

## OUR BASIC PREMISE

Traditional Jewish practice starts the day at sundown (around 6 P.M. in rough terms). If you reckon “the first hour” of the night from 6 P.M. to 7 P.M., then the “sixth hour” of that same night would be around midnight (11 P.M.–12 A.M.). Each day had two portions, darkness and light. Darkness is considered first based on Genesis 1:5, “Evening and morning were the first day.”

This is not only based on historic Jewish practice. Jesus Himself said, “Are there not twelve hours in the day?” (John 11:9). Therefore there must be, as in modern western timekeeping, two of each hour, one in the dark and one in the light.

## THE TIMELINE UNDER THIS ASSUMPTION

### Last Supper in the Early Evening – 5 to 8 PM

Jesus washes the disciples' feet (John 13), after which Judas departs, and "it was night" (John 13:30).

### Gethsemane and Arrest Late Evening – 8 to 10 PM

Jesus prays while the disciples struggle to stay awake. The arrest happens later in the night, though early enough to allow time for the subsequent hearings.

### First Hearing Before Jewish Leadership – 10 PM to 12 AM

Upon arriving at the High Priest's home, Jesus immediately faces questioning.

This nighttime meeting occurs before the High Priest, scribes, and elders—but not before the whole council.

In the courtyard, Peter's denials and the cock-crowing episodes unfold throughout the late-night and early-morning darkness. See Mark 13:30.

### Midnight Meeting Before Pilate – John 19:14 – 12:AM to 6:00 AM

The trial with the high priests was brief since they had predetermined His guilt. After hearing fraudulent testimony, they quickly pronounced Him guilty and sent Him to Pilate. "About the sixth hour" (John 19:14), Jesus stood before Pilate.

While this could mean "about noon," such timing is impossible to reconcile with the timeline, as Jesus was crucified at the third hour, and there's no evidence of a 24-hour arrest period.

"About midnight" makes more sense—though contrary to common assumptions, it aligns perfectly with the hasty nature of this irregular trial.

Between midnight and daybreak, Pilate conducted his examination of Jesus, sent Him to Herod (as mentioned in Luke), received Him back, attempted to release Him, and faced pressure from the crowd.

The final condemnation took time, involving several hours of negotiations between Pilate, the Jewish leaders, and the gathered crowds.

### Second Meeting Before Jewish Leadership – 6:00 AM to 9:00 AM

Matthew 27:1, Mark 15:1, and Luke 22:66 all indicate that the council assembled or concluded "when morning came."

At this point, after interrogating Jesus during the night, Pilate yields to pressure from the priests and crowd, agreeing to the crucifixion.

Jesus appears before the full council, as recorded in Matthew 27:1, Mark 15:1, and Luke 22:66.

This meeting concludes with a formal verdict, after which Jesus is returned to Pilate.

### Crucifixion by the ‘Third Hour’ (Mark 15:25) – 9:00 AM

Mark 15:25 states, "And it was the third hour, and they crucified him." The third hour of the daylight portion typically corresponds to around 9 A.M.

If Pilate's condemnation occurred "about the sixth hour" at midnight, this creates a nine-hour window until 9 A.M., allowing time for: The Jewish council's final condemnation at dawn (6 A.M.); Concluding matters with Pilate (who had been handling Jesus's case since midnight); The journey to Golgotha and the crucifixion around 9 A.M.

### Darkness from Noon to 3 P.M.

The Synoptic Gospels record darkness from the "sixth hour" to the "ninth hour" of the daylight portion (approximately noon to 3 P.M.), as described in Matthew 27:45, Mark 15:33, and Luke 23:44.

### After Jesus dies at 3 P.M.

Joseph of Arimathea arranges His burial, completing it before sundown—when the Sabbath begins, according to the Synoptics.

## THE OBJECTIONS

### “MY BIBLE SAYS IT WAS NOON IN JOHN 19:14”

The NIV, NLT, and some other translations render "the sixth hour" as "about noon." The NIV itself shows inconsistency—its 1984 version uses "the sixth hour" while the 2011 version changes this to "about noon." Any Bible that translates this as "about noon" is incorrect, as demonstrated by simple logic.

### “I’VE NEVER HEARD THIS BEFORE”

It's easy to fall into accepting traditional interpretations without question. However, we should not base our Biblical interpretation solely on commentaries, preachers, or traditional beliefs.

### “JOHN USED ROMAN CLOCKS”

Some argue that John, unlike the Synoptic Gospels, used Roman time reckoning (starting at midnight) when describing Pilate's meeting with Jesus at the sixth hour. However, this is merely conjecture and contradicts John's other time references. John 1:39, 4:6, and 4:52 all use Jewish time reckoning. While the NIV and NLT correctly interpret these passages using Jewish time, they inconsistently switch to Roman time for John 19:14—a choice based on convenience rather than textual consistency.