



The Road to Emmaus - Proof to Support Easter Sunday-NOT!

By Joseph F. Dumond

The Road to Emmaus

Here is the email that has prompted this week's News Letter. If you have a question on something, do let us know. We will try to find an answer if there is one.

Dear Joseph, I have a question that I hope you can clear up for me. I love your teachings and have been taught this from other valid scholars as well. And, I believed it with all of my heart. Then at a Torah study, the Messianic Jewish scholar mentioned Luke 24:21 where it says that today is the 3rd day since these things were done. So, if they were walking on the road to Emmaus on our Monday, I couldn't give a valid reason to the scholar for this verse, as it sounds like it was our Thursday evening from this verse. Other than this, I completely agree with this teaching and would love to be able to figure out this verse. Thank you for any light you will offer here.

Tammy Gose

When I at first read this question, I thought the answer was going to be fairly easy to resolve. It was not and it required a lot more digging than I expected. But the understanding I got from it is astounding for me. This one verse in Luke is what is being used by Christians as their foundational scripture justifying their excuses for keeping Sunday as the day of worship.

Yes, I knew Easter Sunday was why they kept Sunday as "the Lords Day", but I had not realized or understood that it was because of this one verse in Luke. They claim that Luke 24 is irrefutable proof that Jesus rose on Easter Sunday morning. So with the desire to answer Tammy's question and then the realization of just how strong this one chapter is in justifying Christian positions, I had to resolve this issue.

It could help so many to understand the truth if we could just show the truth of what was said.

I have read how Luke 24 is irrefutable proof Jesus rose on Sunday. Here are the scriptures to support that proof that so many Christian base their faith upon. I normally use the MKJV (Modern King James Version). But I also refer to many other versions of the same verse. In this teaching I am going to give you the version quoted for each scripture. Because it is important.

ISV Luk 24:1 But at early dawn on the first day of the week, they went to the tomb, taking the spices they had prepared.

This one verse tells us that it was on Sunday that all the event of Luke 24 took place on. The MKJV says this;

MKJV Luk 24:1 And on the first of the Sabbaths, while still very early, they came to the tomb bringing the spices which they had prepared, and certain others with them.

I want to come back to this expression 'first of the Sabbaths' later if I remember. But let's first focus on the next scripture that Christians use to justify the keeping of Sunday as the Lords day.

ISV Luk 24:13 On the same day, two of Jesus' followers were walking to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem.

This verse now confirms without any doubts that the men were walking on that very same day, Sunday. There is no wiggle room to get around when this took place. It was Sunday the 1st day of the week.

Then we read in Luke 24:21 the verse that proves that Sunday is the resurrection day and I am going to use the MKJV for this verse.

MKJV Luk 24:21 But we had trusted that He was the One who was about to redeem Israel. And besides all this, today is the third day since these things were done.

He was killed on Good Friday and was in the grave just before the Sabbath and He rose today Easter Sunday. That is the 3 days and 3 night and this verse in Luke as they walked to Emmaus proves it. He came out of the grave on the first day of the week and here again in Luke 24:21 we read how today Sunday was the third day. Done deal. Case closed and they are right.

In order for them to be right, then many other scriptures must be wrong. But that does not matter so long as they get to keep doing what they have always done and enjoy the Easter egg hunt at the White House.

Do you study to prove your position and so you do not have to change or do you study to learn the truth and then change your position so that you line up more and more with the new truths you have now proven?

When I began this web site, it was to share with others the truths I had learned. It was never about preserving my position or my reputation or my name. It was always about learning the truth and moving closer to Yehovah to be in line with His position and His truths. This has never changed for me. I take a lot of abuse and a lot of mudslinging for exposing the lies that many profess to be the utmost truth heard directly from the lips of God to that person's ear. One week people are so excited to be learning what I have shared here and then after a few weeks they come across a teaching that challenges one of their cornerstone lines in the sand, that they will not cross over. And because they will not repent, they then turn and begin to attack me and the things I say and teach at every opportunity. When they can't refute what we say using the scriptures, they then resort to name calling and personal attacks.

It has happened so often it is now normal when I see it. It still hurts just as much, but it is the way it is. Don't you be one of these people. Study to show yourself approved. If I say things that ruffle your feathers, then this is good. It is what I am trying to do so you go back to the Bible and read it and stop relying on others to tell you what it says.

So we have a Good Friday crucifixion and now we have our proof of the Easter Sunday resurrection.

Luk 24:21 "But we were hoping that it was He who was going to redeem Israel. Indeed, besides all this, it is the third day since these things happened."

"it is the third day" since Jesus was crucified and placed in the tomb. This was the day the two men were expecting Jesus to rise from the dead. This was their day of expectation. And we have another verse yet to add to our case for an Easter Sunday.

Luk 24:46 "He said to them, "Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and rise again from the dead the third day"

This is not connected directly with the men on the road to Emmaus, but Luke, through inspiration of the Holy Spirit has now referred to the third day as being Sunday, FOUR TIMES!

Yes, this was the first day of the week, what we call Sunday today. (v.1) Yes, this journey to Emmaus was "that same day" (v.13 KJV).

There are even Messianics today who believe because of what Luke says, in order to get a 3 days and 3 nights in the grave and to have Luke also be correct, they are now saying that Jesus or Yehshua was killed on the 15th day and it was Passover. They say this because Jesus ate the Passover meal with them.

What they are saying is this. Jesus kept Passover with the Apostles and it was the 15th of the 1st month. He was killed and put in the earth on the 15th day. And now they count 3 days and 3 nights to Sunday morning. I am not saying it has to make sense. I am saying this is what some are now doing and teaching. Again it has to do with this scripture in Luke.

