

## **The Seventh Day Remains the Christian Sabbath!**

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# The Seventh Day is the Christian Sabbath!

## 1.0 Introduction

Most of Christendom observes the *secular* first-day of the week Sunday instead of the *biblical* seventh day of the week Sabbath. Why should this be seeing the seventh-day Sabbath commandment was never rescinded; and the New Testament (NT) shows how devout men and women continued observing the biblical Sabbath? This monograph examines this question and shows that the Christian Sabbath remains the biblical seventh day of the week; and that first-day of the week or Sunday observance was one of many departures from apostolic teaching.

Not long after the end of the Apostolic Church of God, Greek and Jewish theologians educated in the traditions of Hellenistic philosophies increasingly assumed leading roles in the early church. These men began questioning aspects of apostolic teaching from the perspective of their Hellenistic beliefs. As a result from 125 to 400 AD several doctrinal *changes* were advanced by rival factions. Some, disputes, like the contrary Arian and Trinity Godhead doctrines, were debated for centuries. This led to divisions between the then leading centres of 'Christian thought' at Rome, Alexandria, Carthage, Antioch, Ephesus and Constantinople. This was the age of major doctrinal changes; but changes based on human reason rather than biblical Truth.

Mainstream-Christendom justifies having replaced the *biblical* seventh-day Sabbath with the *secular* first-day of the week Sunday, on the grounds that *Sunday* commemorates Easter *Sunday*, the day on which Christendom claims the Resurrection took place. This monograph shows that this claim fails for the following reasons: (1) The Resurrection did not occur on Sunday because it had already occurred *before* Saturday sunset; (2) Good Friday-Easter Sunday observance denies Jesus His stated *one and only sign* of His Messiahship; (3) The secular Sunday is not the same as the biblical first-day of the week; (4) Sunday worship entered Christendom well after the apostolic church; (5) The Bible nowhere releases mankind from the seventh-day Sabbath Commandment; (6) Good Friday and Easter Sunday are not biblical observances; (7) Jewish and Gentile converts to the apostolic church continued observing the biblical seventh-day Sabbath.

Unless stated otherwise, this monograph quotes the King James Bible (KJV).

## 2.0 Comparing The Apostolic Church and Mainstream Christendom

On that first Pentecost following the Resurrection, the Apostle Peter became in Jerusalem Christianity's first teacher by declaring the gospel (Good news) of the coming Kingdom of God; for which God the Father had sent His Son Jesus as the Messiah; and whom they had killed. As a result of that first sermon some 3000 repented and were baptised (Acts 2:14-47).

An important lesson can be learned from this episode. In only one sermon Peter converted thousands of Jews. Peter could not have taught those Jews anything radically different from Judaism; save that Jesus was the Messiah and man's atoning Passover Lamb sacrifice, and that He would be King of kings in the coming Kingdom of God. (Acts 8:12; 14:22; Rom 5:10). This Peter did by pointing to the OT prophets, starting with Moses [Luke 24:25-27, Acts 2: 16-21; 25-28; 3:13; 22-23 (Cp. Deut 18:15-18!) and Acts 13:22-23 etc.]

Today's teaching of mainstream Christendom is so different from Judaism, that the apostles would not recognise it. Very few Jews are ever converted to Christianity, because the gap between the OT Scriptures and mainstream Christendom's theology is too great. Yet after His Resurrection, Jesus converted His Jewish disciples from the OT Scriptures (Luke 24:25-27; 44-45). Likewise the apostles taught both Jews and Gentiles from the OT Scriptures (Acts 17:11) because there were no other Scriptures.

These facts give us an insight into the extent mainstream Christendom's teaching has departed from apostolic teaching. For example, Paul would attend on the biblical Sabbath even with gentile converts Jewish synagogues; provided there was no hostility to Paul's teaching (Acts 13:14-16, 42; 18:4). Today this would be inconceivable for now the gap between mainstream Christendom and Judaism is far too great. A key question is: Did Judaism or did Christendom depart from their respective first century AD teachings? The answer is self-evident when we consider the enormity and extent of the doctrinal changes that overtook the post-apostolic church.

## 3.0 Mankind Soon Departs from God

Christendom would reject that the post-apostolic theologians had greatly departed from apostolic teaching. The doctrinal changes would be explained as resulting from progressive revelation and clarified by post-apostolic theologians. But the changes are so huge that this is tantamount to saying that the apostles had received only limited Truth and that the post-apostolic theologians had theorised from between their ears additional Truth. But

surely the apostles were given *THE* Truth by Jesus Himself (Luke 24:25-27; 44-45). Since then Christendom has progressively lost this.

Seeing the Bible teaches man soon depart from God's Truth, seeing Christendom has for many centuries been divided by doctrinal differences and seeing Post-apostolic church history shows there were centuries of ongoing doctrinal changes, why are we asked to accept that the doctrines taught by today's mainstream Christendom remain true to first century AD apostolic teaching?

The NT epistles reveal that the apostles had to oppose false teachers who crept in during their lifetime. The Apostle John wrote how Diotrephes had ousted him from the apostolic church (3 John 1:9-11)! So why does Christendom claim that over the past 1900 years no departures from apostolic teaching took place, when secular history shows otherwise? Harry R. Boer's book, *A Short History of the Early Church* (Eerdmans) records endless doctrinal disputes and changes from AD 125 to 400 and beyond. Although this book is an apology for Christendom's resulting doctrinal position; to the observant reader it is plain that by the fourth century AD Christendom's doctrinal position had become far removed from that of the Apostles. How could Christendom's doctrines have remained true to Apostolic teaching, seeing Christendom's current doctrines resulted from centuries of major doctrinal changes from Apostolic teaching?

