

Three Days & Three Nights: The Sign of Jonah

By Jen Shroder

Bible scholars have tried for centuries to figure out what Jesus meant about the sign of Jonah. **God now gives this as a sign that *you* would know I tell you the truth: America, if we turn our backs on Him, He will turn His back on us.** And yet, His desire is for the unbeliever, seek God and live.

THREE DAYS AND THREE NIGHTS IN THE BELLY OF THE WHALE

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Because I have made bold statements of faith, a group of atheists challenged me about what Jesus said:

"An evil and adulterous generation seeks after a sign, and no sign will be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah. 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" (Mt 12:40)

It was the atheist's contention that according to the Bible, Jesus did not spend three days and three nights in the "heart of the earth" (or "tomb" as they saw it).

I know there are many long scholarly explanations about this, but none of them seemed right, so I asked God if He would explain it to me in His word. No sooner had I asked than I heard that small voice say, **"It began before He was crucified."**

What I have written is what I found when I sought confirmation in the Bible. Since this "debate" with 10-14 atheists, three atheists have contacted me to talk more about God, two have asked for prayer to believe, and the remaining seriously plotted to kill me.

The Sign:

Was this sign to mean Jesus would die and rise after three days and three nights sealed in a tomb? Lazarus had just risen from death in a tomb after FOUR days and the Pharisees who wanted a sign were very aware of it. Did Jesus mean to repeat this miracle, for fewer days, and offer it as a sign? No, the sign was much more than rising from the dead after three days and nights in a tomb. The sign was **to immerse Himself in our sins, separated from God as Jonah prophesied, where God would not hear, pay for our sins with suffering**, death and on the third day rise again.

The Scripture:

"...so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in *the heart of the earth*" (Mt 12:40)

The Bible shows us that the "whale's belly" or the "heart of the earth" began for Jesus on the night He was betrayed, immediately after He performed His last healing miracle, when He was "delivered into the hands of men" and became sin:

"For He has made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him." (2 Cor 5:21)

Jesus was separated from God and immersed in our sin *on the night He was betrayed*. Something far more shocking to His being than physical death, the first time in all eternity that Jesus was separated from the Father. I can show you the Scriptures. Please hear me out...

Scriptures repeatedly show the "earth" to be man's heart, which the Bible says is exceedingly wicked. (proof of this later). As *Scriptures* indicate, Jesus became sin on the night He was betrayed, included suffering, the crucifixion, death and resurrection, totaling three days and three nights.

Jesus, as the sacrificial lamb, was without blemish on the night He was betrayed:

"[We were redeemed]... with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot." (1 Peter 1:19)

Of course this refers to Jesus being sinless, yet the lamb was to be perfect in every way. The precious blood could not flow or be wasted before the sacrifice began. The blood began to flow on the night He was betrayed.

"He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities, the chastisement of our peace [prosperity, welfare] was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed" (Isaiah 53:5)

If the sign that Jesus gave was completed only by His death, time in the grave and resurrection, how was payment made earlier when He was wounded, bruised and given stripes (scourged)? Was He beaten and bleeding before He became sin? Were the bruises and bleeding for nothing? No! Was the Lamb delivered for the sacrifice already bloodied and torn? No!

"He was **wounded** for our transgressions..." (Isaiah 53:5)

"He has made Him to be sin for us...that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him."

(2 Cor 5:21)

Christ had to become sin before payment could begin or the blood would be wasted. The chastisement "was upon Him." The miracle of Christ's redemption began

on **Thursday night when Christ became sin, the night He was betrayed, immersed in our sins and delivered unto man.** Before the first drop of His precious blood, Jesus suffered far more than physical death; He became sin which separated Him from His Father, in the heart of the earth, as in the belly of the whale.

Verses that show sin separates us from God:

"But your iniquities have separated
you from your God,
and your sins have hidden His face from you, that He will not hear."
(Isaiah 59:2)

"If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me."
(Psalm 66:18)

Scripture Confirms the Sequence:

I did a computer check and found a total of 12 scripture verses that contained the "three days" or "third day" time frame. EVERY SINGLE ONE began the sequence by starting with the betrayal or suffering. It was never left out.

Understand this. Not once was what happened on "the night He was betrayed" omitted when the three day sequence was outlined in the Bible, not once. 12 out of 12 times a witness came up to bat and laid out the sequence beginning Thursday night, described as either the night He was delivered into the hands of men or the brutality He went through referencing that time. (below are three, see all twelve verses at end of this message)

1. "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.**" (Luke 9:22)
2. "Jesus said unto them, the Son of man shall **be betrayed into the hands of man;** and they shall kill Him, and the third day He shall be raised again." (Matthew 17:22)
3. "**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." (Mark 10:34) (See all 12)

NO WHERE does it only say, "The Son of man must die and the third day rise again" without listing the full sequence, including suffering. (there is one scripture which is a quote of what the Pharisees (bad guys) said, which of course, they were clueless. Interesting that only the bad guys were able to repeat it wrong.)

