

Jesus – Messiah or Liar? Was Jesus in the grave for exactly three days and three nights? 1

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"Then certain of the scribes and of the Pharisees answered, saying, Master, we would see a sign from thee. But he answered and said unto them, An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas: For as Jonas was three days and three night in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth" (Matthew 12:38-40).

Since Jesus claimed to be the Messiah, the Jews demanded a sign of Him to prove His claim. Jesus could give them no better proof that He was the Christ than the literal fulfillment of the well-known sign of Jonah, Luke 11:30. If this sign were not literally fulfilled, it would prove unto them that He was not the Messiah. This was the only sign Jesus ever gave them to prove His Messiahship. Hence the great need for Him to do exactly what He promised them to do.

Mark 8:31 tells us:

"And he began to teach them, that the Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected of the elders, and of the chief priests, and scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again."

Did Christ mean what He said? Did He really expect to be buried in the earth for three days and three nights? Jesus did not say, "After two nights and one day I will rise again." He said, "After three days I will rise again." He meant three days and three nights--a full 72 hours!

The Jews remembered this sign when He was crucified.

"Now the next day, that followed the day of the preparation, the chief priests and Pharisees came together unto Pilate, Saying, Sir, we remember that that deceiver said, while he

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was yet alive, After three days I will rise again. Command therefore that the sepulchre be made sure until the third day, lest his disciples come by night, and steal him away, and say unto the people, He is risen from the dead: so the last error shall be worse than the first" Matthew 27:62-64.

They did all they could to prevent His resurrection. They got the watch, made the sepulchre sure, and sealed the stone. "After three days I will rise again" was necessary to fulfill the Jonah sign.

Modern interpreters of the Bible make Jesus Christ a liar. They say Jesus was crucified on Good Friday, buried about sundown the same day, and arose on the next Sunday about daybreak in contradiction to the Scriptures! Any schoolboy knows that this is only two nights and one day missing the night, which would be less than 72 hours.

If He were crucified on Good Friday and arose on Sunday morning as they say, then He did not literally fulfill the sign of Jonah. If He did not fulfill this sign as He promised the Jews, then He was an impostor and not the Messiah! In other words, Jesus Christ would have lied to the Jews about His burial and resurrection.

If the Good Friday theory is correct as some teach, then the Bible contains "highly figurative language" which requires a human interpreter to tell people what the verses really mean. By this same liberal method of interpreting the Scriptures you can destroy every basic doctrine in the Bible.

I do not care very much for what scholars say! But I am greatly concerned about not accusing my Lord of lying! Jesus Christ plainly said He would be in the grave "three days and three nights". He emphatically declared He would rise again "after three days". I believe He fulfilled the sign of Jonah and vindicated His Messiahship.

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In Matthew 28:6, we read this testimony of the angel at the tomb: "He is not here: for he is risen, as he said."

He said He would be in the grave "three days and three nights" and "after three days" He would rise again. Jesus did fulfill the Jonah sign. But He was not crucified on Good Friday, nor did He rise on Sunday morning as we in America see it!

The Part-of-a-Day Theory Wrong

Men, in order to get the Bible out of an embarrassing situation, allege that the Jews counted a part of a day as the whole day. Such passages as Genesis 42:17, 18; I Samuel 30:12, 13; Esther 4:15-17; I Kings 20:29; and I Chronicles 10:5 are cited to prove this theory. However, none of these passages prove "**three days and three nights**" means two nights and one day. Only one of them even contains the expression "three days and three nights" I Samuel 30:12.

But there is absolutely no reason to give "three days and three nights" in I Samuel 30:12 any meaning except their literal meaning. Divine inspiration declares the young man "had eaten no bread, nor drunk any water, three days and three nights." What authority has any man to contradict these plain words by affirming the time was not so long? The expression, "three days, which contained both night and day", in Esther 4:15, is not the same wording as "three days and three nights" in Matthew 12:40. There is no mention of any nights at all in the other passages; therefore, they give no evidence as to the meaning of "three days and three nights." There is no reason to take any of the passages cited in any sense except their literal sense, unless one has a theory to prove. The "three days and three nights" in Jonah 1:17 are to be taken in their literal sense.

Granting that some of the Jews did count a part of the day for a whole day, can it be proven that this is what Jesus

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meant? Can it be proven that the Jews counted a part of a day as a whole day and a whole night? Where is the proof in the inspired Word?

Yet, proponents of the Good Friday tradition want us to believe that a part of a day meant a whole day and a whole night. **Men who believe the Bible to be literally true dare not accept such reasoning.**

The Meaning of Day in the Bible

The word "day" in the Bible in its primary sense means the interval between dawn and darkness.

