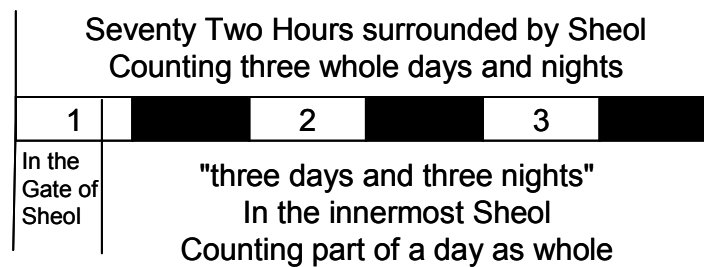


It is plain that one can be surrounded by “Sheol” by being under the mere threat of death. For if one is surrounded by something, then one is in it. In English the idiom “Hell on earth” describes this. So this can be regarded as “in the belly of Sheol.” That a distinction is made between outer and inner Sheol is made plain in this text, “For great is thy mercy toward me: and thou deliverest my soul from the lowest hell [מִשְׁאוֹל תַּחְתִּיָּה]” (Ps. 86:13; cf. Dt. 32:22). For other uses of Sheol that indicate a state near to death but less than death see Prov. 7:27, 9:18 [בְּעַמְקֵי שְׁאוֹל]; Is. 38:10; Amos 9:2; Job 17:13; 2Sam. 22:6. “So they and all that belonged to them went down alive into Sheol [שְׁאוֹלָה], and the earth closed up over them” (Num. 16:33). So we see that briefly they were alive in Sheol before it finally killed them.

We have the English idiom, “One foot in the grave” and further to consider, is that in the middle east graves were typically caves into which one could enter. So it is literally possible to enter into a grave [שְׁאוֹלָה], and then to come out alive again, and clearly being under the threat of death can be considered “in Sheol.” “War is hell” they say in English.

These considerations allow us to complete the “three days and three nights” to seventy-two hours:

Figure 50: A Seventy-Two Hour Interpretation



Yeshua began to suffer at dawn and he was raised from the dead at dawn. Now we must examine the meaning of Yeshua’s phrase “heart of the earth” (ἐν τῇ καρδίᾳ τῆς γῆς), translated into Greek for us by Matthew. This actual phrase does not occur all together in Jonah. The key words “heart” and “earth” occur separately.