

Sign Of Jonas

**By Frank Borg
&
Daniel Frendo**

Sign Of Jonas

COPYRIGHT February 2011
Faithful Church of God in Laodicea
<http://www.fcogl.org>

This booklet is not to be sold.
It is a free educational service
in the public interest, published by the
Faithful Church of God in Laodicea.

Faithful Church of God in Laodicea
All Rights Reserved

Table of contents

Chapter 1	The sign	Pg. 4
Chapter 2	The sign explained	Pg. 7
Chapter 3	Crucifixion on Wednesday, Resurrection on Saturday?	Pg. 19

Chapter 1

The sign

While Jesus walked this earth, some Scribes and Pharisees asked Him for a “sign”. They wanted this sign to know that He really was who He said He was. Notice the exchange between the Scribes, Pharisees and Jesus Christ:

“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 seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas: 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” (Matt. 12:38-40).

Christ stated that “an adulterous generation seeks after a sign”. After all, Jesus had already performed numerous miracles and healings during His earthly ministry and had also delivered a powerful message. That didn’t seem to be enough for the doubters! However, Christ did take the opportunity to prophesy of a major sign that was yet to be fulfilled, which would prove to be the ultimate proof that He was the Messiah. The prophecy Christ gave was that just as Jonas was in the belly of the whale for three days and three nights, so shall He be three days and three nights in the “heart of the earth”. This was the sign which Christ gave to the Jews for which to look out (Matt. 12:39). Many argue that this is the most important identifying sign that Christ was in fact the prophesied Messiah to come. Certainly, God’s people must understand exactly what was meant by Christ when He uttered these words.

In Matthew 12:38-40, Christ drew a parallel between the prophetic sign He had given them and the story of Jonah. In order to deeply understand this parallel, we must take a look at the story of Jonah. Following are a few verses which summarize the main points of this story:

“Then Jonah prayed unto the LORD his God out of the fish's belly, And said, I cried by reason of mine affliction unto the LORD, and he heard me; out of the belly of hell cried I, and thou heardest my voice. For thou hadst cast me into the deep, in the midst of the seas; and the floods compassed me about: all thy billows^{H4867} and thy waves passed over me. Then I said, I am cast out of thy sight; yet I will look again toward thy holy temple” (Jon. 2:1-4).

Here we are told that Jonah prayed from the belly of the whale. During his three days and three nights in the whale's belly, Jonah suffered considerably and used the time to cry out to God. Notice that in his prayer, Jonah told God that “all thy billows^{H4867} and thy waves passed over me”. What exactly did Jonah mean by this statement? Strong's 4867 (and root word 7665) tell us that Jonah meant that this experience of suffering “broke” him; it humbled him. He was cast into this humbling situation which, as Jonah stated, cast him out of the sight of God! Through his suffering, he felt as though God had forsaken Him during that time. Importantly, we must notice that Jonah was *not* dead during this period of three days and three nights.

Following are the remaining verses of Jonah 2 that continue to reveal Jonah's experience:

“The waters compassed me about, even to the soul: the depth closed me round about, the weeds were wrapped about my head. I went down to the bottoms of the

mountains; the earth with her bars was about me for ever: yet hast thou brought up my life from corruption, O LORD my God. When my soul fainted within me I remembered the LORD: and my prayer came in unto thee, into thine holy temple. They that observe lying vanities forsake their own mercy. But **I will sacrifice unto thee with the voice of thanksgiving; I will pay that that I have vowed. Salvation is of the LORD. And the LORD spake unto the fish, and it vomited out Jonah upon the dry land**" vs. 5-10).

While discussing Jonah's situation, the above verses also prophesy about Christ and the suffering which He had to endure as the Saviour of mankind. This is the parallel which Christ was focusing on when He stated:

"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" (Matt. 12:40).

Again, we must notice that Christ here compares His fate to that of Jonas's three days and three nights in the belly of the whale. Christ prophesied that He was to endure three days and three nights in the "heart of the earth", *just as Jonah endured the same amount of time in the whale's belly.*

Chapter 2

The sign explained

The traditional understanding on Christ's prophecy of the three days and three nights is that He would be dead for that amount of time, in other words that He would die and then be resurrected three days and three nights later. In this chapter we will discuss exactly what Christ meant by His prophecy, which is recorded in Matthew 12:40:

“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*”.

