

Three Days and Three Nights

Have you ever wondered how we can observe Good Friday as the day our Savior was crucified and also celebrate His resurrection on the following Sunday? After all He Himself predicted that He would be in the heart of the earth for 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. Matthew 12:40

No matter how hard you try, you can only fit two days and two nights into that time frame, since He arose before dawn on Sunday.

This article will attempt to clear up the confusion and in doing so we are going to discover an amazing fulfillment of prophecy that will pinpoint the actual Passion Week so we will be able to literally see where the three days and three nights fit into our Lord's final week.

Our first stop is a prophecy given by Daniel in chapter 9 verse 25 in the year 538 B.C.:

Know therefore and understand, [that] from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince [shall be] seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times. Daniel 9:25

Ninety three years later we read in Nehemiah chapter 2:

1 And it came to pass in the month Nisan, in the twentieth year of Artaxerxes the king, [that] wine [was] before him: and I took up the wine, and gave [it] unto the king. Now I had not been [beforetime] sad in his presence.

2 Wherefore the king said unto me, Why [is] thy countenance sad, seeing thou [art] not sick? this [is] nothing [else] but sorrow of heart. Then I was very sore afraid,

3 And said unto the king, Let the king live for ever: why should not my countenance be sad, when the city, the place of my fathers' sepulchres, [lieth] waste, and the gates thereof are consumed with fire?

4 Then the king said unto me, For what dost thou make request? So I prayed to the God of heaven.

5 And I said unto the king, If it please the king, and if thy servant have found favour in thy sight, that thou wouldest send me unto Judah, unto the city of my fathers' sepulchres, that I may build it.

6 And the king said unto me, (the queen also sitting by him,) For how long shall thy journey be? and when wilt thou return? So it pleased the king to send me; and I set him a time.

King Artaxerxes reigned in Persia from 465 B.C. to 424 B.C. and the first day of the month Nisan in his 20th year is equivalent to our March 14, 445 B.C.

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Now, let's crunch the numbers. Daniel identified a total of 69 weeks of years (Genesis 29:27) which amounts to 69 times 7 years times 360 days, in the Jewish year, thus $69 \times 7 \times 360 = 173,880$ days counting from March 14, 445 B.C. until "Messiah the Prince." All during our Lord's 3½ year earthly ministry He warned His disciples and others not to make Him known, but there was one day it was declared "**Blessed be the King that cometh in the name of the Lord: peace in heaven, and glory in the highest.**" Immediately, "**some of the Pharisees from among the multitude said unto Him, Master, rebuke thy disciples.**" But this time "**He answered and said unto them, I tell you that, if these should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out**" Luke 19:38-40. This day was none other than the day we call the "triumphant entry" and "Palm Sunday" when He rode into Jerusalem on a colt and we will be able to see that it was on April 6, 32 A.D. which is exactly 173,880 days from March 14, 445 B.C!

Tiberius Caesar Augustus lived from November 16, 42 B.C. to March 16, 37 A.D. and he reigned from August 19, 14 A.D. to March 16, 37 A.D. Thus, when we read of a reference to the fifteenth year of his reign we can identify the time frame of August 19, 28 A.D. to April 19, 29 A.D. (to the Passover). From the following passage from Luke we know that during this time our Lord began His 3½ year earthly ministry after being baptized by John the son of Zacharias. We also know that he was crucified on the Passover as we will see in a moment.

1 Now in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judaea, and Herod being tetrarch of Galilee, and his brother Philip tetrarch of Ituraea and of the region of Trachonitis, and Lysanias the tetrarch of Abilene,

2 Annas and Caiaphas being the high priests, the word of God came unto John the son of Zacharias in the wilderness.

3 And he came into all the country about Jordan, preaching the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins;

4 As it is written in the book of the words of Esaias the prophet, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.

15 And as the people were in expectation, and all men mused in their hearts of John, whether he were the Christ, or not;

16 John answered, saying unto [them] all, I indeed baptize you with water; but one mightier than I cometh, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire:

21 Now when all the people were baptized, it came to pass, that Jesus also being baptized, and praying, the heaven was opened,

22 And the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape like a dove upon him, and a voice came from heaven, which said, Thou art my beloved Son; in thee I am well pleased. Luke 3:1-4, 15, 16, 21, 22

Our Lord's first Passover was in April 29 A.D. and His 4th and last Passover was on April 10, 32 A.D. The following chart will list the date conversions from the Jewish calendar to our Roman calendar.

Three Days and Three Nights

	32 A.D. <u>Hebrew</u>	32 A.D. <u>Roman</u>	
Sunday	Nisan 10	April 6	Triumphal Entry
	Nisan 11		
Monday		April 7	Three Days Observation (Exo 12:3,6)
	Nisan 12		
Tuesday		April 8	Meal in Bethany - Jesus Anointed for Burial
	Nisan 13		
Wednesday		April 9	Last Supper - Betrayal - Arrest Preparation - Passover
	Nisan 14		
Thursday		April 10	Passover (Sabbath) - Crucifixion - Burial Before Dark Preparation - Feast of Unleavened Bread - Day 1
	Nisan 15		
Friday		April 11	Feast of Unleavened Bread (Sabbath) Preparation - Weekly Sabbath - Night 1 and Day 2
	Nisan 16		
Saturday		April 12	Weekly Sabbath Night 2 and Day 3
	Nisan 17		
Sunday		April 13	Resurrection Before Dawn Night 3

To calculate from another angle we know that from 445 B.C. to 32 A.D. is 476 full years. A year consists of slightly less than 365¼ days, so 476 years amounts to 173,856 days plus 24 days from March 14th to April 6th totals: 173,880 days!

