

SATURDAY  
— OR —  
SUNDAY  
WHICH IS THE SABBATH?

*by* David C. Pack

Herbert W. Armstrong led the Worldwide Church of God (formerly The Radio Church of God until 1968) until his death in 1986. Hundreds of millions heard his voice and read his literature. God called him in the fall of 1926 and he was converted in the spring of 1927. Over the course of Mr. Armstrong's ministry, God revealed through him a great many true biblical doctrines, which had been lost to the Church through the centuries. After his death, his successors ceased to believe and teach these doctrines. Although copyright law prohibits The Restored Church of God from reproducing and distributing literature produced while he led the Worldwide Church of God, we are committed to the preservation and teaching of all of these truths!

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Most professing Christians observe Sunday. Yet, the Jewish people (and a few others) keep the seventh-day Sabbath. Was this day only for the Jews, or only for ancient Israel?

Does the New Testament establish Sunday as the *Lord's Day*—or is the Sabbath still in effect? Does it make any difference? If so, which day is the *Christian Sabbath*? Can it be PROVEN?

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## *Introduction*

The subject of which day is the Christian Sabbath is one of the longest running debates about any Bible teaching. Theologians and ministers of every background and theology have offered their opinion about the “Saturday or Sunday” question. Most begin with the assumption that traditional, orthodox Christianity is the place to start the discussion. While human opinion should not count, astonishingly, most are content to accept it. Few will look to the Bible as the authority. Not only is God’s Word the place to begin the study of this subject, as well as that of every other doctrine of God, but the “which day is holy” question already arises at the very beginning of the Bible.

The book of Genesis—the name means “beginnings”—speaks almost immediately about the subject of the Sabbath—the seventh day of the week. It is as though God wanted this issue clearly established in the minds of the Bible’s readers from the outset of their study of Scripture.

Near the book’s beginning, immediately after the “Creation chapter” concludes, the Bible states this: “Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. And on the *seventh day* God ended His work which He had made; and He RESTED on the *seventh day* from all His work which He had made. And God BLESSED the *seventh day*, and SANCTIFIED it: because that in it He had RESTED from all His work which God created and made” (2:1-3).

While no one should have missed, or misunderstood, the weight of this passage, almost everyone has. And rather than examine it, and

the many others on the subject, most merely swallow popular thinking without resistance because it is easy.

You will learn that while the subject of which day to observe as the Christian Sabbath should be a burning issue on the minds of millions, it is not. In fact, almost no one seems to care what the *Bible's* teaching—the only correct teaching—is on this subject. Blow the dust off your Bible, and make yourself come to grips with one of its greatest truths.

There is the question in the minds of some regarding the Jews, and whether these only were, or still are, to observe the Sabbath. Others wonder which is the seventh day of the week in the modern calendar, and can we really know which day should be observed. Still others recognize that Jesus Christ kept the Sabbath, but believe that this was only to “keep it for us” or “He did it because He was a Jew.” And still others believe that the Sabbath is and has always been the seventh day of the week, but that “the Roman church,” under the supposed authority granted to Peter, held the right to change observance to the first day of the week.

Even those who do observe the Sabbath, after one fashion or another, have little understanding of what is really at stake for those who keep the correct day—and for those who do not. Latter chapters present chilling understanding of why you must understand this subject—of why you cannot permit yourself to misunderstand the Bible's towering Fourth Commandment.

After proving the Sabbath's validity today, there still remains a host of related questions pertaining to *how* to observe the seventh day correctly. Since it is God who established the Sabbath, we must look in His Word for guidelines revealing how to keep it in a way pleasing to Him.

Understand that this book takes a very thorough view. In fact, you will find that it is almost certainly the strongest and most complete book on the Sabbath ever written. It examines the Sabbath question as you have never seen it before. Nearly every question, argument and issue that have been raised about the Sabbath are covered in detail—chapter by chapter. The reader will not have arrived at a full comprehension of all that is at stake within the subject of whether Saturday or Sunday observance is binding on Christians until he has read every page of this book.

All of the chapters presented have been prepared in the sequence that they appear for a reason. Each chapter builds off the previous one and prepares the way for the next. Unless the reader understands this method of construction at the outset—why the book was written

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as it was—comprehending the overall picture of the subject as God intended will be more difficult.

Also, recognize that some chapters are essentially insets. These are included for important reasons that will be understood as the full scope of the subject is carefully spread before the reader.

May God help you understand the awesome importance of all that you are about to read!



## *Astonishing Admission*

I grew up in a large, respected Protestant church. I can recall sitting on a stool wearing a bow tie in Sunday school at age three, surrounded by other children. As I grew older, Sunday school became Sunday church services, with everyone taking for granted that we were there on the right day. No one remotely suggested otherwise. We all appeared weekly in our “Sunday best.” This continued for years, with no one questioning anything that was done.

Things changed in 1966 because, at age seventeen, I was challenged to look into the Bible to see what it actually says on the matter of Sunday-keeping. I was absolutely shocked by what I found! You will be also.

While the world is geared contrary to Sabbath observance on the seventh day of the week, I realized there was no excuse for breaking the Sabbath. I found the Bible was PLAIN, leaving no room for doubt. The scriptures about the Sabbath and Sunday were most CLEAR. I saw that common objections to Sabbath observance were easily disproven, *if* one had an open mind.

Unless God did not exist, and the Bible was the word of *men*—merely ancient Hebrew and Greek literature—I had no choice but to observe the Sabbath. Since proving that God exists and the Bible is His Word, and since seeing proof of the Sabbath command from the Bible, I have never attended church on Sunday again or observed that day. I found that the Fourth Commandment is a LAW. When kept, it brings spiritual blessings, “keeping” those who obey it.

When broken, it brings spiritual curses, “breaking” those who disobey it.

### Universal Acceptance

There are over two billion professing Christians on Earth. They attend over 2,000 different church denominations and organizations in the United States alone. This number continually increases, and the result has been no end of confusion over differing beliefs and disagreement between them. However, almost all professing Christians are in agreement about Sunday observance, thinking it to be the biblically authorized “Lord’s Day” of the New Testament.

Are they correct? Does the New Testament establish Sunday in place of the Old Testament seventh-day Sabbath? Did Jesus Christ do away with the Sabbath, making Himself “Lord of Sunday”? Vast numbers are told—and believe—that He did. But, if Christ established Sunday to *replace* the seventh-day Sabbath, why did He tell His disciples, “Therefore the Son of man is LORD ALSO OF THE SABBATH” (Mark 2:28)? This question alone towers over the debate.

Have you ever noticed this verse? Probably not. Yet there it is in the *New Testament*. Most ministers are fond of preaching from the New Testament, almost to the complete exclusion of the Old Testament. But have you ever heard a preacher—or professor, or theologian—mention *this* passage? Almost certainly not—and this is just one of *many* plain scriptures about the Sabbath.

Most people never ask *why* they believe what they believe or *why* they do what they do. In a world filled with popular customs and traditions, few try to determine the real origin of things. Most generally accept common religious practices without question, choosing to do what everyone else does because it is easy, natural and comfortable—because there is a certain “safety in numbers.” The power of peer pressure alone makes most avoid hard questions, so that they can practice what is *acceptable*—and fashionable.

Most follow along as they have been taught, *assuming* what they believe and do is right. They take their beliefs for granted, almost never taking time to PROVE them.

Nowhere is this more true than Sunday observance. Over two billion people keep Sunday without knowing *why*—or *where* this practice originated. Most suppose it is found in the Bible because they see so many professing Christians observing it. Many think Jesus was resurrected on Sunday after a Friday crucifixion—and that this made Sunday the Lord’s Day. Surely billions cannot be wrong. Or can they?

### Incriminating Honesty

A study of the Bible, on almost all teachings generally accepted by the churches of this world—professing Christianity—reveals that they have almost no biblical basis whatsoever. This statement is shocking, yet it is true!

But here is an irony: When confronted with the truth of what the Bible *really* says on a matter, most churchgoers will attempt to deny the facts, however indisputable. They will twist, distort and blur the issues in order to hold to cherished beliefs, preferring what is *familiar* to what is RIGHT—and TRUE!

The Sabbath question is somewhat different. Though, in the end, most people are *unwilling* to observe it, many ministers, theologians and religionists openly *acknowledge* what the Bible says about the Sabbath. When pressed, they admit God's Word authorizes observing the seventh day.

In fact, you will be stunned at their frankness and honesty!

### Roman Catholic Admission

Catholic publications, popes, cardinals, bishops, theologians, historians, professors, and the Vatican itself, have candidly admitted there is no biblical basis—whatsoever!—for Sunday observance. This book includes many quotations from them. You will be astonished at the extraordinary candor with which Catholic leaders address this subject.

It is critically important to take the time to read what *those who keep Sunday* say about their authority—or *lack* of authority—for doing this. Using their own words, we must first establish why 1.2 billion Roman Catholics believe they are no longer obligated to observe the seventh-day Sabbath. They tell the whole world openly!

The Bible plainly states that Jesus Christ is the Head of the Church (Eph. 1:22-23; Col. 1:18). Rome, supposing that Christ, in effect, delegated away His authority over the Church to the apostle Peter—who they proclaim was the first pope—speaks plainly of how it has used this “authority.” Just as God's statements about the Sabbath were shocking to me, the following statements should be shocking to YOU! (Many are included for emphasis.)

“For example, 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 7th day of the week, Saturday. Today most Christians keep Sunday because it has been revealed to us by the [Roman Catholic] church outside the Bible.”

- “To Tell You the Truth,” *The Catholic Virginian*

“From this same Catholic Church you have accepted your Sunday, and that Sunday, as the Lord’s day, she has handed down as a tradition; and the entire Protestant world has accepted it as tradition, for you have not an iota of Scripture to establish it. Therefore that which you [Protestants] have accepted as your rule of faith, inadequate as it of course is, as well as your Sunday, you have accepted on the authority of the Roman Catholic Church.”

- David B. Ray, *The Papal Controversy Involving the Claim of the Roman Catholic Church to the Church of God*

“I have repeatedly offered \$1,000 to any one who can prove to me by the Bible alone that I am bound to keep Sunday holy. There is no such law in the Bible. It is a law of the holy Catholic church alone. The Bible says, ‘Remember that thou keep holy the Sabbath day.’ THE CATHOLIC CHURCH says, ‘No! By my Divine power I abolish the Sabbath day, and command you to keep holy the first day of the week.’ And lo! the *entire civilized world* bows down in reverent obedience to the command of the holy Catholic Church.”

- Bishop Thomas Enright, personal letter printed in *Experiences of a Pioneer Minister of Minnesota*

“There’s but one [church] on the face of the earth—the Catholic Church—that has the power to make laws binding on the conscience, binding before God, binding under pain of hell fire. Take for instance the day we celebrate—Sunday. What right have the Protestant churches to observe that day? None whatsoever. You say it is to obey the commandment, ‘Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy.’ But Sunday is not the Sabbath according to the Bible and the record of time. Every one knows that Sunday is the first day of the week, while Saturday is the seventh day and the Sabbath, the day consecrated as a day of rest. It is so recognized in all civilized nations. I have repeatedly offered \$1000 to any one who will furnish any proof from the Bible that Sunday is the day we are bound to keep, and no one has called for the money...It was the holy Catholic Church that changed the day of rest from Saturday to Sunday, the first day of the week.”

- Bishop Thomas Enright, "Father Enright on the Sunday,"  
printed in *The American Sentinel*

"Is Saturday the seventh day according to the Bible and the Ten Commandments? I answer yes. Is Sunday the first day of the week and did the Church change the seventh day—Saturday—for Sunday, the first day? I answer yes. Did Christ change the day? I answer no!"

- James Cardinal Gibbons, Archbishop of  
Baltimore (1877-1921), signed letter

"Reason and sense demand the acceptance of one or the other of these alternatives: either...the keeping holy of Saturday or Catholicity and the keeping holy of Sunday. Compromise is impossible."

- James Cardinal Gibbons, *Catholic Mirror*

"A rule of Faith, or a competent guide to heaven, must be able to instruct in all the truths necessary for salvation. Now the Scriptures alone do not contain all the truths which a Christian is bound to believe, nor do they explicitly enjoin all the duties which he is obliged to practise. Not to mention other examples, is not every Christian obliged to sanctify Sunday, and to abstain on that day from unnecessary servile work? Is not the observance of this law among the most prominent of our sacred duties? But 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 Church correctly teaches that our Lord and His Apostles inculcated certain important duties of religion which are not recorded by the inspired writers. For instance, most Christians pray to the Holy Ghost, a practice which is nowhere found in the Bible.

"We must, therefore, conclude that the Scriptures *alone* cannot be a sufficient guide and rule of faith, because they cannot, at any time, be within the reach of every inquirer; because they are not of themselves clear and intelligible even in matters of the highest importance, and because they do not contain all the truths necessary for salvation."

- James Cardinal Gibbons, *Faith of our Fathers*

[Author's Note: The apostle Paul, under inspiration by God, also disagrees. Speaking of just the Old Testament books, which were available to him, he wrote this: "And that from a child you have known the holy scriptures, which are able to make you *wise unto sal-*

vation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. *All scripture* is given by inspiration of God...” (II Tim. 3:15-16.)]

“The Bible everywhere enforces the sanctification of Saturday the seventh day of the week... You Protestants have to admit the authority of the Roman Catholic Church that is branded on you when you observe Sunday because you have no other authority for Sunday but that of the Roman Catholic Church.”

- James Cardinal Gibbons

“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.”

- James Cardinal Gibbons, “The Christian Sabbath,” *Catholic Mirror*

“*Question:* What Bible authority is there for changing the Sabbath from the seventh to the first, day of the week? Who gave the pope the authority to change a command of God?”

“*Answer:* If the Bible is the only guide for the Christian, then the Seventh-day Adventist is right in observing the Saturday with the Jew. But Catholics learn what to believe and do from the divine, infallible authority established by Jesus Christ, the Catholic Church... Is it not strange that those who make the Bible their only teacher should inconsistently follow in this matter the tradition of the *Church?*”

- Rev. Bertrand Conway, *The Question-box Answers*

“Q. Have you any other way of proving that the Church has power to institute festivals of precept?”

“A. Had she not such power, she could not have done that in which all modern religionists agree with her;—she could not have substituted the observance of Sunday the first day of the week, for the observance of Saturday the seventh day, a change for which there is no Scriptural authority.”

- Rev. Stephen Keenan, *A Doctrinal Catechism*

“‘Our Lord rose from the dead on the first day of the week,’ said Father Hourigan of the Jesuit Seminary. ‘That is why the Church changed the day of obligation from the seventh day to the first day of the week. The Anglican and other Protestant denominations retained that tradition when the Reformation came along.’”

- *Toronto Daily Star*, Oct. 26, 1949

“Some theologians have held that God likewise directly determined the Sunday as the day of worship in the New Law, that He Himself has explicitly substituted the Sunday for the Sabbath. But this theory is now entirely abandoned. It is now commonly held that God simply gave His Church the power to set aside whatever day or days she would deem suitable as Holy Days. The Church chose Sunday, the first day of the week, and in the course of time added other days as holy days.”

- Rev. John Laux, *A Course in Religion for Catholic High Schools and Academies*

“Nowhere in the Bible is it stated that worship should be changed from Saturday to Sunday...Now the Church...instituted, by God’s authority, Sunday as the day of worship. This same Church, by the same divine authority, taught the doctrine of Purgatory long before the Bible was made. We have, therefore, the same authority for Purgatory as we have for Sunday.”

- Martin J. Scott, *Things Catholics Are Asked About*

“Regarding the change from the observance of the Jewish Sabbath to the Christian Sunday, I wish to draw your attention to the facts:

“1) That Protestants, who accept the Bible as the only rule of faith and religion, should by all means go back to the observance of the Sabbath. The fact that they do not, but on the contrary observe the Sunday, stultifies them in the eyes of every thinking man.

“2) We Catholics do not accept the Bible as the only rule of faith. Besides the Bible we have the living Church, the authority of the Church, as a rule to guide us. We say, this Church, instituted by Christ to teach and guide man through life, has the right to change the ceremonial laws of the Old Testament and hence, we accept her change of the Sabbath to Sunday. We frankly say, yes, the Church made this change, made this law, as she made many other laws, for instance, the Friday abstinence, the unmarried priesthood, the laws concerning mixed marriages, the regulation of Catholic marriages and a thousand other laws...

“It is always somewhat laughable, to see the Protestant churches, in pulpit and legislation, demand the observance of Sunday, of which there is nothing in their Bible.”

- Peter R. Kraemer, *Catholic Church Extension Magazine*

“We move from the ‘Sabbath’ to the ‘first day after the Sabbath’, from the seventh day to the first day: the *dies Domini* becomes the *dies Christi!*...By contrast, the Sabbath’s position as the seventh

day of the week suggests for the Lord's Day a complimentary symbolism, much loved by the Fathers. Sunday is not only the first day, it is also 'the eighth day', set within the sevenfold succession of days..."

- Pope John Paul II, "Apostolic Letter, Dies Domini"

"Only gradually did Christians begin to observe Sunday as a day of rest...In the third century, as we learn from Tertullian, many Christians had begun to keep Sunday as a day of rest to some extent.

"The real need of Sunday as a day of rest as well as worship came much later."

- *Yes, I Condemned the Catholic Church*, Supreme Council, Knights of Columbus

"*Question*: Which is the Sabbath day?"

"*Answer*: Saturday is the Sabbath day.

"*Question*: Why do we observe Sunday instead of Saturday?"

"*Answer*: We observe Sunday instead of Saturday because the Catholic Church, in the Council of Laodicea (AD [363]), transferred the solemnity from Saturday to Sunday."

- Peter Geiermann, *The Convert's Catechism of Catholic Doctrine*

[Author's Note: At this same fourth century Council of Laodicea—in AD 363—the following edict was passed: "Christians must not judaize by resting on the Sabbath" (*A Select Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church*). The penalty for disobedience was *death!*]

### **Protestants Follow Rome**

About one billion Protestants also observe Sunday. Before examining what they say about why they observe the first day of the week, here are several quotes from the Catholics explaining *their view* of why the Protestants do what they do. Consider them carefully.

"Practically everything that Protestants regard as essential or important they have received from the Catholic Church. They accepted Sunday rather than Saturday as the day for public worship after the Catholic Church made that change.

"But the Protestant mind does not seem to realize that in accepting the Bible, in observing the Sunday, in keeping Christmas and Easter,

they are accepting the authority of the spokesman for the church, the pope.”

- *Our Sunday Visitor*, Feb. 5, 1950

“It was the Catholic Church which, by the authority of JESUS CHRIST, has transferred this rest to the Sunday in remembrance of the resurrection of our Lord. Thus the observance of *Sunday* by the Protestants is an homage they pay, in spite of themselves, to the authority of the [Catholic] church.”

- Mgr. Louis G. Ségur, “*Plain Talk About the Protestantism of To-day*”

“Q: How prove you that the Church hath power to command feasts and holydays?”

“A: 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.

“Q: How prove you that?”

“A: Because by keeping *Sunday*, they acknowledge the Church’s power to ordain feasts, and to command them under sin: and by not keeping the rest [of the feasts] by her commanded, they again deny, in fact, the same power.”

- Rev. Henry Tuberville, D.D., *An Abridgment of the Christian Doctrine*

“*Catholic*: Is the Bible the rule or guide of Protestants for observing Sunday?”

“*Protestant*: No, I believe the Seventh-day Adventists are the only ones who know the Bible in the matter of Sabbath observance.”

- *The Bible an Authority Only in Catholic Hands*

“When St. Paul repudiated the works of the law, he was not thinking of the Ten Commandments, which are as unchangeable as God Himself is, which God could not change and still remain the infinitely holy God.”

- *Our Sunday Visitor*, Oct. 7, 1951

### What Protestants Confess

Protestant officials from many denominations have also candidly admitted there is no biblical authority for Sunday observance. Here are their quotations, with most categorized into Protestant denominations.

**Lutheran:** The first true “protestant” was Martin Luther. No record of Protestant teaching is complete without the words of this earliest reformer.

Notice this quote pertaining to Luther’s commentary on Exodus 16:4, 22-30, regarding the Sabbath: “Hence you can see that the Sabbath was before the Law of Moses came, and has existed from the beginning of the world. Especially have the devout, who have preserved the true faith, met together and called upon God on this day” (*Luther’s Works*).

[Author’s Note: Martin Luther also personally kept the Sabbath. The next source reveals why he did *not* urge others to do the same.]

“Luther himself, while it is said believed in and practiced the observance of the seventh-day Sabbath, did not prescribe it in his articles of faith for his followers, in the copies that we now have access to. However, it has been said that in his original thesis, Luther advocated the observance of the seventh-day Sabbath, but that his colleagues objected on the grounds that it was an unpopular doctrine, which would have a tendency to repulse supporters of the Reformation who were *not as pious as they should have been*, but were of great assistance against the usurpations of the papacy.”

- Andrew Dugger and Clarence Dodd, *A History of the True Religion*

“They [Roman Catholics] appeal as well to the transference of the sabbath to Sunday—contrary to the Ten Commandments, as they view it. No other example is so strongly emphasized and quoted as the transference of the sabbath. Thereby they want to maintain that the power of the church is great, because it has dispensed with and altered part of the Ten Commandments.”

- Philip Melanchthon, *The Augsburg Confession*

“We have seen how gradually the impression of the Jewish sabbath faded from the mind of the Christian Church, and how completely the newer thought underlying the observance of the first day took possession of the church. We have seen that the Christians of the first three centuries never confused one with the other, but for a time celebrated both.”

- *The Sunday Problem, a study book of the United Lutheran Church*

“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 laws of the Sabbath to Sunday.”

- Dr. Augustus Neander, *The History of the Christian Religion and Church*

“But they err in teaching that Sunday has taken the place of the Old Testament Sabbath and therefore must be kept as the seventh day had to be kept by the children of Israel... These churches err in their teaching, for Scripture has in no way ordained the first day of the week in place of the Sabbath. There is simply no law in the New Testament to that effect.”

- John Theodore Mueller, *Sabbath or Sunday?*

**Anglican/Episcopal:** “And where are we told in the Scriptures that we are to keep the first day at all? We are commanded to keep the seventh; but we are nowhere commanded to keep the first day... The reason why we keep the first day of the week holy instead of the seventh is for the same reason that we observe many other things,—not because the Bible, but because the [Roman] church has enjoined it.”

- Isaac Williams, *Plain Sermons on the Catechism*

“There is no word, no hint, in the New Testament about abstaining from work on Sunday... into the rest of Sunday no divine law enters... The observance of Ash Wednesday or Lent stands exactly on the same footing as the observance of Sunday.”

- Canon Robert Eyton, *The Ten Commandments*

“We have made the change from the seventh day to the first day, from Saturday to Sunday, on the authority of the one holy, catholic, apostolic Church of Christ.”

- Bishop George F. Seymour, *Why We Keep Sunday*

**Baptist:** “There was and is a commandment to keep holy the Sabbath day, but that Sabbath day was not Sunday. It will be said, however, and with some show of triumph, that the Sabbath was transferred from the seventh to the first day of the week... Where can the record of such a transaction be found? Not in the New Testament absolutely not.

“To me it seems unaccountable that Jesus, during three years’ intercourse with His disciples, often conversing with them upon the

Sabbath question...never alluded to any transference of the day; also, that during forty days of His resurrection life, no such thing was intimated.

“Of course, I quite well know that Sunday did come into use in early Christian history...But what a pity it comes branded with the mark of paganism, and christened with the name of the sun god, adopted and sanctioned by the papal apostasy, and bequeathed as a sacred legacy to Protestantism!”

- Dr. Edward T. Hiscox, before a New York ministers' conference, Nov. 13, 1893, *New York Examiner*, Nov. 16, 1893

“There was never any formal or authoritative change from the Jewish seventh-day Sabbath to the Christian first-day observance.”

- William Owen Carver, *Sabbath Observance*

**Congregationalist:** “It is quite clear that however rigidly or devoutly we may spend Sunday, we are not keeping the Sabbath...The Sabbath was founded on a specific Divine command. We can plead no such command for the obligation to observe Sunday...There is not a single sentence in the New Testament to suggest that we incur any penalty by violating the supposed sanctity of Sunday.”

- Dr. Robert W. Dale, *The Ten Commandments*

“The Christian Sabbath [Sunday] is not in the Scriptures, and was not by the primitive Church called *the Sabbath*.”

- Timothy Dwight, *Theology: Explained and Defended in a Series of Sermons*

**Disciples of Christ:** “‘But,’ say some, ‘it was changed from the seventh to the first day.’ Where? when? and by whom? No man can tell. No, it never was changed, nor could it be, unless creation was to be gone through again: for the reason assigned must be changed before the observance, or respect to the reason, can be changed!! It is all old wives’ fables to talk of the change of the sabbath from the seventh to the first day. If it be changed, it was that august personage changed it who changes times and laws *ex officio*—I think his name is DOCTOR ANTICHRIST.”

- Alexander Campbell, *The Christian Baptist*

“The first day of the week is commonly called the Sabbath. This is a mistake. The Sabbath of the Bible was the day just preceding the first day of the week. The first day of the week is never called the

Sabbath anywhere in the entire Scriptures. It is also an error to talk about the change of the Sabbath from Saturday to Sunday. There is not in any place in the Bible any intimation of such a change.”

- *First Day Observance*

**Methodist:** “But, the moral law contained in the Ten Commandments, and enforced by the prophets, he [Christ] did not take away. It was not the design of His coming to revoke any part of this. This is a law which never can be broken...Every part of this law must remain in force upon all mankind, and in all ages; as not depending either on time or place, or any other circumstances liable to change, but on the nature of God, and the nature of man, and their unchangeable relation to each other.”

- Rev. John Wesley, *The Works of the Rev. John Wesley, A.M. Sometime Fellow of Lincoln College*

“Take the matter of Sunday. There are indications in the New Testament as to how the church came to keep the first day of the week as its day of worship, but there is no passage telling Christians to keep that day, or to transfer the Jewish Sabbath to that day.”

- Harris Franklin Rall, *Christian Advocate*

**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.”

- Thaddeus C. Blake, D.D., *Theology Condensed*

**Dwight L. Moody:** “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*

### Worship Christ in Vain?

It is ironic that at least three well-known Protestant figures here freely admit that the Sabbath has never been changed and is still binding on Christians—but do not keep it themselves!

Here is what Christ said about the popular commandments and traditions of the world—and its churches: “IN VAIN do they worship Me, teaching for doctrines the *commandments of men*...Full well [these men know exactly what they are doing] you *reject* the commandment of God, that you may keep *your own tradition*” (Mark 7:7, 9).

Let’s plainly frame the question: Do we observe the day that GOD commands—or do we observe the traditional day that the Roman Catholics command, and Protestants endorse? This church and its daughter churches are wrong on virtually every doctrine in the Bible—salvation, heaven, hell, method of baptism, the Law, the definition of sin, the trinity, which annual days should be observed by Christians, prophecy, and many more. Over and over, it has substituted its commands and traditions in place of what God plainly says in His Word. Should you follow *its* authority, believing it to be greater than the authority of God?

It *is* possible to worship God in vain. Therefore, you must find out, once and for all, whether Sunday-keeping and worship is what God expects of you—or even permits.

Technically, this book could end here. Though we will see that a few, very weak arguments are put forth in favor of Sunday, in a sense, there is no further room for argument. If those who keep Sunday will so freely acknowledge that they have no authority from God—in His Word, the Holy Bible—for doing so, and the plain biblical command is seen, observance of the Sabbath has been clearly established!

But God has much to say about the crucial importance of observing *His* Sabbath every seven days. This includes understanding *WHY* Christians must do this. What you will read in the remainder of this book is not supposition. It is scriptural *fact*—PROOF from God—that the Sabbath was commanded 6,000 years ago.

You will see that neither God nor His command has ever changed!

## *From the Beginning*

This book will examine many verses from the Old Testament. Of course, it is there that the Sabbath is first mentioned. However, one of the strongest verses in the entire Bible on the subject of God's Sabbath day is found in the *New Testament!*

Speaking to His disciples, Christ said, "The SABBATH was made for man" (Mark 2:27). This is a powerful statement. Immediately following this verse, we read: "Therefore the Son of man is *Lord also of the sabbath.*" (This is repeated in Luke 6:5.) Any who wish to superimpose the idea that Christ did not keep and endorse the Sabbath must face this enormous first obstacle. This plain passage, recorded twice for emphasis, cannot be dismissed. We will see there is a *reason* it follows verse 27 as it does.

But what did Christ mean when He said, "The Sabbath was made *for man*"? Haven't you always been taught, "The Sabbath was made for *the Jews*"? If so, why did Christ say, in the *New Testament*, "for man"? We must go to the creation account to find the answer.

### **The *Real* Beginning**

*Genesis* means "beginning." Most people assume this is where one learns of the beginning of God's revealed knowledge. The *true* beginning of all things—where the account of God's creation *really* starts—is *not* found in Genesis 1. It is found in the New Testament, in John 1.

This is where the Bible records who or what existed *before* the creation recorded in Genesis.

Here is how John writes of the earliest time the Bible records: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. *All things* [“the universe” – Moffatt translation of same word in Hebrews 1:2] *were made by Him*; and without Him was not ANYTHING made that was made” (1:1-3). This is all-encompassing.

But who is “the Word”? John answers a few verses later: “And the Word was *made flesh*, and *dwelt among us*, (and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth” (vs. 14).

In the original Greek, the term “the Word” actually means “Spokesman.” While Christ only became the Son of God at His human birth, He was an eternal Being—He was “without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life” (Heb. 7:3).

Plainly, these verses speak of Jesus Christ both before and after His human birth. Only one God Being “became flesh and dwelt among us.” But verse 1 reveals more! Notice it says that Christ, the Word, “was” God and was also “with” God. This can only be possible if two separate Beings are being described. These two eternal Beings—Personages—existed before any of the physical universe had been created. They existed from the beginning and earlier.

Ephesians 3:9, written by Paul, confirms John 1: “God...created all things *by Jesus Christ*.” Having been “the Word”—the Spokesman—for all eternity, Jesus said many times throughout His ministry that He only stated what God wanted Him to say. Since He was “the Word,” we can understand why Psalm 33 states, “By *the Word* of the LORD were the heavens [the universe] made; and all the host of them by the breath of His mouth...For He spoke, and it was done” (vs. 6, 9).

Understand what we have just read! Notice this plain passage, ignored by almost all: “And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they [ancient Israel] drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock *was Christ*” (I Cor. 10:4). We will examine this later in greater detail.

The One who followed ancient Israel out of Egypt and through the wilderness was Jesus Christ of the New Testament! And Paul wrote that God created “all things—by [through] Jesus Christ”!

Let’s read one final scripture demonstrating, from the New Testament, that Christ, in fact, was involved in all of the creation pro-

cess: “For by Him [Christ] were *all things created*, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by Him, and for Him...And He is the Head of the body, the church” (Col. 1:16, 18).

