

## Three Days and Three Nights

*“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” (Matt.12:40).*

This prophecy by our Lord was the only sign that Jesus would give to unbelieving Israel that He was the Christ of God and came from heaven.

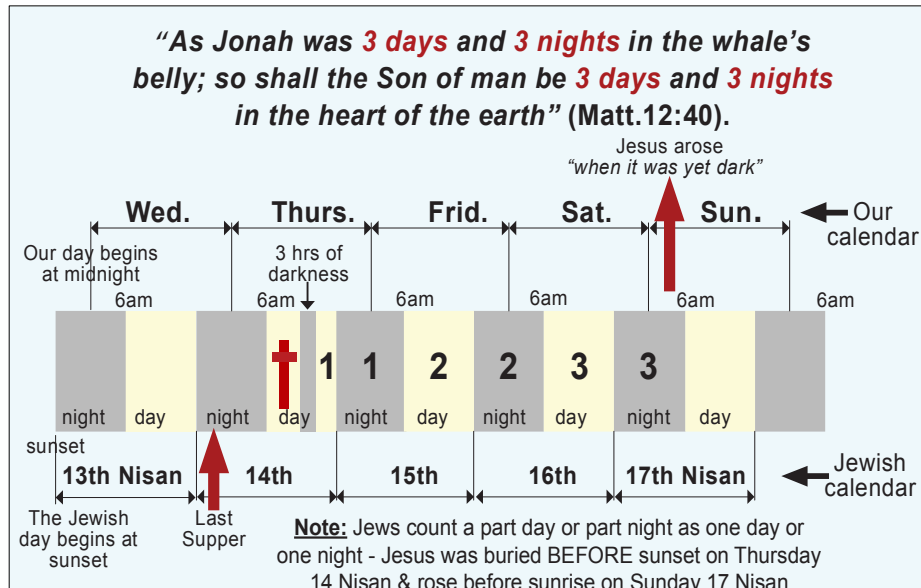
If Jesus was crucified on a Friday and rose on the first day of the week before sunrise then it is impossible to say He was in the grave for **three days and three nights**.

The Jews reckoned “inclusively” which means a part day was counted as “one day”. A part night was counted as “one night”.

Since Jesus was buried BEFORE sundown on the 14th Nisan (Thursday) that was one **day**. Friday was a second day and Saturday a third day.

Thursday night was one **night**; Friday night was a second night; and Saturday night was a third night making three days and three nights that Jesus was in the grave.

