

## I. Historical timeline for the emergence of Christianity:

Ministry/crucifixion?	Paul's letters	Mark	Matthew?	Luke-Acts?	John?
26-36	50-60	70	85	95	100

## II. Historical Context for the first gospel, Mark:

**The Jewish Revolt: 66-73 CE**

--the problem of the death of Jesus by crucifixion

--the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem

## III. Sources for Pontius Pilate in the First Century:

**Philo of Alexandria (ca. 20-50 CE) - Ad Gaium**

**Flavius Josephus (36-100?) – The Jewish War II.168:**

--the incident of Pilate's bringing the Roman standards into the city of Jerusalem

--when Jews protested in the stadium in Caesarea, he threatened a massacre

--stole the Temple treasury funds to build an aqueduct

## IV. Examples of Mark's "Conflict Dialogues:"

**Mark 2:1-12—the healing of the paralytic**

Accusation: The Scribes are shocked that Jesus "heals" by saying, "Your sins are forgiven." Only God can forgive sins.

Response: 'The Son of Man' has authority to forgive sins (role as judge, found in Daniel 7).

**Mark 2:15-17**

Accusation: Eating with sinners and tax collectors.

Response: "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick; I came not to call the righteous, but sinners." (overall view of the role of prophets)

### **Mark 2:23-27**

Accusation: Violation of the Sabbath (gathering grain in the fields).

Response: David and his men ate the bread of the presence; “The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath; so the Son of Man is lord even of the Sabbath.” (it is acceptable to save a life on the Sabbath)

### **Mark 3:1-6**

Accusation: Healing on the Sabbath.

Response: It is permissible to do good on the Sabbath, to save a life. (This response is followed by the conspiracy of the Pharisees and the Herodians to destroy him.)

### **Mark 7:1-23**

Accusation: His disciples eat with unwashed (defiled) hands.

Response: “You leave the commandment of God, and hold fast the tradition of men;” “Do you not see that whatever goes into a man from outside cannot defile him, since it enters, not his heart but his stomach, and so passes on” (just before this, Jesus quotes Isaiah 29:13, and see also Isaiah 64:6, our sins have made us “like one who is unclean.”) Here, Mark claims Jesus declared all foods “clean” (this has to do with the Gentile mission).

### **Mark 10:2-9**

No accusation, but a “test:” “Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife?”

Response: “What did Moses command you?” Upon hearing the permission of divorce, Jesus explains that Moses did this for the hardness of their hearts, followed by a citation of Genesis 1:27.

## **V. The Chronology of “The Passion”**

### **“Holy Week” (Passion Narrative) Timeline:**

“Palm Sunday:” Traditionally, this is the day when Jesus enters the city of Jerusalem, amid rejoicing and exaltations from the crowd.

“Incident in the Temple:” The synoptic gospels report that right after Jesus enters the city, he then goes to the Temple and overturns the tables of the money-changers and the animal sellers, claiming, “My house shall be a house of prayer (for all the nations, so Mark), but you have made

it a den of thieves.” According to the general understanding, first proposed by Mark, this event leads directly to the condemnation of death for Jesus.

“Holy Thursday,” or the first night of Passover in the Synoptic Gospels: Jesus and the disciples celebrate the Passover together, where Jesus presents what has been now become a ritualistic formula (in some manner), “This is my body . . . , etc.” He also reveals to the disciples that one of them will betray him.

“The Agony in the Garden:” After dinner, Jesus and the disciples go over to the foot of the Mount of Olives, to area known as “Gethesemane,” or “olive press.”

The Arrest: According to the gospels, there are variations in who actually comes to arrest Jesus—the “temple guards,” the Jewish leaders, the Roman auxiliaries, or even just the “mob.” The disciples, now in panic, scatter and abandon Jesus to his fate, “fulfilling” what Jesus had predicted.

The Jewish Trial: Again, variation and confusion in the Synoptic gospels as to where Jesus was actually taken for his trial. John states that Jesus was taken to the high-priest’s house. The other confusion is the number of trials . . . one at night, one in the morning? One at night, two in the morning? Luke has two at night and two in the morning, including a separate trial in front of Herod Antipas (in town for Passover).

Problems with the Jewish trial(s):

1. According to later Rabbinic traditions, trials of the Sanhedrin could not be held at night, nor on a holiday.
2. In preparation for the Passover, members of the Sanhedrin who were also in the rotation of priests would have spent the day slaughtering lambs for the thousands of pilgrims in the city.
3. It was the first night of Passover—would the members of the Sanhedrin left their families and their homes that evening for a trial of a Galilean peasant?
4. The False Charge of “blasphemy”
5. If Jesus was deemed guilty of severely violating Jewish law, the punishment would be stoning—debatable issue of whether or not the Sanhedrin could carry out a Jewish death penalty.

The Trial Before Pilate: Pilate in the gospels is presented as sympathetic and powerless to go against the Jewish leadership. He ultimately condemns Jesus, with the appropriate charge that goes with crucifixion—a public notice of the charge was required under Roman law, and so

Jesus is condemned for claiming to be, “Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews”—INRI. He is scourged in the Antonia Fortress, and then led to the execution grounds (outside the city walls).

The Death of Jesus: Jesus dies within a few hours which is inexplicable for crucifixion. It is only in John’s gospel that a guard, wanting to make sure he was dead, pierces his side with a spear. As sunset is near and Sabbath is about to begin, Jesus’s body is claimed by Joseph of Arimathea and laid in his family tomb.

Friday evening/Saturday: As this is the Sabbath, the body of Jesus cannot be ritually prepared for burial fully, so it will have to wait until Sunday morning.

Sunday morning: (Easter Sunday). The women go to the tomb to finish preparing the body. It is here where they discover the “empty tomb.” In Mark, an angel directs them to tell the disciples that Jesus will meet them in the Galilee, but the women “tell no one,” and are terrified (the original ending of Mark). Matthew provides a resurrection appearance by Jesus in the Galilee, Luke and John add several more. But it is only in Luke where Jesus bodily ascends to heaven on Sunday evening.

## **VI. Jewish-Christian Relations in the First Century:**

### **Areas of conflict/polemic:**

**--Jewish-Christians vs. Gentile (ex-Pagan-Christians--the unexpected interest in the movement shown by pagans (Gentiles)**

**--beginning with the missions of Paul and the other apostles, ex-pagans outnumber Jewish followers by the end of the first century**

**--the first Christians remain within the worldview of Judaism, but ex-pagans are not required to adopt the physical identity markers of Jews—circumcision, dietary laws, and Sabbath observance**

**--as a sect within Judaism, Christians nevertheless adopt an innovative concept—Jesus is now worshipped as a “god” in addition to the god of Israel. This will become one of the fundamental issues of tension between “synagogue and church.”**

**VII. In the second century, the Church Fathers will begin the process of claiming the Jewish Scriptures as their own, as Jews did not correctly interpret this material and the way in which the prophets “predicted” the coming of Jesus. At the same time, along with all things pagan and women, the Jews are demonized as agents of the Devil.**