



FUNDAMENTAL #8

How long was Jesus in the grave?

MEMORY SCRIPTURE

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. —Matthew 12:40

SUMMARY STATEMENT

Who was Jesus? Some said He was a great teacher; some, a prophet. But was He really the Son of God? A group of doubtful religious people wanted proof, so they asked Him to give them a sign.

Jesus told them that the Messiah would be in the grave for three days and three nights, like Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of a great fish. How could someone be dead for three whole days and then live again? Only through God's miraculous power!

And then what happened after Jesus was raised from the dead? He joined God the Father in a glorified spirit form in heaven. He now sits at the right hand of God the Father where They continue Their work. Being raised from the dead is called a *resurrection*, and Jesus Christ's resurrection made it possible for humans to one day become spirit beings too!

BEGIN YOUR STUDY

Read the memory scripture together with your children, then read through the summary statement (remember to simplify the statement, if necessary). Have your children cut and paste the summary statement from this page in their **"Fundamentals Bible Study Journal"** (as suggested in the **Memorizing Scripture** resource **"The Fundamentals"**).

Next have your children write the memory scripture, **Matthew 12:40**, in their journals. Ask your children to think about when they fall asleep at night and wake up the next day. Imagine being asleep for three full days and nights! For that same period of time, Jesus Christ was dead in a grave, "in the heart of the earth." (You could do an online search and show photos from the Garden Tomb in Israel so that your child can picture a visual representation of a tomb at that time in history.)

After three days and three nights, Jesus Christ was resurrected: He was alive again! Discuss with your children how we can have hope that we will be resurrected and able to be in God's family forever because we know that Christ was resurrected. God never lies (**Titus 1:2**),





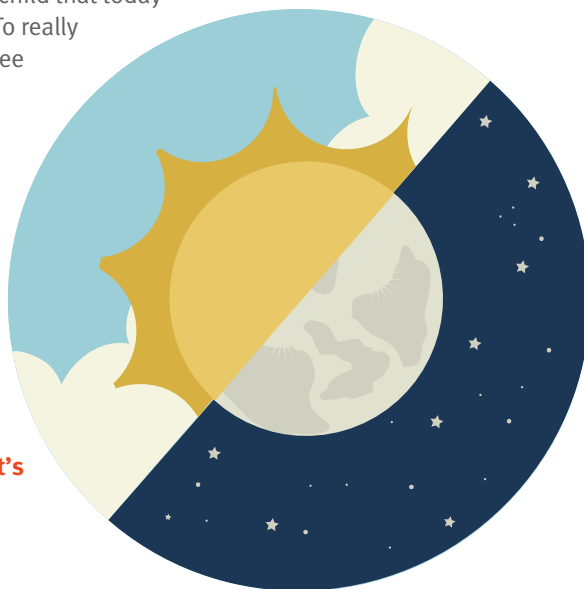
so we know that this is true. God also told us that we can know Christ was the Messiah, the Son of God, because He told us that His body would be in the grave for exactly three days and three nights, just like Jonah was inside the belly of the great fish. And that is exactly what happened!

DIGGING DEEPER INTERACTION #1

Have your child write out [Matthew 12:40](#) and read it aloud. Tell your child that today you are going to focus on the timing of three days and three nights. To really see how Christ's body was in the grave for exactly three days and three nights, you are going to make an "ancient" calendar.

Take a piece of paper and "paint" it with water to wet the paper. Then take brown watercolor and paint a very light brown on the wet piece of paper. Let it dry. This creates an "ancient" look for the paper you will use for your calendar. You and your child will use this piece of paper to create a calendar for the week of Christ's crucifixion. Divide the paper into three sections, then divide each section in half with a diagonal line to show the evening and morning for each day. Write in the events of that historical week, including when Jesus Christ was placed in the tomb, the First Day of Unleavened Bread, the weekly Sabbath, and His resurrection. (You may find the infographic "[Chronology of Christ's Crucifixion and Resurrection](#)" at [LifeHopeandTruth.com](#) helpful.)

Your child will be able to clearly see the three days and three nights!



DIGGING DEEPER INTERACTION #2

Have your child practice reciting the memory scripture, [Matthew 12:40](#). As you discussed the first day, we know that because Jesus Christ was resurrected, we will be too!

Imagine what the world will look like when we are ruling with Christ as spirit beings after we have been resurrected. What are some things you would like to do when you are a resurrected spirit being? What jobs would you like to do as you work with Christ and help the world learn about God? Tell your child what you are looking forward to doing after you are resurrected. Your list can include fun items, like being able to stay up all the time and never get tired! Also discuss some examples of jobs or roles, which may include: being a Teacher to teach everyone God's Word; being a Builder who helps rebuild cities; being a Farmer and helping to grow food for the people who will be living in the Millennium; being a Park Ranger who helps plant trees and care for wildlife; being a Zookeeper who introduces people to the new nature of animals; being a Singer who sings and teaches people songs about God.

In their Fundamentals journals, have your children draw a picture of themselves in the role or roles that they are excited about doing when they are resurrected.

BIBLE STORY: LAZARUS

In the Bible, we see stories of a few who were dead and resurrected back to physical life. One such person was Jesus Christ's friend, Lazarus. You can find the story of Lazarus in [John 11](#). As you read through the story of Lazarus with your child, ask some of the following questions:



- Why do you think Jesus **did not go right away** to his friend Lazarus? (verse 6)
- Why do you think that Jesus said Lazarus was **sleeping**? (verses 11-12)
- How do **Mary and Martha react** when they see Jesus after their brother has died? (verses 24-27 and 32)
- Could Jesus Christ have kept Lazarus from dying? Why do you think He **did not heal Lazarus** when he was sick?
- How did this **story end**? (verses 39-44)
- Do you think this is the **only resurrection** for Lazarus?

BONUS IDEAS

There are several scriptures in the Bible that reinforce this Fundamental, specifically the power given to Jesus Christ after His resurrection. Challenge your children (and yourself!) to find more scriptures to add to their **“Fundamentals Bible Study Journal.”** (Hint: You can start with **Acts 2:33** and use the marginal references in your Bible to find more.)

Find the **“3 Days and 3 Nights”** teaching tool from the EEI **Additional Resources** section. As you assemble the resource together, discuss the historical events that occurred during those days and the scriptures that prove them.

WRAP-UP ACTIVITY

To make this Fundamental’s scripture poster, have your child write out the scripture on either a cutout of a “great fish” or a garden tomb to add to your poster collection.

To end your study, have your child recite the memory scripture for a small audience, perhaps for family members at a special family gathering.

