



The Date of the Crucifixion

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To cite this article: Charles Watson (1906) The Date of the Crucifixion, Palestine Exploration Quarterly, 38:4, 274-278, DOI: [10.1179/peq.1906.38.4.274](https://doi.org/10.1179/peq.1906.38.4.274)

To link to this article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1179/peq.1906.38.4.274>



Published online: 20 Nov 2013.



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subject :—Foss Westcott and Handley Moule of Durham, Hon. and Rev. E. Carr Glynn, Bishop of Peterborough ; Bishops of Ripon, Salisbury, Cashel and Waterford, and Newcastle (Australia). Amongst minor dignitaries of the Church who supported the purchase, may be mentioned the late Canon Tristram, D.D., F.R.S., Canons Appleton, Hobson, Lowe, Philipps, Rev. Preb. Webb Peploe, Rev. Stuart A. Donaldson, Master of Magdalen College, Cambridge, and the Archdeacons of London and Middlesex (1893-4).

The subscribers, donors, trustees and patrons of the Garden Tomb property include many scholars, authors, artists and men of affairs representative of all phases of modern religious thought. The support thus shown does not, of course, imply any belief in the identification of the tomb, or any acceptance of Gen. Gordon's mystical views ; but it may be taken for granted that few would have supported the purchase had it not been considered to be of public importance. Apart, moreover, from any question of identification, the Garden Tomb property is considered by many as well worth preservation both as a Jerusalem memorial of Gen. Gordon, and as a site full of archæological remains of great interest. Gen. Gordon has left on record his belief, "I have still a strong opinion that we shall find the Constantine sepulchre is close to the St. Stephen's Church, outside the Damascus Gate where the cisterns are" (p. 199). This opinion apparently refers to the Garden Tomb site ; and whether it be well founded or not, it is surely a matter of public concern that a spot so interesting and so important to archæologists should be preserved in friendly hands for the use and enjoyment of visitors, and for future study and investigation.

THE DATE OF THE CRUCIFIXION.

BY SIR CHARLES WATSON, K.C.M.G., C.B., R.E., M.A.

MR. DAVISON'S paper dealing with the question of the week-day upon which the Crucifixion took place, which was published in the *Quarterly Statement* of last April, refers to a subject which has frequently been discussed since very early times. Much useful information respecting it is given in the two following books: *Ordo Saeculorum*, by the Rev. Henry Browne, published in 1844 ; and

the *Historical Introduction to the Books of the New Testament*, by the Rev. George Salmon, Provost of Trinity College, Dublin, the eighth edition of which was published in 1897.

Although various writers have held different views as to the year date of the Crucifixion, it has been almost universally agreed that Friday was the day of the week, the Friday in question being the day of preparation for the Feast of the Passover, *i.e.*, the 14th day of the Jewish month Nisan. Mr. Davison, on the other hand, takes the view that the 14th Nisan in that year was Wednesday, and that the great day of the Feast, the 15th Nisan, was Thursday.

A solution of the question appears to depend upon two kinds of argument, the first astronomical, and the second historical, which mutually help each other. The astronomical argument is based on the fact that the Feast of the Passover was celebrated upon a day that coincided, or nearly coincided with the day of full moon, so that, if we know the day of the Paschal full moon in any year, we may be pretty sure that the 15th Nisan was either that day or the day next to it. As, however, the Jewish day commenced at sunset, it included parts of two of our days; but, for the sake of convenience, it is usual, on making a comparison, to say that the 15th Nisan was the week-day in the Christian calendar, the greater part of which corresponded with the 15th Nisan. For instance, if it is stated that the 15th Nisan in a particular year was Saturday, what is meant is that the 15th Nisan included the twenty-four hours from sunset on Friday to sunset on Saturday, so that it contained about six hours of Friday, and about eighteen hours of Saturday. It is rather important to state this, as I have known persons, who were under the impression that the Jewish day corresponded to the Christian day, in which the former commenced. The point has to be carefully borne in mind when considering the date of full moon, for, if the moon reaches the full *after* sunset on any day, the Jewish week-day for full moon will be the day following the Christian week-day. I do not propose to discuss the historical arguments for fixing the year date of the Crucifixion, and will only assume that it must have taken place during the time that Pontius Pilate was Procurator of Judaea. This period is generally given as from A.D. 25 to A.D. 35, and though these dates may not be correct to a year, yet the period certainly includes all the years, in which the Crucifixion could have occurred.

The dates and hours (minutes being omitted) of the equinoctial

full moon at Jerusalem for each of the years in question were as given in the following table, which Dr. Downing, the Superintendent of the Nautical Almanac Office has kindly checked, and which may therefore be regarded as correct.

No.	A.D.	Month.	Day.	Hour.	Day of Week.	
					Christian.	Jewish.
1	25	April	1st	10 P.M.	Sunday	Monday.
2	26	April	20th	3 P.M.	Saturday	Saturday.
3	27	April	9th	7 P.M.	Wednesday	Thursday.
4	28	March	29th	5 A.M.	Monday	Monday.
5	29	March	18th	9 P.M.	Friday	Saturday.
6	29	April	17th	5 A.M.	Sunday	Sunday.
7	30	April	6th	9 P.M.	Thursday	Friday.
8	31	March	27th	1 P.M.	Tuesday	Tuesday.
9	32	April	14th	11 A.M.	Monday	Monday.
10	33	April	3rd	5 P.M.	Friday	Friday.
11	34	March	23rd	6 P.M.	Tuesday	Tuesday.
12	35	April	11th	11 A.M.	Monday	Monday.