"And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night . . ." Genesis 1:5. (Compare Genesis 1:14-18; 8:22.) This is the first occurrence of the word "day" in the Bible, and the Lord God himself gives its meaning. Jesus believed there were 12 hours in a day.

He asked in John 11:9: ". . . Are there not twelve hours in the day? If any man walk in the day, he stumbleth not, because he seeth the light of this world."

Jesus made a day and night consist of 24 hours. Can there be any higher authorities than the Lord God and Jesus Christ? Do not such authorities settle the matter for all true believers?

In the Bible a day is the interval of time comprising the period between two successive risings of the sun (Genesis 7:24; Job 3:16). **The Hebrews reckoned it from evening to evening** Exodus 12:18, ". . . from even unto even, shall ye celebrate your sabbath" Leviticus 23:32.

The 12-hour night began at sunset and ended at sunup. It was counted before the 12-hour day.

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"And the evening and the morning were the first day" Genesis 1:5.

Not morning and evening but evening and morning.

Hence a new day began at 6 o'clock in the **evening** and lasted until the same time the next **evening**--a period of 24 hours--a 12-hour night followed by a 12-hour day!

The Good Friday Hoax

The Bible nowhere says or implies that Jesus was crucified and died on Good Friday! It is said that Jesus was crucified on "the day before the Sabbath", Mark 15:42; Luke 23:54; John 19:14, 31, 42.

As the Jewish weekly Sabbath came on Saturday, scholars have assumed Jesus was crucified on Good Friday. This is poor reasoning because the Bible bears abundant testimony that the Jews had other Sabbaths beside the weekly Sabbath, which fell on Saturday.

The first day of the Passover week, no matter on what day of the week it came, was always an annual Sabbath.

"And on the fifteenth day of the same month is the feast of unleavened bread unto the LORD: seven days ye must eat unleavened bread. In the first day ye shall have an holy convocation: ye shall do no servile work therein" Leviticus 23:6, 7.

On the seventh day of this feast, the 21st of Nisan, was another annual Sabbath:

" . . . in the seventh day is an holy convocation: ye shall do no servile work therein" Leviticus 23:8.

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The day of Pentecost was an annual Sabbath Numbers 28:26. This is the reason we read about Sabbaths in the plural number in the Old Testament Leviticus 26:2, 34, 35, 43.

The Bible makes it plain, Jesus was crucified and buried on:

" . . . the preparation, that is, the day before the sabbath"
Mark 15:42.

John tells us: "And it was the preparation of the Passover"
John 19:14.

It was the preparation day on which the Passover Supper was made ready [editor's note: actually it was the preparation for the Holy Day, the Night to Be Much Remembered], the 14th of Nisan John 13:1, 29; 18:28. It was the preparation to keep the Passover Sabbath--the annual Sabbath which always came on the 15th day of the first ecclesiastical month. John 19:31 adds:

" . . . (for that sabbath day was an high day)"

Its greatness was due to the fact that it was the annual Sabbath of the Passover Festival.

Two Sabbaths that Week

Matthew makes it plain that two Sabbaths had passed since Jesus was crucified. The KJV has this rendering:

"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 sepulchre" Matthew 28:1.

On this verse nearly all translators have allowed tradition to control their translation. It is not "Sabbath" but "Sabbaths" in the Greek text (the genitive case and the plural number). The verse properly translated would read:

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"In the end of the sabbaths"

This allows for an annual Sabbath on Thursday and a regular Sabbath on Saturday.

When Jesus was buried near sundown on the day of the Passover,

"Mary Magdalene, and the other Mary"

watched the burial Matthew 27:58-61. Immediately after the burial, Luke says:

"And that day was the preparation, and the sabbath drew on" Luke 3:54.

This Sabbath was an annual Sabbath on Thursday. The day after the annual Sabbath the women bought spices, Mark 16:1. Luke tells us that the women, after preparing the spices on Friday, (Friday the day they could work)

" . . . rested the sabbath day according to the commandment" Luke 23:56.

The catholic traditional interpretation makes Mark and Luke contradict each other. In Mark 16:1 we are informed that the Sabbath was past when the spices were purchased. "Had" is inserted without any authority from the Greek text.

"No reason can be given for the variation--bought sweet spices. Not had bought" (An American Commentary on the New Testament, Vol. 11, p. 251).

In Luke 23:56 we are told that the women prepared the spices and ointments, and rested the Sabbath day. If Jesus lay in the grave on Sabbath only, Mark and Luke contradict each other. **But if He lay there two Sabbaths having a work day between them, then Mark and Luke harmonize to perfection.**

The Resurrection Late Saturday Evening

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nights?

