

The case of the Rebel Night

§72 On the basis of Matthew 12:40, we have argued that it is necessary to have "three nights" for the time Yeshua was in the grave. An examination of the Sunday chronology shows it has only two nights in the interval from Christ's death to His Resurrection. In spite of this, Sunday Resurrectionists do have a standard pat answer to Matthew 12:40 to make it appear that their chronology really does have "three nights." This response ranks as one of their most shrewd. It is also the most often heard response given to those who point out that Matthew 12:40 does not fit their Friday-Sunday chronology.

§73 The Sunday Resurrectionist response to Matthew 12:40 begins with a quote from the Jerusalem Talmud, "A day and a night are an onah, and the part of an onah is as the whole of it" (*Mishnah*, Jerusalem Talmud: Shabbath, Chapter IX, par. 3, Babylonian Talmud: Pesahim 4a). As a source, this Talmudic quote is important because it reflects semitic usage and thinking concerning the enumeration of days and nights. Also it could well find its origin, as a tradition, in some first century oral saying.

§74 The above quote contains the Hebrew word "onah," and this means, "a period of time." A day and a night is one example of an "onah" (i.e. a period of time). No one will dispute this. The next phrase, however, is true only in a certain sense, "part of an onah is as the whole of it." This means that a portion of a period of time is counted with a whole number, i.e the number 1. On the other hand, although a portion of a period of time may be counted with the numeral 1, this does not mean that a portion of a period of time is equal to a whole period of time. That is, it does not mean that part of a day is equal to a whole day, but only that part of a day is counted as 1 day.

§75 The foregoing distinction may seem trivial, but it is critical. If we go so far to say something equals something else, then we may apply all the rules of mathematics for equations. But if something is only given an alternative label, i.e. the number 1 for part of a day, yet it is not an equation (it is obvious that a part does not equal a whole), then the rules of equations do not apply. In fact, the mathematical axioms for equations are totally invalid if used on anything not already an equation.^{§92} And, it is clear that, "part of an onah is as the whole of it" is not an equation. The phrase only sums up a linguistic or idiomatic convention used in the Hebrew language. It is not an equation.

§76 Nevertheless, Sunday Resurrectionists proceed as if "part of an onah is as the whole of it" is an equation. Their reasoning is summarized below. "D" stands for day and "N" for night. "O"

means an "onah" or a period of time.

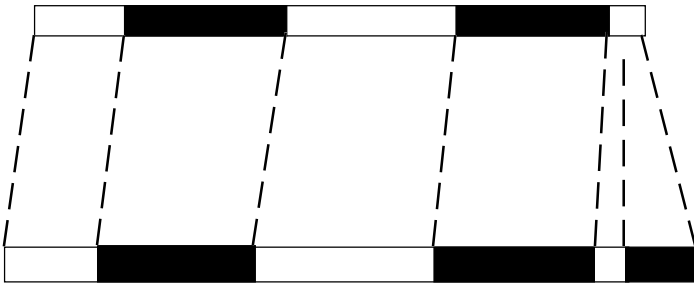
- (1) $D + N = O$
- (2) part $O = O$

§77 Equation (1) is derived from "a day and a night are an onah," and "equation" (2) from "part of an onah is as the whole of it." We have already explained the invalidity of making the second half of the statement into an equation. We proceed anyway, so as to demonstrate how they arrive at three nights.

- (3) Sundayist time interval of Christ in Tomb = $3D + 2N$
- (4) $3D+2N = D + N + D + N + D$, expand
- (5) part $D+N=D+N$, substitute Eq (1) in Eq (2)
- (6) $D = D+N$, reduce Eq (5).
- (7) $D = D + N$ (Amazing!)
- (8) $3D+2N = D+N+D+N+D+N$, substitute Eq (7) in Eq (4)
- (9) $3D+2N = 3D+3N$, collect terms and add.

§78 Observe here that one of the days has transformed itself into a day plus a night (see Fig. 10). The alchemy is similar to the day Aaron threw gold into the fire and out walked the golden calf. Josh

Figure 10: How two becomes three



McDowell, uses the derived Eq (7) above when he states, "Any time before 6:00 p.m. Friday would be considered 'one day and one night'" in his book *The Resurrection Factor* (San Bernardino: Here's Life Pub., Inc.), 1981. That is, he is expanding the part of a day between the death of Christ and sunset on Friday, into a day plus a night. However, since Eq (2) is invalid, the operation of substitution needed to arrive at Eq (7) is also invalid. The Talmud really only allows McDowell to count that part of a day as 1 day.

§79 There have been numerous other attempts to try to prove that two nights really equals three. We will catalogue some of them in this chapter. In general all of these attempts fail to prove what is

needed, i.e. that Matthew 12:40 really means "two nights." All they succeed in proving is that part of a day or night can be counted as a whole number. This is called inclusive reckoning, and in the Hebrew idiom it is valid.

