

Come to Understanding

They also that erred in spirit shall come to understanding,
and they that murmured shall learn doctrine. — Isaiah 29:24

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Three Days and Three Nights

Blinded to the truth of the Word of God, the Jewish scribes and Pharisees had developed a system of legalistic traditions, which they commanded the people to practice. Seeing that many of their religious customs ignored, or even superseded the Scriptures, Yahshua (Jesus) responded to them by quoting Scripture:

- 6 He answered and said unto them, Well has Isaiah prophesied of you hypocrites, as it is written, This people honors me with *their* lips, but their heart is far from me.
- 7 However in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.
- 8 For laying aside the commandment of God, you hold the tradition of men, as the washing of pots and cups: and many other such like things you do.
- 9 And he said unto them, Full well you reject the commandment of God, that you may keep your own tradition. -Mark 7

Yahshua broke many of their traditions. He even performed miracles on the sabbath. Instead of rejoicing as they witnessed the power of God, however, the Pharisees responded angrily:

- 14 Then the Pharisees went out, and held a council against him, how they might destroy him. -Matthew 12

As Yahshua continued performing more great miracles, which included casting out evil spirits, the scribes and the Pharisees asked Him for a “sign:”

- 38 Then certain of the scribes and of the Pharisees answered, saying, Master, we would see a sign from you. -Matthew 12

They were, in effect, asking Him to show them some greater miracle to prove who He was. He responded by offering them only one sign:

- 39 But he answered and said to them, An evil and adulterous generation seeks after a sign; and there shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of the prophet Jonah:
- 40 For as Jonah 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. -Matthew 12

Did Yahshua keep His promise of showing the great “sign of Jonah” by being in the “heart of the earth,” as in the tomb, three days and three nights?

Traditional teaching would say that He did not! It says that Yahshua was crucified on Good Friday, was laid in the tomb just before sundown, and that He rose from the dead on Easter Sunday morning. According to this traditional teaching, as shown in the Table 1, He was only in the tomb one day and two nights!

Table 1. Traditional Teaching

Good Friday		Saturday		Easter Sunday
Day (Crucified)	Night	Day	Night	Risen in the Morning
Yahshua in the Tomb				

Many have used this apparent conflict between the promise of Yahshua and the traditional teaching to undermine the reliability of the Scriptures as the Word of God. If this tradition is correct, then Yahshua did not give the “sign of Jonah” that He promised. This apparent discrepancy has caused some to depart from their faith.

Paul was persuaded that Yahshua’s death, burial, and resurrection all happened “according to the scriptures:”

- 1 Moreover, brethren, I declare to you the gospel which I preached to you, which also you have received, and wherein you stand;
- 2 By which also you are saved, if you keep in memory what I preached to you, unless you have believed in vain.
- 3 For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received, how that the Messiah died for our sins according to the scriptures;
- 4 And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures: -1 Corinthians 15

Much of the confusion concerning the Scriptures occurs because people do not know them. Yahshua, for example, told the Sadducees why they err:

- 29 Yahshua answered and said to them, You do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God. -Matthew 22

What the Scriptures say is summarized in Table 2.

So they read in the book in the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense,
and caused them to understand the reading. — Nehemiah 8:8

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Table 2. The Sign of Jonah: Three Days and Three Nights in the Tomb

<i>Date*</i>	<i>Day/Night</i>	<i>Day</i>	<i>Event</i>	<i>Scriptures</i>
14th <i>(The Days Begin at Sundown)</i>	Night	Tues	This was the Passover and the night of the "Last Supper." It was the Preparation Day before the Sabbath. It was the day when Yahshua was Crucified and was lain in the tomb just before the Sabbath, which began at sundown.	5 In the fourteenth day of the first month at evening is Yahweh's passover. -Leviticus 23
	Day	Wed		15 And he said to them, With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer: -Luke 22 30 When Yahshua therefore had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished: and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost. -John 19 52 This man went to Pilate, and begged for the body of Yahshua. 53 And he took it down, and wrapped it in linen, and laid it in a sepulcher that was hewn in stone, wherein never man before was laid. 54 And that day was the preparation, and the sabbath drew on. 55 And the women also, which came with him from Galilee, followed after, and saw the sepulcher, and how his body was laid. -Luke 23
15th	1st Night	Thu	This was the "High Sabbath," the First Day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread. It was called a "High Day," which was a "holy convocation" in which no "laborious work" was to be done.	31 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 a high day,) asked Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away. -John 19
	1st Day			6 And on the fifteenth day of the same month is the feast of unleavened bread unto Yahweh: seven days you must eat unleavened bread. 7 In the first day you shall have a holy convocation: you shall do no laborious work therein. -Leviticus 23
16th	2nd Night	Fri	This was the Preparation Day for the Weekly Sabbath.	56 And they returned, and prepared spices and ointments; and rested the sabbath day according to the commandment. -Luke 23
	2nd Day			
17th	3rd Night	Sat	This was the Weekly Sabbath, which was the seventh day.	3 Six days shall work be done: but the seventh day is the sabbath of rest, a holy convocation; you shall do no work therein: it is the sabbath of Yahweh in all your dwellings. -Leviticus 23
	3rd Day			
18th	Night		The Resurrection occurred sometime during the night after the Weekly Sabbath.	1 Now upon the first day of the week, very early in the morning, they came to the sepulcher, bringing the spices which they had prepared, and certain others with them. 2 And they found the stone rolled away from the sepulcher. 3 And they entered in, and found not the body of the Lord Yahshua. -Luke 24
	Day	Sun	Tomb was empty before dawn.	1 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 sepulcher. 5 And the angel answered and said to the women, Fear not you: for I know that you seek Yahshua, which was crucified. 6 He is not here: for he is risen, as he said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay. -Matthew 28

Yahshua in the Tomb

*The name of the first month, Abib (see Exodus 13:4), was changed to Nisan during the Babylonian captivity (see Esther 3:7).

Yahshua rose from the dead, as He had promised. In spite of traditional teachings, which ignore the importance of fulfilling Scriptural prophecy, He was indeed in the tomb for three days and three nights. He thereby gave to us the "sign of Jonah."

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As Isaiah prophesied, it is because they have not studied the Word of God that people will honor Yahweh with their words, but not with their hearts:

- 10 For Yahweh has poured out upon you the spirit of deep sleep, and has closed your eyes: the prophets and your rulers, the seers has he covered.
- 11 And the vision of all has become unto you as the words of a book that is sealed, which men deliver to one that is learned, saying, Read this, I pray you: and he says, I cannot; for it is sealed:
- 12 And the book is delivered to him that is not learned, saying, Read this, I pray you: and he says, I am not learned.
- 13 Therefore the Lord said, Forasmuch as this people draw near me with their mouth, and with their lips do honor me, but have removed their heart far from me, and their fear toward me is taught by the precept of men: -Isaiah 29

Is our understanding of Yahweh based on the Word of God, or on the teachings and traditions of men?