

## Sunrise and not Sunset Begins the Day Part 1

Written by Administrator

Friday, 27 November 2015 08:56 - Last Updated Saturday, 15 September 2018 07:05

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[My new book - YAHWEH CONSPIRACY - is now available from amazon.com](#)

Those who observe Sunday as their Sabbath count days from midnight to midnight - in accordance with the Gregorian calendar. However, it should be pointed out that until the 16<sup>th</sup> century Sunday was uniformly observed from sunset to sunset. In some countries this was the practice even until the 18<sup>th</sup>

century. The Jews and other Christian Sabbatarians observe the seventh day of the Roman planetary

week and count their days from sunset to sunset. They believe that this is the only correct and biblical practice. In the booklet entitled

*Has Time Been Lost*

, published by the

*Church of God Seventh Day*

, Denver, Colorado,

on p. 8, we find the following remark:

*“The correct Bible definition of a “day” is not 24 hours, marked by a man-made watch, but the*

## Sunrise and not Sunset Begins the Day Part 1

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---

*period of time from one sunset until the next sunset. A day ends and another begins when the sun sets.”*

In a book entitled *The Sabbath - Every Question Answered*, written by Yisrayl Hawkins and published by The House of Yahweh, Abilene, Texas, on p. 225, we find the following explicit claim:

*“Unlike the “Roman” way of beginning and ending days [which end and begin at 12:00 midnight] - Yahweh’s days begin and end at sunset. Immediately after the sun has set, Yahweh’s day begins. then, this same day does not “end” until the sun has set again - at which time another day “begins.”*

There are several ambiguous references in the Bible which imply that days should be reckoned from sunset to sunset. Overwhelming majority of the biblical texts however clearly show that the correct way to compute time is from *sunrise*. The Jews themselves could not agree on the calendar nor on the method of how the days should be counted. The Sadducees and the Samaritans for example killed their Passover lambs at “twilight” that is, between sunset and actual darkness while the Pharisees killed it at the first “even” that is, between 3pm and actual sunset. The Karaite Jews also followed the Sadducee and the Samaritan practices. The Pharisees observed the Feast of Pentecost always on the 6<sup>th</sup>

of Shivan and therefore on a different day of the week. The Sadducees, Samaritans, Qumran Community of the Dead Sea Scrolls, and the Karaites always observed the Pentecost on a Sunday.

The Jews also disagreed on the method of reckoning days.

## Sunrise and not Sunset Begins the Day Part 1

Written by Administrator

Friday, 27 November 2015 08:56 - Last Updated Saturday, 15 September 2018 07:05

---

### Galilean and Judean Computation of Time

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The Galileans reckoned time from sunrise while the Judeans from sunset. *Nelson's New Illustrated Bible Dictionary*, art. Calendar, on p. 239, points out:

*“One New Testament Calendar problem is that the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke portray Jesus as having celebrated the Passover with His disciples on the eve of His betrayal, whereas the Gospel of John pictures the Jews as not having celebrated the Passover at this time. Many attempts have been made to reconcile this problem. Possible, the solution is that the first three gospels reckoned their timetable of the crucifixion events according to the Galilean method [beginning the day at sunrise] which was used by Jesus, the disciples, and the Pharisees. But John may have reckoned according to the Judean method [beginning the day at sunset], a system used by the Sadducees. If this is true, different calendar systems may have been in use at the same time within the nation of Israel.”*

□

Harold Walter Hoehner, the late biblical scholar and a distinguished professor at Dallas Theological Seminary, in his book *Chronological Aspects of the Life of Christ*, on pp. 87-88 points out that the Galileans and the Pharisees reckoned their days from sunrise and not sunset as did the Sadducees and the Judeans. His argument is based on the Mishnah:

## Sunrise and not Sunset Begins the Day Part 1

Written by Administrator

Friday, 27 November 2015 08:56 - Last Updated Saturday, 15 September 2018 07:05

---

*"The Galileans and Pharisees used the sunrise-to-sunrise reckoning whereas the Judeans and Sadducees used the sunset-to-sunset reckoning. . . . This view not only satisfies the data of the Synoptics and the Gospel of John, it is also substantiated by the Mishnah. It was the custom of the Galileans to do no work on the day of the Passover while the Judeans worked until midday [the footnote reference is to Mishnah: Pesahim iv.5]. Since the Galileans' day began at sunrise they would do no work on the entire day of the Passover. On the other hand the Judeans' day began at sunset and they would work the morning but not the afternoon."*

