

**HOW
SUNDAY
BECAME
THE
POPULAR
DAY OF
WORSHIP**



Randy Barber

Preface

If you were to tour the Supreme Court building in our nation's capital, the tour guide would take you into the large room where the nine judges hear the cases argued before them. And if you look above the bench you will see figures carved into the edge of the ceiling. Among those figures you will see one holding stone tablets. He is Moses, and the tablets he is holding are the moral code known as the Ten Commandments. And there is a real divide among Christians today as to whether the Ten Commandments are still binding in today's society. They take this position despite the fact that the Bible defines sin as breaking God's Law (1 John 3:4). Thankfully not all Christians hold that view. The Amplified Bible defines sin as "ignoring God's Law by action or neglect or by tolerating wrongdoing."

"The commandments of God given to Moses in the mount are as binding today as ever they have been since the time when they were proclaimed in the hearing of the people." (Dwight L. Moody, *Weighed and Wanting*, page 15).

"We hear a lot about ethics and morality. We like to think that we're sophisticated and refined as sinners, but we're not. Sin has not changed. The Ten Commandments are still God's standard. God never changes. The Moral Law is absolute forever." (Dr. Billy Graham, *Decision*, April 1989).

"I wonder exceedingly how it came to be imputed to me that I should reject the Law of Ten Commandments. Whosoever abrogates the Law must of necessity abrogate sin also." (Martin Luther, *Spiritual Antichrist*, pages 71-72).

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A VOICE OF HOPE PUBLICATION

Imagine for a moment

Imagine for a moment that you are God, and you came down on Mount Sinai and gave man your Ten Commandment Law that you wrote in stone with your finger (Exodus 31:18). You wrote them in stone because you intended for them to last—exactly as you wrote them—for as long as this earth exists (Matthew 5:18). And then you set before man a blessing and a curse. A blessing if he obeys your commandments—just as you wrote them—and a curse if he turns aside from them and goes his own direction (Deuteronomy 11:26-28). And then years later, you inspire the Apostle John to write on the last page of the New Testament these words of promise, “*Blessed are those who do His commandments, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into the city.*” (Revelation 22:14). Revelation confirms the fact that God’s Law—just as He wrote it—was meant to last as long as heaven and earth exist (Matthew 5:18).

Now shift gears for a moment and imagine you are the Devil. You were cast out of heaven for the rebellious act of trying to place your throne above the throne of God (Isaiah 14:12-14). And now imagine you are standing before that same Ten Commandment Law (Exodus 20:1-17) that God gave to man. Are you going to be content to let man follow it—just as God wrote it—or are you going to try to deceive man by twisting and reinventing it to suit your own deceptive purposes (Matthew 24:24)?

As Christians we know the sad truth all too well. The Devil has some of us today believing that the whole Moral Law (Ten Commandments) has been abolished, even though Jesus said it could not be altered as long as heaven and earth exist (Matthew 5:17-18). He has others believing that we do not need the second commandment any longer (not worshipping images); or the sixth (not taking life); or the fourth (keeping the Sabbath holy). And this has brought a lot of confusion into the Christian faith. The second and sixth commandments are self explanatory,

so for the purpose of this study we will be looking at the shift that has taken place with the fourth commandment, which deals with the seventh-day Sabbath that God blessed, sanctified, and pronounced holy at creation.

It's a well known fact that the Bible Sabbath is Saturday and not Sunday. So if Saturday is the Sabbath, where did Sunday observance come from? Long before there was a Protestant religion, long before the reformers protested and broke away from the Catholic Church, the Sabbath was changed from Saturday to Sunday. Notice this statement by Johann Neander, "The festival of Sunday, like all other festivals, was always only a human ordinance, and it was far from the intentions of the apostles to establish a divine command in this respect; far from them, and from the early apostolic church, to transfer the law of the Sabbath to Sunday. Perhaps, at the end of the second century a false application of this kind had begun to take place for men appear by that time to have considered laboring on Sunday as a sin." (*Johann Neander's Church History*, translated by Henry John Rose, page 186).

Catholic acknowledgments

The Catholic Church claims to have made this change, as can be seen from their publication *The Catholic Mirror*, September, 1893, "The Catholic Church for over one thousand years before the existence of a Protestant, by virtue of her divine mission, changed the day from Saturday to Sunday." What follows are additional acknowledgments about the change of the Sabbath by Roman Catholic authors.

"Question: How prove you that the Church hath power to command feasts and holy days? Answer: By the very act of changing the Sabbath into Sunday, which Protestants allow of, and therefore they fondly contradict themselves, by keeping Sunday strictly and breaking most other feasts commanded by the same Church."

(H. Tuberville, *An Abridgment of Christian Doctrine*, page 58).

The Sabbath was not changed by God; it was changed by man only decades after the death of John the Revelator. But who gave man the right to change one of God's Commandments? Jesus Himself said that not "one jot or tittle" could be changed in the law as long as heaven and earth exist (Matthew 5:17-19).

The following statement can be found in the official Catholic publication *Our Sunday Visitor*, June 11, 1950, "In all their official books of instruction Protestants claim that their religion is based on the Bible and the Bible only, and they reject tradition as even a part of their rule of faith... There is no place in the New Testament where it is distinctly stated that Christ changed the day of worship from Saturday to Sunday. Yet, all Protestants follow tradition in observing Sunday."

Cardinal Gibbons wrote in *The Faith Of Our Fathers*, 92nd Edition, page 89, "You may read the Bible from Genesis to Revelation, and you will not find a single line authorizing the sanctification of Sunday. The Scriptures enforce the religious observance of Saturday, a day which we never sanctify."

The Catholic Virginian, October 3, 1947 said, "Nowhere in the Bible do we find that Christ or the apostles ordered that the Sabbath be changed from Saturday to Sunday. We have the commandment of God given to Moses to keep holy the Sabbath day, that is the seventh-day of the week, Saturday. Today most Christians keep Sunday because it has been revealed to us by the Church outside of the Bible."

Protestant acknowledgments

BAPTIST

"Of course, I quite well know that Sunday did come into use in early Christian history as a religious day, as we learn from the Christian Fathers and other sources. But what a pity that it comes branded with the mark of paganism, and christened with the name of the sun-god when adopted and sanctioned by the papal

apostasy, and bequeathed as a sacred legacy to Protestantism.” (Dr. Edward T. Hiscox, author of *The Baptist Manual*, quoted by Mark Finley, *The Almost Forgotten Day*, page 106).

CONGREGATIONALIST

“The current notion that Christ and His apostles authoritatively substituted the first day for the seventh, is absolutely without any authority in the New Testament.” (Dr. Lyman Abbott, *Christian Union*, January 19, 1882).

EPISCOPAL

“The Bible commandment says on the seventh day thou shalt rest. That is Saturday. Nowhere in the Bible is it laid down that worship should be done on Sunday.” (Phillip Carrington, *Toronto Daily Star*, October 26, 1949).

CHURCH OF ENGLAND

“The seventh day of the week has been deposed from its title to obligatory religious observance, and its prerogative has been carried over to the first, under no direct precept of Scripture.” (William E. Gladstone, *Later Gleanings*, page 342).

LUTHERAN

“The observance of the Lord’s day [Sunday] is founded not on any command of God, but on the authority of the Church.” (*The Catholic Sabbath Manual*, Part 2, Chapter 1, Section 10).

METHODIST

“The reason we observe the first day instead of the seventh is based on no positive command. One will search the Scriptures in vain for authority for changing from the seventh day to the first.” (Clovis G. Chappell, *Ten Rules for Living*, page 61).

MOODY BIBLE INSTITUTE

“The Sabbath was binding in Eden and it has been in force ever since. This fourth commandment begins with the word,

'Remember,' showing that the Sabbath already existed when God wrote the law on the tables of stone at Sinai. How can men claim that this one commandment has been done away with when they will admit that the other nine are still binding?" (Dwight L. Moody, *Weighed and Wanting*, page 47).

PRESBYTERIAN

"The Sabbath is a part of the decalogue, the Ten Commandments. This alone forever settles the question as to the perpetuity of the institution. Until, therefore, it can be shown that the whole Moral Law has been repealed, the Sabbath will stand. The teaching of Christ confirms the perpetuity of the Sabbath." (T. C. Blake D.D., *Theology Condensed*, pages 474-475).

These frank statements, coming from both Catholics and Protestants who worship on Sunday, show the extremely shaky foundation on which Sunday observance rests. You might ask, "How can this be?" And the best answer I can give you is a story I read recently—

"One day during the time of Imperial Russia, the Czar was walking through one of the beautiful parks connected with his palace. He came upon a sentry standing guard near a patch of shrubs. Surprised to find a guard in that place, he inquired, 'What are you doing?' 'I don't know,' answered the sentry. 'I am following the captain's orders.' The Czar asked the captain, 'Why do you have a sentry standing guard over a patch of shrubs?' 'Regulations have always been that way,' the captain responded, 'but I don't know the reason for it.' After a thorough investigation, the Czar discovered that nobody in his court could remember a time when it had not been that way. So the Czar turned to the archive containing the ancient records and, to his surprise, this is what he discovered. One hundred years before, Catherine The Great ordered a rose bush to be planted and had stationed a sentry nearby so that no one would trample on the young plant.

