



## BIBLE TALK

**Mike King**

**Question:** Was Jesus in the grave three days and nights?

**Answer:** This question is frequently asked in view of the crucifixion and burial of Jesus taking place on Friday and the resurrection early the first day of the week. According to our method of calculating time, from late Friday until early Sunday, does not allow for “three days and nights.” A study of this question will reveal that there is not the conflict that first appears.

The real answer lies here: as the Jews counted time, a part of a day was reckoned as a day. This is borne out in the scriptures sufficiently. For example, we read that Joseph imprisoned his brethren three days, yet the same passage tells us he released them on the third day (Gen. 42:17-18). “Three days” and on “the third day” are the same. This is found to be true in the parallel verses of 1 Kings 12:5, 12 and 2 Chron. 10:5, 12 where “three days”, “the third day”, and “after three days” mean the same.

The following expressions are used in reference to the resurrection and are to be taken as identical: 1. “The third day”; 2. “In three days”; 3. “After three days”; and 4. “Three days and nights.” To force exactly 72 hours into the Biblical expression, “three days and nights” is to make Christ contradict His own statement that He would rise on “the third day” (Lk. 18:33). These considerations should help us to see that the Jews counted a part of a day as a whole. Their day began at 6:00 P.M. and ended at 6:00 P.M. the next evening. Jesus would have been buried on Friday before the Sabbath began, “so that bodies would not remain upon the cross upon the Sabbath day” (Jn. 19:31). There is no question about the second day, as Jesus was in the grave the entire day of 24 hours. He was only in the grave a part of Sunday and still less of that preceding Friday. By 1<sup>st</sup> Century time count, Jesus was shown to be in the grave “three days and three nights.”

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