

**Three Days and Three  
Nights**

**By**

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Have you ever wondered why Jesus said that He would be in the heart of the Earth for three days and three nights and yet you hear it taught that he died on Friday and raised up from the dead on Sunday, only one full day, two partial days and two full nights later? If you have, then this message is just what you needed to clear it all up.

**All Bible references are from the New American Standard unless otherwise stated.**

The Gospel according to Matthew was written about 50 A.D.  
 The Gospel according to Mark was written about 68 A.D.  
 The Gospel according to Luke was written about 60 A.D.  
 The Gospel according to John was written about 85 to 90 A.D.

**Then some of the scribes and Pharisees answered Him, saying, “Teacher, we want to see a sign from You.” But He answered and said to them, “*An evil and adulterous generation craves for a sign; and yet no sign shall be given to it but the sign of Jonah the prophet; for just as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the sea monster, so shall the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.*”** MATTHEW 12:38-40

The Living Son of the Living God said that He would be in the heart of the earth THREE DAYS AND THREE NIGHTS. Does this mean part of a day can be counted as a whole day, therefore, making Friday afternoon, all day Saturday, and a brief part of Sunday morning three days? Even if you do that, how will you get **three nights** between Friday and Sunday? You can't, can you? Of course not. Somebody made a mistake.

HEBREWS 6:18 says that it is impossible for God to lie. If Jesus said He would be in the heart of the earth for three days and three nights, why do Christians consistently teach that Jesus was placed in the tomb on a Friday and was raised from the dead two days later on a Sunday? Who made a mistake? Was it Jesus? God forbid. It had to be the men who have been misinterpreting His Word for centuries, for it is impossible for God to lie.

How do we interpret days and nights using Scripture? Jesus defined what a day is. Look at JOHN 11:9 and you will see that Jesus said, “***...Are there not twelve hours in a day?...***” If you have 12 hours in a day, you also have 12 hours in a night. It then takes a total of 24 hours to make a day and a night or one complete calendar day. Three days and three nights would come to a total of 72 hours. Nothing else will do, for it would not complete what our Lord has said.

Can we get 72 hours between Friday after 3 p.m. and Sunday at daybreak? Not hardly, we can get perhaps 39 hours at the most and that is allowing only three hours to get the body of Jesus into the tomb. Where then do we get the time frame needed to agree with the words of our Lord and Savior?

Look at MATTHEW 28:1 **“Now after the Sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came to look at the grave.”** In the King James/Scofield reference version, it says, **“In the end of the Sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the sepulcher.”** Not too much difference between the two versions, is there? The only big difference is that the NAS says it was after the Sabbath and the King James says it was in the end of the Sabbath. They **both** say it began to dawn toward the first day of the week.

Some will look at the New International Version and become confused, for it says, **“After the Sabbath, at dawn on the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to look at the tomb.”** I believe this version of the Bible takes a bit too much liberty in the translation because if you are approaching something, you are still not there yet, thus the drawing toward or “dawn toward” means that you haven’t arrived yet. It means that the first day of the week was not a reality at this point in time. The interpreters seem to have focused on the end of the Sabbath and missed the part that says it was still moving toward the first day of the week. Unfortunate, but this just adds to confusion in translations. We need to consult an expert on the original Greek text to help us out here.

Dr. Charles Half, Director of the Christian Jew Foundation in San Antonio, Texas is an expert on the Greek language and he says, *“The word ‘dawn’ here is translated from the Greek work epiphosko. Parkhurst’s Greek and English Lexicon of the New Testament defines this word as follows: ‘to draw on’ or ‘to approach.’ When the women came to the sepulchre, it was late on the Sabbath (Saturday evening), drawing on toward the first day of the week. In George Ricker Berry’s Greek Interlinear translation, we have this rendition of Matthew 28:1: ‘Now on the Sabbath as it was getting dusk toward the first of the week.’ If Mathew 28:1 had been translated this way in our Bible, it would have helped to clarify the time of Christ’s Resurrection. The Resurrection was not in the morning, but at dusk (Saturday evening)-as the Jewish day was coming to an end.”*

