

THE QUEST FOR THE THIRD DAY

The mention of that title conjures up visions of a crisp April morning in Jerusalem almost 2000 years ago as the Son of the living God rose from the dead just before the sun dawned over the first-century landscape. It was a dark three days that Passion Week as our Lord lay in that tomb. Tears flowed down his followers' faces as they hid in utter shock at the thought of what had happened to their rabbi, their teacher...the Lord of the entire universe. Little did they know that He meant what He said when he exclaimed that He would rebuild the temple in three days. And on that third day He fulfilled that promise and so many more.



As amazing as the third-day resurrection is, the concept of the appearance of heavenly light being associated with the third day does not start in the New Testament. It doesn't even start in the Old Testament. Like the rest of history, it was written into the very creation itself. In this article, I would like to share some of my favorite "third day" connections with you and explain how all of them

are the appetizers for the greatest third day of them all. Let's start off in outer space and work our way back down to earth.

THE MOON

Genesis 1:14 *"Then God said, 'Let there be lights in the firmament of the heavens to divide the day from the night, and let them be for signs and seasons, and for days and years.'"*

This scripture is one of **THE** most important the bible as it tells us the purpose of the sun, moon, and stars. They're not just pretty things to look at in the sky. Everything He created is to help guide us into deeper relationship with Him. And this is our first glimpse at His plan.

What makes the Maker's real intent almost undetectable in this verse is the English word "seasons." When I mention that word in English, we almost immediately think of spring, summer, fall and winter as that is our modern definition of the word. However, the original word in Hebrew has nothing to do with our definition of season. And the first couple did not even have seasons in the Garden. At that point, the earth was still at a zero-degree axis and everything was tropical, like the Jurassic jungles of South America. The earth had not yet been hit yet by the giant meteorite or comet that broke open the fountains of the deep. This caused the flood of Noah's day, knocked the earth to its current twenty-three-and-a-half-degree axis, and created the seasons we have today. To the ancient Hebrews and to the Jewish people today, using the word "season" in a religious context is always an understood connection to the Feast Days of Yahweh. And incredibly, this is exactly what the Hebrew word means.

MOEDIM

In Hebrew, the word "season" in Genesis 1:14 is the word "moedim," which means "appointment, appointed time, feast day, congregation, meeting, etc..." He put the sun, moon and stars in their place so that His people would know when to meet with Him throughout the year on His special "appointed" days. Then in Leviticus 23, He tells His people how to calculate these special days using what He put in the sky. And the moon was the primary symbol used to calculate.

The moon produces no light on its own. It reflects the light from the sun. In the same way, Yeshua, the Son of Yahweh, only produces the light He receives from His Father. So the God of Israel is like the sun and Yeshua is like the moon. He is the direct reflection of the Father. In keeping with this analogy, we, too, are to be a reflection of the Father, just like the Son who is the perfect reflection of His Father.

All this relates to the third day in the fact that the moon goes dark, beginning the process of a new moon, and on the third day the moon begins its "resurrection." The moon is our very first connection to the third day, and it will show up again and again throughout the bible. Every month, the moon goes "dark," returns to reflect its greatest amount of light in the middle of the month, and then wanes back to the beginning.

THE BINDING OF ISAAC

In Genesis 22 we see the story of Abraham taking his promised son Isaac on a journey to Mount Moriah in obedience of Yahweh's command to sacrifice him. This was no doubt the darkest moment of Abraham's life. After the excitement of being told that he would have an heir and that his children would number as the stars of the sky, the same One that told him he would have a son by Sarah told him to give him up. The pain, confusion, and darkness had to have been overwhelming.

Mount Moriah was not around the corner. It would have taken Abraham and Isaac several days just to get within sight distance of it. Take a look at verse 4 of the same chapter.

Genesis 22:4 *"Then on the third day Abraham lifted his eyes and saw the place afar off."*

It is not by coincidence that Abraham and Isaac came in view of the mountain on the third day of their journey. Yahweh was setting a pattern down for the story of redemption. Even though Abraham was nearing the darkest hour of his life, he had little idea that it's always darkest just before dawn. That third day would not be a day of darkness, but a day of great light. It would be the day that Yahweh redeemed the only begotten son of Abraham and provide a substitute sacrifice, caught by its horns in a nearby bush. The prophetic picture is one of the Father of the Universe setting a course to destroy the mankind He made in His image when a substitute lamb offered to take our place under His knife. What Abraham thought was going to be a day of death and darkness turned out to be a day of life and great light.

JACOB FLEES LABAN

Genesis 31:22 "And Laban was told on the third day that Jacob had fled."

Jacob had worked for both Leah and Rachel for 14 years and another 7 on top of that. Because he didn't have a dowry to give to Laban for his daughters, he was forced to pay off his debt. He was, in fact, a slave to Laban in his land as Laban seemed to find more and more reasons to hold him hostage. Unfortunately, Jacob flourished in his uncle's house and became a threat to Laban. This left Jacob with no choice but to go back to the land of his father, Canaan. He was three days' journey from his uncle when Laban decided to pursue him.