To understand the true meaning of these words we must understand the true meaning of the phrase “the heart of the earth”. Notice a verse which will help us begin to understand this term:

“And these are they **by the way side, where the word is sown**; but when they have heard, Satan cometh immediately, and taketh away **the word that was sown in their hearts**” (Mk. 4:15).

In the above verse, Christ explains that the seed which was sown in the earth is “the Word that was sown *in their hearts*”. Christ is demonstrating the symbolism between the “earth” and the “heart of man”. Notice further:

“Then he which had received the one talent came and said, Lord, I knew thee that thou art an hard man, reaping where thou hast not sown, and gathering where thou hast not strawed: And I was afraid, and went and

hid thy talent in the earth: lo, there thou hast that is thine” (Matt. 25:24-25).

The talent is here shown as being sown *in the earth*, however, the earth in this context obviously signifies “man”. The talent is of course symbolic of the Holy Spirit, which was not literally hid in the earth but was planted in the “individual” (or in the man) and, in this case, hidden there. Here is another scripture which also demonstrates this point:

“The first *man is of the earth, earthy*: the second man is the Lord from heaven” (1 Cor. 15:47).

Paul here states that the first man is of the earth, demonstrating a difference between the earthly and the spiritual. We must understand that Paul is here stating that “man” is “earthy”. Therefore, in Biblical terms, the phrase “in the heart of the earth” is the same as saying “in the heart of men”! Remember, Jesus Christ prophesied of being in the “heart of the earth” for three days and three nights (Matt. 12:40). When Christ stated this prophecy, He was prophesying about being “in the heart of men” for three days and three nights! This will become even clearer as we proceed.

From the above scriptures, and others relating to them, we can understand that the “heart of the earth” is synonymous with the “heart of man”, *which is sinful*. In the Old Testament book of Jeremiah, God tells us that the heart of man is sinful and “desperately wicked” (Jer. 17:9). Notice:

“The *heart is deceitful* above all things, and *desperately wicked*...”

The “heart of the earth” or “heart of man” is desperately wicked! It is *sinful*. Think on this: after studying the scriptures discussed above, is it possible that Christ’s prophecy to be

three days and three nights in the “heart of the earth” meant that He would be three days and three nights in the wickedness of the “heart of men”? It would seem that Christ’s prophecy meant exactly that, and did not mean that He would spend three days and three nights in the grave! Let us ensure that this is made amply clear: Christ *never* sinned! He was without sin.

Let us at this juncture re-visit Matthew 12:40 to once again read and meditate upon Christ’s one final sign which was to prove that He was the Messiah! Notice:

“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*” (Matt. 12:40).

Again, Christ here stated that for three days and three nights He would be “in the heart of the earth”. Remember: we have seen that “heart of the earth” is the same as saying “heart of man”, which is synonymous with “sin”. The question that needs to be asked is: did Christ become sin? Let us allow 2 Corinthians 5:21 to answer this question for us:

“For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him”.

This scripture confirms that Christ became sin! He became sin in the sense that He took on the sin of the world (Is. 53:3-5; Zech. 3:3) so that He could pay the penalty for sin in our stead (Rom. 6:23). Since this is the case, *when* did Christ become sin? Did He become sin the moment He died? If it began the moment He died, did it last to the moment when He was resurrected, thus lasting three days and three nights? When *exactly* was Christ in the “heart of the earth” or in the “heart of men”?

Let us turn to the Bible to find answers to these questions:

“And while they abode in Galilee, Jesus said unto them, *The Son of man shall be betrayed into the hands of men*” (Matt. 17:22)

This is an interesting verse in scripture, which confirms to us that the moment Christ was betrayed by Judas Iscariot, He was delivered into the “hands of men”. It was at that precise moment when Christ was delivered into the hands of men that would lead to the indescribable suffering which He had to endure before His death took place. Stated a different way, the moment Christ was betrayed and delivered, He was thrown into the proverbial “whale’s belly”, or into the “heart of the earth”. Just as Jonah suffered for three days and three nights, Christ would also suffer for three days and three nights at the “hands of men”. At that time, Christ began to feel forsaken (Matt. 27:46), just as Jonah was forsaken (Jon. 2:4)!