In 323 AD Emperor Constantine made Christianity Rome's state religion. From then the state had a stake in Christianity and emperors intervened in church doctrinal divisions before these could lead to divisions of the empire. Emperors would exile theologians and were not backward in stating their doctrinal preferences. Such state pressure is reflected in the political correct decisions made at the councils of Nicea (325 AD) and Constantinople (381 AD). Later doctrinal changes led indeed to major church schisms. In 1054 AD the Eastern (Orthodox) church split from the Western church (Rome). During the sixteenth century the Western church split with the Protestant Reformation, and this split led to political divisions between Protestant and Catholic Europe. The Protestant churches have been fracturing ever since over church governance and doctrine.

#### **4.0 Impact of Doctrinal Changes on Greek and English NT Texts**

Some 5400 ancient Greek manuscripts of various sections of the NT are known to exist but not one apostolic autograph remains extant; all are much recopied documents. No two are quite identical. Some differences are due to genuine copyist errors; but others resulted from deliberate additions, deletions or alterations to reflect doctrines that were favoured at the time of copying. Translations into modern European languages, including the 1611 KJV translation, led to additional changes from the Greek manuscripts to support mainstream-Christendom's departures from apostolic teaching.

Bible translators altered here and there the NT text in support of doctrines they believe to be valid. But God has protected His Word because over the ages consistency has eluded those who altered God's Word! And so observant students of the NT will spot inconsistencies, when diligently searching for harmony from Genesis 1:1 to Revelation 22:21. To avoid Satan's deception (Rev 12:9), this must be done for all doctrines and traditions.

This monograph addresses some NT verses which were altered to support Christendom's Easter Sunday Resurrection; for this the following were consulted:

- *The New Greek-English Interlinear New Testament*, Editor, J. D. Douglas (Tyndale);
- *The NIV English-Greek New Testament, A Reverse Interlinear*, Editor, William D. Mounce (Zondervan) [a useful parsing guide to NT Greek text];
- *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., by Bruce M. Metzger (United Bible Societies);
- *The Greek New Testament*, 4<sup>th</sup> revised ed., edited by Barbara Aland etc. (United Bible Societies);
- *Novum Testamentum Graece*, 27<sup>th</sup> ed., by Nestle-Aland (Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft);
- *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance*, to the KJV (Baker Book House);
- *The Companion Bible*, based on Dr Ethelbert W. Bullinger extensive notes and 198 appendixes (Kregel).

#### **5.0 The Seven-Day Sabbath Cycle Has been Preserved**

Christendom has invented a number of justifications for not observing the biblical seventh day of the week Sabbath. The most popular being that Sunday observance commemorates an Easter Sunday Resurrection. This is usually combined with the justification that the Sabbath commandment is obeyed by observing one day in seven days; and so Sunday being acceptable. Another justification is the claim that with the passage of time we can no longer be certain of the precise seven-day weekly cycle.

God instituted the seven-day weekly Sabbath cycle at the completion of the (re-)Creation week (Gen 2:1-3). When God called the children of Israel out of Egypt, He taught them the seven-day Sabbath cycle by distributing the heavenly bread or manna in accordance with this cycle (details in Exodus 16). Israel received no manna on the seventh-day Sabbath; and this continued for the whole of Israel's forty-year sojourn in the wilderness.

Although over subsequent centuries Israel at times rejected this cycle, it was never permanently lost. For example, after the seventy-year Babylonian captivity, Nehemiah enforced strict Sabbath observance in Jerusalem (Neh 13:15-22).

The four NT gospel accounts show that Jesus attended synagogues on the seventh-day Sabbath. Through this Jesus endorsed the Jews' seventh-day Sabbath cycle. Since the Jews have maintained the seven-day weekly cycle ever since, *we know that God has preserved through them the true seventh-day weekly Sabbath cycle.*

The seven-day weekly cycle was not lost when in 1582 Pope Gregory requested that Roman Catholic nations change from the Julian calendar to the Gregorian one and drop ten days from the calendar to correct an accumulated error. To this end *Thursday* October 4 was followed by *Friday* October 15, 1582. Note that only the dates changed but that the sequence of the seven week days remained unchanged. This means that the seven-day weekly Sabbath cycle remained intact. This cycle remained similarly in tact when Protestant nations (e.g. Britain in 1752) and Eastern Orthodox nations (e.g. Greece in 1920) adopted the Gregorian calendar.

## **6.0 Why Did Christendom Reject God's Sanctified Sabbaths, Holy Days and Feasts?**

The short answer is expediency and political correctness. Over the centuries Rome had savagely persecuted Christians and so when early in the fourth century AD, Emperor Constantine made Christianity the state religion of Rome, many were greatly relieved and chose to ignore there were strings attached. Emperor Constantine and his successors did not hesitate intervening in doctrinal disputes. Emperors knew that not all their subjects welcomed the new state religion; and so were keen that Christendom adapted existing pagan days and festivals to the Christian calendar. Since the Jews had become a stench in the nostrils of Rome after their revolts of 66-70 and 132-135 AD; many in Christendom sought to distance themselves from the Jews, with whom they were often confused through observing the Sabbath and other appointed days. Many in Christendom found it convenient to stop 'Judaizing' and return to more socially acceptable days and which were now 'sanitised' in Christendom.

It is not surprising that Christendom's clergy became increasingly secularly oriented, and for the sake of peace and continued state support, were prepared to replace the biblical seventh-day Sabbath, the Passover, the seven holy days and three festivals; with pagan days, including: the secular Sunday, Good Friday, Easter and the feast of Saturnalia (later known as Christmas). Church services too adopted aspects of Greco-Roman pagan worship and by the end of the fourth century AD Christendom no longer resembled the first-century Apostolic church. In time Christendom began persecuting Sabbatarian Christians and even now views them as cultic.

## **7.0 Some Important Sacred Calendar Facts**

The *Introduction* differentiated between the *biblical* seventh-day Sabbath and the *secular* first-day Sunday. Bible dates are given in terms of the sacred (Jewish) calendar, but Christendom invariably interprets these in terms of the secular Roman (Julian) calendar, which since 1582 became today's secular Gregorian calendar.