Again we see the concept of the third day. Incredibly, hundreds of years later, Jacob's descendants would experience the same kind of Exodus when they also became a threat to the Pharaoh of Egypt because they'd flourished under his hand and also left for the land of their father. Jacob had no idea that his entire story would be the same one his future children would live, as well.

THE EXODUS

Exodus 3:18 "...Yahweh the God of the Hebrews has met with us, and now, please, let us go three days journey into the wilderness, that we may sacrifice to Yahweh our God."

Again, the story is the same and the pattern begins to deepen. Like Jacob their father who left and was overtaken by Laban three days after he departed, so Jacob's children would depart Egypt and be overtaken by Pharaoh three days into their journey. It was a very dark day to the fleeing Israelites as the six hundred chariots were bearing down on them and death was at their door. But on that day, they would come through the baptism of the parting sea and would be redeemed to begin a whole new life.

Not only did the Israelites ask Pharaoh to leave Egypt for a three-day journey into the wilderness, the ninth plague of darkness lasted for three days over the land of Egypt, giving us the perfect typification of what three days is connected to: darkness and lack of sight. There's something about these three days being connected to a lack of seeing, the absence of light, and a filling of darkness that Yahweh wants us to see. The pattern is in full swing.

Incredibly, after Pharaoh and his army were drowned in the Reed Sea, we see the third day again.

Exodus 15:22 *"So Moses brought Israel from the Red Sea. Then they went out into the Wilderness of Shur. And they went three days in the wilderness and found no water."*

Again, another dark and miserable situation connected to three days. The Israelites had no water and when they were three days out, their plight miraculously turned around as Moses was told by Yahweh to take a tree and throw it into the midst of the bitter waters to make them sweet.

This is an amazing connection to what happened when Yeshua came and lived among us. All over scripture, people are connected to trees. And a multitude of people is painted as seas and waters. The waters (people of the earth) were greatly bitter. But when **THE** tree, that Branch of Jesse, was thrown into the midst of the water (people), every person touched by that Branch became sweet and worthy to be used to quench the thirst of strangers. The bitterness was turned to sweet on the third day.

THE CUP BEARER

Joseph was sitting in a prison, being forced to do time for something he didn't do. Near the end of his stay, Pharaoh's baker and butler (cup bearer) also found themselves in prison and both had dreams that only Joseph could interpret. The cup bearer had a dream where he saw a vine with three branches that budded and brought forth grapes. Joseph gave him the interpretation:

Genesis 40:12-13 *"...The three branches are three days. Now within three days Pharaoh will lift up your head and restore you to your place and you will put Pharaoh's cup in his hand according to the former manner, when you were his butler."*

The pattern is strikingly consistent. The butler would be redeemed after three days. There's something about this three-day thing. And we've only just begun!

MOUNT SINAI

As we get back to the Exodus story, we again see the importance of this third-day concept in the mind of God.

Exodus 19:10-11 *"Then Yahweh said to Moses, 'Go to the people and consecrate them today and tomorrow, and let them wash their clothes. And let them be ready for the third day. For on the third day Yahweh will come down upon Mount Sinai in the sight of all the people.'"*

Then verse 16 says, "Then it came to pass on the third day, in the MORNING, that there were thundering and lightnings, and a thick cloud on the mountain, and the sound of the trumpet was very loud, so that all the people who were in the camp trembled" (emphasis mine).

Yahweh wants to meet with His people and right here, in this time, at this place, He tells them to prepare themselves because He is going to meet with them on the third day. He's already there on the two days leading up to the third day, but He chooses to reveal Himself on the third day. This is exactly like the moon. It starts a brand new cycle the moment it goes dark but it does not show

itself until about the third day of that cycle. The parallels to the death and resurrection of our Messiah are revealing. When was new life given? At His death or resurrection? According to Torah, the moment the blood was shed, we were forgiven. The veil was rent and we finally had access to the Holy of Holies. His resurrection only proved what had already happened. In the Torah, raising from the dead wasn't required in order for the sacrifice to be acceptable to the LORD. The moment the blood was shed, there was forgiveness of sins. Because He came for His Bride, His resurrection was intended to provide an eligible bachelor for His newly-freed people to wed. Furthermore, when did Yeshua rise on that third day? In the morning. Just like when His Father revealed Himself to His people for the first time, so the Son revealed Himself to His people again, on the same day, at the same time. Simply remarkable.

THROUGH THE FIRE

Leviticus 19:5-6 *"And if you offer a sacrifice of a peace offering to Yahweh, you shall offer it of your own free will. It shall be eaten the same day you offer it, and on the next day. And if any remains until the third day, it shall be in the fire."*

As we continue our quest to discover the meaning of the third day, we see another component that fits the pattern of the rest but gives us a better picture of the Father's original intent. A peace offering was meant to be shared. The giver was to take part in the offering by eating it after it was dedicated. But there were to be no leftovers on the third day. Any part of an offering that was left over was to be put through the fire on the third day. The purpose of fire is to transform and purify. It transforms the object it is consuming from one state to another. Yeshua was transformed from one state to another on the third day, as well. And Colossians 1:19 tells us that He is, in fact, our peace offering.