The plant had long since died. Now a guard stood watching, but he didn't know what he was guarding." (Mark A. Finley, *The Almost Forgotten Day*, 1988, page 31).

We just read the statement from *The Catholic Mirror* which says, "The Catholic Church, for over one thousand years before the existence of a Protestant, by virtue of her divine mission, changed the day from Saturday to Sunday." So a thousand years before the first Protestant even existed the change was made, and yet scores of Protestant churches are still standing guard over that "rose bush" today. They are believing, defending, and guarding a doctrine that slipped into the church before the Dark Ages began. They are guarding this doctrine while most of their members know nothing of its origin.

"The Protestant world, at its birth, found the Christian Sabbath [Sunday] too strongly entrenched to run counter to its existence. The Christian Sabbath is therefore, to this day, the acknowledged offspring of the Catholic Church." (*The Catholic Mirror*, September 23, 1893).

How it all started

It may come as a surprise to you to learn that not one Christian started keeping Sunday as a day of religious rest until long after the ascension of Jesus. It's a well documented fact that the first Christians to abandon the Sabbath for Sunday were those in Alexandria and Rome.

During the first century AD well over one hundred thousand Jews and Christians were put to death by Rome. Nero was especially ruthless, and in fact it was he who had the apostles Peter and Paul put to death. The persecution of the Jews was so great during this time that Christians began trying to distance themselves from Judaism. This Jewish persecution by Rome seems to have created the desire among Christians to be viewed as different from the Jews, in the hope that Rome would then stop persecuting them.

This desire to disassociate Christianity from Judaism brought on the rejection of the Sabbath and the subsequent substitution of the new day of worship.

“Opposition to Judaism introduced the festival of Sunday very early, indeed, into the place of the Sabbath.” (Johann Neander, *General History of the Christian Religion and Church*, page 186). Dr. Samuele Bacchoicchi wrote, “Anti-Judaism appears to have caused a widespread devaluation and repudiation of the Sabbath.” (Samuele Bacchioicchi, *From Sabbath to Sunday*, 1977, page 269).

Mark Finley wrote, “It was Sixtus, the bishop of the Christian Church in Rome, who began the process that led to a transference of the day of worship from the Sabbath to Sunday. He convinced Christians to celebrate the resurrection, which occurred on Sunday... At first the celebration was not a weekly observance but an annual one. By changing this celebration to Sunday and applying it to the resurrection, the Christians in Rome were able to disassociate themselves from the Jews.”

Finley continues, “It just so happened that this resurrection celebration coincided with a joyous Roman festival in honor of the sun. The converted sun worshiper felt very much at home with the Christian spring festival, held on the sun’s day, to honor the resurrection. Thus Sixtus, by encouraging Christians to celebrate the resurrection on the first day, actually put them in the position of honoring the day of the sun.” (Mark A. Finley, *The Almost Forgotten Day*, 1988, pages 46-47).

“This drift into compromise in order to win the pagans was accentuated by the first civil Sunday law in AD 321, passed by the emperor of Rome, Constantine [a former sun-worshiper]. It was one of his first official acts following his nominal acceptance of Christianity, when he put himself under the spiritual direction of the Roman Catholic clergy and ‘made the priests his counselors.’” (Eusebius, *Life of Constantine*, Book 1, Chapter 32, cited in *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, Second Series, Volume 1, page 491).

“The earliest recognition of the observance of Sunday as a legal duty is a constitution of Constantine in AD 321, enacting

that all courts of justice, inhabitants of towns, and workshops were to be at rest on Sunday, with an exception of those engaged in agricultural labor.” (*Encyclopedia Americana*, Article “Sabbath”).

Of this edict of Constantine, George Elliott wrote, “To fully understand the provisions of this legislation, the peculiar position of Constantine must be taken into consideration. He was not himself free from all remains of heathen superstition. It seems certain that before his conversion he had been particularly devoted to the worship of Apollo, the sun-god... The problem before him was to legislate for the new faith in such a manner as not to seem entirely inconsistent with his old practices, and not to come in conflict with the prejudices of his pagan subjects. He names the holy day, not the Lord’s day, but the ‘day of the sun,’ the heathen designation, and thus at once seems to identify it with his former Apollo worship.” (Reverend George Elliott, *The Abiding Sabbath*, page 229).

However, the Church did not want to be left out of the picture, and Eusebius, (Bishop during the time of Constantine) wrote of the part the Church had in the change of the Sabbath, “All things whatsoever that it was duty to do on the Sabbath, these we transferred to the Lord’s day.” (Eusebius, cited by Robert Cox, *Literature of the Sabbath Question*, Volume 1, page 361).

“Sunday, the first-day of the week, was adopted by the early Christians as a day of worship. No regulations for its observance are laid down in the New Testament, nor, indeed is its observance even enjoined.” (Schaff-Herzog, *Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge*, Volume VI, page 2259).

“The first who ever used it [the title Sabbath] to denote the Lord’s day [here made to mean Sunday] is one Petrus Alfonsus. He lived about the time of Rupertus [beginning of the twelfth century], who calls Sunday by the name of Christian Sabbath.” (Peter Heylyn, *History of the Sabbath*, Part 2, Chapter 2, Section 12).

Sir William Domville wrote, “Centuries of the Christian era passed away before Sunday was observed as a Sabbath. History does not furnish us with a single proof or indication that it was at any

time so observed previous to the sabbatical edict of Constantine in AD 321.” (Sir William Domville, *The Sabbath; or an Examination of the Six Texts*, page 291).

The influence of paganism

After the flood, the first great apostasy against God began with Noah’s great grandson, Nimrod. Josephus, the ancient historian, wrote about Nimrod and how he seduced the people of his day to rebel against God. “It was Nimrod who excited them to such an affront and contempt of God. He said he would be revenged on God, if he would have a mind to drown the world again... The multitude were very ready to follow the determination of Nimrod, and to esteem it a piece of cowardice to submit to God.” (*The Complete Works of Flavius Josephus*, Whiston, 1978, page 30).

Genesis 10:10 says, “*the beginning of his kingdom was Babel.*” Nimrod supervised the building of the tower of Babel which became a monument to his rebellion and anger toward God. After God scattered the people from Babel (Genesis 11:8), Nimrod built the city of Nineveh. Emperor worship was common in ancient times, and he was worshipped in Nineveh, as a war-like god, under his deified name, “Ninus.” Austen H. Layard, of the British Museum, excavated the ancient city of Nineveh and unearthed over 2500 tablets. These tablets described the ancient history of the Assyrian Empire, and Layard found inscriptions that said it was “Ninus” who built the city. The word “Nineveh” means “The habitation of Ninus.”

Assyrian legend says that Nimrod was killed, and his spirit, as a bull, became immortal and flew up to the sun where he became “Beelsamon” or “Lord of the heavens.” After his death, Nimrod’s epics as a hunter and a warrior were imitated in the Canaanite, Egyptian, Greek, and Roman cultures. The Assyrians, who believed that Nimrod lived in the sun, continued to worship him under the name of “Ninus.” The Canaanites worshipped

“Beelsamon,” or the sun, under the name of “Baal.” During the time of Israel in the Old Testament, Baal worship was the greatest rival religion to the worship of God. The Egyptians worshipped the sun as “Osiris,” the Romans as “Mars,” the Greeks as “Zeus,” and the Phoenicians as “Pan.” Since Babel was the center of the known world after the flood, and since all civilizations originated there, multitudes of pagan traditions have their origin in the legends of Nimrod.

Babel was the birthplace of sun worship and astrology. From its origin at Babel, traces of this sun worship culture have been found in the history of every nation and society worldwide today. Babylonian astrology had two sacred numbers, the numbers 1 and 7. The number 7 in astrology stood for the seven fate-controlling planets in the zodiac (Deuteronomy 18 says that astrology is an abomination to God). The number 1 meant that the sun-worshipper was to give to the heavenly bull-god the first of everything; the first-day of the week, the first-day of the month, the first-day of the year, the first-born son, first of the cattle, crops, etc. Of course the sun and Nimrod were only fronts used by Lucifer to get the inhabitants of the earth to worship him instead of the God of heaven.

Gaston H. Halsberghe, in his book, *The Cult of Sol Invictus*, 1972, page 26, says, “Sun-worship was one of the oldest components of the Roman religion.” A. Piganiol, in *Histoire de Rome*, 1954, page 229, says that the Emperor Augustus (27 BC) favored the worship of the sun, and that Anthony, before him, portrayed the sun-god on his coins. Halsberghe says that Nero (AD 54-68) “honored the sun,” and Tacitus tells us that Vespasian (AD 69-79) “greeted the rising sun.”