### Original and Later Reckoning of Time

□

The *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, Vol. 11, on p. 1068 under heading 'Early Palestinian Calendar' states:

*"...days were reckoned from morning to morning."*

On the same page, the same source under heading 'Later Jewish Calendar' states:

*"Following the reign of King Josia [c. 640-609], and especially after the Babylonian exile a number of significant and enduring changes occurred in the Israelite calendar showing that the Jews gradually adopted the Babylonian calendar of the time...The day however, was counted*

## Sunrise and not Sunset Begins the Day Part 1

Written by Administrator

Friday, 27 November 2015 08:56 - Last Updated Saturday, 15 September 2018 07:05

---

*from evening to evening, after the Babylonian fashion."*

The *Encyclopedic Dictionary of the Bible* on p. 497 states:

*"...although the earlier computation did not die completely,[beginning the day with dawn], the custom of considering the Day as beginning at sunset became general in later Jewish times."*

The *Almanac of Bible Facts* on p. 170 states:

*"In later Bible times, the day started at dusk."*

□

The *Lion Encyclopedia of the Bible*, on p. 163 states:

## Sunrise and not Sunset Begins the Day Part 1

Written by Administrator

Friday, 27 November 2015 08:56 - Last Updated Saturday, 15 September 2018 07:05

---

*"...early in the Old Testament period...the day started at sunrise...later, perhaps under Babylonian influence, the calendar seems to have changed, the day began at moonrise [1800 hrs]."*

Rabbi Morris N. Kertzer in his book 'What is a Jew' on p. 108 writes:

*"When the Jews returned to Palestine after their Babylonian exile [516 B.C.E.] they brought back with them the Babylonian astronomy and way of reckoning time."*

It is remarkable that virtually all those who observe the seventh day of the Roman planetary week actually count their days from sunset to sunset and argue that this is the only correct and authentic biblical way to compute time. But where do they find the injunction in the Bible to reckon time from sunset to sunset?

## The Atonement Sabbath

## Sunrise and not Sunset Begins the Day Part 1

Written by Administrator

Friday, 27 November 2015 08:56 - Last Updated Saturday, 15 September 2018 07:05

---

The text most commonly referred to in order to justify their practice and to “prove” their thesis is that of Leviticus 23:32 which reads:

*“It is a sabbath of rest for you, and you must afflict yourselves. From the evening of the ninth day of the month until the following evening you are to observe your sabbath.”*

This text refers specifically to the Day of Atonement which falls on the 10<sup>th</sup> day of the biblical 7<sup>th</sup> month. The text does not say that this is the injunction for all weekly days and the annual sabbaths or the regular sabbaths. That is, there is no command to count all days of the year or regular sabbaths from evening to evening. It is referring specifically to the annual Sabbath which falls on the 10<sup>th</sup>

day of the 7<sup>th</sup>

month. Since the biblical day actually begins at *sunrise*

an alternative is commanded for the fast of this Feast in order that they could “afflict their souls.” If the general rule was retained and the fast was to be observed from *sunrise to sunrise*

- the fast would not really have much effect on the people - since they could have had a large meal just before the sunrise and thus easily go through the daylight period without food. At evening they would go to sleep and wake up in the morning when they could again partake of food. By altering the general rule of counting time from *dawn to dawn*

or *sunrise to sunrise*

the food can be last taken just before

sunset. The people would sleep the night through and wake up in the morning hungry. Since food is forbidden them until the sunset of that day, they would have to “afflict their souls” all the day through. If all days were reckoned from "even to even" then it would not have been necessary to point this out since all days were so reckoned. Therefore it can be argued that the injunction in Leviticus 23:32 concerning the Day of Atonement could be an exception to the

## Sunrise and not Sunset Begins the Day Part 1

Written by Administrator

Friday, 27 November 2015 08:56 - Last Updated Saturday, 15 September 2018 07:05

---

general rule and not the norm by which all the days of the week should be reckoned. The text certainly does not say “sabbaths” or “days in general” but explicitly and specifically “sabbath” which falls on the 10<sup>th</sup>

day of the biblical 7<sup>th</sup>

th

month.