One of the more awkward differences is that biblical days run from sunset to sunset (Gen 1:5, 8, 13, 19, 23, 31; Lev 23:32); whereas secular days run from midnight to midnight. So the biblical Sabbath is from Friday sunset to Saturday sunset; but Christendom's Sunday is from Saturday midnight to Sunday midnight. It is important for the reader to be aware of this difference and to this end some examples will be given.

The biblical seventh day of the week Sabbath, although often identified as the secular Saturday, actually runs from Friday sunset to Saturday sunset. *The biblical Sabbath is not the secular Saturday!* Likewise the biblical first-day of the week is nominally Sunday but runs from Saturday sunset to Sunday sunset. The fourth day of the biblical week runs from Tuesday sunset to Wednesday sunset; and although usually thought of as being nominally Wednesday, it is not identical with Wednesday. Likewise for all seven weekdays.

In particular most in Christendom fail to understand that biblically speaking, the secular first-day of the week Sunday is neither fish nor fowl. The reason being that Saturday evening, which is already the biblical first-day of the week, is excluded from the secular Sunday; and Sunday evening, which is already part of the biblical second day of the week, is included with the secular first-day of the week. The 24-hour biblical day is on average six hours ahead of the corresponding 24-hour secular day.

It is also not widely recognised that the biblical week starts and ends at Saturday sunset, and so is on average six hours ahead of the secular week, for this starts and ends at Saturday midnight.

This monograph refers exclusively to God's or the sacred or biblical calendar rather than the Jewish one. The biblical New Year occurs around the vernal equinox (start of northern Spring) and is the first day of the biblical first month called *Abib*, but also known as *Nisan*. The Jewish New Year occurs on the first day of the biblical seventh month called *Ethanim* but is usually known as *Tisri*. So the Jews observe *Rosh Hashanah* (Hebrew: Beginning of the year), precisely six biblical months after God decreed the year should begin (Exod 12:1; 13:4). Both calendars share the seven months in which occur God's appointed Passover, seven holy days and three feasts; only God's calendar begins with those seven months, but the Jewish calendar ends with the first six and begins with the seventh of those seven months. One of many examples that sooner or later all of mankind will depart from God's Way and Truth.

The OT book of Leviticus in chapter 23 summarises God's appointed weekly Sabbath, the Passover day, the seven holy days and three festivals. Holy days are Sabbaths which recur annually. On these too no work may be done and they too must be dedicated to God. Holy days are also known as 'annual Sabbaths' or 'high days' (John 20:31b). The day before a weekly Sabbath or holy day is known as the *Preparation* day (Luke 23:54), for on this day all preparations for the Sabbath or holy day are to be made.

Leviticus 23:5-7 shows that the fourteenth day of the first month of the sacred year is the Passover day (Abib 14). Also that this day is immediately followed by the seven-day *Feast of Unleavened Bread*, which runs from Abib 15 to 21. The first day of this feast, Abib 15, is a 'holy day' or 'annual Sabbath'; and as a result the Passover day, Abib 14, is the Preparation day to this holy day.

If the reader were to examine the Jewish calendar, it will be helpful knowing that the Jews moved the Passover day from Abib 14 to Abib 15 and now prefer to call the associated feast *Passover* rather than by its biblical name, *Unleavened Bread* (Lev 23:6) – yet another example that sooner or later man departs from God's Way and Truth.

For this monograph the following biblical calendar facts are pertinent:

- Days begin and end at sunset, and so precede secular days on average by six hours,
- The weekly Sabbath is the 7<sup>th</sup>-day of the week (Friday sunset to Saturday sunset),
- Biblical weeks begin and end at Saturday sunset,
- *Abib* is the first month of the biblical year, but is also known as *Nisan*,
- Abib 14 is the biblical (not Jewish!) Passover day, and is *not* a holy day,
- Abib 15 is the annual Sabbath (holy day) beginning the 7-day Feast of Unleavened Bread (Abib 15-21),
- Holy days are *annual* Sabbaths, and must be observed similarly to *weekly* Sabbaths,
- The day preceding a *weekly* or *annual* Sabbath is its Preparation day (Luke 23:54),
- The Abib 14 Passover day is the Preparation day for the Abib 15 annual Sabbath,
- The Crucifixion was on Abib 14 and was the 4<sup>th</sup>-day of the week (Tuesday sunset to Wednesday sunset).

## **8.0 Sunday Does Not Commemorate the Resurrection!**

Christendom defends the adoption of the secular first-day of the week Sunday by claiming this commemorates the most important event in history, the Resurrection. Yet the Bible shows that the Resurrection did not take place before dawn on Easter Sunday as Christendom claims, but just before Saturday sunset, which was some twelve hours earlier!

Let us examine Matthew 28:1, which is one of the verses Christendom claims for their pre-dawn Sunday Resurrection and so as justification for replacing the biblical seventh-day Sabbath with the secular first-day of the week Sunday; albeit without God's endorsement.

This verse opens the passage Matthew 28:1-9, in which we see Mary Magdalene and the other Mary come to the tomb and who are then shown that the tomb was *already* empty! They had seen Jesus buried there on the Crucifixion day but now they witnessed the 'angel of God' rolling away the closing stone and showing them that the tomb was already empty (verse 6). Therefore, seeing Jesus had already risen, the time of verse 1 was already *AFTER* the Resurrection. We now need to determine what the time of verse 1 was.

Mat 28: 1. In the end of the sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the sepulchre.

The time was just *BEFORE* the end of the biblical Sabbath, that is just *BEFORE* Saturday sunset, as plainly implied by the phrases: “In the end of the sabbath” and “as it began dawn toward the first *day* of the week”. This time is the instant separating one biblical week from the next. This is the sunset of the weekly seventh-day Sabbath or the secular Saturday sunset. This verse, whose time follows Jesus’ actual Resurrection, has nothing whatever to do with an Easter Sunday pre-dawn event.

