

WHEN DID OUR SAVIOR DIE AND RISE AGAIN?  
(What did He mean by “Three days and three nights?”)  
by R. W. Young

In Matthew 12:38-40 we read, “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 seeks after a sign; and there shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of the prophet Jonah: For as Jonah 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.” (KJV)

By reading this passage of scripture with the mind set of, and manner of speaking in, our modern Western world, we would naturally conclude that our Savior was saying He was going to be in the heart of the earth, that is dead, for 72 hours, with three consecutive, literal, complete daylight periods plus each of their corresponding complete nighttime periods of time.

However, there are others who say that in the time this was spoken it was a Hebrew idiom that merely meant any parts of three consecutive days. That is to say, they claim that it could be any part of the first 24 hour day, the whole of the next 24 hour day, and any part of the third 24 day. They say it was common to use the phrase, “three days and three nights” in this way at that time in history and in the Hebrew society..

So what is the truth in this matter? Can we reach a solid conclusion by studying how this worked out in the actual events given in the Bible as relates to the death, burial and resurrection of our Savior? I believe we certainly can do so.

But before we begin our study of that, let me make a few preliminary comments.

First, I want to point out that I will be calling our Savior, the Messiah of Israel, by the name He was given at His birth, which is “Yahshua”. Of course in English today He is called “Jesus”, and in modern Hebrew He is called “Yeshua”.

In other articles I give my reasons for using His real name as it was pronounced in the time of biblical Hebrew instead of these other forms. Free information will be given upon request to anyone wanting to know more about this, and about how this relates to the name of the God of the Bible, which is “Yahweh”(or “Yah” in its shorter form) which personal name of the Almighty was removed from most Bibles about 6,832 times by the translators. But for now, I am merely pointing out that by “Yahshua” I will be referring to the person who is commonly called “Jesus”.

Next, I point out that Yahshua never said that the sign of Jonah was the only sign of His being the Messiah. Some make the foolish statement that if you do not believe that Yahshua was in the tomb for what we mean today in our modern Western language by

“three days, and three nights” (that is, three total daylight with their three nighttime periods) you are not accepting the only sign given that He was the Messiah.

However, John wrote in John 20:30-31, “And many other signs truly did Yahshua in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: But these are written, that you might believe that Yahshua is the Messiah, the Son of God; and that believing you might have life through his name.” So, the sign of Jonah - that of being “three days and three nights in the heart of the earth” - was the ultimate sign that He was the Messiah, and it was the only sign that was to be given to that “evil and adulterous generation”. In other words, Yahshua’s death and resurrection was the ultimate and final sign to anyone as to who He was, and was the only sign that He would give to those who up till then had refused to accept the many signs that He had already given.

Finally, before going on with the facts what show what Yahshua was referring to as “three days and three nights” I point out that He did not say He would merely be in the tomb “three days and three nights”, but that He would be “in the heart of the earth” for that period of time. The tomb was not “the heart of the earth”. The heart of anything (whether a system or physical object) is the center of that thing. The heart of the earth would be the center of the earth. His body was in the tomb, of course, but His soul or actual person was in “the heart of the earth”.

Without going into extensive proof about what happens to the wicked, and to the righteous, at death, let me point out what happened to Yahshua when He died. What happened to His “inner man” ( as contrasted with the “outer man”). In 2 Corinthians 4:16 and Eph 3:16 Paul speaks of “the inner man”. He also spoke of being absent from the body in 2 Cor 5:6-8. Also, Peter spoke in 2 Peter 1:13-15 of leaving (or departing from) “this earthly tabernacle”. Stop and think about it.

As respects Yahshua there can be no reasonable doubt as to where He went when He died, for Romans 10:7 says the righteousness of faith does not say “...who shall descend into the deep, that is, to bring Messiah up from the dead” (KJV). The word translated as “deep” in the KJV is the Greek word “abussos”.

“Abussos” is where the demons begged Yahshua not to send them after they said, “art thou come to torment us before our time?” You see this by comparing Matt 8:29 with Lk 8:31. The account in Matthew 8:29 says the demons, “cried out, saying, What have we to do with thee, Yahshua, thou Son of God? art thou come hither to torment us before the time?” The account in Luke 8:31 tells us that they, then, “... besought him that he would not command them to go out into the deep.” This word translated “deep” here in the KJV is again the Greek word “abussos”. These demons knew they would eventually be tormented in the Abussos. So they begged Him to not do send them there before their appointed time.

