

## Good Friday-Easter Sunday Tradition Re-Examined Part 1

Written by Administrator

Saturday, 17 February 2018 06:13 - Last Updated Saturday, 17 February 2018 06:35

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Just when did Jesus die and on what day did his resurrection occur? The greatest segment of Christendom believe in the Good Friday- Easter Sunday tradition. There are those – predominantly Sabbatarians

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who believe that he was crucified on Wednesday and that he arose from the dead about sunset on Saturday.

Others contend that Jesus died on Thursday and rose on either Saturday or Sunday morning. Even in the early centuries of the Christian Era there was no uniformity regarding the day on which Jesus was arrested, crucified and when he arose from the dead.

### Open and Unbiased Mind Required

We must approach this study with an open and unbiased mind. But this is very difficult since we already have some preconceived ideas and convictions on the subject. Even so, it is wise and advisable to re examine the "facts." Please note the inverted comas. I have done so because the word 'fact' is used so lightly. Let's face it. A fact is a fact – and what is a fact is not disputed. If the Easter tradition were a fact then there would be no controversy. Therefore let us in all honesty re-examine the Easter tradition.

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### The 15<sup>th</sup> of Abib

Those who embrace the Easter tradition generally believe that Jesus was arrested and put to death on Friday the 15<sup>th</sup> of Abib or Nisan. The two prominent theologians demonstrate this view. Archibald Thomas Robertson, professor of New Testament Interpretation in the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in his *Word Pictures in the New Testament*, on page 207, in regards to Matthew 26:17 states:

*"...Jesus ate the passover meal at the regular time about 6 p.m. beginning of 15 Nisan. The passover lamb was slain on the afternoon of 14 Nisan and the meal eaten at sunset the beginning of 15 Nisan. According to this view Jesus ate the passover meal at the regular time and died on the cross the afternoon of 15 Nisan."*

Alfred Edersheim [born of Jewish parents but a convert to Christianity] states:

*"It was early on the 15th day of Nisan when the Lord was delivered into the hands of the Gentiles. In the previous night He and His disciples had partaken of the Paschal Supper...the Lord instituted His "Supper" on the very night of the Paschal Feast, and consequently His crucifixion took place on the first day of Unleavened Bread, the 15th of Nisan" [The Temple: Its Ministry and Services, pp. 200, 311].*

In all honesty, this immediately creates a difficulty. The 15<sup>th</sup> of Abib was the first day of Unleavened Bread Festival. It was the Feast Day and the annual Sabbath. The chief priests decided to kill Jesus but they have uniformly agreed not to do so during the Feast Day lest the people would riot. Please note the text of Mark 14:1,2,10-11:

*"After two days was the feast of the passover, and of unleavened bread: and the chief priests and the scribes sought how they might take him by craft, and put him to death. But they said, Not on a feast day, lest there be an uproar of the people..." [King James Bible].*

This is also stated in Matthew 26:5. The Jewish leaders decided not to kill Jesus on the Feast

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**Day** – that is, Abib 15. This day was held in reverence because of the following injunctions in the Jewish Pentateuch:

*“And this day shall be unto you for a memorial; and ye shall keep it a feast to the LORD throughout your generations; ye shall keep it a feast by an ordinance for ever. Seven days shall ye eat unleavened bread; even the first day ye shall put away leaven out of your houses: for whosoever eateth leavened bread from the first day until the seventh day that soul shall be cut off from Israel. And in the first day there shall be an holy convocation, and in the seventh day there shall be an holy convocation to you. No manner of work shall be done in them, save that which every man must eat, that only may be done”*

[Exodus 12:14-16 King James Version].

*“In the fourteenth day of the first month at even is the LORD’S  $\square$  passover. And on the fifteenth day of the same month  $\square$  is the Feast of Unleavened Bread unto the LORD: seven days ye must eat unleavened bread. In the first day ye shall have an holy convocation: ye shall do no servile work therein...in the seventh day is an holy convocation: ye shall do no servile work therein”*

[Leviticus 23:5-8 KJV].

*“And in the fourteenth day of the first month is the passover of the LORD. And in the fifteenth day of this month  $\square$  is the feast: seven days shall unleavened bread be eaten. In the first day shall be an holy convocation; ye shall do no manner of servile work therein”*

[Numbers 28:16-19 KJV].

The 15<sup>th</sup> of Abib was the first day of the Festival and is called the Feast. The chief priests uniformly agreed not to arrest and kill Jesus on that day. Abib 15 was the Feast Day or annual Sabbath on which holy assembly was commanded and secular work expressly forbidden. On that day they were permitted to only prepare that what they would eat. When we realize this, then it becomes apparent why the Jewish leaders ruled out Abib 15 as the execution day.

When we carefully study the relevant texts of the Gospels, it becomes plain that the chief priests and the Jews in general spent the day at Golgotha. So did Jesus' family and the women from Galilee who followed him. There is no evidence to suggest that there was a holy convocation which the chief priests, elders or common people attended.