By the end of the first century, the veneration of the day of the sun was already a well-rooted tradition in Rome. The first-day of the week was dedicated to the heavenly body that came first in importance to pagan worship. Hence the name, “Sunday.” Historical records show that Sunday was used as a day of worship ages before the resurrection of Christ. The Romans gave the days of the week their planetary names, and Sunday, was the special

holy day for Roman, pagan sun worship. F. Cumont, in his book, *Astrology and Religion Among the Greeks and Romans*, 1912, page 163, wrote, "Sunday, over which the sun presided, was especially holy." In *The Mysteries of Mithra*, 1956, page 167, we read, "The dies solis [day of the sun] was evidently the most sacred day of the week for the faithful of Mithra." Origen, in *Contra Celsum*, Number 6, pages 21-22, says that Celsus (AD 140-180) listed the days of the week (using their planetary names) in reverse order enabling Sunday to occupy the significant seventh position.

The fact that Sunday was already established as a day of religious worship in Rome made the step from Sabbath holiness to Sunday holiness a very short one for those early Christians seeking to distance themselves from Judaism. It was especially a short step when one realizes that astrology and sun worship seem to have had such a strong influence on those early Christians, as can be seen in Jack Lindsay's book, *Origin of Astrology*, 1972, pages 373-400. In this chapter Lindsay says that Origen (bishop of the church in Rome) complained that many Christians believed that nothing could happen unless it had been "decreed by the stars." Eusebius (bishop of Caesarea) wrote, "I know many who worship and pray to the Sun." F. A. Regan, in *Dies Dominica*, page 196 wrote, "A suitable, single example of the pagan influence may be had from an investigation of the Christian custom of turning toward the East, the land of the rising sun, while offering their prayers."

The Christian Fathers fought these pagan influences for a time, but then (probably out of frustration) took on an apologetic attitude, adopting many pagan customs into Christianity. This apologetic attitude can be seen in Jerome's *In Die Dominica Paschae Homilia*, where he explains, "If it is called 'Day of the Sun' by the pagans, we most willingly acknowledge it as such, since it is on this day that the light of the world has appeared and on this day the Sun [notice the spelling] of Justice has risen." J. A. Jungmann, in *The Early Liturgy to the Time of Gregory the Great*, 1962, page 51, wrote, "Christianity absorbed and made its own what could be salvaged from pagan antiquity, not destroying it but converting it..." A. J. Vermeulen, in *The Semantic Development of Gloria in*

Early Christian Latin, 1956, page 170 said, “They [the Church Fathers] took a much easier view of certain pagan customs, conventions, and images and saw no objection, after ridding them of their pagan content, to adapting them to Christian thought.”

“We are told in various ways by Eusebius, that Constantine, in order to recommend the new religion to the heathen, transferred into it the outward ornaments to which they had been accustomed in their own.” (John Henry Cardinal Newman, *An Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine*, London, page 373).

The fact that Sunday was already venerated by the Romans made it easy for those early Christians, who were trying to gain favor with Rome, to associate their worship with the symbolism of the pagan sun. Dr. Samuele Bacchiocchi says that this was “aimed at gaining from the Emperor a favorable appraisal of Christianity.” And it’s because of what you have just read that Sunday has come to be known by many Christians today as “the Lord’s day.”

The Lord’s day

In chapter one of Revelation, John received a vision of Jesus Christ who instructed him to write what he saw and send it to the seven churches in Asia. In verse 10 he says, “*I was in the Spirit* [or in vision] *on the Lord’s day*,” however he does not tell us which day that was. Many people today speculate that it was Sunday. But remember that no Bible writer ever substantiates this speculation. Our only authority on this matter must be Jesus Himself. Surely He knows which day He is the Lord of. In Mark 2:28 He says, “*Therefore the Son of man is Lord also of the Sabbath.*” Here is the only clear, concise statement in all of Scripture as to which day “the Lord’s day” is. The Bible Sabbath is the Lord’s day.

The phrase “the Lord’s day” occurs only one time in the entire Bible. When this phrase is used today by Christians it is generally intended to mean Sunday. Sunday-keepers often employ this text in attempted support for the keeping of the first-day of the week in place of the seventh-day Bible Sabbath. But is that

what John meant by the phrase when he used it? Let's let history set the stage for us so that we can better understand what John meant when he wrote these words.

Because of the persecution of the Jews, Sunday observance began with the Christian church in Rome under Bishop Sixtus about AD 125 (Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History*, Book 5, chap. 24). But prior to Sixtus, in fact as early as the time when John wrote Revelation (AD 96), some Christians had begun the annual practice of celebrating the closing days of Christ's life. Jesus was crucified on Friday at the time of the Jewish Passover. He died just prior to sunset on the fourteenth day of the Jewish month of Nisan. It became a tradition among early Christians to celebrate the crucifixion at the time the Jews celebrated Passover. The Christians took their reckoning date from the Jewish fourteenth day of Nisan. Some Christians celebrated only the day of the crucifixion (always on the fourteenth of Nisan), while others celebrated the three days from the crucifixion to the resurrection. Still others observed the whole time of the Jewish festival (Feast of Unleavened Bread) which lasted until the twenty-first day of Nisan (Eusebius, Book 5, chap. 24). In any case the celebration centered around the day of the crucifixion. The fourteenth day of Nisan was observed without concern for which day of the week it fell on, the same way that New Years is celebrated on January 1 regardless of which day of the week it falls on.

It was this practice that Sixtus undertook to change. About AD 125 he changed the emphasis of this yearly celebration from the crucifixion to the resurrection. And he changed the date of the celebration from the fourteenth of Nisan, regardless of the day of the week, to always on Sunday, the first-day of the week, in honor of the resurrection. But remember, this was still only an annual celebration and not a weekly one at this time.

Justin Martyr, in his *First Apology*, gives us the first ever recorded description of a weekly Sunday observance by Christians about AD 155. In this document he referred to the day the Christians observed as "the day of the sun" because he had no other name for it. In other words, Sunday was still not called

“the Lord’s day” as late as AD 155. And it was not until after AD 200 that John’s phrase “the Lord’s day” began being attached to Sunday.

The first time that Sunday was ever called “the Lord’s Day” in recorded history was by Clement of Alexandria at the end of the second century AD. And it was not until the fourth century (AD 325), at the Council of Nicaea, that Pope Sylvester imposed the title “Lord’s Day” on Sunday. Then in AD 364, at the Council of Laodicea, the Catholic hierarchy prescribed Sunday worship and condemned Saturday worship.

Was John referring to Sunday when he wrote the phrase “the Lord’s day” in Revelation 1:10? I believe not. The word “Lord’s,” in Revelation 1:10, is a translation of an adjective used in the Greek phrase *kuriakee heemera*. The adjective *kuriakee* is derived from the regular New Testament word for Lord, *kurios*, with a suffix added to its stem. In English we have no suitable adjective form of “Lord,” since the only one we have, “lordly,” has come by usage to have a meaning not adaptable to this phrase. The nearest we can come to a proper equivalent is to say “day of the Lord,” or as in the text, “Lord’s day”—meaning a day belonging to the Lord or set apart by the Lord.

Scripture gives us an interesting parallel between “Lord’s day” and the phrase “Lord’s supper” (1 Corinthians 11:20). As most all Christians know, this is the supper presided over by Jesus just prior to His crucifixion, and ordained by Him to be observed by His followers “till He comes.” The adjective qualifying “supper” in this verse is the exact same one used to qualify “day” in Revelation 1:10, and it is not used anywhere else in the New Testament. In the case of the “supper,” it was instituted by the Lord’s setting us the example of how to observe it. In the case of “day,” it was also instituted by the Lord’s setting us the example of how to observe it. Scripture sets the Bible Sabbath apart as “the Lord’s day.” In the Ten Commandments the seventh-day is called “*the Sabbath of the Lord your God*” (Exodus 20:10). In Isaiah the Lord calls it “*My holy day*” (Isaiah 58:13). In three Gospels, Jesus calls Himself “*Lord of the Sabbath*” (Matthew 12:8; Mark 2:28; Luke 6:5). The

seventh-day Sabbath is the only day God ever set apart by resting upon it Himself, and commanding us to “remember” to keep it holy. In other words, it is supremely “the Lord’s day,” as surely as the supper was and is “the Lord’s supper.”

Clifford Goldstein, in his book, *A Pause For Peace*, 1992, page 95, wrote, “Just because Sunday has been called the Lord’s day for years doesn’t make it the Lord’s day, any more than the fact that people believed for centuries that the earth was the center of the universe makes it so. We shouldn’t read back into this phrase the meaning of Sunday. Instead, we should use the Bible to read into the phrase its Biblical meaning, and nothing in Scripture ever calls the first-day of the week the Lord’s day.”

