

making a comparison between four soldiers and the 4th day of the week fast to explain the Wednesday fast. If so he was not suggesting that the actual arrest was on Wednesday. If that is the case then we would suppose that Catholics began to fast on Wednesday because Jesus was arrested by four soldiers, but the arrest was actually Friday morning?

To really get to the bottom of this we must judge between the existence of the fasting tradition and the Bishop's explanation for it:

A second reason is that the liturgy is of particular importance because of its communal character. Liturgical rituals are performed, not by individuals but by communities, by groups ... Moreover, rituals are characterized by a certain stability; usually they are not invented all of a sudden ... In this respect they differ from ideas and opinions found in the writings of individual authors, such as theologians and exegetes.³⁴¹

The fasting tradition was established because earlier Christians believed the actual arrest was on Wednesday morning, and not because of some silly symbolism between the 4th day and four soldiers. This is made plain by the Didascalia, and by the biblical fact that the arrest did indeed take place between 12 a.m. and 5 a.m. Wednesday morning.

In Asia Minor most people kept the fourteenth day of the moon, disregarding the [Weekly] Sabbath: ... Also that Polycarp, bishop of Smyrna... kept Easter [Passover] on the fourteenth day of the moon, ... While therefore some in Asia Minor observed the day above-mentioned, others in the East kept that feast on the sabbath indeed, but differed as regards the month. ... The former thought the Jews should be followed, though they were not exact: the latter kept Easter after the equinox, refusing to celebrate with the Jews ... 'for,' said they, 'it ought to be celebrated when the sun is in Aries, in the month called Xanthicus by the Antiochians, and April by the Romans.' ... But all other Christians in the Western parts, and as far as the ocean itself, are found to have celebrated Easter after the equinox, from a very ancient tradition.³⁴²

Very early there was confusion concerning the First Sabbath of Passover (the 15th) and the Weekly Sabbath following. At issue was the day on which the resurrection was celebrated. The earliest view (the biblical one) was that the resurrection was on the weekly Sabbath, which was the "first of the Sabbaths". However, the Quartodecimans kept Passover on the 14th day of the month considering the time after sunset to mark the "First of the Sabbaths" of Unleavened bread. It was a "first Sabbath," indeed, but the wrong first Sabbath having confused the two Sabbaths. Therefore they kept the resurrection at the end of the 14th day. This short timing was justified by the Gnostic views on the Harrowing of Hell previously mentioned, and "the third day" was taken exclusively as a reverse type (Mat. 26:2; Mark 14:1). They followed the Jews in their intercalation of the year, even after the Jews began missing intercalations and putting the 14th before the equinox.

The other group, mentioned by Socrates Scholasticus, observed the resurrection on the weekly Sabbath. He mentions this not once, but twice. This was the true "first of the Sabbaths" the weekly Sabbath after Passover. We should not

³⁴¹ G. Rouwhorst, "Jewish Liturgical Traditions in Early Syriac Christianity" *Vigiliae Christianae*, Vol. 51, No. 1 (Mar., 1997), pp. 72-93.

³⁴² Socrates Scholasticus. *Ecclesiastical History*. Book V, Chapters XXI-XXII. *Nicene and Post Nicene Fathers*, Vol. 2, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans, 1952, p. 131.

assume that these believers neglected the Passover. They did observe the 14th also, but it was not the Resurrection celebration for them, and the Catholic writer is only concerned with the history of the Easter observance here and not other customs. Now these believers figured out that the Jews were missing the intercalation of the 13th month and so they deviated from the Jews and put the Passover after the equinox in the new year where it belonged biblically.

The reason Socrates Scholasticus says the first class of Quartodecimans "disregarded the Sabbath" is that he says this in respect of the resurrection. It is probable that the Eastern Church was of two minds on the resurrection, one group taking their cue from Jewish believers placed the resurrection on the Sabbath before sunrise, while the majority wanted to place it on Saturday night after "three hours" as is stated in the Didascalia. The Jewish believers and the Syrian Gentiles of the Eastern Church existed more peacefully for a while. Therefore the Eastern Church forbade fasting on the Sabbath and put the resurrection at the earliest moment on Sunday that they could to woo the Jewish Christians into the Orthodox Church.

The battle ground, however, was over Asia Minor where the Jewish believers and Gentile believers had gone in two radical directions. Here it was not so easy to escape Roman persecution. They all had to abandon the annual Sabbath resurrection observance after the Second Jewish Revolt, but the Quartodecimans were able to celebrate the annual first Sabbath (the Great Sabbath) at midweek without drawing undue attention. Their Gnosticism helped them justify this. Further to the West, only Sunday was observed as Easter. When the persecution abated, then Sabbath observance reasserted itself in the remoter areas.

Gregory of Tours writes in the 6th century:

22. James fasts from the death of the Lord to the resurrection 23. Now in our belief the resurrection of the Lord was on the first day, and not on the seventh as many deem. [non septiman sicut multi putant] 24. Pilate transmits an account of Christ to Tiberius. The end of Pilate and of Herod. 25. Peter and Paul are executed at Rome by order of Nero, who later kills himself. 26. The martyrs, Stephen, James and Mark; burning of Jerusalem by Vespasian; death of John.³⁴³

Gregory, in his mediaeval ignorance, is trying to give sort of a chronology here. What is interesting is that he finds it necessary to pointedly deny that the resurrection was on the Sabbath while confessing that "on the seventh [day]...many put it". There must have been those with contrary views at the time, especially in view of the fact that the Latin Bible preserved the Greek in "prima Sabbatorum" as the resurrection day.

³⁴³ Gregory of Tours (539-594): *The History of the Franks*, Vol. 2, (trans. By D.M. Dalton), Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1927, pg. 24 (Underlined portion), " 23. De die resurrectione dominicae. Dominicam vero resurrectionem die prima facta credimus, non septimam, sicut multi putant." Some sources seem to quote only, "the resurrection of the Lord was on the first day, and not on the seventh" leaving off the critical words "as many believe" (sicut multi putant).