

# Three Days and Three Nights

Derived from an Audio lesson by Aaron Budjen

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[Disc 1]

## ***Three Days and Three Nights?***

Jesus said, in Matthew 12 40

[40] For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.

How does this work out?

The traditional view is:

Jesus died on Friday and rose from the dead on Sunday

But with the traditional view, you don't quite have three days and three nights. Many attempts have been made to reconcile this. You have to stretch it a bit. However, even if you stretch it a bit to get three days, you still only have two nights.

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There is an explanation that works, but you will have to

1. Reconsider the traditions, and
2. Get a greater understanding of the Law regarding the feast of Passover and the feast of Unleavened Bread

## ***Context: Jesus healed on the Sabbath***

Let's examine Matthew 12 and the context of three days and three nights.

- Walking through the grain fields on the Sabbath day and eating the grain
- Conflict with the Pharisees on the Sabbath law
  - v.9, he healed on the Sabbath day
- It is lawful to do good on the Sabbath
- The Pharisees believed it was their responsibility to destroy Jesus

His purpose was to die for the sins of the world, restoring our God back with His creation.

In v.22 the Pharisees bring to Jesus someone who was demon possessed, blind, and mute. When Jesus healed Him, the crowd said, "Could this be the son of David?" Why? What was so special about this healing?

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The man was demon possessed, but this was not the greatest concern.

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The Pharisees believed that even they could cast out demons using the following protocol:

Establish communication with the Demon

Get the name of the Demon

Command that Demon come out by the name of the Living God

Here is a man blind and mute. He cannot see and cannot speak. The Pharisees cannot cast out this demon because they cannot perform the three steps on him.

The Pharisees concluded the only one who could cast out a demon from a man who could not speak, see, or hear is the Messiah.

Jesus did it, therefore, *from the Pharisees own teaching*, Jesus must be the Messiah. But the Pharisees then claimed it was by Beelzebub. They were willing to reject their own teaching in order to try to reject Jesus. Jesus was responding to their very teaching in order to reach out to them. Jesus then responded to the Pharisees that there is only one more miracle to assert His messianic claim. From that point on, Jesus did not perform any miracle to assert His messianic claim, but instead, only to meet the needs of various individuals.

[40] for just as JONAH WAS THREE DAYS AND THREE NIGHTS IN THE BELLY OF THE SEA MONSTER, so will the Son of Man be

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three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.

[Disc 2]

## ***Three Days and Three Nights***

Jesus makes the claim of “three days and three nights.”

From this point on (when He made the statement above in Matthew 12:40), Jesus began to speak in parables.

How was His claim of “three days and three nights” fulfilled?

If we assume Jesus arrived in Jerusalem the week that He was crucified, on the First day of the week, Sunday, we can walk forward from that day, but things don't line up.

(We'll discuss that a little later.)

Let's look at the Gospel of Mark:

Mark 11:8 Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord

Salvation Now! (Hosannah!)

v.11 Jesus went into the Temple, then went out to Bethany

v.12 Jesus left Bethany (Monday)

v.19 He went out of the city

v.20 He went back into the city (Tuesday)

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If you follow Mark's writing from this point, you would likely conclude Jesus was crucified on Friday. But...

There are some chronological discrepancies in Mark's account.

Generally, the Gospels themselves were not written in specific chronological order, which is why they do not always match each other in sequence. Luke was the only one who claimed his book is in chronological order.

Mark's account was not intended to record that Jesus would be in the grave for three days and three nights. Therefore, it's not appropriate to look in the Gospel of Mark for the evidence to verify the claim of "three days and three nights" Jesus made in Matthew.

In the Gospel of Mark (Mark 11:11) Jesus arrived in Jerusalem, to the Temple, and then just left. Matthew records that He threw out the money-changers at that moment! We can therefore see there are possible chronological discrepancies.