Some Christians teach that John received new light in his visions at Patmos, when he wrote Revelation, bidding him to call Sunday by the name of “Lord’s day.” But a point we need to remember is that John’s gospel is dated later than his book of Revelation. John used the phrase “the Lord’s day” in AD 96 when he wrote Revelation, yet in AD 98, when he wrote the Gospel of John, he twice referred to Sunday only as “the first-day of the week” (John 20:1, 19). Why would John in his Gospel call Sunday “the first-day of the week,” if, in an earlier book, Revelation, he had been instructed to call it “the Lord’s day?” What does this tell me? John did not receive new light in vision at Patmos bidding him to call Sunday “the Lord’s day.” Rather, I believe it was consistent for the Apostle John to write *kuriakee heemera*, “Lord’s day,” as a designation for the Sabbath of the Lord.

The missing text

In doing my research for this book, I asked a Sunday-keeping pastor friend of mine for Biblical proof of the change of the Sabbath from the seventh to the first-day of the week. While we both agreed that the Bible should be our final authority on any subject, he reluctantly admitted that there is no textual support for Sunday observance. Instead he referred me to the writings of

some of the early church fathers such as Ignatius, Barnabas, Justin Martyr, and Clement of Alexandria for his Sunday rationale.

Ignatius was Bishop of Antioch at the time of Trajan (AD 98-117). He wrote *The Epistle of Ignatius to the Magnesians*, a book which was not included in the authorized New Testament because its content was not believed to be inspired by the Holy Spirit (see *The Lost Books of the Bible*, page 172). And while it's true that in AD 101 Ignatius does make a statement favoring the first-day instead of the seventh, he also made many other statements renouncing the custom of Sabbath observance. The fact that he urges Christians to stop keeping the Sabbath tells us that the Sabbath was still kept at the turn of the century. Dr. Samuele Bacchiocchi says of Ignatius, "His language suggests that the separation from Judaism was in progress, though the ties had not yet been severed... Ignatius, by urging Christians to differentiate themselves from Jewish practices such as 'sabbatizing,' offers us significant insight on how the existence of anti-Jewish attitudes and efforts contributed to the adoption of Sunday observance." (Dr. Samuele Bacchiocchi, *From Sabbath to Sunday*, 1977, pages 213-216).

Ignatius only further reinforces what this book has been telling you all along. Sunday observance did not begin with Christ or the apostles in Jerusalem, but gradually crept in around the turn of the first century as a result of apostasy in the Christian faith.

Barnabas of Alexandria wrote *The Epistle of Barnabas* between AD 130-138 (see E. Goodspeed, *Apostolic Fathers*, 1950, page 19). While Ignatius makes only an obscure reference to Sunday, Barnabas makes the first explicit reference to the observance of "the day of the sun." His epistle was written as an attack against Judaism, and it reveals how social and theological tensions between Jews and Christians caused the devaluation of the Sabbath and the adoption of a new day of worship by many Christians.

Justin Martyr lived, taught and wrote in Rome under the reign of Antoninus Pius (AD 138-161). "He was at first a pagan proponent of Platonism, and subsequently embraced Christianity

without abandoning Platonism.” (*Encyclopedia Americana*, 1973, Volume 16, page 267). He is the first contemporary writer to give an extensive description of Sunday worship. Dr. Bacchiocchi writes, “The testimony of Justin, coming from Rome, confirms what we have already gathered from other sources, namely the existence, particularly in the capital city, of deep anti-Judiac feelings... The adoption of a new day of worship appears to have been motivated by the necessity to evidence a clear dissociation from the Jews.” (*From Sabbath to Sunday*, pages 233-234). On page 235 of the same book Dr. Bacchiocchi says, “The diversity of motivations advanced by Justin to justify Sunday worship reflects the effort being made to justify a practice only recently introduced.” In other words, at the time of Justin Martyr, Sunday observance had only been “recently introduced” into Christianity as a means of avoiding any semblance of Judaism.

Those Christians who today quote from these sources as proof for the change of the Sabbath must realize that their proof is coming from extra-biblical sources; sources that can hardly be considered inspired or theologically correct, as you will see from what you are going to read next.

Clement of Alexandria, born around AD 150, wrote between AD 200-215 (see *Encyclopedia Americana*, 1973, Volume 7, page 48). He wrote his three epistles, *Protrepticus*; *Paedagogus*; and *Stromata*, one hundred years after the death of the last apostle. He tells us that by that time the seventh-day Sabbath had “become nothing more than a working day.” From his writings we see that the church to which he belonged had gradually ceased to observe the Bible Sabbath, and had begun keeping Sunday in its place as a holy day. But I will leave you to judge just how theologically correct his writings are after you read the following from his works—

“There is a certain bird called Phoenix; of this there is never but one at a time; and that lives 500 years. And when the time of its dissolution draws near, that it must die, it makes itself a nest of frankincense, and myrrh, and other

spices into which when its time is fulfilled it enters and dies. But its flesh putrefying, breeds a certain worm, which being nourished with the juice of the dead bird brings forth feathers; and when it is grown to a perfect state, it takes up the nest in which the bones of its parents lie, and carries it from Arabia into Egypt. And flying in open day in the sight of all men, lays it upon the altar of the sun, and so returns from whence it came.”

Imagine being compelled to read from such a source as this to prove that “the day of the sun” has taken the place of the Bible Sabbath for the Christian. No wonder the preface to *The Lost Books of the Bible* says these writings were “not included in the authorized New Testament.”

Allen Walker wrote, “Since many of the Romans who came into the apostate, or apostatizing, church were sun worshipers before they came in, they were permitted to continue to give certain respect to the day, but were instructed that its observance should have to do with ‘the risen son’ rather than ‘the rising sun.’ Gradually as the pagan element grew in influence and power in the church, the true Sabbath was supplanted by Sunday.” (Allen Walker, *The Law and The Sabbath*, 1953, page 150).

The Sabbath in the New Testament

Over the years, I have heard many Christians reason that the Sabbath is strictly an Old Testament institution. They argue that the Sabbath cannot be found in the New Testament. If you have used this reasoning in the past, maybe it’s because you haven’t been looking for the Sabbath in the New Testament.

In Matthew 3:15, Jesus, who had no need of baptism, was baptized as our example. In John 13:15, Jesus washed the disciples’ feet as our example. The truth is that Jesus came to this earth to do more than die for our sins. He also came to live as our example. And following His example, we are “to walk, even as He walked.” (1 John 2:6).

Luke 4:16 and Mark 6:2 tell us that Jesus worshipped on the Sabbath day. Matthew 12:8 and Mark 2:28 tell us that Jesus is “*Lord of the Sabbath day.*” According to Luke 23:54-24:1, Jesus even honored the Sabbath while in the tomb. But the most convincing proof of the Sabbath in the New Testament comes from Christ’s own prophecy in Matthew 24. Jesus, looking some forty years into the future, spoke to His disciples of the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans. Jesus admonished His listeners to watch for certain signs, and then to flee to the mountains. Prophesying this destruction He said in verse 20, “*And pray that your flight may not be in winter or on the Sabbath.*” This prophecy of Jesus was fulfilled nearly 40 years after He ascended back to heaven when Titus sacked Jerusalem in AD 70. Now if Jesus knew that the Sabbath was to be changed to another day after His death, this would have been the perfect opportunity for Him to tell His disciples whom He was training for evangelism. But He didn’t. In fact He told them to pray that they would not have to flee Jerusalem on the Sabbath when they saw His prophecy being fulfilled. Nowhere in Scripture does Jesus even hint at a change in the Bible Sabbath.

Acts 17:2 tells us that it was Paul’s “manner” (or custom) to worship on the Sabbath day. Acts 13:42 tells us that he also preached to the Gentiles on the Sabbath. If the Christian Sabbath was to be changed to a day other than the Bible Sabbath, here was the perfect opportunity for Paul to explain this change to his Gentile listeners. But he didn’t. In fact, nowhere in Scripture does he even hint at a change. Paul clearly taught the Gentiles on the Sabbath in Acts 18:4, and he clearly taught the Jews concerning the Sabbath in Hebrews 4:4-11.

A Bible student can hardly miss finding the Sabbath while reading the New Testament. In fact the Sabbath is given more coverage by the apostles than any other single aspect of Christ’s ministry. The Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John) were not written immediately after Jesus’ death. They were written between 30 and 60 years after His ascension. The fact that the gospel writers and Paul give so much attention to the Sabbath is indicative of the importance they attached to the Sabbath at the

time of their writing. These evangelists were writing to encourage their congregations. They were not simply writing a history of what happened, but rather a theological account to promote the Christian faith. Had they believed the Sabbath to be abolished, they would never have encouraged their congregations by even referring to it.

Gerhard Barth, in his book, *Tradition and Interpretation in Matthew*, London, 1963, page 81 says, "In Matthew's congregation the Sabbath was still kept, but not in the same strict sense as in the Rabbinate." If Pastor Matthew and his congregation still kept the Sabbath after Christ's ascension, it is quite evident that Matthew knew nothing of any supposed change of the day. A. W. Argyle, in his book, *The Gospel According to Matthew*, Grand Rapids, 1963, page 183, wrote, "The Sabbath was still observed by Christians when Matthew wrote."