### Samson and the 7th Day

Another passage the Sabbatarians often point to is that of Judges 14:12-18 which deals with Samson’s wedding and the riddle. The wedding lasted seven days [verse 12]. The seventh day of the wedding was to end “at sunset.” This is the only text in the Masoretic Hebrew Bible and therefore in the King James Version which clearly implies that the days in general were reckoned from sunset to sunset. Judges 14:18 says:

*“On the seventh day, before the sunset, the townsmen said to him: what is sweeter than honey, and what is stronger than a lion?”*

□

The text strongly implies that the seventh day and therefore the last day of the wedding was to end at sunset. So they hurried to answer the riddle before its end. But the earliest Hebrew

## Sunrise and not Sunset Begins the Day Part 1

Written by Administrator

Friday, 27 November 2015 08:56 - Last Updated Saturday, 15 September 2018 07:05

---

manuscripts did not read “before the sunset” but rather they contained a different phrase - as we shall shortly see. The Greek Septuagint Bible which is generally quoted in the New Testament or the Hebrew manuscripts which agreed with the version of the Greek Septuagint preserved a different reading. Please note the text as translated by Sir. Lancelot Brenton in his version of the Greek Septuagint Bible:

*“And the men of the city said to him on the seventh day, before sunrise, What is sweeter than honey? And what is stronger than a lion?”*

The Hebrew Masoretic text on which the King James Bible is based shows that the days are reckoned from “sunset to sunset” whereas the Greek Septuagint Bible and therefore the earlier Hebrew text from which this Greek translation was actually made, shows that the days were reckoned from “sunrise to sunrise.”

## Nehemiah and the Sabbath

The next text the observers of the Sabbath which falls on the seventh day of the Roman consecutive week often refer to is that of Nehemiah 13:19 where Nehemiah, arguably, commanded the gates to be shut just before the sunset in order to prevent trading on the Sabbath. But the passage is not as simple as the Sabbatarians who count time from sunset to sunset seem to think. Please note the text as is translated in the *Good News Bible*:

## Sunrise and not Sunset Begins the Day Part 1

Written by Administrator

Friday, 27 November 2015 08:56 - Last Updated Saturday, 15 September 2018 07:05

---

□

*“So I [Nehemiah] gave orders for the city gates to be shut at the beginning of every sabbath, as soon as evening began to fall...once or twice merchants who sold all kinds of goods spent Friday night outside the city walls” [Good News Bible].*

This translation is based on the Hebrew Masoretic text - published by the Jewish Masoretic scribes in the 6<sup>th</sup> century of the Christian Era. But the earlier Hebrew texts present a different picture. This fact is apparent from the Greek Septuagint Bible and the Aramaic Peshitta - which antedate the Masoretic text by many centuries. The Greek Septuagint Bible which was the official Bible of the Hellenistic Jews of the Diaspora and the authors of the New Testament - as well as all the early Church Fathers - and which is also the official version of the Greek Orthodox Church actually reads as follows:

*“And it came to pass, when the gates were set up in Jerusalem, before the Sabbath, that I spoke, and they shut the gates” [Sir Lancelot Brenton’s translation].*

The Good News Bible says that the gate was shut “as the evening began to fall.” The Hebrew actually says “as the shadow fell on the gates.” It is generally accepted that the “shadow” is that cast by the sun as it was setting - although some have contested the idea. But the Greek Septuagint Bible actually does not use the word “shadow” or “evening” at all. On the contrary, it says that as the gates were to be “SET UP” just before the Sabbath, Nehemiah commanded that they be shut instead. The word “set up” means many things. One of its definitions in *Collier’s Dictionary* is:

## Sunrise and not Sunset Begins the Day Part 1

Written by Administrator

Friday, 27 November 2015 08:56 - Last Updated Saturday, 15 September 2018 07:05

---

*“to prepare or arrange for use - as in to set up a trap for use, to set up the table for use.”*

The Greek text implies that as the gates were just about to be opened on the Sabbath morning - as we shall shortly see - Nehemiah actually commanded that they be shut instead. In those days the cities were always walled and there was a gate in one of those walls. This gate was always shut in the evening so that the inhabitants of the city could feel secure from the intruders and their enemies. In the morning they were opened so that the citizens and visitors could travel in and out of the city. It is not difficult to prove that in those days the gates were shut and locked in the evening until the daybreak.