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The Synoptic Gospels [Matthew, Mark and Luke] refer to the day of execution as "preparation day." John calls it "preparation for the Passover." How could this be the case if the day of execution was Abib 15? How could the Jews be preparing for the Passover on Friday, 15th of Abib, if they have already observed the Passover the previous evening? How could they call it the preparation day when in fact the 15<sup>th</sup> of Abib was the Feast Day and the annual Sabbath Day? If Jesus was crucified on Friday the 15<sup>th</sup>

of Abib, then there would have been two Sabbaths back-to-back in that week. Friday, the annual Sabbath, and Saturday Sabbath. But if that was the case it would mean that the chief priests sealed the tomb and set the guard to watch the tomb of Jesus on the weekly Sabbath, since they did so on the "next day"

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the day after the crucifixion. This is unthinkable.

### Beginning of the 14th

The Worldwide Church of God, founded by late Herbert W. Armstrong and the Churches of God 7th Day and offshoots of these churches believe that the Passover actually began at the end of the 13<sup>th</sup> 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."*

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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>

of Abib means the beginning of the 14<sup>th</sup>

that is, the sunset of the 13<sup>th</sup>

then the evening of the 9<sup>th</sup>

also means the beginning of the 9<sup>th</sup>

and therefore the sunset of the 8<sup>th</sup>

. This reckoning would thus make the Day of Atonement to be observed on the ninth and not the tenth of Tishri. Yet even the adherents of these churches believe that the Day of Atonement was actually observed on the 10<sup>th</sup>

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from evening of the 9<sup>th</sup>  
to the evening of the 10<sup>th</sup>

. They are therefore inconsistent in their teaching.

If we could pinpoint the day on which Jesus arose from the dead, then it would be much simpler to determine on which day he was executed. Therefore I will first of all refer to some early ecclesiastical records which clearly state that Jesus arose from the dead on Saturday and not Sunday, the first day of the week.

### Testimony of the Gospel of Peter

It can neither be proven nor disproven that this Gospel is authentic. But, then, this is the case even with the canonical Gospels. This Gospel could not have been written later than the middle of the second century since by then it was already referred to. In this Gospel we are plainly told that Jesus was delivered and crucified

*"on the day before the unleavened bread, their feast."*

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Then we are told that after Jesus died, Joseph buried Jesus and the disciples hid because they were afraid of the Jewish elders and the priests:

*"But I mourned with my fellows, and being wounded in heart we hid ourselves, for we were sought after by them as evildoers and as persons who wanted to set fire to the Temple. Because of all these things we were fasting and sat mourning and weeping **night and day until the sabbath** ."*

According to this statement it is impossible that Jesus was executed on Friday, since from Friday until Saturday they could not have fasted and mourned "night and day." Then we are told the following regarding the sealing of the tomb:

*"And Pilate gave them Petronius the centurion with soldiers to guard the tomb. And with them came the elders and scribes to the sepulchre, and having rolled a great stone together with the centurion and the soldiers, they all together who were there set it at the door of the sepulchre; and they affixed seven seals, and they pitched a tent there and guarded it. And early in the morning as the Sabbath was drawing on, there came a multitude from Jerusalem and the region round about, that they might see the sepulchre that was sealed. And in the night in which the Lord's day was drawing on, as the soldiers kept guard two by two in a watch, there was a great voice in the heaven; and they saw the heavens opened, and two men descend from thence with great light and approach the tomb. And that stone which was put at the door rolled of itself and made way in part; and the tomb was opened, and both the young men entered in."*

The text clearly states that the Sabbath did not commence at sunset on the day they have sealed the tomb, but rather it emphatically states that the Sabbath was drawing on, that is, about to begin *early in the morning*. It also says that the "Lord's Day" was actually drawing on or about to begin in the night and not at "sunset." This Gospel therefore clearly implies that Jesus arose from the dead during the night of the Sabbath and prior to sunrise of Sunday morning.

Many biblical scholars agree that the *Gospel of Peter* dates back to the early period and that even some Church Fathers accepted it as genuine and authentic work of Peter. In this Gospel

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the beginning of days is reckoned from dawn or sunrise and not sunset. That the biblical day begins at sunrise is fully documented in my article 'Sunrise and not Sunset Begins the Day.' Then we are told that women went to the tomb early on the Lord's Day not to anoint his body but rather to mourn and lament at the tomb since they could not do so on the day he was buried. Please note:

*"Early in the morning of the Lord's day Mary Magdalene, a woman disciple of the Lord – for fear of the Jews, since [they] were inflamed with wrath, she had not done at the sepulchre of the Lord what women are wont to do for those beloved of them who die – took with her women friends and came to the sepulchre where he was laid. And they feared lest the Jews should see them, and said, 'Although we could not weep and lament on that day when he was crucified, yet let us now do so at his sepulchre. But who will roll away for us the stone also that is set on the entrance of the sepulchre, that we may go in and sit beside him and do what is due? – For the stone was great, – and we fear lest any one see us. And if we cannot do so, let us at least put down at the entrance what we bring for a memorial of him and let us weep and lament until we have again gone home.' So they went and found the sepulchre opened. And they came near, stooped down and saw there a young man sitting in the midst of the sepulchre, comely and clothed with a bright shining robe, who said to them, 'Wherefore are ye come? Whom seek ye? Not him that was crucified? He is risen and gone. But if ye believe not, stoop this way and see the place where he lay, for he is not here.. For he is risen and is gone thither whence he was sent.' Then the women fled affrighted."*