In the above list two dates are given for full moon in A.D. 29, as it is a little uncertain which of these is likely to have been the paschal full moon in that year.

As the day of full moon in the month of the Crucifixion cannot have been on any day of the week except Thursday, Friday, or Saturday, the dates Nos. 1, 4, 6, 8, 9, 11, and 12 need not be considered further. With regard to the remaining five dates we find that full moon was on Thursday (Jewish Calendar) in A.D. 27; on Friday in A.D. 30 and 33; and on Saturday in A.D. 26 and 29.

The actual day of full moon in Nisan in these years being thus fixed, it is necessary to consider what were the probable days observed as the 15th Nisan, the Feast of the Passover. This is not easy, as the Jewish date of full moon was settled by the date of the new moon, which had occurred fourteen days before, and the latter date was fixed by actual observation of the new moon after sunset, so that an error of a day could easily be made. There is also another point which is somewhat obscure. There appears to be a tradition among the Jews that when full moon is on Tuesday, Thursday, or Saturday, that day is observed as the 15th Nisan; but, if the full moon is on Monday, Wednesday, or Friday, then the day following is the 15th Nisan.

If, for instance, we examine the Jewish calendar for the past quarter of a century, we find that in the years 1882, 1885, and 1906, full moon was on Monday, and 15th Nisan was ²on Tuesday.

In 1881, 1889, 1892, 1895, and 1902, full moon was on Tuesday and the 15th Nisan was also on Tuesday.

In 1898 and 1905, full moon was on Wednesday and the 15th Nisan on Thursday.

In 1884, 1901, and 1904, full moon was on Thursday and the 15th Nisan on Thursday.

In 1880, 1887, and 1894, full moon was on Friday and the 15th Nisan on Saturday.

In 1890, 1893, and 1897, full moon was on Saturday and the 15th Nisan also on Saturday.

In a few exceptional cases the 15th Nisan was observed on the day before full moon; for example in 1888, full moon was on Wednesday and 15th Nisan was on Tuesday, and in 1899, full moon was on Monday and the 15th Nisan was on Sunday.

I do not know the meaning of this custom, nor when it originated, and the only direct allusion to it that I have found is in Hopton's *Concordance of Years*, published in 1612. He says, in his treatise on the method of fixing the date of Easter: "The Jews' Easter was commanded to be kept the 14th day of the first month, called Abib, which day at even was the Lord's Passover, and the 15th day should be the holy Convocation. . . . And this 15th day is taken for the first day after the first full moon, happening after the spring equinoctial; which institution the Jews altered, holding a superstitious opinion of days, and thereby would not keep their Easter upon a Monday, Wednesday, or Friday, thereby breaking the commandment of God, like stiff necked people."

There is a paragraph bearing on the subject in an article by Mr. Filipowski on the "Method of Computing the Hebrew Calendar," published in the *Lady's and Gentleman's Diary* for 1850. In this he says: "The year begins with the month Tisri, it being the 7th in the year, and is fixed on or immediately after the day of mean new moon of that month (which always takes place during the month of September), provided the new moon does not occur within the last six hours of the day (the day commences and terminates at 6 p.m.). The new year is not to be fixed on either of the following days, Sunday, Wednesday, or Friday. Accordingly, if the new moon happens to take place on either of

"these days, the new year is postponed respectively to the next "following day."

If it is assumed that a similar custom was observed in the first century, the following is the final conclusion arrived at.

In the year A.D. 26, the 15th Nisan, the day of the Feast of the Passover, was probably Saturday or Sunday.

In the year A.D. 27, the 15th Nisan was probably Thursday.

In the years A.D. 29, 30, and 33, the 15th Nisan was probably Saturday.

Which of these years is most likely to be the correct one is a matter to be decided on historical grounds, but it will be seen that the only year which would suit Mr. Davison's theory would be A.D. 27, and that is most probably too early.

With reference to the last paragraph of Mr. Davison's paper, it will be seen that in the years A.D. 30 and 33, the day of full moon was Friday, and, if the Feast of the Passover should have been observed on that day, the day of preparation should have been Thursday. There may therefore be some force in the argument that, assuming that the Crucifixion took place in one of those years, the last supper of our Lord was eaten on the correct day of preparation, whereas the Jews, for the reason given above, may have postponed it to Friday, the following day.

NOTES ON THE TOPOGRAPHY OF JERUSALEM.

(Continued from Q.S. p. 213.)

BY THE REV. J. C. NEVIN, Los Angeles, California.

II.—*General Questions*—continued.

What Josephus meant by saying the Second Wall "went up to Antonia," it seems to me, was that there was simply an incline, "ascent," or stepping up of the surface of the wall to meet the ore on a higher elevation, as was the case where the "ascent" occurred at the "corner" south of the sheep gate.

The second wall, starting from the Tower of Hananel (N.W. corner of Antonia), went west across the Tyropœon Valley, and in