[Some claim that] The Gospel of John verifies that Jesus arrived in Jerusalem on the first day of the week. John 12:1-12

v.1 Six days before the Passover, Jesus came to Bethany.

v.12 The next day, a great multitude took branches of palm trees... in Jerusalem

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Jesus traveled from Jericho to Bethany/Jerusalem. [If the Passover were Friday, six days before would be Saturday.] We assumed that He arrived in Bethany on Saturday. But Saturday is the Sabbath. This would be a direct violation of the commandment of God.

Jesus did not arrive in Bethany on Saturday, He arrived on Friday.

John did not give us that detail. John was not detailing every day of Jesus' travels. We should not be looking in the Gospel of John for the "three days and three nights" explanation.

If we consider that Jesus would *not* have traveled from Jericho to Bethany on a Saturday, the following Thursday would be the Passover.

Turn back to the Gospel of Matthew. Matthew's gospel is the one that makes the claim of "three days and three nights."

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[Disc 3]

## Review

Let's review what we've covered so far.

- We need to account for three days and three nights.
- From John 12:1-12 Jesus most likely arrived in Bethany on Friday.
- If you assume Jesus arrived in Bethany on Saturday, then you have to believe He violated the Sabbath law.
- Also, if Jesus arrived on Saturday, the following Thursday would be the Passover.

## Let's move on

It is important to consider that He arrived on Friday. If you assume He arrived on Sunday, then as you walk through what is given in Scripture, you'll see in a moment that you don't have enough days to reach the Sabbath on the following Saturday.

Let me assert now that the Passover was to begin Wednesday evening. **The Lord Jesus was crucified on Thursday.** Then you have three days and three nights: Thursday night, Friday night, and Saturday night.

Matthew tells us Jesus entered Jerusalem on the 1<sup>st</sup> day of the week. The people acknowledge that He is the Messiah:

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21:12 Jesus went into the Temple of God... on the first day of the week

21:14 The blind and lame came to him

Jesus didn't just go into the temple look around, and leave as Mark seems to indicate. It was not important to Mark's audience. Matthew is giving much more detail.

21:17 went to Bethany...

He cursed the fig tree on Monday. Mark did not intend to write a chronology. Matthew is being specific.

He was then examined by the leadership groups. This fulfilled the Passover law that the Passover lamb was to be examined before it could be used in sacrifice.

Matthew chapters 22-25 all occurred on Monday .

In Matthew chapter 26, Jesus gives us more information

[2] “You know that after two days is the Passover, and the Son of Man will be delivered up to be crucified.”

The Passover therefore begins Wednesday night.

There are some additional passages that are difficult to understand because some words that are being used that describe very specific things and there seems to be some uncertainty as to Passover and the day of preparation, that is, which day of preparation it means. However, they can be clearly explained.

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We need to make a distinction between Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread.

Too often, people are relying on traditions of men rather than the Law of God.

## ***When Is Passover?***

How do you know when the Passover is to take place?

“Tenth day of the first month of the Hebrew calendar”;  
the month of Aviv

Leviticus 23:4-6

[4] ‘These *are* the feasts of the LORD, holy convocations which you shall proclaim at their appointed times. [5] ‘On the fourteenth *day* of the first month at twilight *is* the LORD's Passover. [6] ‘And on the fifteenth day of the same month *is* the Feast of Unleavened Bread to the LORD; seven days you must eat unleavened bread.

When does the first month start?

If you go by a calendar from the Rabbinical community, they are using a computational calendar to determine Passover, not the method defined by God.

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God had a way of resetting the Calendar to be correct each year without regression, without Leap Years, and etc.

Israel's calendar was defined according to the harvest of barley.

They were to monitor the moon. Months are determined by the lunar cycle.

Starting at Full moons and counting days since They were to monitor the barley in the fields near Jerusalem

[Barley must have been a winter crop]

How did they know when the barley was ready for harvest?

