

THREE DAYS AND THREE NIGHTS

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There's a controversy as to what Yeshua meant when He spoke of being dead for three days and three nights, which only occurs once in Matthew:

“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.” (Matthew 12:40)

Eleven times in the Gospels though, Yeshua also spoke of “just” rising “*on* the third day,” not after three days and nights:

1. “From that time Jesus began to show to His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised the third day.” (Mt. 16:21)
2. “and they will kill Him, and the third day He will be raised up.” And they were exceedingly sorrowful.” (Mt. 17:23)
3. “and deliver Him to the Gentiles to mock and to scourge and to crucify. And the third day He will rise again.” (Mt. 20:19)
4. “For He taught His disciples and said to them, “The Son of Man is being betrayed into the hands of men, and they will kill Him. And after He is killed, He will rise the third day.”” (Mark 9:31)
5. “and they will mock Him, and scourge Him, and spit on Him, and kill Him. And the third day He will rise again.”” (Mark 10:34)
6. “saying, “The Son of Man must suffer many things, and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised the third day.”” (Luke 9:22)
7. “And He said to them, “Go, tell that fox, ‘Behold, I cast out demons and perform cures today and tomorrow, and the third day I shall be perfected.’” (Luke 13:32)
8. “They will scourge Him and kill Him. And the third day He will rise again.” (Luke 18:33)
9. “saying, “The Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again.”” (Luke 24:7)
10. “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 24:21)
11. “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.”” (Luke 24:46)

Yeshua died on Thursday afternoon.¹ He was in the grave three days and three nights, with a Sunday morning resurrection. This follows Yeshua being symbolized as the First Fruits (or First Sheaf) to rise from the dead (cf. Lev. 23:9-12; 1st Cor. 15:20, 23).² Counting inclusively, as they did back then, three days and three nights would look like this:

1. Thurs nite, Friday nite and Saturday nite.
2. Friday, Saturday and Sunday.

¹ For more on this ask for the PDF *Crucifixion Day—Thursday or Friday?*

² See [First Sheaf](#).

It seems clear from Scripture that one should not only take the ‘Sign of Jonah’ into account, with its three full days and three full nights, but also the overwhelming majority of ‘the third day.’

But If He Wasn’t Crucified on Passover Day, How Is He the Passover Lamb?

Nowhere in the New Testament does it say that Yeshua died when the Passover lambs were being sacrificed³ (Lev. 23:5; Ex. 13:4, 28, etc; 14 *Aviv*). The first Passover in Egypt was eaten in the night of the first day of Unleavened Bread (15 *Aviv*, as the Passover lamb had been sacrificed the evening before, at the end of 14 *Aviv*) and it was in the middle of that night, about midnight, that God killed all the Egyptian firstborn sons. Then Pharaoh, still ‘in the night’ (darkness), called for Moses and told him to take all the Hebrews and leave Egypt:

Exodus 12:12: “For I will pass through the land of Egypt on that *night* and will strike all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast, and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment: I am Yahveh.”

Exodus 12:29–32: “And it came to pass at *midnight* that Yahveh struck all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, from the firstborn of Pharaoh who sat on his throne to the firstborn of the captive who was in the dungeon, and all the firstborn of livestock. So Pharaoh *rose in the night*, he, all his servants, and all the Egyptians and there was a great cry in Egypt for there was not a house where there was not one dead. Then he called for Moses and Aaron by *night*, and said, ‘Rise, go out from among my people, both you and the Sons of Israel. And go, serve Yahveh as you have said. Also, take your flocks and your herds, as you have said, and be gone; and bless me also.’”

Numbers 33:3: “They *departed* from Rameses” (were set free) “in the first month, on the ***fifteenth*** day of the first month (15 *Aviv*) on the day after the Passover the Sons of Israel went out with boldness in the sight of all the Egyptians.”

When Messiah was being crucified it became dark like night, at noon, even though it was the daytime when He died (Mt. 27:45; Mk. 15:33; Lk. 23:44). The point is that ***when*** Yeshua died on 15 *Aviv* *we were set free* from our slavery to Satan, sin and death, just as the Hebrews were set free from Pharaoh and Egyptian slavery on 15 *Aviv*. It seems that it was on this day, the actual day-time *after* the Passover had been eaten the night before, that God chose to align our freedom with His Firstborn Son’s death⁴ as the Passover Lamb with ancient Israel’s freedom from slavery. Both lambs set Israel free on 15 *Aviv*.

God chose to have Yeshua, His Firstborn Son (Rom. 8:29; Heb. 1:6), sacrificed on the day that both commemorates *when* the Hebrews ate the Passover lamb and *when* they were *literally set free* from Egypt by the death of Egypt’s firstborn sons and Pharaoh’s proclamation for Moses “to go,” not the actual time of the slaying of the Passover lambs in Egypt (dusk of 14 *Aviv*). The ancient Hebrews weren’t literally freed from Egypt by their sacrificing of the lamb, but by God’s slaying of the Egyptian firstborn sons in the middle of the night of 15 *Aviv* (Ex. 12:29). Pharaoh released Israel soon after that. Hence, when Yeshua, God’s Firstborn Son, was slain on 15 *Aviv* (in darkness at noon, mimicking the darkness of the middle of the night when the Egyptian firstborn sons were slain), we too were set free from slavery to sin, sickness, Satan and death.⁵

³ See [Passover and the Apostle John](#) for why John 13 is not a “commemorative meal” or Yeshua eating “a special Passover” a night before Israel would eat it on its biblical date.

⁴ Yeshua is God’s Firstborn Son (Rom. 8:29; Col. 1:15, 18; Heb. 1:6; 12:23; Rev. 1:5).

⁵ Revised on Thursday, January 26, 2023.