It will now be confirmed from Luke 23:54 that Matthew 28:1 was indeed set just before Saturday sunset. The Matthew 28:1 verbal phrase “began to dawn” is the KJV rendering of the Greek verb ‘epiphōskō’. This verb’s root means: ‘to dawn, let shine’; but like the English verb ‘to dawn’, ‘epiphōskō’ too has a wider range of meanings as evidenced by Luke 23:54, where the KJV renders ‘epiphōskō’ ‘drew on’:

Luke 23:54. And that day was the preparation, and the sabbath drew on.

The time of Luke 23:54 is also near the very end of the day, that is just before sunset. But that day was the Crucifixion day and, as the next verse shows, this was the time the women witnessed Jesus’ Burial.

Luke 23:55. And the women also, which came with him from Galilee, followed after, and beheld the sepulchre, and how his body was laid.

Jesus’ Burial was just before sunset on the Crucifixion or Passover day. But in verse 54 the Greek verb ‘epiphōskō’ is translated ‘drew on’ rather than ‘began to dawn’ as in Matthew 28:1. *But in both cases the Greek conveys the idea of one day ending as the next day approaches.* In Matthew 28:1 it is the weekly Sabbath which ends and the first-day of the week which approaches; but in Luke 23:54, it is the Passover (Crucifixion) day which ends and a Sabbath which approaches. But which Sabbath? It is not the weekly Sabbath of Matthew 28:1 but a special or ‘annual Sabbath’, or ‘holy day’ or ‘high day’ as John 19:31 calls it.

It will become clear from the next section, *The Sign of Jonah (Jonas)*, that during the Crucifixion week there were two Sabbaths, the first being the ‘annual Sabbath’ or ‘holy day’ of Abib 15, and the other the seventh day weekly Sabbath of Abib 17.

But for now the important thing to understand is that the Greek verb ‘epiphōskō’ in both Matthew 28:1 and Luke 23:54 describes an imminent ‘drawing near’ of the next day at sunset. This has nothing to do with a pre-sunrise or pre-‘dawn’ Resurrection as Christendom wrongly claims for Matthew 28:1.

Seeing the time of Matthew 28:1 was just before sunset Saturday, and at which time the seventh-day weekly Sabbath was about to end and the first day of the new biblical week was about to start: and seeing the sequel of the passage Matthew 28:1-9 reveals that before this Jesus had already been raised from the sealed tomb (verse 6): it is plain that Jesus rose not before dawn on Easter Sunday, but before sunset on Saturday.

## **9.0 The Sign of Jonah (Jonas)**

Jesus gave only one sign that He was the Messiah; but this Christendom has forgotten! The Pharisees had challenged Jesus to give them a sign that He was the Messiah (Hebrew for ‘Anointed One’, which in Greek is ‘Christ’). Jesus said He would give them only one sign, the sign of the OT Prophet Jonah (NT Jonas), namely that as the prophet Jonah had been *3 days and 3 nights* in the belly of the especially created big fish (Jonah 1:17), so He would be *3 days and 3 nights* in the grave (Matt 12:40).

Christendom teaches that Jesus was in the grave from just before sunset of Good Friday till just before dawn of Easter Sunday. But the 3 days and 3 nights of the Sign of Jonah will not fit that time for only *1 day and 2 nights* separate Good Friday sunset and Easter Sunday sunrise. *Therefore Christendom, through adopting the unbiblical Good Friday – Easter Sunday observance, has denied Jesus His Messiahship!*

Because Jesus is man’s Passover Lamb (John 1:29; 1 Cor 5:7; Rev 21:22), He would have been slain on the same day as was the Exodus Passover lamb in Egypt, that is on the Abib 14 Passover day. So the Crucifixion was not on Good Friday but on the Abib 14 Passover day. His Burial was just before sunset of the Abib 14 Passover day. His Resurrection would, in accordance with the Sign of Jonah, have been 3 days and 3 nights after his Burial.

In the previous section it was shown that the Resurrection had occurred just before sunset Saturday; so working back from this and applying the Sign of Jonah, Jesus’ Burial must have been 3 days and 3 nights before the Resurrection, and so His Burial must have been just before sunset Wednesday. That must have been the Abib 14

Passover day. So for the Crucifixion year, the Abib 14 Passover day was on the fourth day of the week (Tuesday sunset to Wednesday sunset). It so happens that the Jewish calendar permits Abib 14 to be on the fourth day of the week, the other possible days for Abib 14 are the second, sixth and seventh days of the week.

In summary: the Burial was just before sunset of Wednesday, the Abib 14 Passover; and the Resurrection was just before sunset of Saturday, the Abib 17 weekly Sabbath. This shows that mainstream Christendom's non-biblical Good Friday and Easter Sunday is errant nonsense.

Because this will be revisited in the section *Week Days and Millennial Days*, it needs to be reiterated that Jesus died towards the end of the fourth day of the biblical week.

REMARK: The Crucifixion and Burial were on the fourth day of the week, which was the Abib 14 Passover day. The following day, Abib 15, was a holy day or annual Sabbath or high day. *As a result the Crucifixion week (Abib 11 to 17) contained two Sabbaths.* The first was the Abib 15 holy day Sabbath, and which was on the fifth day of the week (nominally Thursday). The second was the Abib 17 weekly Sabbath, and which was of course the seventh day of the week.

NOTE: Mainstream Christendom through their non-biblical Good Friday – Easter Sunday tradition has failed to discern there were two sabbaths in the Crucifixion week. The 'scholarly' atheist *Higher Critics* of the Bible delight in pointing to there being several discrepancies between the accounts given by Matthew, Mark, Luke and John for the arrest, trials, crucifixion, burial and resurrection of Jesus, and the various tomb visits. Christendom's theologians are unable to answer these claims due to their Good Friday – Easter-Sunday confusion. To answer the *Higher Critics* we need to reject the traditions of the post-apostolic *church fathers* and return to God's literal Word of Truth as this monograph shows. But it is man's tradition to worship man's tradition, rather than worship God in spirit and truth (John 4:23)!