Parch the grain with fire in a pan. If grain remained after parching, it was ready for harvest. If grain remained, it is now the month of the Barley. (Aviv means Barley)

If the barley was ready to be harvested before the tenth day after the previous full moon, then signal fires would be ignited to tell all in Israel that the current month is the first month of the year. Passover would be the 14<sup>th</sup> day of the current month.

If the barley was ready to be harvested the tenth day of the month or later, the people would not have enough time to properly prepare for Passover if the current month was declared the first month. So, in this case, the next full moon would designate the first day of the

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first month of the new year. The tenth day following that full moon would be the day to select the Passover lamb and the Passover would be the 14<sup>th</sup> day of that month.

Passover must be observed in Jerusalem. All of Israel was to go there. Today, if you say you are observing Passover, you deceive yourself. You cannot observe Passover because not only are you not in Jerusalem, but the Temple is gone! If you're going to hold a Passover celebration, you should say you are remembering Passover, not observing Passover.

The first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread occurs 24 hours after Passover (the 15<sup>th</sup> day of the month). You are required to eat unleavened bread for 7 days. The first day of the Feast of the Unleavened Bread **is a Sabbath day**, but it is a special Sabbath day. On this special Sabbath day, you are permitted to prepare food. You are to enjoy this food! This is the Passover Seder (The Feast of Unleavened Bread). The Seder is NOT the meal in which Jesus participated on the night before He died. This was NOT the "last supper."

People who say this are a day late and a law short. The Passover meal comprised Lamb, Bitter Herbs, and Unleavened Bread. There is no Lamb eaten in the Seder.

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Any Lamb that remained after the Passover meal was to be consumed with fire before morning.

Very few people know this information. They aren't paying attention to the Law. If you read the Law of Moses, it is very clear that there is a distinction between the Passover meal and the Feast of Unleavened Bread.

When the Temple was destroyed in 70AD, God took away the people's ability to live in obedience to the Commandments of God. No Temple. No Priesthood. No sacrifices (which had to be made at the Temple). Because of this, the Rabbinical authorities decreed that they were no longer to observe Passover, with the thought that it would be better to wait until it is possible, than to do it incorrectly. Instead, they emphasized the Feast of Unleavened Bread. Even in Jesus' day, the word Passover was used synonymously with the Feast of Unleavened Bread. However, they are very different.

### Matthew 26:17

[17] Now on the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread the disciples came to Jesus, saying to Him, "Where do You want us to prepare for You to eat the Passover?" [18] And He said, "Go into the city to a certain man, and say to him, 'The Teacher says, "My time is at

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hand; I will keep the Passover at your house with My disciples.””” [19] So the disciples did as Jesus had directed them; and they prepared the Passover.

Even though the terms are being used synonymously, the feasts need to be viewed separately.

[Disc 4]

Passover was held on the 14<sup>th</sup> day

The first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread was the 15<sup>th</sup> day of the month

According to the Law, they are *not* the same.

Jesus was in the grave on the first day of the Feast of Unleavened bread, so He couldn't have had a meal on that day, but culturally, Matthew's audience would have understood that this discussion meant the Passover meal.

There was more than one day of preparation that week.

Wednesday was a day of preparation for the Passover meal.

Thursday was also a day of preparation for the Sabbath of the Feast of Unleavened Bread that was to occur on Friday (the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month, the special Sabbath).

Friday was also a day of preparation for the “seventh day” Sabbath (Saturday).

There were three days of preparation in a row.

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Also, there were two Sabbaths that week.

The first Sabbath: Thursday night to Friday night: This was the *Sabbath of the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread*. This Sabbath **only occurred once a year**.

The second Sabbath: Friday night to Saturday night, the weekly Sabbath

If you read the Law, you will see that these Sabbaths are there.

You need to understand which Sabbath was meant.

Jesus was crucified on Thursday.

Jesus rose on Sunday morning.

