Then also those who have fallen asleep (died) in Christ have perished (1Cor. 15:17-18; Ed. notes in parentheses; NKJV used throughout unless otherwise noted).

The key to understanding how some people arrive at two days and two nights is based on an erroneous interpretation of Mark 15:42. In this verse, the Sabbath being referred to is a High Day, which can occur on any day of the week.

Therefore, because it (day of Christ's death) was the Preparation Day, that the bodies (of Christ and four criminals; see study: The Two Thieves Reviled Christ) should not remain on the cross on the Sabbath, **for that Sabbath was a high**

**day** (cf. Ex. 12:16; Lev. 23:6-7), the Jews asked Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away (Jn. 19:31; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

If Christ died just before the weekly Sabbath commenced (late Friday afternoon on most secular calendars used today) and was raised from the dead three days and three nights later, he would have been resurrected late on a Monday. If only two days and nights are counted from a late Friday death, Christ would have been resurrected late on a Sunday, and both these positions are contrary to the Christian tradition that Christ was raised on a Sunday morning ([en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Resurrection\\_of\\_Jesus](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Resurrection_of_Jesus)). However, as Christ's resurrection occurred late on the weekly Sabbath (Saturday on most secular calendars), if three days and three nights are subtracted from the time he rose, his death would have occurred late on a Wednesday (see graph: The Timing of the Death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ). This would mean that Thursday was the first High Day Sabbath during the Feast of Unleavened Bread of that year, which follows immediately after the Passover (see study: The Feast of Unleavened Bread).

Another confirmation that Christ was in the grave from late on Wednesday until late on the weekly Sabbath, or Saturday, is found in the activities of the women who bought spices to anoint Christ's body.

Then he (Joseph of Arimathea; cf. Lk. 23:50-51) took it (Christ's body) down, wrapped it in linen, and laid it in a tomb that was hewn out of rock, where no one had ever lain before.<sup>54</sup>That day was the Preparation, and the (High) Sabbath (see Jn. 19:31) drew near.<sup>55</sup>And the women who had come with him (Christ) from Galilee followed after, and they observed the tomb and how his body was laid.<sup>56</sup>Then they returned and

prepared spices and fragrant oils. And they rested on the Sabbath (Thursday which was the first High Day Sabbath during the Feast of Unleavened Bread of that year) according to the commandment (Lk. 23:52-56; Ed. notes in parentheses).

As these women had not anticipated the timing of Christ's death, they were not prepared for it. Consequently, they had to go out and purchase spices the day after the first High Day, as well as making other purchases in preparation for the weekly Sabbath. These business activities would have occurred on a Friday, which also is a Preparation day before the weekly Sabbath (Saturday). Therefore, there were two Preparation days during the same week. One before the High Day, which fell on a Thursday, and one before the weekly Sabbath.

Now when the Sabbath was past (Thursday - High Day), Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices (on Friday), that they might come and anoint him (Christ; after the weekly Sabbath ended) (Mk. 16:1; Ed. notes in parentheses).

Having purchased spices on the Friday Preparation day as well as securing other provisions for the weekly Sabbath, these women rested until the Sabbath was over (cf. Ex. 20:8-11; Isa. 58:13-14). When the weekly Sabbath was over (Saturday night based on most secular calendars; see study: How to Determine the Beginning and End of the Day), it would have been dark, and the women would not risk traveling at night without a male escort (see study: The Role of Women in the Church). Instead, they traveled in the early morning only to find that Christ's tomb was already empty (see study: It Was Sunrise When They Came to the Sepulcher).

Now after the (weekly) Sabbath (Saturday night), as the first day of the week (Sunday) began to dawn, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came to see the tomb (Mt. 28:1; Ed. notes in parentheses).

When the women arrived at Christ's tomb, it was early Sunday morning and Christ had already risen. The reason Christ's body was gone is because he was resurrected late on Saturday, which was three days and three nights since his burial late on Wednesday. Another confirmation of this fact is found in the account of the Roman guards, who were given the task of securing Christ's sepulcher. Instead of keeping watch, these guards were overcome by a series of events, including an earthquake and the appearance of an angel of God. According to scripture, these guards fainted due to shock (cf. Mt. 28:4), and this occurred late on Saturday. As soon as they recovered consciousness, they traveled into Jerusalem to report what had happened. This event was a source of embarrassment for the Romans because it occurred while there still was some light, late on a Saturday. As a result, it was easy for the Jewish religious leaders to convince the guards to lie about what happened, and claim that some of Christ's followers stole his body during the night. This fact alone should be enough to prove that Christ did not rise from the dead anywhere near Sunday morning as many in Christianity teach today.

And the guards shook for fear of him (an angel of God), and became like dead men (SGD 3498; became inactive, inoperative, inanimate; i.e. passed out from fright) (Mt. 28:4; Ed. notes in parentheses).

Now while they (the women) were going, behold, some of the guard came into the city and reported to the chief priests all the things that had happened. <sup>12</sup>When they had assembled with

the elders and taken counsel, they (the Jewish religious leaders) gave a large sum of money to the soldiers, <sup>13</sup>saying, 'Tell them, "His disciples came at night and stole him (Christ) away while we slept"' (Mt. 28:11-13; Ed. notes in parentheses).

The problem with this bribery is that the captain of the guard could have these soldiers executed for failure to complete the mission they were given. However, the cunning Jewish religious leaders covered this as well.

And if this (cover up) comes to the governor's ears, we will appease him (probably with another bribe) and make you secure (safe from execution). <sup>15</sup>So they (the guards) took the money and did as they were instructed; and this saying is commonly reported among Jews until this day (Mt. 28:14-15; Ed. notes in parentheses).

In conclusion, it is clear that calculating the time Christ was in the grave, as being two days and two nights, is based on a misunderstanding of the sequence of events that occurred during the week in which he was executed. The primary error is the belief that Christ died on a Friday, when in fact he died late on a Wednesday and was resurrected late on the weekly Sabbath (Saturday) of that same week. By the time the women arrived at Christ's tomb early Sunday morning, he had already risen from the dead. As previously noted, the Roman guards covered up their failure to secure Christ's sepulcher by lying and stating that Christ's disciples stole his body during the night, when in fact Christ had risen late on Saturday, just before dark. Even the scheming Jewish religious leaders knew when Christ said he would rise from the dead (Mt. 27:63), which is why they asked Pilate to secure Christ's tomb until late on Saturday. Had Christ remained in his sepulcher after dark had commenced on Saturday, the Roman guards

would no longer have been on duty because their mandate was exactly three days and three nights from the time Christ was placed in the sepulcher (Mt. 27:62-66). However, as Christ rose from the dead just before the guards were due to leave their post late Saturday afternoon, they were subject to discipline, including execution (see: [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Decimation\\_\(Roman\\_army\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Decimation_(Roman_army))).

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