Now we need to be aware that there is a difference between the Hebrew day and our day. Their day ended at 6:00 p.m. and our day ends at 12:00 midnight. In LEVITICUS 23:32 the Lord said, **“...from evening until evening you shall keep your Sabbath.”** This is one complete 24 hour period. To this day, the Jewish Sabbath starts at 6:00 p.m. on Friday and goes until 6:00 p.m. on Saturday. Ask any of your Jewish friends and you will see this is correct. As we go through the information in am presenting here, please toss out all reference to our day and go by the Hebrew day and you will have no trouble understanding any of this.

You also need to keep in mind that the women made two separate visits to the tomb. The first visit is recorded in Mathew on Saturday evening and the second visit is recorded in Mark, Luke, and John on Sunday morning before dawn.

When you start comparing the four Gospels, you will find some differences. I want to clear them up before we start moving on to the actual day of the week in which the crucifixion took place.

Let's take a look at the four Gospels and see the differences between them:

MATTHEW 28:1-7 (Written 50 AD)

**Now after the Sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came to look at the grave. And behold, a severe earthquake had occurred, for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven and came and rolled away the stone and sat upon it. And his appearance was like lightning, and his garment as white as snow; and the guards shook for fear of him, and became like dead men. And the angel answered and said to the women, "Do not be afraid; for I know that you are looking for Jesus who has been crucified. He is not here, for He has risen, just as He said. Come, see the place where He was lying. And go quickly and tell His disciples that He has risen from the dead; and behold, He is going before you into Galilee, there you will see Him; behold, I have told you."**

You will notice that it said an earthquake HAD occurred (past tense). It happened before the women had arrived. It scared the guards so much they passed out! Then the angel told the women not to be afraid and he showed them the empty tomb and told them to go and tell Jesus' disciples about it.

Now look at MARK 16:1-8 (Written 68 AD)

**And when the Sabbath was over, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome, brought spices, that they might come and anoint Him. And very early on the first day of the week, they came to the tomb when the sun had risen. And they were saying to one another, "Who will roll away the stone for us from the entrance of the tomb?" And looking up, they saw that the stone had been rolled away, although it was extremely large. And entering the tomb, they saw a young man sitting at the right, wearing a white robe; and they were amazed. And he said to them, "Do not be amazed; you are looking for Jesus the Nazarene, who has been crucified, He has risen; He is not here; behold, here is the place where they laid Him. But go, tell His disciples and Peter, He is going before you into Galilee there you will see Him, just as He said to you" And they went out and fled from the tomb, for trembling and astonishment had gripped them; and they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid.**

Okay, now we are at the early morning hours on Sunday. The women went to the tomb and found that it was already open. They were told not to be afraid and were showed the place where Jesus lay. Then they were told to go tell the disciples. Did they do it? No, it says they didn't tell anyone because they were afraid.

Now look at LUKE 24:1-12 (Written 60 AD)

**But on the first day of the week, at early dawn, they came to the tomb, bringing the spices which they had prepared. And they found the stone rolled away from the tomb, but when they entered, they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. And it happened that while they were perplexed about this, behold, two men suddenly stood near them in dazzling apparel; and as the women were terrified and bowed their faces to the ground, the men said to them, “Why do you seek the living One among the dead? He is not here, but He has risen. Remember how He spoke to you while He was still in Galilee, saying that the Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again.” And they remembered His words, and returned from the tomb and reported all these things to the eleven and to all the rest. Now they were Mary Magdalene and Joanna and Mary the mother of James; also the other women with them were telling these things to the apostles. And these words appeared to them as nonsense, and they would not believe them. But Peter arose and ran to the tomb; stooping and looking in, he saw the linen wrappings only; and he went away to his home, marveling at that which had happened.**

