

Chapter 4

Establishing Time Elements of the Trial of Jesus and Other Considerations

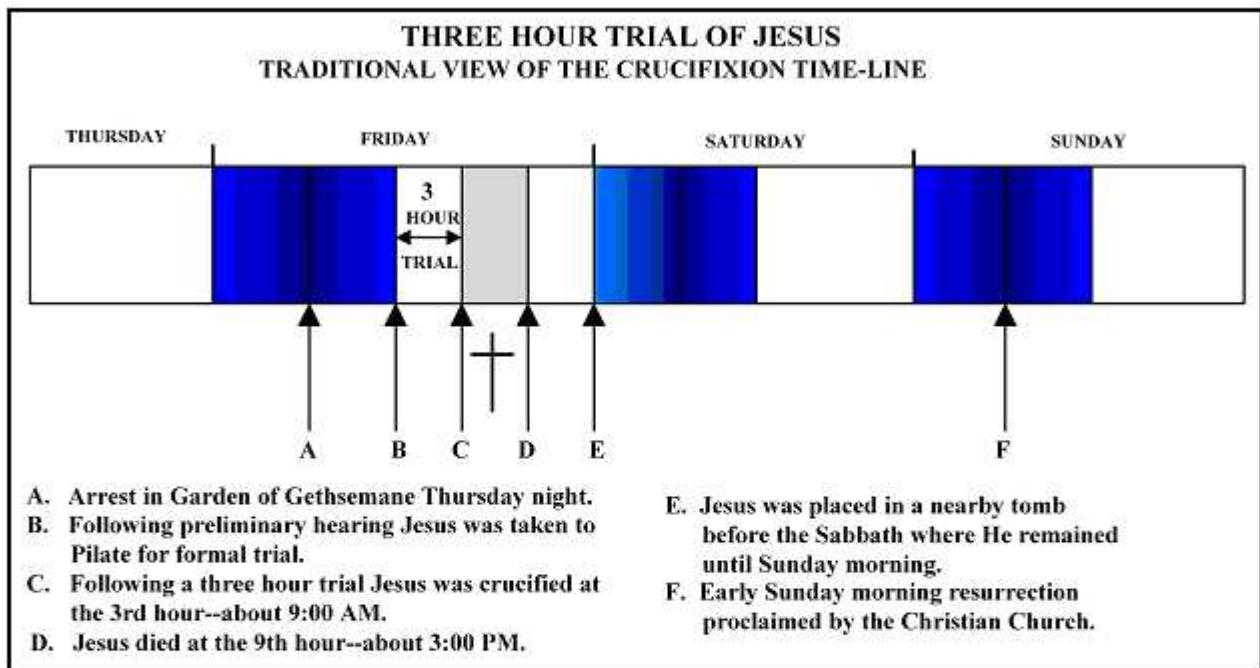
The Christian community generally accepts the traditional view of the elapsed time involved in the trial and crucifixion of Jesus. Tradition maintains that Jesus ate the Passover meal with his disciples, instituted the Lord's Supper, and retired to the Garden of Gethsemane. In due course, tradition asserts, He was arrested, taken to the house of the high priest, and interrogated. From there Jesus was taken before Pilate (At daybreak--about 6:00 AM--[Luke 22:66; Matthew 27:1-2]), then to Herod, brought back to Pilate where He was interrogated again, condemned, scourged, mocked, and finally crucified later that morning--at approximately 9:00 AM (The third hour--[Mark 5:25]).

In the traditional view three hours (6:00 AM - 9:00 AM) are allocated for the trial before Pilate and associated activities of the crucifixion event. The assumption has existed in nearly all Christian literature that the arrest in the Garden of Gethsemane was made the night preceding His trial and crucifixion. Since the traditional view of the trial of Jesus places the crucifixion event on Friday, the arrest in the Garden of Gethsemane is made to occur on Thursday night. This night is called Maundy¹ Thursday in the Christian Church.