This passage is all-inclusive. The fact that Christ helped create *everything* that exists in the entire universe must be understood before continuing.

### The Creation of Man

Since Jesus Christ and the Father were both present during the creation week, Genesis 1:26 naturally speaks of “Us” and “Our” when referring to God. Yet, again, it was Christ who actually did the creating of “all things.”

Notice: “And God [Elohim] said, Let *us* make man in *our* image, after *our* likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth. So God created man in His own image, in the image of God created He him; male and female created He them...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” (Gen. 1:26-27, 31).

The last part of Genesis 1 records the creation of man on the sixth day. This passage reveals that the Father and Christ (remember, Christ did the creating—*He* was the God of the Old Testament) created man for a great purpose—to reflect physically and take on spiritually God’s “image” and “likeness.”

### Sabbath Created Next—for Man

Recognizing that Christ is doing the creating, here is the next passage following the creation of man and the completion of the sixth day: “Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. And on the *SEVENTH DAY* God ended His work which He had made; and He *rested* on the *SEVENTH DAY* from all His work which He had made. And God *blessed* the *SEVENTH DAY*, and *sanctified* IT: because that in it He had *rested* from all His work which God created and made” (Gen. 2:1-3).

The very first thing that CHRIST created after man was the Sabbath. This occurred over 2,000 years *before* the first Jew (the man named Judah) was born. The Sabbath was never merely for the Jews,

or ancient Israel. The Sabbath was made “*for man*”—first, for Adam and Eve in the Garden, and for all other men ever after.

Christ created man—and He created the Sabbath. No wonder He said He was “Lord of the Sabbath.” Christ knew who He had made it for and why! Ponder this. Nowhere does Christ ever say He was Lord of Sunday. He never said that He made *Sunday* for man. Instead, we can now understand *why* He could say He was Lord of the SEVENTH DAY. Christ personally *rested on, blessed and sanctified* THIS day from the beginning of creation.

God does everything for a purpose. He wanted His creation, *man*, to be able to rest one day *after* working for six previous days. We will learn later that the Sabbath involves a SPECIAL COVENANT—a Sabbath covenant—between God and His true servants.

### **Pharisees Miss the Point!**

Some, missing the entire point of Mark 2:27-28, referenced earlier, have used this account to show that Jesus *did away* with the Sabbath. This account and others we will examine are misused to say that Christ voided the Sabbath. They say no such thing!

The Mark 2 account occurs on the Sabbath and begins in verse 23, with the disciples plucking ears of corn for food as they strolled along listening to Christ’s instruction. The Pharisees challenged them, thinking they were doing things “not lawful” on the Sabbath. Christ’s response was to show that, as the Author, Creator and Lord of the Sabbath, He—not the Pharisees or anyone else, then or ever after—could speak with authority about how to observe it. In other words, Christ governs all matters in relation to the Sabbath. As Maker, Sustainer and Author of the Sabbath Covenant, He alone deserves the title “Lord of the Sabbath.” Neither any *church* nor any *man* can take this role from the One who created the Sabbath for His own purpose!

The Pharisees had 65 separate “do’s” and “don’ts” governing almost every tiny aspect of how the Sabbath should or should not be kept. Their *manmade* regulations, developed over centuries, had turned the Sabbath into bondage instead of the blessing for mankind that God intended it to be. Many things were considered “not lawful.”

Jesus stressed that the Sabbath was made for man’s *needs*—to rest, be refreshed and commune with God. The Pharisees acted as if man was made for complying with their endless rules. Their maze of regulations separated them from the Sabbath’s true meaning.

Christ showed that the Pharisees' condemnation of gathering corn to be eaten on the Sabbath was wrong (vs. 23-26). It *was* permissible to gather food on the Sabbath to satisfy immediate hunger.

Also, in Mark 3:1-6, the Pharisees watched Christ to see if He would heal on the Sabbath. When He perceived that they sought to accuse Him, Christ asked, "Is it lawful to do good on the sabbath days, or to do evil? To save life, or to kill?" (vs. 4). The Pharisees would not answer Him. Christ immediately healed the man, after which the Pharisees sought to KILL Him. What an indictment against self-righteous human nature! Christ's example shows that it *is* permissible to do good on the Sabbath and, in certain circumstances, to relieve suffering. This is in harmony with the spirit and intent of the Fourth Commandment.

In the same account found in Matthew 12:11-12, Christ used the analogy of rescuing an animal in distress. To this the Pharisees agreed. Yet they did not allow for Christ to heal people on the Sabbath. He used this same analogy in Luke 13:15-17, of loosing livestock from a stall to lead them away for watering on the Sabbath, with which the Pharisees also agreed. But they protested Christ's healing of an Israelite woman bound with an 18-year affliction.

While these accounts are never a license to break the Sabbath, they explain that Christ allowed certain *necessary* physical duties to be carried out on this day. The Sabbath is made FOR mankind, as a BLESSING—not to create a list of strict manmade "do's" and "don'ts," thereby making it a curse.

### God Did Not Need to Rest

Exodus 31:17 states, "In six days the LORD made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day He rested, and *was refreshed*." Did Christ *need* to rest? The Bible states plainly that God "faints not, neither is weary" (Isa. 40:28). While God certainly *was* refreshed, it was not because He was tired and "needed a break."

It would make no sense for God to make a day of rest on the first day of the week. Think about this. What would be the point of God making the Sabbath to *begin* the week so that He could rest from six days of work He had *yet* to perform? Christ says in both the Old and New Testaments that He never changes (Mal. 3:6; Heb. 13:8). Therefore, God (Christ) could not ordain the Sabbath as the *seventh* day of the week only to *later* change it to the *first* day.

Invariably, when people are tired, they must rest. The purpose for God resting was entirely different—and far greater in meaning than

first meets the eye. This is important because some assert God rested on the seventh day to satisfy His own personal fatigue. Of course, this makes no sense whatsoever if the Sabbath was made “for man.” It was never “for God.”

Exodus 20:11 reveals that God “hallowed”—made holy—the seventh day of every week. Other scriptures will make this absolutely plain. God “*blessed* the seventh day.” From this moment forward, the seventh day is made SPECIAL—it has God’s divine blessing on it. The phrase “and *sanctified* it” helps clarify what this means. Dictionaries define the word *sanctify* as “set apart for a holy use or purpose.” This makes the Sabbath *God’s* time, not ours. Remember, in effect, Christ declared that He is Lord of *this* block of time. Four thousand years after creation, Christ said He was still Lord of this *same* special holy time He had given to man.

When placed together, the terms *hallowed*, *blessed* and *sanctified* show that God made the Sabbath holy, special for all time—throughout all ages! This was God’s intended purpose. This is what His resting—when He did not *need* to rest—achieved. When this is understood, it is easy to see why no MAN—or CHURCH—has the authority to make the Sabbath, or any other period of time, holy. Just as men cannot cause some other day to be holy, their ignorance or rejection of what God has made holy cannot make it UNHOLY.

The Sabbath is a 24-hour period *of time* God has made holy once every seven days. It begins at sunset Friday and ends at sunset Saturday.

### **The Bible Can Be Proven**

We will see that God commands men to remove their foot from this special time. He does not want men trampling on, profaning, His Sabbath.

Before we discuss *how* God makes things holy, and what this means, none of this would make any difference if the Bible is not God’s Word—and cannot be proven to be divinely inspired.

You must come to realize the Bible has SUPREME AUTHORITY in all spiritual matters, involving both belief and practice. Romans 8:9 says that one is not a Christian if he does not have Jesus Christ, through the Holy Spirit, living within him. God’s Spirit is holy. It will not enter one who refuses to follow that which is holy.

Christ kept the Sabbath (Luke 4:16). Remember, the Bible states that He is “the same yesterday, and today, and forever” (Heb. 13:8), and does not change (Mal. 3:6). Christ will still keep the Sabbath in you!



**BREAKING THE SABBATH:** Today, the world (including the vast majority of professing Christians) ignores God's Sabbath command, pursuing its own pleasure. But what if everyone observed the Sabbath day? Imagine how different these scenes would be.



ABOVE: [bigfoto.com](http://bigfoto.com)

Do these words, and other passages cited in this book, carry the authority of a Supreme Being? Can one actually *prove* the Bible? This is itself a huge question! Just as most never seek to prove the *existence of God*, most never concern themselves with proving the AUTHORITY of the Bible. They either have no *interest* in such proof or assume there is none—that it cannot be done!

What about you? Have *you* taken the time to seek actual, tangible *proof* of the Bible’s authority? As with the existence of God, have you been taught that you must accept the Bible entirely “on faith”? Most people are never challenged to find real PROOF that this Book is the inspired record of a Supreme Being. Circumstances rarely *force* people to undertake such a task. This is probably the single biggest reason that most never do. While I regularly attended “church” when growing up, I was never required, nor felt compelled, to prove either that God exists or that He authored the Bible. Not one of my “Sunday school” teachers ever suggested that this should be done or that there was value in it. Nor was any proof of these ever given or offered to me by anyone else prior to my calling! Not one person ever suggested to me that I should even be concerned with proving the answers to these two towering questions.

But unless you prove the Bible’s authority, you will never remove *your* activity from what God tells you He has made holy—the Sabbath. Again, no man has the authority to make a day holy. Only God does—and He commands us to keep His Sabbath in the condition we found it. But you must prove if the Bible command carries weight. Others of my books do this.

Let’s see further what *holy* means.

### Explaining “Holy”

I ask again: Does it make any difference to God which day *men choose* to make holy? Can they arbitrarily select any day they wish and designate it “holy”?

A well-known Bible example illustrates the point. Exodus 3 gives the account of God speaking to Moses from a burning bush. While most who know anything of the Bible are familiar with this passage, there is an overlooked lesson in it pertaining to the Sabbath. The setting is Moses leading a flock of sheep to Mt. Sinai (Horeb). He came to a bush that was burning, yet was not burning up.

God commanded Moses, “Draw not near here: put off your shoes from off your feet, for the place whereon you stand is HOLY GROUND” (vs. 5). Moses did not argue about whether he thought the ground

was holy. He simply took his shoes off. Much was at stake here. Had Moses done otherwise, reasoning like so many today, who *argue* about what God has made holy, God would have been unable to use him to lead Israel from bondage in Egypt.

It was God's *presence* in the bush that made it holy. Surrounding bushes or ground were not holy. God designated only a certain piece of ground as holy, as having *His presence*. The account does not indicate that the ground *looked* or *felt* or in any way *appeared* different from the surrounding landscape. God had to REVEAL to Moses that the ground was holy—that *He was present* in it—that Moses must remove his shoes from it. Moses was given no choice but to treat that ground as special and holy. But appearance did not tell him this. God had to *reveal* it to him!

There is a direct connection to the Sabbath in this point. Here is what the prophet Isaiah wrote: "If you *turn away your foot from the sabbath*, from doing your pleasure [business] on My holy day; and call the sabbath a delight, the holy of the LORD, honorable; and shall honor Him, NOT doing your own ways, nor finding your own pleasure, nor speaking your own words: Then shall you delight yourself in the LORD; and I will cause you to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed you with the heritage of Jacob your father: for the mouth of the LORD has spoken it" (58:13-14).

This plain passage explains that there are ways to profane God's holy Sabbath. Like the ground around the burning bush, we are commanded to take our feet (our shoes) off *God's holy time*—time that points to Him and has His holy presence in it. Either we believe the ideas and customs of men—and their churches—or we believe the plain commands from ALMIGHTY GOD! Either the opinions—and acceptance—of God-rejecting human beings are important to us, or the opinion of God is!

Which do you value?

God says, "The Eternal has given you the Sabbath." We have seen that this world's theologians have given mankind and professing "Churchianity" Sunday (the day of the sun)—and we will learn that it comes from rank paganism!

### **God Kept Track of the Weekly Cycle**

After making the seventh day holy 4,000 years earlier, Jesus Christ kept the Sabbath—and His presence is still in it today, 2,000 years later. Obviously, having been present at its creation, Christ would not be confused about which day to keep the Sabbath (Luke 4:16). But

we should take a moment to briefly overview the pattern of Sabbath observance through the 4,000 years from its creation to Christ's First Coming. This sets the stage to "clear the deck" of all questions for mankind's first 4,000 years of existence.

Adam and Eve kept the Sabbath almost immediately after they were created on the sixth day. Obviously, their son Abel is called "righteous" (Matt. 23:35). Since Psalm 119:172 explains, "All your commandments are *righteousness*," Abel kept the Sabbath. Since Enoch "walked with God" (Gen. 5:24), as a preacher of righteousness (Jude 14-15), he just as obviously kept the Sabbath. Therefore Noah, also a "preacher of righteousness" (II Pet. 2:5), would certainly have kept the Sabbath. All these preachers—Abel, Seth, Enos, Cainan, Mahalaleel, Jared, Enoch and Noah—were direct descendants of each other (Seth was Abel's brother) in this order and their lives overlapped for hundreds of years. (It can be demonstrated that Adam died only about 125 years before Noah was born.) No one would have lost track of the weekly cycle—and therefore which day was the Sabbath—during this period. (We will address this topic in greater detail in the next chapter.) Certainly Shem would have been taught by his father Noah to keep the Sabbath. History also records that he was "righteous"—and he overlapped 150 years into Abraham's lifetime.

Abraham, often called "the father of the faithful," kept God's Sabbath. Notice: "Because that Abraham *obeyed* My voice, and *kept* My charge, My COMMANDMENTS, My statutes, and My laws" (Gen. 26:5). This verse is most plain. Abraham kept God's Sabbath! It is the Fourth COMMANDMENT.

The Bible declares that "Sin is the transgression of the law" (I John 3:4). Because the Law *did* exist from creation, God *could* tell Cain, before he killed Abel, that "SIN lies at the door" (Gen. 4:7), if he did not control his attitude.

Human beings must justify their rebellion against God's Commandments. Human nature hates His law (Rom. 8:7), preferring the traditions and commandments of men in its place (Mark 7:6-9). Yet, God commands in the New Testament that to break any ONE of His laws is sin (Jms. 2:10-11).

There is a reason this is especially critical to understand. Many who refuse to accept God's Sabbath, forgetting it was made at creation, claim that God's *Commandments* did not exist until Moses received them at Mt. Sinai—430 years after the promises were made to Abraham. How then did Abraham and others know of them? Because they were all given at creation. The weekly cycle has never changed since the original creation week.

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Before continuing, let's be absolutely certain that this is true. Let's study the abundance of proof.



## *Has Time Been Lost?*

**M**any realize that God created, rested on, blessed and hallowed the *seventh day*!—and by now, so should you. But which day is the seventh day in today’s calendar? Has the weekly cycle been lost? Can we know? You can be certain. This chapter presents absolute PROOF!

“In spite of all of our dickerings with the Calendar, it is patent that the human race has never lost the Septenary [seven-day] sequence of *Week days*, and that the Sabbath of these latter times comes down to us from Adam...without a single lapse!”

- Dr. Charles A. Totten, *Joshua’s Long Day and the Dial of Ahaz*

Let’s ask, is the above statement true? Can it be proven? If so, how? We saw that at the end of the creation week in Genesis 1 God finished His activity with a special creation: “Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. And on *the seventh day* God ended His work which He had made; and He *rested on* the seventh day from all His work which He had made. And God *blessed* the seventh day, and *sanctified it*: because that in it He had rested from all His work which God created and made” (Gen. 2:1-3).

Twenty-five centuries later, at Mt. Sinai, God gave the Ten Commandments to the nation of ancient Israel through Moses. We also saw that the Sabbath command in Exodus directly referred to the creation account of Genesis 2. It states, “*Remember* the sabbath day,

to *keep it holy*. Six days shall you labor, and do all your work: but the *seventh day is the sabbath* of the LORD your God...*For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is*" (Ex. 20:8-11).

These have been very plain, clear verses. But for the sake of discussion, we will continue with several basic facts. God made the Sabbath. He rested on it. He sanctified it (set it apart). He blessed it. He made it to be the seventh day of a seven-day cycle.

This chapter is not primarily written to prove that the Sabbath should be kept. The book does that. Our purpose here is to prove the weekly cycle has never changed since creation. Many suppose that it has. If this cycle has been either broken or lost, there remains no further obligation for mankind to observe the true Sabbath of the Bible. It is that simple. If the weekly cycle has been broken, the Sabbath is lost to history and cannot be in effect today!

### Keeping Track of the Sabbath

Others are more sincere and ask, "Well, I know God created the Sabbath, but how do we *now* know *which day* of our week He made holy?" or "Hasn't mankind changed the *calendar*?" And further, our seventh day, Saturday, was named after the pagan god Saturn, and some question whether this had an effect on the Hebrew calendar. Others ask about what has been called "the long day of Joshua" or traveling around the world and "gaining a day" or "losing a day." Many naturally wonder what possible effects any of these issues may have had on the weekly cycle.

Before addressing the concerns raised in this series of questions, a point must first be acknowledged.

Consider! These questions, while individually important, collectively represent a single great question. Is the all-powerful God of the universe capable of creating, hallowing, sanctifying and blessing the seventh day of the week, yet, at the same time, be *incapable* of keeping track of this day throughout history? Would God command people to "remember" the Sabbath only to Himself forget that He must preserve it for this to be possible? The idea is absurd. It insults God's thinking—and power—by making Him appear to be a doddering old man who is so disorganized and forgetful that He cannot keep track of what He has created or commanded!

While mankind seeks excuses not to keep the Sabbath, some actually dare to blame God as the reason this is no longer possible. They then reason that if *He* forgot to preserve the weekly cycle, mankind no

longer needs to remember and observe the Sabbath. How convenient for human nature!

This world's professing Christianity—Catholicism and the many branches of Protestantism—keep Sunday. It has been Roman Catholicism that has preserved Sunday as the day of worship. Notice again, before continuing, what was a stunning admission from a letter by James Cardinal Gibbons, Archbishop of Baltimore (1877-1921). While it also makes a statement about *how* Sabbath obedience was exchanged for Sunday observance, this quote demonstrates the importance of the preservation of Sunday observance for Catholics throughout the centuries. This is only one of so many previously-stated similar quotes:

“Is Saturday the seventh day according to the Bible and the Ten Commandments? I answer yes. Is Sunday the first day of the week and did the Church change the seventh day—Saturday—for Sunday, the first day? I answer yes. Did Christ change the day? I answer no!”

- James Gibbons

No one ever seems to question that the *first day* of the week is *Sunday*! Over two billion professing Christians assert that they keep Sunday in commemoration of Christ's supposed resurrection on that day—the first day of the week. It is unthinkable to suggest that so many people would either purposely, carelessly or inadvertently be keeping “their day,” the *first day* of the week, Sunday, on the *wrong day*! Right? But Jews are no less certain that they are keeping the Sabbath on the true seventh day of the week. The Jewish people have been responsible for “keeping track” of *their day*, the same day kept by Jesus and the apostles, for many centuries longer than Catholics have been tracking “their day.”

The point is this: Each group (Catholics and Jews) knows full well which day is which—and neither would dare suggest the other does not!

### **Israel Forgets the Sabbath**

Most know the story of Israel's slavery in Egypt and her Exodus under Moses. A 1950s Hollywood movie made it famous. Before the Exodus, Jacob and his sons had joined another of his sons, Joseph, in Egypt. Later, after Joseph died, a different Pharaoh came into power and enslaved the Israelites for over 150 years. They were not permit-

ted to keep the Sabbath and had no priesthood to guide them. Since Moses recorded the first five books of the Bible later, they would not yet have had any Scriptures available to teach them.

Notice Israel's condition: "Therefore they did set over them taskmasters to *afflict* them with their burdens. And they built for Pharaoh treasure cities, Pithom and Rameses...And the Egyptians made the children of Israel to *serve with rigor*: And they made their lives *bitter* with *hard bondage*, in mortar, and in brick, and in all manner of service in the field: all their service, wherein they made them serve, was *with rigor*" (Ex. 1:11, 13-14).

The Bible records that there were 600,000 men, age 20 and above, who left Egypt with Moses. This means there were three-to-four million Israelites, counting women and children. All of them lacked formal knowledge of the Sabbath. By the time they reached the Wilderness of Sin (Zin), two months after leaving Egypt, they were hungry and complaining because of lack of food in the desert.

### The Manna Miracle Reveals the Sabbath

It has been established that God gave the Sabbath to ancient Israel through Moses. *Why* did God do this? He had to! Israel had just spent nearly two and a half centuries in Egypt, with most of that time in slavery. They had not been permitted to properly worship the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob—their forefathers—for all those years. At the time that God liberated them, many had forgotten the identity of the true God and His Sabbath.

This is one reason that the Sabbath command begins with the words "*Remember* the Sabbath day"—Israel had forgotten it. Abraham, Isaac and Jacob had kept God's law (Gen. 26:5), but the knowledge of the Sabbath had become lost through the centuries.

God decided to make the Sabbath command clear to Israel while they were in the Wilderness of Sin. Israel had left the "flesh pots" of Egypt behind and grumbled to Moses because they lacked food. God had to test whether they would obey His law. This was a specific test designed to teach Israel the uniqueness of the Sabbath's holy time. The account is found in Exodus 16. It illustrates that people can find themselves thinking that "time has been lost."

The Old Testament story about God feeding manna (and quail) to Israel is well known. Notice: "Behold, I will rain bread from heaven for you; and the people shall go out and gather a certain rate every day, that I may prove them, whether they will *walk in my law, or no*" (vs. 4). "And Moses said, This shall be, when the LORD shall give you in

the evening flesh to eat, and in the morning bread to the full; for that the LORD hears your murmurings” (vs. 8).

The test had begun: Would Israel keep God’s law—keep His Sabbath? Would they walk in His law or not?

The context continues, “And Moses spoke unto Aaron, Say unto all the congregation of the children of Israel, Come near before the LORD: for He has heard your murmurings. And it came to pass, as Aaron spoke unto the whole congregation of the children of Israel, that they looked toward the wilderness, and, behold, the glory of the LORD appeared in the cloud...And it came to pass, that at even the quails came up, and covered the camp: and in the morning the dew lay round about the host” (vs. 9-10, 13).

It is important to realize that the quail did not come up until after dusk (sunset). Also, Israel was assembled as a congregation on the Sabbath day. They were gathered for a religious service. The quails appeared *when the Sabbath was over*, and people were permitted to gather them for the evening meal.

The next morning was the first day of the week and the first time that *manna* appeared. People were instructed to only gather enough for each day, or it would breed worms and stink (vs. 20). The people disbelieved Moses and attempted to gather extra manna. Just as God said, it bred worms and stank. However, verse 22 explains that on the *sixth day* of the week they could gather twice as much, so they would have food for the Sabbath, and it would *not* breed worms and stink. God said this because “*Tomorrow* is the rest of the holy sabbath unto the LORD” (vs. 23).

As is always the case, some did not believe God and attempted to gather manna on the Sabbath—the seventh day (vs. 27). Just as God had said, they found none. How quickly some become confused about time! These *Israelites* must have thought “time had been lost” and that the manna would be there even though God had told them it would not. Others thought the manna could be held over on days other than the sixth day when it could not. God’s response to those who became confused was, “And the LORD said unto Moses, How long *refuse you to keep My commandments* and My laws? See, for that *the LORD has given you the sabbath*, therefore He gives you on the sixth day the bread of two days; abide you every man in his place, let no man go out of his place on the seventh day. So the people rested on the seventh day” (vs. 28-30).

Set confusion and disobedience aside. The sole purpose of this test was to show that God made a specific time holy—the seventh day!

### Christ Kept the Sabbath

Fifteen hundred years after the account in Exodus 16 is the example of Christ. He had no doubt which day was the Sabbath.

Mark 2:27-28 records Christ talking to the Pharisees: “And He said unto them, The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath: Therefore the Son of man is Lord also of the sabbath.” If Christ were Lord of the Sabbath, He would have *known* when it was! Luke 4:16 says that Christ’s custom was to enter the synagogue *every Sabbath*.

In AD 69-70, all Jews were driven from Palestine and dispersed into nations around the world. Through the last 19 centuries, they have never become confused about which day was the Sabbath. Remember, Luke 4:16 (and 17, 20) actually showed Christ meeting *with the Jews* in the synagogue on the Sabbath. Again, the Jews had not become confused about which day it was when Christ was alive.

Today, if time had been lost, we would expect that Jews, scattered around the world and no longer in communication with one another, would be keeping *different* days. However, today they are all in unity—in agreement—on which day is the Sabbath.

A famous Hebrew essayist once said, “More than Israel has kept the Sabbath, it is the Sabbath that has kept Israel” (Ronald L. Eisenberg, *The JPS Guide to Jewish Traditions*). This is true! Modern Jews have never lost their identity because they have *never lost track of the seventh day Sabbath!*

There is no doubt that the Sabbath was kept intact through the 1,500 years until Christ’s time. *He* was certainly not confused and knew when to keep it. There is also no doubt that the Jews have kept it intact ever since. We will momentarily consider other proofs of the period *after* Christ, but first we must examine an event *prior* to Christ’s life.

### Joshua’s Long Day

Christ’s obedience to the Sabbath established its continuity throughout His lifetime. So, while there should now be no need to look *backward* in time, we will consider one other objection that arises. Some argue, “What about Joshua? Didn’t he have some kind of ‘long day’ in the Old Testament? Didn’t that day throw time off and make Sunday the seventh day of the week?” Is this true? We must carefully consider this account, from Joshua 10.

Notice: “Then spoke Joshua to the LORD...before the children of Israel...*Sun, stand you still* upon Gibeon; and you, Moon, in the valley of Ajalon. And the sun stood still, and the moon stayed...So *the sun stood still* in the midst of heaven, and hastened not to go down *about a whole day*” (10:12-13).

The scripture states that the sun stood still for “about a whole day.” We will later demonstrate that God defines a normal day as about twenty-four hours.

A clever argument has been used to teach that Joshua’s long day caused Sunday to become the new seventh day of the week. Carefully following the logic of this argument, it is best summarized in this way: “The week in which Joshua’s long day occurred contained an extra twenty-four hour period. This would be the period described as ‘about a whole day.’ If Joshua’s battle occurred, for instance, on a Thursday, then there were *eight* twenty-four hour periods in the week of Joshua’s long day instead of *seven*! Since Thursday would be about forty-eight hours long, it would now also include Friday. The following day, Friday, would then become the day that was Saturday. And Saturday (what would have been the seventh day of this week) would become Sunday.”

This faulty logic would then continue by concluding that “the seventh day has been Sunday ever since.” Of course, this means that people have been keeping the Sabbath on the wrong day for over 3,400 years! For this argument to be true we must ask: Was Thursday really *Thursday and Friday*—or was Thursday merely a *long Thursday*?

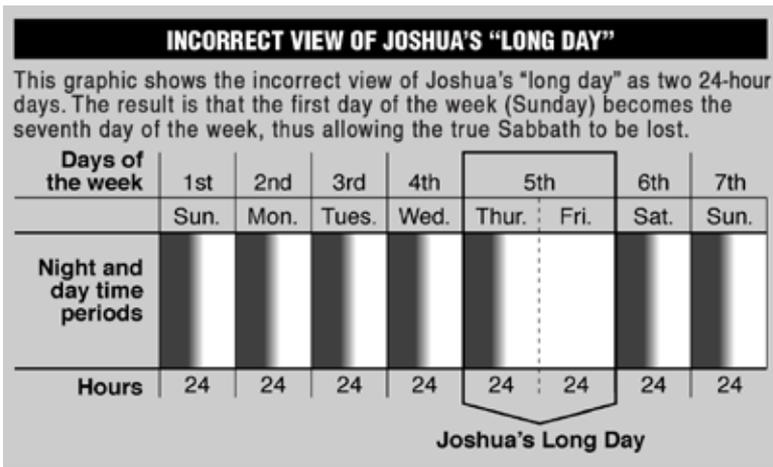
Here is the problem with the logic of this argument. Those who espouse it do *not* understand the Bible definition of a *day*. Let’s keep this matter straight. We must let the Bible, and the Bible alone, define a day! Men have endless ideas about things they *think* the Bible says. We must examine what it *actually* says—not what *people* with preconceived ideas *think* it says.

Men try to say that Joshua’s long day was *two days* of twenty-four hours each. This is what is necessary to move the seventh day of the week forward into what is now Sunday. Return to Joshua’s account. Does God refer to this day as *two days*? Here is His answer: “And there was *NO DAY* like that before *IT* or after *IT*” (10:14). Did you catch the “it”? God refers to this period as a “day,” and “it” (twice). God uses the singular, not the plural. It says *day*, not *days*!

Make no mistake. This was not an ordinary day! This much is certain. God says, “there was *no day like...it*.” It was only *one day*—and this does not mean “two days in one.” It was a single, unique day in the course of human history, and perhaps of all time. This was

a tremendous supernatural event demonstrating the great power of God. The universe is a finely tuned mechanism, functioning like a giant Swiss watch. Astronomers agree that it is all interdependent and moves together. Literally, it required God to halt the entire heavens (remember, this miracle included the moon) for about twenty-four hours in order to make the sun “stand still.” To use this event as an excuse to disobey the Sabbath is to trivialize one of the greatest miracles of all time!

The following diagrams depict the error of the clever argument that we have described. The first diagram is the *wrong* view of the week, and the second is the *correct* view.



### How the Bible Defines a Day

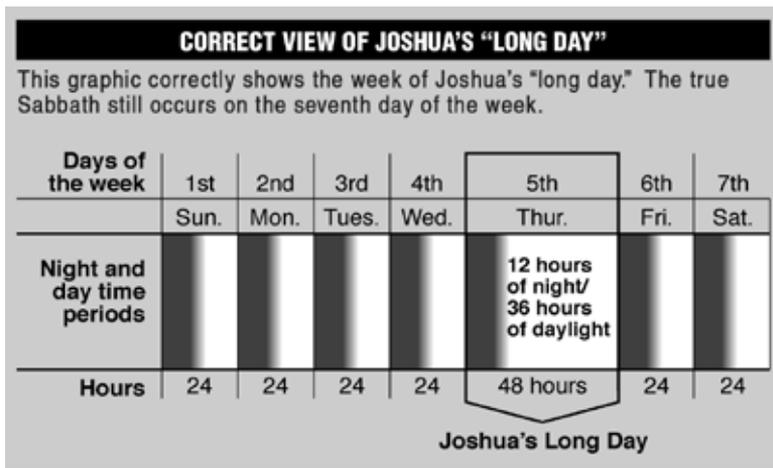
Men may decide that a day is twenty-four hours *by the clock*—but that is not what *God* says. We must understand *why* God could correctly describe Joshua's approximately forty-eight hour day as one day.