No one who was following the Law could leave Jerusalem from the time Jesus was crucified to the time He rose from the dead because of the two Sabbaths. Everyone was there (The entire nation of Israel!) This was Jesus' testimony to the entire nation of Israel!

Understanding this, let's consider these passages:

John 18:28

[28] Then they led Jesus from Caiaphas to the Praetorium, and it was early morning. But they themselves did not go into the Praetorium, lest they should be defiled, but that they might eat the Passover.

This was Thursday during the day after Jesus had eaten the Passover meal Wednesday night. The people were actually concerned about the feast

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of Unleavened Bread. This is the Seder meal, not the Passover meal. This is the one without Lamb. [Hmmm...]

Matthew 26:17 shows that they were using these terms interchangeably

John 19:13-14

[13] When Pilate therefore heard that saying, he brought Jesus out and sat down in the judgment seat in a place that is called The Pavement, but in Hebrew, Gabbatha. [14] Now it was the Preparation Day of the Passover, and about the sixth hour. And he said to the Jews, “Behold your King!”

What preparation day? There were three.

It was not the preparation day for the Passover meal because they had already eaten that.

It was the preparation day for the Feast of Unleavened Bread.

Why would John use the word Passover? There was a cultural bias. They were emphasizing the Feast of Unleavened Bread. They called it all “Passover.” The Jews do this today.

John 19:31

[31] Therefore, because it was the Preparation *Day*, that the bodies should not remain on the cross on the Sabbath (for that Sabbath was a high day), the Jews asked Pilate that

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their legs might be broken, and *that* they might be taken away.

This is the preparation day for the Feast of Unleavened Bread. This is the Sabbath that only occurred once a year!

They had to inform Pilate that a special Sabbath was occurring, so they wanted Jesus taken down from the cross. If Jesus had been crucified on Friday, they would not have had to inform Pilate of a Sabbath occurring.

### Luke 23:50-56

[50] Now behold, *there was* a man named Joseph, a council member, a good and just man. [51] He had not consented to their decision and deed. *He was* from Arimathea, a city of the Jews, who himself was also waiting for the kingdom of God. [52] This man went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. [53] Then he took it down, wrapped it in linen, and laid it in a tomb *that was* hewn out of the rock, where no one had ever lain before. [54] That day was the Preparation, and the Sabbath drew near. [55] And the women who had come with Him from Galilee followed after, and they observed the tomb and how His body was laid. [56] Then they returned and prepared spices and fragrant oils. And they rested on the Sabbath according to the commandment.

This was the preparation day for the Sabbath of the First day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread

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This Sabbath was 24 hours before the seventh day Sabbath

Matthew 27:62

[62] On the next day, which followed the Day of Preparation, the chief priests and Pharisees gathered together to Pilate, [63] saying, “Sir, we remember, while He was still alive, how that deceiver said, ‘After three days I will rise.’ [64] “Therefore command that the tomb be made secure until the third day, lest His disciples come by night and steal Him away, and say to the people, ‘He has risen from the dead.’ So the last deception will be worse than the first.” [65] Pilate said to them, “You have a guard; go your way, make it as secure as you know how.” [66] So they went and made the tomb secure, sealing the stone and setting the guard.

Which day of preparation? Thursday, again, the day of preparation was for the Sabbath of the First day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread

The Pharisees and Chief Priests acknowledged that Jesus would rise after three days. If Jesus had not met the three days of His prophecy, they would claim Jesus was a liar! This is evidence that Jesus was in the grave for three days and three nights, or His opposition would have used it as evidence that He was not the Messiah.

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In the Hebrew version of the Gospel of Matthew (The Gospel of Matthew was written originally in Hebrew) in v.62, it says it was the day after Passover.

In conclusion, we see that Jesus was crucified on Thursday (Passover), buried on Friday (Thursday ended at sunset, so he was placed into the tomb on the Feast of Unleavened Bread) and rose from the dead on Sunday (First Fruits). Jesus was “three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.”