When does the Bible say that Jesus rose from the dead? The two Mary's came to the tomb:

"in the end of the sabbath" Matthew 28:1.

The Sabbath always ended at sunset:

"From even unto even, shall ye celebrate your sabbath" Leviticus 23:32.

Then they went to the tomb before sunset on Saturday. Jesus had risen from the dead before their arrival Matthew 28:1-8. According to the Bible, Jesus Christ arose before sunset on Saturday. Christ did not rise on Sunday morning, for the two Mary saw Him, heard Him speak, and held His feet just as the Sabbath ended and the first day of the week began.

"In the end of the sabbath, as it **began to dawn toward** the first day of the week . . ." (Matthew 28:1).

Mark 16:9 tells us Jesus first appeared to Mary Magdalene early the first day of the week, which was Saturday after sundown. **The nearer after sunset this happened, the earlier in the first of the week it was.** Mark does not say that she was alone at the time she first saw Jesus, and Matthew tells us that:

"the other Mary was with her" (Matthew 28:1).

The Date of the Crucifixion

Having shown from Matthew 28:1 that Jesus rose from the grave as the Sabbath ended at sunset and the first day of the week began, this would put the crucifixion on Wednesday at sunset just as the preparation day ended and the annual Sabbath commenced.

According to the Gospel writers, Jesus died at the ninth hour (3:00 p.m. our time) and was buried about sunset that same day, Luke 23:44, 45, 50-54; Mark 15:33-38, 42-47.

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If Jesus were buried at sunset on Wednesday and arose at sunset on Saturday, He fulfilled the sign of Jonah. He would have been in the grave Wednesday night, Thursday night, and Friday night--a full "three days". All together a full "three days and three nights." Thus we have a literal fulfillment of the words of Christ in Matthew 12:40. hence there is no need to follow Roman Catholic tradition which makes Jesus Christ a liar. Truly,

". . . He rose again the third day according to the scriptures" I Corinthians 15:4,
not the second day according to Roman Catholic tradition!

The Third Day

Some Scriptures speak of His resurrection

"after three days" (Mark 8:31; 9:31 R. V.; 10:34 R. V.; Matthew 27:63).
Other verses say

"three days" (Matthew 26:60, 61; 27:39, 40; Mark 14:58; 15:29, 30; John 2:19, 20).
Still others speak of

"the third day" (Matthew 16:21; 17:23; 20:19; 27:64; Luke 9:22; 18:33; 24:6, 7, 21, 46; Acts 10:40; I Corinthians 16:4).

Some make much over "the third day" in Luke 24:21, and they affirm that if the crucifixion took place on Wednesday, Sunday would be the fourth day since these things were done. But the answer is simple. These things were done just as Thursday was beginning at sunset on Wednesday. They were therefore completed on Thursday, and the first day since Thursday would be Friday, the second day since Thursday would be Saturday, and "the third day since" Thursday would be Sunday, the first day of the week.

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So the supposed objection in reality supports the Wednesday crucifixion. But if the crucifixion took place on Friday, by no manner of reckoning could Sunday be made "the third day since" these things were done.

Unless we believe the Bible contains errors, we know that all passages must harmonize. Therefore, "after three days" must mean the same as "the third day" Matthew 16:21.

There is nothing in the Bible to favor the Good Friday crucifixion of Jesus Christ. The biblical record harmonizes with a Wednesday crucifixion and Saturday evening resurrection--a full 72 hours. This view allows for a literal interpretation of "three days and three nights." It allows for the word "after three days" **to mean just that.** It proves that Jesus Christ fulfilled the sign of Jonah and thus proved His Messiahship to the Jews.

Remember 6PM to 6 PM is a night an day = 24 hours. The first day of the week started after 6 PM on Saturday and went to 6 PM on Sunday known as the first night and day of the week = a full 24 hours.

Based on the way we look at our calendar from 6 AM to 6 AM that would mean Jesus arose on a Saturday night but based on the Bible it means that after 6 PM Saturday night that Sunday actually began.

Died 3 PM our time, buried before 6 PM
Wed 6PM – Thursday 6 pm 1 day
Thursday 6 pm to Friday 6 PM 2nd day
Friday 6 PM to Saturday 6 PM 3rd day
Rose on Sunday which began after 6PM on Saturday. **A full 72 hours which means that Jesus told the truth.**
A full 72 hours – 3 days and 3 nights. Resurrection after 72 hours proves He is the Messiah. **INVITATION.**