Judges 16:1-3 says:

*“One day Samson went to the Philistine city of Gaza...The people of Gaza found out that Samson was there, so they surrounded the place and waited for him all night long at the city gate. They were quiet all night, thinking to themselves, we’ll wait until daybreak...but Samson stayed in bed only until midnight. Then he got up and took hold of the city gate and pulled it up - doors, posts, lock and all.”*

□

The Philistines learned that Samson was in the city. They knew that the only way out of the city was through the locked gate. So they reasoned that they could afford to meet him at the locked gate at daybreak. Samson however rose at midnight. He could not just walk out of the city - since the gate was locked. He had to rip the gate open in order to escape. If the Philistines were

## Sunrise and not Sunset Begins the Day Part 1

Written by Administrator

Friday, 27 November 2015 08:56 - Last Updated Saturday, 15 September 2018 07:05

---

not after Samson then the gate would have stayed locked until daybreak - when the new day begins - so that the people could resume their daily activities. The Greek Septuagint Bible therefore has preserved an alternative reading which does not agree with the Hebrew Masoretic text. It strongly implies that Nehemiah commanded the gates to be shut just after they were opened on the morning of the Sabbath. The text therefore in fact upholds the "sunrise" computation of time. The Greek version of this text is also supported by the reading of the Aramaic Peshitta:

*"Now when the gates of Jerusalem were being opened before the sabbath, I commanded that the gates should be shut."*

□

When were the gates of the city generally shut? In the evening of course. Nehemiah therefore would not need to give an order for the gate to be shut in the evening - since the gate was always locked in the evening - on any given day of the week. But because the gates were always unlocked and opened in the morning, Nehemiah had to give an order that this be not done on the Sabbath morning but that on this morning they remain locked so that no merchants could come in and trade with the people. These two ancient versions therefore support the "sunrise" reckoning of time.

□

## The Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread

The text of Exodus 12:18-19 is another text often referred to by the observers of the weekly

## Sunrise and not Sunset Begins the Day Part 1

Written by Administrator

Friday, 27 November 2015 08:56 - Last Updated Saturday, 15 September 2018 07:05

---

Sabbath in order to show that the days end and begin at sunset. This passage says:

*“In the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month at evening, you shall eat unleavened bread, until the twenty-first day of the month at evening. For seven days no leaven shall be found in your houses...”*

□

Because the word “evening” appears in this text it is argued that this is so because the days always start at evening and end at evening.. But the text does not say that “evening” starts or ends the days at all. It merely says that unleavened bread should be eaten from the evening of the 14<sup>th</sup> to the evening of the 21<sup>st</sup> of Abib. Other texts clearly show that the days of Unleavened Bread actually began with the “sunrise” and that is why the victim was not to be left over “until the morning.” The Bible makes it very plain that the Passover must be eaten on the 14<sup>th</sup> of Abib during the night:

*“On the tenth day of this month each man must choose either a lamb or a young goat for his household... Then, on the evening of the fourteenth day of the month, the whole community of Israel will kill the animals... That night the meat is to be roasted, and eaten with bitter herbs and with bread made without yeast... You must not leave any of it until morning... On that night I will go through the land of Egypt, killing every firstborn male... At midnight the LORD killed all the firstborn sons in Egypt” [Exodus 12:2,6,8,29].*

## Sunrise and not Sunset Begins the Day Part 1

Written by Administrator

Friday, 27 November 2015 08:56 - Last Updated Saturday, 15 September 2018 07:05

---

Whether the lambs were slaughtered between late afternoon and sunset as the Pharisees argued or whether they were slaughtered at twilight - between sunset and actual darkness - as the Samaritans, Sadducees and the Karaites contended, is neither here nor there. All agreed that the lambs were to be eaten after sunset and during the night which the Exodus author continually calls the 14<sup>th</sup> of Abib even though all this takes place after sunset and [according to the Jewish computation] it is really the 15<sup>th</sup> of Abib. At midnight of the Passover Night the firstborn were

killed. Now please note Leviticus 23:5-6:

*“In the fourteenth day of the first month at even is the LORD’S passover. And on the fifteenth day of the same month is the feast of unleavened bread.”*

□

According to the Jewish and virtually all Sabbatarian computation of time, when the sun sets on the 14<sup>th</sup> of Abib and the evening commences it is already the 15<sup>th</sup> of Abib. If the author believed that the 14<sup>th</sup> ended at sunset why did he speak of the Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread taking place on two different days? Why did Yahweh command that no part of the Passover victim be left until morning? The answer is simple. The 14<sup>th</sup>

day of the month lasts until morning dawn. Only at sunrise [daybreak] does the new day begin, in this case the 15<sup>th</sup>

of Abib. Therefore the author had to refer to the night in which the Passover victim was eaten as the 14<sup>th</sup>