The “abussos” is seen in Rev 9:1,2 as a place inside the earth, which upon being opened released huge amounts of smoke upon the earth. It is the place from which the “beast” of Rev is spoken of as ascending from in Rev 17:8, and it is where the devil will be cast and confined for 1000 years per Rev. 20:1-3. Thus it appears to be another name for Sheol or Hades, or at least that part where wicked beings are kept until the day of resurrection.. It is there that Yahshua went when our sins were placed on Him in His death. That is why we also read in Eph 4:8-9 that Messiah “descended into the lower parts of the earth” (at His death) before He “ascended up on high” (at His resurrection).

So with all of that said, let’s now proceed to see what happened as respects the timing of Yahshua’s death and resurrection. Does the Bible show that by “three days and three nights in the heart of the earth” Yahshua meant 72 hours, as some contend, (or at least parts of 3 daylight periods and parts of their 3 nighttime periods) or does it show that He must have been using a Hebrew idiom, which during that time in history could mean any part of three consecutive 24 hour days, as others contend?

To begin, we need to consider when Yahshua was put to death as it relates to the feast of the Passover.

Abib 14 was the specified day on which the Passover, as the lamb itself was called, was to be killed.. At sunset of the 14th it changes to, or becomes, the 15th of Abib , which is the start of the 7 day Feast of Unleavened Bread.(Lev 23:5,6) In the time of our Savior the Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread were combined to such a degree in the people’s minds that the entire period of time was lumped together as being one feast and called “*the feast of the Passover, and of unleavened bread*” (Mk 14:1). Thus we also read in Luke 22:1 “the Feast of Unleavened Bread drew nigh, which is called the Passover”.

Now let’s begin our pursuit for the answer to the question of what Yahshua meant by “three days and three nights” by first looking at the gospel accounts about Yahshua and the apostles keeping the Passover. Knowing that he kept the law perfectly, let’s see if He died after the time of the killing of the Lamb, or died at the actual time of the killing of the Lamb. We will do this by examining all the accounts that show when He kept the Passover.

Whatever the case turns out to be does not change the fact that He is the fulfillment of being the Lamb of Yah that took away the sins of the world, just as He was also the fulfillment of the Atonement sacrifice, and of every other sin sacrifice ever required under the Torah, or Law of Moses, even though He obviously did not die on the day when the atonement sacrifice was slain or when all the other sin offerings were slain.

We begin with Matthew 26:17-20, which says, ‘Now the first *day of the feast of unleavened bread* the disciples came to Yahshua, saying unto him, Where wilt thou that we prepare for thee to eat the Passover? And he said, Go into the city to such a man, and

say unto him, The Master saith, My time is at hand; I will keep the Passover at thy house with my disciples. And the disciples did as Jesus had appointed them; and they made ready the Passover. Now when the evening was come, he sat down with the twelve.”

As I pointed out earlier, the whole period of time from the 14th of the month of Abib until the end of the 7 day Feast of Unleavened Bread had become called the Feast of Unleavened Bread. (There is little doubt that the Jews started eating unleavened bread on the 14th of the month. ) This was the 14th of the month, the day the Passover was supposed to be killed as will be clearly seen as we continue on in our study.

Exodus 12:6 clearly shows that the lamb was to be killed on “the fourteenth day ...in the evening”. Actually the Hebrew says “ben ha erebim” – “between the evenings”. Without going into exactly what that means, in any case, it was to be killed on the 14th.

Notice that the apostles came to Yahshua asking Him where they should prepare the Passover. Obviously, they knew this was the correct time to do so. This would require them to take the Lamb to the priest to have it killed, so that they could, then, roast it for the Passover meal. This day on which they came to Yahshua asking where they should prepare the Passover was undoubtedly the 14th of the month (the correct time for killing the lamb) which will also be shown clearly by the other accounts.

Verse 20, says, “And when the evening came, He sat down with the twelve.” So, since one day ends, and the next day begins, at sunset, He sat down to eat the Passover Lamb on the day after it was killed, which would, therefore, be the 15th of the Hebrew month of Abib since the Passover (the lamb) was killed on the 14th of Abib.