Twelve out of twelve times is NOT a coincidence.

"The Heart of the Earth"

Many have assumed this indicates Jesus in the tomb. Yet, there are countless Scriptures that indicate "earth" is the heart of man, which the Bible says is exceedingly wicked. Thus when Jesus *became sin*, He was in the "heart of the earth."

Jesus Himself used "earth" many times when He referred to man's heart. The "four soils" parable (originally "earth" in Scripture, Greek and KJV) confirms that earth is used to describe the heart of man. The importance of this is exemplified, for when the disciples asked Jesus to explain the parable, He said,

"Know you not this parable? How then will you know all parables?" (Mk 4:13)

Jesus then explains that the seed that was sown in the earth is: "...the word that was sown in their hearts." (Mark 4:15)

The "faith of a mustard seed" parable is also planted in the earth and the earth signifies man's heart; and the talents were also "hidden in the earth" by the lazy servant. Suddenly so many other verses that include the earth make sense to me. The treasure hidden in a field, etc. are all about man's heart.

Additionally, 1 Cor 15:47 says,

"The first man is of the earth, earthy; the second man is the Lord from heaven."
(speaking of Adam and Jesus)

Jesus entered the "heart of the earth" or the "heart of man" as the parables often point out, when He fulfilled prophecy and BECAME SIN.

"And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thought of his heart was only evil continually..." (Genesis 6:5-12)

"But we are all like an unclean thing, and all our righteousness are like filthy rags."
(Isaiah 64:6)

There are dozens of Scriptures that depict mankind as the "earth" expressing emotions and reactions as men's hearts.

Even the original Greek word in the Scripture for "heart" is kardia:

kardia; prol. from a primary (Lat. cor, "heart"); the heart, i.e. (fig) the thoughts or feelings (mind). [Strongs Exhaustive Conc.]

An Interesting Twist: The Man in Linen

Mark 14:50 says that when the soldiers took Jesus,

"They [His followers] all forsook Him and fled. And there followed Him a certain young man, having a linen cloth cast about his naked body; and the young men laid hold on him: and he left the linen cloth, and fled from them naked."

Ever wonder about that verse?...

Revelation 19:8 says

"linen is the righteousness of saints."

Again, 2 Cor 5:21 says

"for He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him."

The righteousness of the saints, the linen, was left by this spiritual being as men [soldiers] took hold of him, and he fled naked as Jesus was arrested. When Adam sinned and ate the fruit,

"he knew that he was naked and hid from God among the trees of the garden (Genesis 3:7-8)

When Adam sinned and when Jesus became sin, both times righteousness was removed, nakedness was revealed, somebody fled and hid. I don't know who this "spiritual being" was as it is controversial in Daniel 10:5 as well.

Adam sinned and thus the fall. Jesus was the second Adam who became sin and bought us back by His blood. When this event happened, Jesus was delivered into the hands of men and was beaten, bruised and scourged. He bled the precious blood to redeem us. It was the lamb's blood that was painted on the doorposts in Egypt at Passover,

"He was wounded for our transgressions".

Jesus delivered Himself into the hands of men, without blemish, while a spiritual being wearing linen followed. (I think this was Melchizedek but I'm not a scholar). The linen was left by this spiritual being as men took hold of him. Jesus became sin and the "righteousness of the saints" (which we have only in Christ) was removed... the linen was left, the precious blood began to flow, payment had begun; and Jesus, separated from God because He became sin, was in the "heart of the earth," the belly of the whale.

I believe this "certain man," was the spiritual being that Daniel described in Daniel 10:5, "Then I lifted up mine eyes, and looked and behold a certain man clothed in linen..." compares to a certain young man, having a linen cloth...SAME description. This spiritual being was wearing linen.

The Prophetic Prayer of Jonah shows the sequence of Jesus in "the heart of man."

"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" (Mt 12:40)

Jonah's prayer begins in the "belly of the whale" to which Jesus compared his fate. It was not only Jesus' time in death, but becoming sin and separated from God (hell)

which Jesus bore beginning Thursday night with immediate bleeding and beatings. Jonah 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 and waves passed over me. I have been cast out of Your sight; Yet I will look again toward Your holy temple..."

"Billows and waves" passed over Jonah. I wonder if the poundings suffered by Jesus began to feel like far away billows (breakers) and waves as He clung on to consciousness.