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If on the other hand the 14<sup>th</sup>

ended at sunset then the Passover night would have been referred to as the 15<sup>th</sup>

of Abib - since all authorities definitely agree that the Passover took place after sunset on the 14<sup>th</sup>

## Sunrise and not Sunset Begins the Day Part 1

Written by Administrator

Friday, 27 November 2015 08:56 - Last Updated Saturday, 15 September 2018 07:05

---

- which according to the Jewish computation of time is and must be reckoned as the 15<sup>th</sup>

. Moreover, if the Passover actually took place on the 15<sup>th</sup>

- since it took place after sunset on the 14<sup>th</sup>

- then the 15<sup>th</sup>

day, the day on which they left Egypt, could not be called the next day nor would they be required to burn any flesh of the victim before sunrise. Now please note Numbers 33:3:

*“And they departed from Rameses in the first month, on the fifteenth day of the first month; on the morrow after the Passover the children of Israel went out.”* □

Clearly the departure took place on a different day than the Passover. The Passover took place during the night of the 14.<sup>th</sup> At midnight the slaughter of the firstborn occurred. At sunrise the 14<sup>th</sup> ended and the 15<sup>th</sup> began. Late that day they departed from Egypt. Please compare the text of Numbers 33:3 with the text of Leviticus 23:11,15-16 in order to understand the real meaning of the phrase *on the morrow*:

□

*“And he shall wave the sheaf before the LORD, to be accepted for you: on the morrow after the sabbath...And ye shall count unto you from the morrow after the sabbath, from the day that ye brought the sheaf of the wave offering; seven sabbaths shall be complete: even unto the morrow after the seventh sabbath shall ye number fifty days.”*

## Sunrise and not Sunset Begins the Day Part 1

Written by Administrator

Friday, 27 November 2015 08:56 - Last Updated Saturday, 15 September 2018 07:05

---

□

The *morrow after the sabbath* does not and cannot include the Sabbath. For then there would be eight Sabbaths in fifty days and not seven [if you follow the traditional Jewish calendar]. Therefore the expression *on the morrow after the Passover* does not and cannot include the Passover. The Passover therefore was not and could not have been on the 15<sup>th</sup>

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of Abib - since the 15<sup>th</sup>

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of Abib did not begin until the 14<sup>th</sup>

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ended at sunrise - and the 15<sup>th</sup>

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was the next day, the morrow after the 14<sup>th</sup>

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. Deuteronomy 16:4,7-8 also shows that the count of days actually begins with the sunrise:

□

*“For seven days no leaven shall be found with you in all your territory. And none of the flesh of what you slaughter on the evening of the first day shall be left until morning... You shall cook and eat it at the place that the LORD your God will choose; and in the morning [of the 2<sup>nd</sup> day] you may start back on your journey home. After eating unleavened bread for six days, you shall hold a solemn gathering for the LORD your God on the seventh day”*

[The Tanakh - Jewish Publication Society].

What counts here is the fact that the author of Deuteronomy 16 clearly computed time from sunrise. The Passover Festival was to be observed for seven days. The first day began at sunrise. The victim was killed in the evening of the first day. The victim was eaten after the end of the daylight period - during the night. In the morning - at sunrise - the first day ended and they were permitted to go home. Six more days were to follow during which the leaven was to be excluded. This text clearly shows that the author believed in the sunrise computation of time.

## Sunrise and not Sunset Begins the Day Part 1

Written by Administrator

Friday, 27 November 2015 08:56 - Last Updated Saturday, 15 September 2018 07:05

---

According to the traditional translation of the Synoptic Gospels, Jesus observed the Passover in accordance with the text of Deuteronomy. For there we are told that the Passover was eaten on the first day of the Unleavened Bread. However, when correctly translated from the Greek it is apparent that this was not the case.

Matthew 26:17 reads:

*"On the first day of Unleavened Bread Festival."*

More literally translated this should read:

"But before the Passover week."

## Sunrise and not Sunset Begins the Day Part 1

Written by Administrator

Friday, 27 November 2015 08:56 - Last Updated Saturday, 15 September 2018 07:05

---

Therefore the day in question is the 13th as John clearly states. But is there any justification to translate the text in this manner. The Greek word "protos" has been translated in the King James Bible also as "before" in John 1:15 and 30. James Strong under word "protos," number 4413, says that the word means: "foremost - in time, place, order or importance." Then he states that it comes from the word "pro," number 4253 which means: "fore, ie. in front of, prior." The word "pro" has been translated "before" in many, many places in the New Testament. The Greek word "azumos" translated "Unleavened Bread Festival" was also specifically by implication used to refer to the "Passover Week" as James Strong points out under word 106.