In the creation chapter of Genesis 1, God gives *His* definition of a day. God says that He “divided the light from the darkness. And God called the light Day, and the darkness He called Night. And the evening (darkness) and the morning (light) were *the first day*...And the evening (darkness) and the morning (light) were *the second day*...And the evening and the morning were *the third day*” (vs. 4-13) and so on through the first week. From this account, we see that days are comprised of *evenings* and *mornings*. Despite the common perception, a day is not merely the daylight portion of a

twenty-four-hour period. It is, in fact, the *entire* period between sunsets.

This is the Bible definition of the length of a day! What could be more plain?

Further, we must go to Leviticus to see what God says is the starting point of each day. Notice that “from even unto even” (23:32) is how God instructed that the Sabbath be observed. The word *evening* is derived from the word *even*. For several hundred years after the death of Christ, the general practice was always to begin days at sunset, not at midnight. Any encyclopedia will explain this and Luke 4:40 and Mark 1:32 show that days *begin and end at the time of sunset*.



Joshua’s long day consisted of a twelve-hour evening and about a *thirty-six-hour* “morning.” But this did not make it two days—it was just one very long day.

Now we must restate a previous point. Remember that Christ was not confused about the Sabbath, and that He kept it on the proper day over 1,400 years *after* “Joshua’s long day.” To believe that the long day of Joshua altered the weekly cycle, thus losing a day, it is necessary to believe that Christ Himself did not adjust for this “long day.” Then one must believe that Christ was “off” by one full day in His calculation of which day was the Sabbath—and so were the Jews.

Now think! If Christ was incorrect in His calculation of the Sabbath, then He *broke* the Sabbath—He *sinned*—and mankind has no Savior! But Christ did *not* sin by breaking the Sabbath or in any other fashion. And mankind *does* have a Savior.

Finally, it is interesting to note that even those who reference Joshua's account always call it "Joshua's long *day*"—not "Joshua's long *days*." The whole argument of trying to compress two days into one, to escape the command to keep the seventh day Sabbath (today's Saturday), seems rather silly, doesn't it? Do not be fooled by the clever arguments of men.

### Can Days Be "Gained" or "Lost"?

Because the Earth is round, days are determined by the rotation of the planet on its axis. This rotation is measured in relation to the sun. It is the same with the Sabbath. Sundown—at any given place on Earth—determines the beginning of the Sabbath or any other day. Whether one is in New York, Manila or Paris is irrelevant. A day is from "even [sunset] unto even [sunset]" (Lev. 23:32). The beginning of any day is determined based on where someone is when the sun goes down.

The International Date Line was established so that men could know where their travels would require them to add or subtract a day—depending upon whether they were traveling east or west. Except for a couple of isolated South Pacific islands, this location was ideally placed in the middle of the Pacific Ocean because it does not permit people in different parts of the world to keep any day (including the Sabbath) on *two different days*. People in Japan start the Sabbath before those in India—who start it before people in Jerusalem—who start it before those in London—who start it before people in Chicago—who start it before those in Honolulu. However, all keep it on the same day!

Do not be confused by people who say that traveling around the world can cause one to "gain" or to "lose" days. Clever statements are often made about gaining hours while traveling west or losing them while traveling east. This is not reality, but rather a perception of reality.

Here's how to prove it! If one starts in London and travels non-stop westward around the world, returning to London, will he arrive one full day *behind* everyone who never left London? Has he traveled backward in time and "gained" twenty-four hours? Conversely, if one did the same thing traveling non-stop eastward, would he arrive in London a day *before* everyone that had remained there? Has he traveled forward in time and actually "lost" twenty-four hours?

The idea is silly! Yet this is how some people reason. If this were true, two separate people, one traveling non-stop eastward and the other traveling non-stop westward, would both arrive in London at the

same time and yet be *two days apart in time*. If two people did this over and over, one would become younger while the other would be aging at a faster rate. How ridiculous to consider this! Yet this argument fools some people.

There is a slightly different, but related, point to be considered. It seems that there are never-ending ways that people devise to believe time can be lost. What would have to happen—exactly—for time to truly be lost in such a way *that the whole world would lose it*? Another way of asking this question is: What would it take today for over *six and one half billion people* on Earth to *all* lose track of time?

We have all known people who forget where they are, fall asleep or “lose track of time,” when they are supposed to be somewhere or do something on a schedule. Perhaps this has happened to you several times. So, it is admitted that *individuals* can certainly “lose track of time.” However, someone would have to be knocked unconscious or fall into a coma to lose track of time so that, when they awaken, they are unable to know how much time has passed—days, weeks, months, or even years! But, they would merely ask how long they had been “out” and the answer would reorient them.

Let’s carry this further. What would be necessary for *all people* on Earth to lose track of time? The following would have to happen (I am being facetious): Simultaneously, *everyone* on Earth, for an extended period of time, would have to be knocked unconscious, fall asleep or fall into a coma! Presumably, if everyone then regained consciousness, there would be no one left to ask how much time had passed while everyone else was “out cold.” If even one person remained conscious, he could tell everyone what had happened. Everyone would be re-oriented to the proper time.

Can you see the absurdity of such shallow, deceptive arguments about “gaining” or “losing” time?

### **The True Church Proves Time Has Not Been Lost**

The true Church of God has always kept God’s Sabbath—Saturday. Just as Jews know the correct day, so also do true Christians.

Most theologians and religionists have long admitted that the true Sabbath of the Bible is the seventh day. However, they will not obey it. Saturday, not Sunday, is the seventh day of the week. Even a good dictionary explains this. You have already seen several scriptural references to the Sabbath. God hallowed it at creation—long before there were any Jews or Israelites to keep it.

God told ancient Israel, “Moreover also I gave them My sabbaths, to be a *sign between Me and them*, that they might know that I am the LORD that sanctify them” (Ezek. 20:12). One of the single greatest KEYS that identifies the true Church, the one founded by Jesus Christ, is the *sign* of God’s true Sabbath.

The quote, “More than Israel has kept the Sabbath, it is the Sabbath that has kept Israel!” (ibid.) could as easily have been said of the true Church, which has been under siege throughout the ages—partly for keeping the Sabbath. The church at Rome, in AD 363, decreed the death sentence on all who continued to observe the Sabbath.

Christ kept the Sabbath. A Christian is one who *follows*—who *copies*—Jesus Christ’s example in his own life. His example was Sabbath observance! Therefore, for 2,000 years, the New Testament Church has always kept God’s Sabbath. The record of history is that God’s Church has remained faithful to the Sabbath command despite intense persecution. It has remained a sign between God and His people.

### **What About Changes to the Roman Calendar?**

What about the important question of changes to the Roman calendar? There were two important changes (actually one change that occurred in two stages) to two different Roman calendars. These changes are acknowledged. But what were the *nature* of these changes? Did they affect the *weekly cycle*? They did not! Neither of the two changes affected the days of the week. This has not kept people from saying that these changes broke the weekly cycle. This reasoning continues with the claim that this has caused time to be lost—and thus the certainty of when to observe the Sabbath is gone.

Some understanding of history is required. Most are unfamiliar with the fact that today’s calendar is called the *Gregorian* calendar or that the *Julian* calendar preceded it.

Most are familiar with the famous Roman emperor, Julius Caesar. He devised the first Roman calendar—called the “Julian calendar.” Our month of *July* still carries the stamp of his name. His calendar dated from 45 BC and continued to AD 1582—spanning over 16 centuries. A Greek astronomer named Sosigenes calculated the calendar in 46 BC, which Caesar adopted.

The first change to the calendar occurred in 1582 and was decreed by Pope Gregory XIII (1572-1585). From this point, the calendar has been known as the “Gregorian calendar.” One hundred and seventy years later, in 1752, another change was made. Both involved drop-

ping days from the calendar to correct for previous errors in construction and computation. What had caused the problem?

Over the centuries, astronomers had come to greater precision in understanding how to compute and devise a more exact (solar) calendar. The Julian calendar lacked this precision. It was based on the belief that a solar year was exactly  $365 \frac{1}{4}$  days long. Hence, the calendar added one extra day every four years to the month of February. Astronomers learned in time that the solar year was actually 12 minutes and 14 seconds shorter than previously believed. This caused the spring equinox to fall backwards on the calendar until it eventually fell on March 11th instead of March 21st. This required that ten days be dropped from the calendar.

Bear in mind that days were dropped from the *month*—in October 1582—but not from the *week*! The below diagram shows how this was done.

The first week of October went from Thursday, October 4th, to Friday, October 15th. The two Sabbaths on either side of this change were still *seven days apart*. The Sabbath remained unaffected. The weekly cycle was not broken. Because it was the Catholics who made the change, it is they who possess the best historical record of how they did this. The official change took place in Italy, Spain and Portugal.

## October – AD 1582

Sun.	Mon.	Tues.	Wed.	Thurs.	Fri.	Sat.
	1	2	3	4	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

Apparently, there was much debate about how and when to make the change. Notice the following two quotes: “Thus, every imaginable proposition was made; only one idea was never mentioned, viz. the abandonment of the seven-day week” (*The Catholic Encyclopedia*, Vol. 9, “Lilius”). (It was Lilius who actually proposed the change that was finally accepted.)

Also, “It is to be noted that in the Christian period the order of days of the week has never been interrupted. Thus, when Gregory XIII reformed the calendar in 1582, Thursday, 4 October was followed by Friday, 15 October. So in England, in 1752, Wednesday, 2 September, was followed by Thursday, 14 September” (*The Catholic Encyclopedia*, Vol. 3, “Chronology”).

As stated, two changes occurred to the calendar that were really one change occurring in *two stages*. This bears explanation. When Pope Gregory decreed the change, the British would not comply. They retained the old Julian calendar until 1752—thus remaining ten days behind the newly established Gregorian calendar! Obviously, Sabbath-keeping remained undisturbed in British areas for these 170 years.

The British finally determined to make the change. With the passing of 170 years came an additional “drift” in the calendar of *one more day*. Now it became necessary to drop *eleven days* to catch up with the spring equinox, instead of the previous ten! The change was effected in September of 1752. Instead of dropping ten days, between a Thursday and Friday as in 1582, the British chose to drop eleven days between a Wednesday and Thursday. The next diagram explains what happened. Once again, Sabbath-keeping continued undisturbed during the seven-day period spanning the change:

## September – AD 1752

Sun.	Mon.	Tues.	Wed.	Thurs.	Fri.	Sat.
		1	2	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30

Actually, there was even a *third stage* to the calendar changes described above. The Russians refused to make the change until 1907! Their calendar had now fallen *thirteen days* behind everyone else’s. It was not until 1907 that they synchronized with the rest of the world by dropping thirteen days from their calendar. Before and after this change, Sabbath-keepers in Russia observed the same day that Sabbath-keepers everywhere else in the world observed. Certainly the same practice applied to all Sunday-keepers.

No one can dispute these basic facts of recent history!

### The View From Scientists, Historians and Astronomers

Have you ever asked yourself where the different terms *day*, *week*, *month* and *year* originated? Consider the *year*. What is it? How was it derived? *Men* determined that it is the exact amount of time necessary for the Earth to revolve around the sun one time. Astronomers and scientists were able to determine the length of a YEAR through precise mathematical computation. Their calculations cannot be disputed!

What about a MONTH? The same is true. The word *month* is a shortened version of “*moonth*.” *Men* determined that it is the exact amount of time necessary for the moon to orbit or revolve around the Earth. Astronomers and scientists were able to determine the length of a month through precise mathematical computation. Their calculations cannot be disputed!

What about the DAY? What is it? Again, the same is true. *Men* determined that it is the exact amount of time necessary for the Earth to rotate on its axis one time. Astronomers and scientists were able to determine the length of a day through precise mathematical computation. Their calculations cannot be disputed!

None of the above calculations required a revelation from God. All of the computations and calculations could be performed by *men*. They cannot be “interpreted” otherwise. The evidence has been long established!

Now consider who determined that a week contains *seven days*. Did scientists—astronomers—mathematicians—historians—Popes or other religious authorities? What exact mathematical computation would have guided men to a seven-day conclusion for the length of a week—in the same way that the year, month and day were derived? Astronomy and math have nothing to do with the length of a week! So, why doesn't the week have *five days*? Why doesn't it have *eight days* or *ten days*? This question of “why the seven-day week?” has always loomed before all men.

The only correct answer to this question is that God divinely revealed the week to mankind! No other solution fits and the seven-day weekly cycle is universally accepted around the world!

Many experts have spoken about the unbroken continuity of the weekly cycle from creation. Their testimony represents its own towering authority attesting to the sanctity and divine origin of the seven-day week.

Consider the following powerful quotes:

“The week is a period of seven days...It has been employed from time immemorial in almost all eastern countries” (*The Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 11th ed., “Calendar”).

In the 1920s and early 1930s, the League of Nations was considering altering the Gregorian calendar. Many ideas were considered and debated. In the League’s official “Report on the Reform of the Calendar,” published at Geneva, August 17, 1926, are the following statements by noted astronomers:

“The week has been followed for thousands of years and therefore has been hallowed by immemorial use” (Anders Donner, professor of Astronomy at the University of Helsingfors).

“I have always hesitated to suggest breaking the continuity of the week, which is without a doubt the most ancient scientific institution bequeathed to us by antiquity” (Edouard Baillaud, director of the Paris Observatory).

“There has been no change in our calendar in past centuries that has affected in any way the cycle of the week” (Dr. James Robertson, director of the American Ephemeris, Navy Dept., U.S. Naval Observatory, Washington, D.C.).

“As far as I know, in the various changes of the Calendar there has been no change in the seven day rota of the week, which has come down from very early times” (Frank W. Dyson, Astronomer Royal, Royal Observatory, Greenwich, London).

“The week of seven days has been in use ever since the days of the Mosaic dispensation, and we have no reason for supposing that any irregularities have existed in the succession of weeks and their days from that time to the present” (Dr. William W. Campbell, director of Lick Observatory).

“For more than three thousand years science has gone backward, and, with profound research, reveals the fact that in that vast period the length of the day has not changed by the hundredth part of a single second of time” (General O.M. Mitchell, *The Astronomy of the Bible*).

“By calculating the eclipses, it can be *proven* that *no time has been lost*, and that the creation days were seven, divided into twenty-four hours each” (Dr. Hinckley, *The Watchman* [Dr. Hinckley was a well-known astronomer of a half a century ago.]).

“The continuity of the week...has crossed the centuries and all known calendars, still intact” (Professor Demetrios Eginitis, director of the National Observatory of Athens).

Then this longer quote:

“It is a strange fact that even today there is a great deal of confusion concerning the question of so-called ‘lost time.’ Alterations that have been made to the calendar in the past *have left the impression that time has actually been lost*. In point of fact, of course, these adjustments were made to bring the calendar into closer agreement with the natural [solar] year. Now, unfortunately, this supposed ‘lost time’ is still being used to throw doubt upon the unbroken cycle of the Seventh-day Sabbath that God inaugurated at the Creation. I am glad that I can add the witness of my scientific training to the irrevocable nature of the weekly cycle.

“Having been time computer at Greenwich [England’s Observatory] for many years, I can testify that all our days are in God’s absolute control—relentlessly measured by the daily rotation of the earth on its axis. This daily period of rotation does not vary one-thousandth part of a second in thousands of years. Also, the year is a very definite number of days. Consequently, it can be said that not a day has been lost since Creation, and all the calendar changes notwithstanding, there has been no break in the weekly cycle” (Dr. Frank Jeffries, Fellow of the Royal Astronomical Society, and research director of the Royal Observatory, Greenwich, England).

Finally, consider the following extraordinary admission by the Sunday-keeping Presbyterian Church:

“Yet this singular measure of time by periods of seven days may be traced not only through the sacred history before the era of Moses, but in all ancient civilizations of every era, many of which could not possibly have derived the notion from Moses. Among the learned of Egypt, the Brahmins of India, by Arabs, by Assyrians, as may be gathered from their astronomers and priests, this division was recognized. Hesiod (900 BC) declares, ‘The seventh day is holy.’ So [also] Homer and Callimachus. Even in the Saxon mythology, the division by weeks was prominent. Nay, even among the tribes of Devil-worshippers in Africa, we are told, that a peculiar feature of their religion is a weekly sacred day, the violation of which by labour will incur the wrath of the Devil-god. Traces of a similar division of time have been noticed among the Indians of the American continent.

“Now, on what other theory are these facts explicable, than upon the supposition of a divinely ordained Sabbath at the very origin of the race?” (*A Series of Tracts on the Doctrines, Order, and Polity of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America*).

**Time Has NOT Been Lost**

This chapter has addressed whether the Sabbath has been lost in the time since creation. You have seen that it has not. No amount of deceptive trickery or clever “sleight of hand” has been sufficient to overthrow the truth about when God’s Sabbath should be observed. God never requires people to discern for themselves *what* to obey—only *whether* they will obey.

You have now seen proof that the weekly cycle has been kept intact for nearly 6,000 years. What will you do?

## *Law of God, Not Moses*

Think for a moment. Almost everything God says to do, men do *not* do. Almost everything God says *not* to do, men do. In the Sermon on the Mount, Christ says, “Swear not at all.” Yet people routinely swear, over Bibles in courtrooms and about nearly everything else one can think of. He says, “Love your enemies,” so men hate them and kill them in war, and many other ways. Also in the Sermon on the Mount, He says, “Think not that I am come to destroy the law,” yet preachers declare, “You can’t keep the law. Christ did away with it because He kept it for us.”

Why do human beings seemingly examine the Bible for everything God says in His Word, only to find a reason to do or believe the *exact opposite*?

### **The Sabbath Command**

Just shortly after the manna test, the three-to-four million Israelites arrived en masse at Mt. Sinai. There, they were given the Ten Commandments by God through Moses. The Sabbath is the fourth command.

Let’s read the entire Sabbath commandment: “*Remember* the sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shall you labor, and do all your work: But the seventh day is the sabbath of the LORD your God: in it you shall not do any work, you, nor your son, nor your daughter, your manservant, nor your maidservant, nor your cattle, nor your stranger that is within

your gates: For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: Wherefore the LORD *blessed* the sabbath day, and *hallowed* it” (Ex. 20:8-11).

Several points are vital to understand. First, God said, “Remember the Sabbath.” Again, Israel had largely forgotten it during their time in Egypt. God had just miraculously revealed the Sabbath—through the manna—as holy time and He wanted Israel to “remember” this time that they had forgotten. Why do men today want to *forget* a commandment that begins with the word *remember*? In a world that has forgotten it, God tells *you*—today—to remember the Sabbath. Will you?

Second, God (actually Christ) commands to abstain from work on the seventh day. God made the Sabbath as a time for man to rest from the previous six days of work. The *rest command* is all-encompassing. He knew that man would need this rest—physically, mentally, emotionally, psychologically and spiritually. This is another reason the Sabbath is literally “for man.” It is a weekly opportunity to break away from the daily routine, commune more closely with God and reflect on our purpose for being.

God does command human beings to *work* six days. He wants man to provide for himself (and his family) and manage his life and finances in accordance with His laws. Many verses, such as John 5:17, 36, show that both God the Father and Christ work—so should we.

Third, is the critically important point revealing that God *regives* the Sabbath by hearkening to its place and creation in the original creation week. Exodus 20:11 uses practically the same language as Genesis 2:2-3. More than 2,500 years had passed from the time of creation. God explains that the Sabbath is still holy—HALLOWED—time.

An important side note is in order here. Though Genesis 2:2-3 does not use the term “the Sabbath day,” Exodus 20 does. This is critical because Exodus 20 directly references the Genesis 2 creation account. While both use the term “the seventh day,” Exodus merely adds that this is “the Sabbath,” therefore making it one and the same as the Sabbath from creation. The Sabbath did not, technically, *first* appear at Mt. Sinai as some claim. Remember, the same Christ who was LORD of “the Sabbath” made it at creation. The “seventh day” and “the Sabbath” are synonymous! Do not let anyone cleverly twist terms to “prove” that the Sabbath is 2,500 years *newer* than God says it is!

Fourth, the seventh day is called “the Sabbath of the LORD”—not “the Sabbath of the Jews” or “the Sabbath of the Israelites.” The phrase “of the LORD” connotes possession. An equivalent way of saying this is “the Lord’s Sabbath.” Following basic reasoning, the seventh day is “the Lord’s day.”

No wonder Christ called the Sabbath “the Lord’s day.” Sunday has never been the Lord’s day—it is “the *Sun’s* day,” plain and simple. Yes, men have given the seventh day the pagan name of *Saturday* (Saturn’s day), but it has always been God’s day—the true Lord’s day. Also, since the original Sabbath command uses the term “the Sabbath of the LORD,” it should be easy to see why the same Lord (Christ) would say to the Pharisees that He was “Lord of the Sabbath” (Mark 2:28; Luke 6:5).

### **Christ’s Resurrection Was Not on Sunday, the Supposed “Lord’s Day”**

Surely some will cite Revelation 1:10 and try to apply the term “Lord’s Day” there to Sunday. This is usually done by saying that Christ’s Resurrection from the tomb was on a Sunday.

We have seen that many theologians and religionists have long admitted that the *true* Sabbath of the Bible is the seventh day. Saturday is the seventh day of the week (any good dictionary states this), and the weekly cycle has never been broken. However, the ministers of this world have had to carefully devise “explanations” that dismiss many clear scriptures about God’s plain command to keep His Sabbath. Instead of letting God’s Word *change* their beliefs to conform to His truths, they change the words or their meanings to make them *fit* their beliefs! They justify Sunday-keeping even though God’s Word has *never* justified this!

God has always instructed, “Remember the sabbath day, to keep *it* holy” (Ex. 20:8). He has *never* said, “Remember the first day (the pagan *Sun’s* day) to keep *it* holy,” or authorized His Church or mankind to do this. Nor did He ever command or allow His people to observe numerous other pagan festivals and days of worship, kept by this world’s churches.

We have just introduced why theologians and so many others *must* conclude that Christ’s Resurrection was on *Sunday*! Consider. This is why Sunday is commonly referred to as “the Lord’s Day.” While the Bible refers to time periods known as the *Day of the Lord*—which in some cases also refers to the Day of His WRATH (Rev. 1:10; 15:1, 7; Joel 2:1-11 and over 30 other places in the prophets)—the term, the Lord’s Day, has come to be synonymous with Sunday. But why? The reason is simple. If Sunday can be established as the day Christ was resurrected—i.e., the “Lord’s Day”—it becomes a means of validating and “authorizing” the keeping of Sunday by the churches of the world, in place of God’s true Sabbath.

It is interesting that the churches of this world will often admit to making a half-hearted effort at keeping nine of the Ten Commandments. Typically, they will acknowledge that it is wrong to steal, kill, covet, bear false witness, and commit adultery. They will also acknowledge that honoring one's father and mother, avoiding idolatry and taking God's name in vain—while also *claiming* to follow the God described in the First Commandment—are basically good things to do. However, most do a poor job of actually keeping these nine Commandments, and teach that Christ officially did away with them and “kept them for us.” But most will agree, at least tacitly, that these nine commandments are “nice principles.”

Exodus 20:8-11 reveals Sabbath-keeping is the Fourth *Commandment*—a fundamental LAW of God! The Sabbath was hallowed—made into holy *time*—by God at creation. God never hallowed the first day of the week.

Therefore, more than the Good Friday-Easter Sunday tradition collapses if Christ was in the grave for 72 hours instead of 36. (This is discussed in Chapter Ten.) The largest single “reason” for the unscriptural *tradition* (recall Mark 7:7) of Sunday-keeping collapses at the same time. Again, God has always said, “Remember the sabbath day, to keep *it* holy,” never “Remember *Sunday* to keep it holy—and just call it the Lord's day!” Actually, Christ's Resurrection occurred late *Saturday* afternoon, between 3 and 6 p.m. If the day of His Resurrection is important—THEN IT POINTS TO THE SABBATH, not Sunday!

All arguments that Sunday is the Lord's Day are easily exposed as a product of rebellious human reasoning from people who refuse to OBEY GOD! An entire later chapter will thoroughly expose this idea for the falsehood that it is.

### What Is Sin?

Nearly everyone has a different idea about what constitutes sin. Do *you* know? If sin brings the death penalty (Rom. 6:23), then the Bible must tell us what it is so that we can avoid such a terrible punishment. Do not settle for half-answers or the opinions of men. Do not concern yourself with what “religious *people*” and this world's ministers say, but with what the Bible says.

The Word of God reveals truth (John 17:17). Here is His definition—the *true* definition—of sin: “Whosoever commits SIN transgresses also the law: for SIN IS THE TRANSGRESSION OF THE LAW” (I John 3:4). GOD decides what sin is. And He states that it is transgressing—breaking—His laws. Since sin is the *transgression* of the law,

and the opposite would be *obedience* to the law, then exactly what law must we obey?

The answer is the Ten Commandments! Let's prove it with some review. John also wrote, "All *unrighteousness* is sin" (I John 5:17). Remember, "all [God's] commandments are righteousness" (Psa. 119:172). So then, unrighteousness is sin—*breaking* God's Commandments.

The apostle James added, "For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet *offend* [sin] in *one point*, he is guilty of *all*. For He that said, Do not commit ADULTERY, said also, Do not KILL. Now if you commit no adultery, yet if you kill, you are become a *transgressor of the law* [a lawbreaker]" (2:10-11).

James was directly referring to the Ten Commandments.

If a person breaks any "one point" of the Law, he is guilty of sin. The Fourth Commandment—fourth "point"—in the Law James speaks of is "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy." Sabbath-breaking is still SIN today. Once again, so says the *New Testament*!

### Your Natural Mind

Before continuing, let's examine the greatest single reason mankind has sought to get around God's laws, particularly His Sabbath.

Paul, in his letter to the Romans, makes an amazing statement: "Because the carnal [physical, natural] mind is *enmity against God*: for it is *not subject to the law of God*, neither indeed can be" (8:7). Other translations use the phrase "is the ENEMY of God" in place of "is enmity against God."

This verse offers startling insight into the working of the carnal, physical mind of every human being. Cut off from God, the natural mind is God's enemy—it *hates* Him. Think of it! Then ask yourself if any minister, religionist or theologian has ever explained *this* to you.

NO! The religious leaders of this world never refer to it. They either ignore this understanding entirely or do not recognize its powerful implications!

This verse plainly states that the natural mind does not want, and even hates, to yield to God and obey His Law. While most people *profess* that they "love God," the truth is that their minds despise His way and refuse to obey Him. No wonder the prophet Jeremiah wrote, "O LORD, I know that the way of man is not in himself: *it is not in man that walks to direct his steps*" (Jer. 10:23). Seven chapters later, he wrote, "The heart is deceitful above all things" (17:9). These are incredible statements. When confronted with problems or important

decisions, men simply either *do not know what to do*, or they deceive themselves about what they have already decided *not* to do.

Instead of allowing the Bible to tell them God's will—how they should live and believe—most read into Scripture whatever meaning they assume is correct, the meaning they desire, consciously or unconsciously, to be the biblical view. They ignore what Christ said in Matthew 5: “Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill” (vs. 17). This includes the Sabbath. This is the same Christ who prophesied in Isaiah 42:21, “The LORD is well pleased for His righteousness' sake; He will *magnify the law*, and make it honorable.” This must include the Sabbath.

What about you? Are you willing to let the Bible correct you? Are you willing to approach it with a teachable, open mind and permit God to “speak” to you—tell you His will—through His Word? Do you stand in awe of it?

You must come to have a healthy respect for your mind's ability to deceive you about the laws and principles of God, which it *naturally* rebels against!

### All Israel at Mt. Sinai

In Chapter Three, we saw how three-to-four million Israelites learned of the Sabbath a little over two weeks before they arrived at Mt. Sinai. Exodus 19:2 describes their arrival there. What a sight it must have been. Imagine this enormous “tent city,” bigger by far than most cities of today's world.

Verse 3 describes Moses departing from the camp, answering God's call to go up the mountain. God was about to enter into what we call the “Old Covenant,” with ancient Israel. In this agreement, God would establish Israel as His nation among all nations of the Earth. His purpose was to be both Ruler and King of this national theocracy, to be ruled solely by God, apart from any kind of humanly-devised government. There were to be no elections, parliaments or congress, and no leaders apart from those God would directly appoint. God would be “President for life.”

God's instruction to Moses was “Now therefore, if you [all of Israel] will OBEY My voice indeed, and keep *My covenant*, then you shall be a peculiar treasure unto Me above all people: for all the earth is Mine: And you shall be unto Me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation. These are the words which you shall speak unto the children of Israel” (vs. 5-6).

Note this well. It was at this point the *Twelve Tribes* of Israel were to become God's “chosen people.” You have often heard the term.

Why then do so many believe that “the Jews (only *one* tribe—Judah) are God’s chosen people”? The other eleven tribes are continually left out and forgotten.

After Moses departed from his meeting with God, this happened next: “And Moses came and called for the elders of the people, and laid before their faces all these words which the LORD commanded him” (vs. 7). The moment of truth had arrived. The agreement—God’s covenant with Israel—was about to be struck, *if* the people agreed to God’s terms.

What was the people’s response?

“And all the people answered together, and said, All that the LORD has spoken WE WILL DO.” It was Moses’ responsibility to take the people’s decision back to God: “And Moses returned the words of the people unto the LORD” (vs. 8).

This was a truly historic moment. The people agreed to accept God’s leadership—to obey His Law, His rule—over them. Here was an ocean of people (perhaps 40 times the number who could fit into a giant football stadium seating 100,000) who were prepared to obey God.

Three days later, the entire assembly of Israel was to meet God at the base of Mt. Sinai to receive His Law (vs. 11). The Bible describes that God came with tremendous THUNDER and LIGHTNING—and great POWER and GLORY, to show Himself as the great God. The people were instructed not to come too close to the mountain—to God’s presence—or they would die.

Imagine the deafening voice of God (simply described as “exceeding loud”)—booming loud enough that, without amplification, millions could hear it! Notice verses 17-18: “And Moses brought forth the people out of the camp to meet with God; and they stood at the nether part of the mount. And mount Sinai was altogether on a smoke, because the LORD descended upon it in fire: and the smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mount quaked greatly” (Ex. 19:17-18).

Picture it. The entire event must have been a stunning, goose-bump-raising, ear-splitting, blinding experience! It was in *this* setting that God chose to give His holy, righteous, perfect, spiritual LAW!

### God Gives *HIS* Law

It is at this point that many go terribly wrong. Most have been taught that *Moses* gave—or brought—the Ten Commandments. This has

been a means of diminishing what has always been God's Law as being merely the "law of *Moses*."

Here is what really happened. Exodus 20 describes the giving of God's great Ten Commandments. But *who* gave them?: "And *GOD* spoke all these words, saying..." (vs. 1). (What follow in the text are the Ten Commandments – vs. 2-17.) Yes, they are God's Law, *GOD'S TEN COMMANDMENTS*—not Moses' or anyone else's.

