

Arrest, Trial, and Crucifixion

Similarities among Gospels

- Presence in Jerusalem at Passover time
- Conspiracy by Jewish authorities
- Betrayal by Judas
- Last Supper with disciples on night of arrest
- Arrest that night by Jewish authorities accompanied by Judas
- Appearance at night before Jewish authorities
- denial by Peter
- Appearance next morning before Pontius Pilate
- release of Barabbas
- Crucifixion on Roman cross as "King of Jews"
- Burial by Joseph of Arimathea

Why Historicity of Passion Story is Questioned

- Why Isn't Multiple Attestation Enough?
- Theological tendency in the story to see story as fulfillment of Old Testament (Ps. 22, etc.)
- Apologetic tendency to shift responsibility for Jesus' execution from Romans to Jewish leaders (but we know from external sources that Pilate was ruthless)
- Form Criticism suggests that the form of the story was set early so that all the sources were working with a common story
- Disagreement over important details among gospel accounts

Date - when did Jesus die?

- Agreement on Thursday evening of arrest and Friday afternoon of crucifixion (in Jewish calendar this is the same day)
- Synoptics say this time period was the 15th of Nisan, the day of Passover
- Gospel of John says this time period was the 14th of Nisan, the day of Preparation

Option 1 – 15 Nisan

- Synoptic date is correct and John's reflects his theological interest to identify Jesus with the sacrifice of the paschal lamb
 - Problem -seems unlikely that crucifixion would occur on holy day when execution & burial were outlawed by Jewish law, and
 - Passover meal does not mention all typical elements, especially lamb

Option 2 – 14 Nisan

- John's date is correct and synoptics reflect concern to identify last supper as a ritual replacing Passover
 - Problem - there are still many similarities between last supper in synoptics and Passover meal, e.g., type of wine, dish for dipping bread, etc.

Option 3 – Different Calendars

- **Both dates are correct!**
 - Either Jesus celebrated Passover a day early (like celebrating Christmas on Christmas eve)
 - Or the gospel writers had access to different calendars, one which would place Passover on Thursday evening/Friday afternoon, and the other would have had Passover on Friday evening/Saturday afternoon

Option 4 – Neither is Correct

- **Neither date is correct:**
 - both reflect theological concerns
 - the events in the gospels probably occurred near the time of Passover, close enough that it was natural for gospel writers to make theological connections

Nature of Trial

- We don't know anything outside gospels about Sanhedrin trials and trials before Roman governors were carried out in first century
- Mark & Matt say Jesus was on trial before Sanhedrin, but Luke and John suggest there was only an inquiry
- Mark & Matt suggest Jesus was found guilty of blasphemy; Luke suggests a political charge (not paying taxes to Caesar, claiming to be king); John suggests religious charge of claiming to be son of God

Two theories about trial(s)

- Jesus underwent two trials
- Jesus underwent one trial, before Roman authorities

Crucifixion

- What was crucifixion?
- What was the medical cause of Jesus' death?
- What Did Jesus Think of His Death? (A look at words of last supper)
 - Jesus saw his death as making a new covenant (Luke & Paul)
 - Jesus saw death as "substitutionary atonement"
 - Jesus saw himself as martyr for the reign of God