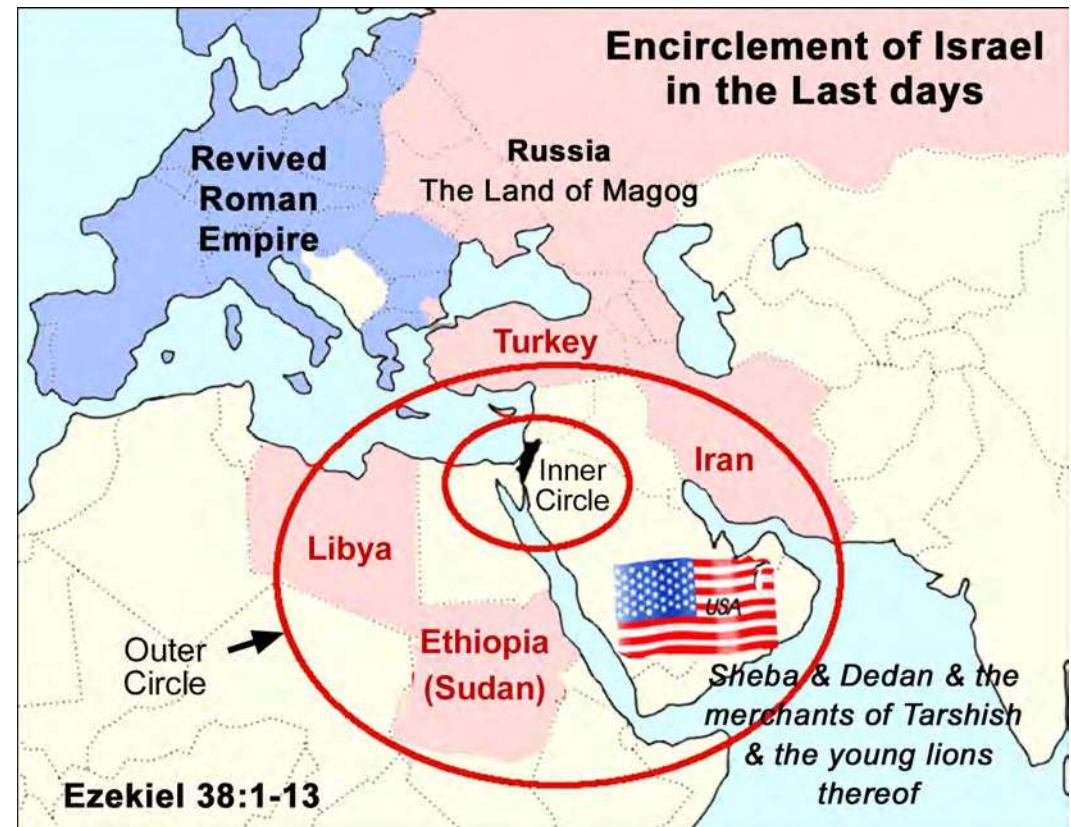
The miracle of Jonah’s preservation in the whale’s belly was to teach us that Jesus would rise from the dead. If men can’t believe that Jonah survived neither can they believe that Jesus rose from the dead!



## Israel the Centre of Attention in the Last Days

From its earliest times Israel has been hated of the nations. The Psalmist wrote: *“Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD, and against his anointed, saying, Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us. He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the LORD shall have them in derision. Then shall he speak unto them in his wrath, and vex them in his sore displeasure. Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion” (Psalm 2:1-6).*

The heathen rage because Israel is God’s covenant people through whom He preserved His Word and through whom He sent His beloved Son. In the first half of the Tribulation Israel will be attacked by a Russian/ Islamic force (Ezek.38&39) and in the second half by “all nations” led by Antichrist. The first invasion brings Israel to repentance and the second invasion brings Gentiles into judgment.



## The Resurrection of Christ - *“declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead”* (Rom.1:4).

**B**efore daybreak on the Sunday morning after Christ was crucified, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James and Joses, Salome the wife of Zebedee, and Joanna whose husband was Herod’s steward (Luke 24:1,10; 8:10; Matt 28:1; Mark 15:40; John 20:1) came to Jesus’ tomb to embalm the body but they found the grave was empty.

When Mary Magdalene saw the stone rolled away she assumed that someone had stolen the body and immediately left the women and ran about half a mile into the city to wake the disciples and tell them the news. Meanwhile the other women entered the tomb and saw an angel sitting beside where the Lord had lain. The angel told them to tell Peter and the other disciples that Jesus would see them in Galilee (Matt.28:7).

Meanwhile, Mary Magdalene had found Peter and John and told them the tomb was empty. All three immediately ran to the tomb and saw the grave clothes lying undisturbed. Peter and John returned to the city but Mary stood weeping at the door of the tomb when Jesus suddenly appeared (John 20:13). Mary mistook Jesus for the gardener until He spoke her name and told her to tell the disciples she had seen the Lord. Meanwhile, the other women were making their way into the city when Jesus appeared to them (Matt.28:9-10).



Later that day, Cleopas and another disciple were walking to the village of Emmaus when Jesus appeared to them. When they finally recognised Him as he broke bread at the evening meal, He disappeared and they ran back to Jerusalem to tell the other disciples (Luke 24:13-35).