This work questions the traditional view that only three hours was involved in the trial and crucifixion of Jesus Christ. This work maintains that the time allotted by tradition of three hours in the trial of Jesus for the fifty-one separate trial events, condemnation, mocking and trial location transitions is not accurate and cannot be substantiated. Transaction analysis of trial events and computer simulations require that the trial take longer than three hours. Three chapters, chapters 4, 5 & 6, cite the evidences for trial dating given required timing modifications. Our claim is that this new data enables the trial occurrence to be accurately dated for the first time. The resultant implications for our understanding of history and eschatological analysis are enormous

The following diagram illustrates the elapsed trial time supposed in the traditional view:

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In the three-hour complete trial scenario, fifty-one trial transaction events are supposedly accomplished in 180 minutes or a completed trial transaction event every 3.53 minutes. Yet just the transit times alone, the movement from one trial location to another measured at a reasonable transit rate, range from a low of fifty-three minutes to a high of ninety-five minutes, nearly one and one half hours. (If the high transit time estimate is allowed and five transit time events are subtracted from the three hour traditional trial times, only eighty-five minutes are then allocated for the remaining forty-six trial events--this has one trial event occurring every 1.85 minutes--an unlikely and unreasonable circumstance). Both transaction

analysis and computer simulation give empirical evidence that the trial of Jesus spanned a much longer period of time than the three hours tradition has allocated to the trial. It is the author's contention that the trial before the Sanhedrin, two trials before Pilate, one trial before Herod, and the time involved in mocking Jesus and crucifying Him, along with the time required to transit from one trial location to another cannot be accomplished in three hours--the trial timing elements must be reconsidered and re-evaluated.

Transaction analysis, a review of each trial transaction event, which assigns probable elapsed time to the event, indicates that the trial continued for an entire day and extended on into the night. However, transaction analysis alone cannot provide definitive information as to the actual length of the trial or when the trial process terminated. John 19:14 provides specific information concerning the trial termination time. Transaction analysis and the passage in John concerning the sixth hour condemnation are complementary information sources, which together identify a full-day trial overlooked in history. A reading of this critical passage in John 19:14 is as follows:²

ηνδε παρασκευη τον πασχα ωρα οε ωσει εκτη
(and it was [the] preparation of the Passover [the] hour and about the sixth)

The passage in John cited has been the subject of much speculation and has caused substantial negative Gospel criticism. When a three-hour trial is assumed, the citation in John concerning the sixth hour condemnation time cannot be reconciled with other timing aspects of the event. This anomaly has brought Gospel veracity into question. Some have attempted answers in terms of the difference between Jewish and Roman timekeeping, particularly the difference in the length of the nighttime watches after the Roman occupation. Some have attempted an explanation and reconciliation on the supposed difference between the Galilean and Judean methods of timekeeping. However, vagueness clouds these attempts as the varied answers seem strained, a plethora of unnecessary contrived complexity.

When it is recognized that the trial process continued much longer than that allocated by tradition, the passage found in John concerning the sixth hour condemnation becomes viable as the simple historical record of the trial termination time. The sixth hour (midnight) condemnation is the logical conclusion of the long, drawn-out, full-day, trial process and confirms what transaction analysis indicates.³

The two complementary information sources combine to identify a full-day trial. Historical information loss of the full-day trial in the formation of the traditional view has allowed a three-hour trial process to gradually assume the place of certainty. It is an error of great consequence. Without complete trial timing information, an accurate projection of many associated things such as trial dating is not possible. The correction of this historical information loss provides the necessary factual basis, which allows the trial to be accurately dated, and to focus other Christ event related data.

In addition to the assumption of a three-hour Friday morning trial, many efforts have been made to date the trial,⁴ and ongoing trial dating speculation continues. Much of the effort, up to this point, has relied on speculative textual analysis and substantial secondary (external to the gospels) data sources to substantiate hypotheses about the timing of trial events. Yet even when buttressed with much scholarly support, uncertainty has only deepened regarding accurate trial timing and dating. In such an intellectual environment a straightforward solution would appear all the more elusive and improbable.

The duration of the trial process--the length of the trial--impacts many things related to the crucifixion story. For instance, if a trial duration timing error exists, accurate dating of the trial is affected. This work maintains that a trial duration timing error does exist and that the error constitutes a missing full day in the trial time accounting. This missing element, a vital full-day trial, is causing the many sincere trial-dating efforts to be clouded with vagueness, uncertainty and to be, of necessity, inaccurate.

A total of fifty-one separate transaction events have been identified in the trial of Jesus. The following illustrations of the Thursday and Friday trial events time line summarize the identified transaction information:

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as a sample.**

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