So again the question Tammy is asking is very important for all of us to understand so that each of us can explain it to those who base their faith on this false teaching derived from Luke.

Let us now begin to look at this verse in Luke 24:21 and see what is being said. Was that Sunday morning actually the third day and therefore the day of the resurrection? If it is, then last week's News letter and all the scriptures we quoted to you are dead wrong. Again I urge you to read our teaching on 3 Days and 3 Nights-What do they mean?

First the KJV says, "and beside all this, to day is the third day since these things were done." Now the word "Today" Vincent Word Studies says, "The best texts omit to-day." As I began my research into this verse and I read this, I then knew what I had to do and that was to look at the Greek and see what it actually does say.

The Greek word for "since" after "the third day" in Luke 24:21 actually means "away from". Away from is the same as our "after".

Strong's #575 says, "A primary particle; 'off', that is, away (from something near), in various senses (of place, time, or relation; literally or figuratively): – (X here-) after, ago, at, because of, before, by (the space of), for (-th), from, in, (out) of, off, (up-) on (-ce), since, with. In composition (as a prefix) it usually denotes separation, departure, cessation, completion, reversal, etc."

Jesus died late on a Wednesday afternoon and was laid in the grave at sundown on Wednesday as Thursday was beginning. He was in the grave 3 days and 3 nights.

Wednesday night, Thursday night, and Friday night and Thursday day, Friday day, and Saturday day using our reckoning of days and nights. This also hold true when you look to see if the crescent moon was sighted and on which day it would be sighted and then count 14 days later. In 31 C.E. 14 days after the moon was sighted was indeed Wednesday. He rose at the end of the Sabbath just before sunset as the first day of the week was about to begin. So He was in the grave 3 days and 3 nights and rose after 3 days and 3 nights while the Sabbath was still on. So He rose on the third day. Sunday is therefore the 4th day. The 4th day is "away from" the third day. So it is apparent that the verse is literally saying they were walking and talking after the third day, which was Sunday.

However, have other translators understood this point too? Yes, let's look at 3 of them. (Luke 24:21).

Moffatt Translation—by James Moffatt "...but he is dead, and that is three days ago!"

The Bible in Basic English Version says, "In addition to all this he has now let three days go by from the time when these things took place;"

James Murdock Translation has it, "And lo, three days [have passed], since all these things occurred."

The New Berkeley Version in Modern English— Gerrit Verkugl "Moreover, three days have already passed, since all these events occurred."

The Syriac New Testament Translated Into English From The Peshitto Version — James Murdock "...and lo, three days have passed since all these things have occurred."

The Syriac Reading can be confirmed by 2 of the oldest manuscripts in Estrangelo Aramaic: the Sinaitic Palimpsest and the Curetonian Syriac.

ASV Luk 24:21 But we hoped that it was he who should redeem Israel. Yea and besides all this, it is now the third day since these things came to pass.

BBE Luk 24:21 But we were hoping that he would be the Saviour of Israel. In addition to all this he has now let three days go by from the time when these things took place;

CEV Luk 24:21 We had hoped that he would be the one to set Israel free! But it has already been three days since all this happened.

Lamsa NT Luk 24:21 But we were hoping that he was the one to save Israel; and behold, it is three days since all these things happened.

Interlinear Bible Hebrew Greek says the following. But (4594) with all (575, 3739, 5023) these things (1096) third (235) this (1135) day (5100) comes today (1537, 2257) since these things occurred (1839, 2248, 1096).

There is exceedingly ample evidence that the correct translation for Luke 24:21 is that the KJV should read, "today is after the third day since these things were done." As the information above shows, the oldest and multiple original manuscripts show that "away from" is the correct word for "since", and shows us that they were talking about Sunday being the 4th day since Jesus was laid in the grave.

Again, if we just look at the word translated as "today". It is Strong's;

G4594 sēmeron say'-mer-on

Neuter (as adverb) of a presumed compound of the article G3588 ("tau" changed to "sigma") and G2250; on the (that is, this) day (or night current or just passed); genitively now (that is, at present, hitherto): - this (to-) day.

This word sēmeron could be translated as, "That is, this Day or That is this night" Or "That is this current night" or "that is just passed"

So here is a legitimate translation using just this version of Strong's and using one of the proper translations they provide.

But we were hoping that he was the one to save Israel; and behold, it is three days "That is just passed" since all these things happened.

Understand that there is or was an agenda going on here to make Sunday "The Day" of worship. A Saturday Sabbath did not suit the purpose of those doing away with anything and all things Jewish in favor of a Sunday resurrection and a Sunday Sabbath. This fit their erroneous understanding of a Friday Crucifixion and Sunday resurrection.

We can read what Constantine said about this back in 325 C.E.

"... it appeared an unworthy thing that in the celebration of this most holy feast we should follow the practice of the Jews, who have impiously defiled their hands with enormous sin, and are, therefore, deservedly afflicted with blindness of soul ... Let us then have nothing in common with the detestable Jewish crowd; for we have received from our Saviour a different way."

Theodoret's Ecclesiastical History records The Epistle of the Emperor Constantine, concerning the matters transacted at the Council, addressed to those Bishops who were not present:

“It was, in the first place, declared improper to follow the custom of the Jews in the celebration of this holy festival, because, their hands having been stained with crime, the minds of these wretched men are necessarily blinded. ... Let us, then, have nothing in common with the Jews, who are our adversaries. ... Let us ... studiously avoiding all contact with that evil way. ... For how can they entertain right views on any point who, after having compassed the death of the Lord, being out of their minds, are guided not by sound reason, but by an unrestrained passion, wherever their innate madness carries them. ... lest your pure minds should appear to share in the customs of a people so utterly depraved. ... Therefore, this irregularity must be corrected, in order that we may no more have any thing in common with those parricides and the murderers of our Lord. ... no single point in common with the perjury of the Jews.”