Next, we read the account in Mark 14:12-17, “And **the first day of unleavened bread, when they killed the Passover**, his disciples said unto him, Where wilt thou that we go and prepare that thou mayest eat the Passover? And he sendeth forth two of his disciples, and saith unto them, Go ye into the city, and there shall meet you a man bearing a pitcher of water: follow him. And wheresoever he shall go in, say ye to the goodman of the house, The Master saith, Where is the guestchamber, where **I shall eat the Passover** with my disciples? And he will show you a large upper room furnished and prepared: there make ready for us. And his disciples went forth, and came into the city, and found as he had said unto them: and **they made ready the Passover**. And **in the evening he cometh with the twelve**.”

I have highlighted several things. First, we see that this was “the first day of unleavened bread” (which, as I have shown, the whole period of time became called). But more specifically, it was said to be the time, “when they killed the Passover”. (The term “they” would refer to the people, or Jews, in general.) So it was the day when the Jews “killed the Passover”, which was Abib 14th. Next, we read that the Savior, in

fact, declared that He “would eat the Passover”. Finally, we see again that it was in “the evening” that He actually came to eat it. Thus, He ate the Passover, and did so on the proper day, the day after it was supposed to be killed, rather than the same day it was killed., since “evening” would have begun the next 24 day.

The next account is found in Luke 22:7-13, which says, “Then came **the day of unleavened bread, when the Passover must be killed.** And he sent Peter and John, saying, Go and prepare us the Passover that we may eat. And they said unto him, Where wilt thou that we prepare? And he said unto them, Behold, when ye are entered into the city, there shall a man meet you, bearing a pitcher of water; follow him into the house where he entereth in. And ye shall say unto the goodman of the house, The Master saith unto thee, Where is the guestchamber, where **I shall eat the Passover** with my disciples? And he shall show you a large upper room furnished: there make ready. And they went, and found as he had said unto them: and they made ready the Passover.” I high lighted the “I shall eat the Passover” to point out that He, who does not lie, said He would do so.

The main thing in this account is that it was, “the day of unleavened bread, when the Passover must be killed”. The significant thing is that it was plainly stated that it was, “when the Passover must be killed”. It was the correct time for the lamb to be slain. The apostles know this (as did all the Jews).

The conclusion from all three accounts, therefore, is that although He died at the general time, or the season of, the Passover, He did not die at the exact time that the Passover , the Lamb, was being killed, as some insist that He had to in order to fulfill His being the Passover Lamb. As I have pointed out, His death fulfilled not only the Passover, but also the Day of Atonement sacrifice, and every other sin sacrifice even though He obviously did not die at all those times.

He certainly died as our Atonement for sin, as well as the Lamb whose blood was shed to take away our sins and to release us from the authority of the devil as the prince of this world, which Pharaoh was the type of. Yet, it is clear that He did not die at the exact time that the Passover (Lamb) was killed, not even on that same day, for He ate the Passover the day following.

Before we look at the evidence that shows what Yahshua meant by being in the heart of the earth for “three days and three nights”, let’s for a moment to look at the passage in John that deals with Yahshua eating the Passover. That He ate the Passover (the lamb) on that last night (before He was slain) has already been established from the three “Synoptic Gospels”.

John’s account is found in chapter 13. John 13:1-2 says, “Now before the feast of the Passover, when Yahshua knew that his hour was come that he should depart out of this

world unto the Father, having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end. And supper being ended, the devil having now put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray him.”

This passage causes some to conclude, that contrary to the other three witnesses (Matthew, Mark, and Luke ), John says this supper was before the Passover. However, that would make either John to be a false witness, or the other three to be false witnesses, and we would have a glaring contradiction in the Bible. That cannot be. And there is nothing in this passage that requires it to so read.

John is simply making the statement that before the Passover, that is, before the time when the Passover was to be killed, roasted and eaten, even though Yahshua knew He was about to leave this world, having loved His own up to that point He continued to love them until the very end. He loved them even while knowing that one of them would betray Him, and that all the rest would forsake Him, He still loved them unto the very end. That's the only thing John was saying up till this point in his writing.