§80 However, we must note that the continued use of these arguments is not a genuine attempt to prove that two nights can be called three nights. Rather it is a diversion from the real issue. The real issue is that Matthew 12:40 clearly teaches three nights in the interval of Christ's death and Resurrection taken in both the literal

Figure 11: A literal 72 Hour Interpretation

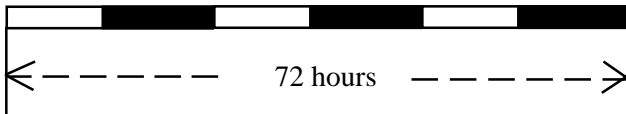
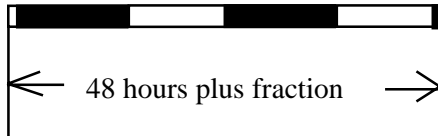


Figure 12: Minimum Idiomatic Interpretation



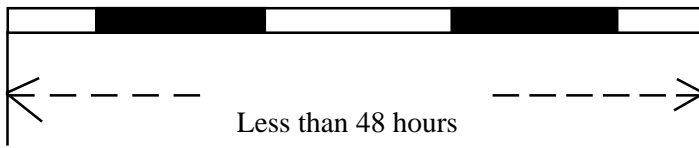
and the idiomatic sense. The "literal" sense has 72 hours (see Fig. 11).

§80.5 The idiomatic sense, where part of a day or night can be counted with a whole number, has at least 48 hours plus a fraction of a day and a fraction of a night (see Fig. 12). The Hebrew idiom of inclusive reckoning can make three days and three nights no shorter than 48 hours. On the other hand, the Sunday chronology from Friday afternoon to Sunday morning has less than 48 hours (see Fig. 13).

§81 We merely need to assume that Christ died after noon, and rose before noon. The Sunday view must, as a consequence, have less than 48 hours. It is therefore impossible to reconcile the Sunday chronology even with the idiomatic interpretation of Matthew 12:40.

§82 Now we will turn to those other arguments put forth by Sunday Resurrectionists in their attempt to prove either that two nights can

Figure 13: Sunday Chronology Cannot obtain 48 hours required by Idiomatic Interpretation of Matthew 12:40:



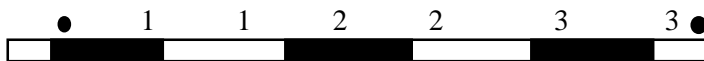
be called three, or that part of a day or night can be reckoned as a whole. As to the former we shall point out the flaw in their proof. As to the latter, we have already shown that it does not save their chronology.

An Abandoned Slave

§83 1 Samuel 30:12 reads as follows: "For he had eaten no bread, nor drunk any water, three days and three nights," and he said "today is the third day" (1 Sam. 30:13).

§84 Our man falls sick at the first dot (see Fig. 14), and he does not

Figure 14: An Abandoned Slave



eat his breakfast. He is unable to travel and is abandoned. He goes without food or drink a total of three days and three nights. On the third day since his abandonment he is found. Clearly this proves the idiomatic inclusive reckoning. But it fails to prove that three days and three nights can be less than 48 hours. In other words, it also fails to prove that three nights equals two.

Esther's Fast

§85 Esther told the Jews to "neither eat nor drink for three days, night or day," (Esther 4:16), and then "on the third day" we assume she took food and went before the king (Esther 5:1). If we assume that she meant "three days and three nights," then this case is precisely like the former case. It fails to prove that the period is less than the theoretical minimum of 48 hours for the idiomatic reckoning. Therefore, it fails to prove that three equals two.

§86 Those who have the Resurrection on Sabbath afternoon have failed to refute the Sunday position adequately because they have assumed Christ was in the grave exactly 72 hours. However, that would be four days and three nights. If they had considered the evidence produced by scholars for inclusive reckoning they would have discovered that 72 hours was unnecessary, but that at least 48 hours was necessary. Since the Sunday view lacks 48 hours, it follows that even granting the idiomatic interpretation of Matthew 12:40, the Sunday position fails utterly. The only solution for them is to accept Matthew 12:40 or chop it out of their Bibles.

§87 To review, Christ was in the grave three days and three nights; He rose after three days reckoned according to the standard day; He rose on the third day according to the common day; He rose on the first of the Sabbaths; He rose on the later of the Sabbaths in Passover week. He died before the Passover Sabbath. He died on the preparation day for the Passover Sabbath, and He rose on the weekly Sabbath.

A Hendiadys?

§88 One writer claims that "three days and three nights" is a hendiadys for "three days."^{§91} He cites "heavens and earth" (Gen. 1:1) as an example of hendiadys, and "flesh and blood," (Matthew 18:17). He claims since "heavens and earth" means "everything" and "flesh and blood" means "man" so "three days and three nights" must mean "three days," and not "three nights."

§89 However, this is absurd logic. Does "heavens and earth" mean heaven, and not earth? Does "flesh and blood" mean flesh, and not blood? The fallacy used by this author is in reasoning from the specific to the more general, and then denying one or more of the specifics upon which the generality is based. It is far better to treat "three nights" as "earth" and "blood." They are all real entities.

§90 I can't help but note the spiritual bankruptcy of the Church's position. In their error they have forgotten the truth of simple mathematics and numbers. In fact, if God was not concerned about accuracy in numbers, He would not have put so many of them in the Bible.

END NOTES

§91 Pg. 235, *Today's Handbook for Solving Bible Difficulties*, David E. Obrien.

§92 Occasionally, mathematicians have tried to kid the public by proving such things as $2 = 3$. Always some fallacy is involved in the "proof."