This agrees with what we are told in Mark 16. The women were afraid and fled away and did not tell the disciples a word about the resurrection. Please note 16:7-8:

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*"But go your way, tell his disciples and Peter that he goeth before you into Galilee: there shall ye see him, as he said unto you. And they went out quickly, and fled from the sepulchre; for they trembled and were amazed: neither said they any thing to any man; for they were afraid."*

What follows in chapter 16 is a later addition and is missing in the earliest manuscripts. The Gospel of Peter ends by saying that even on the last day of Unleavened Bread – that is, on the 21<sup>st</sup> of Abib, the disciples still did not see Jesus and were disillusioned. Please note:

*"Now it was the last day of unleavened bread and many went away and repaired to their homes, since the feast was at an end. But we, the twelve disciples of the Lord, wept and mourned, and each one, very grieved for what had come to pass, went to his own home. But I, Simon Peter, and my brother Andrew took our nets and went to the sea. And there was with us Levi, the son of Alpheus" [All quotations from this Gospel are taken from the book New Testament Apocrypha, Volume One: Gospels and Related Writings, Revised Edition, Edited by Wilhelm Schneemelcher. English translation by R. McL. Wilson. James Clarke & Co. Westminster/John Knox Press].*

If this was the only Gospel we had, we would have to conclude at least the following:

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1. Jesus was crucified on the day which preceded the day of Unleavened Bread, that is, the 15<sup>th</sup> of Abib.

2. The days were not reckoned from sunset but rather from sunrise.

3. Jesus could not have died on Friday since the disciples fasted and mourned day and night until the Sabbath.

4. Jesus arose from the dead on Saturday during the night and before the women went to the tomb early Sunday morning.

### Acts of Pilate and its Testimony

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In the Acts of Pilate – a document written in the early centuries – we discover that Jesus rose from the dead at midnight on Saturday. When the chief priests asked the soldiers at what time was the earthquake and the opening of the tomb and when did they see the women come to the tomb, they replied "at midnight." When the chief priests asked the guards why didn't they arrest the women, they replied:

*"We were like dead men through fear, and gave up hope of seeing the light of day; how could we then have seized them?"* [See Acts of Pilate in New Testament Apocrypha, Volume One: Gospels and Related Writings, Revised Edition, Edited by Wilhelm Schneemelcher. English translation by R. McL. Wilson. James Clarke &Co. Westminster/John Knox Press p. 514.]

Even though it was midnight when Jesus arose from the dead it was still regarded as the Sabbath resurrection according to the biblical and Galilean computation of time. For the Galileans correctly counted days from sunrise and not from sunset as the Judeans did. We are also told that Joseph of Arimathea went to the synagogue on Friday and at about 4pm was arrested by the Jews because he asked Pilate for the body of Jesus. They arrested him and locked him in a house intending to deal with him on the first day of the week – after the Sabbath had passed:

*"When the Jews heard that Joseph had asked for the body, they sought for him...Then the Jews seized Joseph and commanded him to be secured until the first day of the week. They said to him: 'Know that the hour forbids us to do anything against you, because the Sabbath dawns'...[at sunset, according to the Judean reckoning]. They were embittered in their hearts, and laid hold on Joseph and seized him and shut him in a building without a window, and*

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*guards remained at the door. And they sealed the door of the place where Joseph was shut up. And on the sabbath the rulers of the synagogue and the priests and the Levites ordered that all should present themselves in the synagogue on the first day of the week. And the whole multitude rose up early and took council in the synagogue by what death they should kill him. And when the council was in session they commanded him to be brought with great dishonour. And when they opened the door they did not find him. And all the people were astonished and filled with consternation because they found the seals undamaged, and Caiaphas had the key."*

Joseph was released from prison by Jesus who appeared to him at midnight, the night before the first day of the week:

*"And they said to him: 'We were very angry because you asked for the body of Jesus, and wrapped it in a clean linen cloth, and placed it in a tomb. And for this reason we secured you in a house with no window, and locked and sealed the door, and guards watched where you were shut up. And on the first day of the week we opened it, and did not find you, and were much troubled...And now tell us what happened to you.' And Joseph said: On the day of preparation [Friday] about the tenth hour you shut me in, and I remained the whole sabbath. And at **midnight** as I*

*stood and prayed, the house*

□

*where you shut me in was raised up by the four corners...Full of fear I fell to the ground, and someone took me by the hand and raised me up from the place where I had fallen...and I said to him: Who are you, Lord? He replied: I am Jesus, whose body you asked for from Pilate...then he kissed me and said to me: Do not go out of your house for four days. For see, I go to my brethren in Galilee."*