Then, without giving the details of the preparation for the Passover, or even what went on during the eating of the meal (as the other writers do), John simply skipped the details of the preparation and of the meal itself and jumps to the end of the meal by saying, “and supper being ended” etc. This clearly has to be the Passover supper, as the context shows from the beginning statement, and as the other accounts show.

John chapter 12 tells us that it was 6 “days before the Passover” when Yahshua came to Bethany and had His feet anointed” etc. It then goes on to give other events leading up to the Passover, along with certain things Yahshua said during that period of time. Then, with coming right up to just before the Passover, John in this chapter 13 merely starts by declaring Yahshua's enduring love even while having the Passover and His death in view. Having mentioned Yahshua enduring love for His own, John, next, jumps to the events that happened after the meal, events that occurred on the night of Yahshua's betrayal and death.

In keeping with the other accounts, and with John having mentioned that it was before the Passover, it should be obvious that the supper mentioned was the Passover supper. The context makes this very clear. It is strange that so many get mixed up about this.

One verse that is used by some to say this supper recorded in John 13 was not the Passover supper is John 13:29. There we read, “For some of them thought, because Judas had the bag, that Yahshua had said unto him, Buy *those things* that we have need of against the feast; or, that he should give something to the poor.” They assume that this means the apostles thought Yahshua was telling Judas to buy those things needed for the Passover meal, and that this, therefore could not be the Passover meal. There is no reason to make such an assumption. And that cannot be the case unless scripture

contradicts itself and either John was or the writers of the other three gospels were false witnesses. In which case, we would have no way of knowing if our records about the life of Messiah are right or not.

The answer is that by buying something for the feast, they must have meant to buy something for the rest of the feast of tabernacles. After all, there was still the rest of that day, and still 6 more days to go until the end of the feast. As far as whether or not it was o.k. to buy on that same day or not, I do not know for sure, for it was not the weekly Sabbath. I do know that the women bought spices when they saw Yahshua was dead, or dying, which as I have shown was on the daylight portion of the 15<sup>th</sup> of Abib.

With that being said, let's go on to see when Yahshua died and when He arose again, which will also show us what He meant by the phrase, "three days and three nights" according to the Hebrew understanding of that time in history.

The time of day that He was hung on the stake is mentioned in Mark 15:25, which says, "And it was the third hour, and they crucified Him." Yet in John 19:14, it is said, "And it was the preparation of the Passover, and about the sixth hour..." Matthew 27:45-51 indicates that it was about the "ninth hour" of the day.

My purpose here is not to go into an explanation of what these seemingly different times mean and how they can all be reconciled. Rather I just want to point out what is quite evident to most, which is that He was put on the stake and died in the daylight part of the day. (As regards what is meant by "the preparation of the Passover" I will speak to that matter latter on in this writing.)

First, what about the matter of when He rose from the dead? We have three different statements made in the Bible about when He would and, therefore, did rise again.

There are 13 places where it is said He would (or did) rise "the third day" or "on the third day". (You can look these up in a good concordance.) There are 5 places where it was said He would arise "in three days". In 2 places it is mentioned that He said He would arise "after three days".

The 13 places which speak of Him rising on "the third day" and the 5 that speak of His resurrection as being "in three days" are basically the same. The only one that differs is the one speaking of "after three days".

In Acts 10:40 Peter is quoted as saying, "Him God raised up the third day, and showed him openly." Since so many passages speak of His resurrection being the third day, or in three days, the statement "after three days" must somehow mean the same thing as

well. It can only mean that He would, and did, arise after the third day came, not that He arose after the third day was over, for that would be the 4th day, which cannot be.

Actually that phrase “after three days” was made once by Yahshua and later quoted by the Pharisees. They quoted it to Pilate as recorded in Matthew 27:62-64, which says, “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 was yet alive, ‘After three days I will rise again’. Command therefore that the sepulcher 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.”

This shows us that they understood “after three days” to mean the same as “until the third day.” Otherwise they would have asked Pilate to secure the tomb until the fourth day. This is an example of how the Hebrew mind and way of speaking at that time was different than our Western way of thinking and speaking in our modern time.

Thus we have to settle on the fact that, as Peter said, Yahweh raised Him “up the third day”. Also Paul said, “he rose again the third day according to the scriptures”. (1 Cor 15:4) So, we still need to see if when He said those words “three days and three nights”, that Yahshua meant a literal 72 hours, as we understand them to mean in our modern day and way of thinking in the Western world ( or at least parts of three consecutive days and nights). Or was it an idiomatic phrase that did not require one to consider it actually meaning 3 consecutive 24 days that had to include all of the nights connected to those days as well?

