

# Jesus gave a sign

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TYLER, Texas—Jesus Christ gave us evidence that He was the Messiah. Do you remember what that evidence was?

If we explore the writings that are called "the Gospels" (Matthew, Mark, Luke and John), we find many places in which Jesus was asked if He was the Messiah. Some believed that He was the Messiah, and that He was who He said He was! Others were skeptical.

Notice what the apostle John wrote concerning Jesus the Messiah.

**John 1:10-14**—"He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him. He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him. But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth."

Today, there are many people who say that they believe that Jesus was the Christ, the Messiah. Many of these people are leaders in various churches. But why, then, do many of them deny the very sign that He gave as evidence of His being the Messiah?

He gave everyone solid proof. Solid evidence.

## Seeking a sign

When Jesus was talking to the scribes and Pharisees, they asked Him for a sign.

**Matthew 12:38**—"Then some of the scribes and Pharisees answered, saying, 'Teacher, we want to see a sign from You.' "

Jesus' first response was to caution them to be careful about seeking a sign.

**Matthew 12:39**—"But He answered and said to them, 'An evil and adulterous generation seeks after a sign, and no sign will be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah.' "

But He did mention that there was one particular sign.

**Matthew 12:39**—"But He answered and said to them, 'An evil and adulterous generation seeks after a sign, and no sign will be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah.'"

### The specific sign

And then He mentioned what the specific sign was.

**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."

Jesus indicated that after His death He would be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth—the grave.

### Middle of the week

In a study of the 70-weeks prophecy of Daniel 9:24-27, we see a prediction about the timeline of the Messiah coming and being cut off or killed (verse 26). It also referred to events happening in the middle of the week (verse 27).

Many historians correctly claim that Jesus was killed at 3:00 p.m. on a Wednesday. It was on a Wednesday that many lambs were being killed because the Jews were in preparation for a high holy day, the first day of Unleavened Bread—which began at sunset Wednesday evening and on into Thursday of that week.

### Crucified on Wednesday

When Joseph of Arimathaea arranged to put Jesus in the new tomb (Luke 23:50-53), he was doing it in haste because he wanted to have it done before the Sabbath. Some people believe that only the seventh day was called the Sabbath. But this is not true. The high holy days were also called Sabbaths.

Therefore, the Sabbath mentioned in Luke 23:54 was the first day of Unleavened Bread (from Wednesday evening through Thursday). There was preparation for that day.

When people don't realize that the Sabbath mentioned in Luke 23:54 is a high holy day (the first day of Unleavened Bread), I can understand why some people believe that Jesus was crucified on Friday.

Understanding Luke 23:54 helps us to see that Jesus was not crucified on a Friday. He was crucified on a Wednesday.

I believe that Jesus was buried late on Wednesday.

The Scripture also indicates that there was another day of preparation between the time of the crucifixion and the weekly Sabbath (Luke 23:55-56).

### Counting three days and nights

After Jesus was buried, then the counting began.

Wednesday night and Thursday were one night and one day. Thursday night and Friday were the second night and the second day. Friday night and Saturday were the third night and the third day.

With the end of Saturday (the Sabbath) and just before sunset would have marked the end of the 72-hour period of three days and three nights.

I personally believe that this was the time of the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Obviously, He would not be at the tomb on Sunday morning when the women went there—because He was already resurrected.

### **Power of the resurrection**

Understanding the power of the resurrection is very important to a disciple of Jesus Christ.

I realize that there are people who sincerely believe in the power of the resurrection who have not understood the timing of three days and three nights.

It is my opinion that understanding the only sign that Jesus gave will enhance your appreciation of the Bible and the promise of Christ's resurrection.