Deuteronomy 5 is Moses' recounting of how God's Law was given: "The LORD talked with you *FACE TO FACE* in the mount out of the midst of the fire, (I stood between the LORD and you at that time, to show you the word of the LORD: for you were afraid by reason of the fire, and went not up into the mount;) saying..." (vs. 4-5). As with Exodus, the Ten Commandments follow (vs. 6-21).

Yes, Moses stood in front of the people as a kind of buffer to their fear of what God was saying. But Moses did not give the Law—*GOD* gave it directly to Israel, "face to face." That is what it says. It was God's Law, and *HE* gave it. Now notice all-important verse 22: "These words the LORD spoke *unto all your assembly* in the mount out of the midst of the fire, of the cloud, and of the thick darkness, with a great voice: AND HE ADDED NO MORE. And He wrote them in two tables of stone, and delivered them unto me."

This verse clearly shows that God spoke "unto all your assembly." Let's say it plainly. The Ten Commandments were given to Israel *by God*, not Moses! But there is this additional key phrase within the verse—"And He added no more."

All of the other laws that God gave *LATER*—His statutes, ordinances, precepts and judgments—were not part of His *complete spiritual Law* given by Him directly to the people at Mt. Sinai. This must be recognized. God held nothing back in the giving of His Law. He left nothing out—His spiritual Law was perfect and complete.

The Law of God is a *living* entity. Speaking of this Law, Acts 7:38 states, "This is he [Moses], that was in the *church in the wilderness* with the angel which spoke to him in the mount Sinai, and with our fathers: who received the lively oracles to give *UNTO US*." That's right. God's Law is a living—"lively"—Law, and was intended to be carried down "TO US."

God's Law, including the Fourth Commandment, is binding on His New Testament Church today. It has not been done away. It was sent "unto us."

Have you ever read this next passage *from the New Testament*? The foundation—His Law—of God's Old Covenant agreement with



**MASSIVE ASSEMBLY:** The Israelite assembly at Mt. Sinai (consisting of 3 to 4 million people) vastly outnumbered even the biggest crowds found at typical large sports stadiums today.



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Israel is the same as His New Covenant agreement with the Church: “For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord; I will put MY LAWS into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to Me a people” (Heb. 8:10).

### Is God’s Law Harsh?

Many have tried to say that God’s Law is harsh, unfair and unjust, and therefore cannot be obeyed. This is untrue, but it is predictable that human nature would find such an excuse to disobey that Law.

Would the One who created mankind, who says He “is love” (I John 4:8, 16), not explain the supreme importance of love within His Plan—and its direct relationship to His Law?

Broadly speaking, there are two different ways of life. One is the “GIVE” way—the way of love and outgoing concern—God’s Way. The other is the “GET” way—the way of selfishness and self-concern—the way of this world. Love is patient, kind and considerate. It shares, cooperates, serves and helps. Christ taught, “It is more blessed to GIVE than to receive” (Acts 20:35).

The way of love is a marvelous, unseen *spiritual law* that keeps those who keep it and breaks those who break it! It is inexorable and binding in every aspect and relationship in life. Like the law of gravity, you cannot see it, but you can see the *effects* of breaking it.

This world is based on *getting* rather than *giving*! People constantly strive to *get* more—to accumulate—for themselves throughout their lives.

This violates the Tenth Commandment, which forbids coveting. Notice what God says about His people, and about *all* nations, in a prophecy directed to those alive at the end of the age: “For from the least of them even unto the greatest of them *every one is given to covetousness*; and from the prophet even unto the priest *every one deals falsely*” (Jer. 6:13).

Two chapters later is an almost identical statement, except that God also warns of the horrific *punishment* He will bring because of this worldwide attitude. We will see this later.

God wanted Adam to take of the Tree of Life so that he could enjoy all the good things of life. God must have explained this to him, since He warned that violating His basic command would result in his death. If Adam had eaten of the Tree of Life, he would have received the Spirit of God. He would have learned the way of LOVE—the “give” way—instead of the way he chose.

### Love Defined

Paul wrote, "...because *the love of God* is shed abroad in our hearts by *the Holy Spirit* which is given unto us" (Rom. 5:5).

Now what is the *Bible* definition of love? Men's opinions do not count!

John wrote, "FOR THIS IS THE LOVE OF GOD, THAT WE KEEP HIS COMMANDMENTS: and His commandments are not grievous" (I John 5:3). Many who claim to have love believe that the Commandments *are* grievous. But God says they are not, and calls His Law "holy, just, good and *spiritual*" (Rom. 7:12, 14). This includes the Sabbath. God nowhere makes it an exception to this statement. The Sabbath is also *giving* time back to God through worship, prayer, Bible study, and meditation on Him, His creation and His purpose. Certainly worshipping God is a form of giving to Him.

Paul explains that the *Commandments* and the *Law* are the same: "Love works no ill to his neighbor: therefore LOVE IS THE FULFILLING OF THE LAW" (Rom. 13:10). The Bible defines love as "the fulfilling of the law." Obeying the Commandments fulfills the Law—and *this* "WORKS NO ILL TO HIS NEIGHBOR."

The Bible speaks of "the Holy Spirit, [which] God has given to them that OBEY Him" (Acts 5:32). Christians obey God's spiritual Law. Jesus never taught that we should just "believe on Him" to be saved. When asked what one must "do" to have "eternal life"—be saved—Christ did not say, "Just believe on Me." He said, "If you will enter into life, KEEP THE COMMANDMENTS" (Matt. 19:17). Now, why do not preachers ever read this passage to their congregations?

Now ask: Where is the harshness in a Law that God equates with *love*? The standards of men's "sentimental fluff" forms of "love" mean nothing to God. As with sin, God defines *real* love!

Understand! "Sin is the *transgression* of the LAW" (I John 3:4), and "The wages of sin is *death*" (Rom. 6:23). There is a cause for every effect.

The Sabbath is a matter of obedience, and, as the Fourth Commandment, is directly tied to receiving eternal life. But it also yields benefits in *this life*. Understand. It is possible to obey God, but the world is ignorant of this because its ministers and theologians tell them it cannot be done or that Christ did it *for* them. Yet, "Love is the *fulfilling of the LAW*." Romans 8:6—the verse just preceding the verse 7 quoted earlier states, "For to be carnally [physically] minded [hostile to God's Law] is *death*; but to be spiritually minded is LIFE and PEACE."

In the next chapter, we will learn that God has established a special, permanent Sabbath covenant with His people.

## *The Perpetual Sabbath Covenant*

When it comes to God's command to "Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy" (Ex. 20:8; Lev. 23:3; Deut. 5:12), practically all church-goers find a way to relegate the Sabbath to "something that the Jews do," or "something lost in antiquity." Or they claim, "It doesn't matter what day you keep, as long as you keep *a day*." Others say, "Sunday has replaced the Sabbath." Most simply believe it has been "done away." They concoct *endless* arguments as to why the Sabbath command no longer applies. But God's Word reveals that the Sabbath was made for *all* people, for *all* time.

Be willing to open your Bible and honestly accept what it says about the Sabbath. Many have supposed that Christ "nailed it to the cross" along with most everything else in the Old Testament. Yet, no one can be guilty of sin—of *any* kind—where there is no law: "Because the law works wrath: for where no law is, *there is no transgression*" (Rom. 4:15). No one can be guilty of sin, or be under the death penalty, if there is no law—if it was nailed to the cross.

### **The Additional Sabbath Covenant**

Recall that after giving the Ten Commandments, God "added no more." His Law was complete and anything that came later could not be considered part of it. Even agreements (covenants) between men cannot be amended or changed in any way by either party

alone: “Brethren, I speak after the manner of men; Though it be but a man’s covenant, yet if it be confirmed, no man disannuls, or adds thereto” (Gal. 3:15). Yes, even men’s contracts are binding *as is*, once agreed upon. Exodus 24:4-8 describes the confirmation of the Old Covenant, of obedience between God and Israel in Exodus 19 and 20.

The Sabbath originated (long) before the Old Covenant was established. The Ten Commandments did not come into existence along with the Old Covenant, but pre-dated it. They had been in force since creation.

After God had completed His covenant with Israel, He introduced another very special and unique covenant. It pertained solely to the Sabbath: “And the LORD spoke unto Moses, saying, Speak you also unto the children of Israel, saying, Verily My sabbaths you shall keep...” (Ex. 31:12-13).

Make no mistake. All Sabbaths belong to God—He calls them “*MY* sabbaths.” This connotes ownership—they are His. They belong to no man, including the Jews.

### The Sabbath Is a Sign

In Exodus 31:12-17, God made a special covenant with Israel regarding His Sabbath. Continue in verse 13: “For it is a SIGN between Me and you throughout your generations; that you may know that I am the LORD that does *sanctify* [set apart] *you*. You shall keep the sabbath... the seventh [day] is the sabbath of rest, *holy* to the LORD... Wherefore the children of Israel shall keep the sabbath... for a *perpetual covenant*. It is a SIGN between Me and the children of Israel *forever*: for in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day He rested.”

Recall that this last phrase proves the Sabbath was established from the creation week, over 2,500 years prior to Exodus 31.

God explains that His purpose is that the Sabbath “sanctifies” those who keep it. They are *set apart* as belonging to—being *owned* by—God. Christians are told, “You are *bought* with a price; be not you the servants of men” (I Cor. 7:23) and “You are *bought* with a price: therefore glorify God” (I Cor. 6:20).

Those who observe the Sabbath are signified as *God’s* people—and that He OWNS them. They are also publicly identified as people who keep the Commandments. Civil laws require people to keep several of the *other* Commandments (against stealing, murder, lying [perjury], etc.). Therefore, obedience to most or all of the *other*

Commandments, which the world at least generally acknowledges in one form or another, does not identify one as a commandment-keeper!

The Sabbath does! It is a *sign* that people are of God, since no human would ever think or choose to keep this law without it having been *revealed* by God.

Understand. God had to *reveal* this sign so that people would appreciate how it functions, what it represents. Take a drive down the street. You will notice all kinds of signs connoting ownership of various businesses and retail establishments. If you are looking for something in particular, the signs are important to you as a shopper. When God says the Sabbath is a SIGN, He intends and uses His sign in the same way the proprietor of a business does.

Notice that God established the Sabbath as a “perpetual covenant” to be kept “throughout your generations”—and “forever.” This is ironclad. God’s command is for *all time*. The Sabbath was to be kept *forever*! Doing this keeps people in touch with the true God. It is the way God intended that people *never* lose sight of who He is (their God)—and who they are (His people)! If all peoples and nations kept the Sabbath, as Israel was commanded to do, no one would have ever fallen into idolatry and the worship of *other* gods—which has happened to all nations who have *not* kept it!

The Sabbath identifies God for who—*which* God—He is!

Someone will surely ask: “Couldn’t Sunday point to the true God?” Absolutely not! Here is why. Recall that God tied the Sabbath to the creation week: “It is a SIGN between Me and the children of Israel *forever*: for in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, and on the SEVENTH DAY He rested.” God’s rest was on the SEVENTH DAY, not the first. Only by keeping the Sabbath are people forced to look back to the creation, and this forces them to focus on which God did the creating. Sunday-worship and Sunday-keeping does not do this, and obviously no other god but one created all things!

All others thought to be “gods” are made of things that God made. The Sabbath points to God as Creator, and the creation is a proof that GOD EXISTS!

### “That Does Sanctify You”

Not only does the Sabbath point those who observe it back to the true God, it also sets apart those who do this as different than all others around them. Recall that Exodus 31:13 states, “...that you may know that I am the LORD *that does sanctify you.*”

I cannot overstate the vital, crucial meaning of this phrase. *Sanctify* means “to set apart for a holy use or purpose.” Consider. In a world filled with Sunday-keepers (Muslims keep Friday), and even among those who keep no day at all, the Sabbath-keeper sticks out like the proverbial “sore thumb.” No one observing the seventh day can avoid this.

Every time one keeps the Sabbath day, he puts up a neon SIGN pointing to the God who created the heavens and Earth and rested on the seventh day. When one begins keeping the Sabbath, it *immediately* separates him as different from everyone else.

### ***This World’s God***

Now we must ask: Which commandment would Satan choose to overthrow? Which one would he hate most—and why? Which one signifies that those who obey it do not belong to him? The only commandment *signifying* (is a *sign*) that one belongs to God—and the only commandment that directly points to the true God of creation, thus displacing Satan, is the SABBATH!

Satan most hates the *Fourth* Commandment! There is no way to get around whether one *does or does not* observe the seventh day of the week as the Sabbath. Either you do or you do not. God and Satan are not confused on this point. They know what is at stake. And the world can readily see whether one keeps the Sabbath or not.

The Bible calls the devil the “god of this world.” To most, this is a truly shocking revelation! Yet, II Corinthians 4:4 states, “In whom the *god of this world* has blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the *light* of the glorious *gospel*...should shine unto them.”

Satan blinds the world to the real gospel for a personal reason. It describes the Kingdom of God—God’s soon-coming world-ruling government. Of course, Satan seeks to block people from understanding this marvelous truth. He does not want *light* to shine on God’s incredible purpose for mankind. He wants humanity, collectively and individually, to think that it has *no future*.

The devil also recognizes that the arrival of God’s Kingdom means he will be banished from his current position of great influence as the god this world unwittingly worships. He will no longer be permitted to deceive (Rev. 12:9) or weaken the nations (Isa. 14:12). He also understands that he can never have what God has offered to all men who obey Him.

In John 12:31, 14:30 and 16:11, Christ refers to Satan as “the prince of this world.” All these verses state that the “prince of this world” will one day be judged. Read them! John 12:31 parallels the judgment of *this world* with Satan’s judgment.

Why? Because this world *is his*! He is its “god.” This is the plain truth from your Bible! Man’s civilization, with its cultures, ways and systems, is under the control of the devil!

Since Satan has deceived the *entire* world (Rev. 12:9), then this cannot be God’s world. And since the *whole* world is deceived, it is cut off from God. Deceived people do not know their purpose for being, and practice lives that reflect this ignorance (Isa. 59:1-2).

How can a single being deceive over *six billion* people? There are two primary ways.

First, Revelation 12:9 concludes with, “He was cast out into the earth, *and his angels were cast out with him.*” Notice that it says, “*his* angels.” These beings, which he leads, are referred to as demons (or fallen angels) and they assist Satan in his role of super deceiver. Therefore, Satan does not work alone—he has millions of deceived spirit beings helping him.

Try telling people that the devil influences and controls the entire world. Try telling them he is this world’s “god.” (Do not actually try this.) You would quickly learn how complete is his deception. Recent surveys show that he has convinced nearly 60 percent of all Americans that he does not even exist!

As the god of a completely deceived world, which must, therefore, include all the differing forms of Christianity and other religions, Satan has his own *agents*. He uses these agents to unwittingly spread his false doctrines. Yes, he has been able to achieve this great success because he HAS HIS OWN MINISTERS! Of course, his agents—his ministers—are themselves deceived into believing that they are God’s ministers. Some teach a few aspects of God’s truth, but *none* of His most important truths! Virtually all of them teach that God’s Law, including His Sabbath, is done away.

The second way is this. Notice II Corinthians 11:13-15. Paul warned of the cunning with which Satan’s ministers successfully deceive: “For such are *false* apostles, *deceitful* workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if *his ministers* also be transformed as the *ministers* of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works.”

Yes, shocking as it seems, Satan the devil has his ministers! And they do *not* teach you that you must obey God—that the Fourth Commandment is still in effect!

### The True God Requires Obedience

I have never heard anyone, professing to believe in the God of the Bible, suggest it is alright to *knowingly* serve another god. Of course, the vast majority do this *unwittingly—unknowingly!* But that is another matter. Virtually no one actually deliberately sets out to worship the wrong god.

Also, most people know that the First and Second Commandments require that only the true God be worshipped. Again, though most do not do this properly, people acknowledge that it is the correct thing to do, and claim that they practice it. Why then do they not read the last statement attached to these Commandments?: “You shall not bow down yourself to them, nor serve them: for I the LORD your God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate Me; And showing mercy unto thousands of them that love Me, AND KEEP MY COMMANDMENTS” (Ex. 20:5-6).

All who serve the true God are told by Him to “keep My commandments.” These—says God—are the *basic terms* for serving Him! This includes the Sabbath as an identifying sign. The Sabbath is the test of obedience. While people will generally, at least tacitly, acknowledge that the other nine Commandments should be kept, they refuse to keep the Sabbath.

Remember, God inspired Paul to summarize what obedience—to any god or authority—means: “Know you not, that to whom you yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants you are to whom you obey; whether of sin unto death [Rom. 6:23], or of obedience unto *righteousness* [Psa. 119:172]?” (Rom. 6:16).

The world serves a different god. Soon, it will understand that more is at stake regarding Sabbath observance than anyone could now dream. The Bible speaks of a coming “mark” of the beast that involves “buying or selling”—holding a job and earning a living. (A later very extensive chapter will examine the chilling Sabbath/Sunday connection to this future “mark.”)

Notice that Christ understood that those who claim to follow Him must do what He says: “Not every one that says unto Me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that *does the will of My Father* which is in heaven” (Matt. 7:21). In Luke, He asked, “And why call you Me, Lord, Lord [Master, Ruler], and *do not* the things which I say?” (6:46).

Does this describe you?

### Explaining a Covenant

The Fourth Commandment is the only one upon which a *covenant* was made. The two Commandments that are the most lengthy and detailed—the Second and the Fourth—are the ones that most churches have altered for their own convenience. (They often combine the Second Commandment with the First, which diminishes its importance.) We have seen that these churches claim the authority to effectively change the Sabbath from the seventh day of the week to the first. This ignores the fact that the Sabbath is a *special* covenant, as God said, “between Me and you” (Ex. 31:16).

*Webster’s II Revised Dictionary* defines a covenant this way: “A binding agreement: compact.” Anyone who has ever signed a contract—an agreement or covenant (compact)—knows that it involves a certain payment, compensation or reward by one party to another for fulfilling a certain stipulated function or performance.

While the Old Covenant was entirely physical in nature—Israel was to obey certain laws and receive physical blessings as a result (including the promise of being “above all people” as a nation)—the New Testament is different.

It is “...a *better covenant*...established upon *better promises*” (Heb. 8:6). The New Testament carries “the promise of *eternal inheritance*” (Heb. 9:15). It carried rewards that greatly exceed physical blessings or even being “above all people.”

Remember, once a covenant is finalized, sealed or signed, nothing can be added to it (Gal. 3:15). Ancient Israel sealed its covenant with God in blood (Ex. 24:6-8). But the special Sabbath covenant does not appear until Exodus 31—seven chapters later. Yes, the Sabbath had already been given in chapter 20, but Exodus 31 came much *later*. Do not forget that God also presented the Sabbath to the people *before* they got to Mt. Sinai. The Sabbath got special emphasis—twice. It was to be a special sign.

How do we know that the Sabbath is an enduring covenant, binding today on any who are God’s people? Exodus 31:16 states, “Wherefore the children of Israel shall keep the sabbath, to observe the sabbath *throughout their generations*, for A PERPETUAL COVENANT.” Further, verse 17 says, “It is a SIGN between Me and the children of Israel FOREVER.”

What could be plainer? The Sabbath is an on-going—PERPETUAL—covenant between God and Israel “forever”—“throughout their generations.”

### How Serious Is God?

How serious is God about Sabbath observance? In Israel, all who worked on this day were put to death (Ex. 31:14-15; 35:2). II Corinthians 3:7-8 describes the Old Testament administration of a civil death penalty, which is no longer applicable. (This is because, as we will see, God is now building the nation of *spiritual* Israel.) Of course, God has always said, “The wages of sin is [eternal] *death*” (Rom. 6:23; Gen. 2:15-17).

It would be terribly inconsistent of God to require the death penalty for those who ignored the Sabbath in ancient Israel, and to say that “all flesh” will keep the Sabbath during the millennium (Isa. 66:23)—yet declare that He does not care whether His people—*spiritual* Israel (explained thoroughly in the next chapter)—keep it during the Christian era!

There is another reason God is serious about His Sabbath. Most have no idea that the Sabbath is also a type of God’s coming rest (Heb. 4:1-9), when mankind rests from practicing sin. This is another reason why Isaiah 66:23 states that all nations will keep the Sabbath test commandment of obedience during Christ’s reign on Earth. Observing the Sabbath is a weekly reminder, pointing directly to this wonderful future time!

### Binding on More Than Israel

Almost everyone who is unfamiliar with the Bible eagerly asserts that God only bound the Sabbath on Israel, which most suppose to be just the Jews. Recall that they were only one of the Twelve Tribes of Israel.

But suppose for a moment that the Jews are the only Israelites alive today. All would agree the Sabbath is clearly binding on them—on “*their* generations.” Those who acknowledge that the Sabbath is binding on the Jews put themselves directly into a box canyon.

Here is why. Romans 1:16 states that the gospel is the power of God “unto salvation to *everyone* that believes; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.” None doubt that salvation is open to both Jew (including the other eleven tribes) and Gentile. Paul actually stated that salvation is open to the “Jew first.”

Remember, the Jews must keep the Sabbath, so it must be admitted that becoming Christian does not eliminate this responsibility for *them*. But are the Jews required to keep the Sabbath while other Christians are free to ignore it, keeping Sunday instead? Are there two standards for Christianity—two kinds of Christians?

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We have introduced the fact that Christianity involves more than physical Israelites, that Gentiles are included and must meet on the same day as the Jews or Israelites—and that Christ has a New Testament Church!



## *The Church Christ Heads!*

**M**ark 1:1 begins with “The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ.” Christ’s gospel concerned His world-ruling supernatural government—the Kingdom of God—to come to this Earth (it was not, and has nothing to do with being, a message about His *Person*). In verse 15, Christ commands people to repent and believe *this* gospel to be saved!

In verse 21, Jesus gathered His disciples and “they went into Capernaum; and straightway on THE SABBATH DAY He entered into the synagogue.” We earlier referenced Luke 4:16, which establishes Christ’s approach toward the Sabbath: “And, AS HIS CUSTOM WAS, He went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and stood up for to read.”

### **Building His Church**

Later, in Matthew 16:18, Christ made one of the most fundamental statements in the entire Bible: “I will build *My church*.” No matter how men interpret it, this verse speaks of a single organized Church! Christ continued, “and the gates of hell [the grave] shall not prevail against it.” He promised that *His Church* could never be destroyed. After His Resurrection, in AD 31, Christ kept His promise to build His Church. That Church is alive on Earth today!

Some additional things are important to understand. Let’s read all of Matthew 16:18-19 first for background: “And I say unto you, that you are Peter, and upon *this rock* I will build *My church*; and the gates

of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto you the KEYS of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever you shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever you shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.”

In order to understand the meaning here, we must start reading from verse 13. Christ asked the disciples, “Whom do men say that I the Son of Man am?”

### Founded on *The Rock*

Peter answered, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God” (vs. 16). Then Christ responded, “You are *Peter* [*petros*, which means “little rock or pebble”], and upon this *rock* [*petra*, meaning “very great rock”] I will build My church” (vs. 18). John 1:40-42 describes Peter’s brother, Andrew, bringing him to Christ: “And when Jesus beheld him, He said, You are Simon [Peter] the son of Jona: you shall be called *Cephas*, which is by interpretation, *A stone*” (vs. 42). A *stone* is not a giant rock.

But Christ is!

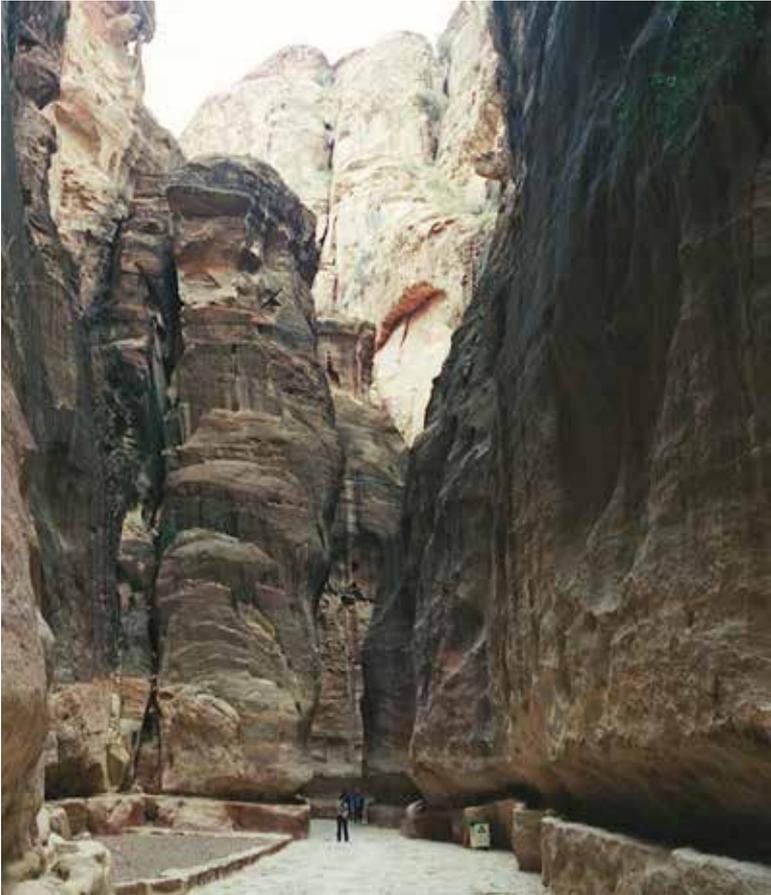
Most people—and the Catholic religious system—assume Christ meant He would build His Church *on Peter*. This is not what it says. *Christ*—not Peter—is the great “Rock” upon whom the Church is built (Deut. 32:3-4, 15, 18; I Cor. 10:4; Eph. 2:20; Psalms 18:2).

Verse 13 mentions that Christ was speaking at Caesarea Philippi. It is significant that He chose this site to speak of His Church! Here is why.

This city is in the far north of Israel, about 25 miles north of Capernaum and the Sea of Galilee. Located at the foot of Mt. Hermon, it is where one of the three main branches of the Jordan River originates. It is a beautiful setting.

I have stood on the spot from which Christ delivered these words. This is what I saw—and what anyone would see: Immediately above where the river springs directly out of the base of a cliff is a massive rock outcropping that dominates the topography. Its presence towers over the landscape. None who were present when Christ spoke these words could possibly have believed He was talking about building His Church on Peter, whom He compared to a *little* rock. The enormous physical size of the rock looming directly over Christ’s head reinforced His message that He was building the Church on a *giant* Rock—HIMSELF!

Note this proof that Jesus *was* the ROCK of the Old Testament: “And [Israel] did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank



**PETRA, PETROS:** Christ said to Peter, “Upon this Rock [petra] I will build My church.” Located in Jordan, the enormous rock formation found in Petra (named after the same Greek word Christ used) exemplifies the meaning of Christ’s words: that He would build the Church upon Himself, “the CHIEF CORNERSTONE” (Eph. 2:20)—not on Peter, whom Christ referred to as a petros, a small stone. The millstone (right) shows the size of a stone Peter referred to as a “stumbling block.” This would be a medium-sized stone—neither a massive rock nor a small stone—the kind commonly used to build temples or to seal a tomb.



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BOTTOM: Free Stock Photos

of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ” (I Cor. 10:4).

Jesus Christ was the Word—the Spokesman—who was directly used by the Father to put the Bible into print. He was telling Peter that He (Christ) was about to build the New Testament Church ON HIMSELF, lead it as its HEAD (Eph. 1:22; 4:15; 5:23; Col. 1:18; 2:19; Rev. 1:13-18), be with it *always* (Matt. 28:20), never leaving or forsaking it (Heb. 13:5), with the gates of hell (hades—the grave) never prevailing against it, just as He had been the Rock of, and followed, the “church in the wilderness” (Acts 7:38).

### Would Never Die

The Church Christ built—God’s Church—was to continue to exist, doing His Work through the ages as a “little flock” (Luke 12:32), until the end of the age, when it would reach all nations with the good news of the Kingdom of God (Matt. 24:14). This Church would be persecuted (John 15:20; 16:33), but would never die out, remaining and enduring until Christ’s Return.

Matthew 7:24 instructs Christians to build their “houses” on a rock (Greek: *petra*). No one would suggest that a house could be built on a small stone or pebble. This alone eliminates the Church being built on Peter. He was not the first pope, given the “keys” authorizing him to change Scripture at will—including which day is the Christian Sabbath! Grasp this! Jesus was not appointing the future apostle Peter and his successors to head the Church as Christ’s earthly replacement (as a *Vicar*: “in place of”)!

In Matthew 16:19, Christ stated, “And I will give unto you the keys of the kingdom of heaven...” The “keys” He is referring to is symbolic language meaning that He gives His ministers the knowledge of *how* to enter the Kingdom of God. This knowledge shows the way of life a Christian must follow in order to achieve salvation. Luke 11:52 shows Christ reproving certain lawyers for hiding or suppressing *this knowledge*, thus preventing themselves and others from entering the Kingdom.

### You Must Understand!

Let’s better understand Christ as the Rock the Church is built upon. Since Christians are to build on *this* Rock to enter the Kingdom of God (Matt. 7:24-26), we must understand more fully what this means. It will make even clearer that the Church of God was *not* built on Peter,

as the first pope, thus empowering him and his successors to change doctrines—including the Sabbath—at will.

Notice what Peter later said about Christ: “Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Zion a CHIEF CORNERSTONE, elect, precious: and he that believes on Him shall not be confounded. Unto you therefore which believe He is precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the Head of the corner, and a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offense, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed” (I Pet. 2:6-8).

Peter was quoting the prophet Isaiah: “Therefore thus says the Lord GOD, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a *stone*, a tried *stone*, a precious CORNERSTONE, a *sure foundation*: he that believes shall not make haste” (28:16).

These verses unmistakably demonstrate that Jesus Christ is described as a Rock in both the Old and New Testaments!

Note that Peter, when using the word *stone*, cited a different Greek word, *lithos*, meaning “a stone, millstone, or stumblingstone.” This would be more like a *medium-sized* stone—neither a massive rock nor a small pebble—such as the stones used to build the temple or as a stone sealing a tomb. This is how *lithos* is used in other places. In other words, people trip—stumble—over a rock the size of a “lithos.” They never even got to the point where they were willing to *build* on the *massive* Rock—Christ’s WORDS (Matt. 7:24)!

We have seen Christ’s words include that He is “Lord of the Sabbath”!

Now notice: “And [the saints] are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the CHIEF CORNERSTONE” (Eph. 2:20). In reality, Christ is the Head (Chief) *Stone* of the Church *and* its true foundation: “For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ” (I Cor. 3:11). In I Peter 2:5, Peter also calls *all* Christians “lively stones” (*lithos*) who are part of Christ’s “spiritual house”—“temple” (I Cor. 3:16-17).

### Promise of the Holy Spirit

Christ promised to send His Spirit to build His Church after He was resurrected and returned to heaven: “Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send [It] unto you” (John 16:7).