I found something on the internet on a site called “Apologetics page” that is interesting concerning this matter. I quote it below.

“While to the 21<sup>st</sup>-century reader these statements may initially appear to contradict one another, in reality, they harmonize perfectly if one understands the different, and sometimes more liberal, methods ancients often used when reckoning time. 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*: Shabbat ix. 3, as quoted in Hoehner, 1974, pp. 248-249, bracketed comment in orig.). Azariah indicated that a portion of a 24-hour period could be considered the same “as the whole of it.” Thus, as awkward as it may sound to an American living in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, a person in ancient times could legitimately speak of something occurring “on the third day,” “after three days,” or after “three days and three nights,” yet still be referring to the same exact day.”



This is what we are still planning to show is the case as we continue to further check out the facts presented in the Bible concerning the death, burial and resurrection of our Master.

We have seen that Yahshua ate the Passover and that He did so after the proper day for killing it and preparing it. The day for killing it was the 14<sup>th</sup> of the first month, the month of Abib (or Nisan). This was when the disciples prepared it. That was the proper day for preparing the Passover, that is, the Lamb according to Exodus 12 and elsewhere/. Then, as we have seen, in the evening, that is, after sunset, which would make it the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month, they sat down and ate the Passover.

The 15<sup>th</sup> was the first day of unleavened bread and was the first Sabbath of the feast, while the last one was 7 days latter. The only other Sabbath during the feast would be the weekly Sabbath. Actually these feast sabbaths were called “shabbaton” in Hebrew, rather than “Shabbat”, as the weekly “Sabbath” was called. However, the Greek only has the one term “sabbaton” for both.

The difference between the feast Shabbaton and the weekly Sabbath was that on the Shabbaton it was said that you are to “do no servile work”, which seemed to mean no hard labor or regular type of work. Some work, such as preparing your meals could be done on those Shabbatons. Exodus 12:16, for example says, “And in the first day there shall be an holy convocation, and in the seventh day there shall be an holy convocation to you; no manner of work shall be done in them, save that which every man must eat, that only may be done of you.”

However, on the weekly Sabbath Day – the Shabbat – it says – no work at all may be done. You are to prepare for that day by fixing your food the day before, which it why it became called “the preparation *day*”. Thus when the manna fell in the wilderness in Exodus 16:23 we read that Moses said to the people, “This *is that* which Yahweh hath said, To morrow *is* the rest of the holy Sabbath unto Yahweh: bake *that* which ye will bake *to day*, and seethe that ye will seethe; and that which remains over lay up for you to be kept until the morning. “ And regarding the weekly Shabbat we are told in Leviticus 23:3, “Six days shall work be done: but the seventh day is the Sabbath of rest, an holy convocation; ye shall do no work therein: it is the Sabbath of Yahweh in all your dwellings.”

When we read in Mark 15:42, “And now when the even was come, because it was the preparation, that is, the day before the Sabbath”, it has to be the weekly Sabbath day that it was the preparation for, because the 15<sup>th</sup>, the first day of unleavened bread, which was a Hebrew “shabbaton”, had already occurred and was the very day on which He was impaled.

The day before these Shabbatons was never called “the preparation, the day before the

Sabbath”, because there was nothing to were required prepare for as would be the case if you could not cook your food, and do any other related labor on that day.. You could do these, even when it came to fixing the Passover meal on the 15th of Abib, which is a Shabbaton, not a Shabbat. The only preparation you would have to do the day before (the 14th) was to kill the lamb. Most likely they, including the apostles, did do much of the rest of the preparing. But because it was not completely required, it was never called “the preparation” meaning “the day before the Sabbath.”.

In fact the term translated “preparation” is “paraskeue” in Greek and was the actual name of the 6th day of the week, the day before the weekly Sabbath. It is still the name used in Greek for what is now called “Friday” in English. It was, and yet is, the name of a day of the week, the day of preparing for the weekly Sabbath Day”, the day of the 4th commandment.