At least twelve sets of scriptures were inspired to be included in the New Testament, which give us irrefutable proof that **the prophesied three days and three nights which Christ would endure in the heart of the earth began with His deliverance into the hands of men and ended with His resurrection**. Notice the following scriptures which confirm this:

“From that time forth began Jesus to shew unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and **suffer many things** of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and **be killed, and be raised again the third day**” (Matt. 16:21).

The above verse clearly communicates the fact that the three days and three nights were not limited to the time

during which Christ was in the grave. They *included* the suffering, killing, and raising from the dead! Now notice the following verses:

“And while they abode in Galilee, Jesus said unto them, **The Son of man shall be betrayed** into the hands of men: And **they shall kill him, and *the third day he shall be raised again***. And they were exceeding sorry (Matt. 17:22-23).

Matt. 17:22-23 clearly demonstrates that the three days and three nights included the betrayal, death and resurrection. There is *no reference* in scripture to indicate that Christ was dead or in the tomb for three days and three nights! Notice again:

“Behold, we go up to Jerusalem; and **the Son of man shall be betrayed** unto the chief priests and unto the scribes, and **they shall condemn him to death, And shall deliver him to the Gentiles to mock, and to scourge, and to crucify him: and *the third day he shall rise again***” (Matt. 20:18-19).

Here we again see that during the three days and three nights **Christ would be betrayed, condemned to death, delivered to be mocked, scourged and crucified, and would rise again *on the third day from the beginning of these things!*** All these things happened within the period of three days and three nights. Scripture proves this to beyond doubt! Notice further:

“And he began to teach them, that **the Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected** of the elders, and of the chief priests, and scribes, and **be killed, and *after three days rise again***” (Mk. 8:31).

The above verses continue to solidify the fact that the three days and three nights are *not* referring to Christ being

in the grave for that duration of time. There are more scriptures to offer clarification of this prophecy:

“For he taught his disciples, and said unto them, **The Son of man is delivered into the hands of men, and they shall kill him; and after that he is killed, he shall rise the third day**” (Mk. 9:31).

The above verse again communicates the fact that the three days and three nights include the deliverance, killing, death and resurrection. Another scripture:

“And **they shall mock him, and shall scourge him, and shall spit upon him, and shall kill him: and the third day he shall rise again**” (Mk. 10:34).

Do we need more proof to understand what Christ meant when He said that He would be three days and three nights in the “heart of the earth”? Evidently, God’s people need this proof because God inspired at least twelve scriptures to communicate this important Truth! Notice further:

“Saying, **The Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected** of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and **be slain, and be raised the third day**” (Lk. 9:22).

Scripture is clear in stating that Christ was raised on the third day after He began to suffer “many things”, which began the moment He was betrayed! Again:

“Then he took unto him the twelve, and said unto them, Behold, we go up to Jerusalem, and all things that are written by the prophets concerning **the Son of man** shall be accomplished. For he **shall be delivered** unto the Gentiles, and shall be **mocked, and spitefully entreated, and spitted on:** And **they shall scourge**

him, and put him to death: and *the third day he shall rise again*” (Lk. 18:31-33).

Scripture does not state that Christ would be raised on the third day after His death! So many Biblical passages clearly communicate the fact that the three days and three nights began from the moment Christ was betrayed and handed over to the Gentiles by Judas Iscariot. Scripture also tells us that the three days and three nights ended at the time of Christ’s resurrection:

“Saying, **The Son of man must be delivered** into the hands of sinful men, and be **crucified, and *the third day rise again***” (Lk. 24:7).

Scripture repeatedly confirms Christ rose *on the third day* after He was delivered. It is absolutely clear that the trials He endured from the moment of His deliverance, together with His death and resurrection, are all included in the period of three days and three nights! (His resurrection is a parallel with Jonah 2:10). We shall note two more scriptures to complete twelve scriptures inspired for us in God’s Word on this subject:

“And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus **it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead *the third day***” (Lk. 24:46).

“And we are witnesses of all things which he did both in the land of the Jews, and in Jerusalem; **whom they slew and hanged on a tree: *Him God raised up the third day***, and shewed him openly” (Acts 10:39-40).