Receiving the Holy Spirit at repentance and baptism (Acts 2:38) places one into the Church of God. Notice: “For by one Spirit are we

all baptized into one body, whether we be *Jews or Gentiles*, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit” (I Cor. 12:13).

The Greek word for Church is *ekklesia*, meaning “the congregation of called out people.” It is not a reference to a physical building, but rather to the begotten sons and daughters of God—God’s temple—who will one day be born into the Kingdom of God (Rom. 8:29-30; I Cor. 15:50-54; I Thes. 4:13-18). These are those who have been led of God’s Spirit and been made partaker of God’s “divine nature” (II Pet. 1:4).

Today, and for over 1,900 years, Christ has been the LIVING HEAD of His Church, guiding it, and holding Supreme authority over all matters within it.

A Christian is one who yields to God’s authority. Christ said that He is LORD (Master, Ruler) of the Sabbath. While it may make no difference to men which day they keep—because God does not seem *real* to them—He is very much in the picture, and will judge all human beings. Someday, many will regret their carelessness with Christ’s definition of sin, and which day *He* made holy!

People’s opinions do not count. What counts is the opinion of the living, Almighty God who made the entirety of heaven and Earth. He gave a law that would bring all the good things in life—happiness, abundance, peace and security—en route to His greatest gift, ETERNAL LIFE!

The living Jesus Christ is the Rock upon which all who wish to be in His one Church must build. He alone has the authority to tell us which day is His Sabbath.

### **Israel Intended to Be Model Nation**

Israel’s Sabbath-keeping was intended to be an example seen by other nations. It was always God’s purpose that Israel be a light to the nations around her. Yet, she failed utterly in carrying out this responsibility, instead choosing to COPY surrounding nations, including many of their abominable pagan customs.

Some wonder why God began this phase of His plan with the particular nation, Israel. The single biggest reason God *started* with Israel, instead of any other nation, is merely because He had to start with just *one* nation. He selected a poor, down-trodden slave people (yet having exceptional potential) to show that, when *He* worked with a nation, they could come to greatness and enjoy many wonderful blessings. Also, no Gentile nations had ever served God. But Abraham, Isaac and

Jacob, from which the Twelve Tribes sprang, had once known God. So God started with this small nation of slaves.

God intended that other nations would see Israel's blessings—her prosperity—and want the same for themselves. He wanted all nations to see Israel's wisdom—and that she served a different God than any known to them. The nations of the world had completely lost track of the identity of the true God. From the Garden of Eden—and Adam and Eve's rejection of God's offer of eternal life—had sprung every conceivable false god and goddess.

The world's nations have literally “reaped what they have sowed”—*and* what Adam and Eve sowed on behalf of all mankind. Only a very few had been faithful to God by the time He called Israel—Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Job and possibly a few others. The entire world had rebelled, and suffered the consequences of confusion, war, famine, disease, poverty, misery, religious deception and more.

But God understood that the nations around Israel would inquire of her as to why she had such wisdom and enjoyed so many material blessings (Deut. 4:6-8). That was His purpose.

So in a world cut off from God, He called the little slave-people nation, descended from Abraham. Their down-trodden condition made it possible for them to listen to God. They could then be a light to other nations who would inquire about their laws, statues and other customs, taught them by God.

In Isaiah 43:21, God said, “This people have I formed FOR MYSELF; *they shall show forth My praise.*”

Being His example was God's plainly intended purpose for this nation. God performed one mighty miracle after another for Israel. The world was able to see these awesome events—such as the plagues used to deliver them from Egypt. Yet Israel still rebelled. Why? Her citizens had human nature. The world has also rebelled, because it also has human nature.

### **Church Also to Be a Model!**

We have seen that the Church is *spiritual* Israel. It is those whom God has called and chosen—and in which He has put His Spirit. From the time of Christ's ministry, God has used the Church to be a model of obedience to His ways—and to reflect—“show forth”—the blessings of happiness, peace and unity in truth that He intends all peoples to enjoy.

Notice what Christ taught His disciples: “You [Christians] are the LIGHT of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid...Let your LIGHT so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and

*glorify your Father* which is in heaven” (Matt. 5:14, 16). This verse sounds much like “they shall show forth My praise.”

Christians are to set a right example. People should see vibrant, happy, productive lives in those God has called to Himself and to His way.

The Sabbath was not made for the Jews only. It was made “for man.” And this includes the Gentiles. Why do so many think that Christ came to say, in effect, “I could never get Israel to obey Me, and keep the Sabbath, so I guess it was a bad idea. We’ll just get rid of it. And if the world thinks that it was always only for the Jews—who cares? I have done away with it, anyway”?

Such shallow reasoning. God’s laws are called pure, clean and perfect (Psa. 19:7-11)—and they work!

### **Gentiles, Too!**

Here is what God inspired Paul to write to the *Gentile* Ephesian converts. It is an extensive but important passage, revealing how Gentiles become partakers of the exact same promises God made to Israel 3,500 years ago:

“Wherefore remember, that you *being in time past Gentiles in the flesh*... That at that time you were without Christ, being *aliens from the commonwealth of Israel*, and *strangers* from the covenants of PROMISE, having no hope, and without God in the world: But now in Christ Jesus you who sometimes were far off are made near by the blood of Christ. For He is our peace, who has made both one... that He might reconcile both [Jew and Gentile] unto God in one body by the cross... and preached peace to you which were afar off... For through Him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father. Now therefore you are *no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints*, and of the household of God” (2:11-19).

This passage is most clear regarding Gentiles. They have access to the *same* promises, confirming Romans 1:16, read earlier.

God intended that Israel be modeled in the same way! God always permitted Gentiles to enter the congregation of Israel—also called the “*church in the wilderness*” (Acts 7:38).

Notice Exodus 12:38: “And a mixed multitude went up also with them; and flocks, and herds, even very much cattle.” Thousands of Gentiles were permitted to enter Israel and become naturalized citizens. Here is how it was to happen: “And when a stranger shall sojourn with you, and will keep the passover to the LORD, let all his males be circumcised, and then let him come near and keep it; and he shall be

as one that is born in the land: for no uncircumcised person shall eat thereof. ONE LAW shall be to him that is homeborn, and unto the stranger that sojourns among you” (vs. 48-49).

Again, does God have two different standards for Sabbath-keeping—one for Jews and another for Gentiles? Many claim this is the case. But God says He is “not a respecter of persons” (Rom. 2:11; Col. 3:25). He does not have one standard for one person and a different standard for someone else.

God says that He is “not willing that *any* should perish” (II Pet. 3:9) and that He would “have *all* men to be saved” (I Tim. 2:4). Of course, Gentiles are certainly part of “all men.”

I Corinthians 12:13 said that both “Jews and Gentiles” enter the Church through the receiving of God’s Spirit. They both live under the same standard.

### Not a House Divided

Jesus plainly taught, “Every city or house divided against itself shall not stand” (Matt. 12:25). The Church of God could not have some brethren keeping Saturday and some keeping Sunday. Impossible! Notice: “There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you be Christ’s, then are you Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise” (Gal. 3:28-29).

God promised that “all nations” would be blessed through Abraham. This means the promise of salvation is open to all, including Gentiles. Paul wrote, “But glory, honor, and peace, to *every man* that works good, to the *Jew first, and also to the Gentile*” (Rom. 2:10). This was said to the congregation at Rome, which was almost entirely comprised of Gentiles.

The promise was “to the Jew first.” The covenants and the promises of God are clearly made to Israel. This is also found in Romans: “Who are *Israelites*; to whom pertains the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, AND THE PROMISES” (9:4).

But if the promises are only made to Israelites, how are *Gentiles* included? Paul explained: “Wherefore remember, that you being *in time past Gentiles* in the flesh...” (Eph. 2:11). The Greek-born Ephesians were only Gentiles “in the past.” They had become converted and were now *spiritual* Israelites.

The next verse makes this clearer: “That at *that time* [the past, before conversion] you were without Christ, being *aliens* from the

commonwealth of *Israel*, and *strangers* from the covenants of PROMISE, having no hope, and without God in the world” (vs. 12).

I grew up believing that all the Israelites were Jews (yet, as explained, Judah [the Jews] is only *one* of the *Twelve Tribes* of Israel), that I was a Gentile, and that Christianity is basically a *Gentile* religion. The truth of the Bible is that Gentiles must become spiritual *Israelites*.

Since most modern descendants of Israel (Jacob) think that they are Gentiles, the world believes the opposite of what the Bible teaches. In other words, those who are actually physical Israelites (and *professing* Christians) think that upon accepting Jesus they became “spiritual” or “Christian” or “saved” GENTILES. The truth is that those who really *are* physical Gentiles can only be *true* Christians by becoming *SPIRITUAL ISRAELITES!*

Can you see how God’s truth seems upside down to the world (Acts 17:6)?

The Ephesians were Gentiles who had become *spiritual* Israelites. They went from being “strangers” from God and His promise, and without hope, to being included in God’s Plan: “But *now* in Christ Jesus you who sometimes *were far off* are made near by the blood of Christ...” and “Now therefore you are *no more strangers* and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God” (Eph. 2:13, 19).

Once again, that settles it! *ALL* are one in Christ. God does not have different standards for different people. All people become spiritual inheritors with Abraham, the grandfather of Israel (Jacob).

But let’s see this from a different perspective.

### Hosea’s Prophecy for Today

The prophet Hosea brought a remarkable prophecy that applies to the Ten Tribes of the modern House of Israel. This prophecy describes them in a pathetic condition, having lost all knowledge of the true God.

In the Old Testament period, the Israelites were God’s only people. In Hosea 1:9, God describes Israel as “Loammi,” which means “NOT My people.” By (the prophet) Hosea’s time, Israel had rejected God’s Sabbath, having replaced it with Jeroboam’s first day of the week observance—Sunday.

During her migration from Assyria to her lands in Northwest Europe, Israel was prophesied to get confused about her “paths.” Notice: “Therefore, behold, I will hedge up your way with thorns, and make a wall, that she shall NOT FIND HER PATHS” (Hos. 2:6).

This prophecy reveals that Israel was to lose her identity!

Here is why: “For she did not know that I gave her corn, and wine, and oil, and multiplied her silver and gold, which they prepared for *Baal*” (vs. 8). These are direct prophecies that speak of America and Britain now! *Our* peoples have forgotten how much God has given them. “*Baal*” is the sun god and Sunday is *Baal’s* day—as are Christmas, Easter, New Year’s and other pagan holidays, which have been borrowed from heathen religions and inserted into modern professing “Christianity.”

The PLAIN TRUTH is that God HATES Sunday worship and all the days that point to *Baal*. Yet hundreds of millions unwittingly follow the authority of the Roman church—and ignore God’s plain commands to keep HIS day—and HIS annual Feast days—HOLY!

All of this comes at a great price for rebellious Israel. Notice how the blessings begin to disappear: “Therefore will I return, and *take away* My corn in the time thereof, and My wine in the season thereof, and will recover My wool and My flax given to cover her nakedness” (vs. 9).

Numerous prophecies foretell of famines that now lie just ahead for our peoples. I said that God hates these holidays, and Sunday, which men have substituted for HIS Holy Days and Sabbath. Notice: “I will also cause all her mirth to cease, HER feast days, HER new moons, and HER sabbaths, and all HER solemn feasts...” (vs. 11).

Take careful note of this verse. God is not speaking of His own Sabbaths, but of the days Israel adopted (“her” days) from the nations around her who worshipped *Baal*. These were *Baal’s* feasts!

God adds more: “And I will visit upon her the *days of Baalim*, wherein she burned incense to them [*Baal’s* holidays], and she decked herself with her earrings and her jewels, and she went after her lovers, and forgot Me, says the LORD” (vs. 13).

Yes, terrible punishment is coming from the hand of God! Massive drought and disease epidemics will devastate the nations of modern Israel. This will be followed by horrific invasion and captivity for our peoples. It is coming soon. All who doubt this will soon wish they had not. All who scoff will soon scoff no more! The culmination of this prophecy is found in verses 14-23. But it can only be understood in light of God’s special Sabbath covenant (Ex. 31:12-17).

Let’s carefully read this crucial passage in Hosea. It describes God talking to Israel while she is in slavery, but then ready to hear His instruction:

“Therefore, behold, I will allure her, and bring her into the wilderness, and speak comfortably unto her. And I will give her her vine-

yards from there, and the valley of Achor for a door of hope: and she shall sing there, as in the days of her youth, and as in the day when she came up out of the land of Egypt. And it shall be at that day, says the LORD, that you shall call Me *Ishi* [my Husband]; and shall call Me no more Baali. For I will take away the names of *Baalim* out of her mouth, and they shall no more be remembered by their name. And in that day will I make a COVENANT [the New Covenant] for them...and I will betroth you unto Me forever...in righteousness, and in judgment, and in loving kindness, and in mercies. I will even betroth you unto Me in faithfulness: and you shall know the LORD. And it shall come to pass in that day, I will hear, says the LORD...and I will have mercy upon her that had not obtained mercy; and I will say to them which were not My people, YOU ARE MY PEOPLE; and they shall say, YOU ARE MY GOD” (vs. 14-23).

This prophecy only makes sense when one understands modern Israel’s attraction to the pagan feasts and days derived from Baal worship.

Obviously, Israel never became the model nation God intended. All Gentile peoples did not observe her example and seek God.

But again, God has always had a plan for *all* human beings. The vast majority of peoples on Earth are Gentiles, not Israelites. All Israelites make up less than 10 percent of the world’s population. But the world thinks the Sabbath was only for one tribe, Judah, and that the only people God chose were the Jews.

God does have a specific plan for any Gentiles who wish to be included!

### Isaiah Foretold!

By now you have seen that God does not have one Sabbath standard for the Jews and another for Gentiles. Let’s now see this even more plainly.

Isaiah removes all doubt about this. Let’s begin in chapter 56: “Thus says the LORD, Keep you judgment, and do justice: for MY SALVATION *is near to come*, and My *righteousness* to be revealed” (vs. 1). This verse sets the stage. It also begins with a “Thus says the LORD.” This establishes God’s AUTHORITY to say all that will follow in the next sequence of verses.

Let’s be absolutely sure of the *time-setting*—of exactly WHEN Christ’s righteousness will be revealed to the world. We will put several verses together: “And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment: So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of

many; and unto them that look for Him SHALL HE APPEAR THE SECOND TIME without sin UNTO SALVATION” (Heb. 9:27-28).

Now let’s continue with CHRIST’s prophecy in Isaiah: “Blessed is the man that does this, and the son of man that lays hold on it; that KEEPS THE SABBATH *from polluting it*, and keeps his hand from doing any evil. Neither let the son of the *stranger*, that has joined himself to the LORD, speak, saying, The LORD has utterly separated me from His people” (56:2-3).

Let’s grasp this vitally important verse. It speaks to all *Gentiles* who wish to become converted, joined to Christ and receive salvation. Christ plainly states that no “stranger” should declare himself “separated” from Christ. Verses 6-7 expand on this prophecy and should excite every Gentile who reads it. Carefully read: “Also the *sons of the stranger* [Gentiles], that join themselves to the LORD, to serve Him, and to love the name of the LORD, to be His servants, *every one that KEEPS THE SABBATH from polluting it*, and takes hold of My covenant [Ex. 31:12-17]; even *them* [Gentiles] will I bring to My holy mountain, and make *them* [Gentiles] joyful in My house of prayer...for Mine house shall be called an house of prayer for *all* people.”

How PLAIN!

Why do some ignore that God’s Sabbath was established “forever,” as a “perpetual covenant”? And why do so many believe that it was only binding on Israelites? (Of course, we have also seen that converted Gentiles are spiritual Israelites—and Israelites were commanded to keep the Sabbath “throughout their generations.”) *Forever* is *forever*—and, on God’s authority, I tell you that every stranger may freely “join himself to the LORD.” As a matter of fact, Gentiles are told not to say that they are an exception to God’s command to NOT pollute His Sabbath day, if they are to see Christ revealed unto *their* salvation!

All men—Jew and Gentile—will be judged by the same Law!



## *Israel and Judah Go into Slavery—and Why!*

Understand again this critical point, now lost to the world. The Jews are only one twelfth of the tribes of Israel. They sprang from Jacob's son Judah. There were eleven *other* sons. All but two grew into modern nations present on Earth today. (Simeon and Levi are scattered.)

From one son, Joseph, a great NATION and a COMPANY OF NATIONS sprang—out of his sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, came modern Britain and the United States. The other tribes are, generally speaking, the nations of Northwestern Europe, plus a few others.

My book *America and Britain in Prophecy* explains how the overall picture of end-time prophecy centers on *these* nations. Understanding—grasping—the enormous truth of the identity of the modern-day descendants of ancient Israel is absolutely vital. It leads directly to the subject of the Sabbath.

The Sabbath is still binding on the LOST TEN TRIBES of Israel. God's identifying SIGN was to be kept by these nations. But they have refused to observe it, believing themselves to be Gentiles, and have assigned the Sabbath obligation to “the Jewish people.”

### **Why Tribes Now “Lost”**

The true story behind Israel's loss of identity is astonishing, and known to almost none for many centuries. Yet, these modern nations need never have lost sight of their true identity. A choice they made caused this to happen.

While people denigrate and sneer at the Sabbath as merely “Jewish,” it is binding on far more people than the relatively small number of Israelites who have descended from the tribe of Judah.

Here is a great irony, known to almost no one. The Bible speaks of the term “Jew.” Of course, most think this term is synonymous with *all* the tribes of Israel, because they never investigate what the Bible actually says!

Consider. The very first place in the entire Bible in which the term “Jews” is found describes a war occurring *between* the JEWS and ISRAEL! Let’s read it: “Pekah son of Remaliah *king of Israel* came up to Jerusalem to war: and they besieged Ahaz, but could not overcome him. At that time Rezin king of Syria recovered Elath to Syria, and *drove the Jews from Elath*” (II Kgs. 16:5-6).

This was not Jews fighting Jews. Most people have no idea that the nation of Israel had become divided—into two different nations, representing two separate kingdoms. When Solomon died, Israel rebelled against the oppressive tax rates he had imposed. The price of Solomon’s luxurious lifestyle came on the backs of the Israelites he overtaxed. His son Rehoboam ignored the wise counsel of those who advised him that reducing taxes would stop a revolt developing under a high-ranking leader named Jeroboam, appointed by Solomon. Instead, Rehoboam listened to younger men who told him to actually raise taxes.

The result? Ten tribes rebelled, leaving only Judah and Benjamin still loyal to Rehoboam. These tribes pulled away from Jerusalem as their capital, much like the Old South seceded from the American Union in 1861. Two separate kingdoms—the KINGDOM OF ISRAEL and the KINGDOM OF JUDAH—emerged, with two separate capitals, Samaria (Israel) and Jerusalem (Judah).

### Sin and Jeroboam

The Bible speaks continually of the “sins of Jeroboam.” Over and over, in the books of Kings and Chronicles, this term is found. We will learn what they were.

First, recognize that sin is sin—whether committed by Israelites or Gentiles (I John 3:4). When people break God’s great spiritual Law, the penalty is always the same. They are robbed of peace, happiness, abundance and prosperity. Because God loves *all* people, He punishes *all* for disobedience. Everyone must learn that sin cannot be taken lightly. All sin is serious! When people break God’s Sabbath, or any other point in His Law, a loving God must spank—PUNISH—them.

Otherwise, what would be the point of keeping a law? Certainly everyone understands that if you break the law of gravity, by jumping from a cliff or a building, a terrible price will be paid. Hence, only those who are suicidal consider such an action. It is the same with God's Law.

God hates sin. He understands that it steals happiness from the lives of all those who commit it. Therefore, He *must* punish for disobedience. His Law does that automatically—just as it brings automatic blessings for obedience!

### Jeroboam Changes Israel's Sign

I live in Ohio. It is one of fifty states in America. While I am an American, as are *all* Ohioans, all Americans are not Ohioans. Some are Californians, others New Yorkers or Floridians, and so forth. Grasp the following point! All Jews are Israelites, but all Israelites are not Jews. The Jews are a comparatively *small* amount of the total number of Israelites.

Israel and Judah were totally separate kingdoms.

Following the split of the Twelve Tribes of ancient Israel, Jeroboam was king over the northern Ten Tribes. He had to find a means of consolidating his kingdom, insuring it would never reunite with Judah and Benjamin. He recognized the great danger of people returning to Jerusalem to keep God's feast days (*annual* Sabbaths or Holy Days) and then deciding to leave him. He had to take specific—and swift—political actions to diminish the threat to his new solidarity over the Ten Tribes, and protect his power.

Since the Temple of God was in Jerusalem, the capital city of the Southern Kingdom of Judah, Jeroboam feared that his kingdom would rejoin itself to Judah. Notice what he did: "Jeroboam said in his heart, Now shall the kingdom return to the house of David: If this people go up to do sacrifice in the house of the LORD at Jerusalem, then shall the heart of this people turn again unto their lord, even unto Rehoboam king of Judah, and they shall kill me, and go again to Rehoboam king of Judah. Whereupon the king took counsel, and made *two calves of gold*, and said unto them, It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem: *behold your gods*, O Israel, which brought you up out of the land of Egypt" (I Kgs. 12:26-28).

Does this sound far-fetched? Not only did it happen, but history records many millions bought the idea.

In quick succession, Jeroboam created a new religious system to distance the people in his kingdom from worshipping at Jerusalem. This included building the two large idols for worship in the towns of

Bethel and Dan, at the far northern and southern points of his kingdom. He also established a festival to replace the Feast of Tabernacles—a God-ordained festival. In Leviticus 23:34, God ordained the keeping of this Holy Day and Feast: “The fifteenth day of this *SEVENTH* month shall be the feast of tabernacles for seven days unto the LORD.” However, Jeroboam made the observance of *his* festival on the *eighth* month! (See I Kings 12:28-33.)

He made one other critical decision that eventually pushed most of the Levites back into alignment with Judah and Benjamin. Recognizing they were the most educated and were the leaders, Jeroboam demoted them, a pattern followed by modern Gentile dictators today. Also, because the Levites were supported by God’s tithes, they had been accustomed to receiving larger incomes. Jeroboam set baser, less-educated people to be Israel’s priests. The Levites became disgruntled and eventually many returned and intermingled with Judah.

II Kings 17:16 records, “And they [the Israelites] left *all* the commandments of the LORD their God, and made them molten images, even two calves, and made a grove, and worshipped all the host of heaven, *and served Baal.*” The people of Israel followed Jeroboam’s lead, and worshipped the pagan god Baal, the supposed “sun god,” or “lord of the sun.”

Alexander Hislop’s *The Two Babylons* and Hutton Webster’s *Rest Days* explain how this “lord of the sun” was specifically worshipped on the day we now call *SUNDAY*. Israel’s example of worshipping on this day demonstrates how quickly the entire nation began to observe Sunday. They ignored God’s Sabbath command—“Remember the Sabbath day.”

How do we know that Israel disobeyed this command? II Kings 17 stated that they had “left *all* the commandments of the LORD their God”—this would have included the Sabbath!

Recall that, in Hosea, God warned Israel—almost 200 years after Jeroboam’s rebellion—about what will happen because of her Sunday-worship. Hosea 2:11 stated, “...*her* feast days, *her* new moons, and *her sabbaths*, and all *her* solemn feasts.” God calls Sunday worship *Israel’s* sabbaths—not His! His Sabbath falls on Saturday—and identifies His people!

The true originator of Sunday observance is Baal, and God will punish those who participate in it: “And I will visit upon [punish] her [for keeping] the days of BAALIM, wherein she burned incense to them, and she decked herself with her earrings and her jewels, and she went after her lovers, and forgot Me, says the LORD” (vs. 13).

Jeroboam caused Israel to forsake God's Sabbath day—the seventh day of the week, in order to worship Baal the lord of the sun, on Sunday—the false “lord's day.” His proclamation, setting the “day of the sun” as the national day of worship, led ancient Israel to lose—and never return to—the observance of the true Sabbath!

The acceptance and observance of the “day of the sun god,” Sunday, is a deadly sin with *grave* repercussions. The result of Jeroboam's decisions was that all Ten Tribes of Israel, through seven successive dynasties and nineteen kings, practiced the two basic “sins of Jeroboam”—SABBATH-BREAKING and IDOLATRY!

### Israel Goes into Slavery

Jeroboam was the only king in Israel's history noted to have actually “made” the people sin. Notice: “...and Jeroboam *drove* Israel from following the LORD, and *made them sin* a GREAT SIN. For the children of Israel walked in all the sins of Jeroboam which he did; they departed not from them” (II Kgs. 17:21-22). Jeroboam bringing Israel to sin caused God to “remove Israel out of His sight...” Verse 23 further records that the outcome of their Sabbath-breaking was *captivity* and *slavery*: “Until the LORD removed Israel out of His sight, as He had said by all His servants the prophets. *So was Israel carried away out of their own land to Assyria* unto this day.”

Judah was not taken into captivity until 604 BC. But God caused the Assyrians to take the House of Israel into captivity in 721-718 BC. The Assyrians literally enslaved them and carried them far away from their homeland to Assyria on the southern shores of the Caspian Sea.

Several generations later, the Babylonian (Chaldean) Empire came to power under Nebuchadnezzar. They entered Judah and took the inhabitants captive into the land of modern-day Iraq, over the period from 604 to 585 BC.

Not long after Israel was taken to Assyria, the Assyrians migrated to northern Europe and settled in what is now modern Germany. They took their Israelite slaves with them, eventually allowing these peoples to migrate further north and west and to regain their independence. They settled in Northwestern Europe, including the British Isles and Scandinavia.

A huge question looms from this historic invasion, migration and the Ten Tribes losing their identity: WHY did the House of Israel become lost *to themselves*—and to the world? For over 200 years, Israel had known their identity—that they were the House of Israel. What happened?

The answer is basic, and more crucial to your understanding than you can imagine: Israel stopped keeping God's Sabbath—and thus LOST THE NATIONAL SIGN THAT IDENTIFIED THEM! They ceased to be the people with whom God was working.

Israel lost all national identity. After they were taken to Assyria, they ceased to function as a nation, with a king and a government. Eventually, they took on the Assyrian language, losing track of their native Hebrew tongue. They became slaves.

The Ten Tribes that had followed Jeroboam into rebellion against God became lost to history. Because they gave up God's IDENTIFYING SIGN—His Sabbath—they lost track of who they were. Even the world no longer recognizes them!

### Why God Allowed Israel's Defeat

God never allows people to decide *WHAT* is right and *WHAT* is wrong. That is His prerogative—and He exercises it. But He does permit them to decide *WHETHER* they will obey Him—or *WHETHER* they will disobey.

In Leviticus 26, during Moses' time, God carefully outlined what He expected of His people. This chapter promises NATIONAL BLESSINGS for obedience and NATIONAL CURSINGS for disobedience. Take time to read it all. God cited *two* particular sins—*two* Commandments—upon which everything hinged.

Here were His terms: "You shall MAKE YOU NO IDOLS nor graven image, neither rear you up a standing image, neither shall you set up any image of stone in your land, to bow down unto it: for I am the LORD your God. YOU SHALL KEEP MY SABBATHS, and reverence My sanctuary: I am the LORD" (vs. 1-2).

God specifically warned against Sabbath-breaking and idolatry. These Commandments were so critical, so vital, to God's Plan that—"IF you walk in My statutes, and keep My commandments and do them"—He would pour out blessings upon Israel. He described those blessings in the next 11 verses (vs. 3-13). This was followed by 20 verses (vs. 14-33) explaining all of the curses that would come if these two Commandments were broken. God explained that, for 2,520 years, Israel would lose all prosperity, be conquered, taken from their land into slavery and suffer plagues, sickness and disease.

Sabbath-breaking and idolatry were the triggers God stated would bring captivity. Yet these were the very first things that Jeroboam instituted after the nation of Israel was divided into two nations. The result: The Assyrian king Shalmaneser defeated and enslaved Israel.

### Why the Jews Were Taken Into Slavery

The House of Judah remained a nation for another 117 years, until 604-585 BC. Over this 19-year period, they were also taken captive. The reason was directly related to Sabbath-breaking.

Jeremiah prophesied a time when many Jews would return to the Holy Land (29:10), 70 years after entering captivity, to rebuild the temple and restore the knowledge and worship of the true God.

Here is what Nehemiah said after the captivity when the people of Judah reverted to Sabbath breaking, which caused them to go into captivity in the first place: “In those days saw I in Judah some treading wine presses ON THE SABBATH, and bringing in sheaves, and lading asses; as also wine, grapes, and figs, and all manner of burdens, which they brought into Jerusalem on THE SABBATH DAY: and I testified against them in the day wherein they sold victuals. There dwelt men of Tyre also therein, which brought fish, and all manner of ware, and sold ON THE SABBATH unto the children of Judah, and in Jerusalem. Then I contended with the nobles of Judah, and said unto them, What evil thing is this that you do, and PROFANE THE SABBATH DAY? Did not your fathers thus, and did not our God bring all this evil upon us, and upon this city? Yet you bring more *wrath* upon Israel BY PROFANING THE SABBATH” (13:15-18).

Disobedience to God’s commands is a serious matter. Let’s review: Sin is the transgression of God’s holy, righteous, and perfect spiritual Law (I John 3:4; Rom. 7:12, 14). When people break God’s Law—any part of it—the penalty is death (Rom. 6:23). God says, “Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy.” Men say, “Ignore this command and keep Sunday holy instead.” This is a COLOSSAL SIN, carrying terrible consequences!

### God Warned Judah

Like any human parent, before God punishes, He WARNS of consequences for disobedience. He carefully explains the terms—what will trigger the punishment—so there can be no misunderstanding what will happen. God’s prophets always foretold His purpose.

Here is how God inspired Jeremiah to warn the House of Judah on His behalf: “Thus says the LORD; TAKE HEED to yourselves, and bear no burden on THE SABBATH DAY, nor bring it in by the gates of Jerusalem; Neither carry forth a burden out of your houses on THE SABBATH DAY, neither do you any work, but hallow you THE SABBATH DAY, as I commanded your fathers...But if you will not hearken unto Me to hallow

THE SABBATH DAY, and not to bear a burden, even entering in at the gates of Jerusalem on THE SABBATH DAY...”—and if Judah disobeyed, “...THEN WILL I KINDLE A FIRE IN THE GATES THEREOF, AND IT SHALL DEVOUR THE PALACES OF JERUSALEM, AND IT SHALL NOT BE QUENCHED” (17:21-22, 27).

Judah rejected God’s warning. Since God does not warn in vain, here is the price they paid: “Now in the fifth month, in the tenth day of the month, which was the nineteenth year of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, came Nebuzaradan, captain of the guard, which served the king of Babylon, into Jerusalem, and burned the house of the LORD, and the king’s house; and all the houses of Jerusalem, and all the houses of the great men, burned he with fire” (52:12-13).

Make no mistake—God brought this captivity!