Calendar for year 32 (Israel)

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From the Triumphal Entry on April 6th (Nisan 10) there needed to be three days of observation of the sacrificial lamb which we now know was to be the Lord Jesus Christ when He was crucified on Thursday the 10th (Nisan 14).

3 Speak ye unto all the congregation of Israel, saying, In the tenth [day] of this month they shall take to them every man a lamb, according to the house of [their] fathers, a lamb for an house:

4 And if the household be too little for the lamb, let him and his neighbour next unto his house take [it] according to the number of the souls; every man according to his eating shall make your count for the lamb.

5 Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year: ye shall take [it] out from the sheep, or from the goats:

6 And ye shall keep it up until the fourteenth day of the same month: and the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it in the evening.

Exodus 12: 3-6

With the crucifixion on Thursday we now have solved the question we started with as to the fulfillment of the three days and three nights; Thursday being Day 1, Friday being Night 1 and Day 2, Saturday being Night 2 and Day 3, and Sunday being Night 3. The Hebrew day started at 6:00 p.m. and we know that the Lord arose before dawn on Sunday the 13th.

Most of the confusion surrounding this question concerns the use of the term “Sabbath” and “preparation” especially in the book of John.

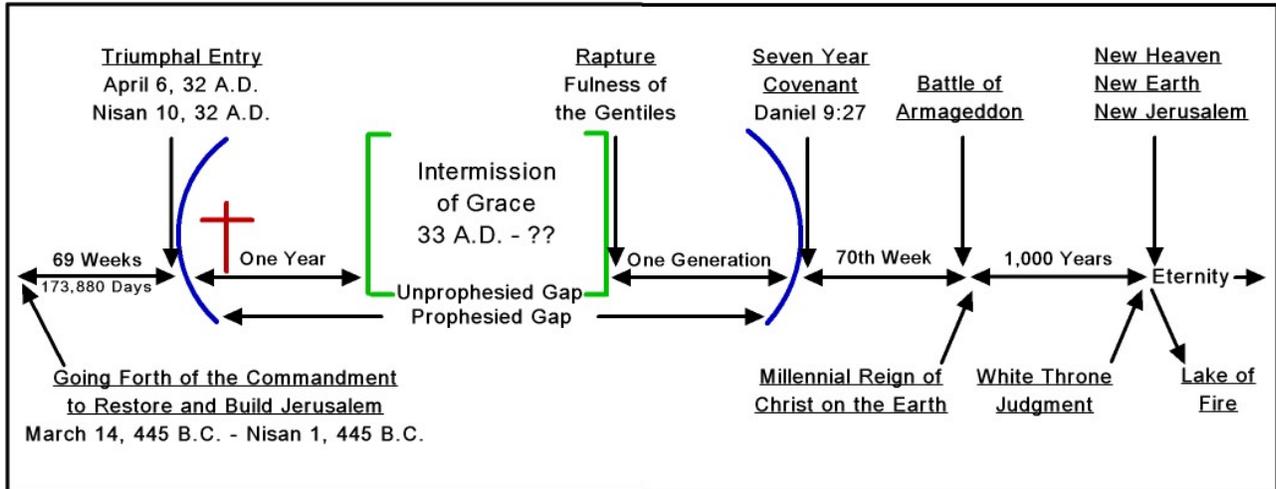
The Jews therefore, because it was the preparation, that the bodies should not remain upon the cross on the sabbath day, (for that sabbath day was an high day,) besought Pilate that their legs might be broken, and [that] they might be taken away. John 19:31

According to the Jewish custom there were three Sabbaths and three preparations. The day before the weekly Sabbath was a preparation day and likewise on the day before the Passover (Nisan 14/April 10) and the Feast of Unleavened Bread (Nisan 15/April 11). In the verse above John says: **“that sabbath day was an high day”** meaning it was the Passover Sabbath as well as the preparation for the Feast of Unleavened Bread (which also was a Sabbath). As you can see from the chart on page 3, there were three preparations and three Sabbaths in a row from April 9th through April 12th.

I don't know how the critics are going to get out of this one. One thing you may run into when you try to share this wonderful truth is someone saying, “Well, you know you can always prove anything with the Bible, but I don't trust it because it could have been made up just to look like that.” The most difficult objection to overcome is when someone doubts the veracity of the Word of God (may God help us to reach them!).

The following chart summarizes the Biblical events from March 14, 445 B.C. up to the present and on into Eternity:

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 March 10, 2012
www.biblicaladvancedbasics.com