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Thus according to the Acts of Pilate Jesus rose from the dead at midnight on Saturday. This Gospel plainly states that Joseph went to the synagogue on Friday about 4pm and was arrested. This positively proves that Jesus was not crucified on Friday. Jesus died at 3pm. Joseph was already in the synagogue about 4pm. He could not have obtained permission from Pilate and conducted the burial within one hour. In fact, the Gospels clearly state that Joseph went to ask for the body of Jesus in the "evening" on the crucifixion day. This was certainly after 4pm. Later I will show that this same work strongly implies the mid week crucifixion and I will demonstrate that Jesus was buried well after sunset on the Preparation Day. We also have an early document which describes the persecution of believers in Persia which took place in 341c.e. One Symeon is mentioned who was executed along with hundred others. They were killed on the "sixth day of the week." But in this document we are told that this day was actually the day preceding the festival of the resurrection. Please note:

*"10.1 The following day, which happened to be the sixth day of the week, and likewise the day on which, as immediately preceding the festival of the resurrection, the annual memorial of the passion of the Saviour is celebrated, the king issued orders for the decapitation of Symeon"*  
[See Creeds, Councils, and Controversies, Documents illustrative of the history of the Church A.D. 337-461, Edited by J. Stevenson. Printed and bound in Great Britain by William Clowes Limited, Beccles and London, p. 7].

It was generally believed in the East that Jesus arose from the dead on Saturday and not Sunday – as was held in the West and Rome. The Church Historian Socrates [440 c.e.] in his work 'Differences of usage in regard to Easter' states that Christians in the East observed their Easter on the Sabbath and not Sunday [The Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Vol. 2, p. 131.,1989. WM. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, Michigan].

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Bishop Gregory of Tours [c.e. 538-594] informs us that a large segment of Christendom in France believed that Jesus rose from the dead on the Sabbath. He himself did not endorse such a view but nevertheless wrote:

*"Now in our belief the resurrection of the Lord was on the first day, and not on the seventh as many deem"* [The History of the Franks, Vol. 2, (trans. by D.M. Dalton), Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1927, p. 24.

The Armenians taught that Jesus rose from the dead on the Sabbath day [Alexander Ross, Pan sebeia: or A View of All the Religions of the World, London, John Saywell, 1658, p. 219].

The Coptic Church observed the Eucharist on the Holy Saturday in remembrance of the Passion Week and especially of the resurrection. In India, the Nestorian Church still observes the communion [Qurbana] on Holy Saturday in honor of Jesus' resurrection. Now we can turn to the canonical Gospels for they also [apart from Matthew] clearly teach that the resurrection of Jesus occurred during the Saturday night, [once we accept the fact that the days are reckoned from sunrise and not sunset](#). Let's face it. If Jesus arose from the dead sometime before the sunrise on Sunday morning

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it was the Saturday resurrection [once we accept the Galilean method of counting days which is in fact the correct biblical method](#). I simply ask the reader to take for granted that the days are counted from sunrise to sunrise. For a conclusive proof

however, refer to the article 'Sunrise and not Sunset Begins the Day.'

### Testimony of John

John 20:1 states:

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*"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 [KJV]."*

It is generally understood that Mary came to the tomb before dawn and daybreak, hence it was still dark. But according to the sunrise computation of time then she did not come on the first day of the week but rather still on Saturday, since Saturday would have ended only at sunrise or daybreak. Yisrayl Hawkins, the overseer of the House of Yahweh, Abilene, Texas, claims the text is mistranslated. He is right, but he himself corrupts the text. Let me first demonstrate his view and then I will show how the text should be translated. Hawkins refers to the text of Marshall from his Greek-English Interlinear which simply reads:

*"Now on the one [first day] of the week Mary the Magdalene comes early darkness yet being [while it was yet dark]" [The Sabbath, page 203].*

Hawkins states:

"This Greek phrase, which has been underlined [in his book], reads *skotias eti ousas*. The Greek word "Skotias" means: dimness, darkness; "eti" means further, yet, after that; "Ousas" is a Greek verb denoting ordinary existence. In other words, what this Greek Phrase actually says, is: "darkness yet existing"

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darkness did not yet exist!"

Thus he translates the text in the following manner:

*"Early on the First of the week, before darkness arrived, Miriam Magdalene went to the sepulchre."*

But Hawkins ignores and leaves out the Greek word *proi* – which actually precedes the phrase *skotias eti ousas*

. The word  
*proi*

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number #3029 in Strong's means: "daybreak, early morning."  
*Thayer's New Greek-English Lexicon*  
translates it: "in the morning, early." Thayer points out that the word

*proi*

is

*opposite*

to

*opse*

. Opse of course means: "late, in the end, at the close, at even, dusk." Proi being opposite must denote early morning

—  
daybreak. Thayer also points out that the word

*proi*

especially refers to the time from 3 o'clock in the morning till 6 am. Spiros Zodhiates in his

