

Jesus Christ Died at the Appointed Time

About 2,000 years ago, God sent His Son to earth to die in our place to atone for our sins. As we'll see shortly in God's Word, God planned it before the foundation of the world, before time began.

It's the most momentous event in all of human history. Everything in the Bible points to it, in both Old and New Testaments. In fact, the Apostle Paul "determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified" (1 Cor. 2:2).

Our salvation — our eternal life — God's entire plan — hinges on Christ's sacrifice. Without Christ's death and resurrection, we are nothing. We are dead men walking, awaiting the doom of eternal death. But through His death and resurrection, we can live forever with Him!

All four gospels carefully establish that Jesus died on Nisan 14th, the preparation day for the Feast of Unleavened Bread and the same day God's people sacrificed the Passover lambs in the Old Testament (Ex. 12:6). Is this just a coincidence, or is it crucially important?

1 Cor. 5:7 tells us Christ is our Passover Lamb, and Rev. 13:8 tells us that He was "slain from the foundation of the world." That is, God ordained Jesus Christ to be our Passover sacrifice from the very beginning, from creation!

Furthermore, Matthew, Mark, and Luke all tell us that Christ died at the 9th hour. That's three witnesses telling us three times when He died. Again, were they just telling us a random fact, or is this crucially important?

There's no filler in God's Word. Everything is there for a reason.

Does that mean that God planned all this out in advance? Or did He let man decide?

In fact, Christ's sacrifice was God's plan all along, before He even created the world. He tells us in 1 Pet. 1:19-20 that He spared us by "the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot. **He indeed was foreordained before the foundation of the world.**"

We learn in Eph. 3:11 that Christ's sacrifice was God's "eternal purpose." In Acts 2:23, we're told that Jesus died only "by the determined purpose and foreknowledge of God."

Since God planned this out before He even created the world, and it was His eternal purpose, it would seem logical that He also planned out when it would happen. But we don't have to assume that, for Gal. 4:4 tells us explicitly, "But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son." Christ's sacrifice happened when God decided it would happen!

Did man have any control or any say in the matter at all?

Here's John 11:49-52: "And one of them, Caiaphas, being high priest that year, said to them, 'You know nothing at all, nor do you consider that it is expedient for us that one man should die for the people, and not that the whole nation should perish.' **Now this he did not say on his own authority**; but being high priest that year he prophesied that Jesus would die for the nation, and not for that nation only, but also that He would gather together in one the children of God who were scattered abroad."

Even when evil and corrupt men plotted against His Son, God remained in control, right down to putting His own words in the mouth of the high priest and chief plotter!

In Acts 4:27-28, the apostles prayed these words: "For truly against Your holy Servant Jesus, whom You anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the people of Israel, were gathered together to do whatever Your hand and Your purpose determined before to be done."

Again, God's Word tells us that this was all part of His plan, that He planned all the details before He created us, and that nothing was done contrary to His plan.

When Jesus was brought before Pontius Pilate, He informed Pilate that God the Father was the one in control: "Jesus answered, 'You could have no power at all against Me unless it had been given you from above'" (John 19:11).

No, man had no control in the matter. God planned everything. He worked through evil and corrupt men who wanted His Son's death, but they couldn't do anything He didn't allow them to do.

Jesus Christ was nailed to the cross or stake at the 3rd hour (Mark 15:25), or roughly 9 AM by modern time. Darkness fell over all the land from the 6th hour (noon) until the 9th hour (Mat. 27:45; Mark 15:33; Luke 23:44). At the 9th hour, or about 3 PM by modern time, Jesus died (Mat. 27:46-50; Mark 15:34-36; Luke 23:44-46). When He died, the veil in the temple was torn in two and the earth quaked (Mat.27:51).

When Jesus died at the 9th hour, Pilate marveled that He had died so soon (Mar. 15:44). Crucifixion was a slow, torturous method of execution. The condemned sometimes clung to life for days before finally succumbing. Yet our Savior died in only 6 hours. Why was that? Because it was the Father's will.

Man had no control over whether, when, or how Jesus died; God did.

Man didn't plan for the Messiah to be nailed to the cross or stake at the 3rd hour (9 AM); God did.

Man had no control over the darkness that fell over the land at the 6th hour (noon); God did.

Man had no control over Christ dying at the 9th hour (3 PM); God did.