### Why Jewish People Have Retained Their Identity

The modern world knows who the Jews are. Have you thought to ask why? *Why* does the world believe that the Jews are God’s chosen people? This must be understood.

The answer: The Jews have retained the Sabbath. They do not keep it holy, nor as God instructed, but they have *not* switched to Sunday, or Friday, as have professing Christians and Muslims. They have *generally* retained the Sabbath.

The Jews, therefore, have *not* become lost! They know who they are. As we saw one historian put it, “More than the Jews having kept the Sabbath, the Sabbath has kept the Jews!” How true! The other Ten Tribes became lost to history because they rejected what Judah, at least in overall principle, retained.

But with all this comes an irony. Again, the world has come to believe the Jews—EXCLUSIVELY—are God’s chosen people. Virtually no one talks or wonders about the identity of the other tribes. They have become almost entirely forgotten. Yet today they number between perhaps 500-600 million!

This is why it is so vitally important that you carefully read *America and Britain in Prophecy*. It will leave you incredulous, because many of you reading this are part of modern Israel. The Bible identifies the British Commonwealth peoples as *Ephraim*. America is descended from *Manasseh*. Both these nations descended from Joseph. The remainder of the Lost Ten Tribes are generally the nations of Northwestern Europe.

These nations have been deceived into believing they are Gentiles. They are NOT! They are as Israelitish as are the very Jewish people themselves!

God's Sabbath day is binding—and even more so on the modern nations of Israel—our peoples. While we have seen that Gentile Christians today must keep the Sabbath, because they are spiritual Israelites, it is *doubly* vital for the modern nations of Israel to understand that the One who says, "I CHANGE NOT!" (Mal. 3:6) commands to keep the Sabbath.

Now we must learn what is at stake for the modern nations of Israel, if they do *not* obey God's Sabbath, while there is yet time in this age.

### **God's Warning to Israelite Nations Today!**

Millions of professing Christians have the attitude of Israel and Judah—that God does not really mean what He says. But God DOES mean what He says!

God used the prophet Ezekiel to warn today's modern descendants of Israel of these same things. We will see that God outlines the consequences of disobeying His Sabbath MOST PLAINLY!

Ezekiel was sent with a special warning from God to the House of Israel, not Judah. Here is what God told him: "Go speak unto the House of Israel" (3:1). This is vital to understand, because Ezekiel lived over 100 years *after* Israel had been taken into captivity. Ezekiel himself was a Jewish captive—a slave—in Babylon. There was no way for him to deliver his message directly to the House of Israel *at that time*.

Let me say this plainly. Ezekiel could not *personally* deliver the message to the lost tribes of Israel, because they were already in the land of Assyria, on the southern shores of the Caspian Sea. Also, they later migrated to Northwestern Europe, with the Assyrian migration to modern Germany, settling in Britain, Ireland, Scotland, Holland, France, Belgium, Scandinavia, Switzerland and America, among others. They were outside his time and beyond his reach.

Understand! God knew that the nations of Ephraim and Manasseh would rise to national prominence after 2,520 years of punishment. He also knew they would learn nothing from their punishment and, having lost their identity, would continue Sabbath-breaking and widespread idolatry, among other national sins. Yet, a loving God always warns before punishment. Recall that Ezekiel was told to "Go" to Israel.

It is the responsibility of this Work of God to bring this warning to you NOW!

Time is running out. I pray *you* will heed this WARNING!



**DARK HORIZON:** War, death, disease and famine: These are the devastating, grim results of rebellion against God—and are prophesied to come upon the modern descendants of ancient Israel.

PHOTOS: National Archives and Records Administration



**Ezekiel 20**

We will focus on chapter 20 of Ezekiel, verse-by-verse. This chapter begins with God recounting to “certain of the elders of Israel” His repeated warnings to cease their rank idolatry. We pick up in verses 10-12. Notice how it parallels the Exodus 31:12-17 Sabbath covenant: “Wherefore I caused them to go forth out of the land of Egypt, and brought them into the wilderness. And I gave them My statutes, and showed them My judgments, which if a man do, he shall even live in them. Moreover also I gave them MY SABBATHS, to be a SIGN between Me and them”—*why?*—“that they might know that I am the LORD that SANCTIFY them.”

God reminded Israel that the Sabbath was His identifying sign as the God who set them apart. Verse 13 describes Israel’s approach to His Sabbath: “But the house of Israel *rebelled* against Me in the wilderness: They walked not in MY statutes, and they despised MY judgments, which if a man do, he shall even live in them: and MY SABBATHS *they greatly polluted*: Then I said, *I would pour out My fury upon them* in the wilderness, *to consume them.*”

Notice God’s repeated use of the pronoun “MY.” This is important. Next, God pleads with the *following* generation of Israel: “But I said unto their children in the wilderness, Walk you *not* in the statutes of *your fathers*, neither observe THEIR judgments, nor defile yourselves with THEIR idols: I am the LORD your God; walk in MY statutes, and keep MY judgments, and do them; and hallow MY SABBATHS; and they shall be a SIGN between Me and you, that you may know that I am the LORD your God” (vs. 18-20).

It is important to make a crucial distinction at this point. Some get confused about God’s use of the words “MY” and “THEIR.” Grasp this. God is not condemning His own Sabbaths in the same breath He is condemning Israel for polluting them. The problem was that Israel would not keep GOD’S Sabbaths. They wanted to keep *their own* statutes and *their own* judgments. (Recall Mark 7:7-9, and how so many worship Christ in vain as they hold to the “traditions and commandments of men.”)

In Ezekiel 20:21, God plainly said, “They polluted MY Sabbaths!” Of course, Israel paid a terrible price for what they did: “I lifted up Mine hand unto them also in the wilderness, that I would scatter them among the heathen, and disperse them through the countries” (vs. 23). Why? “BECAUSE they had *not* executed MY judgments, but had despised MY statutes, and had polluted MY SABBATHS, and their eyes were after *their FATHERS’ idols*” (vs. 24).



**OBEYING GOD REAPS MANY BLESSINGS:** When Christ returns to set up the Kingdom of God, the modern-day descendants of Israel will have learned from their punishment. They will then wholeheartedly follow God and obey His laws—including the Sabbath command. As a result, the Israelites will reap many blessings, such as an abundance of cattle and livestock...



PHOTOS: USDA/NRCS



...prosperous farms, yielding fresh, ripe fruits, vegetables and grains. Obedience always brings the abundant life. These blessings and many more will come to all nations of the world when the true God reveals Himself to mankind!



PHOTOS: USDA/NRCS



TOP: Free Stock Photos/USDA  
BOTTOM: USDA

God never leaves any doubt as to exactly why His purpose is carried out as it is. It is important to Him that people keep His Sabbath—it makes a difference to Him!

Verse 33 speaks of God’s “FURY poured out”: “As I live, says the Lord GOD, surely with a mighty hand, and with a stretched out arm, and with fury poured out, will I rule over you.”

Ezekiel 20 is a prophecy for the years just ahead, involving the MODERN NATIONS OF ISRAEL. Invariably, similar Old Testament prophecies referring to Israel depict her modern descendants in national *captivity*—SLAVERY!

This—captivity and slavery—will again come upon OUR peoples nationally. I cannot repeat this strongly enough. Prophecy says this *will* happen! Ezekiel’s prophecy continues with a description also found in Jeremiah 23:7-8. Now continue in Ezekiel 20, with Christ’s promise to gather His people back to Him: “And I will bring you out from the people, and will gather you out of the countries wherein you are scattered, with a mighty hand, and with a stretched out arm, and with fury poured out [on the world and nations who took her captive]. And I will bring you into the wilderness of the people, and there will I plead with you face to face” (vs. 34-35).

You may scoff or sneer at this, but not for long!

Israel was given a unique opportunity by God to become an example unlike any other nation. Notice: “He shows His word *unto Jacob*, His statutes and His judgments *unto Israel*. HE HAS NOT DEALT SO WITH ANY NATION: and as for His judgments, *they* [other nations] have not known them” (Psa. 147:19-20).

Israel defaulted on their responsibility. God cannot ignore this. Now notice Amos 3:1-2: “Hear this word that the LORD has spoken against you, O children of Israel, against the whole family which I brought up from the land of Egypt, saying, *You only* have I known of all the families of the earth: therefore I will PUNISH YOU for all your iniquities.”

Look around you. All that you see will soon change—DRAMATICALLY! People you know and love are being spoken of in this prophecy. Think about it. Meditate on it—and hear this WARNING from God through Ezekiel, and through this book, TO YOU! The voice of our predecessor in this Work, Herbert W. Armstrong—like Noah, Elijah and John the Baptist—spoke out alone to a world that largely ignored him. Will you hear my voice, or will the pull of the rebellious majority of mankind around you be too strong, causing you to receive what is foretold to come upon them?

Yet God pleads with all who will listen. He told Israel, “Hallow My Sabbaths.” Continuing in Ezekiel 20, here is how He pleads similarly

with YOU: “Like as *I pleaded with your fathers* in the wilderness of the land of Egypt, so will *I plead with you*, says the Lord GOD. And I will cause you to pass under the rod, and I will bring you into the bond of the covenant: And I will purge out from among you the rebels, and them that transgress against Me: I will bring them forth out of the country where they sojourn, and they shall not enter into the land of Israel: And you shall know that I am the LORD” (vs. 36-38).

The future carries a wonderful, happy ending for the peoples of Israel. God promises to reveal Himself to them. When Christ returns, establishes His government—and gathers His people—here is what happens: “And you shall know that I am the LORD, when I shall [yet future] bring you into the land of Israel, into the country for the which I lifted up Mine hand to give it to your fathers. And there shall you remember your ways, and all your doings, wherein you have been defiled; and you shall loathe yourselves in your own sight for all your evils that you have committed. And you shall know that I am the LORD, when I have wrought with you for My name’s sake, not according to your wicked ways, nor according to your corrupt doings, O you HOUSE OF ISRAEL, says the Lord GOD” (vs. 42-44).

This depicts God gathering the Israelite survivors of national punishment and bringing them back to the land He has reserved for them. This time, Israel will obey.

YOU can be spared from all that is prophesied to happen soon to the nations of Israel. What will YOU do? Will YOU keep God’s Sabbath? Will YOU receive His identifying SIGN?

## *The Mark of the Beast*

Few prophecies in the Bible are as fascinating to its readers as is the subject of the *mark of the beast*. As with other aspects of prophecies described in this book, theories attempting to explain this mark abound.

This intriguing, mysterious mark is much talked about, but almost universally misunderstood. Some believe it is a computer chip implanted in people's foreheads or right hands. Others have thought it was Hitler's swastika and still others have thought it has been this or that government program. Despite endless sermons preached and articles written about its possible meaning, millions remain baffled by it.

While almost none have known or suspected this, you will learn that the mark has much—in fact, everything—to do with the subject of this book. But before seeing how, important background must be brought in to build a foundation of understanding without which the reader will be lost.

### **Dreaded Mark**

Revelation 14 pictures *three angels bearing three messages* (vs. 6-11). This chapter, like most of the book of Revelation, pictures a time that is farther into the future than most realize. This does not picture imminent events that we are to look for now. However, they do represent a recurrence of terrible conditions that arise when most of mankind is led into rebellion against God.

These messages announce the fall of Babylon through the seven last plagues and warn against receiving the “*mark of the beast*.” Many prophecies show that most—*all* who belong to the coming great false church-state system—will *ignore* the warning, and will be deceived into receiving it!

The prophecies that describe the mark are stark—and horrible! Sadly, most all preachers focus on just one passage to the exclusion of the many others on the subject. Let’s read it: “And he causes all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a MARK in their *right hand*, or in their *foreheads*: And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the MARK, or the name of the beast, or the NUMBER of his name” (Rev. 13:16-17).

This is a critical statement, for it speaks of some kind of a universal mark backed by authority in a way that controls people’s ability to conduct normal matters of commerce (“buying and selling”). Those who do *not* have the mark are isolated from the most routine matters of purchasing food, goods and services.

Being able to buy and sell goods is certainly essential—something that everyone needs to be able to do. But understand. This is not speaking of whether stores and retail establishments will be *willing* to sell goods to people without the mark, but rather whether people can earn a living—meaning a wage and a salary—in order to have income, if they do not have it. The implication of the Greek is that one will not be *able* to buy or sell—will not have money in hand to do so—because he is unemployed!

So then, the “mark of the beast” involves ability to obtain and hold a job in order to make a living.

Obviously then, millions will have it—and it will have to be considered *desirable* and *attractive*, or else the masses would not seek or accept it.

But the mark will be a trap to those who are charmed by the surface of its attraction. For here is what will happen to all those who receive it: “And I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvelous, seven angels having the *seven last plagues*; for in them is filled up the WRATH OF GOD...And the seven angels came out of the temple, having the seven *plagues* [vials], clothed in pure and white linen, and having their breasts girded with golden girdles...And I heard a great voice out of the temple saying to the seven angels, Go your ways, and pour out the *vials* [plagues] of the WRATH OF GOD upon the earth. And the first went, and poured out his vial upon the earth; and there fell a noisome and grievous sore upon the men which had the MARK *of the beast*, and upon them who *worshipped his IMAGE*” (Rev. 15:1, 6; 16:1-2).

This is serious! Terrible punishment will fall on all who have taken this mark. However unwittingly they did this, the result will be the same—horrible plagues on all, including you or me, if we have this mark!

### God Must Explain the Mark

To get a complete picture of the mark of the beast, we must study all of the verses that pertain to it. There are many, and studying just a few will not reveal the full truth. Using imagination and human reasoning to invent various silly—and some are truly ludicrous—conclusions about what the mark of the beast may be, only serves to further deceive and confuse those with interest in the subject.

Ask: Would God foretell plagues on all those who receive the mark and then leave mankind in the dark about what it is? Would He say, in effect, “I am going to pour out terrifying, horrible PLAGUES—causing the death of millions—on those who receive the mark of the beast, but I will not tell you what it is or how to avoid it—so that you can *escape*”?

Comprehend this vital point. Men cannot reveal the meaning of or explain the mark—only God can. Plain reality is that He *must* do this—and He does tell us *most plainly* exactly what it is!

### The *Beast’s* Mark

Now understand this most basic point. The mark is plainly identified as one pertaining to the beast. It is the “mark *of the beast.*” Other of my books have carefully identified the beast as the Roman Empire, with much proof. This is also the Holy Roman Empire through its eight revivals, or resurrections. Therefore, the mark of the beast is the mark of the eighth and last head of the (Holy) Roman Empire.

The mark of the beast is not the mark of Roman Catholicism. Keep in mind that the Bible uses the term “beast” to symbolize civil governments, while a church or religious system is often represented as a “woman” (Rev. 12:13-17). The Bible does not speak of the “mark *of the woman,*” but rather of the “mark of the beast” that the woman rides. Is this clear?

While the beast has much greater *power* than she has, like any horse, camel or elephant has greater power than its rider, the rider—in this case, the “woman”—steers the animal to do its bidding.

Remember what we read: “And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should

be killed. And he CAUSES all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a MARK in their right hand, or in their foreheads” (Rev. 13:15-16).

We can summarize in this way: This great false church steers, guides and directs—“causes”—others to receive the mark. She does not directly administer it herself, but rather *causes* all in the empire to accept—“receive”—the mark. She is the same woman that caused the martyrdom of saints throughout the ages. The mark is received in the right hand and the forehead—and it is a kind of brand of the (Holy) Roman Empire, not of the church. This mark will be brought—caused—upon the entire civilized western world!

### **Martyrdoms—Past and Future!**

In Revelation, John, in vision, was shown a preview of future events (“hereafter,” 4:1). Since John was “in the spirit” as the seals were opened (vs. 2), the events he witnessed were not actually occurring when he saw them. They were *heavenly previews* of things that would happen *later on Earth*.

Revelation 6:9-11 contains a description of the *fifth seal*, which is the great tribulation and future martyrdom of saints. Upon the opening of the fifth seal (vs. 9), John “saw under [at the base of] the altar the souls of them that were slain.”

Here is John’s description of the fifth seal: “And when he had opened the FIFTH SEAL, I saw under the altar *the souls of them that were slain for the word of God*, and for the testimony which they held: And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, do You not judge and AVENGE our blood on them that dwell on the earth? And white robes were given unto every one of them; and it was said unto them, that they should *rest* yet for a little season, *until their fellow servants* also and their *brethren*, that should be *killed* as they were, should be fulfilled” (vs. 9-11).

Some cite these verses to validate both the pagan immortal soul doctrine and the belief that the saved go to heaven (which is not true)—and thereby miss the whole point of what Christ is revealing.

This description is not literal, but rather is *symbolic*, as is much of Revelation. No one believes that the four horses that precede it in context are literal horses. They are obviously symbolic and part of a *vision*. So are the souls under the altar.

The fifth seal portrays the martyrdom of true saints (along with vast numbers from national Israel and Judah). This occurs during the tribulation. The context develops with the already-martyred souls ask-

ing God a question: “How long, O Lord...” Verse 11 is a symbolic instruction to these martyrs of the Middle Ages to await this *latter* martyrdom of the end time.

In the vision, John was shown the *future*. A long period of martyrdom, at the hands of the great *false* system will have already taken place. (Revelation 12 briefly describes God’s *true* Church through the last 2,000 years.) There, this period is described as “a thousand two hundred and three score (1,260) days”—or 1,260 *years*, from AD 325 to AD 1585.

Revelation 12:6 describes how the Church had to flee “into the wilderness” to escape persecution. Accounts from history indicate that more than 50 million human beings were killed during this time because of their unwillingness to compromise beliefs that were contrary to the Roman church. (Most of these were not true Christians striving to hold to all of God’s doctrines, but were “protestors” holding to some few areas where they disagreed with Rome.)

Again, a later martyrdom is yet to happen. The “souls” who were *already* “slain” were *previously* martyred true Christians. These earlier martyrs were told to “rest yet for a little season, until their *fellow servants* also and their *brethren*, that should be *killed* as they were, *should be fulfilled*” (vs. 11).

The “souls under the altar” are at that time awaiting God’s punishment of—His “vengeance” on—the great governmental power that persecuted them. God said that He would “AVENGE [their] blood” through the seven last plagues on those who carry the mark of the beast. God will pour His vengeance on this false Babylonish murderous woman. But this cannot take place until this martyrdom is past.

### **The Mark—Past and Future!**

The true Christian’s initial reward involves rulership. But the test has been the same for those of previous ages. Those who hold fast their convictions, in the face of impending martyrdom, when this test comes again, will be victorious even in death—but they will truly be refined like “gold tried in the fire” (Rev. 3:18).

Here is what God says awaits those who have been faithful unto death. Read each word carefully: “And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the *souls* of them that were *beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God*, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, *neither had received his MARK* upon their foreheads, or in

their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years” (Rev. 20:4).

This is an astonishing verse. Did you notice that *all* those killed for holding to the truth of God also refused to receive the MARK? In other words, those of all *previous* eras were required to withstand the enforcement of the mark as well. But, because they would not yield to pagan beliefs, festivals, customs, rank idolatry and worship of the revived Holy Roman Empire, they were killed. The mark of the beast was *first* enforced well over 1,000 years ago. And, though it is not *yet* being enforced, for the plagues to fall on those who have it, and for those who refuse it to be forced into martyrdom—IT MUST BE ENFORCED ONCE AGAIN!

Christians of previous times were killed because they refused the mark of the beast and the worship of its image. They “obeyed God rather than man” (Acts 5:29)—they obeyed the government of God rather than the Roman government guided by the woman riding it. They did not resist punishment, but willingly yielded to their punishment—torture and death! These future rulers proved themselves faithful to God and have qualified to reign with Jesus Christ when He comes, bringing “His reward with Him.”

The Bible reveals that there will be three final warnings to the rebellious nations under the woman and beast’s deception. This will occur through three separate angelic messengers, referenced earlier. Again, these are found in Revelation 14.

The third message declares this: “If any man WORSHIP THE BEAST [again, the final end-time revival of the Roman Empire] and his IMAGE, and receive his MARK...the same shall drink of the wine of the WRATH OF GOD...He shall be tormented with fire and brimstone... in the presence of the Lamb” (vs. 9-10).

### **True Christians “Marked” by Obedience**

We have not yet identified the exact *nature* of the mark. But we will see that it has something to do with obedience—whether we will obey “God or man” (Acts 5:29).

As we have seen, two churches are described in the New Testament. The true Church that Jesus built (Matt. 16:18) is the bride of Christ, forsaking involvements with this world and its customs in order to be pure when He comes to marry her.

Throughout the New Testament are warnings that false teachers would creep in (Jude 3-4; II Thes. 2:3-11; II Cor. 11:13-14) and gain control of the church organization, forcing faithful Christians to flee from their original congregations to continue to obey God. God’s true

people were foretold to remain a “little flock” (Luke 12:32), often scattered, never having political power in this world.

Despite continual persecution—even during periods of great martyrdom—by the large popular churches that have continually sought to destroy it, a determined remnant has always remained throughout the last nearly 2,000 years.

The world has kept little track of this small, scattered Church, but Christ promised that He would never leave or forsake it, and that “the gates of hell [the grave] shall not prevail against it” (Matt. 16:18). Though it has periodically been forced to flee for its life (Acts 8:1; Dan. 12:7), Christ has faithfully kept His promise to remain with it, empowering and strengthening it through His Spirit. His true Church is loyal and obedient to *His* government structure, and no other!

Immediately after the third angel’s warning in Revelation 14:9-10, verse 12 contains a description of God’s servants who will *not* take the mark. Remember, there are only two categories of people—those who take the mark and those who do not.

God declares, “Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the *commandments of God*, and the *faith of Jesus*” (vs. 12).

In a disobedient world that has followed a system in rebellion against God, there are relatively few commandment-keepers. God’s little Church has always been willing—and determined—to obey Him.

This verse explains that only the “*faith of Jesus*” (not merely faith *in* Jesus) gives them the strength to resist receiving the mark. Shallow human faith will be of no value in avoiding the mark!

When Jesus was approached by a young man seeking salvation, He was asked, “What good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?” (Matt. 19:16). Christ answered, “If you will enter into life, keep the commandments” (vs. 17).

It has always been this plain for all who would serve God! The commandments of God must be kept.

Regarding obedience to His Law, God has always had but one standard: “For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all. For he that said, Do not commit adultery, said also, Do not kill. Now if you commit no adultery, yet if you kill, you are become a transgressor of the law” (Jms. 2:10-11).

Christians keep *all* the laws of God. They make *no* exceptions!

### **Disobedience Is the Mark**

The above scriptures reveal that God’s people refuse the mark, keep His commandments and obey His government. Those of the world

receive the mark, obey *something else*, and thereby disobey God and reject His rule over them.

Now here is a description of those who have triumphed over Satan's mark: "And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire: and them that had gotten the victory *over the BEAST, and over his IMAGE, and over his MARK*, and over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God. And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvelous are Your works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are Your ways, You King of saints" (Rev. 15:2-3).

God likens those who have achieved victory to those who escaped Egypt and Pharaoh's rule. Under Moses' leadership, Israel escaped the plagues that fell on Egypt, which was a forerunner and type of the plagues to fall on those who have received the mark. Paul spoke of how Old Testament examples "are written for our admonition, upon whom the *ends* of the world are come" (I Cor. 10:11).

God's saints are shown to "sing the song of Moses" standing on a sea of glass (before God), just as Israel stood on the shore of the Red Sea having been delivered from oppression in Egypt. They sing Moses' song because Moses reflects God's commandments. They sing the song of the Lamb (Christ) because, through faith ("of Christ"), they have conquered sin, and received salvation.

### What Mark Would Satan Choose?

Since Satan has "deceived the whole world" (Rev. 12:9; 20:3), how has he accomplished this? On what point has he seized, which he can most naturally replace with a counterfeit. What command would Satan most easily change, and then expect carnal human reasoning to conclude is merely an innocent *adjustment*?

Now understand. The carnal mind is "enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be" (Rom. 8:7). Human beings are most agreeable to sin in *all* of its forms. People are perfectly willing to break *every one* of God's commandments. Whether idolatry, stealing, adultery, murder, dishonoring of parents, coveting or lying, people willingly—and eagerly—do these things. And, of course, Satan has certainly led people into all of these practices.

But none of these represent, in any particular way, a *test* that directly connects to how one might earn a living or hold a job—to whether or how one could or could not "buy and sell." And Satan must select a commandment, which affects *this* ability of those who will not compromise God's Law.

There is only one commandment that Satan would see as a candidate for such a test. It is a commandment that God has always said is a *sign* between Him and His people.

We should now ask, “What is a mark, brand or sign?” What do these terms signify—what do they *mean*?

In practical application, ranchers brand their cattle to signify ownership. In many cases, retailers hang up a sign above their establishment to show whose hardware store, restaurant or shop it is. In Genesis 4:15, after he killed Abel, Cain received a “mark,” signifying that he had sinned. This was also a kind of brand or sign telling those who met Cain who and what he was. The famous novel *The Scarlet Letter* is the story of a woman who committed adultery and had to wear a large “A” on the front of her clothing to signify what she had done.

It is no different with a church. God does not force anyone to obey Him. But Satan, through his church, *does* force his brand on his people in the same way that ranchers force their brand on cattle.

Now what is the sign that God says identifies His people? What point of obedience tells God that we are His people?

### Recalling *God’s Sign*

Recall how, in Genesis 2, immediately after God had made man, He finished the week with one final creation: “Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. And on the SEVENTH DAY God ended His work which He had made; and He *rested* on the SEVENTH DAY from all His work which He had made. And God *blessed* the SEVENTH DAY, and *sanctified* IT: because that in IT He had *rested* from all His work which God created and made” (vs. 1-3).

Also recall that, from creation, God established, blessed and sanctified (set apart) the seventh day of the week as a day of rest. He never established any other day—and confirmed that this was His Law “forever.” He told ancient Israel to “Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy...the SEVENTH DAY is the sabbath of the Lord your God” (Ex. 20:8-9).

We also saw that, after a few generations in Egypt, God’s people, the ancient Israelites, lost all knowledge of His Law. God had to teach it to them again. After freeing them from slavery, the first great Law that He gave them was the command to keep the Sabbath.

Again, the Sabbath originated before the Old Covenant was established. The Ten Commandments were not given as part of the Old Covenant. They had been in force since creation.

Then, in Exodus 31:12-17, we learned that God made a special covenant with Israel regarding His Sabbath: “And the LORD spoke unto Moses, saying...Verily My sabbaths you shall keep: for it is a SIGN between Me and you *throughout your generations*; that you may know that I am the LORD that does *sanctify* [set apart] *you*. You shall keep the sabbath...the seventh [day] is the sabbath of rest, *holy* to the LORD...Wherefore the children of Israel shall keep the sabbath...for a *perpetual covenant*. It is a SIGN between Me and the children of Israel FOREVER: for in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day He rested...”

Remember, the Sabbath “sanctifies” those who keep it. They are set apart as belonging to—as being *owned* by—God. I repeat for emphasis: Christians are told that “you are *bought* with a price; be not you the servants of men” (I Cor. 7:23) and “you are *bought* with a price: therefore glorify God...” (I Cor. 6:20).

Those who observe the Sabbath are signified as *God’s* people—and that He owns them. They are also publicly identified as people who keep the commandments. Civil laws require people to keep several of the *other* commandments (against stealing, murder, lying [perjury], etc.), so obedience to most or all of the *other* commandments, which the world at least generally acknowledges in one form or another, does not identify one as a commandment-keeper!

We saw the Sabbath does this! It is an automatic sign that people are of God, that they belong to God, since no one would think or choose to keep this command without it having been divinely revealed.

Recall that God established the Sabbath as a “perpetual covenant” to be kept “throughout your generations”—and “forever.” This command is ironclad—for all time. This day was to be observed forever! Doing so kept people in contact with the true God. It was the means God intended His people never lose sight of who was their God—and that they were His people! And again, if all peoples and nations kept the Sabbath, as Israel was commanded to do, no one would have ever fallen into idolatry and the worship of other gods—which has happened to all nations who have not kept it.

We must ask again: Which commandment would Satan choose to throw out? Which commandment would he most hate—and why? Which commandment signifies that those who obey it do not belong to him?

The only commandment *signifying* (from which comes *sign*) that one belongs to God—and the only commandment that directly points to the true God of creation, thus displacing Satan, is the SABBATH!

The devil most hates the *Fourth* Commandment! There is no way to get around whether one does or does not literally observe the seventh day as the Sabbath. You either do or you don't! God and Satan know what is at stake on this point. And the world as a whole can readily see whether one keeps the Sabbath or not.

### Where "Sunday Keeping" Came From

Even though God commanded that the Sabbath be kept forever, we saw that the churches of the world replaced it with the popular tradition of Sunday-keeping. By now it is obvious that this practice did not come from God or His Church. But let's see more.

Many have assumed the unscriptural tradition that Christ was resurrected from the tomb on Sunday. If Sunday can be established as the day that Christ was resurrected, it can be a means of injecting the pagan Easter festival and celebration, with its Sunday sunrise services, into Christianity.

Many pagan festivals, including Christmas (Saturnalia), Easter (the festival of Ishtar) and worship on the day of the Sun, were observed throughout the Roman Empire long before Christ. The apostate church (the "woman") simply adopted them into practice, and enforced them on all citizens in the empire through the civil government. Actually, the first one to enforce Sunday worship was not a Pope or a church, but was Constantine, the Roman emperor.

Here is what happened next. At the Council of Laodicea, in AD 363, the following decree was passed: "Christians must not judaize by resting on the Sabbath, but must work on that day, rather honouring the Lord's Day [Sunday]...But if any shall be found to be judaizers, let them be anathema from Christ" (*A Select Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church*).

Understand what this decree meant. When one was branded "anathema" (accursed or heretic) by the church, he was arrested by the state, tortured and, unless he recanted, this continued until death. This was enforced so strictly that people were *required* to rest on Sunday, and work on Saturday, in order to engage in business or hold a job. This enforcement governed their "buying and selling."

### The "Little Horn"

Daniel 7 introduces and speaks of something called "the little horn." Verse 25 there sheds important light on what happened in the Roman Empire. Here is what Daniel wrote: "And he [the little horn, the same

as the false “woman” church] shall speak great words against the most High, and shall wear out the saints of the most High”—now get this next point and do not misunderstand—“and think to change TIMES and LAWS.”

This is a remarkable statement about how the great false “woman” seeks to alter God’s LAW as it has to do with TIME. The single most obvious way this has happened in the past has been to change the *time* of God’s Sabbath to the pagan SUN’S DAY (the day long set apart by men for worship of the sun), thus altering the fourth great *law* of God! (More and more people today speak of Sunday as their “sabbath.”)

HOW PLAIN has been the work of this system in its efforts to “wear out the saints”!—and to speak against “the most High”!

Is it any wonder that God will pour out His wrath without mercy on any who would dare to do these things to His Word and to His people?