*The Complete Word Study Dictionary New*

*Testament*

defines the word

*proi*

as: "early in the morning." He also points out that this word is metonymically connected to the morning watch which ushers in the dawn. The word

*metonymy*

according to Collier's Dictionary means:

*"use of the name of one thing for that of another associated or related to it; for example: crown is a metonym for monarch."*

Thus the word *proi* is a metonym for *daybreak* or *early dawn*. Dr. Zodhiates also points out that the word *proi* is anti *opse*, that is, opposite or a contrast of the word *opse*. We can better understand the word *proi* if we examine several texts in the Greek New Testament where it also occurs:

*"When it is evening [opsias] ye say, It will be fair weather: for the sky is red. And in the morning [proi], It will be foul weather today" [Matthew 16:2-3 KJV].*

Please note how the word *proi* is used to contrast *opsias*. The word *proi* is used in opposition to evening. It must be understood to imply early morning dawn

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daybreak.

*“And in the morning [proi], rising up a great while before day, he went out, and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed” [Mark 1:35 KJV].*

This text is of extreme significance. In verse 32 we are told that after the Sabbath ended and the Sun did set, Jesus healed many who were sick. He spent the night in the house of Simon Peter and very early in the morning went to a solitary place to pray. We are here in a perfect situation to judge how the word *proi* is actually used. In under no circumstances can it be used to apply to evening, for the word *opsias* was used in verse 32. The word *proi* was used to designate the morning dawn. And in this case the word was used in reference to the same time of day as it was used in Mark 16:2. In both cases it refers to early Sunday morning dawn.

*“And straightway in the morning [proi] the chief priests held a consultation with the elders and scribes and the whole council, and bound Jesus, and carried him away, and delivered him to Pilate” [Mark 15:1 KJV].*

Once again the word *proi* clearly refers to early morning dawn or daybreak. For Jesus ate the meal with his disciples the previous evening — just after sunset. He spent some time on Mount of Olives and in the Garden of Gethsemane. Then he was arrested and led to Caiaphas the High Priest. After being ridiculed and tried, the chief priests summoned the whole Sanhedrin in the morning, that is, *proi*. Clearly the Greek word does not refer to sunset but absolutely and positively to early morning dawn.

*“Watch ye therefore: for ye know not when the master of the house cometh, at even [opse] or at midnight, or at the cockcrowing, or in the morning [proi]” [Mark 13:35 KJV].*

Once again the Greek word *proi* was used to denote early morning. If John states that Mary went to the tomb "*proi*" — in the morning, at daybreak — how then could he also say that it was "still dark?" Let me first of all give you several Greek-English interlinear translations.

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*"But on the first [day] of the week Mary the Magdalene comes early dark still it being to the tomb, and sees the stone taken away from the tomb" [Interlinear Greek-English New Testament, by George Ricker Berry].*

*"Now on the one [first] [day] of the week Mary Magdalene comes early darkness yet being = while it was yet dark being to the tomb, and sees the stone having been taken out of the tomb" [The Interlinear Greek-English New Testament, by Alfred Marshall].*

*"on the And first of the sabbaths, Mary the Magdalene comes early, darkness yet being to the tomb, and sees the stone being removed from the tomb" [The Interlinear Bible, Hebrew-Greek-English, by J.P. Green Sr].*

*"To the but one [day] of the sabbaths Mary the Magdalene is coming early of darkness yet being into the memorial tomb, and is looking at the stone having been lifted off out of the memorial tomb" [The Kingdom Interlinear Translation of the Greek Scriptures].*

In each case we find the word "proi" translated as "early." The translators generally understand John to mean that Mary went to the tomb early on Sunday morning while it was still dark. That is, before dawn or daybreak. But if that is what John meant then he does not only contradict other Gospel authors – especially Mark who states that she, with other women, went to the tomb "at the rising of the Sun" – but he also contradicts himself since the word "proi" definitely means "morning" and "daybreak" and at that time it could not have been still dark. I believe that this is what John actually meant, translating it in modern English:

*"And one day after the Sabbaths, Mary Magdalene came in the morning, while darkness was still in the tomb, and looking at the stone she saw that it was lifted from the memorial tomb."*

Once we accept the sunrise reckoning of time we must also accept the fact that Mary went to the tomb after Saturday ended, that is, at sunrise, otherwise she would not have gone on the first day of the week.

### Testimony of Luke

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In Luke 24:1-3 we read:

*"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. And they found the stone rolled away from the sepulchre. And they entered, and found not the body of the Lord Jesus" [KJV].*

The text also clearly states that very early in the morning the women went to the tomb and found it empty. Practically all Sabbatharians believe that Jesus arose from the dead late on Saturday afternoon. Yisrayl Hawkins, overseer of the House of Yahweh, Abilene, Texas, claims that the text is mistranslated from the Greek. He argues that the words "in the morning " are not in the Greek text but were added by the King James translators. In support he reprinted the text from Greek-English Interlinear Bible by Alfred Marshall which reads:

*"But on the one of the week while still very early upon the tomb they came carrying which they prepared spices" [The Sabbath: Every Question Answered by Hawkins p. 201].*

Hawkins, just like most Sabbatharians, believe in sunset to sunset computation of time – hence "very early on the first day of the week" was just after Saturday sunset. But Hawkins was dishonest and hid the facts. Just because the words "in the morning" are not found in Marshall's English

translation does not prove that they are not in the Greek. Hawkins refused to comment on each Greek word. He simply reprinted this text as a fact.