We learn from this that the third day is meant to transform and purify. And we've certainly seen that play out in all the examples we've looked at so far. Let's continue.

THE CLEANSING OF THE THIRD DAY

Numbers 19:11-12 *"He who touches the dead body of anyone shall be unclean seven days. He shall purify himself with the water on the third day and on the seventh day, then he will be clean."*

This entire chapter is about the laws of purification and how to purify someone with the waters of the red heifer, which are "for the purifying from sin" (Num. 19:9). And when is this transformation and purification to be done? On the third and seventh days. This is an allusion to the first century Passion Week. The Feast of First Fruits landed on the third day after Passover that year, the day on which Yeshua "just so happened" to rise from the grave. And the seventh day was the high Sabbath of the Feast of Unleavened Bread that concluded the Passover sacrificial season with the final, *final* close coming almost fifty days later at the Feast of Shavuot (Pentecost). Once again we see fire, water, and transformation happening on this special day. We also see the same thing in 1 Samuel 30:1 where David and his men came into Ziklag on the third day and found it burned with fire. The pattern is incredibly consistent.

DAVID IS HIDDEN UNTIL THE THIRD DAY

1 Samuel 20:5 *"And David said to Jonathan, 'Indeed tomorrow is the New Moon, and I should not fail to sit with the king to eat. But let me go, that I may hide in the field until the third day at evening.'"*

This passage is a remez (a hint or allusion) to Yeshua, who was also hidden for three days and was also a prophetic future King of Israel. Things that are hidden are consistently revealed on the third day.

THE AMALEKITE IS KILLED ON THE THIRD DAY

In 2 Samuel chapter 1, David is told through an Amalekite that Saul and Jonathan are dead and that he helped Saul fall on his sword. This happened on the third day after Saul's death and meant that David would now be anointed king of Israel. This Amalekite was killed because he dared to touch God's anointed. The Amalekites were the fierce arch enemy of Israel whom God commanded be eradicated from the earth. David had just come back from slaughtering them when he received this message. It was the third day since his return.

This is incredible when you realize that this entire story mirrors the story of what Yeshua – the second king David, if you will – did. Yeshua had slaughtered the enemy his entire ministry and on the third day, when He resurrected from the grave, He personally dealt the final blow to Satan himself for daring to touch His Father's anointed.

THEY JUST KEEP COMING!

There are many, many more examples of highly significant things happening on the third day. We could fill a small book if we took the time to go through them all. Joshua makes a covenant with the Gibeonites on the third day (Joshua 9), Hezekiah's life was extended and he was healed on the third day when he went up to the Temple (2 Kings 20), the revolt against the evil king Rehoboam started on the third day his counselors came to him (2 Chr. 10), the temple was finished on the third day of the month of Adar (Ezra 6), and the night Esther spent with the King to save her people happened on the third day of her visit. But out of all those, my favorite might be the last one in the Old Testament. It's found in the book of Hosea.

Hosea 6:1-2 *"Come, and let us return to Yahweh. For He has torn, but He will heal us. He has stricken, but He will bind us up. After two days He will revive us. On the third day He will raise us up, that we may live in His sight."*

This scripture is one of the most powerful scriptures prophesying that on the third day, the Father will raise us up that we may live. He spends the first two days reviving us and the third on complete resurrection. It is also, of course, a hint at the rising of the Messiah. The two days we spend reviving are the last two thousand years. On the third day, which will also be the seventh since creation (completing the red heifer cleansing process), the Messiah will raise up His Bride Israel and bring her into His sight. In the meantime, He is in the process of reviving her. His Bride is getting ready for her big day.

IN CONCLUSION

I wasn't sure what the Spirit was up to when He inspired me to study the third day in scripture, but after going through all we just unpacked, I think I now understand why a little more. We have not just uncovered an ancient pattern; we've uncovered and unwrapped a promise. Sorrow only lasts for a night, but joy comes in the morning. The dawning of new light comes after the darkest hour. There must be death before new life.

All of these quips are birthed from the third day principle. Maybe you're going through a difficult time, and you feel like you're in the midst of your own prison experience, your own dark hour. Maybe you've just lost a loved one and your world has gone completely dark. Perhaps you're simply having a hard time seeing any way out of your situation right now. Or maybe you just desire to see more of who He really is and what He really desires for you to be. In all of the above, we can see that transformation comes through fire, resurrection comes after death, joy comes after pain, and the promise comes after testing.

Yahweh is in the business of reviving and refining His people. He's preparing us for eternity and is trying to get us to a point where we will qualify for as much reward as possible when we get there. In order to do that, He must send a fire. He must tell the moon to stop giving its light. And it is this pre-planned darkness that inspires our soul to once again desire the power and warmth of His light. And it is that desire that causes Him to transform us and raise us up to live in His sight at a higher plane than before. Without the fire, there can be no pure gold. And without the pain of death and darkness, there can be no third day. Wait for it. Trust Him. Be still and know that He is God, for tomorrow just might be **your** third day.

Shalom,
Jim Staley