The book of Mark was written by John Mark, cousin to Barnabas. Mark was a scribe who became Peter's interpreter when Peter addressed audiences whose language was other than Aramaic. The book of Mark is believed to be Peter's account of Christ's life, and it was written as a Christian evangelistic tool for non-Jewish readers. The style of writing suggests that it was written in Greek with Latin transliteration so as to be more easily understood by the Romans. What is the significance of this? In Mark 2:27 Jesus said, "*The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath.*" Some 27 years after Christ's ascension, Peter recalled these words of Jesus to teach his Gentile listeners the true meaning of the Sabbath. What was that meaning? That the "*Sabbath was made*" (*ginomai* in the Greek refers to its origin at creation) to insure man's physical and spiritual well-being. "*Not man for the Sabbath*" means that man is not the ultimate arbiter who determines the validity of one of God's commandments.

Luke, a physician, and one of Paul's Gentiles converts from Antioch authored the book of Luke about AD 63 (some 30 years after the ascension), and the book of Acts shortly thereafter. In Luke 1 he introduces us to Christ's earthly parents; in Luke 2 he tells of Christ's birth; in Luke 3 of His baptism; and in chapter 4 he

introduces us to Jesus as a habitual Sabbath-keeper. In Luke 4:16 he wrote, “So He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up. And as His custom was, He went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and stood up to read.” Luke also refers to Paul as a habitual Sabbath-keeper in Acts 17:2, and wrote of Paul’s teaching on the Sabbath in Acts 13:42, Acts 16:13, and Acts 18:4. The word “Sabbath” occurs 21 times in Luke’s gospel, and 8 times in the book of Acts. This surely suggests that Luke attached great significance to the day. Luke’s intention was to place Jesus before his readers as a model of true Sabbath-keeping.

Luke, being a Gentile, made a habit of pointing out things which were exclusively Jewish. “*Nation of the Jews*” (Acts 10:22); “*land of the Jews*” (Acts 10:39); “*people of the Jews*” (Acts 12:11); and “*synagogue of the Jews*” (Acts 14:1). And though Luke refers to the Sabbath over and over again, never does he say, “*Sabbath of the Jews.*”

If the Sabbath was not to be kept in the New Testament, someone forgot to tell Matthew, Peter, Paul, Luke and many others who should have known. If “*All Scripture is given by inspiration of God...*” (2 Timothy 3:16), then one must acknowledge that these men wrote what they did under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, and that neither they, nor any other Bible writer, intended to leave us with the idea that the Sabbath had been changed.

Revelation tells us that God will create this earth new again after the millennium is over. Speaking of this new earth, God, through Isaiah, said, “*...and from one Sabbath to another, all flesh shall come to worship before Me, says the Lord.*” (Isaiah 66:23). The Sabbath is not an Old Testament institution, but rather a Bible institution that spans from Eden lost to Eden restored.

“The Sabbath was established originally in no special connection with the Hebrews, but as an institution for all mankind, in commemoration of God’s rest after the six days of creation. It was designed for all the descendants of Adam.” (*Adult Quarterly*, Southern Baptist Convention Series, August 15, 1937). “The seventh-day was blessed and hallowed by God Himself. This commandment is of universal and perpetual obligation. So long,

then, as man exists, and the world around him endures, does the law of the early Sabbath remain. It cannot be set aside, so long as its foundations last... It is not the Jewish Sabbath. There is no Jewish element, any more than there is in the third commandment, or the sixth.” (*Eadies Biblical Cyclopedia*, page 561).

The Sabbath and the Cross

Genesis chapter one takes us step by step through the first six days of creation week. Verse 31 says, *“And God saw every thing that He had made, and, behold, it was very good. And the evening and the morning were the sixth day.”* Luke calls that sixth-day the *“preparation”* (Luke 23:54), meaning it is a day to prepare oneself for the Sabbath. And on that sixth-day of creation, the day we now call Friday, God formulated His masterpiece. He created a pair of living, breathing human beings. Genesis 1:27 says, *“So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.”*

In Mark 2:27 Jesus said, *“The Sabbath was made for man...”* God knew that man would need a weekly reservation of uninterrupted time to remain close to his Maker. So at the end of that first Friday of creation week, with Adam and Eve at His side, God made the Sabbath. Beginning with Genesis 2:2 we read, *“And on the seventh day God ended His work which He had done, and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had done. Then God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because in it He had rested from all His work which God had created and made.”* Just think, if Adam and Eve needed Sabbath rest in paradise, how much more do you and I need it today.

God finished creation in six literal days, and then invited His children to share in the celebration of His work. Adam and Eve rested with God, and by doing so, acknowledged the work that He had done in their behalf. After all, this is the purpose of the Sabbath. It points us away from ourselves and our own works, so that we can value the work that God has done for us.

George Vandeman wrote, “This Sabbath rest in God’s finished work symbolizes what Christianity stands for. Other world religions focus on human ‘realization’—what we can do to help ourselves. But Christians celebrate God’s accomplishments on our behalf. That’s why the Sabbath points us away from ourselves and from our works, so we can value what God has done.” (George E. Vandeman, *When God Made Rest*, 1987, page 19).

Justin Edward said, “Had all men properly kept the Sabbath all would have known Jehovah, and worshipped from the creation of the world to the present time, and idolatry would never have been practiced on the earth.” But unfortunately that is not what happened. You know the sad story all too well. Adam and Eve disobeyed and changed God’s plan for their happiness. God told them if they sinned they would have to die, and on the day they strayed from Him, that death process began. Genesis chapter 3 tells us that God took Adam and Eve out of Eden and made them “*coats of skins*” (verse 21). Where did He get those skins from? What must one do in order to have clothing made from skins?

On that dark day outside of Eden God took the life of that first innocent lamb. He did this to show Adam and Eve that death is the consequence for sin. Revelation 13:8 tells us that Christ is “*the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.*” God explained to our first parents the wages of sin, and then told them that the lamb would represent the Saviour, or the substitute who would someday die in their place. Yes, the plan of salvation had its origin way back at the east of Eden, and every bleeding lamb of the Old Testament reminded the repenting sinner that one day a Substitute would die in their place.

Now that we have allowed our imaginations to scan creation and the fall, move ahead with me about four thousand years to a hill outside of Jerusalem. It’s another Friday afternoon. Amid the shameful laughter and jeers of the crowd, Jesus hangs dying on a wooden cross. The same Creator who formed our first parents now hangs in open shame as the substitute for a lost race. And as the afternoon sun begins to fade, He cries, “*It is finished,*” and closes His eyes in death. His friends lovingly remove His lifeless body

from the cross and lay Him in the tomb where He remains over the hours of the Sabbath (Luke 23:56). He who rested at the end of creation, now rests at the end of redemption.

Vandeman wrote, “We can see why Jesus proclaimed Himself ‘*Lord of the Sabbath.*’ Because the Sabbath commemorates His two greatest acts on our behalf—creating us and saving us. These are the reasons we worship Him. And we express our faith in Christ as our Maker and Redeemer by sharing His Sabbath rest. Every Friday evening as the sun goes down, millions of Christians around the world stop working. They set aside their unfinished business to celebrate the finished work of Jesus.” (George E. Vandeman, *When God Made Rest*, 1987, pages 20-21).

The next time someone tries to tell you that Sabbath-keeping is an attempt to gain salvation by works, tell them that nothing could be further from the truth. The word “Sabbath” comes from the Hebrew meaning “to cease, to rest”—the exact opposite of works. The Sabbath points us away from our own works and invites us to rest in Christ’s work for us.

Some of your questions answered

Did the Sabbath change at the Cross?

Some Christians teach that Matthew 28:1 is the exact point in Scripture where the change of the Sabbath was made by Jesus when He rose from the tomb. Matthew 28:1 reads, “*In the end of the Sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the sepulchre.*”

The Greek word *opse*, here translated “end,” may also be rendered “after.” In Hebrew reckoning the day ended at sunset. This means that the Sabbath ended when the sun set on Saturday evening, which is consistent with Matthew’s use of *opse* in this verse. It was “*In the end of [or after] the Sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day...*” (meaning at sunrise on Sunday morning), when the two women went to the tomb. This is confirmed by the other three Gospel writers in defining the time when the women

came to the tomb. Mark says plainly, “*when the Sabbath was past*” (Mark 16:1). Luke wrote, “*the first day of the week, very early in the morning*” (Luke 24:1). John says, “*the first day of the week...while it was still dark*” (John 20:1). Friedrich Blass, Ph.D., Th.D., Litt.D., in his book, *Grammar of New Testament Greek*, page 97, confirms the fact that the Sabbath was “clearly over” when the women came to the sepulcher on Sunday morning. This means that Sunday is not an extension of the Bible Sabbath, but the day “after” the Sabbath.