The truth is, however, that this text of Marshall is somewhat mistranslated. Yahweh's New Covenant Assembly also incorrectly claims that there is no basis to add the words "in the morning." Again, they only refer to the Greek word *bathus* which is translated *very early* in both King James Bible and Marshall's Interlinear Bible. Both, Hawkins and YNCA ignore and refuse to address the Greek word

*orthros*.

This word was translated "in the morning" in the King James Bible and "while still" by Marshall. Let us take a close examination of this word in order to discover the true meaning of the text.

The word

*orthros*

is number #3722 in Strong's and is thus rendered by James Strong:

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*“dawn [as sun rise, rising of light]; by extens. morn.”*

The *Complete Word Study Dictionary New Testament* defines the word as follows:

*“The daybreak or dawning of the day, the early morning.”*

We are also told that the word *orthros* is related to *orthrizo* [3719], *orthrinos* [3720] and *orthrios* [3721]

—

all of which clearly refer to dawn

—

early morning. We are also told that the word

*orthros*

is a synonym of

*proia*

and

*proi*

—

dawn, daybreak. And, finally, the dictionary points out that the Greek word

*orthros*

is in contrast to

*hespera*

[evening],

*opse*

[evening, the close of the day],

*nux*

[night] and

*skotos*

[darkness].

*Thayer's New Greek-English Lexicon*

defines the word

*orthros*

as follows:

*“to stir up, rouse; daybreak, dawn, early in the morning.”*

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*Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words* defines the word in the following manner:

*“daybreak, early dawn, early in the morning.”*

Please note how the word *orthros* was used elsewhere in the New Testament.

*“And early in the morning he came again into the temple”* [John 8:2 KJV].

Please note the translation of Hawkins:

*“And early in the morning He returned to the sacred precincts of The House of Yahweh.”*

Please also note the rendering of Alfred Marshall of this text:

*“And at dawn again he arrived in the temple”* [Greek-English Interlinear].

Please note how Hawkins again renders the Greek word *orthros* correctly in Acts 5:21:

*“And when they heard this, they entered into the sacred precincts of The House of Yahweh early in the morning.”*

The apostles were arrested and locked up in prison. During the night an angel released them and instructed them to go and teach the people in the temple. Early in the morning they did so.

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In Acts 5:21 Marshall renders the word *orthros* as *dawn* [not *while still*]. It is also significant to point out the fact that this Greek word was also used in the Septuagint Bible to translate Hebrew words for *dawn* and *daybreak*.

Please note the following texts:

*"And Yahweh has sent to you all His servants the prophets, rising **early** and sending them"*  
[The House of Yahweh Bible].

*"But on the seventh day they rose at **daybreak**"* [The House of Yahweh Bible].

*"A day of darkness and of gloominess, a day of clouds and of thick darkness, like the **morning clouds**"*  
[The House of Yahweh Bible].

In these passages the Greek word *orthros* is used to convey the Hebrew meaning of the word. Hawkins himself must admit so since that is exactly how he rendered these texts. Hawkins also agrees that the word *bathus* actually means *twilight, earliest dawn*

. He of course applies it to the twilight just after sunset. He points to the word *bathus*

and then states that the word is not defined "early in the morning" by Bullinger in his Critical Lexicon. But he altogether ignores the word "orthros" which precedes the word "bathus." We have already seen that the word

*orthros*

means "dawn, early morning." Even Bullinger defines this word as the "time before daybreak."

But Hawkins cleverly hid the fact by reprinting the rendering of Marshall where the word *orthros*

is rendered "very early." Then he reprinted the word

*bathus*

from Bullinger's Lexicon which is rendered "while still" and "deep twilight, earliest dawn" by Ethelbert Bullinger. In this way he was able to claim that the words "in the morning" nowhere appear in this text. Please note his own translation of Luke 24:1:

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“Now on the First Day of the week, at the earliest dawn, they came to the sepulchre bringing spices which they had prepared.”

The words *earliest dawn* correspond to *bathus*. But the word *orthros* has been left out and is nowhere rendered in this text. If Hawkins was honest with himself, or if he realized the facts, then he would have translated this text in the following manner:

*“Now on the First Day of the week, in the morning, at the earliest dawn, they came to the sepulchre.”*

Hawkins and Mansager from YNCA insist only on the word *bathus* and altogether ignore the word *orthros*. They also favor the meaning "twilight." They, however, ignore the fact that the word twilight does not only refer to the time just after sunset but it also refers to the time just before sunrise. Notice the definition of the word *twilight* in Collier's Dictionary:

*“the light reflected from the sun after sunset and before sunrise, the period during which this light prevails.”*

The text of Luke therefore clearly shows that the women went to the tomb at the early dawn of the morning on Sunday, and found an empty tomb. Jesus was already risen during the night before the first day of the week began – according to the correct biblical computation of time.

