

הַיּוֹם בַּאֲשֶׁר קוֹמֵם יֵשׁוּעַ
הַמָּשִׁיחַ מִן־הַמָּתִים



**The Resurrection Day
Of Messiah Yeshua**

When It Happened

According To The Original
Texts

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(laid out in book order)

Counter Arguments — *Great Sabbaths*

whatever day of the week it might happen to fall.³¹⁶

The faults of the LXX, Targums, and Rabbinical writers have been mentioned before, viz. they translated the word “Sabbaths” as “weeks.” The purpose here is not to endorse those translations (whose beginnings lie in the second century), but to show that the foundation of the dogmatic argument against the feast day being called the “Sabbath” is full of holes, and that critics who take the dogmatic view have plenty of fellows to deflate their certitude.

The dogmatism of the critics, and in this case the Church and Judaism, leaves the question of what to do with the “Great Sabbath” (*μεγάλη ἡ ἡμέρα ἐκείνου τοῦ σαββάτου*). Franz Delitzsch translates this for us: *תְּשַׁבֵּת יוֹם הַגָּדוֹל* = V’Gadol Yom Ha-Shabbat. That is, it was the Shabbat HaGadol. The explanation of the Church is that the Sabbath is “Great” whenever a feast day happens to coincide with the weekly Sabbath. If the ad hoc nature of this apologetic is not clear, then consider that the feast day would not be “great” in the six out of seven years that it does not coincide with the weekly Sabbath. The explanation they give is simply to rid themselves of the annual Sabbath occurring between Wednesday sunset and Thursday sunset in that year, and the fact that it is called “great” because it joined together the Passover in Egypt and the Exodus on the first day of unleavened bread.

But the Church did not stop with this explanation. They decided to redefine the whole issue. The Greek Orthodox say the Great Sabbath is the weekly sabbath between the Friday crucifixion and Sunday resurrection in every year. Thus, the need for a Jewish feast day to land upon it to make it Great is forgotten. It is great simply because it lies between the crucifixion and resurrection. The Roman Catholic Church agrees, but usually calls this day “Holy Saturday”:

The Saturday, or Sabbath, in Passion Week, was commonly known by the name of the Great Sabbath. It was the only Sabbath throughout the year that the Greek churches, and some of the Western, kept as a fast.³¹⁷

³¹⁶ Commentary on the Holy Scriptures, Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1960, vol. i. “Lev 23:11ff,” pg. 175).

³¹⁷ *Cyclopaedia of Biblical, Theological, and Ecclesiastical Literature*,

It's Work Objections — Counter Arguments

Thus Israel's greatest Sabbath and feast day was moved onto the weekly Sabbath and turned into a fast! Of course when John called the annual Sabbath the "Great Sabbath," it was not a fast, and it was not perpetually placed on the weekly Sabbath. It was great because it was Israel's greatest day.

Judaism, however, was not to be outdone by the Church. They also had an interest in ridding themselves of the "Great Sabbath" attested to by John. For to acknowledge the Evangelist is too much, and to certify his correctness too dangerous. The Jewish masses might figure things out. So the Rabbis decided sometime after the second century that the "Great Sabbath" for them would now be the Sabbath before the Passover:

It is extremely doubtful whether the Jews described any Sabbath as "the great Sabbath" until later. The only argument in favour of an early date is its occurrence in John xix. 31. The entire absence of the term from the early Rabbinic sources led Zunz to the view that the Synagogue adopted it from the Church. Much later the Jews applied the title to the Sabbath before Passover, Pentecost, New Year, and Tabernacles.³¹⁸

So we see that the "great Sabbath" has been moved out of its place by both the Synagogue and the Church.

IT ISN'T POSSIBLE ON SABBATH

One of the charges that the authorities wanted to try Yeshua on was Sabbath breaking. It seems that Yeshua's definition of work on the Sabbath was nowhere so stringent as the Scribes and Pharisees. Yeshua healed on the Sabbath. He instructed a man to carry his bed. He allowed his disciples to "harvest" (Luke 6:1). He made mud on the Sabbath. And he said he was working. Of course it was redemptive work—a work of rescuing. And the Torah permitted rescuing on the Sabbath. Yeshua justified his disciples by citing the fact that the Priests do work in the Temple during their service to YHWH, and he also cited exceptional circumstances sometimes justified ignoring the

volume 7. John McClintock, James Strong, pg. 732, "Passion Week."

³¹⁸ *Studies in Pharisaism and the Gospels*, pg. 69, Israel Abrahams.

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