About one billion Protestants and another billion Catholics believe that Jesus Christ was crucified and entombed on a Friday afternoon—“Good Friday”—and raised to life again at daybreak on Easter Sunday morning, a day and a half later.

When we add the word TODAY as a definitive expression, that means right now, this day, Sunday is three days later give credence to those who want to use Good Friday as the day of the crucifixion. But this is not what the Greek is saying. It is saying that 3 days have now passed since all these things took place.

In the Aramaic New Testament it says the following.

And we were hoping that He was about to save Israel. And behold, three days have passed.

The footnote for this scripture reads as follows.

Peshitta clearly reads, “Three days have now passed,” but the Greek reads “this is the third day”. The reader can decide whether Greek translators stated this to bolster a Sunday resurrection or whether it was a simple translation oversight.

Brethren there is a running bias in many of the translation out there to give cause and support to the notion of a Sunday resurrection. This verse in Luke and the way some translate it is a prime example. Those 3 days and 3 nights had passed and that day they were walking to Emmaus was after these events.

These same anti Jewish hatreds that you see today were around during the time when the bible was being translated into Latin and the faith being moved from Jerusalem and the Apostles to Rome and the Popes. A conspiracy to justify Easter Sunday.

I will conclude with that and let you read about this controversy as recorded by Wikipedia.

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

The term “Quartodecimanism” (from the Vulgate Latin *quarta decima* in Leviticus 23:5,[1] meaning fourteenth) refers to the custom of early Christians celebrating Passover beginning with the eve of the 14th day of Nisan (or Aviv in the Hebrew Bible calendar), which at dusk is biblically the “Lord’s passover”.
[citation needed]

The modern Jewish Passover and Feast of Unleavened Bread is seven days, starting with the sunset at the beginning of Nisan 15. Judaism reckons the beginning of each day at sunset, not at midnight as is common in Western reckoning. The biblical law regarding Passover is said to be a “perpetual ordinance” (Exodus 12:14), to some degree also applicable to proselytes (Exodus 12:19), but what it means to observe biblical law in Christianity is disputed.

Regarding the chronology of Jesus, some claim the Gospel of John (e.g., 19:14, 19:31, 19:42) implies that Nisan 14 was the day that Jesus was crucified in Jerusalem and that the Synoptic Gospels instead place the execution on the first day of Unleavened Bread (Matthew 26:17). In Ancient Israel the first day of Unleavened Bread, a special Holy Sabbath, was on Nisan 15 and began a seven-day feast to the Lord (Leviticus 23:6). By the time of Christ, many customs in regard to the festival had changed, notable among them the intermixing of the two festivals in some customs and terminology. The eight days, passover and the feast of unleavened bread, were often collectively referred to as the Passover, or the Pesach Festival.[2][3]

History The Quartodeciman controversy arose because Christians in the churches of Jerusalem and Asia Minor celebrated Passover on the 14th of the first month (Aviv), while the churches in and around Rome changed to the practice of celebrating Easter on the following Sunday calling it “the day of the resurrection of our Saviour”. The difference was turned into an ecclesiastical controversy when synods of bishops which held to Apostolic tradition condemned the practice.[4]

Background Of the disputes about the date when the Christian Pascha should be celebrated, disputes known as Paschal/Easter controversies, the Quartodeciman is the first recorded.

In the mid-2nd century, the practice in Asia Minor was for the pre-Paschal fast to end and the feast to be held on the 14th day (the full moon) of the Jewish lunar month of Nisan, the date on which the Passover sacrifice had been offered when the Second Temple stood, and “the day when the people put away the leaven”. [5] Those who observed this practice were called Quartodecimani, Latin for “fourteenthers”, because of holding their celebration on the fourteenth day of Nisan.

The practice had been followed by Polycarp, who was a disciple of John the Apostle and bishop of Smyrna (c. 69 – c. 155) – one of the seven churches of Asia, and by Melito of Sardis (d. c. 180).[5] Irenaeus says that Polycarp visited Rome when Anicetus was its bishop (c. 68-153), and among the topics discussed was this divergence of custom, with Rome instituting the festival of Easter in place of the Pasch. Irenaeus noted:

Neither could Anicetus persuade Polycarp not to observe what he had always observed with John the disciple of our Lord, and the other apostles with whom he had associated; neither could Polycarp persuade Anicetus to observe it, as he said that he ought to follow the customs of the presbyters that had preceded him.[6] But neither considered that the disagreement required them to break off communion and initiate a schism. Indeed, “Anicetus conceded the administration of the eucharist in the church to Polycarp, manifestly as a mark of respect. And they parted from each other in peace, both those who observed, and those who did not, maintaining the peace of the whole church.”[6]

Sozomen also wrote:

As the bishops of the West did not deem it necessary to dishonor the tradition handed down to them by Peter and by Paul, and as, on the other hand, the Asiatic bishops persisted in following the rules laid down by John the evangelist, they unanimously agreed to continue in the observance of the festival according to their respective customs, without separation from communion with each other.