The above twelve scriptures *all* state the same thing: the betrayal, deliverance, scourging, death and resurrection are all included in the three days and three nights which Christ prophesied about Himself in Matthew 12:40. It should now be abundantly clear in the readers’ mind that when Christ

prophesied that He would be in the “heart of the earth” for three days and three nights, He did not mean that He would be in the grave for that duration of time. Scripture clearly defines that which Christ meant when He prophesied that He would be in the “heart of the earth” for three days and three nights. Scripture leaves no stone unturned in helping those who want to see what Christ meant by His prophecy on this subject. Christ demonstrated that for that duration of time He would endure the suffering placed upon Him by the severe wickedness resultant from the inner core of man’s heart! Just as God had forsaken Jonah for three days and three nights (Jon.2:4), during this time Christ felt as though God had forsaken Him:

“And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? that is to say, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” (Matt. 27:46).

There is one other passage of scripture which we need to discuss. This passage continues to offer us irrefutable proof on the meaning of Christ prophecy being in the “heart of the earth” for three days and three nights. The following section of scripture is a wonderful summary of all that has been discussed in this booklet. Please read the following passage carefully:

Now upon the first day of the week, very early in the morning, they came unto the sepulchre, bringing the spices which they had prepared, and certain others with them. And they found the stone rolled away from the sepulchre. And they entered in, and found not the body of the Lord Jesus. And it came to pass, as they were much perplexed thereabout, behold, two men stood by them in shining garments: And as they were afraid, and bowed down their faces to the earth, they said unto them, Why seek ye the living among the dead? He is not here, but is risen: **remember how he spake unto**

you when he was yet in Galilee, Saying, **THE SON OF MAN MUST BE DELIVERED INTO THE HANDS OF MEN, AND BE CRUCIFIED, AND THE THIRD DAY RISE AGAIN.** [*Notice that the three days and three nights prophecy is being referred to in this dialogue. They were being reminded of the events which were to take place in the three days and three nights prophecy!*] And they remembered his words, And returned from the sepulchre, and told all these things unto the eleven, and to all the rest. It was Mary Magdalene, and Joanna, and Mary the mother of James, and other women that were with them, which told these things unto the apostles. And their words seemed to them as idle tales, and they believed them not. Then arose Peter, and ran unto the sepulchre; and stooping down, he beheld the linen clothes laid by themselves, and departed, wondering in himself at that which was come to pass. And, behold, two of them went that same day to a village called Emmaus, which was from Jerusalem about threescore furlongs. And they talked together of all these things which had happened. And it came to pass, that, while they communed together and reasoned, Jesus himself drew near, and went with them. But their eyes were holden that they should not know him. And he said unto them, What manner of communications are these that ye have one to another, as ye walk, and are sad? And the one of them, whose name was Cleopas, answering said unto him, Art thou only a stranger in Jerusalem, and hast not known the things which are come to pass there in these days? And he said unto them, What things? And they said unto him, **Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, which was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people: And how the chief priests and our rulers delivered him to be condemned to death, and have crucified him.** But we trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel: and beside

all this, ***TODAY IS THE THIRD DAY SINCE THESE THINGS WERE DONE***” (Lk. 24:1-21).

Verses 7 and 21 in the above quote emphasize the “three days and three nights” prophecy, in each case outlining the events that had taken place within that period of time. It is clear that scripture repeats the meaning of the “three days and three nights” prophecy a number of times! The account discussed in Luke 24:1-21 all takes place on the first day of the week (vs. 1), which is the third and last day of the three days and three nights prophecy (vs. 21). Verse 21 also confirms that the three days and three nights include all “these things” and not only the duration of time that Christ was in the grave! Please do not take our word for this – re-read, study and prove all the verses on this subject and understand what is being communicated to us on this vital prophecy which God’s people must understand!

Christ the perfect Lamb

We must understand that 1 Peter 1:19 and other scriptures demonstrate that Jesus Christ was the perfect Lamb; He was sinless. He came to this earth to die for the forgiveness of our sins. Our sins were placed on His Body through the beating and stripes He received just after He was betrayed and handed over to the Gentiles, which led to His death. Isaiah 53:3-5 tells us:

“He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not. Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.”