### Testimony of Mark

In Mark 16:2 we read:

*“And very early in the morning the first day of the week, they came unto the sepulchre at the*

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*rising of the sun*" [KJV].

Again, Hawkins claims that the text is mistranslated and he renders it in the following manner:

*"And very early on the First of the week, they came to the sepulchre just after the setting of the sun"* [The Holy Scriptures, House of Yahweh Edition. See also his book: THE SABBATH, page 201].

Hawkins argues that the Greek phrase *anateilantos tou helious* should be translated *after the setting or end of the sun*

. He breaks the word

*anateilantos*

to

*ana tello.*

The Greek word

*ana*

is a preposition and is usually rendered

*at, upon, after.*

The word

*tello*

can also be rendered

*end, termination*

. Therefore he concludes that the text should be translated "at the end or termination of the Sun." The context of Mark 16:2 does not allow sunset visit. The Greek words

*lian*

and

*proi*

argue against it.

The word *lian* means: "very much, exceedingly." The word *proi* - number #3029 in Strong's means: "daybreak, early morning." I have already defined the word "proi" when I have dealt with Luke's version. Hawkins cleverly used the words "very early." But omitted "in the morning" although the word "proi" demands it. The King James translators correctly translated the words "lian proi" as early in the morning."

The word *anateilantos* itself expressly denotes *sunrise*. It is word number #393 and is rendered

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in Strong's as "to cause to arise."

Thayer

's *New Greek-English Lexicon*

defines it: "to cause to rise." Spiros Zodhiates points out in his *The*

*Complete Word Study Dictionary New Testament*

that the word

*anatelaintos*

or

*anatello*

is actually opposite of "duno" which refers to the setting of the Sun. In the whole of the Greek New Testament nowhere does the word

*anateilantos*

actually refer to the setting of the Sun. Let us see some of the texts where the word "anatello" appears:

*"The people which set in darkness saw great light; and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death light is **sprung up**" [Matthew 4:16 KJV].*

Hawkins in his own translation renders the last phrase of this text in the following manner:

*"...upon them the Light **has shined.**"*

Hawkins in this case renders the word *anatello* "to shine." Now please pay a special attention to the following text of Matthew 13:6 – quoted from the very translation of Yisrayl Hawkins:

*"But when the sun **rose up** they were scorched, and because they had no root, they withered away"* [The Holy Scriptures – House of Yahweh Edition].

The word *rose up* Hawkins translates from the Greek word "anateilantos" – the same word that appears in Mark 16:2. And he translates it so in connection with the Sun. In other words – at the rising of the Sun

because of the heat, the plants withered. Why did he not translate

*anateilantos*

in this case as the "setting of the Sun?" Please also note the following text also taken from the very translation of Hawkins:

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*"...until the day dawns and the morning star RISES in your hearts" [2 Peter 1:19].*

Please note how he translates *anateilo* [393] as **rises** rather than **sets**. Why do so if he really believes that the word means sunset? In James 1:11 Hawkins renders

*anateilo*

[393] in the following manner:

*"For when the sun rises with its burning heat, the grass withers."*

Nowhere in his whole translation of the Greek New Testament does Hawkins translate the word *anatello*, *anateilo*,

or

*anateilantos*

as

*sunset*

except in Mark 16:2. He had to do so in this text in order to uphold the late Saturday afternoon resurrection.

### Testimony of Matthew

The text of Matthew 28:1 is very controversial. Frankly, I don't know with what version to begin this text since the translators do not agree. Some understand the text to imply the visit to the tomb early in the morning – at daybreak – while majority understand it to imply the visit late on the Sabbath, shortly before sunset. I will first refer to some biblical versions which clearly imply Sunday morning visit.

The New English Bible:

*"The Sabbath had passed, and it was about daybreak on Sunday, when Mary of Magdala and the other Mary came to look at the grave."*

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Next quotations will refer only to the first part of the verse, since this is the matter of contention.

Good News Bible:

*"After the Sabbath, as Sunday morning was dawning..."*

The Bible for Today:

*"The Sabbath was over, and it was almost daybreak on Sunday..."*

New Living Translation:

*"Early on Sunday morning, as the new day was dawning..."*

The Message:

*After the Sabbath, as the first light of the new week dawned..."*

New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures:

*"After the sabbath, when it was growing light on the first day of the week..."*

These are the translations which clearly imply that the visit to the tomb took place on the day *after*

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the Sabbath. Some translators have translated the text ambiguously which can be taken either way. However, majority of the translators believe that the visit took place late on the Sabbath and at the time just before the first day of the week began. This is evident from the following translations.

*Interlinear Greek-English New Testament*, by George Ricker Berry:

*"Now late on Sabbath, as it was getting dusk toward the first day of the week..."*

□ The word "dusk" means "darkness" and it comes from Old English "dox" which means "dark." Thus this *Greek-English Interlinear Version* clearly implies the visit at evening twilight just before the first day of the week.