Man had no control over the darkness lifting, the veil in the temple being torn in two, or the earthquake happening when Christ died; God did.

As Rom. 5:6 tells us, "For when we were still without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly." In other words, it was at the time the Father appointed. Jesus Christ died at the appointed time.

Now, the question is, why did the Father appoint Nisan 14th at the 9th hour for His Son to die? We might also ask, Why did He choose for His Son to be on the cross from the 3rd to the 9th hour? Why did He choose to send darkness over the land from the 6th hour until the 9th hour? Why did He determine these things before He even created the world?

Remember that Jesus Christ was our Passover Lamb and that He was sacrificed on the same day the Passover lambs were always sacrificed: Nisan 14th. The Passover sacrifice, too, happened at an appointed time each year. We read in Num. 9:13, "But the man who is clean and is not on a journey, and ceases to keep the Passover, that same person shall be cut off

from among his people, because he did not bring the offering of the LORD at its appointed time; that man shall bear his sin.”

Those who didn't sacrifice the Passover at its appointed time on the 14th of Nisan would bear their sin. Similarly, those who refuse to accept Jesus Christ's sacrifice still bear their sins.

As the book [*The Lord's Passover* \(available for free online\)](#), by this writer, proves in detail from both Scriptural and historical sources, the Passover sacrifices began each year at the 9th hour on Nisan 14 — the same day and same time Jesus died!

What else happened at the 3rd and the 9th hours? As the book also shows, four things happened at this time each day: 1) the sacrifice of a yearling, unblemished, male lamb, 2) tending of the lampstand in the temple, 3) offering incense to God, and 4) the people gathering at the temple to pray. All this can be easily proved from Scripture, though it's beyond the scope of this article.

Here's another interesting point: every day “between the two evenings” — that is, at the 9th hour — as the evening sacrifice was offered, the priests in the temple lit the lampstand, just as God instructed in Ex. 30:8. “Twilight” is a mistranslation in this verse; the correct time was the 9th hour, but that, too, is covered in [*The Lord's Passover*](#) and is beyond the scope of this article.

Now, remember that there was darkness over all the land from the 6th hour to the 9th hour. That means that when Jesus died, when the priests always lit the lampstand in the temple, the darkness lifted!

Is all this a coincidence? Was it a coincidence that Jesus died as our Passover Lamb on the same day and at the time of day as the Passover lambs? Was it a coincidence that He was nailed to the cross at the morning sacrifice and died at the evening sacrifice? Was it a coincidence that He died and the darkness lifted at the same time the lampstand was lit?

Consider this: God foretold centuries earlier that the earth would become dark at noon. We read in Amos 8:9, “‘And it shall come to pass in that day,’ says the Lord GOD, ‘That I will make the sun go down at noon, and I will darken the earth in broad daylight.’” Only one time in history has this happened, and it was during Jesus' crucifixion! God planned it that way.

The preceding verse, Amos 8:8, mentions the land trembling, which it literally did at Jesus' death. In Amos 8:10, we read, "I will turn your feasts into mourning, and all your songs into lamentation; I will bring sackcloth on every waist, and baldness on every head; I will make it like mourning for an only son, and its end like a bitter day."

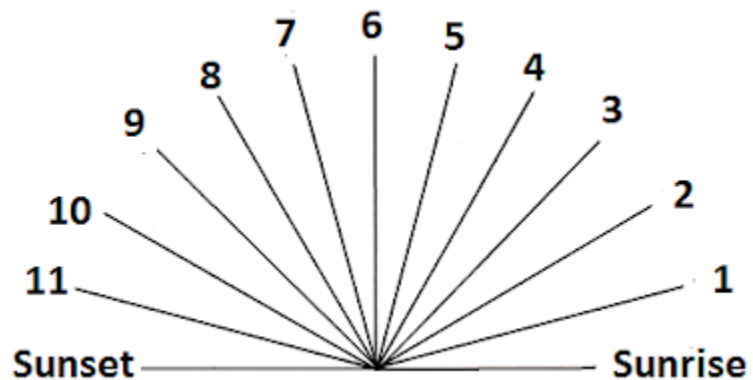
This verse is expounded upon in Zech. 12:10: "And I will pour on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem the Spirit of grace and supplication; then they will look on Me whom they pierced. Yes, they will mourn for Him as one mourns for his only son, and grieve for Him as one grieves for a firstborn."