### **10.0 Comparing Mark 16:1-3, 6; Luke 24:1-3; John 20:1 and Mark 16:9 with Matthew 28:1**

Let us now examine Mark 16:1-3, 6; Luke 24:1-3; John 20:1 and Mark 16:9; for these passages appear to contradict the conclusion drawn from Matthew 28:1, that the Resurrection was *before* Saturday sunset. These passages are quoted next, but were edited by placing square brackets [ ] around words which do not occur in the Greek manuscripts, and by placing round brackets ( ) around words which are not in some ancient manuscripts.

- Mark 16:1. And when the sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome, had bought sweet spices, that they might come and anoint him.”
2. And very early in [the morning] the first [day] of the week, they came unto the sepulchre (at the rising of the sun).”
  3. And they said among themselves, Who shall roll us away the stone from the door of the sepulchre?”
  6. And he saith unto them, ‘Be not affrighted: Ye seek Jesus of Nazareth, Which was crucified: He is risen; He is not here: behold the place where they laid him...’ ”
- Luke 24:1. Now upon the first [day] of the week, very early in the morning, they came unto the sepulchre, bringing the spices which they had prepared, and certain others with them.”
2. And they found the stone rolled away from the sepulchre.”
  3. And they entered in, and found not the body of the Lord Jesus.”
- John 20:1. The first [day] of the week cometh Mary Magdalene early, when it was yet dark, unto the sepulchre, and seeth the stone taken away from the sepulchre.”
- Mark 16:9. Now when [Jesus] was risen early the first [day] of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene,...

Save for Mark 16:9 these passages appear to describe Sunday pre-dawn tomb visits. That these passages show the tomb was empty before Sunday sunrise is consistent with our earlier conclusion drawn from Matthew 28:1 and Luke 23:54-55, that the Resurrection took place even before sunset Saturday. So these passages do not prove an Easter Sunday Resurrection as is widely assumed. These dawn visits no doubt resulted from Mary Magdalene reporting Saturday evening that she had seen an empty tomb shortly after Saturday sunset. This monograph will leave it there, save for Mark 16:9 which is examined in detail next; because the KJV, and especially modern renderings of this verse, quite falsely assert the Resurrection was early on the first day of the week.

### **11.0 Mark 16:9 Requires Exegesis not Eisegesis!**

The translations of Mark 16:9 is an example that man must not inject his uninspired thoughts into God's Word of Truth, rather he should with the deepest respect (Ps 111:10) extract from there God's inspiring thoughts. Alas

theologians and Bible translators frequently practise *eisegesis*<sup>1</sup> rather than *exegesis*, when interpreting the Bible. That is they inject their thoughts into the Bible to promote man's doctrinal traditions. This section shows that KJV translation of Mark 16:9, as well as other translations, are prime examples of misapplied *eisegesis*.

Below are given four translations of Mark 16:9: (1) the King James (KJV), (2) the Revised Standard (RSV), (3) the New King James (NKJV), and (4) the New International Version (NIV); and again these were edited by placing square brackets [ ] around words which do not occur in the Greek text.:

- KJV. Now when [Jesus] was risen early the first [day] of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene,...
- RSV. Now when [he] rose early on the first [day] of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene...
- NKJV. Now when [he] rose early on the first [day] of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene...
- NIV. When [Jesus] rose early on the first [day] of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene,...

Next follow a transliteration of the Mark 16:9 Greek text, and aligned to this, a literal translation:

Greek.	Anastas	de	prōi	prōtē	sabbatou	ephanē	prōton	Maria	tē	Magdalēnē
Literal.	Having	risen	but	early	on the first [day]	of the week	[He]	appeared	first	to Mary Magdalene

The key to correct exegesis of Mark 16:9 is the Greek participle 'anastas'. It will be shown that the KJV, RSV, NKJV and NIV all mistranslated this participle; and apparently to promote an Easter Sunday Resurrection.

Greek participles have both verbal and adjectival attributes and either qualify a noun or pronoun and/or the principal verb. Here 'anastas' has the following *verbal* and *adjectival* attributes: (1) *aorist* tense, (2) *active* voice, (3) *masculine* gender, (4) *singular* number, (5) *nominative (subject)* case.

The KJV, RSV, NKJV and NIV all incorrectly translated this participle by (a) introducing a subject that is not present in the Greek ('Jesus', 'He'); and (b) turning this participle into a verb ('was risen' or 'rose') but which it is not in the Greek. Note especially that 'Jesus' or 'He' do not occur in the Greek; and so the phrases "Jesus was risen early on the first day..." or "He rose early on the first day..." are constructions rather than translations.

Although it is not possible to reflect in English all five attributes of a Greek participle, it is possible to do far better than the KJV and the other translators did. As is shown it is possible to relate the participle's *masculine* gender, *nominative* (subject) case and *aorist* tense to the associated subject noun and verb. In Greek a *masculine* participle can only qualify a *masculine* noun and never a *feminine* or *neuter* noun.

Let us first consider the *masculine* gender of the participle 'anastas'. This can not qualify the noun 'day' as the KJV and the other translations attempt, because the Greek noun for 'day', 'hēmera', has *feminine* gender. Nor can it qualify the Greek noun for 'week', 'sabbatou', because this has *neuter* gender. The *masculine* Greek participle 'anastas' can qualify *only* the Greek *masculine* pronoun 'he', which is the subject of the verb 'appeared', and represents the unexpressed (understood) *masculine* proper noun 'Iēsous' (Jesus).

The case of 'anastas' is nominative and so relates to the subject of the verb 'appeared'<sup>2</sup>. Therefore the *masculine* participle 'anastas' relates to the *masculine* pronoun 'he', which is the subject (Jesus) of the verb 'appeared'. The nouns 'day' and 'week' do not relate to this role.