As Christ was beaten, scourged and bruised He took upon Himself our sins (Is. 53:4-5). We are also told that He carried

all these sins to the stake (1 Pet. 2:24). Christ endured being beaten, scourged and bruised to take on the weight of man's sin and diseases before He could pay the penalty in our stead. The moment He was betrayed, Christ was delivered into the hands of men or in the "heart of the earth" (Matt. 17:22). Isaiah 53:4-5 confirms that the forgiveness of our sins could not have taken place any other way. The spilling of Christ's blood had to be preceded by His beating during which mankind's sins were heaped onto His body. This made the sacrifice and forgiveness of our sins possible. The beating, scourging and bruising represented Christ taking upon Himself the weight of the penalty for all mankind's sins (Is. 53:4-5). Once He took that weight and carried it to the cross, He could then (and only then) pay the penalty in our stead through death (Rom. 6:23). Christ's spilled blood (death) ultimately paid the penalty for the World's sins (Rom. 6:23; 1 John 1:7). In Matthew 12:38-40, Christ was comparing the suffering, humiliation and loneliness which He was to endure with that which Jonah endured as he was thrown into the belly of the whale (Jon. 2).

Notice what is stated in Matthew 27:50-51:

"Jesus, when He had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost. And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent".

The moment the soldier's spear ripped through Christ's side, His blood was spilled and He died. At that time, the penalty of sin was paid. As was noted in the twelve scriptures listed earlier in this booklet, the three days and three nights ended the moment Christ was resurrected. Let us once again take note of just one of the twelve scriptures noted earlier in this text, which conclusively demonstrates this point:

"Saying, **The Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected** of the elders and chief priests and

scribes, and **be slain**, and *be raised the third day*” (Lk. 9:22).

As has been thoroughly discussed and proven by scripture, the three days and three nights began the moment Christ was delivered to the Gentiles. The deliverance, betrayal, suffering, death and resurrection are all included within the sequence of the three days and three nights time frame during which Christ was in the ‘heart of the earth’. Jesus Christ prayed to His Father just as Jonah did (Matt. 27:46). Jesus Christ was humbled to the core. Just as Jonah was, Christ was at this time separated from God and suffered as a result! As scriptures state, the moment Christ was resurrected was the moment when the three days and three nights ended.

Chapter 3

Crucifixion on Wednesday, resurrection on Saturday?

Those of us with roots in the *Worldwide Church of God* were taught that Jesus Christ was crucified on a Wednesday afternoon and was resurrected on a Saturday afternoon. This, as we were taught, constituted the three days and three nights of Christ being in the “heart of the earth”. However, with the deeper understanding now given to us on this subject through the scriptures discussed in this booklet, we should be able to see that there is a correction to be made regarding the “Wednesday crucifixion/Saturday resurrection” theory. This shall be explained as simply as possible in this final chapter.

We now understand that the three days and three nights referred to the time spanning from the moment Christ was handed over to the Gentiles to the moment He was resurrected. If the Bible tells us exactly when Christ was resurrected, then we can count back three days and three nights and find out the moment they begin. Traditionally, we thought the resurrection took place on a Saturday afternoon, but is this what the Bible tells us? No it is not! Notice what is clearly stated in Mark 16:9:

“Now when Jesus was risen early the first day of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene...”

Scripture does not tell us that Christ was resurrected in the afternoon of the Sabbath. We are here expressly affirmed that *He was risen early the first day of the week!* If we would simply believe our Bible, this subject becomes so easy to understand.

Verses which have traditionally been used to prove a Sabbath (afternoon) resurrection include Matthew 28:1-6. Notice:

“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 sepulchre. And, behold, there was a great earthquake: for the angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it. His countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow: And for fear of him the keepers did shake, and became as dead men. And the angel answered and said unto the women, Fear not ye: for I know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified. He is not here: for he is risen, as he said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay (Matt. 28:1-6).

At face value, the above verses do tend to give the impression that Christ may have been resurrected sometime late on a Sabbath. However, Mark 16:9 does not state this and scripture does not contradict itself! If we look at the above verses closely, together with reading the last verses in the preceding chapter 27, we will see that a slightly different account is being communicated. Notice:

“Pilate said unto them, Ye have a watch: go your way, make it as sure as ye can. So they went, and made the sepulchre sure, sealing the stone, and setting a watch. 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 sepulchre (Matt. 27:65-66, Matt. 28:1).

Of course, punctuation was included in the scripture by man, well after the Bible was inspired and written. Punctuation in these verses were inserted in places, which can give the wrong meaning to what is being communicated. The above

verses read much clearer with the following correct punctuation:

“Pilate said unto them, Ye have a watch: go your way, make it as sure as ye can. So they went, and made the sepulchre sure, sealing the stone, and setting a watch 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 sepulchre (Matt. 27:65-66, Matt. 28:1).