When John says in John 19:31, “The Jews therefore, because it was the preparation” [paraskeue] “that the bodies should not remain upon the cross on the Sabbath day, (for that Sabbath day was an high day,) besought Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away” , the Jews were not using term “high day” as referring to a festival Sabbath as some contend. There is no place where a “shabbaton” is called a “high day”. This is just something made up by someone who came up with this idea by assumption, but an idea that has nothing to substantiate it. Then, it was carried on, or repeated, by others who use it to try to prove their position that this was not speaking of a weekly Sabbath, but an annual shabbaton. .

What apparently made that weekly Sabbath considered to be a “high day” is that is was the weekly Sabbath Day that marked out the count down to the Feast of Shavuot, the feast of weeks. The Jews did not want Him to be left on the “cross” on this special weekly Sabbath day that marked the beginning of counting toward Shavuot, or Pentecost.

There can be no question that the Sabbath that occurred the day after Yahshua was impaled was the weekly Sabbath, for we have seen that the annual shabbaton began the night He ate the Passover, since it was killed the day before (that is, on the 14<sup>th</sup> of Abib). Even the statement that the women rested “according to the commandment” bears this out, for there is no actual commandment to “rest” on any day called a “shabbaton” in Hebrew, but only on the weekly sabbaths and the Day of Atonement, which is also called a “Shabbat” like the weekly Sabbath is.

The 10 commandment Sabbath is the only one on which has an actual commandment to rest. The other sabbaths (as shabbatons) merely say to do no work as “servile work”, on them. No place is there a commandment to totally rest on them.

Another thing some point out is that the term translated “Sabbath” in the statement in Matthew 28:1 should be “Sabbaths”, for it is plural in the Greek, even though the KJV

translates it as as, “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 sepulcher”. The Greek word translated “Sabbath” in the KJV is indeed plural. This would be due to one of two possibilities.

First, the plural form for Sabbath in the Greek was also used to mean week. If that is what was meant, then, the passage could be rendered, “In the end of the week”, referring to the previous week which ended with the weekly Sabbath. (In fact the Greek, in using the word “opse”, which is translated as “in” in the KJV, can also mean “after”. So this passage could properly be translated “After the week, as it began to dawn toward”, etc.)

However when it says in Mark 16:1, “And when the Sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome, had bought sweet spices, that they might come and anoint him”, the Greek word translated “Sabbath” is singular. Thus it could only be referring to the weekly Sabbath. And of course we know that it was on the first day of the week that they came to the tomb.

Thus it all points to the fact that Yahshua was impaled and died on the daytime portion of the day on which the Passover was eaten (in the previous nighttime portion of that day). From what Matthew, Mark and Luke say we know that that very day was, therefore, the first day of the Feast of Unleavened bread, or the 15<sup>th</sup> of Abib. It was the day after the apostles prepared for the Passover, and was the daytime that followed the night during which the Passover meal was eaten. Therefore, it was on the preparation day for the weekly Sabbath that Yahshua was put to death. He died before sunset and was put in the tomb shortly before sunset. He rested in the tomb on the weekly Sabbath, and rose sometime soon after the very beginning of the first day of the week before the sun was fully risen, which was when the women came to the tomb, “early, when it was yet dark.”

He had to appear that day in order to show that He was only “three days and three nights in the heart of the earth”. Thus, although “three days and three nights could mean 72 consecutive hours, it could also mean any part of three consecutive days with, of course, one whole 24 hour day in the middle, for this latter way is how Yahshua used it. In the case of our Master’s being in the heart of the earth, it was, just that, namely, part of the first day, all of the second, and part of the third that He was in there.

Some point out that those who took Yahshua to Pilate’s judgment hall had not yet taken the Passover. They think this proves that the time for the Passover had not yet come. They quote John 18:28, which says, “Then led they Yahshua from Caiaphas unto the hall of judgment: and it was early; and they themselves went not into the judgment hall, lest they should be defiled; but that they might eat the Passover.” They also include the fact that when the Jewish leaders decided to kill Yahshua they had said “not on the feast day lest there be an uproar among the people.”. (Matt 26:5; Mark 14:2) Neither of these facts prove that the time of the Passover had not yet come.

First of all, even though it was their plan to eat the Passover at the usual time, and although they planned to wait until after the feast to kill Him, both of these plans were unexpectedly changed due to the sudden opportunity that Judas was now providing them by offering to take them to Him in betrayal of Him.