The word for “Sabbath” in Matthew 28:1, and the word for “week” are translated from the same identical Greek word *sabbaton*. By an idiom of the language, both the singular and the plural form of *sabbaton* can be used for either “Sabbath” or “week.” One must study the context of the entire verse to know how to correctly translate. A rule to remember in Greek is that all modifying adjectives must agree in gender, as well as in case and number, with the noun they modify. When context warrants *sabbaton* to be translated “Sabbath,” *Louw and Nida’s Greek English Lexicon of the New Testament* states that it means “The seventh or the last day of the week, Sabbath, Saturday.” And when context warrants the translation of “week,” it means “a period of seven days” or “the period of time that falls between two Sabbaths.”

Some students of Scripture, wishing to promote Sunday sacredness argue that the phrase “the first day of the week” should read “the first of the Sabbaths,” and they conclude that Matthew here designates resurrection Sunday as the first occasion on which Sabbath sacredness was extended to the first-day of the week. But such a translation is grammatically impossible in the Greek. The word *sabbaton* is neuter in gender, and both “first” and “day” are feminine. Hence to make first mean first Sabbath would violate the most fundamental and invariable rule in Greek inflection—that all modifying adjectives must agree with the noun they modify. Hence the true meaning of the phrase is perfectly expressed in its translation “the first-day of the week.”

No knowledgeable Greek scholar has ever attempted to make an argument in favor of Sunday sacredness on the basis of this syntax error. In fact, Greek Professor, Dr. Willbur Fletcher

Steele, in an article published in the *Methodist Review*, May-June, 1899, wrote that this argument for Sunday sacredness “rests upon the profoundest ignoring or ignorance of a law of syntax fundamental to inflected speech.” He called this misuse of *sabbaton* a “travestied exegesis” and a “monumental blunder.” His article was entitled, “*Must Syntax Die That Sunday May Live?*” Greek scholar, F. D. Nichol, wrote, “Novices who have made such an attempt have been rebuked by their more scholarly Sunday keeping brethren who categorically deny the possibility of such a translation.” Matthew 28:1 makes the simple statement that the two Marys’ went to the tomb after the Sabbath was over, as the sun was rising early on Sunday morning. Do not try to complicate Matthew’s statement by reading more into it than this.

What about Romans 10:4?

Some people today interpret Romans 10:4 as saying that the Law of God (Ten Commandments) ended when Christ died on the Cross. But is that really what Paul is saying? The text reads, “*For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.*” The word “end” here comes from the Greek *telos*, and it can be rendered “goal or objective.” And knowing that, Paul would be saying, “*Christ is the goal or objective of the law for righteousness.*” We have all heard someone say they are working toward a certain end. This means they are working toward a certain goal or objective. We see that same word *telos* in James 5:11, “*You have heard of the perseverance of Job and seen the end of the Lord.*” Now we all know that the Lord did not come to an end. This means the “goal or objective of the Lord.”

Has time been lost?

Every time we study the subject of the Sabbath, someone asks, “How do you know that Saturday is still the seventh-day of the week? How do you know that the calendar hasn’t been changed?”

There is no need to carry the question of “lost time” back before the Christian era. Any knowledgeable person will agree

that the weekly cycle, which had its origin at creation, was still employed in Palestine at the time of Christ. All Sunday keeping people believe that Christ rose from the tomb on the first-day of the week, which we call "Sunday." Now, the Bible plainly states that the day preceding that first-day of the week is "the Sabbath day according to the commandment." (Luke 23:56-24:1). Jesus was accustomed to keeping the Sabbath, as we just read in Luke 4:16. Thus the seventh-day in the weekly cycle in the first century of the Christian Era was the same "seventh-day" of the fourth commandment. Therefore it is quite unnecessary to present evidence for "lost time" for the centuries that preceded our Lord Jesus Christ. Still many people question, "How do you know that our current Saturday is the same day that Jesus kept?"

Julius Caesar authorized a calendar (known as the Julian Calendar) which was calculated by the Greek astronomer Sosigenes. It went into effect in 45 BC and was used until AD 1582. But because the Julian Calendar was imperfect, it was reformed in AD 1582 by Pope Gregory XIII. Since then our calendar has been known as the Gregorian Calendar. It is important that you understand that there have only been two calendars since before the time of Christ to our present day—the Julian from 45 BC (some 40 years before Christ's birth) and the Gregorian from AD 1582.

The computations of Sosigenes made the year a bit too lengthy, and by the time of Pope Gregory XIII the Julian Calendar had drifted ten (10) days away from the seasons. The spring equinox fell on March 11 rather than March 21. To correct this, and to bring the calendar year back into harmony with the solar year, ten days were dropped from the calendar. Here is the calendar from October AD 1582 when that calendar change was made—

OCTOBER AD 1582

Su	Mn	Tu	Wd	Th	Fr	Sa
	1	2	3	4	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

You will notice that the ten days were dropped between Thursday the 4th and Friday the 15th. You will also notice that the weekly cycle was not changed. In other words, Friday still followed Thursday, Saturday still followed Friday, etc. *The Encyclopedia Americana*, 1973 Edition, Vol.5, p.188, says of this calendar change, “Note that the continuity of the days of the week was maintained.” We are on the same weekly cycle that Jesus was on.

James Robertson, Director of the U.S. Naval Observatory, Department of the Navy, Washington, D.C., wrote, “We have had occasion to investigate the results of the works of specialists in chronology and we have never found one of them that has ever had the slightest doubt about the continuity of the weekly cycle since long before the Christian era.” (Francis D. Nichol, *Answers to Objections*, page 560).

The change to the Gregorian Calendar was made only in Spain, Portugal, and Italy in 1582. The British countries refused to make the change when the Pope ordered it, so they continued with the old Julian Calendar until the year AD 1752. By that time, it was necessary to drop eleven (11) days. Here is the calendar for September of that year when the British adopted the Gregorian Calendar—

SEPTEMBER AD 1752						
Sn	Mn	Tu	Wd	Th	Fr	St
		1	2	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30

You will notice that the eleven days were dropped between Wednesday the 2nd and Thursday the 14th. You will also notice that while their days of the month had been different from the Gregorian Calendar, their days of the week were exactly the same. In other words, Saturday was the same day under both the Julian and Gregorian calendars, proof once again that the weekly cycle has remained constant. The following statement can be found in *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, Volume 3, page 740, Article, “Chronology.”

It reads, "It is to be noted that in the Christian period the order of days of the week has never been interrupted."

In Russia, the change to the Gregorian Calendar was not made until the year 1918. By then the two calendars were thirteen (13) days apart, yet Saturday in Russia was exactly the same day of the week as Saturday in every other part of the world. Today in Russia, their Saturday is our Saturday, proof that the weekly cycle has not been changed.

The Orthodox Church did not adopt the Gregorian reform until 1922. But when it was Saturday in Greece, it was Saturday in every other part of the world, proof once again that the weekly cycle of days has not been altered. But that's not all. There is more proof that the day we call Saturday is the seventh-day Sabbath. In 108 languages of the world, "Saturday" is rendered "Sabbath." For example—

Spanish	"Sabado"
Italian.....	"Sabbato"
Portuguese.....	"Sabbado"
Latin.....	"Sabbatum"
Bulgarian.....	"Shubbuta"
Russian.....	"Subbota"
Arabic	"As-Sabt"
Greek	"Sabbaton"

Linguistic evidence shows that different people, in widely-scattered parts of the world, have always called Saturday by the name of "Sabbath." If one still has doubts as to Saturday being the seventh-day and Sunday being the first-day of the week, just ask any Sunday-keeping church which day of the week Easter falls on. They will tell you that Easter is the celebration of Christ's resurrection on the first-day of the week (Mark 16:9). Sunday is not the Bible Sabbath. Sunday is without a doubt the first-day of the week.

What about Colossians 2:16?

Colossians 2:16 is probably the most misunderstood and misquoted text in the whole Bible when it comes to trying to

disprove the Sabbath of the fourth Commandment. It is interpreted by some today (1) as abolishing the prohibition of unclean food and drink, and (2) as removing the distinction between days, thus abolishing the seventh-day Bible Sabbath. But is this what Paul is saying to his readers?

Colossians 2:16 reads, “*Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holy day, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days.*” (KJV). Sabbaths here is plural, and it refers to the yearly feast sabbaths of the Ceremonial Law that ended when Christ died on the cross. Presbyterian Clergyman Gordon Clark, in *Colossians: Another Commentary on an Inexhaustible Message*, page 94, cautioned, “The context speaks of food and drink, feasts, and new moons. All this is ceremonial. Then are not the sabbaths here condemned ceremonial sabbaths?”