God has never authorized His Church or mankind to keep the pagan Sun’s day. Nor did He ever command or allow His people to keep numerous other pagan festivals and days of worship—and has always explicitly commanded *against* them!

### What You Obey

Paul, in his letter to the Romans, explained that people are the servants of whatever and whoever they obey: “Know you not, that to *whom* you yield yourselves servants to obey, his *servants* you are to whom you obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?” (6:16).

People either serve and obey God, and are given eternal *life*—or they serve and obey sin and the “god of this world” (II Cor. 4:4), Satan, and earn eternal *death* (Rom. 6:23)!

In the Old Testament, Sabbath-breaking was punishable by death (Ex. 31:14 *and* 15). II Corinthians 3:7-8 describes the Old Testament administration of a civil death penalty, which is no longer applicable, because God is now building the nation of *spiritual* Israel (Rom. 2:28-29; 8:9; 11:24-26; Gal. 3:29; Eph. 2:11-13, 19; I Pet. 2:5, 9).

The Sabbath was to be kept perpetually, throughout the generations of Israel. There are still generations of Israel today—and there is spiritual Israel, which keeps the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus, and the testimony of Jesus Christ.

Take heed whether and how you will obey God. For “He that despised Moses’ law died without mercy under two or three witnesses: of how much sorer punishment, suppose you, shall he be thought worthy, who has trodden under foot the Son of God, and has counted the

blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and has done despite unto the Spirit of grace?" (Heb. 10:28-29).

This is most serious!

In plain terms, the mark of the beast is SUNDAY-KEEPING AND THE KEEPING OF PAGAN FESTIVALS—in place of God's weekly and annual Sabbaths!

Towering—truly colossal!—prophecies, concerning the most terrible calamities to ever strike the Earth, will become reality in the years ahead. You have seen them explained in clear and plain detail. A spiritually darkened, blind and deceived world rushes headlong toward disaster, now just ahead. They do not suspect that God's wrath, poured out in full fury, and undiluted with mercy, will soon fall on a sin-ravaged humanity that God has *marked* to receive it.

These prophecies are certain—they are sure. They *will* happen!

Will *you* be deceived when they come to pass? Will you be seduced by miracles and lying wonders? Will you take the mark of the beast? Will you worship the beast and his image? Will you follow the masses and ignore God?

Or will you obey God, watch and pray always—and ESCAPE?

### How the Mark Is Made

The issue of the mark of the Beast being received on the hand and forehead is no different from most of the examples found throughout the book of Revelation. It is symbolic. The right hand represents labor or work, what one *does*. The forehead symbolizes the human mind or intellect, what one *believes*. God wants us to understand that it is what we BELIEVE and what we DO that reveals who we have chosen to obey in regards to Sabbath- or Sunday-keeping.

The Roman religious system forced people to take Rome's mark of Sunday observance. This was the day that the entire Roman Empire kept. The penalty for disobeying this order was death! The facts of history are unmistakable—at least 50 million people were killed.

The Sabbath command is the only commandment that would clearly identify those who have either taken the mark of the Beast or the sign of God. The Fourth Commandment is the *only* one that the world does not accept in its *mind* and then obey (working, or resting with the *hand*).

But did you realize that God's sign is also directly tied to the *hand* and *forehead*? It is seen to also distinguish His people from the rest of the world. Notice this passage about one of God's annual Sabbaths: "...it shall be for a *sign* unto you upon your HAND, and for a memo-

rial BETWEEN YOUR EYES, that the LORD’S Law may be in your mouth” (Ex. 13:9).

Also take note of the following verses in Deuteronomy about God’s identifying sign: “Now these are the commandments...And these words, which I command you this day, shall be in your heart: And you shall teach them diligently unto your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise up. And you shall bind them for a *sign* upon your HAND, and they shall be as frontlets BETWEEN YOUR EYES” (6:1, 6-8).

“Therefore shall you lay up these My words in your heart and in your soul, and bind them for a *sign* upon your HAND, that they may be as frontlets BETWEEN YOUR EYES” (11:18). Also read Proverbs 7:2-3 and Revelation 7:3-4; 14:1.

This is proof from your Bible that God, in His own way, marks His servants who keep His weekly or annual Sabbaths. God’s truth on this matter is unmistakably clear. To the open-minded reader, there should be no room for doubt.

During the Middle Ages, the Roman religion did in fact cause all those in the “Holy Roman Empire” to take the mark. The impact of this doctrine was not limited to church members forced to observe Sunday instead of the Sabbath. Sunday-keeping had become even at that time so widespread that it caused the *entire Western world*—despite religious background or affiliation—to accept Sunday as opposed to Saturday as the weekly day of rest. This is now a near-universal practice in the West, with certain religions such as Judaism, Islam and a few Christian denominations the only exceptions. The few that God has called out of this world to be placed in His true Church would also be an exception to the vast majority who worship on Sunday.

Every nation on Earth is deceived by the false religious system that calls itself Christianity while following pagan practices. God gives a strong warning in Revelation to those who wish to be protected from the times to come: “Come out of her, My people, that you be not partakers of her sins, and that you receive not of her plagues” (18:4).

Will you choose the mark of the Beast, or will you obey God and take His identifying sign?

## *Sabbath or Sunday in the New Testament?*

**W**e have already seen that Christ's custom was to enter the synagogue "on the sabbath day" (Luke 4:16). We also saw that He is "Lord of the sabbath" (Mark 2:28) and that He never changes (Mal. 3:6; Heb. 13:8).

But what other New Testament evidence is there of Sabbath observance? Are there other passages revealing what day Paul kept—and what day he used to teach those *Gentiles* God was converting? Let's examine a series of verses, first referenced in all capital letters.

### **Paul and Barnabas Teach on the Sabbath**

*ACTS 13:14-15, 42-44* contains an account of Paul and Barnabas teaching Jews on the Sabbath: "But when they departed from Perga, they came to Antioch in Pisidia, and went into the synagogue **ON THE SABBATH DAY**, and sat down. And after the reading of the law and the prophets the rulers of the synagogue sent unto them, saying, You men and brethren, if you have any word of exhortation for the people, say on" (vs. 14-15).

The account picks up in verse 42: "And when the Jews were gone out of the synagogue, the *Gentiles* besought that these words might be preached to them **THE NEXT SABBATH**." Why would he not tell them to just show up the *next day*—Sunday—instead of requiring them to wait an entire week, until the next Sabbath, for further instruction? The account says nothing of Paul telling the Gentiles that they no longer

had an obligation to keep the Sabbath—that it had been done away. While one might *suppose* that *the Jews* still carried this obligation, why did Paul not at least explain to the Gentiles, in a message about the “grace of God,” that the Law had been nailed to the cross? He could have easily explained that the Sabbath was no longer binding in the New Testament era.

Notice verse 43: “Now when the congregation was broken up, many of the Jews and religious proselytes followed Paul and Barnabas: who, speaking to them, persuaded them to continue in the GRACE OF GOD.”

But more time passed. People wanted to hear more of the “word of God.” Paul required everyone to wait another week—a second time. Another lost opportunity to point the Gentiles to Sunday. Now read: “And THE NEXT SABBATH DAY came almost the whole city together to hear the word of God” (vs. 44). “Continuing in the grace of God” meant learning to observe the Sabbath!

### Gentiles Also Assemble on Sabbath

The next passage, *ACTS 15:1-2, 14-21*, yields important understanding. Examine it closely. Certain Jews had come to Antioch seeking to teach newly converted Gentiles that they must keep the law of Moses and be circumcised to be saved. It states “no small dissension” arose between Paul and Barnabas and these teachers. A conference of ministers was necessary to resolve the question of what was binding on Gentiles. Paul and Barnabas went to Jerusalem to confer with the apostles and elders.

James announced the final decision: “Wherefore my sentence is, that we trouble not them, which from among the Gentiles are turned to God: But that WE WRITE UNTO THEM, that they abstain from pollutions of idols, and from fornication, and from things strangled, and from blood” (vs. 19-20).

Let’s examine James’ statement. Some assert that James did *not* tell them that the Ten Commandments were binding on Gentiles. Of course, he did not say this! The Commandments were not in question. Rather, circumcision and obedience to the law of Moses were the issues in dispute. Think a moment. Would any suggest that, because James did not mention the Ten Commandments, he was tacitly approving cursing, killing, adultery, stealing, lying, etc.? Ridiculous!

How far some will go to get away from the Fourth Commandment!

James did mention four points in Moses’ law that should still be kept. Now notice verse 21: “For Moses of old time has in every city

them that preach him, being read in the synagogues EVERY SABBATH DAY.” This verse is crucial. It reveals that Gentile converts were attending services and hearing the first five books of the Law “every *Sabbath* day.” The *New* Testament records this important clue for those seeking to know which day God’s people were keeping after Christ’s Church began—“every” week.

Why did the apostle’s letter not tell the Gentiles to stop meeting “every Sabbath”? Think of it. This is a giant omission—an enormous missed opportunity to correct what many believe is the greatest burden of all—Sabbath-keeping! It is evident that Gentile converts were routinely instructed to begin meeting on the Sabbath day. This is the message of verse 21!

### Another Account

Next we examine *ACTS 16:12-15*, an account of Paul and Silas observing the Sabbath in Philippi. Careful reading of the account shows that it was a custom for people to meet on a river bank each Sabbath: “And from there to Philippi...and we were in that city abiding certain days. And ON THE SABBATH we went out of the city by a river side, where prayer was wont to be made; and we sat down, and spoke unto the women which resorted there. And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worshipped God, heard us: whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul. And...she was baptized.”

Obviously, Paul and those with him kept the Sabbath each week. This required them to find where Sabbath assembly regularly took place locally.

### Paul Kept the Sabbath

The next account, *ACTS 18:1-11*, is remarkable. It reveals that Paul worked during the week *and* kept the Sabbath—“every” Sabbath: “After these things Paul departed from Athens, and came to Corinth; and found a certain Jew named Aquila...with his wife Priscilla...and came unto them. And because he was of the same craft, he abode with them, and wrought: for by their occupation they were tentmakers. And he reasoned in the synagogue EVERY SABBATH, and persuaded the Jews *and the Greeks* [Gentiles]...and he continued there *a year and six months*, teaching the word of God among them” (vs. 1-4, 11). Eighteen months is equivalent to *78 weekly Sabbaths* on which Paul taught God’s Word!

Verse 6 shows that the Jews became angry and, blaspheming, departed from Paul. This left him teaching *Gentiles only*—and yet he continued teaching them *on the Sabbath!* The argument that he met on the Sabbath to satisfy the Jews holds no water.

Paul taught both Jews *and Gentiles* each Sabbath. And he worked the other six days in accord with “Six days shall you labor, and do all your work.” If Paul was *also* observing Sunday, he would have been routinely violating the other aspect of the Sabbath command, having but five days to work.

Finally, notice that Acts 17:2 states that Paul, when in Thessalonica, “...as his manner was, went in unto them, and three sabbath days reasoned with them out of the Scriptures.” This was also a Gentile city.

The pattern is clear. Paul kept the Sabbath, meeting with and teaching brethren *everywhere* he went. Now consider what he instructed the *Gentile* Corinthians: “Be you *followers of me*, even as I also am of Christ” (I Cor. 11:1).

### **But Is Sunday Mentioned in the New Testament?**

What we have just seen should settle the question of which day New Testament converts—Jews *and* Gentiles—observed. The matter should be settled. But human nature still looks for evidence to prove Sunday is the New Testament day of worship.

Does the New Testament *mention* Sunday? No, but it does mention the “first day of the week” in eight places. They are not difficult to examine. Before we begin, recognize that at least one of these passages must clearly authorize Sunday observance. In light of all the Old and New Testament evidence we have seen, such a passage, to even be considered, must carry *absolute* authority supporting Sunday!

#### **John 20:19**

“Then the same day at evening, being THE FIRST DAY OF THE WEEK, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for *fear of the Jews*, came Jesus and stood in the midst, and said unto them, Peace be unto you.” Was this a Sunday worship service? Was it to celebrate Christ’s Resurrection?

Christ had just been resurrected—late Sabbath afternoon, between 3 and 6 p.m. Some disciples had gone to the tomb early Sunday morning to see if He was there. Other accounts we will review demonstrate that He was already gone—already “risen.” His first opportunity to see the disciples would have been on Sunday—the first day of the week.



### **FROM THE FIRST CENTURY**

**AD:** These ruins, located in Capernaum, are built over the synagogue where Christ taught on the Sabbath day (Mark 1:21). These remains reflect what the synagogue may have actually looked like in Christ's day.

TOP: Free Stock Photos

MIDDLE, BOTTOM: Holy Land Photos

He had just been horribly tortured and crucified, and gone for three days in the tomb. It was natural for Christ to meet with them right after this had happened.

The account says nothing of this being a “worship service,” or a “resurrection service.” The brethren were meeting privately, probably secretly in a closed room, “for fear of the Jews.” Remember, the Jews had crucified their friend and Master. They would have had much to discuss. Also remember that they had all been living together in this single upper room (Acts 1:13). It was also impossible that the meeting was some kind of “Sunday resurrection celebration,” because the disciples did not believe that Jesus was risen (Mark 16:14; Luke 24:37, 39, 41)!

There is certainly nothing in this account that references either Sunday or that the Sabbath is done away. Therefore, we conclude that it contains no authority for changing God’s Sabbath to Sunday.

#### **Matthew 28:1**

“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 sepulcher.”

Matthew wrote this verse six years after this event occurred. Take the passage at face value. Matthew used the Sabbath as a point of reference—to show that it was drawing toward or into the first day of the week from what he *still understood was the Sabbath*. This is the point being made. The Sabbath was still the seventh day of the week from Matthew’s perspective—and he wrote under inspiration of God!

Consider one other point. Matthew is describing events that occurred three days after Christ supposedly abolished the Sabbath, with all other things that were supposedly “done away,” or “nailed to the cross.” This verse refutes the argument that merely “keeping *any* day in seven holy” is acceptable.

This second passage in no way authorizes Sunday-keeping. No religious or resurrection service is mentioned. It does introduce the third reference.

#### **Mark 16:2**

“And very early in the morning THE FIRST DAY OF THE WEEK, they came unto the sepulcher at the rising of the sun.”

Mark wrote his gospel account ten years after Christ’s Resurrection. Like Matthew, he still uses the Sabbath as a reference. His purpose for

using “the first day of the week” was merely to identify *when* Mary Magdalene and two other women (vs. 1) came to the tomb to anoint Christ’s body with spices. This passage carries no authorization for Sunday-keeping, and speaks nothing of any kind of religious service.

The fourth reference is a few verses later.

### Mark 16:9

“Now when Jesus was risen early THE FIRST DAY OF THE WEEK, He appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom He had cast seven devils.”

Some use Mark 16:9 to prove the Sunday resurrection theory. Simply reading the verse shows it does not say Christ “was *rising*,” but rather He “was *risen*” from the grave. It uses past tense because, as we have seen, Christ had been gone from the grave for about twelve hours (since late Saturday afternoon) by this time on Sunday morning. Again, there is no reference to any kind of resurrection service.

This verse is nothing more than a factual account of Mary Magdalene appearing at the tomb. It carries no greater meaning than this. There is no statement about Sunday-keeping, worship services or doing away with the Sabbath.

### Luke 24:1

“Now upon THE FIRST DAY OF THE WEEK, very early in the morning, they came unto the sepulcher, bringing the spices which they had prepared, and certain others with them.”

Comparing this account with the parallel account in Matthew and Mark reveals that these women had waited until the Sabbath was over to do certain work. One verse earlier, in Luke 23:56, it states that these women had “rested the sabbath day ACCORDING TO THE COMMANDMENT.”

This would be strange if the women had been taught, throughout Christ’s 3½-year ministry, that He intended to “nail the Sabbath to the cross.” Of course, they knew that the Sabbath was ordained forever and that Christ did not abolish it. How could these women “rest... according to the commandment” if the Fourth Commandment had been done away?

Does Luke 24:1 authorize Sunday-keeping? Quite the opposite! It validates Sabbath-keeping, as do the accounts of Matthew and Mark, written years later. Luke actually emphasizes that the first day of the week is a normal work day.

**John 20:1**

“THE FIRST DAY OF THE WEEK comes Mary Magdalene early, when it was yet dark, unto the sepulcher, and sees the stone taken away from the sepulcher.”

This account merely validates Matthew, Mark and Luke. It contains nothing new. However, John wrote his gospel *63 years* after Christ’s Resurrection. At the end of the first century, he held no doubt about whether the Sabbath was still in effect. No authorization for a change here either! (The next chapter discusses in detail the subject of Christ’s Resurrection, and whether it was on Sunday.)

**Acts 20:7-8**

“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. And there were many lights in the upper chamber, where they were gathered together.”

This account does, in fact, speak of a religious meeting on the first day of the week. But the last phrase demonstrates that it had grown dark—“there were many lights.” This was because Paul had continued his Sabbath preaching “until midnight.” Since God counts days from sunset to sunset (Lev. 23:32; Gen. 1:5, 8, 13, 19, 23, 31), this was what we would call *Saturday night*. It had nothing to do with a Sunday morning worship service. Paul was a visiting apostle. Such an event was special, and people wanted to hear him preach as long as possible. And it was a farewell sermon.

**What Does “Break Bread” Mean?**

This is an interesting account for other reasons. Paul was visiting the Troas congregation immediately after the Days of Unleavened Bread (vs. 6). Here is what the others traveling with him did: “And we went before to ship, and *sailed unto Assos*, there intending to take in Paul: For so had he appointed, minding himself *to go afoot*. And when he met with us at Assos, we took him in, and came to Mitylene” (vs. 13-14).

Paul’s plan was to walk an arduous journey of 19½ miles across a peninsula to meet his companions. These men had to sail 60 miles around the peninsula to their rendezvous point with Paul. Both Paul and his companions were going to be doing very hard work, all day, on

the first day of the week. They had enjoyed the Sabbath together and Paul was “ready to depart on the morrow” (vs. 6), or Sunday morning. Verse 6 also shows that this occasion had occurred “after the days of unleavened bread”—one of God’s annual Feasts.

Again, Paul had spent an entire Sabbath preaching to the brethren, continuing well into Saturday night—or the first day of the week—which started at sundown Saturday evening. Some claim Acts 20:7 refers to keeping the Lord’s Supper on Sunday morning because the term “break bread” was used. This assumption is not true. Paul’s long preaching had left people hungry. It was midnight. They wanted to eat. This is why verse 11 says those present “had broken bread *and eaten*.” This was an ordinary meal, not the observing of the Lord’s Supper. Other passages prove this.

Acts 2:46 speaks of the disciples who, “continuing *daily...breaking bread* from house to house, did *eat their meat* with gladness.” The account shows that the brethren were doing this daily. Obviously, human beings *do* eat daily.

Further, Acts 27:34-35 explains, “Wherefore...take some meat... he [Paul] took bread...and when he had broken it, he began to eat.” Finally, even Christ said, in Matthew 26:29, that He would not take the “Lord’s Supper” until after He had returned to Earth and was in His Kingdom. However, Luke 24:30, *at a later time*, shows Him to have sat “at meat,” or eating a meal, with the disciples. He broke bread and blessed it on that occasion. There are cultures today, particularly in Europe, who still use the term “break bread” to mean the actual breaking of a certain type of bread as they eat a meal.

The Acts 20 account provides no authority for Sunday-worship. It is not even talking about Sunday morning, except that Paul had an all-day walk ahead of him starting then. Rather, it validates that the brethren met on the Sabbath with Paul, and that he and his companions were perfectly willing to perform hard labor—*after* the Sabbath, on the first day of the week.

### I Corinthians 16:2

“Upon THE FIRST DAY OF THE WEEK let every one of you lay by him in store, as God has prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come.”

Before examination, let’s read the first three verses of this chapter to put verse 2 in context: “Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do you. Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store,



### **PAGAN CUSTOMS AND RITUALS:**

The Easter Sunrise Service is a familiar scene to many millions worldwide, attempting to “worship Christ” as He supposedly rose from the grave on Sunday morning. While sincere, they are sincerely wrong! The Bible condemns this service and its pagan origin.



TOP: Photo Illustration, The Restored Church of God  
RIGHT: Inertia Stock.xchg 003/Arturo



**TRADITIONS OF MEN:** Although the Bible plainly teaches otherwise, “church,” to most people, traditionally connotes an ornate building where they meet on Sunday.

as God has prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come. And when I come, whomsoever you shall approve by your letters, them will I send to bring your liberality unto Jerusalem.”

This passage supposedly gives authority for passing the “collection plate” every Sunday. Does it represent a *general* command to *all* Christians, for *all* time, to give freewill offerings at “Sunday services”? No! However, the passage does speak of an offering, a collection to be taken up for a specific purpose. The offering described here is unique in *five* ways. As you read these points, see if there is even a remote indication or hint that God in any way commands or authorizes Sunday-keeping through it.

*First*, it is a specific *offering* described in Romans 15:25-28: “But now I go unto Jerusalem to minister unto the saints. For it has pleased them of Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain *contribution* for the poor saints which are at Jerusalem. It has pleased them verily; and their debtors they are. For if the Gentiles have been made partakers of their spiritual things, their duty is also to minister unto them in carnal [physical] things. When therefore I have performed this, and have sealed to them this fruit, I will come by you into Spain.”

This passage shows the collection was “for the poor saints... at Jerusalem.” It was not a collection plate passed on Sunday. The Jerusalem saints were to receive food because they were suffering from drought and famine. The Greek word translated “fruit” can also refer to grain, produce or wine, which can be stored for long periods.

There is no reference to money here. There is also nothing about giving a collection to the minister or a church hierarchy.

*Second*, it was done at one specific *time*—when Paul passed through (“I will come by you into Spain”).

*Third*, it was given at one specific *place* (“let everyone of you *lay by him* in store”). This is because Paul would come later (vs. 3 – “when I come”) to gather what brethren had been saving *at home* (“lay *by him* in store”). This was not an offering kept at the church, or given every—or any—Sunday.

*Fourth*, this command is specific to the *Corinthians* (vs. 1). There is no command for Sunday collections here, but merely instruction to local brethren to store an important offering for poor *brethren*!

*Fifth*, this letter was received in Corinth during the Days of Unleavened Bread. “First day of the week” should properly be translated “first of the *weeks* (plural).” The collection was almost certainly to happen immediately after the Days of Unleavened Bread, in the first *week* counting toward Pentecost.

Verse 4—“and if it be meet that I go also, *they* shall go with me”—coupled with verse 3 referencing “*them*,” shows that it took several people to transport this large offering to Jerusalem. This would not be necessary if it was simply cash and coins taken up in an offering plate. It *would* be necessary if much food and drink was involved.

### **Eight Passages—No Sunday Authority!**

Objective people will admit we have seen no evidence—no *proof* whatsoever—for Sunday-keeping in these eight passages. There is not the slightest suggestion in any of them that Sunday should be kept, or that the Sabbath is done away. Nor does Revelation 1:10, mentioned earlier and referencing “the Lord’s day,” have anything to do with Sunday, as some claim.

Instead, we have seen that Christ, Paul and the New Testament brethren (Jews and Gentiles) all kept the Sabbath. BLESSINGS for obedience, and CURSINGS and CAPTIVITY for disobedience—and polluting it—have been explained.

Christians are to “live...by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God” (Matt. 4:4; Luke 4:4). God’s “mouth” has spoken much about how the Sabbath is holy to Him—“blessed” and “hallowed”—and that it commemorates the creation week of the true God. God calls the Sabbath “*My* holy day” (Isa. 58:13). Truly, the Sabbath is “the *Lord’s* day.”



## *Christ's Resurrection Was NOT on Sunday*

An important inset chapter is vital at this point. We previously mentioned that the world commonly believes that Christ's Resurrection was Sunday morning. Does the Bible say this, or have millions made an assumption? And if it was *not* on Sunday, then when was it?

The discussion of Matthew 28:1, John 20:1, Mark 16:2 and Luke 24:1 in the previous chapter set the stage. Very early Sunday morning (it was still dark), the tomb was open. Do these verses supply the supposed proof for the Sunday resurrection tradition? Do they support "Easter sunrise services"? Do they open the door to validating Sunday as the "Lord's day"?

Did Jesus rise from the grave on Sunday morning? Had He been there for three days and three nights? He said this was the *only sign* (Matt. 12:40) that He was the Messiah! Does—can—this sign coincide with the tradition of a *Good Friday* crucifixion near sunset and a sunrise resurrection on *Easter Sunday*?

### **All-important Proof**

We ask: What proof did Christ offer that He was the Messiah? The Pharisees challenged Him on this very point and He gave them an answer—His *sign* that He *was* true:

"An evil and adulterous generation seeks after a *sign*; and there shall no *sign* be given to it, but the *sign* of the prophet Jonas: For as

Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale’s belly; so shall the Son of man be *three days* and *three nights* in the heart of the earth” (Matt. 12:39-40).

How, then, does the “Good Friday-Easter Sunday” tradition fit? Can 72 hours (three days and three nights) be made to fit into a period between late day Friday and early Sunday morning? Why do so few even seem to question this *only sign that Christ said He would give that He was the Messiah*? Could He have been wrong on this single great proof of who He was and still have been the Messiah?

Since no one directly witnessed His Resurrection, we must examine the only available authority on this great event—your Bible! The apostle Paul said to “Prove all things; hold fast that which is good” (I Thes. 5:21). The Bible is the revealed Word of God. It is His written revelation to mankind on all points men could not discover by themselves through research or trial and error. Prepare to be shocked at what the Bible *does* and *does not* say on this vital point!

While professing Christians willingly accept the common traditions of *men*, true disciples (learners, students) of Christ want to know what HE says. Christ warned, “In vain do they worship Me teaching for doctrines the commandments of men. For laying aside the commandment of God, you hold the *tradition* of men” (Mark 7:7-8).

What standard will you use? Will you accept the recorded facts of history found in God’s Word—or continue with the familiar, comfortable *traditions* of men?

### The Tremendous Importance of His Sign

Is it any surprise that Satan the devil would want to deny that Christ was the Messiah? Is it any surprise that he would seek to relegate the story of Jonah and the “whale” to folklore, myth, symbolism and superstition? If this miracle never occurred, then Christ’s sign, based entirely upon it, is nothing more than hollow and pointless allegory.

Consider what is at stake in Jesus’ statement in Matthew 12:39-40. Jesus placed His ENTIRE IDENTITY on the line with His sign. If He failed His only sign, then He is not our Savior and *nothing* He said can be trusted. In effect, if His prophecy of this sign *failed*, then He must be considered a false prophet. He would be a fraud and should not be followed—and MANKIND HAS NO SAVIOR!

Do not confuse the *fact* of the resurrection’s occurrence as being the sign, with the question of “how long”—the precise *length of time*—He would be in the grave before His resurrection took place. *This* was the test of His sign.

Be under no illusion about the position of Bible critics—sometimes known as “higher critics.” While it is embarrassing to watch them try to explain away Christ’s only sign, they really have no choice. If Christ’s sign remains intact, the Good Friday-Easter Sunday tradition would be exposed as groundless—false—and collapse in a heap!

Some Bible commentaries nearly leave one breathless in astonishment when they assert that three days and three nights, in the Greek language, can actually mean *three periods of time*—either day or night. Friday night, Saturday daylight and Saturday night are portrayed as these three “periods” of time.

At least some are honest enough to acknowledge that the Friday-Sunday tradition is, in fact, only about *half* the length of time that Christ said He would be in the grave.

### What Are Days and Nights?

Can we know for certain or must we speculate on the meaning—the definition—of a *day* or the meaning of a *night*? Does the Bible leave this definition open to opinion—with one man’s opinion as good as another?

Jonah 1:17 plainly says, “And Jonah was in the belly of the fish *three days and three nights*.” The Old Testament was written in Hebrew. Here, scholars face a dilemma when they explore the phrase “three days and three nights.” Some of these same “scholars”—who are actually *critics*—acknowledge that the Hebrew language must mean a 72-hour period of time. There is no room for any “periods of time” theories in the Hebrew.

Here is the problem! Christ said His time in the grave would be “*as* Jonah was three days and three nights in the great fish’s belly...” The word “as” sets the standard of comparison. It leaves no room to “negotiate” the meaning of the Greek. The margin of Jonah 2:2 even compares Jonah’s time in the “great fish” to “the grave.” In this verse, the Hebrew word translated “hell” is *sheol*. It literally means “the grave.” The comparison of Christ to Jonah—in a grave—becomes complete.

Did Christ understand the length of a “day” or the length of a “night”? He did! In John 11:9-10, He asked, “Are there not TWELVE HOURS in a day?...But if a man walk in the night, he stumbles.”

The Bible mentions in several places that Christ rose “the third day.” How long was this? The first half of the creation chapter, in Genesis 1:4-13, plainly says that God “divided the light from darkness. And God called the light Day and the darkness He called Night. And

the evening [darkness] and the morning [light] were *the first day*... And the evening [darkness] and the morning [light] were *the second day*... And the evening [now THREE periods of darkness called *night*—three nights] and the morning [now THREE periods of light called *day*—three days] were *the third day*.”

This is the Bible’s definition of the length of time accounted for within the phrase “the third day.” It spanned three periods of darkness and three periods of light. We have proven that each of these periods is twelve hours. Six times twelve hours equals 72 hours! What could be more plain?

### The Source of the Problem

We have now established the exact duration of Christ’s time in the tomb as a 72-hour period. He *was* there for three days and three nights “as Jonah was...” We will shortly examine four additional scriptures that prove the same thing.

In Mark 7:13, Jesus strongly warns against “making the word of God of none effect through your tradition.” How is it that intelligent, well-educated Bible scholars seem to “know” that Jesus was crucified on Friday and resurrected on Sunday? What is it about Christ’s clear, straightforward sign that they cannot accept? The answer lies in the comfort of long-held but clearly *FALSE traditions!*

One of the most important rules of Bible study is to gather *all* the scriptures on a subject to get the complete picture of that subject. There are other verses that prove the 72-hour duration of Christ’s time in the tomb.

John 2:19-21 states, “Jesus answered and said unto them, Destroy this temple, and *in* three days I will raise it up...But He spoke of the temple of His body.” Clearly, the use of the phrase “*in* three days” means that Christ’s time in the tomb *could not exceed* 72 hours—or it would not be *within* the three-day period.

Conversely, Matthew 27:63 establishes Jesus’ time in the tomb as not *less than* three days, or 72 hours, for it says, “*After* three days I will rise again.”

Examining two additional verses in Mark’s gospel account proves the same parameters of John 2 and Matthew 27. Notice Mark 8:31: “And He began to teach them, that the Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected of the elders, and of the chief priests, and scribes, and be killed, and *after* three days rise again.” A late Friday afternoon entombment means a late *Monday afternoon* resurrection. It is as simple as counting one, two, three! Finally, in reference to this

verse, if it stood alone without other scriptures to qualify it—it must be plainly admitted that Christ's use of the word "after" does not, by itself, *limit* His time in the tomb to 72 hours. He could still be there longer. He just could not be there one bit *less than* 72 hours. This much should now be clear.