The *aorist* tense of the participle 'anastas' reflects an 'unlimited' or *ongoing state* as implied by the term 'aorist'<sup>3</sup>. Greek aorist participles usually refer back to an action which *precedes* that of the main verb (appeared), and so 'anastas' could support a resurrection that preceded an early-on-the-first-day-of-the-week manifestation.

More to the point, the *ongoing state* of 'being resurrected' can not pertain to 'the first-day of the week'; because even had the Resurrection taken place on that day, it would have been a *momentary* event and not a still *ongoing* one. In that case a *perfect* rather than an *aorist* tense participle would have been appropriate. Only for Jesus' is being resurrected an *ongoing state*. It was this when He first appeared to Mary Magdalene; and later when He chided the doubting Thomas (John 20:26-29), and as Revelation 1:5, 18 and 5:6 show, even for ever!

It has now been shown that the Greek participle 'anastas' can *not* relate to either 'day' or 'week', that therefore Mark 16:9 does not support an Easter Sunday Resurrection as the KJV and especially more modern Versions

<sup>1</sup> *Eisegesis* = lit. *lead into* and *exegesis* = lit. *lead out*; from Greek *eis* = into, *ex/ek* = out and *ēgeomai* = lead/bring.

<sup>2</sup> Although the Greek text does not explicitly state this subject, the context makes it clear that implied is 'he' for Jesus.

<sup>3</sup> Aorist = unlimited from Greek *a* (= not) + *horizō* (to limit), Cp. Horizon.

convey. With that vanishes any justification for Christendom's Sunday observance in place of the commanded biblical seventh-day of the week Sabbath!

NOTE: The passage Matthew 28:1-9 concludes with Jesus appearing to Mary Magdalene (verse 9). From the context of this passage, it is plain this was His first manifestation. So Matthew 28:9 and Mark 16:9 both describe His first manifestation to Mary Magdalene. As explained earlier, the time of Matthew 28:1 was just before Saturday sunset. Also from Matthew 28:6 (empty tomb) we concluded that the Resurrection had occurred before Saturday sunset. And so Jesus' first manifestation to Mary Magdalene, occurred after sunset or early Saturday evening. This is supported by the Mark 16:9 phrase, '*early on the first [day] of the week*'! In other words, the time of Mark 16:9 is some twelve hours before Christendom's claim of Easter Sunday dawn.

REMARK: Mark 16:9 opens the so-called longer ending of Mark comprising verses 9-20. This longer ending is absent from the earliest manuscripts and so raises doubts about its validity, but which may be allayed by the closing verse of John's gospel. Although the longer ending has been for many centuries part of mainstream Christendom's NT tradition, as shown, it fails to support Christendom's Easter Sunday Resurrection tradition!

## **12.0 Not Only the Seventh-day Sabbath but All God's Sanctified Days Were Rejected!**

Leviticus 23 summarises all God's appointed and sanctified days and declares these are to be observed in perpetuity (e.g. Lev 23:41). These days are the weekly Sabbath, the Passover, the seven holy days or annual Sabbaths and the three festivals [*Unleavened Bread*, *Firstfruits* or *Feast of Weeks* (NT *Pentecost*) and *Tabernacles* or *Ingathering*]. These days jointly form a blueprint of God's plan for man's salvation. For example, Passover is the day on which Israel killed the Passover lamb in Egypt, marked their doors with its blood, so that the Angel of Death would *pass over* their dwellings (Exod 12:13). That observance is also a type of mankind's Passover Lamb, Jesus, being killed on the Passover Day. His shed blood must be similarly applied, albeit symbolically, by Christians for the remission of sins (Mat 26:28; Rom 5:10; Heb 9:20-22). All feasts and holy days have a *salvation significant* meaning. God calls these feasts, *His feasts* (Lev 23:2, 4, 37, 44); *they are not man's to reject!*

God has not only designed His special days to annually depict His plan for man's salvation; but God causes special events to take place on these days. For example, on the day of Pentecost that followed the Resurrection, the disciples received God's holy spirit. They had been instructed to stay for this in Jerusalem (Acts 1:4). Had they not observed God's sanctified Pentecost day, they would not have received God's holy spirit. *Christendom no longer observes the true Pentecost!* Likewise Christendom no longer observes Passover, or any of God's appointed days and feasts.

Christendom rejected all God's appointed and sanctified days; but which are the key to understanding eschatology. Not surprisingly, Christendom no longer understands what salvation entails! Christendom teaches a false *Heaven and Hell* eschatology based on Dante's *Divine Comedy*. In this eschatology *the wages of sin is eternal life*, albeit in an ever-burning non-consuming Hell fire! In contrast the Bible teaches that the wages of sin is death (Rom 6:23 and Ezek 18:4, 20). Not eternal life in Hell but eternal death.

Christendom replaced God's beautifully designed and sanctified days with pagan ones. One such pagan feast was Easter. It was originally the feast of Ishtar, the multi-breasted pagan fertility goddess, whose fertility symbols of eggs and Bunny rabbits remain to this day. Sunday was the day dedicated to the Sun god; and Christmas was the feast of Saturnalia. None of these days are mentioned anywhere in the Bible.

Zechariah chapter 14 is a yet future prophecy of God taking over from mankind. The passage Zechariah 14:16-19 shows that in the yet future Kingdom of God, He will insist that even gentile nations, such as Egypt, observe His Feast of Tabernacles!

Therefore the Bible reveals that God insisted His sanctified days be observed during OT times; and by both Jews and Gentiles during the Apostolic church; and that God will insist that even Gentiles observe His sanctified days in His yet future Kingdom. *So which days should now be observed by today's Post-apostolic church?* Surely it can only be God's sanctified ones, and which He commands throughout the Bible, and which He has never repealed! But no, Christendom claims to have received special dispensation to observe unbiblical pagan days. When pressed to show this, they will hold their peace (Cp. Mark 3:4-5!), for they received no dispensation.