They faithfully and justly assumed, that those who accorded in the essentials of worship ought not to separate from one another on account of customs.[7] A modern source says that the discussion between Polycarp and Anicetus in Rome took place within the framework of a synod.[8]

Thus the churches in Asia appealed to the Apostle John in support of their practice, while Sozomen wrote that the Roman custom (observed, according to Irenaeus, since at least the time of Bishop Xystus of 115–25)[6] was believed to have been handed down by the Apostles Peter and Paul,[7] and Eusebius states that in Palestine and Egypt the Sunday observance was also believed to have originated with the Apostles.[9]

Condemnatory synods According to Eusebius, in the last decade of the 2nd century a number of synods were convened to deal with the controversy, ruling unanimously that the celebration of Easter should be observed and be exclusively on Sunday.

Synods and conferences of bishops were convened, and drew up a decree of the Church, in the form of letters addressed to Christians everywhere, that never on any day other than the Lord's Day should the mystery of the Lord's resurrection from the dead be celebrated, and on that day alone we should observe the end of the Paschal fast.[4] These synods were held in Palestine, Pontus and Osrhoene in the east, and in Rome and Gaul in the west.[4] The council in Rome, presided over by its bishop Victor, took place in 193 and sent a letter about the matter to Polycrates of Ephesus and the churches of the Roman province of Asia.[8] Within the same year, Polycrates presided over a council at Ephesus attended by several bishops throughout that province, which rejected Victor's authority and kept the province's paschal tradition.[8]

Polycrates emphatically stated that he was following the tradition passed down to him:

We observe the exact day; neither adding, nor taking away. For in Asia also great lights have fallen asleep, which shall rise again on the day of the Lord's coming ... All these observed the fourteenth day of the passover according to the Gospel, deviating in no respect, but following the rule of faith. And I also, Polycrates, the least of you all, do according to the tradition of my relatives, some of whom I have closely followed. For seven of my relatives were bishops; and I am the eighth. And my relatives always observed the day when the people put away the leaven.[5] Excommunication[edit] On receiving the negative response of Polycrates, Victor attempted to cut off Polycrates and the others who took this stance from the common unity, but reversed his decision after bishops who included Saint Irenaeus, bishop of Lugdunum in Gaul, interceded, recommending that Victor follow the more peaceful attitude of his predecessors.

Thereupon Victor, who presided over the church at Rome, immediately attempted to cut off from the common unity the parishes of all Asia, with the churches that agreed with them, as heterodox; and he wrote letters and declared all the brethren there wholly excommunicate. But this did not please all the bishops. And they besought him to consider the things of peace, and of neighborly unity and love. Words of theirs are extant, sharply rebuking Victor. Among them was Irenaeus, who, sending letters in the name of the brethren in Gaul over whom he presided, maintained that the mystery of the resurrection of the Lord should be observed only on the Lord's day. He fittingly admonishes

Victor that he should not cut off whole churches of God which observed the tradition of an ancient custom.[10] Resolution[edit] In the short following chapter of the account by Eusebius, a chapter headed “How All came to an Agreement respecting the Passover”, he recounts that the Palestinian bishops Narcissus and Theophilus, together with the bishops of Tyre and Ptolemais, wrote a lengthy review of the tradition of Sunday celebration of Easter “which had come to them in succession from the apostles”, and concluded by saying:

Endeavor to send copies of our epistle to every church, that we may not furnish occasion to those who easily deceive their souls. We show you indeed that also in Alexandria they keep it on the same day that we do. For letters are carried from us to them and from them to us, so that in the same manner and at the same time we keep the sacred day.[9] Historically, there had been a debate about when quartodecimanism disappeared and in particular whether it disappeared before or after the first ecumenical council (Nicaea I) in 325. In 1880, Louis Duchesne showed that quartodecimanism was not the subject of Nicaea I.[11] According to Mark Del Cogliano, “the older opinion persists” but Duchesne’s opinion “has gained widespread acceptance.”[12] According to Del Cogliano, “by the early 4th century all Christians were celebrating Easter on a Sunday. Accordingly, it was not the Quartodeciman practice that Constantine sought to eliminate, but rather the so-called ‘Protopaschite’ practice which calculated the paschal full moon according to the Jewish lunar calendar and not the Julian solar calendar”.[12]

As shown, for instance, by the Sardica paschal table, it was quite common at that time that the Jewish calendrical year started before the equinox. In case the previous year had started after the equinox, two Passovers would be celebrated in the same solar year (the solar New Year was starting on March 21). Since the 3rd century this disorder of the Jewish calendar of the time was lamented by several Christian writers, who felt that the Jewish were often using a wrong lunation as their Nisan month and advocated the introduction of an independent computus by the Christians.

In a letter to the bishops who had not been present, Emperor Constantine I said that it had been decided to adopt a uniform date, rejecting the custom of the Jews, who had crucified Jesus and whose practice often meant that two Passovers were celebrated in the same solar year:

It was resolved by the united judgment of all present, that this feast ought to be kept by all and in every place on one and the same day. For what can be more becoming or honorable to us than that this feast, from which we date our hopes of immortality, should be observed unfailingly by all alike, according to one ascertained order and arrangement? And first of all, it appeared an unworthy thing that in the celebration of this most holy feast we should follow the practice of the Jews, who have impiously defiled their hands with enormous sin, and are, therefore, deservedly afflicted with blindness of soul. For we have it in our power, if we abandon their custom, to prolong the due observance of this ordinance to future ages, by a truer order, which we have preserved from the very day of the passion until the present time. Let us then have nothing in common with the detestable Jewish crowd; for we have received from our Saviour a different way. A course at once legitimate and honorable lies open to our most holy religion. Beloved brethren, let us with one consent adopt this course, and withdraw ourselves from all participation in their baseness... being altogether ignorant of the true adjustment of this question, they sometimes

celebrate Easter twice in the same year. Why then should we follow those who are confessedly in grievous error? Surely we shall never consent to keep this feast a second time in the same year... And let your Holinesses' sagacity reflect how grievous and scandalous it is that on the self-same days some should be engaged in fasting, others in festive enjoyment; and again, that after the days of Easter some should be present at banquets and amusements, while others are fulfilling the appointed fasts. It is, then, plainly the will of Divine Providence (as I suppose you all clearly see), that this usage should receive fitting correction, and be reduced to one uniform rule.[13]

The First of the Sabbaths

The first of the Sabbaths, I wanted to talk about this as I mentioned above because it is the excuse many Christians use to justify the switching of the Sabbath to Sunday.

