

## The Biblical Significance of the Third Day

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*[Note: The Feasts of Israel series on “Christ in Prophecy” is very rich in information, but because a half-hour weekly TV show has time limitations, here we will take a “deep dive” into some extra meanings and purposes. When it comes to the Feast of Passover, our Messianic Jewish teacher, Dr. Richard Hill, taught about the third day in the sequence of this feast. Let’s now dive for some deeper insight into the biblical significance of the third day!]*

Have you ever wondered why Jesus was in the tomb for three days? Why not a week? Why not an hour? Why three days?

I believe the answer to that question is found in the Bible. Throughout Scripture the third day contains much significance:

- The third day is associated with a **special divine activity**.
- The third day is a **day of restoration**.
- The third day is a **day of rescue**.

Therefore, the “third” day represents a day of significance, restoration, and rescue. And, in the Old Testament, the third day is the moment when an **event attains its climax**. It is repeatedly the day when a **situation is completed or fulfilled**.

Let’s look at the following examples.

### 1. Creation

**Genesis 1:10,12** – When God created the heaven and the earth, after each day He would say... ‘*It is good.*’ However, God did NOT say ‘*it is good*’ UNTIL the third day of creation.

It wasn’t until the third day of Creation did God twice declare “*it was good.*” Why was the third day considered “good”? Because on the third day life could be sustained. God values life and he emphasizes this by twice proclaiming the third day as “good.”

Because of God’s double blessing on the third day of creation, today it is common for couples in Israel to plan to get married on a Tuesday, which is the third day of the week. Israeli businessmen will often schedule the start of a business trip on Tuesday because, according to Genesis 1, it is the day of double blessing.

## 2. Abraham

**Genesis 22:1-4** – “... God tested Abraham and said to him, “Abraham!” And he said, “Here I am.” Then He said, “Take now your son, your only one, whom you love, Isaac, and go forth to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I will tell you.” So Abraham rose early in the morning and saddled his donkey and took two of his young men with him and Isaac his son; and he split wood for the burnt offering and arose and went to the place of which God had told him. **On the third day**, Abraham lifted his eyes and saw the place from a distance.”

It was on the third day Abraham arrived at Mt Moriah. Being a day of significance and rescue, Isaac was rescued, and a ram was put in his place. This is the first act of **substitute atonement**, meaning God substituted a ram in place of Isaac, just as God substituted Jesus for you and me.

Jesus – as the substitute for you and me – paid the price for your sins and my sins, dying on the cross on Calvary, so that you and I may be rescued from the penalty of our sins, and so be freed from the darkness of eternal punishment.

## 3. Joseph

**Genesis 40:1-23** – When Joseph was sentenced to prison in Egypt, he was there with the King's former cupbearer and baker. Both men had experienced disturbing dreams and desperately wanted to know what their dreams meant. Joseph knew that God would sometimes allow him to interpret dreams, crediting God for all rightful interpretations of dreams and visions, and so he asked the two to tell him what they had dreamed. Joseph sought God's answer and then told each of them what their dreams meant and interpreted how they would be fulfilled. He even told the timeframe for when their visions to be fulfilled.

When? Yes, on the third day!

## 4. Moses

**Exodus 19:10** – When Moses was up on Mount Sinai with God, God spoke to him, telling him to tell the people to prepare themselves for in **three days** they would see Him meet with Moses. “Yahweh also said to Moses, “Go to the people and set them apart as holy today and tomorrow, and let them wash their garments;”

God wanted the people to trust Moses and follow Moses.

**Exodus 19:16-19** – “So it happened **on the third day**, when it was morning, that there were thunder and lightning flashes and a thick cloud upon the mountain and a very loud trumpet sound, so that all the people who were in the camp trembled.<sup>17</sup> And Moses brought the people out of the camp to meet God, and they stood at the foot of the mountain. <sup>18</sup> Now Mount Sinai

*was all in smoke because Yahweh descended upon it in fire; and its smoke ascended like the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mountain trembled violently.<sup>19</sup> And the sound of the trumpet grew louder and louder; then Moses spoke and God answered him with thunder.”*

When did this happen? On the third day!