John 18:28 comments that “it was early” before it adds the other statement, “and they themselves went not into the judgment hall, lest they be defiled, but that they might eat the Passover.” In other words although it had gotten somewhat later than usual for taking (i.e. “eating”) the Passover, and they had not done so because of being occupied with the unexpected events of that evening, but it was still possible to do so. Therefore, they did not want to become prevented from doing so by becoming defiled.

In most cases of becoming unclean you could do the required ceremonial washing and become clean again by evening. Which means that they were not concerned about becoming unclean so that they wouldn't be free to take the Passover the following day, if it had been the following day, for they could have become clean by then. But they didn't want to become unclean so as to be unable to still take it on that same day.

They obviously did not want to be defiled on that day, because they would not, then, be able to eat the Passover on that designated day, but would have to wait till the next month to take it (under a special provision spoken of in Num 9:10,11.). I repeat that, if the next day, was the correct day to take it, their becoming defiled on this day would not have kept them from eating it, for they could have become clean again by then. This is, therefore, really just a further proof that this was the actual feast day (on which Yahshua had eaten the Passover before He was put to death and laid in the tomb shortly before sunset).

Another indication that the 1st day of the week was the third day of Yahshua being in the heart of the earth is the account that we find in Matthew 27:62-64 which reads as follows: “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 was yet alive, After three days I will rise again. Command therefore that the sepulcher 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.”

If they had understood “three days and three nights to mean 72 hours, then they would have asked that the tomb be secured until the 4<sup>th</sup> day, not the 3<sup>rd</sup> day as they did.

Think about it. Since this was the day after Yahshua was laid in the tomb, it had to be the second day. If, as some say, “three days and three nights” means three consecutive, complete 24 hours periods (or even three parts of three consecutive days including at least parts of each of their day and night portions) then, if this day they were making their

request on is to be counted as the first day, for Yahshua to be three complete, consecutive days in the tomb, He would also have been a small part of an additional day in death and the tomb, which would, then, be three days and three nights, plus a little more, for Yahshua was dead, and “in the heart of the earth”, a short while before sunset, and buried just slightly before, not after, sunset.

Luke 23:53-54 says of His body, “And they took it down, and wrapped it in linen, and laid it in a sepulcher that was hewn in stone, wherein never man before was laid. And that day was the preparation, and the Sabbath drew on.” Thus He died a while before sunset and was put in the tomb before, but almost at, sunset.

Therefore, when the chief priests and Pharisees asked that the sepulcher “be made sure until the third day, since Yahshua was dead and buried on the previous day, they had to be making this request on the 2<sup>nd</sup> day during which Yahshua was dead and buried. That would mean that they wanted the protection of the tomb until the next day, because they said “until the third day, and the next day would be the third day.

If, as some say, this was not on the weekly Sabbath on which they came making this request, but the annual Sabbath, then, this does not tie in with the fact that this was the day after the time that the lambs were killed. Any preparation for the Passover would have already been made, for the apostles came asking “Where shall we prepare ...the Passover?” Therefore, this day on which they made their request had to be the weekly Sabbath.

Some of those who make the claim the preparation mentioned was not the preparation for the weekly Sabbath, but the preparation for the Passover shabbaton, say that Yahshua was buried exactly at or a few minutes before the 15<sup>th</sup> of Abib, and that the 72 hours began then. To them this 1<sup>st</sup> of the three 24 hour days when He was in the tomb began at that time, and was followed by another day that was not a Sabbath (making that day two), and was, then, followed by the weekly Sabbath on which He arose just before sunset – just before the first day of the following week began with set on what is called Saturday.

The problem with this is the fact that the women did not come to anoint His body until around sunrise of the first day of the week. Why did they not come to anoint it on that day in between, which was not a Sabbath Day at all, if that theory is right?

So there you have it. It is clear that Yahshua was put to death, and went into the heart of the earth (the “abussos”) then laid in the tomb on the feast day, the day after the Passover lambs were slain, the same day on which the Passover meal was eaten.. He was slain on the preparation day, the day that is called Friday in English (and is still called “Preparation”, i.e. “Paraskeue”, in Greek) then, laid in the tomb just before the Sabbath Day, the 7th day of the week. And He was, therefore, raised on the very beginning of the 1st day and seen alive on that day proving that He was “three days and three nights in the

heart of the earth” as He said He would be by using that idiomatic term as it was understood by the people of that day.