### 13.0 Week Days and Millennial Days

God gave mankind the seven-day weekly cycle but there is much more to this.

The Sabbath commandment tells man not just to observe the seventh-day Sabbath but *also* to *work* on the first six days of the week (Exod 20:8-11). It is not generally understood that there are two separate aspects to the Sabbath commandment. Man is to work for six days and rest and be in spirit with God on the seventh day. Since the Jews have preserved God's seven-day weekly cycle, we know precisely when is the first-day and when is the seventh-day of the biblical week; and so Christendom has no excuse for failing to obey the Sabbath commandment.

Man is to work on the first, second, third, fourth, fifth and sixth day of the biblical week; but rest on the seventh day and devote that day to God. This pattern was set by God in Genesis 1:1–2:2, when He created for six days and rested on the seventh day. The problem with Christendom's first-day-of-the-week observance is that it is back to front. God requires that man begins work on the first day of the week and rests on the seventh; but Christendom has decided to rest on the first day of the week and work on the sanctified seventh day. Sooner or later man will depart from God's Way and Truth.

There is yet another aspect to God's seven-day week. Peter declares that to God *a day is as a thousand years and a thousand years as a day* (2 Pet 3:8). This points to the principle of a biblical millennial Day. To illustrate this Day let us examine a warning God gave Adam but *apparently* did not carry out when Adam transgressed. God commanded the man not to partake of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, the penalty of transgression being death that very day (Gen 2:17).

When Adam transgressed he must have done so on a particular week day. But he did not die that week day because after this day he begot Cain, then Abel (Gen 4:1-2) and at age 130 he begot Seth and died aged 930 (Gen 5:3-5). Since Adam did not die the very week day he transgressed as God had said, we may ask: Was God inconsistent? or Is the Bible in error? The answer to both questions is, No! Adam did not live a full millennial Day for he died aged 930! Peter taught that to God a Day is like a thousand years; and a thousand years is like a Day; and so Adam died the very millennial Day he transgressed.

God has given mankind not only a seven-day week, but also a seven-millennial-Day Week of 7000 years. During that Week mankind has been granted the first six millennial Days (6000 years) to 'labour' Eve's chosen way. Man will be subject to God's Kingdom on this Earth during the seventh or Sabbatical millennial Day (Cp. Rev. 20:1-7).

Although the seven-day millennial Week is not explicitly stated in the Bible, it is discernible from its dual the seven-day week. The Bible contains many examples of dual events, where the first is the lesser and the second the greater. This monograph has already pointed to the dual Passover events; the first in Egypt and the second the Crucifixion. Another and closely related dual concerns Abraham (= 'Father of a multitude') who offered his miraculously-born son Isaac (Gen 22:1-14); and God the Father (Heb for father is Ab!) offering His miraculously-born Son Jesus. Likewise the seven-day week and the seven-millennial-Day Week are dual concepts.

Revelation chapter 20 mentions the 1000 years when the saints (resurrected true Church of God) will rule under Jesus this Earth. That millennium will be the Sabbatical or seventh-millennial-Day because it follows the six-millennial Days allotted to mankind.

It is plain from Biblical and secular chronology that from Eden to Christ were some four millennial-Days (4000 years). Since Jesus died near the close of the fourth day of the week [see section, *The Sign of Jonah (Jonas)*], by the implied duality, this is likely to have occurred towards the close of the fourth-millennial Day of the millennial Week. That is before the end of the year 4000 Anno Mundi.

Since that time nearly two millennial-Days (2000 years) have passed. So now man has almost completed his allotted six millennial Days (6000 years). That mankind is approaching the end of man's allotted six millennial Days is also apparent from the almost universal turning away from God, the sharp increase in weapons of mass destruction and the worsening world political situation.

Revelation 20:5a shows that the rest of the dead will not live until this (Sabbatical) Millennium is over. Then will begin the second-millennial Week. Jesus is Lord of the Sabbath (Mat 12:8) and He will be King of kings starting with the coming Sabbatical seventh-millennial Day. But Satan, who on the *first* millennial Day of the first millennial Week appeared to mankind in Eden, will again appear to mankind on the *first* millennial Day of the second millennial Week (Rev 20:7)!

Knowledge of the Sabbath is a prerequisite for understanding the Bible.

## **14.0 Did the NT Church Hold First-day of the Week Church Services?**

Sunday does not occur in the NT but the phrase '*first day of the week*' occurs eight times in the KJV NT, namely: Matthew 28:1; Mark 16:2, 9; Luke 24:1, John 20:1, 19, Acts 20:7, 1 Cor 16:2. The first five instances plainly were not church services; but many in Christendom doggedly adhere to their church tradition and claim that Acts 20:7 and 1 Cor 16:2 point to first-day of the week (Sunday) observances. Let us examine these claims in turn.

Act 20: 7. And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight.

This concerns a Saturday evening meal after which Paul spoke till midnight; and as the sequel shows even till sunrise Sunday morning. All that took place on the first day of the biblical week, which starts with the Saturday sunset. The passage that follows this verse shows that the next day ('on the morrow', i.e. daylight) Paul and party travelled from Troas to Assos, but with Paul walking. Had Paul deemed Sunday to be the NT Sabbath, then he would not have walked the 20 miles (32 kms) from Troas to Assos, for that would have taken him all day, plainly far in excess of a 'Sabbath' walk.

That Troas Saturday evening gathering must have followed their biblical seventh-day Sabbath observance; and so was a continuation of their fellowship, during which they shared a meal with Paul and listened to him explain further the good news of God's coming Kingdom. Acts 20:7 is no evidence at all that Paul had changed from Sabbath to Sunday observance.