## 5. Joshua

**Joshua 1:11, 3:2** – When Joshua was going to lead the nation of Israel across the Jordan River and into the Promised Land, they were told to get themselves ready for **in three days** they were going to cross the Jordan and enter into the Promised Land. Guess what happened? On the third day, they entered the Promised Land!

## 6. King Hezekiah

**2 Kings 20:1-5** – *“In those days Hezekiah became ill to the point of death. And Isaiah the prophet the son of Amoz came to him and said to him, “Thus says Yahweh, ‘Set your house in order, for you shall die and not live.’”<sup>2</sup> Then he turned his face to the wall and prayed to Yahweh, saying,<sup>3</sup> “Remember now, O Yahweh, I beseech You, how I have walked before You in truth and with a whole heart and have done what is good in Your sight.” And Hezekiah wept greatly.<sup>4</sup> Now it happened that Isaiah had not gone out of the middle court, and the word of Yahweh came to him, saying,<sup>5</sup> “Return and say to Hezekiah the ruler of My people, ‘Thus says Yahweh, the God of your father David, “I have heard your prayer, I have seen your tears; behold, I will heal you. **On the third day** you shall go up to the house of Yahweh.”*

When did God heal Hezekiah? On the third day!

## 7. The Temple

**Ezra 6:14-15** – Six-hundred years before Christ, the Jews were exiled from Israel to Babylon. They were in Babylon for 70 years before they were allowed to return to the Holy Land. When they returned, their first task was to rebuild the destroyed Temple.

**Ezra 6:14-15** – *“And the elders of the Jews were building and succeeding through the prophesying of Haggai the prophet and Zechariah the son of Iddo. So they built and completed it according to the decree of the God of Israel and the decree of Cyrus, Darius, and Artaxerxes king of Persia. And this house was brought to completion **on the third day** of the month Adar; it was the sixth year of the reign of King Darius.”*

The Temple was completed on the third day of the month.

## 8. Queen Esther

**Esther 5:1** – The book of Esther tells the story of the Persian plan to destroy the Jewish nation. Queen Esther, who was Jewish, learned of this plan and decided she was going to confront the king and expose Haman’s treachery. There was only one problem. No one, including a queen, was allowed to approach the king without his permission.

So, what solution did Queen Esther come up with? She called for a **three-day fast**, then **on the third day**, she put on the royal robe and approached the king, standing in the inner court of the palace. He received her, and she eventually saved the Jewish nation from destruction. All because of a three-day fast!

## 9. Jonah

**Jonah 2:1-9** – Jonah decided he was going to run away from God because God had asked him to go preach to a nation of very evil people. Jonah did not believe that this group of people deserved to receive God’s grace. Because Jonah knew God so well, he was concerned that in His mercy, should this nation respond to the prophet’s message of repentance, God would show them mercy, and Jonah did not feel this nation deserved to receive God’s mercy. So, instead of obeying God, Jonah decided he was going to run as far away as he could in the opposite direction from where God told him to go.

When Jonah ran out of land, he then got on a boat to get even further away. But, God intervened, and Jonah was thrown into the sea and swallowed up by a large fish. After spending three days in the belly of the fish, **on the third day**, Jonah was released from the fish’s belly.

## Summary

- On the third day of Creation, God said it was good.
- On the third day, Isaac was saved from being sacrificed by Abraham.
- On the third day, Joseph interpreted the dreams of the cupbearer and baker.
- On the third day, God spoke to Moses in front of all the people.
- On the third day, Joshua led the people into the Promised Land.
- On the third day, King Hezekiah was healed.
- On the third day, the Temple was finished being rebuilt.
- On the third day, Esther called for a fast before approaching the king.
- On the third day, Jonah was released from the fish’s belly.

Why was Jesus in the tomb for three days? Why not a week? Why not an hour? Why three days? Because the third day is the moment when an **event attains its climax**. The third day is the day when a **situation is completed or fulfilled**. The third day is associated with a **special divine activity**.

Jesus rose from the grave on the third day. He lives today and He offers each of us eternal life.