

Three Days and Three Nights in New Testament

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BIG SANDY, Texas—As a Bible student, you are aware of the term "three days and three nights" as mentioned in regard to the resurrection of the Son of God.

Many theologians like to describe the time period of three days and three nights as "parts" of days. However, most of the people in my circle of life view that expression as literal days. Notice the scriptures why my friends and I form our conclusion.

Christ's early comments

John 2:18-22—"So the Jews answered and said to Him, 'What sign do You show to us, since You do these things?' Jesus answered and said to them, 'Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.' Then the Jews said, 'It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and will You raise it up in three days?' But He was speaking of the temple of His body. Therefore, when He had risen from the dead, His disciples remembered that He had said this to them; and they believed the Scripture and the word which Jesus had said."

Later in His life, people taunted Him for saying those words.

- Matthew 26:61
- Mark 14:58
- Matthew 27:40
- Mark 15:29

Sign of Jonah

Matthew 12:39-40—"But He answered and said to them, 'An evil and adulterous generation seeks after a sign, and no sign will be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah. 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.' "

Began to tell disciples

As the Son of God grew closer to the time of His death, He started warning His disciples about future events—including being raised on the third day following His death.

- Matthew 16:21
- Matthew 17:23
- Matthew 20:19
- Mark 8:31
- Mark 9:31
- Mark 10:34
- Luke 9:22
- Luke 18:33

They guarded the tomb

Matthew 27:63-64—“Sir, we remember, while He was still alive, how that deceiver said, ‘After three days I will rise.’ Therefore command that the tomb be made secure until the third day, lest His disciples come by night and steal Him away, and say to the people, ‘He has risen from the dead.’ So the last deception will be worse than the first.”

Comments after the tomb

Luke 24:7—“The Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again.”

Luke 24:21—“But we were hoping that it was He who was going to redeem Israel. Indeed, besides all this, today is the third day since these things happened.”

Luke 24:46—“Then He said to them, ‘Thus it is written, and thus it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day.’ ”

Peter mentioned it

Acts 10:39-40—“And we are witnesses of all things which He did both in the land of the Jews and in Jerusalem, whom they killed by hanging on a tree. Him God raised up on the third day, and showed Him openly.”

Paul mentioned it

1 Corinthians 15:3-4—“For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures.”