The verse indicates separation and suffering. At this point Jesus was separated from God, became sin and beaten. Imagine how that must have felt, no other place in time in ALL ETERNITY had Jesus EVER been separated from His Father! What a shock to His system! No wonder He sweat blood as the hour drew near.

Jonah's prayer continues:

"The waters compassed me about, even to the soul: the depth closed me round about, the weeds were wrapped about my head. [as the linen cloths in burial, death] I went down to the bottoms of the mountains; the earth with her bars was about me for ever: (Jonah 2:2-6a)

Notice Jonah begins this ordeal already in "hell" (as Jesus became immersed in man's sin) then halfway through his prayer, Jonah arrived in Sheol, (death) going down below the mountains just as Sheol is described in Deut. 32:22. Being in the "heart of the earth" (hell) was to be apart from God, made sin, wounded, along with the crucifixion and THEN he goes down to the bottom of the mountains, after spending time being cast out and billowed by waves. This describes Jesus being separated from God, delivered, beaten and suffering all "in the belly of the whale" and then going down yet further to the depths (death) just as Jonah did.

Notice Jonah, too, was cast out of God's sight, separated from God, just as Jesus was when He became sin. If Jesus compared His experience to Jonah's, and Jonah was cast from God's sight in the FIRST half of Jonah's descent, how did that relate to where Jesus was?

Understand this, **Jonah was being afflicted but he had already been cast from God's sight.** Jesus was being beaten but He was already cast from God. How? Why? Because He had BECOME SIN, He was immersed in the wickedness of man's heart, the heart of the earth. **The grave or the tomb could not separate Jesus from God, only sin would.**

"Where can I go
from Your Spirit?"

Or where can I flee from Your presence? If I ascend into heaven, You are there;
If I make my bed in Sheol [death, hell], behold, You are there."
(Psalm 139:7,8)

The grave, death, not even hell separate us from God, only sin does. Only immersed in sin (the heart of man) could put Jesus in the belly of the whale. And THAT is why He sweat blood; not during torture, not standing before Pilate, not facing the cross, but on the night He faced the hour of separation from the Father. The night His righteousness was removed and He BECAME SIN. It was the night He was betrayed, exactly three days and three nights before He rose again.

Other Bible Puzzle Pieces that Fit:

Jesus made statements that indicated the transition. On the night He was betrayed, the very words after healing the servant's ear, Jesus said to those arresting Him:

"But this is your **hour**, and the **power of darkness**" (Luke 22:53)

After Jesus was betrayed, He said very little. I believe Jesus did not speak in God's authority from that time on, as His relationship with God had been severed. Jesus DID say,

"but now My kingdom is not from here." (John 18:36)

Before Jesus was arrested, He said,

"For I have given [past tense] unto them the words which You have given to Me." (John 17:8)

I believe Jesus was so quiet from the point of His arrest because He did not have the words of the Father once He became sin, the relationship, the communication had been broken.

Few words were spoken by Jesus after His arrest, yet the *Scriptures stating Jesus would say nothing were completely fulfilled* because Pilate realized that only Herod had jurisdiction over the situation. In front of Herod, where it mattered, Jesus would not say a single word, not one, and the Scriptures remain completely fulfilled:

"Then he questioned Him with many words, but He answered him nothing. And the chief priests and scribes stood and vehemently accused Him."
(Luke 23)

His last miracle aside from the cross was the healing of an ear when He was arrested, seconds before the "certain young man in linen" appeared and Jesus was "officially" betrayed, actually made sin, actually in the heart of the earth/belly of the whale.

God's Purpose:

One of the atheists demanded, "Why would God reveal this to YOU rather than all these scholars, after all these years?"

Because I'm some great holy prophet that can hear from God? ...NOT! My confessions are all over this website, so many that it's hard to know my family and friends can read them. There is sincerely no one less worthy than me. But I asked on behalf of *the lost*, and *God's desire is for the lost*, He will leave the 99 for a single lost soul. It is God's love reaching out to those who reject Him still, though they mock and hate me for showing them.

Jesus said that no sign would be given except the sign of Jonah...

"This is an evil generation: they seek a sign; and there shall no sign be given it, but the sign of the prophet Jonah" (Luke 11:29)

I find it remarkable that these lost souls, some of them so full of hate toward me that they sought to kill me, are so precious to God that He went to such lengths to give them the only sign that He said would be given: the sign of Jonah. God will not break His word, yet He provided for them this sign, the very one they chose to challenge my faith, the sign of the prophet Jonah.

If you do not know God, know this, you are precious to Him, more precious than my comfort, more precious than my life on earth, more precious than even the earthly life of His only begotten Son. You are beloved, no matter what you've ever done or said. You are passionately loved by your Holy Father who longs to pour His mercy out upon you. Seek Him and you will find Him. Seek Him and live.*****