Now we have a slightly different version from what Mark’s account gave us. Dr. Luke said that the women went and told not only the eleven disciples, but all the rest. Why the difference? Keep in mind that each writer had a different style. Not only that, each one wrote his account many years separate from the others. They each told their version. While Mark said they told no one, Luke said they told everybody. I don’t think there is a conflict here. When Mark wrote his version of the events, perhaps the women didn’t tell anyone at first, but later did as the angel instructed them. As you can see, each writer described the angel in his own words. Mark described only one young man. Luke described two men near them. When you read John’s version, he doesn’t talk about the messengers at all!

Now look at JOHN 20:1-18 (Written 85 to 90 AD)

**Now on the first day of the week Mary Magdalene came early to the tomb, while it was still dark, and saw the stone already taken away from the tomb. And so she ran and came to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple whom Jesus loved and said to them, “They have taken away the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid Him.” Peter therefore went forth, and the other disciple, and they were going to the tomb. And the two were running together; and the other disciple ran ahead faster than Peter, and came to the tomb first; and stooping and looking in, he saw the linen wrappings lying there, and the face cloth, which had been on His head, not lying with the linen wrappings, but rolled up in a place by itself. So the other disciple who had first come to the tomb entered then also, and he saw and believed. For as yet they did not understand the Scripture, that He must rise again from the dead. So the disciples went away again to their homes.**

We can look at the Scriptures given here and see a lot of different things were happening and everyone was amazed, excited, scared, and flat-out terrified at the happenings. Earthquakes, angels appearing, some of the disciples thought the women were crazy at what they were saying (probably because they were so excited and animated).

...“The first day of the week while it was still dark”. The first day of the week comes on Saturday at 6:00 p.m. while it is still dark, not on Sunday morning. Remember, we are studying the Scripture as it was written by those who followed the Jewish tradition of day and night and their days started and ended in the evening.

You may say you are concerned about Mary Magdalene coming back to bring spices the next day after they had just been there the night before and were told by the angel that Jesus had risen. Perhaps they thought they were just seeing a vision. Mark said they **“fled from the tomb, for trembling and astonishment had gripped them; and they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid.”** When you look at Luke’s version, he tells you that the disciples thought that the women were telling them nonsense! Then Luke tells us that Peter ran to the tomb to see for himself. John goes on further to tell us that not only Peter ran but he did also and that he beat Peter to the tomb!

When I combine the accounts of all of the Gospels together I get the following list of events:

Matthew tells us that Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to the tomb on Saturday evening. They saw the angel and the empty tomb.

Mark and Luke tell us that Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James and Salome went on Sunday morning just at daybreak; they went back again with more women this time and saw the empty tomb again.

John tells us that Mary Magdalene went on Sunday morning but doesn’t mention the other women. John even adds the statement that Peter had a foot race to the tomb with the disciple that Jesus loved and that disciple won!

I can find no conflict in any of the versions given. Each has his own way of telling the events in his own style. The Gospels were written many years apart (Matthew – 50 A.D., Luke – 10 years later at about 60 A.D., Mark – 18 years after Mathew and 8 years after Luke at about 68 A.D., and John – some 35 to 40 years after Mathew at 85 to 90 A.D.) , yet they are extremely faithful to what took place and are very close in their individual renditions.

The most important thing we need to remember is that Matthew tells us what happened in the end of the Sabbath and Mark, Luke, and John tell us what happened on Sunday morning.

Now let's take a look at what day of the week Jesus was crucified on. To do that we need to go backward three days and three nights from Saturday just before the end of the seventh day Sabbath (which would be close to 6:00 p.m.).

Saturday near 6:00 p.m. to Friday near 6:00 p.m. – one day.

Friday near 6:00 p.m. to Thursday near 6:00 p.m. – two days.

Thursday near 6:00 p.m. to Wednesday near 6:00 p.m. – three days.