Each morning when I would drive to work at 5AM I got to listen to Ronald Dart. He passed away a short while ago. While preparing this teaching I came across his message on this subject. I liked most of what Mr. Dart taught. But he would not let me share with him about the Sabbatical years when I contacted him.

Nevertheless I still want you to understand this 'first of the Sabbaths' expression that is found in the New Testament and translated as Sunday. It is time we drew closer to Yehovah, so let's begin to understand His truths and know that some who translate have an agenda to lead you away from the truth.

First Day of the Weeks

By: Ronald L. Dart

Just for this program, try to put yourself in the mind of one of the original disciples of Jesus. How would you have been different from what you are today? How would you think differently? How would you look at the world? What would your world view be? Well, in the first place, you would have been a Jew. Like Jesus himself, you would have been a regular in synagogue attendance and you would've been a Sabbath keeper. Because through out the time of Jesus' earthly ministry, Jesus and His disciples were Sabbatarian, that is Sabbath keepers. They were in the synagogue every Sabbath Day and they would not have thought about working on a Saturday.

The Sabbath Identifies God

The Sabbath, you have to understand was more than just another commandment, it was more than a mere doctrine, it was a matter of religious identity. The Sabbath was clearly the identifying sign that answered the question: Who is your God? To change the Sabbath to another day, for Jesus or for any of his disciples, would not have been merely a change in doctrine or

ideas, it would have been tantamount to changing their God.

Here is what the Scripture says, it is in Exodus 31:13 “Speak to the children of Israel saying, Verily my Sabbaths you shall keep for it is a sign between me and you throughout your generations that you may know that I am Jehovah that does sanctify you.” Remember that Jesus and His disciples were Jews. All of them were, and they were observant Jews at that, so when I read the Scripture like this one here, what were they supposed to think? Well, they would have thought that immediately, that this is the thing that says I’m a worshiper of Jehovah in stead of being a worshiper of Baal. Listen to what else it says: Verse 16, “So the children of Israel shall keep the Sabbath, to observe the Sabbath throughout their generations for a perpetual covenant, {17} It is a sign between me and the children of Israel forever, for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth and on the seventh day he rested and was refreshed.”

So if you were one of the original disciples of Jesus, this would’ve been a part of your religious upbringing, a part of the very fabric of your beliefs, that the Sabbath day was a perpetual covenant, it was established for ever, and it identified your God. You wouldn’t have thought about, or considered possible, a change in the Sabbath day. The Sabbath would not have been just another doctrine to believe or not believe. It would’ve been the irrevocable sign of the identity of your God.

Abandoning the Sabbath?

Now, how and when did all that get changed? Why would you, if you were a disciple of Jesus, at some later time, abandon the observance of the Sabbath in favor of Sunday. Especially after this thing that the Sabbath is a perpetual covenant. It is a sign between God and the children of Israel for ever. Why would you think of that and what would have been the consequences of that change. Would you have expected Jesus to say something about it, to explain the change or there would have had to have been a moment in time when the change came into effect, right? Being good Jews, you or some of your close friends would have, well, you would have had a problem with the change. The fact is that nearly everything about the Christian faith, somebody had a problem with it. Can you imagine that the entire body of the disciples of Jesus, who were all Jews at the time, kept the Sabbath, and then the next week observe Sunday instead? With no explanation, no comment, not a ripple. Well, it is kind of hard to imagine it, isn’t it? So, what did happen?

Did Jesus’ Resurrection Change Everything?

Well the conventional wisdom is that the crucifixion of Jesus and the resurrection from the dead, changed everything. The first thing to face-up to is this, that there’s not a word in the New Testament that says that. You would really expect that a change of this magnitude would be explained somewhere, that there would be a passage that gives us, not merely the change, but the reason for the change. The Sabbath had a theology that went with it; it identified who your God was. You are a worshiper of Jehovah, not Baal, and it was the Sabbath that established that identity. So there should be a statement, just as strong as the original statements about the Sabbath, to explain who our new God is and what we are going to do about it. No such passage exists. And of course, there was no change in their God.

The First Day of the Week

Now there is a general presumption among Christians who do not keep the Sabbath, that the church began meeting on Sunday immediately after the resurrection of Jesus and they did it, because Jesus rose from the dead on Sunday morning. Now this is based in its entirety on eight New Testament texts, that mention the first day of the week. There are eight and only eight that do this.

The superficial impression is that the church was meeting regularly on Sunday, the first day of the week. This is entirely misleading. Six of these Scriptures, for one thing, refer to the same events on the same day, and that is the day of Jesus' first appearance to His disciples after His resurrection. So that only leaves two other passages that might lead one to this conclusion.

No Greek Word for 'Week'

There's something else you should know about these passages, there is no Greek word for 'week', in any of these passages. In fact, there is no Greek word for 'week' found in the New Testament at all. That's right, in every case, in the New Testament where you see the word 'week', the word in the Greek is a Greek transliteration of the Hebrew word: 'Sabbath'.