Meanwhile Peter had left the upper room and while away, Jesus had met him. Peter had returned to the upper room and was excitedly telling the disciples he had seen the Lord when the two arrived from Emmaus to tell their story (Luke 24:34; 1Cor.15:5). Just then Jesus appeared in the room and said, *“Peace be unto you”* (Luke 24:36).

Thomas was absent when Jesus appeared and when he was told, would not believe the witness of Mary, the women, Peter, the disciples or Cleopas and the other disciple, unless he saw the wounds in the Lord’s hands and side.

The disciples remained in Jerusalem that week which was the feast of unleavened bread and the next Sunday Jesus again appeared to the disciples in the upper room when Thomas was present. Thomas exclaimed, *“My Lord and my God”* (John 20:26-28).

The disciples then took the 4-day journey to Galilee where Jesus said He would meet them but it would seem he did not immediately appear until one night, seven of the disciples decided to go fishing and caught nothing. Jesus appeared on the shore with breakfast cooked and after breakfast, He took a stroll with Peter and asked Peter three times if he loved Him. Peter was ashamed because he had denied the Lord but was recommissioned to feed the Lord’s sheep.



Later, Jesus appeared to the disciples in a mountain in Galilee where He had appointed them (Matt.28:16) for we read:

*“Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, into a mountain where Jesus had appointed them. And when they saw him, they worshipped him: but some doubted”* (Matt.28:16-17).

Five hundred saw the Lord on another occasion and James saw Him on yet another, but there were many more appearances which were not recorded (Acts 1:3; John 21:25; 1Cor.15:6-7).

Finally, the disciples returned to Jerusalem ten days before the Feast of Pentecost. Jesus again appeared and led them out of the city to the Mount of Olives as far as Bethany where Lazarus lived. He told them to remain in Jerusalem until the Holy Spirit came upon them and then to witness in *“Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth”* (Acts1:8). As He spoke these words He ascended up to heaven and a cloud received Him out of their sight. Then, as Jesus ascended two angels appeared telling the disciples,

*“This same Jesus which is taken from you into heaven shall so come in like manner even as ye have seen Him go into heaven”* (Acts 1:11).



## Beyond the Grave in the Old and New Testament Eras

Time has been divided into two major parts: Before Christ died and after Christ died. Everything that God did for man before Christ died was done in anticipation of Christ's first advent and everything God has done since Christ has died looks back to the crosswork of Christ.

All the sacrifices of the Old Testament from Adam to Christ were only shadows of what was to come in the "fulness of time" (Gal.4:4).  
 "For it is **not possible** that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins" (Heb.10:4).

Nobody could go to heaven before Christ rose because He was the "firstfruits of them that slept" (1Cor.15:20).

Enoch "walked with God and he was not for God took him"- to Paradise.

Elijah was caught up to heaven in a whirlwind. This heaven was the heaven of the firmament but his soul went to Paradise. God buried his body as He did for Moses. They searched but could not find it.

Before Christ rose the souls of the saved went to the paradise section of *sheol* (Heb.) which Jesus described as "Abraham's bosom" (Luke 16:22) and the souls of the unsaved went to the *torment* section of *sheol* (Luke 16:23). There was a great impassible gulf between.

When Jesus died He went to paradise in *sheol* with the repentant thief on the cross (Luke 23:43).

David foretold that Christ would only be in *sheol* for **three days** (Ps.16:10) and Peter quoted this prophecy to the Jews on the day of Pentecost.

"My flesh (Christ's flesh) shall rest in hope: Because **thou wilt not leave my soul in hades** (Heb.*sheol*) neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption" (Acts 2:26-27).

All the Old Testament saints rose after Christ and ascended with Him (Matt.27:52-53); He took them into heaven (Eph.4:8-10). "When he ascended up on high, he **led captivity captive**...He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things."

Now, the souls of the saved go to heaven at death and the souls of the unsaved go to the torment of hades, God's Remand Centre, to await the judgment at the Great White Throne after which they are punished in the lake of fire for ever for the degree they have sinned, "according to their works" (Rev.20:11-15).