Jamison, Fausset, and Brown wrote, “The sabbaths of the day of atonement and feast of tabernacles have come to an end with the Jewish services to which they belonged. But the weekly Sabbath rests on a more permanent foundation, having been instituted in Paradise to commemorate the completion of creation in six days. Leviticus 23 expressly distinguishes ‘the Sabbath of the Lord’ from the other sabbaths.” (Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown, *Commentary of the Whole Bible*, Colossians 2:16).

In the above paragraph Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown reference Leviticus 23. Verse 13 says, “*And the meat offering thereof shall be two tenth deals of fine flour mingled with oil, an offering made by fire unto the Lord for a sweet savour; and the drink offering thereof shall be of wine, the fourth part of an hin.*” The sacrificial system revolved around the offering of a lamb as one’s substitute for sin. Along with that sacrifice was a meat (or food) offering, and a drink offering. We still use these two emblems (unleavened bread and wine) today in our Communion Service. Paul mentions these meat and drink offerings while writing about the wilderness tabernacle in Hebrews 9:10, “*Which was a figure for the time then present, in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices, that could not make him who did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience; which stood only in meats and drinks, and diverse washings, and carnal ordinances,*

imposed on them until the time of reformation”—or the cross. So the “meat” or “food” offering was flour mixed with oil that was placed on the sacrifice as it was burning to give a sweet smell. And the “drink” offering was wine, that was poured on the sacrifice along with the meat offering. You can read more about these “meat” and “drink” offerings in Numbers 28. And remember, the word “meat” in the KJV is a generic word meaning “food.” So the “meat offering,” “grain offering,” and “food offering” are all referring to the same thing.

The noted Presbyterian commentator Albert Barnes wrote, “There is not the slightest reason to believe that he [Paul] meant to teach that one of the Ten Commandments has ceased to be binding on mankind. If he had used the word in the singular number—‘THE Sabbath’—it would then, of course, have been clear that he meant to teach that that commandment had ceased to be binding... But the use of the term in the plural number [sabbaths], show that he had his eye on the great number of days which were observed by the Hebrews as festivals... No part of the Moral Law—The Ten Commandments—could be spoken of as ‘a shadow of good things to come.’” (Albert Barnes, *Commentary on the New Testament*, Colossians 2:16).

What about Romans 14:5?

Romans 14:5 reads, “*One person esteems one day above another; another esteems every day alike. Let each be fully convinced in his own mind.*” This text is interpreted by some today as removing the distinction between days, thus leaving the Christian free to worship on any day of his choosing. But is this what Paul is saying to his readers? Not at all.

Romans 14 covers one topic and one topic only, and that is eating or not eating. Paul is actually talking about food and fasting. How do I know? Look at the next verse. Verse 6 reads, “*He who eats, eats to the Lord, for he gives God thanks; and he who does not eat, to the Lord he does not eat, and gives God thanks.*” Now go to the end of the chapter. Verse 20 says, “*Do not destroy the work of God for the sake of food.*” Meyer’s explains that because Paul does not enter into

a lengthy explanation of “days,” but returns immediately in verse 6 to “food,” indicates that the controversy over “days” stemmed around food. (*Meyer’s New Testament Commentary*). Weiss argues from Romans 14:6 that there is no contrast between “him who observes the day” and “him who eats,” and that they are really addressing the same subject. (*Expositor’s Greek Testament*).

The letter to the Romans came less than a year after Paul addressed the Corinthians, and the similarity between 1 Corinthians 8 and Romans 14 is difficult to miss. The first letter to the Corinthians was written around AD 55, and Paul wrote his letter to the Romans less than a year later in AD 56. And since he wrote Romans from Corinth, the struggle at Corinth was still fresh in his mind. In 1 Corinthians 8 the problem is identified as eating foods sacrificed to idols. According to ancient practice pagan priests would sell the food that had been offered to their pagan gods out of the back door of their temple. Paul told the Corinthian believers that because the idols meant nothing to them, it was not wrong to eat the foods dedicated to them. However, he said, not everyone would have sufficient religious training to understand this, and could not with a free conscience eat such foods. So Paul urged those on both sides of this issue not to judge or place a stumbling block in the other one’s way (Romans 14:13).

Verse 5 is where the problem comes in for many Christians. It’s a discussion of “days” and it’s easy for some to try to force the word “day” to mean the Sabbath. But there is no evidence that the discussion about “the weak or the strong” in 1 Corinthians 8 or Romans 14 has anything to do with the Sabbath. The word “eat” appears 15 times in Romans 14, and the word “Sabbath” does not appear at all. So then the question is, what does the word “day” have to do with eating? Some commentators believe the “*disputes*” (verse 1) started with food offered to idols (1 Corinthians 8), and expanded at some point to include “feast days” and “fasting days,” all of which center around the context of food. Everett Harrison says, “The close association with eating suggests that Paul has in mind a special day set apart for feasting or for fasting.” (*The Expositor’s Bible Commentary*). *The Pulpit Commentary* on Romans 14:5 suggests,

“days” being only briefly referred to in a chapter where the main subject is food, would cause some to suppose fast-days only to be meant; in which case the necessary point of conscience would be to abstain from food, or certain kinds of food, on certain “days.”

In Luke 18:12 the Pharisee took pride in the fact that he was not like other men and that he fasted twice a week. Zechariah 7:4-7 says they also observed special fasting days during the fifth and seventh months. These were, and still are, very special “days” to the Jewish people. As Christians we believe that the ceremonial feast days, festivals, and fasting days ended at the cross. And Paul was constantly having to deal with Jewish converts to Christ who continued to try to impose their ceremonial beliefs on the new Gentile converts. This is the subject of Romans 14:5, and remember, if you read the entire chapter together, in context, Paul is dealing with eating or not eating.

Verse 21 continues, *“It is good neither to eat meat nor drink wine nor do anything by which your brother stumbles or is offended or is made weak.”* Paul tells them that they must consider the conscience of others and to put others before themselves. Then he continues, *“Do you have faith? Have it to yourself before God.”* Since this dispute over food was not a doctrinal or moral issue, Paul is saying that what a person “approves” is to be a private matter and not to be done for show, which is exactly what Jesus said in Matthew 6:16, *“Moreover, when you fast do not be like the hypocrites, with a sad countenance. For they disfigure their faces that they may appear to men to be fasting. Assuredly I say to you, they have their reward.”* Hasting’s tells us that both Jews and Gentiles abstained from certain foods on certain days, and this was a constant point of contention between them. (*Hasting’s Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*). And most everyone is aware that Catholics practice a kind of fast, where they do not eat meat on Friday. Albert Barnes, commenting on Romans 14:5 says, “The discussion had reference only to the special customs of the Jews which they would attempt to impose on the Gentiles.”

Is there evidence that Paul is referring to ceremonial “days,” rather than the Sabbath of the Moral Law? In trying to understand

Paul's intent in Romans 14:5, one must consider the content of the rest of the book. In Romans 2:12 Paul says that all mankind will be judged by God's law; in 3:20 that it is by the law that we have the knowledge of sin; in 3:31 that faith establishes the law in our hearts; in 6:1-2 that grace saves from its transgression; in 8:4 that the demands of the law are met by those in Christ; and in 8:7 that the carnal mind is at enmity with the law. Those to whom Paul wrote this epistle were commandment-keeping Christians in the church at Rome. Can you imagine the ruckus it would have caused had they felt that Paul was saying that we can now choose a different day to worship on other than God's Sabbath. Therefore Romans 14:5 cannot be made to mean that Paul spoke against the Sabbath of the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20:8-11). Remember that the Bible was written by men who were "moved" (inspired) by the Holy Spirit (2 Peter 1:21), but the Moral Law is the one place in Scripture that was not written by men. It was written directly by the finger of God (Exodus 31:18) on tables of stone. Therefore it cannot be removed or altered. Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown, in their comments on Romans 14:5 affirm that Paul was referring to ceremonial days and not the Sabbath of the fourth commandment (*Vol 3, page 270*). Notice again what *The Sunday School Times* says, "Paul's argument against 'the law' was aimed at this rabbinical code, and at the continuance of the Ceremonial Law which Christ's redemptive work had canceled." (*The Sunday School Times*, April 21, 1934).

What about Galatians 4:10?

Galatians 4:10-11 is another text that speaks of the observance of days. It reads, "*You observe days and months and seasons and years. I am afraid for you, lest I have labored for you in vain.*" If you have ever used these verses to try to prove that we no longer have to keep the fourth commandment, or at least that we do not have to keep it on the seventh-day of the week, you are completely wrong in your interpretation. In verse 8, Paul says, "*But then, indeed, when you did not know God, you served those which by nature are not gods.*" Before they knew God—before the gospel came

to them—they were heathens worshipping things that “*are not gods.*” They were observing heathen “*days and months and seasons and years.*” The oldest and most widespread heathen worship was sun-worship, and the oldest heathen holy day was “the day of the sun.” When the Galatians backslid from Christianity—when they left Christ they returned to the “*beggarly elements*” (verse 9) of their old heathen feasts and festivals and holy-days. In Galatians 4 the apostle Paul is questioning their conversion to Jesus Christ, and laying before them the “*beggarly elements*” to which they were in bondage before he had preached Jesus to them.