The *Interlinear Greek-English New Testament*, by Alfred Marshall:

*"But late of the sabbaths, at the **drawing on toward** one of the sabbaths=the first day of the week..."*

Marshall clearly implies that the women went to the tomb while it was still a Sabbath since he states that at that time the first day of the week did not as yet begin but was only *drawing on toward* it. The Greek word "eis" means "toward." Spiros Zodhiates in *The Complete Word Study Dictionary New Testament* on p. 645 after defining the word "epiphosko" as "drawing toward" and "shine" has this to say in regards to Matthew 28:1:

*"In the evening of the Sabbath when the Jewish day was drawing on towards the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went..."*

Didascalia Apostolorum:

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*"At even on the Sabbath, when the first day of the week drew on..."*

Aramaic Peshitta:

*"In the evening of the sabbath, when the first day of the week began to dawn..."*

This is very significant. I have shown earlier that it was generally held in the East that Jesus arose from the dead on Saturday. The official Bible for the eastern Christians is Aramaic Peshitta. George Lamsa, in his English translation of the Peshitta Bible, on pp. 3-4 states:

*"The Assyrian church, or as it is known, the ancient Apostolic and Catholic Church of the East, was one of the strongest Christian churches in the world and was noted for its missions in the Middle East, India, and China. Its missionaries carried the Christian gospel as far as China and Mongolia, Indonesia, Japan and other parts of the world. Not until the 14<sup>th</sup> century was this church rivaled by any other church in the world. It was the most powerful branch of Christendom in the Near East, Palestine, Arabia, Lebanon, Iran, India and elsewhere."*

Practically all those who regard Aramaic Peshitta as their authentic Bible accept the version of Matthew and therefore the Saturday resurrection. Baptist professor Archibald Thomas Robertson in his *Word Pictures in the New Testament*, on page 240 translates and then comments on Mattew 28:1:

*"Now late on the sabbath as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week [opse de sabbaton, tei epophoskousei eis mian sabbaton]. This careful chronological statement according to Jewish days clearly means that before the sabbath was over, that is before six p.m., this visit by the women was made..."*

The Latin Vulgate Bible reads:

"Vespere autem sabbati" which means "But on Sabbath evening."

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The Latin Vulgate agrees with the version of Aramaic Peshitta which also reads "in the evening of the Sabbath."

Now this is very significant since the Vulgate Bible was translated by St. Jerome by the commission of Pope Damasus I in 382 c.e., from the best Greek manuscripts. The English word "vesper" comes from Latin word "vespere" and simply means "evening" or "eventide." Matthew's Gospel had to place the visit to the tomb in the evening so that it would not agree with Luke's Gospel which places it in the morning. The Synoptic principle demands that Matthew and Luke simply do not agree. For a conclusive proof of this please read my article 'Corruption of the Canonical Gospels.'

Now that we have established that the resurrection of Jesus took place on Saturday, it becomes clear that his crucifixion could not have taken place on Friday for that day would have been the annual Sabbath. Furthermore, Saturday is not the third day from Friday but only the first. Jesus said that he would be raised "the third day," "in three days," and "after three days." The statement in Matthew 12:40 "three days and three nights" which is the very foundation of all those who believe in the afternoon Saturday Sabbath resurrection I do not regard as authentic since it was missing in the Hebrew Matthew which was used by the early Nazarenes. Likewise, if Friday was the 15<sup>th</sup> and the annual Sabbath, it follows then that the women prepared spices [according to Lukan version] on the annual Sabbath, a thing they were prohibited to do. Also [according to Markan version] the women had to buy spices after the annual Sabbath was over and actually on the Saturday Sabbath. This had to be so if Jesus was crucified on Abib 15, since then there would have been two sabbaths back to back. Moreover, if Jesus was crucified on Friday then the chief priests and the Pharisees went to see Pilate on Saturday and with the soldiers sealed the tomb on Saturday Sabbath. If this was the case then Matthew would have surely pointed that fact out. But instead he wrote:

*"Now the next day, that followed the day of preparation, the chief priests and Pharisees came together unto Pilate..."* [Matthew 27:62 King James Bible].

Matthew did not refer to the day of the crucifixion as the first day of Unleavened Bread or as the Feast, or the Sabbath as it was called in the Mosaic Law, but rather as the "day of preparation." John called it "the preparation for the Passover" which clearly refers to the day before the 14<sup>th</sup> of Abib when the victim was killed in the evening of the 14<sup>th</sup>. Likewise, the "next day" Matthew does not call the Sabbath nor does he points out the hypocrisy of the Pharisees and the chief priests who condemned Jesus for healing on their Sabbath while they themselves desecrate their Sabbath. We have seen earlier that Symeon was executed on the sixth day of the week which preceded the annual observance of the resurrection. If Jesus was crucified on Friday then

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the document would have pointed out that it was the day of the crucifixion just as it pointed out that Saturday was the day of the resurrection.