

The Fourth Day—Jesus Rose

Three *Full Days* & Three *Full Nights*

Jonah 1:17; Matthew 12:38-40; John 11:17

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There seems to be a conflict in the Bible. How can this be? Matt. 17:23, and Matt. 20:19 state that Jesus rose “on” the third day, whereas Matt. 27:63 and Mark 8:31 state that Jesus rose “after” three days. In fact, Jesus *did* wait until the fourth day to rise from the dead. Why? What was Jesus doing when He waited for a specific amount of time before rising from the grave? Why not rise from the dead after 24 hours of death? Why not after two days? Why wait until the fourth day? First let’s deal with the reason Jesus wanted to rise on the fourth day, and then let’s discuss the biblical proof that Jesus did, in fact, wait until the fourth day to rise.

In **Matthew 12:38-40**, Jesus tells the people that He would give them one sign that He was truly the Messiah. The people were looking for a sign. They wanted to find a way to prove that Jesus was just a man, and not the long awaited Messiah. So, Jesus said He would give them a sign...a sign which would prove to the whole world, not just the Jewish people, but also the pagan world (whom God loves also), that Jesus was truly the one and only Messiah, with powers only God could have...power over life and death (**Matt. 28:18**).

There is nothing in Scripture that requires a specific amount of time to elapse before declaring a person dead. In fact, Jewish tradition is to bury a person as soon as possible—within a day if possible (although it is common to wait two days if death occurs on a Sabbath, or if relatives need to travel from far away). The pagan religions influenced many of the Jewish peoples into believing that a person could come back to life within three days, and therefore, many traditions at the time of Jesus would cause people to wait three days before burial. The pagans believed that a person’s spirit hovered around the body for up to three days. So, the pagan people would wait until the fourth day.

Scripture states that upon death, the spirit of a person is with the Lord (**Eccl. 12:7**). The question is whether death is defined by a heart stopping, or when a person stops breathing, or when the brain ceases to function, or whether a certain number of minutes, or hours have passed. Today we define death by bodily functions, and can measure these to make a determination (although there is still disagreement even with these techniques). But, in the days of Jesus, many pagan peoples (and even many Jewish people who were influenced by the pagan practices), believed it was necessary to wait three *full* days, and proclaim the person officially dead on the fourth. On the third day, decomposition could begin to be detected, meaning that the person was officially dead with no possibility of coming back to life—so death would then be declared on the fourth day.

You may recall that when Jesus’ friend Lazarus was dying, that Jesus deliberately waited to go to him (**John 11:1-17**). Jesus could have gone immediately to him and been there in a day or two, and raised him from death then. But, Jesus knew and understood these pagan practices, and He had this purpose in mind of waiting four days to raise Lazarus from the dead (**John 11:17**). Likewise, waiting until the fourth day to rise from the dead Himself, was a way of reaching out to all people from all over the world—to convince them—pagan or otherwise—that He truly was the Messiah. The purpose of waiting was to prove that Jesus was truly God in the flesh—that He alone had power over life and death. Thus the sign of Jonah—three full days and three full nights in the grave. Jesus knew that if He waited until the fourth day, that He would provide evidence all could believe (even the pagans, and pagan Jews), that He truly had power over life and death. Of course, this did not mean that people would automatically begin to trust in Jesus, but Jesus was giving all of us evidence of His power—whether we accept it or reject it, is up to each person.

Passover, the death of Jesus, was on a *Wednesday*, not a Friday, even though that is our traditional day to remember this event (Good Friday). The key to understanding the Passover week are Jesus’ words in **Matthew 12:39-40** (3 days and 3 nights in the tomb, indicating 72 hours). Everyone agrees that Sunday was the resurrection day (**John 20:1**). This means that Jesus must have been placed in the tomb at least 72 hours prior to the resurrection. Scholars agree that in the Hebrew understanding the phrase “the third day” can mean both - any part of three days, or the three full days. However, **Mark 8:31, 9:31**, and **Matthew 27:63** clearly state “after” three days (Greek Amplified, NAS, NIV), whereas **Matthew 17:23** and **Luke 9:22** state “the third day.” Since the

phrase “the third day” can mean three full days and nights, and since **Mark 8:31, 9:31** and **Matthew 27:63** include the clarification of “after,” this means that Jesus rose *after* 72 hours.

The Jewish day ends and begins at sunset (6 PM), not midnight like in the western world. Many translations today use the word “on” in reference to the third day (**Matt. 16:21** and many others). However, the word “on” was added. The word “on” in every single one these passages does not exist in the Greek. The phrase is “the third day” and it requires us to determine its’ reference. From the point of view of the “*death*” of Jesus (Wed.—3pm—**Matt. 27:46-51**), Jesus would rise “after” three days (on Sunday), whereas, from the point of view of the “*burial*” of Jesus (Thurs.—after 6pm—**Matt. 27:57; John 19:38-42**), Jesus would rise “on” the third day. Both views are correct if your reference is correctly understood as referring to Jesus’ death, or His burial.

The real key to understanding that three full days must pass is found in Scripture by following the women and their purchase, preparation, and use of the spices to anoint the body of Jesus.

Mark 16:1 – The women bought the spices *after* the Sabbath was over (which was a Friday because the Sabbath of Unleavened Bread occurred on Thursday—which is a High Holy Sabbath--the day Jesus’ body was buried).

Luke 23:56 – The women rested on the Sabbath, *after* preparing the spices (they rested on the Saturday Sabbath after preparing the spices on Friday).

Luke 24:1-3, and Mark 16:2 – On the first day of the week (Sunday), after the Sabbath (Saturday), Jesus had risen—the fourth day.