From Wednesday forward you have three complete days and nights to Saturday evening just before 6:00 p.m.

Now you are saying that we have a problem because they wanted to get Jesus off the cross because of the approaching Sabbath. Let me clear that up for you.

JOHN 19:31

**The Jews therefore, because it was the preparation, that the bodies should not remain upon the cross on the Sabbath day, (for that Sabbath day was an high day,) besought Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away.**

The key to understanding this portion of Scripture is to look at the part in parentheses. It is talking about a High Day Sabbath. Whenever the Jews celebrated the Passover, the day following the day of preparation was always a High Day Sabbath. This means that they had two Sabbaths that week. One on Thursday (the day after the day of preparation) and a seventh day Sabbath on Saturday.

The High Day Sabbath can fall on any day of the week. It doesn't have to be on Saturday. Look at LEVITICUS 23:5-7: *“In the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month at twilight is the LORD'S PASSOVER. Then on the fifteenth day of the same month there is the Feast of Unleavened Bread to the LORD; for seven days you shall eat unleavened bread. On the first day you shall have a holy convocation; you shall not do any laborious work. But for seven days you shall present an offering by fire to the LORD. On the seventh day is a holy convocation; you shall not do any laborious work.”* The fifteen day is the High Day Sabbath.

Jesus ate the Passover on what we would consider as Tuesday evening after 6:00 p.m. Keep in mind that we are using the Jewish clock and not ours. This means that Jesus ate the Passover in the first hours of Wednesday which was the day of preparation. That is the day they were supposed to eat the Passover.

Jesus went to the garden with his disciples later that night (still Tuesday to us but Wednesday to them—day of preparation). Later still He was betrayed by Judas and taken to Annas. Later still He was taken to Caiaphas for trial. He was then taken to Pilate and

then to Herod and then back to Pilate. This took up the entire night and included the torture and mockery by the Roman soldiers. Finally Jesus was nailed to the cross at 9:00 a.m. on Wednesday morning. It was the ninth hour of the day (3 p.m.) when He said, ***“Father, into Thy hands I commit My Spirit.”***

It was Joseph of Arimathea who went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. They placed Jesus’ body in the tomb before 6:00 p.m. on Wednesday because after 6:00 p.m. it would be the High Day Sabbath and would be prohibited from working. It says in Luke 23:56 **And on the Sabbath they rested according to the commandment.**

Thursday before 6:00 p.m. is one night and one day. **1 day**

Friday before 6:00 p.m. is one night and one day. **2 days**

Saturday before 6:00 p.m. is one night and one day. **3 days**

Three days and three nights, just as Jesus said. Complete and accurate. No days missing **and we have discovered that there were also two Sabbaths that week.** When is the last time you heard any pastor tell you that there were two Sabbaths the week Jesus was crucified?

Why has it taken so long for this to come to light? Because men were trying to make it fit a ***theory*** and were not allowing Scripture to speak for itself. Isn’t Scripture beautiful when you let it teach you the truth? Everything fits perfectly. If you don’t accept this study, you will have to show me how you can get that extra night between Friday and Sunday, because if you accept the old way, you will only have two nights and one is missing and God cannot lie...so who did?

***As an added bonus to this Bible study, I have added some information that you may find interesting as far as traditions go.***

Where did the name Easter come from?

The Academic American Encyclopedia says, “According to the Venerable Bede, the name Easter is derived from the pagan spring festival of the Anglo-Saxon goddess Eostre, and many folk customs associated with Easter (for example, Easter eggs) are of pagan origin.”

The World Book Encyclopedia says, “The word Ester may have come from an early English word, Eastre. Some scholars say Eastre was the name of a pagan goddess of spring, the name of a spring festival, or the name of the season itself. Other scholars believe the word Easter comes from the early German word eostarun, which means dawn.

This word may be an incorrect translation of the Latin word albae, meaning both dawn and white.”

The Encyclopedia Americana says, “The origin of the English word “Easter” is uncertain.

