

JEWISH OR ROMAN TIME?

(7th Day or 1st Day?)

Ac.20:7-11

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. In view of the conflicting claims concerning Ac.20:7 and the time or the day when the disciples at Troas “came together to break bread,” we are asking three questions:
 - a. Was it done on the 7th day of the week, or Saturday, or on the 1st day of the week, or what our calendars call Sunday?
 - b. Was it the Jewish method or reckoning time or the Roman method the disciples were then observing as per the context of Ac.20:7-11?
 - c. How can we determine the truth as to which day it was and whether it was Jewish time or Roman time they were observing?
2. This is the burden of this study.

II. DISCUSSION

A. FIRST, THE CONFLICTING CLAIMS CONCERNING AC.20:7 OF WHICH WE SPEAK.

1. Some people of our day known as “Hebrew Christians” or some such designation claim it was on Saturday evening or the 7th day of the week, therefore it was according to Jewish time.
2. Some Bible versions such as the following claim it was on Saturday night, thus the 7th day of the week.
 - a. NEB renders Ac.20:7: “On the Saturday night”
 - b. TEV translates Ac.20:7: “On Saturday evening we gathered together for the fellowship meal. Paul spoke to the people and kept on speaking until midnight, since he was going to leave the next day.”
 - c. The Jeru. Bible renders Ac.20:7: “On the first day of the week we met to break bread. Paul was due to leave the next day...” (With this footnote added: “The day was reckoned in the Jewish fashion; the Lord’s day began on the evening of Saturday and it was then that this meeting was held.”)
 - d. The Contemporary English Version (by The Am. Bible Society) renders Ac.20:7: “On the first day of the week we met to break

bread together...” (With the following footnote added: “On the first day of the week: Since the Jewish day began at Sunset, the meeting would have begun in the evening.”)

- e. Important note: Each of these versions:
 - (1) Claim the disciples met to break bread on Saturday night.
 - (2) Claim the Jewish method of reckoning time is to be recognized in the context of Ac.20:7-11.
 - (3) Recognize that Paul was due to or was going to leave or depart from Troas the next day.
 - (4) Recognize that the disciples met on one day to break bread, that Paul preached to them on that day, continuing his preaching until midnight, and that Paul departed from Troas the next day, or on the “morrow”, V.11.
 - (5) In other words, these versions recognize there are two different days involved in this text – day one when they met to break bread, and day two when Paul departed.
 - (6) It’s important to notice this because, as we shall show, it proves that the method of reckoning time this text recognizes is Roman time, not Jewish time.
 - (7) These versions contradict themselves in this context!
- 3. Now, on the other hand, to further show the fact of the conflicting claims concerning Ac.20:7, thus the problem with which we are dealing, we take note of other Bible versions, the majority of which are recognized by all as accurate, trustworthy, dependable; versions that do not contradict themselves in this context.
 - a. KJV: “And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight.”
 - (1) Several other versions that agree: ASV; NASV; NKJV; ESV; Goodspeed; NIV.
 - b. Important note: Each of these versions:
 - (1) Claim the disciples met to break bread on the 1st day of the week, not the 7th day, V.7a.
 - (2) Recognize that:
 - (a) The disciples met on one day to break bread.
 - (b) Paul “preached to them, ready to depart on the morrow (or the next day, or day two),” V.7b.
 - (c) He continued his speech until midnight of the day they met to break bread, V.7c.

- (d) After midnight, and before day-break, Paul miraculously raised the young man Eutychus from the dead, Vv.9,10,12.
- (e) Then Paul came up again, ate a common meal, talked with the brethren “a long while, even till break of day,” at which time he departed from Troas, V.11.
- c. Thus Paul departed from Troas “on the morrow” or the next day, as he was ready to do, Vv.7,11.
- d. There are two different days involved in our text – day one when they met to break bread, which was before midnight, and day two, which was after midnight, when Paul departed from Troas

B. NOTE HOW THIS CONTEXT PROVES THAT THE ROMAN METHOD OF RECKONING TIME IS THE METHOD THE DISCIPLES WERE THEN USING.

1. To see this we must first understand both the Jewish method of reckoning time and the Roman method.
 - a. The Jewish method counted the day from 6:P.M. to 6:P.M., divided into four segments as follows: 6: P.M. to 12 midnight; 12 midnight to 6: A.M.; 6:A.M. to 12 noon; 12 noon to 6: P.M.
 - b. While the Roman method of reckoning time is from midnight to midnight, divided into four segments as follows: 12 midnight to 6: A.M.; 6: A.M. to 12 noon; 12 noon to 6: P.M.; 6: P.M. to 12 midnight.
2. Our text says they met to break bread on one day, the 1st day of the week, sometime before midnight, for Paul preached to them till midnight, then at day-break, after that midnight, Paul departed, a time the text identifies as the “morrow” (V.7), or the next day, or the 2nd day of the week.
 - a. Even the versions that say it was Saturday night when the disciples met to break bread, and Jewish time was being used by the disciples, admit there are two different days spoken of in this context!
3. Consider this: In view of the facts in this context, the Jewish method of reckoning time cannot be the method herein recognized because it would cause a contradiction!
 - a. For according to Jewish time the day is counted from 6: P.M. to 6: P.M.; therefore, when Paul met with the disciples on the 1st

day of the week to break bread, then departed at day break, which the text says he did, he was actually departing on the same day, not "on the morrow," as planned, and as the text says he did.

(1) Thus we have a contradiction, for according to Jewish time the "morrow" was yet 12 hours away at 6: P.M.

4. But if, and only if, the Roman method of counting time is recognized as being used at that time, when he met with the disciples on the 1st day of the week to break bread, preached to them till midnight that day, raised Eutychus, ate his common meal, talked till break of day, all after midnight, and then departed, he was departing "on the morrow," or on the 2nd day, as the text affirms he was ready to do, not on the same day, or the 1st day.
 - a. For according to the Roman method of reckoning time midnight was the end of the 1st day and the beginning of the 2nd day.
 - b. They met on the 1st day of the week before midnight.
 - c. Paul preached to them till midnight.
 - d. Paul departed at day-break after preaching till midnight.
 - e. His departing was on the "morrow," the 2nd day of the week, not the same day of the week they met to break bread.
 - f. Thus we have no contradiction! Just plain textual harmony!
 - g. Proving once again that the Bible is its own best interpreter!

III. CONCLUSION

1. The answers to our introductory questions are obvious.
 - a. The Roman method of reckoning time is to be recognized in Ac.20:7-11, not the Jewish method.
 - b. The day the disciples met to break bread was the 1st day of the week, not the 7th day of the week.
 - c. The truth on the matter is easily determined by simply making a careful exegetical study of the text of Ac.20:7-11.
2. Therefore, those in our day who are known as "Hebrew Christians," or by whatever name, are wrong about Ac.20:7.
3. So also are the Bible versions we have quoted that render the text as Saturday and claim for the text the Jewish method of reckoning the time!
 - a. Such versions are simply not dependable, nor trustworthy.
 - b. Should not be used!