Clearly, it's talking about Jesus' death! He's the one whom they pierced — not only His hands and feet in nailing Him to the cross, but also His side with a spear (John 19:34). And it was the inhabitants of Jerusalem who did so.

Even Jesus' manner of death was described in Psa. 22, a psalm which vividly, and in medically precise terms, described crucifixion's effects upon a human body — centuries before crucifixions happened!

Is our God not an awesome God? He planned everything down to the smallest detail thousands of years before it happened! It boggles the mind to think about.

But here's another interesting fact. In Isa. 28:16-17, we read, "Therefore thus says the Lord GOD: 'Behold, I lay in Zion a stone for a foundation, a tried stone, a precious cornerstone, a sure foundation; whoever believes will not act hastily. Also I will make justice the measuring line, and righteousness the plummet; the hail will sweep away the refuge of lies, and the waters will overflow the hiding place.'"



Who is the sure foundation? Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 3:11). Who is the cornerstone? Jesus Christ (1 Pet. 2:6-7). Now, then, does this passage tell us anything about His sacrifice?

A plummet, also called a plumbline or plumb bob, hangs straight down to form a straight, perpendicular line with the earth. When we look at the hours of the crucifixion, we see that the plummet is noon. That's when the sun is directly overhead. As for the 3rd and the 9th hours form a perfect square, a 90-degree angle — a cornerstone. The very hours of the crucifixion reveal to us Jesus Christ as our cornerstone and sure foundation!

Is this by chance? Or did God plan it that way?

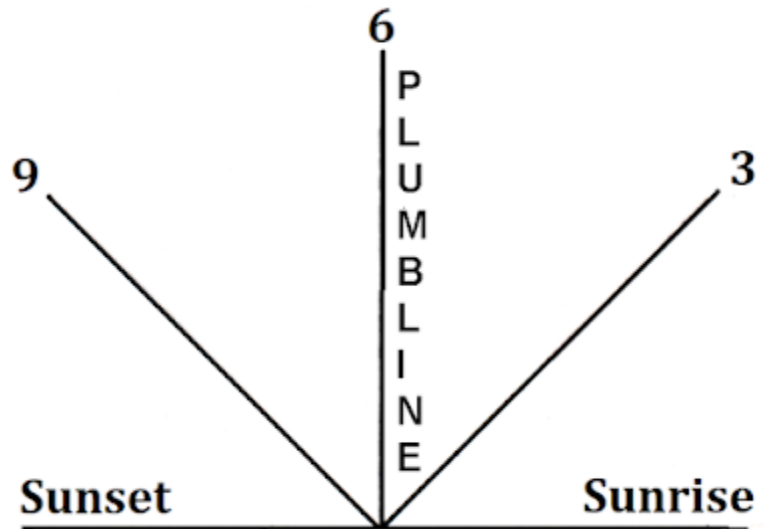
God's attention to detail is unfathomable. He designed everything in the universe, from red giant stars to the smallest insects. He knows every hair on our heads (Mat. 10:30). Not so much as a sparrow falls to the ground against His will (Mat. 10:29).

He knows every thought we think and every word we say, He designed every cell in our bodies, He designed every rod and cone in our eyes.

God our Father left nothing to chance! He is the Master Architect and Designer. He planned out everything, down to the smallest detail.

Christ's death and resurrection are the two most important events in all of human history. Could anyone truly believe that their timing was meaningless — subject to the whims of the Jews or the Romans? If the timing was meaningless, why is His hour of death repeated three times in the gospels? Is the time given just for filler? Trivial details? Or is it extraordinarily important?

As we've now seen, God's Word tells us that Jesus Christ died at the time appointed by the Father. He planned everything before man existed, before He even created the world. The



entire Old Covenant system of sacrifices pointed to Jesus Christ and His ultimate sacrifice. That was the whole point of it. The Passover sacrifice pointed to Christ. The daily offerings pointed to Christ.

As a writer named Juan Rains elegantly put it, "...the priests offered no sacrifice before the morning sacrifice and they offered no sacrifice after the evening sacrifice.... Therefore, the Messiah hung on the tree for the entire duration of time that Israel offered any sacrifice or made any offering. Christ is the sacrifice to end all sacrifices; He covered them all. Christ was the morning sacrifice, the evening sacrifice, and the Passover offering. He is the first and the last, the Alpha and the Omega."

All praise be to God our Father and our Lord Jesus Christ!

Written by Brett Gray