Take this one for example. It's in the parable of the Pharisee and the publican and it is found in Luke 18:10: "Two men went up to the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican. {11} The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, saying God, I thank you, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even like this publican. {12} I fast twice in the week."

Now wait a minute, what does he mean by that?

Literally the Pharisees say, "I fast twice of the Sabbath", because there is no Greek word for 'week' here. He is after all a Jew, talking in Jewish terms about what he did. No Pharisee would fast ON the Sabbath. And so when he says "I fast twice of the Sabbath", it is an idiom referring to the period of time between the Sabbaths. It is as simple as that. Twice from one Sabbath to the next Sabbath this man fasted. That's all that it meant.

The Morrow After the Sabbath

Now about the eight instances in the New Testament where the expression, "The first day of the week" is found, the first thing you should realize is, that the Hebrews did not identify days of the week this way. As far as I know the Greeks didn't either. The Hebrew manner of designating Sunday would have been to call it "the morrow after the Sabbath". In other words they would have normally said, if they're just talking about Sunday as Sunday, they would have said: "On the day after the Sabbath we did this and went there". It is that simple.

First Instance

Now here is what the first instance says literally: Matthew 28:1 "Now after the Sabbath, as the first of the Sabbaths (plural) began to dawn, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came to see the tomb."

Now that's an odd expression isn't it? "After the Sabbath as the first of the Sabbaths began to dawn". What does it mean? Well there are seven Sabbaths

between Wave Sheaf Sunday and Pentecost. The day that is being mentioned here is the first day of the 50 days leading to Pentecost. It was the day when the first of the Firstfruits were offered to God. It was also the day of Jesus' presentation to the Father as the first of the Firstfruits from the dead (1 Corinthians 15:23). It was an important day, it was a festive day in the Jewish calendar, because up until this particular day, nothing of this year's grain crop could be eaten. The first thing they had to do was cut a sheaf of grain, prepare it, present it before God as the first of the firstfruits (Leviticus 23:9-16).

Well, the morning after Jesus' resurrection when Mary tried to touch Him (John 20:17), He said "Don't touch me". Later in the same day, He did allow Himself to be touched (Matthew 28:9-10). He said don't touch me because I'm ascending to my Father and the presumption is that, since the New Testament tells us elsewhere that Jesus is the Firstfruits from the dead (1 Corinthians 15:20), that He was presented to God the Father at the same time, the Firstfruits of the ground were presented in the Temple before God. So consequently this day, this first day of the weeks leading up to Pentecost, is an important annual day. Not merely a day of the week, but a special day of the year, the day which was the beginning of the spring harvest.

As I said, there are eight of these references to the first day of the week. Maybe one of the others will clarify this matter.

Now every one of these places in the New Testament where you find this expression "the first day of the week", the word "day" is not in any of them. Now this is a curious thing, and the word "week" isn't there either. As I said before, the word is "Sabbaths" in the plural.

Second Instance

So as we come to Mark 16:1 which is the next one, we can understand what they are saying: "When the Sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome, 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."

But literally what this says is: "Very early in the morning, the first of the Sabbaths". Now this was not the Sabbath Day, of course, it is an expression that basically means, the first of the weeks that lead up to Pentecost. It is day one of the seven week period.

Third Instance

Okay, here's number three, Mark 16:9: "Now when Jesus was risen early the first day of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom he had cast seven demons." Literally, it says: "Now when Jesus was risen early the first of the Sabbaths".

Another important thing to know is that this passage does not really say that Jesus was risen early Sunday morning. There were no witnesses to the moment Jesus' resurrection. It is giving us the time, not of His resurrection, but of the appearing to Mary. "Now when Jesus was risen, (comma) early the first day of the Sabbaths He appeared first to Mary Magdalene". This is what He is really saying here. So here we have, so far through three of these, there is not a thing in the world that would tell us one of the other about when the church ought to

meet or what should be done with the Sabbath Day. All it is doing, all about the same time, is telling us about Jesus' first appearances to His disciples after His resurrection.

Fourth Instance

Number four is Luke 24:1: "Now upon the first of the Sabbaths, very early in the morning, they came to the sepulchre, bringing the spices which they had prepared, and certain others with them." Nothing there. It's the same thing.

Fifth Instance

Number five is John 20:1: "The first day of the week comes Mary Magdalene early, when it was yet dark, to the sepulchre, and sees the stone taken away from the sepulchre." It is the same thing. It is the same expression. The word "day" isn't there, the word "week" isn't there, it is the first of the Sabbaths.

Sixth Instance

Number six is John 20:19: "Then the same day at evening, being the first day of the week (or the first of the Sabbaths), when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in the midst, and said, Peace be unto you." Now that is sixth of the instances, all referring to the events of the same day. That thins out considerably the argument that some new custom had started in the church. The disciples were meeting together late that afternoon, but there's nothing here to suggest that anything new was going on. They were frightened and confused and did the natural thing, they huddled together trying to make sense out of what had happened to them that day. So we haven't found anything here about a new custom of meeting on Sunday versus the Sabbath, have we? If I were one of those disciples, I would have found nothing here to change anything concerning the Sabbath Day, would you? If there were going to be anything, wouldn't someone have to explain something about this to us.

Seventh Instance

That leaves us with two to go. This one is in First Corinthians 16:2. This is an interesting passage because it has been widely misunderstood and widely misapplied. Sometime before this epistle was written a prophet of God had gotten a vision from God about an upcoming famine in Jerusalem. People were going to be starving in the streets and once this information got out to the church, the churches all over Asia and in Greece decided that they needed to get together and send help to Jerusalem.