With the above corrected punctuation, scripture becomes clearer. They now clearly demonstrate that Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came to the tomb *after* the Sabbath had ended, in the night part of the first day as it began to dawn toward the day part of the first day of the week! Mary Magdalene and the other Mary would certainly not have broken God’s laws and gone to the tomb on the Sabbath day! They went there after the Sabbath had ended, as the day part of the first day was dawning. The above verses now perfectly tally with all the other verses in the Bible on this subject. With the corrected punctuation, the above verses tally with Mark 16:9 and communicate that which was inspired! It clearly supports other verses on this subject. Notice further:

“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” (Mk. 16:1).

Notice the following parallel scripture which also confirms that Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came to the tomb *after* the Sabbath had ended (i.e. they came on the first day of the week, as the day part began to dawn). Here is another verse to confirm that which is being stated:

“Now *upon the first day of the week*, very early in the morning, they came unto the sepulchre, bringing the

spices which they had prepared, and certain others with them. And they found the stone rolled away from the sepulchre” (Lk. 24:1).

As Mark 16:1, Luke 24:1 and other scriptures confirm, both Mary Magdalene and the other Mary did not go to the tomb on the Sabbath, but went early on the first day of the week and found that Christ rose that same day (see Mk. 16:9).

We must keep in mind that the *resurrection took place on the first day of the week* and not on the 7th day (Sabbath). Therefore, the three days and three nights *ended* early on the first day of the week! For further Biblical support that “the third day” referred to by Christ as the day when He would be raised was in fact “the first day of the week”, please see Luke 24:1-21. Here we are told that later on that “first day of the week” (vs. 1), after Jesus had returned from presenting Himself to His Father, “Jesus Himself drew near and went with them” (vs. 15). This was on the third day since Christ had been delivered to be condemned to death by crucifixion (vs. 20-21).

We must also understand that *in the year of Christ’s death, the first day of Unleavened Bread and the weekly Sabbath fell on the same day*. Notice:

“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” (Jn. 19:31).

Scripture clearly tells us that Christ died on the preparation day before a Sabbath. The above verse also tells us that the Sabbath was a *high* Sabbath, indicating it was a double Sabbath (i.e. the weekly Sabbath and the first Holy day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread). This tells us that Christ died on the

preparation day before the double Sabbath, meaning He died on the 6th day of the week and not on a Wednesday!

If Christ was resurrected on the first day of the week, we can count back to find out when the three days and three nights began! When we count back three days and three nights from the first day of the week, we come to the 5th day of the previous week. Scripture tells us that Christ was handed over to the Gentiles in the night (see Matt. 26:34), indicating that the three days and three nights began in the night of the 5th day.

Here is a summary of the period of the prophesied three days and three nights, which began “in the night”:

NIGHT 1 = 6th Night of the week

- *Christ delivered into hands of men (Matt. 26:34, 47)*

DAY 1 = 6th Day of the week

- *Suffering/death*

NIGHT 2 = 7th Night of week (Sabbath/Holy Day)

- *In the tomb*

DAY 2 = 7th Day of the week (Sabbath/Holy Day)

In the tomb

NIGHT 3 = 1st Night of the week

In the tomb

DAY 3 = 1st Day of the next week

Resurrection (Mk. 16:9)

(It must be noted that in the Jewish language, a part of a day and a part of a night is referred to as a day and night respectively).

The above summary demonstrates the beginning and ending of the three days and three nights. It outlines scripture as proving that Christ did *not* die on a Wednesday and was *not* resurrected on a Sabbath. The Bible clearly details that Christ was delivered into the “hands of men” on the fifth night of the week, and was resurrected very early in the morning on the first day of the week (Sunday on the Roman calendar).

God has certainly given deeper understanding on the wonderful prophecy which Christ uttered regarding the three days and three nights which He was to endure in the “heart of the earth”. How wonderful and simple is the Word of God when we allow it to interpret itself!

We are here to help! Please feel free to contact us should you have any questions. Our address is: Faithful Church of God in Laodicea, P.O. Box 31135, Edmond, Oklahoma 73003, USA. Email: mail@menofsign.org. Our web address is: www.fcogl.org