Let’s conclude our study by considering three scenarios that have been put forth as to what day Yahshua died. Or, we can say three different days of the week that have been proposed as to when the three days begin that form what Yahshua called “three days and three nights”.

First , let’s note that on the first day of the week, that is now called Sunday, the two men that Yahshua met as they were walking on the way to Emmaus said, “today is the third day since these things were done.” (Luke 24:21) The words translated as “since” here are the two words “apo” and “hos” . The first word, “apo”, can mean a number of different things, but the basic idea is separation from whatever time or object is mentioned.. It is often translated as “from”. The question is whether they meant this day, Sunday, was the third day with the counting including the day the things actually occurred as I think it must, or something else.

In other words is it best translated as, “Today is the third day since these things were done”, or better translated as, “Today is the third day from *when* these things were done”. Let’s see how it works out by looking at these three scenarios.

The first scenario is that Yahshua died on 4th day of the week, which is now called Wednesday. If we make it Wednesday when He took the supper, after which He was taken to be slain, then, He would have died on the end part of the 4th day of the week according to Bible way of counting the days of the week (as beginning at sunset). That would make Wednesday daylight the first day, Wednesday night the first night, Thursday daylight the 2nd day, Thursday night the 2nd night, Friday daylight the 3rd day, and Friday night the 3rd night. So He would have had to then have risen sometime early on Sabbath morning. That means He would have hung around somewhere until part of Saturday daylight, all of Saturday night and a little of Sunday morning had past, before He showed Himself alive . That is very problematic. So I don’t see how a Wednesday death and burial could work out.

Let’s try Thursday. If He died and was buried on the latter part of the daylight portion of Thursday, then, Thursday daylight would be day 1, Thursday nighttime, night 1, Friday daylight, day 2, Friday nighttime, night 2, Saturday daytime, day 3, and Saturday nighttime, night 3. If He arose on Saturday night, rather than on Sunday morning, then, you would have parts of three days and three nights. So, although you would not have 72 hours, you could say it was “three days and three nights “ that He “was in the heart of the earth” if all your require is a parts of three consecutive days and nights.

So a Thursday death and burial would work out from that standpoint, even though it would not be three complete days and three complete nights. However, Yahshua is

called the first fruits of them that slept. Since the first day of the week, “the day after the Shabbat” (not “shabbaton”) is the day of the first fruits, and Shavuot (or Pentecost) was fifty days latter, it is much more likely that He arose on that day, the first day of the week than on the day before first fruits, if He rose on Sabbath.

Also, if we say Thursday is the day on which He died and was buried, then we have several problems in trying to reconcile it with all the facts we have seen are clearly laid out in the gospels. For one thing we are, then, saying Wednesday is the preparation. But the very word “paraskeue”, translated as “preparation” means Friday. Even if we ignore that, and make Thursday the preparation for the first day of unleavened bread rather than for the weekly Sabbath, thereby making the day after Yahshua was slain the day of eating the Passover, we contradict the other scriptures, which show us that the day that Yahshua kept the Passover and was slain was the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread.

The only scenario that fits all the scriptures is that He was put to death and put in the tomb on a Friday, making it the first day, then counting the Sabbath as the 2nd, and Sunday morning as the 3rd day. We conclude, therefore, that rabbi Eleazar ben Azariah, who lived around A.D. 100, was right in what he wrote in *The Jerusalem Talmud* : “A day and night are an Onah [‘a portion of time’] and the portion of an Onah is as the whole of it, and that the statement is correct that says, “as awkward as it may sound to an American living in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, a person in ancient times could legitimately speak of something occurring “on the third day,” “after three days,” or after “three days and three nights,” yet still be referring to the same exact day.”

Thus, of the “three days and three nights” we see that the day which is now called Friday should be considered as the first “day and night”, the Sabbath that follows is of course the 2nd day and night, and Sunday is the third “day and night” according to the language of that day, even though it includes only a small portion of the first day and third day. This all fits the many scriptures that say Yahshua arose “the third”, “on the third day”, in “three days”, and “after three days” (meaning after the third day had arrived).