Now the other verse sometimes cited in support of Sunday service:

1 Cor 16:2. Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come.

Paul did not here urge a Sunday service but asked the Corinthians to have ready for collection gifts for the saints in Jerusalem (see verse 3). These gifts would undoubtedly have included goods and so the collection would require too much effort for the seventh-day Sabbath. That is why Paul instructs it be done on the first-day of the week. 1 Corinthians 16:2 is not a declaration for Sunday observance, but rather for Sunday work!

That Paul had not changed from the biblical seventh-day Sabbath to the first-day of the week can be seen also elsewhere in the NT record. For example, how he arranged even with Gentiles to meet on the Sabbath (Acts 13:42, 44; 16:13; 17:2; 18:4). There is no NT record of Paul urging Gentiles to change from Sabbath to Sunday worship.

## **15.0 The Sabbath is a Perpetual Covenant, a Sign, Even a Ring!**

God spoke to Moses in the passage Exodus 31:12-17 declaring the Sabbath would be as a sign between Himself and His people Israel (v. 13), even a *perpetual* covenant to be observed throughout *all their generations* (v. 16). In verse 17 God repeated that the Sabbath is to be as a sign between Him and His people and linked the Sabbath to His Creation. That Israel too should work for six days but rest on the seventh day of the week.

God declares Himself to be married to Israel, to be Her Husband (Jer 3:14; 31:32; Isa 54:5). The so-called Old (marriage) Covenant had been sealed with Israel at Mt Sinai. Israel became more than God's people, she became His Wife and through whom He later begot His Son Jesus.

The Sabbath is like a *wedding ring* (sign) on the finger of God's Wife! But God's Wife Israel was unfaithful for she repeatedly committed spiritual adultery with pagan gods. Not surprisingly Israel cast away her Sabbath wedding ring. Besides she had not wished to listen to her Husband (Exod 20:19, Deut 18:15-18). This remained Israel's attitude, and eventually most of God's Wife (the northern 10-tribe *House of Israel* – the Israelite nations) went into their Assyrian captivity; leaving only the 3-tribe southern *House of Judah* (Jews) in the Promised Land.

God's Son, Jesus, is betrothed to be married to the Church of God under the yet future New (marriage) Covenant (Rev 19:7; 21:9). The Bible is the book of two marriage covenants. Jesus' betrothed, the Church of God, must also wear the sign of being God's chosen (Elect) people. *That can only be the seventh-day Sabbath sign or ring.* But most of Christendom rejected this ring and only a small remnant retained this ring. Over the last two millennial Days, God's true church has remained a small church (e.g. Mat 5:48; 7:14; 22:14). The Bride of Christ or the true church of God, is not ashamed to wear her Sabbath ring!

## **16.0 Converted Jews Must Join a Sabbatarian Christian Church**

Since the Sabbath was made a perpetual covenant for all generations of Israel, it follows that when a Jew is converted to Christianity, he remains under that *perpetual* Sabbath covenant. It was not a temporary OT covenant because Jesus, His disciples and the devout NT men and women, including Gentiles, all abided by the Sabbath covenant.

When a Jew is converted to Christianity, he remains bound to the perpetual Sabbath covenant of his forefathers, because this was for all their generations. Israel's perpetual Sabbath covenant was never repealed and remains in force for all generations of Israel. *Seeing converted Jews can only join a Sabbath-observing Christian church; God's true church must be Sabbath-observing*, for else it would be divided and could not be God's true church.

## **17.0 The Seventh-Day Sabbath Commandment is a Test Commandment**

Few people break all commandments weekly but billions weekly break the Sabbath Commandment. The Sabbath commandment is part of the opening bracket of four commandments concerning man's relationship with God. Is it not amazing that millions in Christendom are unconcerned that they weekly break this fundamental biblical law? A law Jesus, His disciples and the devout NT men and women all observed!

The Sabbath is special. It is the day, God sanctified and which day God expects us to spend as 'quality time' in the spirit with Him. God sanctified the Sabbath day (Gen 2:2-3). It commemorates our creation when God gave us the breath of life. The Sabbath is a sanctified or holy 24-hour time slot (Exod 20:8). When God met Moses at the burning bush, God instructed Moses to take off his shoes because the ground he stood on was holy due to God's presence there (Exod 3:5). Likewise man may not tread on the sanctified (holy) seventh-day Sabbath in which too is God's presence.

The Sabbath is a test commandment. It is impossible to observe God's seventh-day Sabbath and not have this noticed sooner or later by the world. The Sabbath tests us whether we really put God before all else, or whether our attitude is that God must fit in where we find this convenient or socially acceptable. The Sabbath regularly tests our attitude towards God. Do we deeply respect, care for and love God above all else? Are we truly grateful for the life He gave us? Are we truly enthusiastic for His Plan for His Family; a Family in which we have the potential to be 'born again' as His literal children? Do we place Him before all else? Do we gladly honour our heavenly Parent? Or does God come after family, after work, after business, after hobbies and after our interests?

## **18.0 Conclusion**

There is no evidence in the Bible that the apostolic church departed from God's commanded seventh-day Sabbath. There is also no evidence in the Bible that God agreed to Christendom replacing His sanctified and carefully planned seventh-day Sabbath, Passover, seven holy days and three feasts with man-made pagan days. The seventh day of the week Sabbath commandment, along with all other commandments still stand (Mat 5:17-19; 1 John 3:4; Rev 14:12). No dispensation was given to discard God's beautifully meaningful sanctified days and feasts. In fact the Bible shows that God will insist that in His yet future Kingdom, even Gentiles shall observe His sanctified days and feasts (Zech 14:16-19). There is no record of Paul or any of the apostles urging Gentiles to observe Sunday. Rather the Bible shows that our Lord Jesus, His apostles, the devout NT men and women continued observing the biblically commanded seventh-day Sabbath, the Passover, the seven holy days and the three feasts. Secular church history shows that Christendom departed on many doctrines from the apostolic teaching, including the seventh-day Sabbath. God's true church observes the biblical seventh-day Sabbath and holy days and feasts.

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