Now if you know anything about famines, you know that sending money is not going to do anybody much good, because there's no food to buy. So what they had to do was to send food, and the way they're going to go about sending food was to send grain, which is shippable and transferable. It is a staple of life in this part of the world, because bread was more stable than what potatoes would be today. Okay, so they were going to send a shipment of grain from all over this area.

Collection for Saints in Jerusalem

Now in First Corinthians 16:1 Paul is writing to the church in Corinth about the offering or the collection for the Saints and about what they were planning to do. He says this: "Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order

to the churches of Galatia, even so do you. {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". Now let's stop. First of all Paul is not saying "On the first day of the week", he is saying "On the first of the Sabbaths". This is the same expression identically as everywhere else. The word "day" is missing, and the word for "weeks" is the plural for Sabbath. Okay. Literally Paul said "Upon the first of the Sabbaths let every one of you lay by him in store." Now this is not a Sabbath Day, this is a work day, of collecting the harvest of grain for shipment to Palestine. It was the first day of the harvest, it was not a regular first day of the week, the reason is important. This offering had to go to Jerusalem. Paul was going to be leaving and he did not want any delays involved in this and therefore he said "On the first of the days that you do the harvest, day number one, get out there and prepare this amount that you going to send to Jerusalem. Lay it by yourself in storage so that when I come you won't have to go into the fields to get it."

Simple isn't it? All that Paul is telling them to do is to get to work on the first day of the harvest, get out there and get this grain together, so that we can get it off more quickly when I get there.

An Offering on Sunday?

When you understand the background, and it's obvious to anyone who's read his Bible carefully, you really ought to spot this. The use of this passage for taking up an offering every Sunday is really quite thin to anyone who knows what is going on. I have gone into churches and pulled out little envelopes on the back of the pew and it has a Scripture on it.

The Scriptures is "On the first day of the week let everyone of you lay by him in store what God has prospered him." So we are going to take up an offering in church on Sunday morning because of this Scripture? Well, not because of this Scripture, because that's not what the Scripture is even remotely about. You may have noticed, there's not a word here about a church meeting.

Eighth Instance

Well we have one Scripture left in the New Testament that mentions the "first day of the week". This one is Acts 20:7 "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."

Now this is the only passage in the New Testament that suggests the possibility that the church met on the first day of the week. And even here, it is a Saturday night, not Sunday, and it is also not merely the first day of the week, it is that particular first day of the weeks (Sabbaths) that led up to Pentecost.

Change the Sabbath?

Now this is really a thin rule upon which to base a change in something as central to the faith as the Sabbath day, isn't it? Remember we started thinking at the beginning of this program about ourselves being among the original disciples of Jesus. Now we know everything that's in the New Testament. Is there anything in the New Testament that would have led us to abandon the centuries-old practice of Sabbath observance? God had said it was a sign of His own identity, which He commanded on the death penalty, as matter-of-fact, it was such a serious matter for them, that it had become right along with circumcision,

the core beliefs actually that made one a Jew.

Would we have laid all this stuff aside, on nothing more than this? Now here is our problem. We have the flimsiest of circumstantial evidence that the church ever met on the first day of the week at all. What we have is incidental, that is to say, it's an isolated incident, not a custom of the church, and we have the idea of Christians abandoning the observance of the Sabbath, which we have already seen is tantamount to changing Gods, without any explanation of the change anywhere in the New Testament. The idea is that it was a Sunday resurrection of Jesus that prompted that change.

No One Witnessed Jesus' Resurrection

Well, we have an even bigger problem than that. Okay, are you ready for this? No one in the New Testament bears witness to the time of Jesus' resurrection. Why? It's simple, no one witnessed it.

You may have to go back and read again to refresh your memory on this, but the fact is that no one in the New Testament witnessed the resurrection of Jesus. We have all kinds of witnesses that He was alive, Sunday morning on, but no witnesses as to the time of his actual resurrection. For that we only have circumstantial evidence, but that circumstantial evidence is very persuasive.

Three Days and Three Nights

Let's start with Jesus' own testimony as to what He said about it himself. In Matthew 12:39 "Jesus answered and said unto them, An evil and adulterous generation looks after a sign; and there shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of the prophet Jonah: {40} For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth." Now there simply no way to get three days and three nights between Friday afternoon and Sunday morning. We all know that. The way you can get three days and three nights in this is between Wednesday afternoon and Saturday evening. It is about the only way you can do it. Jesus was crucified on the day before a Sabbath. That is as clear as crystal in the New Testament, but what is not apparently crystal clear to everyone, is that Sabbath was a high day. It was the First Day of Unleavened Bread, which was as much a Sabbath as a Saturday was. That Sabbath was not a Saturday, it was Thursday.

You'll find references beginning in John 19:30, when Jesus was on the cross and He had received the vinegar, said, "It is finished: and he bowed his head, and gave up His spirit.{31} The Jews therefore, because it was the preparation, that the bodies should not remain upon the cross on the Sabbath Day, (for that Sabbath Day was an high day,) besought Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away."

Now in some years, the weekly Sabbath and the Sabbath high day of the First Day of Unleavened Bread will fall upon the same day. But they didn't always, in fact, commonly you'll find the First Day of Unleavened Bread on a Thursday and the regular weekly Sabbath on Saturday.

Now in John 19:41 "In the place where Jesus was crucified there was a garden; and in the garden a new sepulchre, wherein was never man yet laid. {42} They laid Jesus there therefore because of the Jews' preparation day; for the sepulchre was close at hand." Now all of this conspires together to tell us something very

important. One is that Jesus died late in the day. They took Jesus down late in the day, and because they didn't have very much time, they buried Him close at hand.