In the 8<sup>th</sup> century, the Venerable Bede proposed that it was derived from the name of an Anglo-Saxon goddess of spring, Eostre.”

Still others believe that the word came from the Babylonian religion and is a perversion of the name of the goddess Ishtar.

Well, they all agree that the word is not Scriptural and that it has pagan origins. As a matter of fact the word only appears one time in the Bible and that is in the King James version. The New American Standard version and the International version correctly translate to use the word Passover, not Easter. If it is of pagan origin, why are we using it to describe the Resurrection of our Lord and Savior? Why not just say Resurrection Day? That’s what it is, isn’t it?

Now you are going to question why pastors the world over have not taught what is presented here. The answer lies in the teaching they have received in the seminaries that they attended. They were not taught to be detectives with God’s word. There are many wonderful and beautiful keys to Scripture that are there for us to explore. I have shown you only one of them. All we have to do is be willing to search God’s word and test it against the “traditional” teaching of men. Men have made mistakes that are passed on from generation to generation without question.

It will take courage for a pastor to start teaching the Scripture as it was written and not follow a “theory” that has been ingrained into them in a seminary. **May God richly bless the pastor or teacher who has the courage to stand up to false teaching and make the corrections that have been brought before His children over the years.**

In the Book of James it says the following:

***“If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, who giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not, and it shall be given him. But let him ask in faith, not wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed.”***

In 1<sup>st</sup> John it says:

***“Beloved, believe not every spirit, but test the spirits whether they are of God; because many false prophets are gone out into the world. By this know ye the Spirit of God; every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God;”***

***I challenge every believer and Pastor who reads this information to test what I have given you here.*** If I have erred in my teaching, it is required of you that you correct me so that I may not falsely teach God’s Holy Word. It says in Luke 12:48 ***“For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required;”*** The Lord requires that I teach the truth and I am not afraid to tell other believers what the truth is, for it is to God that I must answer for what I have taught. Jesus said that I ***“...shalt not bear false witness,”*** I am convinced of what I have taught here is not false. It is God’s truth and I teach it with the pure thought that it should glorify God and edify the brethren.

We cannot teach that Jesus spent less than three days and three nights in the heart of the

Earth for it is out of the mouth of the Living Son of the Living God who said those words. **It is impossible for God to lie (Hebrews 6:18).**

If Jesus said it, you can believe it. If He did not lie, then who did?

If you have been deceived by the Friday-Sunday theory, you can now turn away from it and be blessed by the truth. Isn't it wonderful when you let the Scriptures say what is really true and not try to make it fit something else?

Those who have born false witness over the years in attempting to make you believe that Christ was crucified on a Friday and rose from the dead on Sunday morning are not doing you good as a believer.

I have shared this information with many believers. One very learned scholar with a Doctorate told me that you could take a piece of a night or day and make it a whole night or day. That's is a sad way to try to make a Friday-Sunday theory work because if you did that in an attempt to make three nights between Friday and Sunday, you would actually make it into four. If you split Friday night into two, you would also have to do that with Saturday and then you would have four nights! No matter how you try to make the Friday-Sunday theory work, you can't. Remember this: It takes 24 hours to make a day and a night. You must get three distinct 24-hour periods between the time our blessed Savior was put into the tomb and His glorious resurrection. Nothing else will work.

Now you have the truth...

It did not happen the way many are teaching you it did. It *did* happen the way Jesus said it would and with that, I bring you the truth of His Word, that you may be edified by it. It is my sincere hope that you have found this message to be edifying and that it will glorify our Savior. I strive for accuracy in sharing God's Holy Word and want to share only that which can help others understand the Scriptures more fully. May God bless you richly in your study of His Word.

If you can prove that what I have brought before you here is wrong by using the Scriptures and not just an opinion, then I welcome you to contact me at

[CliffAshbridge@live.com](mailto:CliffAshbridge@live.com) with your comments.

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