

How many days and nights was Jesus in the tomb?

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Here are some of the statements Jesus made regarding this time span. There were several ways this three-day statement was made. 1) Three days and three nights. 2) After three days. 3) Three days later. 4) In three days.

[Matthew 12:40](#) "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 NKJV](#)

[Mark 8:31](#) And He began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things, and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again. [Mark 8:31 NKJV](#)

[Mark 9:31](#) 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 NKJV](#)

[John 2:19](#) Jesus answered and said to them, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." [John 2:19 NKJV](#)

The priests understood Jesus to mean "After three days."

[Matthew 27:63](#) saying, "Sir, we remember, while He was still alive, how that deceiver said, 'After three days I will rise.'"
[Matthew 27:63 NKJV](#)

According to common belief, Jesus wasn't in the tomb for three nights, nor was He even there for three full days. He was there for the last portion of Friday, all of Saturday, and the first part of Sunday. Taken literally, these different statements of Jesus cannot all be reconciled. One way of reconciling this is understanding that the Jews would count any part of a day as a full day when doing this type of counting. There are many Bible verses to support this idea as well including the following statement of Jesus.

[Luke 13:32](#) 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.'³³ "Nevertheless I must journey today, tomorrow, and the [day] following; for it cannot be that a prophet should perish outside of Jerusalem. [Luke 13:32-33 NKJV](#)

Thus, the last portion of Friday counted as one day, all of Saturday counted as the second day, and any part of Sunday after sunset on Saturday counted as the third day. Another very simple familiar way to express it is "the day after tomorrow."¹ I believe the three days and three nights was a figure of speech. Many who take the three full days and nights literally explain this by saying that Thursday was a ceremonial Sabbath, and that Jesus was crucified on Wednesday. So, you get Wednesday, Thursday, Friday nights and Jesus was resurrected after sunset on Saturday.^{2 3} Finally, there was a third interesting explanation I came across from Amazing Facts. Doug Batchelor said one could

¹ <https://www.amazingfacts.org/media-library/book/e/81/t/three-days-and-three-nights>

² Fredrick, William. *Infallible Proof by Three Immutable Witnesses proving Wednesday Crucifixion*. Clyde, OH. 1916.

https://books.google.com/books?id=WBQAQAAMAAJ&printsec=frontcover&source=gbs_ge_summary_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false

³ Nuesch, John. *Exposition of Heavenly Truths*. 1902, p212. <https://books.google.com/books?id=iPFMAQAAMAAJ&pg=PA212>

interpret the heart of the earth in a way that would begin the three days and three nights with the suffering in the Garden of Gethsemane on Thursday.

So the phrase “in the heart of the earth” can easily be translated as “in the midst of the world”—or in the grip of this lost planet—that Jesus came to save!⁴

This provides yet another way to harmonize the three-day statements.

What do you believe?

- Do you think these saints who were resurrected were all over the world, or just in Jerusalem?
- Do you think there was one or two separate meetings with Jesus before He went up to heaven?
- How long do you believe Jesus was in the tomb?

⁴ <https://www.amazingfacts.org/news-and-features/news/item/id/10899/t/three-days-and-three-nights>