Bread Crumbs

The writers of the New Testament did not anticipate our problem. They never imagined that anyone would use a Sunday resurrection to abandon the Sabbath day, so they didn't cover these bases. However, when we look at this whole thing together, Luke and Mark left us with some bread crumbs to follow, that open up a new way of looking at this. Now keep in mind, they were in a rush to get Christ buried before the Sabbath day came on. Then having buried him (Mark 15:47) "Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Jesus beheld where he was laid." (Mark 16:1) "And when the Sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome, bought sweet spices, that they could come and anoint him."

This is not difficult to understand in the sequence of events, is it? They buried Him late and got Him in the grave quickly. After the Sabbath was over, Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of James went out and bought some sweet spices. I said Mark and Luke had left us some breadcrumbs and here in Luke 23, we have some more breadcrumbs on this.

Luke 23:54 He says "That day was the preparation (when they put Christ in the grave), and the Sabbath drew on. {55} And the women also, which came with him from Galilee, followed after, and beheld the sepulchre, and how his body was laid. {56} And they returned, and prepared spices and ointments; and rested the Sabbath Day according to the (fourth) commandment."

Do you realize what they said here? They didn't see the need to clarify this for us but they accidentally left us these bread crumbs. They bought their spices after the Sabbath, and they prepared the spices before a Sabbath, which tells us there were two Sabbaths that week with a day in between, Thursday and Saturday.

So Jesus was three days and three nights in the heart of the earth, which means His grave. Jesus was resurrected and left the tomb Saturday evening about sunset and NOT on Sunday morning!

The early church had to know that. Now the reason why Sunday morning was important and that one in particular is because it was the "Wave Sheaf of the firstfruits" that was presented in the Temple on that morning at about the same time, when they were first seeing Jesus alive. It was the day of the year that was important not so much the day of the week.

Why are 3 Days and 3 Nights Important?

Now why was the three days and three nights important? There's a story in 11th chapter of John that's fascinating. A good friend of Jesus, Lazarus, was sick, but Jesus delayed to go to him. Jesus seems to have deliberately waited until Lazarus was dead and not only dead, but three days dead, before he actually showed up to raise him from the dead. When he got there, He approached the tomb and He told Martha: "Let's get the stone away from here", and Martha said "Lord by this time his body will be stinking, he's been dead four days".

Now consider this little item from the N.I.V. Study Bible about this issue. "Many Jews believed that the soul remained near the body for three days after death in the hope of returning to it." If this idea was in the minds of these people they

obviously thought all hope was gone and Lazarus was irrevocably dead. Now you know this is a common thing down through history, the worry about the fact that somebody might come to or revive, when they thought they had been dead. This is the idea behind having a wake, let's lay the body out in the living room here for a couple days, and let's see if old Bob is really dead or not. In fact, there are stories of people who were thought to be dead, and they weren't.

I guess one of the reasons for embalming a dead body is that when it's embalmed, we're sure.

Did You Find Anything to Change the Sabbath?

It was important that Jesus be in the grave for three days and three nights less someone claim He had merely revived and had not really been dead. So where' does this put us? Well it puts us with a late Wednesday crucifixion and death and burial and a late Saturday resurrection.

Now think back again to our original premise. Put yourself in the mind of an original disciple of Jesus, a Sabbath keeper, one who went to the synagogue all of his life and who saw the Sabbath as a sign of who your God is. Would you have found anything in any of these Scriptures or passages or ideas from the New Testament, that would have led you to think that the day of worship should be switched from the Saturday Sabbath to Sunday? Did you find anything that would tell you that you could abandon the Sabbath day? No, not really. There is no reason or excuse for the abandonment of Sabbath in favor of Sunday, not a hint of the abandonment of the Sabbath nor any real separation from the synagogue in New Testament Christianity. So if this change didn't get made, while the New Testament was being written, when did it get changed? We will talk about that next time. Until then, I am Ronald L. Dart.

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A Born to Win radio program given by: Ronald L. Dart titled:
Christian Holidays # 22 - #CHD22 2-16-01

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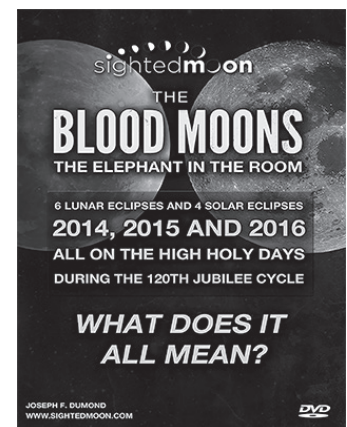
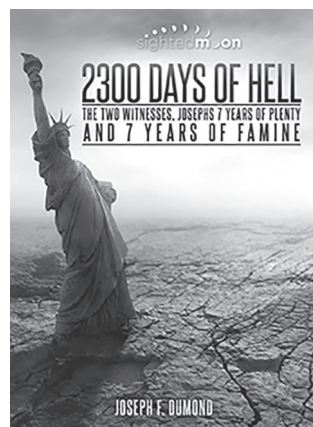
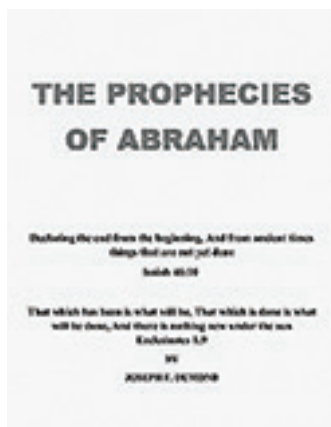
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