



The Tri-Cities Edifier

Volume 12

July 26, 2026

No. 30

Three Days and Three Nights

by Joe R. Price

How long was the body of Jesus in the grave? The skeptic is quick to say there is a contradiction in the Scriptures over the time Jesus said He would be in the tomb and the actual length He was there. When one considers the evidence, this allegation cannot be scripturally or logically sustained.

Jesus said He would be in the grave three days and three nights: “For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth” (Matt. 12:40). But Mark records Jesus saying He would rise again “after three days” (Mark 8:31). This is where the skeptic thinks he proves his case.

Jesus died and was buried on Friday before the Sabbath (Luke 23:53-56). Jesus rose from the death on the first day of the week, on which day two disciples said, “today is the third day since these things happened” (Luke 24:1, 7, 21). Parts of three days are under discussion.

Peter said Jesus was raised from the dead “on the third day” (Acts 10:40). Paul said, “that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures” (1 Cor. 15:4). Is it a conspiracy? Did Jesus and the apostles conspire to deceive? No, they did not.

Historically, the Jewish reckoning of time has been quite liberal. They counted any portion of a day as a day itself. The following from Eric Lyons is instructive on this point:

“In the first century, any part of a day could be computed for the whole day and the night following it (cf. Lightfoot, 1979, pp. 210-211). The Jerusalem Talmud quotes rabbi Eleazar ben Azariah, who lived around A.D. 100, as saying: “A day and night are an Onah [‘a portion of time’] and the portion of an Onah is as the whole of it” (from Jerusalem Talmud: Shabbath ix. 3, as quoted in Hoehner, 1974, pp. 248-249, bracketed comment in orig.).” Azariah indicated that a portion of a twenty-four hour period could be considered the same “as the whole of it” (Reasoning About the Resurrection of Christ, Eric Lyons, M. Min, Apologetics Press).

We are not unfamiliar with this way of speaking of time. For example, a man says, “I worked all day” when in fact he only worked a 10-hour shift. Similarly, the expression “three days and three nights” in the Bible can properly include portions of three days without meaning the entire 72-hour period.

Furthermore, the Bible confirms this to be a common way of counting time.

In Genesis 7:12 the rain of the flood was on the earth “forty days and forty nights,” while verse 17 merely says, “the flood was on the earth forty days.” The one expression is equivalent to the other.

A Biblical parallel to the length of time the body of Jesus was in the tomb is found in 2 Chronicles 10:5 and 12. Here, when Jeroboam and all Israel petitioned King Rehoboam to lighten their load, the king said, “Come back to me after three days” (10:5). Verse 12 then observes, “Jeroboam and all the people came to Rehoboam on the third day, as the king had

directed, saying, "Come back to me the third day." When they came back "on" the third day it was "as the king had directed." So, "on" the third day (v. 12) is equivalent to "after" the third day (v. 5). Because we might not speak of it that way today does not preclude the fact that Scripture so speaks of it, confirming the point that a portion of a day was spoken of as a day itself.

In the Jewish reckoning of time, any portion of a day could be regarded as a day. Thus, there is no contradiction between Jesus's predicted length of His burial and the actual event. In fact, its accuracy is confirmed.

Jesus: The Resurrection and the Life

Roger Bruner

Jesus said to Martha, *"I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth on Me, though he die, yet shall he live"* (**John 11.25**). Our hope of life after death rests upon these words. Without this hope, we have no real reason to live, nor any reason to have scruples. Indeed, a life without faith and hope of life beyond physical existence is *"vanity and a striving after wind"* (**Ecclesiastes 2.26**).

It is sad to read of some whose love of *"all that is in this world"* (**1 John 2.15-17**), drove them to a persecution level of hatred toward those who preached a resurrection from the dead through Jesus (**Acts 4**). Most of their ancestors of the nation of Israel doubted God's power to fulfill his oath to Abraham (**1 Corinthians 10**). Their lack of faith also turned to rebellion and persecution of God's messengers and appointed leaders. They boasted of being Abraham's seed, yet failed to acknowledge that the blessing of Abraham was through the righteousness of faith, regardless of physical lineage (cf. **Romans 4**; **Galatians 3**). They rejected the message of the prophets, that Christ was a confirmation of the *"promises made unto the fathers"* (**Romans 15.8**).

Jesus was the one promised to bring a blessing upon all families of the earth (**Acts 3.25**). That blessing has come because Jesus lives. His soul did not see corruption. He is now seated at the right hand of the Father and has given us the Holy Spirit as the assurance of our eternal inheritance (cf. **Romans 8**; **Ephesians 1**). Jesus's resurrection from the dead is God's assurance to us that all who die in faith, will be raised to eternal life. As God raised the Lord, God will raise us up through his power (**1 Corinthians 6.14**).

"He is risen," declared the angel (**Matthew 28.6**). Because He lives, we have the *"promise of the life which now is, and of that which is to come"* (**1 Timothy 4.8**). Let us pray for one another lest there be, even the slightest resentment of Jesus's resurrection, simply because of what we are called upon to give up in this life (cf. **Hebrews 11.25-26**).

04/20/25 Southside Somerset, KY Bulletin