Mark 14:12 reads:

*"And the first day of unleavened bread, when they killed the passover, his disciples said unto him, where wilt thou that we go and prepare that thou mayest eat the passover?"*

Here also appears the word "protos" and therefore the text correctly understood reads:

*"And before the day of unleavened bread, when they killed the passover..."*

## Sunrise and not Sunset Begins the Day Part 1

Written by Administrator

Friday, 27 November 2015 08:56 - Last Updated Saturday, 15 September 2018 07:05

---

The Passover was on the 14th. The day before was the 13th. Luke 22:7 reads:

*"Then came the day of unleavened bread, when the passover must be killed."*

The word "came" comes from the Greek word "erchomai" which simply means "to come." But this word was qualified by the following Greek word "de" which has not even been translated. The word opposes the previous word and qualifies it and therefore the text should read:

"The day of unleavened bread was coming - but did not come yet - when the passover should be killed."

The Passover was killed in the evening of the 14th and the day before it was the 13th.

## Sunrise and not Sunset Begins the Day Part 1

Written by Administrator

Friday, 27 November 2015 08:56 - Last Updated Saturday, 15 September 2018 07:05

---

Synoptics properly understood agree with John who places the Last Supper on the 13th of Abib. This also agrees with the Talmud statement that Yeshu was hanged on the "eve of the passover." It also agrees with the statement in the Gospel of Peter that Pilate delivered Jesus to the people "before the unleavened bread festival." It is highly unlikely that all three Synoptic authors would have placed the killing of the lambs on the first day of the Unleavened bread Festival and thus on the 15th, when all knew at that time that the Jews observed the passover on the 14th. Moreover, the fact that all three Synoptic Gospels refer to the day of the crucifixion as "preparation day" and John as "preparation for the Passover" prove that it was not the 15th of Abib. If it was then they would have stated that the day was either the sabbath or the feast day and not the preparation day.

## Sunrise and not Sunset Begins the Day Part 1

Written by Administrator

Friday, 27 November 2015 08:56 - Last Updated Saturday, 15 September 2018 07:05

---

If the first day on the other hand began with the previous sunset and if Peter and John prepared the Passover during the daylight period, it follows that this first day would have ended at sunset

and therefore Jesus and the Twelve would have observed the Passover on the second day of the Festival and not the first. The authors of the Synoptic Gospels therefore clearly follow the Galilean method of computing time with sunrise and not the Judean method of reckoning time from SUNSET. The Churches of God 7

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Day believe that the Passover actually began at the end of the 13

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## Sunrise and not Sunset Begins the Day Part 1

Written by Administrator

Friday, 27 November 2015 08:56 - Last Updated Saturday, 15 September 2018 07:05

---

day of Abib. The expression “on the 14<sup>th</sup>

at evening” they interpret to mean “the beginning of the 14<sup>th</sup>

and therefore the end of the 13<sup>th</sup>

. One biblical passage is sufficient to disprove this idea.

Leviticus 23:27 says:

*“Mark, the tenth day of this seventh month is the Day of Atonement.”*

Then verse 32 clearly shows when the count of this day begins:

*“...on the ninth day of the month at evening, from evening to evening, you shall observe this your sabbath”* [The Tanakh - Jewish Publication Society].

The Day of Atonement is on the tenth - from the sunset of the 9<sup>th</sup> to the sunset of the 10<sup>th</sup> day. If the evening of the 14<sup>th</sup>

## Sunrise and not Sunset Begins the Day Part 1

Written by Administrator

Friday, 27 November 2015 08:56 - Last Updated Saturday, 15 September 2018 07:05

---

of Abib means the beginning of the 14

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that is, the sunset of the 13

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then the evening of the 9

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also means the beginning of the 9

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and therefore the sunset of the 8

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. This reckoning would thus make the Day of Atonement to be observed on the ninth and not the tenth of Tishri. Yet even the members of the Churches of God 7

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Day believe that the Day of Atonement was actually observed on the 10

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- from evening of the 9

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to the evening of the 10

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. This therefore proves that the adherents of the Churches of God 7

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Day are in error as far as the observance of the Passover is concerned.

## Sunrise and not Sunset Begins the Day Part 1

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Friday, 27 November 2015 08:56 - Last Updated Saturday, 15 September 2018 07:05

---

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