Why the Sabbath matters to God

A friend of mine said recently, “I see no reason for keeping a day holy.” And my answer back to him was, “We don’t have to see the reasoning. If God said it, that is all the reason we need.” What if Peter had taken the same attitude as my friend? Jesus told him to go and catch a fish and he would find the tax money in the fish’s mouth (Matthew 17). Peter could have reasoned, “I see no reason for looking for money in a fish’s mouth. That’s not where money is found.” What a blessing Peter would have missed had he not obeyed. What God asks us to do does not have to make sense to us. Naaman was told to dip in the Jordan River seven times and he would be healed (2 Kings 5). His first response was anger. He could not see the reasoning behind bathing in a muddy river to heal leprosy. Had he not reconsidered and obeyed, he would never have been healed. What God asks us to do does not have to make sense to us.

Someone asks, “How much can a day really matter to God?” Notice what theologian Clifford Goldstein wrote, “In every religion, men revere something—shrines, cities, even people. They kiss holy land; their ears clutch the syllables of holy men; they immerse themselves in holy water; tangibles, touchables, holy things that they can see, revere and feel. In Genesis, however, the first thing declared holy is not a hill, a shrine, or a place, but a block of time—the seventh-day. *‘Then God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it’* (Genesis 2:3). The word sanctified is translated from the Hebrew

meaning ‘to set apart for holy use.’ Though Creation dealt with the heavens, the earth, the birds, the sea, the beasts of the earth, and things of space—it was time, not space, that God first pronounced blessed and holy. This action makes sense, because, besides space, time is the dimension in which God’s creation—the heavens, the earth, the birds, the sea, and the beasts of the earth exist. Also, if God had made one specific place holy, a hill, a spring, a city, not all people would have easy access to it. They would have to travel to worship there. But time comes to us, instead of us going to it. Once a week the Sabbath circles the globe, arriving on one sundown and leaving on the next. The seventh-day washes over the planet each week like a huge cleansing wave. We never have to seek it. The day always finds us.”

Goldstein continues, “Meanwhile, holy cities can be burned. Holy people can be killed. Holy shrines can be looted. But time is beyond the fire and the knife. No man can touch, much less destroy it. Therefore, by making a special time holy, God has made the Sabbath invincible. We can no more stop the Sabbath than we can stop the sunrise. God protected His memorial from the objects of space, which are vulnerable to men, by placing it in time, which is not. Finally, men can avoid holy things. They can hide from objects, people, places. But they can’t flee from time. We can ignore it, be ignorant of it, hate it, but the Sabbath always comes, and nothing, no one, can stop it.” (Clifford Goldstein, *A Pause for Peace*, pages 46-47).

Wordsworth wrote, “In doing only things of which we ourselves see the reason, we may be only obeying ourselves and not obeying God. Therefore Almighty God tests our faith by things of which we do not see the reason.” (Bishop Wordsworth, *Commentary on the Holy Bible*, Volume 1, page 272).

Is it legalistic to keep the Bible Sabbath?

Many Christians today have been taught that to observe the Sabbath on the seventh-day of the week involves the observer automatically in legalism. But the question must be addressed, “In precisely what way, and on what Scriptural authority, can regard

for the fourth commandment be considered legalism?" Was God legalistic when He rested on the seventh-day of creation week? Is God legalistic because He commands us to keep holy the seventh-day of the week? Is it more legalistic to worship on the seventh-day than it is to worship on the first-day of the week? And if it was not legalistic for God to rest on the seventh-day, why should it be legalistic for us to follow His example and "walk, even as He walked" (1 John 2:6). What logic is there in the thought that it is legalistic for us to observe the seventh-day, but not for God to do so?

No Sunday-keeping Christian would call the sixth commandment, "*You shall not kill*," legalistic. In fact, many openly protest and march against abortion. And this is their right. It is not legalistic to take this commandment literally. And Jesus was not legalistic when He enlarged on it by saying that even if a person is angry with his brother he is guilty of murder already in his heart (Matthew 5:21-22).

No Sunday-keeping Christian would call the seventh commandment, "*You shall not commit adultery*," legalistic. And Jesus was not legalistic when He enlarged on it by saying that anyone who lusts after another is guilty already in his heart (Matthew 5:27-28).

Dear reader, I protest against the reasoning prevalent in Christianity today that makes it legalistic to observe the seventh-day of the week, but not legalistic to observe the first-day of the week. Such reasoning is inconsistent with sound logic. Robert Shuler wrote, "The keeping of the seventh-day by a renewed soul is not legalism, nor is it contrary to salvation by grace. In fact, the Sabbath commandment is the only precept in the law that stands as a sign of deliverance from sin and sanctification by grace alone." (Robert Shuler, *God's Everlasting Sign*, page 90).

The Jewish nation had distorted the Sabbath and turned it into a burden. They devised their own list of rules to make sure that no one broke the Sabbath by mistake. And the Pharisees had come to believe that God loved people to the extent to which they kept these rules and regulations. But God never intended the Sabbath to be burdened down like this. The Pharisees forbade people to

squeeze the juice out of a piece of fruit on the Sabbath, or to eat an egg that had been laid on the Sabbath. They forbade people to walk two miles, to sew two stitches, to lift two dried figs, to write two numbers, or even to erase two numbers on the Sabbath. In their zeal they bogged the whole Jewish nation down in an endless parade of details. By the time of Christ, the Sabbath had become so burdened down with man-made rules that the Jews lost sight of both the Sabbath and the Lord of the Sabbath. Jesus came on a mission of restoration. He came to show that *“the Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath.”* (Mark 2:27). He came to show us what proper Sabbath observance should be.

Because Jesus did not do things the way the Jews thought He should, they constantly accused Him of Sabbath-breaking. They had terrible hatred for Him, and this hatred eventually led them to take His life. There are many today who have this same spirit of enmity toward true Sabbath-keeping. They call those who try to follow God by keeping the Sabbath a “cult.” They say all manner of evil against these Christians and accuse them of being deceived. Jesus said in Matthew 5:19, *“Whoever therefore breaks one of the least of these commandments, and teaches men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven (meaning they are the least worthy of the kingdom of heaven); but whoever does and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.”* No where does Jesus ever imply that one who purposely breaks the commandments will be in heaven. On the contrary, He always taught that the kingdom of heaven is for those who love Him and obey Him. Albert Barnes, commenting on Matthew 5:19, says, “Anyone who considers any command of God so unimportant as not to be obeyed is unworthy of His kingdom.”

Someday there will come a “restitution of all things” (Acts 3:21). Then the creation Sabbath; the Sabbath that Christ made (for He was our Creator, John 1:3; Colossians 1:16-17; Hebrews 1:1-2); the Sabbath that Christ kept; the Sabbath that Christ asks us to keep, will still be a day of rest and worship of God. Isaiah 66:22-23 says, *“For as the new heavens and the new earth which I will make shall remain before Me, says the Lord, so shall*

your descendants and your name remain. And it shall come to pass that from one New Moon to another (month to month), and from one Sabbath to another (week to week), all flesh shall come to worship before Me, says the Lord.” The Sabbath of Eden lost will still be observed in Eden restored.

I will follow Thee, my Saviour,
Wheresoe'er my lot may be;
Where Thou goest I will follow,
Yes, my Lord, I'll follow Thee.

Though the road be rough and stormy,
Trackless as the foaming sea,
Thou hast trod this way before me,
And I gladly follow Thee.

Though 'tis lone and dark and dreary,
Cheerless though my path may be,
If Thy voice I hear before me,
Fearlessly I'll follow Thee.

Though I meet with tribulation,
Sorely tempted though I be,
I remember Thou wast tempted,
And rejoice to follow Thee.

CHORUS

I will follow Thee, my Saviour,
Thou didst shed Thy blood for me;
And though all men should forsake Thee,
By Thy grace I'll follow Thee.

James L. Elginburg, 1871

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Voice Of Hope Bible Lessons

url: voiceofhopebiblelessons-randybarber.com

“Take this day from the calendar of the Christian,
and all that remains will be cloudy and cheerless.”

Dr. T. Dwight

“Where the holy day becomes the day of man, society
and humanity wither away and the demons rule...”

De Quervain

“Two facts have to be clearly recognized before
significant living is possible. One, that there is such a
thing as right and wrong, and two, that none of us have
entirely fulfilled the right and avoided the wrong.”

C. S. Lewis

“When the Sabbath goes, the Church goes.
When the Church goes, the family goes.
When the family goes, the nation goes.”

D. L. Moody

“The Sabbath is the lungs by which the Christian
religion breathes. Destroy it, and Christianity
dies of consumption.”

J. O. Peck

“In doing only things of which we ourselves
see the reason, we may be only obeying ourselves,
and not obeying God.”

Wordsworth