Three hundred years later, the Christians went along with the Roman emperor to break away from the Jewish people, and their celebration of Passover, and today we’ve all but forgotten Passover, and many have also all but forgotten what the “Easter” season for Christians (and all non-Christians), is truly about.

One last thought...In the End-Times, Revelation 11:11 informs us that the two witnesses which are killed, will rise *after* being dead three full days and nights...at daybreak on the 4th day. Jesus will then return and the resurrection of the dead will occur (**Rev. 20:4-6**). Ready? On the count of three...

Following is a Scriptural description of the week of Passover, when Jesus was killed, and then rose from the dead on the forth day.

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** *Note: the Jewish day begins at sundown (6 P.M.).*

(see Message *The Fourth Day*)

Thursday 8th - John 12:1 (6 days to Passover—long travel from Ephraim—John 11:54).

Friday 9th - John 12:2 (“supper”- supper is after 6 P.M. on Thursday—so this is now Friday).

Mark 11:4-6 (colt brought to Jesus—see also Matt. 21:2-6)

Saturday – John 12:12 (“next day”) – Passover Week begins – **Feast (appointment) #1** of 3 this week.

10th Matthew 21:7-11 (Jesus entered Jerusalem—the *triumphal entry*).

Mark 11:7-11 (Jesus entered Jerusalem, “looked around and left”).

Exodus 12:3-6 (**lamb for sacrifice to be selected** on the **10th** of the month).

John 1:29 (Jesus declared the *Lamb of God*—see also Rev. 5:6-14).

Sunday 11th - Mark 11:12-14 (**next day** – tree cursed).

Mark 11:15-17 (overturned tables of money changers—see also Matt. 21:12-13).

Mark 11:19 (left city—see also Matt. 21:17).

Monday 12th - Mark 11:20; 14:1 (**next morning** – tree dead—**2** days to Passover - see also Matt. 21:18-19).

Tuesday 13th - Mark 11:27 (“**again**” returns to Jerusalem).

Luke 19:47-48 – He taught daily.

Wednesday – Leviticus 23:5-7 (**Passover** – the **4th day of Feast (appointment) #1** when **the lamb is killed** – the blood sacrifice - **on the 14th of the month**—begins at 6 P.M. of 13th).

Exodus 12:1-6 Lamb to be killed on 14th (start of 5th day), *after* being held 4 days / 10th to 13th – Lamb traditionally killed at 6 P.M., just *after* 13th daylight has ended (twilight)—the beginning of 14th (the 5th day). Jesus (the Lamb of God), began His ministry with the world at His baptism (28 A.D.), and at the end of 4 years (at the start of this 5th year—32 A.D.—fulfilling the “4 days” prophetically), Jesus is sacrificed like the lamb in the first Passover, just after the “4th day” (year) ends, and the next day (year) begins. Note that God changed the start of the Jewish year to Passover.

Luke 23:54 (Preparation day—Passover—the High Holy Sabbath begins *after* 6 P.M. today).

14th Mark 15:42-47 (Preparation day--Passover--the day *before* the Sabbath of Unleavened

Bread—John 19:31—which is a “high day”—Luke 22:1—the names of these feast days are used interchangeably...Passover is the first feast, and Unleavened Bread is the High Holy day...so some people refer to “Passover” and others call it “Unleavened Bread”—Lev. 23 delineates them...Passover is on the 14th, and Unleavened Bread begins the next day...the 15th, which begins at 6 P.M. on the 14th).

[as to the issue of Jesus sharing the Passover meal with disciples and also dying on Passover see book *Revelation, Apostasy, End-Times & This Generation*]

Matthew 27:45-54 (6th to 9th hour—noon to 3 P.M.). Jesus died around 3 P.M.

1 Corinthians 5:7 (Jesus called our *Passover*).

John 19:31-42 (Jesus prepared for burial, and placed in the tomb by 6 P.M.—the beginning of Thursday). The tomb sealed on Thursday.

Thursday 15th - Leviticus 23:6-8 (**High Sabbath** day--**Unleavened Bread**-no work allowed)- **Feast/appointment #2**

Luke 23:55-56a (The women say Jesus body laid in the tomb).

John 6:35 (Jesus claimed to be the *Bread of Life*).

Matthew 12:38-40 (3 *days* and 3 *nights* in the earth—Jonah 1:17).

Friday – Luke 23:54-56b (The women prepared spices for the body *before* the Sabbath - Saturday).

Mark 16:1 (bought spices *after* High Sabbath over-purchased this day and prepared them).

Saturday – Luke 23:56c (*after* preparing spices, they rested on the Sabbath - Saturday).

Leviticus 23:3 (Saturday Sabbath – no work allowed).

Sunday – Luke 24:1-3 (*after* the Sabbath—Sunday). Jesus is risen!..... Jesus rose “**on**” the third day in

Mark 16:2 (first day of week—Sunday).

the context of the tomb being

1 Corinthians 15:20-23 (Jesus called the “*Firstfruit*”).

sealed, and He rose “**after**” 3

Leviticus 23:9-11 (**The Feast/appointment #3** of **Firstfruits**).

days in the context of His death.

Why are these dates important? **Luke 16:31**—Listen to Moses (Leviticus), and the Prophets (Daniel & Ezekiel).

Leviticus 23 (The Seven Feasts of Israel—fulfilled by Jesus).

Daniel 9:24-26 (69 weeks fulfilled exactly on the 10th of Nisan, 32 A.D., by Jesus).

Ezekiel 4 (fulfilled *exactly* to the very year Israel became a country again in 1948, and also

fulfilled *exactly* when Jerusalem was restored to Israel in 1967--*fulfilled after 2,520 years*).

See “*Great Prophecies*” Study—**Target Truth Ministries.com**