We are now ready for Mark 9:31: "They shall kill Him; and *after* that He is killed, He shall rise *the third day*." This verse presents another *limitation* on Christ's time in the tomb. Consider! This verse, if taken by itself, places His time in the grave between 48 and 72 hours. The phrase "the third day" *caps* the duration at 72 hours—but it also creates a minimum of 48 hours—or the period would be somewhere in *the second day*! Again, if this verse is to be taken alone, a Friday afternoon crucifixion requires a resurrection somewhere *after* late Sunday afternoon and no later than late Monday afternoon.

### Establishing the *Time* of the Resurrection

The following fact should be clear. The exact moment and time of day when Christ was placed in the tomb had to coincide with the exact time of day of His Resurrection. We must establish *precisely when* Christ was placed in the tomb. We will then know precisely when He left the tomb. Plainly, *any* time of day or night—morning, noon, afternoon, evening, midnight, etc.—that Christ would have entered the tomb would have to be the very same time He would depart it by His resurrection!

While on the stake, after "the ninth hour" (three o'clock in the afternoon), Jesus "cried out" (Matt. 27:46-50; Mark 15:34-37; Luke 23:44-46) and died. Luke 23:44 also makes a reference to "*the sixth hour*, and there was darkness in all the earth until *the ninth hour*." The sixth hour is six hours after sunrise—or noon! This would make the ninth hour three o'clock.

These events occurred on the day before "the Sabbath"—the day called "the preparation" (Matt. 27:62; Mark 15:42; Luke 23:54). We should recognize that the Bible counts days as the period from evening to evening (Lev. 23:32) or sunset to sunset. Recall Genesis 1: "...the evening [night or darkness] and the morning [day or light]..."

John 19:42 explains, "There laid they Jesus therefore because of the Jews' *preparation day*." Jewish burial law (vs. 31) forbade the bodies of the dead remaining unburied at the outset of any Sabbath day or feast day. Remember, Luke 23:46 explained that Christ died at, or shortly after, three o'clock in the afternoon. He would have been buried soon thereafter—prior to sunset.

We have not yet established the day of the week that the crucifixion occurred. However, our previous computation and comparison of related scriptures reveals that Christ must have risen sometime after three o'clock in the afternoon—on whatever would have been the day that was three days later.

A brief summary is in order at this point. Again, Christ's Messiahship is at stake. Based on when He was buried (sometime between three and six o'clock on the day of His crucifixion), His sign as our Messiah was that He must—I repeat *He must*—rise at the same time 72 hours later. Otherwise, He is an impostor and a fraud, and we have no Savior. Unless we wish to make “the word of God of none effect through [our] tradition,” we must now admit that a popular, worldwide tradition has crashed in a heap of rubble. Some honest questions remain.

### **The Crucifixion Preceded a Sabbath—But Which Sabbath?**

We have now reached the important issue of when to start counting the 72-hour period of Christ's sign. It involves the Sabbath. But we might ask, *which* Sabbath? Could this question lie at the heart of why people assume a Friday crucifixion? We have already proven from all four Gospels that the day of Christ's crucifixion was called “the preparation.” John 19:14 explains “it was the preparation of *the Passover*.” However, verse 31 goes further by stating, “for that sabbath day was an *high day*.” What does this mean?

What is a Sabbath that is a *High Day*?

Any Jew will tell you that a “High Day” is a FEAST DAY or an ANNUAL HOLY DAY! Leviticus 23 describes seven of these days that the nation of ancient Israel was commanded to keep year by year. A simple review of this chapter (verses 24, 26-32 and 39) reveals that God considered these days to be Sabbaths. Notice that Leviticus 23:2 refers to all of these Sabbaths as “the *feasts* of the LORD” and “even these are my *feasts*.” This same verse also calls them “holy convocations”—meaning commanded assemblies. These days do not fall on the same day, year after year, any more than do the common pagan holidays that most people observe today.

Matthew 26:2 states, “You know that after two days is the feast of the passover, and the Son of man is betrayed to be crucified.” (Leviticus 23 shows that the Passover was the one feast that was not also a Sabbath, wherein work was prohibited.) There is no doubt that Christ was crucified on the Passover.

The original Passover is described in Exodus 12. A lamb was slain and the blood of this lamb was struck over the doorposts of all the

Israelite houses. It was this blood that caused the death angel to *pass over* any particular house, thus saving the firstborn of that house from death! Hence, the term “passover.”

The Old Testament Passover always preceded the annual Sabbath called the first Day of Unleavened Bread. This day was a High Day or a feast day to be celebrated each year, again, on the day immediately following the Passover. Notice Numbers 28:16-17: “And in the *fourteenth* day of the first month is the *passover* of the LORD. And in the *fifteenth* day of this month is the *feast*.” This feast was the first Day of Unleavened Bread.

Jesus Christ was slain by crucifixion on the exact same day that the Passover lamb had been slain every year. I Corinthians 5:7 plainly states, “Christ *our passover* is sacrificed for us.” John the Baptist called Christ “the Lamb of God, which takes away the sin of the world” (John 1:29). Christ was crucified on the Passover and this day then would automatically be a preparation day for the feast day, or annual High Day Sabbath—which was to begin almost immediately after His burial.

As mentioned, annual Sabbaths could occur on any day of the week. Tuesday and Thursday are more common than any other day for the first Day of Unleavened Bread, following the Passover. Thursday is probably the most common of all. For instance, in the thirty-six years (counting inclusively) between 1998 and 2033, the first Day of Unleavened Bread occurs on a Thursday 12 times, and on a Tuesday 10 times. All other days are less often during this period. In the year of Christ's crucifixion, according to the Hebrew calendar, the *Passover occurred on a Wednesday!* This means that the annual Sabbath had to be one day later—or Thursday! *It was, in fact, THIS SABBATH that was approaching, thus requiring the swift burial of Jesus' body prior to its arrival.* The weekly Sabbath, or Saturday, was to occur two days after that.

### **Which Was the Day of the Resurrection?**

If Christ's Resurrection was *not* on Sunday, then when was it? The world commonly believes that it was Sunday morning. Does the Bible say this, or have millions made an assumption?

Recall that John 20:1 says, “The first day of the week comes Mary Magdalene early, *when it was yet dark*, unto the sepulchre, and sees the stone taken away from the sepulchre.” Compare this verse with Mark 16:2 and Luke 24:1.

It is now very early Sunday morning (it is still dark) and the tomb is open. Do these verses supply the supposed proof for the Sunday

resurrection tradition? Do they support “Easter sunrise services”? A problem already presents itself. Christ is gone from the tomb *before* sunrise!

Now notice Luke 24:6. Mary Magdalene, and the others with her, are described as finding two angels standing before them. These angels stated plainly to these women, “He is not here, but *is risen*.” Also see Mark 16:6 and Matthew 28:5-6.

Christ was GONE—He was *already* risen! Notice the past tense of the two angels’ statement.

We can now establish the *day* of Christ’s resurrection. We have already established the *time* of day of His death and the burial soon thereafter and, therefore, also the time of His resurrection. It was late afternoon, between 3 and 6 p.m. Obviously, Christ was already risen, by this time, in the darkness of Sunday morning—*because He had been gone from the grave since late afternoon on SATURDAY!* Let us state this plainly. Christ died on the late afternoon of a Wednesday Passover and was resurrected three days later on the late afternoon of the very next Saturday.

Thus, the resurrection did not even occur on Sunday—period!

### Christ’s Sign Fulfilled

Who will you believe? Will it be theologians, scholars, higher critics and other traditionalists, who love to profess Jesus, but reject the sign that He gave? Or will you believe the words of your Bible—that Jesus Christ rose from the dead exactly as He said He would?

It is now time to read a different Gospel account of the two angels’ statement to the women at the tomb. This time notice Matthew 28:6. It states, “He is not here: for He is risen, *as He said*.” This would be impossible if Christ had been in the grave one second more or one second less than 72 hours. The One who said, “Are there not twelve hours in a day?” was well aware of exactly how long His sign required that He remain in the “belly of the earth”—the grave.

Not only did Christ state that He would fulfill His sign, but it was also established by the mouth of two witnesses (Deut. 17:6; 19:15), who happened to be mighty angels of God.

Paul adds a final, great, corroborating proof that Christ *did* spend three entire days and three entire nights—from late Wednesday afternoon until late Saturday afternoon—in the tomb. In I Corinthians 15:3-4, Paul validates the words of Christ and the two angels who witnessed His fulfillment. Notice: “For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins *according*

*to the scriptures*; and that He was buried, and that He rose again THE THIRD DAY *according to the scriptures*.”

Further, the prophet Daniel gave a prophecy he described as “seventy weeks” (Dan. 9:24-27). In this prophecy, the Messiah was foretold to be “cut off...in the *midst* of the week.” Wednesday is literally the fourth, or middle day, of a seven-day week. So then, it *was* in the “midst of the week” that Christ was “cut off.” (It should be noted that this prophecy in Daniel was a foretelling of Christ also being “cut off” in the midst of His ministry—after 3 ½ years [Fall AD 27 to Spring AD 31]—if the biblical application of “a day for a year” is properly applied to the seventieth week of that prophecy.)

### **Are There Other Questions for Examination?**

Some will say, “But what about this scripture or what about that scripture or this point or some other point?” Are there other questions that should be examined?

Some ask about Mark 16:9. Certain people suppose that this verse proves the Sunday resurrection theory. Does it? Simply reading the verse makes plain that it does not say Christ “was rising” but rather He “was risen” from the grave. Take time to read the verse. It uses past tense because, as we have seen, Christ had been gone from the grave for about twelve hours (since late Saturday afternoon) by this time on Sunday morning.

But what about Luke 24:21? It states, “...and beside all this, today is *the third day* since *these things* were done.” The phrase “these things” is a reference to all the events related to the crucifixion. Verses 18-20 describe the particulars of “these things” to be Christ’s delivery to Pilate, His trial, His crucifixion, His beating, His death, up to the setting of the seal and the watch over His tomb, which occurred the following day—Thursday. This discussion occurred on Sunday, and Sunday *was* the third day since all of “these things” were completed (on Thursday) with the setting of the watch on Christ’s tomb. Therefore, this is not a verse which can be used to set aside everything that all of the other scriptures on this subject have proven.

### **A Final Proof**

Matthew 28:1 contains an important statement that bears examination before this subject can be laid to rest. Notice that this verse begins with the phrase “In the end of the sabbath.” Most versions render it this way, but some use the phrase “After the Sabbath.” The Ferrar

Fenton translation correctly renders this phrase. Fenton translates this phrase with “After the Sabbaths” (plural). Fenton is possibly the only translator to note that the original Greek has the word “SABBATHS” in the plural. This is important. We will see why.

Notice Mark 16:1: “Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome, had bought sweet spices.” Their purpose was to anoint the body of Jesus. They were not able to buy their spices until *after* the Sabbath was passed. Yet Luke 23:56 explains that they prepared these spices “and rested the Sabbath day according to the commandment.” While this may appear confusing, it need not be if these two passages are studied carefully.

Only one possible explanation emerges. It is that these women bought and prepared their spices on Friday, *after the Thursday annual High Day Sabbath*—or the first feast day of Unleavened Bread—and then rested on the weekly Sabbath, which was Saturday according to God’s plain command found in Exodus 20:8-11.

Mark 16:1 and Luke 23:56 must refer to *two separate Sabbaths* of that crucifixion week—with a day in between, Friday. Any other explanation creates a contradiction of scripture and the Bible *never* contradicts itself.

### **Sunday Is Not “The Lord’s Day”**

We learned earlier in the book that there is another very important reason why theologians and many others *must* conclude that the resurrection *was* on Sunday! First, we saw that Sunday is commonly referred to as “the Lord’s Day.” But why? The reason was simple. With Sunday established as the day that Christ was resurrected, “authorization” for the keeping of Sunday by the churches of the world, in place of God’s true Sabbath, can be secured.

You have already seen references to the Sabbath day. Exodus 20:8-11 shows that the keeping of the Sabbath is the Fourth Commandment! It was always the seventh day of the week and God never authorized Sunday—which would be keeping the *first day* instead. God hallowed it at creation—long before there were any Jews or Israelites to keep it (Gen. 2:1). The Sabbath was to be kept “forever”—“continually”—and “throughout the generations” of Israel, God’s intended model nation (Ex. 31:12-17). Christ kept it (Luke 4:16) and said that He was Lord of it and that it was “made for *man*” (Mark 2:27-28). He did not say it was “made for *the Jews only*.” Paul observed it (Acts 13:42, 44; 17:2; 18:4).

More than the Good Friday-Easter Sunday tradition collapses if Christ was in the grave for 72 hours instead of 36. The largest single

reason for the unscriptural *tradition* (recall Mark 7:7) of Sunday-keeping collapses at the same time. God has always said, "Remember the Sabbath day, to keep *it* holy" (Ex. 20:8). He has never said, "Remember *Sunday* to keep it holy—and just call it the Lord's day!" The reader is left to ponder this.

### Jesus Was NOT Crucified on a Friday

We have seen that professing Christianity has erroneously followed the Roman Catholic Good Friday-Easter Sunday tradition, rejecting the truth of Scripture. This tradition teaches that Christ was in the grave from late Friday afternoon, just before sunset, until Sunday sunrise. This timeframe includes Friday night, the daylight portion of Saturday, and Saturday night. This is clearly two nights and one day—not three days and three nights, as Christ promised as His only sign.

Instead of believing Christ, theologians ignore His own words—that He would be *three* days and *three* nights in the grave—three complete 24-hour days. Religionists proclaim the false idea that Christ was only buried for half that time. Amazingly, many scholars believe and teach this false idea. *Clarke's Commentary*, in explaining Matthew 12:40, follows this false tradition, established as early as the mid-second century AD. Despite many scholars' and theologians' attempts to "prove" otherwise, one day and two nights *cannot* mean three days and three nights. (See accompanying inset for history of the so-called "Good Friday" tradition.)

### Accepted by Professing Christianity

The Good Friday-Easter Sunday tradition distorts the truth of what actually happened. But what is the origin of this tradition? Since the originators of this false doctrine had no sound biblical proof or authority to fall back on, they resorted to fraudulent tactics to legitimize their fabrications. One such claim was that Hermes, the brother of Pope Pius (about the year AD 147) "had received instruction from an angel, who commanded that all men should keep the Pasch [Passover] on the Lord's-day [Sunday]" (*Origines Ecclesiasticae*).

The apostle Paul wrote, "But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed" (Gal. 1:8). He repeats this same warning in verse 9. Instructions from an angel can *never* supplant God's Word.

# Christ's Crucifixion Was Not On Friday

Christ's crucifixion took place on Passover day, the 14th of Abib (or Nisan), the first month in God's Sacred Calendar. This occurred in the year AD 31, in which Passover fell on a Wednesday. Many fail to consider the prophecy that the Messiah would be "cut off...in the *midst* of the week" (Dan. 9:26-27). Wednesday falls in the middle of the week—the very day upon which Passover fell in AD 31. According to the Roman calendar, this date was Wednesday, April 25.

By first establishing the day of the week and day of the month of the Passover in 1931, we can arrive at the day of the week and day of the month of the Passover in AD 31. Precisely one hundred 19-year time cycles would have elapsed. Following this method helps greatly in computing the difference of elapsed time between the Roman and Sacred calendars during that 1,900-year time span. After this, we can safely calculate the month and week in which Passover fell in AD 31.

Various Hebrew calendar software programs calculate when Passover or any other Holy Day fell in almost any year, even before AD 31. The following historical accounts further validate the evidence presented here.

In the seventh year of Artaxerxes, king of Persia, a decree was made to rebuild Jerusalem (Ezra 7). It followed the decree of Cyrus, in which he acknowledged that "the LORD God of heaven" had charged him "to build Him an house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah" (Ezra 1:2). Artaxerxes' decree became significant because of a prophecy revealed to Daniel.

Daniel 9:25 states, "Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be *seven weeks*, and *threescore and two weeks*: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times." This shows that there are 62 weeks + 7 weeks—69 prophetic weeks (or 483 days). Applying the day-for-a-year principle (Num. 14:34; Ezek. 4:6), we arrive at 483 *years* from the decree until the beginning of Christ's ministry.

The decree was made during the seventh year of Artaxerxes' reign (457 BC). This date is historically well documented. By subtracting 457 from 483, we come to the year AD 26. When counting from BC to AD, astronomers correctly add one year since there is no year "zero," while historians and chronologers generally neglect to do this. Adding one year brings us to AD 27—the prophesied year of the beginning of the ministry of the Messiah.

Luke 3:23 tells us, "And Jesus Himself began to be about thirty years of age..." The context of this verse is after John the Baptist had

begun his ministry and just before Jesus began His. Since Jesus was 30 years old in AD 27, He would have been born in 4 BC. Remember, we must add one year to compensate for no year “zero.” Thus, from 4 BC, advancing 30 years brings us to AD 27. This leads us to the next historical proof that further confirms when Christ was born.

Shortly after Christ’s birth, an angel warned Joseph in a dream that he and his wife Mary were to take the child and flee into Egypt. They stayed there until the death of Herod (Matt. 2:15). Christ was an infant less than one year of age when Herod died.

Matthew 2:16 shows that Herod “slew all the children that were in Bethlehem and, all the coast thereof, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had diligently inquired of the wise men.” Herod knew the child’s approximate age, but went beyond that age to include those up to age two, to make sure that the prophesied Messiah would not escape execution.

To better establish the exact time of Herod’s death, we find in Josephus’ *Antiquities of the Jews* a reference to a lunar eclipse. A footnote in the Whiston translation of Josephus states, “This eclipse of the moon (which is the only eclipse mentioned by Josephus) is of greatest consequence for the determination of the time for the death of Herod...and for the birth and entire chronology of Jesus Christ. It happened March 13th, in the year of the Julian period 4710, and the 4th year before the Christian era” (Bk. XVII, ch. vi, sec. 4). According to Josephus, Herod died the following year, 3 BC.

Soon after Herod’s death, the angel instructed Joseph to return to the land of Israel with Mary and Jesus, who would have been about age one.

As mentioned, Christ was 30 years old (Luke 3:23) when He began His ministry in AD 27. Now, we will see how the chronology of the temple harmonizes with the chronology of Christ: “Then answered the Jews and said unto Him, What sign show You unto us, seeing that You do these things? Jesus answered and said unto them, Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up. Then said the Jews, *Forty and six years* was this temple in building, and will You rear it up in three days? But He spoke of the temple of His body” (John 2:18-21).

This occurred on the first Passover during Christ’s ministry, in AD 28. The Jews said that the temple had been under construction for 46 years. By adding one year to compensate for no year “zero,” this means that the temple’s construction began in 19 BC, the 18th year of Herod’s reign.

In *Antiquities*, Josephus wrote, “And now Herod, in the eighteenth year of his reign... undertook a very great work, that is to build of himself the temple of God...” (Bk. XV, ch. xi, sec. 1). From 19 BC, we advance 46 years since the beginning of the reconstruction

of the temple, arriving at AD 28—the first Passover after the beginning of Christ's ministry.

Other historical evidence involves the time of the beginning of John the Baptist's ministry. Luke 3:1 begins, "Now in the *fifteenth year* of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judea..." It then describes the beginning of John's ministry.

The reign of Roman Emperor Tiberius began about AD 11 or 12, since he reigned concurrently with Augustus Caesar for about 2 years. If we add the 15 years of Tiberius' reign to AD 11 or 12, we arrive at AD 26 or 27. Here again we see the biblical chronology verified by history. The 15th year of Tiberius brings us precisely to the beginning of John the Baptist's ministry, which was just before the time of Christ's ministry.

Historians agree that Pilate ruled for ten years. Luke 3:1 shows that during the 15th year of Tiberius' reign, Pilate was governor. *Some* historical accounts, such as the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, date Pilate's rule from AD 26 to 36. When he was recalled, he immediately sought help from his close political ally, Emperor Tiberius. Yet, while Pilate was en route to confer with him, Tiberius died, in AD 37. With Tiberius' death, Pilate's rule ended the same year. Therefore, Pilate's ten-year rule would have had to coincide with the years AD 27 to 37.

Now let's recap: Pilate's governorship over Judea began in early AD 27, during the 15th year of Tiberius' rule. Meanwhile, John the Baptist began his ministry in early AD 27, which preceded Christ's ministry by several months.

Christ's ministry would not have begun until the autumn of AD 27 since (1) He was 30 years old when His ministry began and (2) He was born in the *autumn* of 4 BC. Christ's ministry could not have begun later than AD 28 because, at that point, the temple's 46-year construction would have been finished. Thus, the autumn of AD 27 corresponds with numerous secular and historical proofs, as well as Scripture.

The length of Christ's ministry is important to understand. Remember the prophecy in Daniel 9, which established 483 years, from 457 BC to AD 27. Verse 27 establishes the length of Christ's prophesied ministry: "And He shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week He shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations He shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate [margin: *desolator*]."

Christ was to confirm the covenant for one week. According to the day-for-a-year principle, the seven days of that week equal seven years. Yet, in the midst of the week, the Messiah was to cause the sacrifice and oblations to cease. This was done by offering His own life to cover the sins of all humanity, as part of God's Plan of salvation. The Messiah was "cut off" (vs. 26) in the "midst of the week"—

after 3½ “days,” or prophetic *years*. His earthly ministry lasted precisely 3½ years. Then He was cut off—crucified—in the middle of the week—Wednesday. In this prophecy, the “midst of the week” had a *dual* meaning, as does most prophecy.

Since Christ’s ministry began in the autumn of AD 27, this means that He was crucified in the spring of AD 31, 3½ years later.

John 2:23 records the first Passover of His ministry in AD 28: “Now when He was in Jerusalem at the Passover, in the feast day, many believed in His name, when they saw the miracles which He did.” Afterward, Christ began teaching in the area of Judea near Jerusalem.

Luke 6:1 records an event during the Passover season in the second year of His ministry, in AD 29: “And it came to pass on the second Sabbath after the first, that He went through the corn fields; and His disciples plucked the ears of corn, and did eat, rubbing them in their hands.”

The term “the second Sabbath after the first” means the second High Day, which was the Last Day of Unleavened Bread. Although this event is covered in Matthew 12:1-8 and Mark 2:23-28, only Luke’s account, written in Greek, makes clear which Sabbath this was. The Greek term, *deuteroproton sabbaton*, literally means “the second Sabbath of the first rank”—or the second High Day of that Passover season.

John 6:4-5 records the following, which preceded the third Passover (AD 30) of Christ’s ministry: “And the Passover, a feast of the Jews, was near. When Jesus then lifted up His eyes, and saw a great company come unto Him, He said unto Philip, Where shall we buy bread, that these may eat?” This is also found in Matthew 14:15, Mark 6:35-36, and Luke 9:12.

The fourth and final Passover of Christ’s ministry is the most documented Passover of all. All four of the gospels cover it in detail. Notice Luke 22:1-2: “Now the feast of unleavened bread drew near, which is called the Passover. And the chief priests and scribes sought how they might kill Him; for they feared the people.” John 11:55 records, “And the Jews’ Passover was near at hand: and many went out of the country up to Jerusalem before the Passover, to purify themselves.”

Christ’s final Passover completed His earthly ministry of 3½ years. Again, it began in the autumn of AD 27 and ended in the spring of AD 31, on a Wednesday—in the “midst of the week.” The world of professing Christianity claims that Christ’s crucifixion occurred on a Friday, in AD 33. However, it can easily be documented by God’s Sacred Calendar that none of the four Passovers during Christ’s ministry fell on a Friday. The four Passovers fell on Monday (AD 28), Saturday (AD 29), Wednesday (AD 30), and Wednesday (AD 31), respectively.

In a distorted twist, Sunday came to represent both the Passover as the time of Christ's crucifixion and burial, AND the resurrection. However, since it was not logical to condense the events of three days and three nights into only one day, the idea of a Friday crucifixion was born. The above-mentioned letter from Hermes was used to validate the position of Anicetus, Pius's successor, who disputed with Polycarp over the issue of transferring Passover to a Sunday. Trained by the apostle John, Polycarp held fast and taught the observance of Passover as Christ and the apostles had always done. Yet, the bishops of Rome had other ideas.

Thus, the letter from Hermes was either a forgery or it was deceptively written by Pius, who died just before Polycarp's visit to Rome (James Donaldson, *The Apostolical Fathers*). The bishops at Rome had decreed that they possessed the power to supersede and change the times and laws of God (see Daniel 7:25). They rewrote history and changed the order of events in order to introduce their false doctrines.

Their effort to change the day of the resurrection to Sunday was simply a continuation of the Babylonian tradition—that Nimrod (father of the Babylonian Mystery Religion) was resurrected on a Sunday. By AD 321, Roman Emperor Constantine established Sunday as part of the official state religion, thus legitimizing all the various traditions attached to that day.

Now that you are armed with the truth, will you accept *it* or the blind traditions of professing Christianity?

## *Sabbath Assembly and Fellowship*

As part of Sabbath observance, assembling is a clear Bible command. This instruction also carries a prophesied end-time warning. Does it matter with whom you assemble? Is *any* “Church of God” or Sabbath-keeping group good enough?

### **Our First Glimpse of the Church**

Acts 2:1 records an historic scene: The disciples are together and the New Testament Church is about to come into existence. Luke writes, “They were all with one accord in one place.” Peter gives a powerful sermon. Miracles are recorded. The Holy Spirit is given. After repentance is explained, thousands request baptism. About 3,000 are “called” (vs. 39) and “gladly receive his [Peter’s] word” (vs. 41). Probably the largest single group baptism in history occurs. The *New Testament Church* is born!

What did this signify—what did it mean? Of course, the Church of God was established, but what else? Even in its infancy, there were clues. Allow the Bible to answer.

What did this new Church look like? Here is what Luke records: “And they continued steadfastly in the APOSTLES’ DOCTRINE and FELLOWSHIP” (Acts 2:42).

Why is this significant? The two earliest and most defining features of God’s Church are evident: (1) Steadfastness in the *apostles’ doctrine*, and (2) FELLOWSHIP. After verse 43 explains that the fear

of God is apparent in “every soul,” verse 44 adds, “All that believed were TOGETHER.” Verse 46 also states that they continued to be of “one accord [agreement],” meeting together “daily” in various houses in “singleness of heart.” The Church was unified!

God’s purpose—His intent—for His faithful servants is that *they remain together*, believe the full truth, submit to His government, and actively continue His Work (Matt. 24:14, 44-45; 28:19-20; Ezek. 33:7-9; Isa. 62:6).

### God Is Present on the Sabbath

We have seen many places where God has made the Sabbath holy. Literally, God is *present* in and throughout this day. Those who are meeting together are meeting in God’s *presence*. All that is done occurs in His *presence*.

Many groups speak of fellowship. In fact, as a result, many churches incorrectly refer to themselves as “fellowships.” While fellowshiping with others *is* very important, even essential, it is *not* the centerpiece of *true* Christian fellowship.

John explains the real basis of fellowship, both with other spirit-led Christians and with God: “That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that you also may have fellowship with us: And truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ...If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the *truth*: But if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin” (I John 1:3, 6-7).

*True* fellowship is with God and flows through Christ. He taught, “I am the Vine, you are the branches” (John 15:5). Christians “abide in Him” (vs. 4). Like grapes cut from a vine, without spiritual contact with Christ, Christian growth is *impossible*. Christ explained, “For without Me you can do *nothing*” (vs. 5).

Understand. You cannot go it alone. If any limb of a body is severed (arm, leg, hand, finger), it will live for a little while—but *only* for a little while. It will die, unless it is successfully grafted back onto the body. John 15:15 speaks to any who might try to have a “just you and me, God” attitude. (See I Cor. 12:12-20.)

Vast millions meet every Sunday, having no idea that *God is not present* in this day. They suppose that they can force Him to be involved by claiming that He is. We have learned that God has never been present on Sunday. Regardless of what men say, it will always be a normal workday to God. Christ established His presence on the

Sabbath by resting on *that* day. We have read that He does not change. By meeting on this day, those who have God's Spirit (Rom. 8:9, 14; Acts 2:38; 5:32) fellowship directly with Christ and the Father.

### Worshipping in Truth

The Bible teaches, "Your Word is truth" (John 17:17). We have seen that the truth of God's Word—the Bible—is that the Sabbath was made holy. While the world teaches that religion is a "personal thing" and "each person must act as they see fit, according to their own conscience," God has never stated this is an acceptable way to worship Him. Here is what He tells you: "You worship you know not what: We know what we worship: For salvation is of the Jews...God is a Spirit: And they that worship Him *must* worship Him IN SPIRIT AND IN TRUTH" (John 4:22, 24).

It is impossible to worship the true God of creation on the wrong day. That is the TRUTH! Only the seventh day reflects the truth that it is the identifying sign between God and all who worship Him in spirit.

Several verses show that Christ is alive, inside the Spirit-led person. This is how one worships God "in Spirit"—the Holy Spirit.

Notice what Paul told the Philippians: "Let THIS MIND BE IN YOU, which was also IN CHRIST JESUS" (2:5).

Here is what he told the Colossians: "To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is CHRIST IN YOU, the hope of glory" (1:27).

This is what He told the Galatians: "I am crucified with Christ: Nevertheless I live; yet not I, but CHRIST LIVES IN ME: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me" (2:20).

Christ kept the Sabbath. His "mind" in us will *always* keep the Sabbath. He has not changed! He would NEVER keep a pagan day in or through *you*!

Jesus was a Jew. We have seen that Jews at least tacitly accept the Sabbath. But many people denigrate God's day with the contemptuous, derisive cliché of "that Jewish Sabbath." They seem to almost spit out these words. I have heard the bigotry and scorn in their voices. Romans 8:7 explains why so many deceivers today speak with such contempt and scorn for God's wonderful Sabbath.

We just read that "salvation is of the Jews" (John 4:22). Now notice what Paul wrote: "For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: BUT HE IS A JEW,

which is one *inwardly*; and circumcision is that *of the heart, in the spirit*, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God” (Rom. 2:28-29).

Yes, a true Christian *is a Jew*. Have you ever heard that before? Jesus Christ is the Jew who is living inside all those begotten of God. Technically speaking, a Christian could correctly be spoken of as either a “Christian” or a “Spiritual Jew.” And it makes no difference whatsoever whether or not one is born a Jew, an Israelite or a Gentile. All who are baptized and converted (Acts 2:38) have the Spirit of God. This means that they obey God (Acts 5:32).

### **Think Carefully!**

Christ led a perfect, sin-free—Commandment-keeping—life. His role as our Savior depends on this. This means He kept the Fourth Commandment perfectly for an entire lifetime. Could any think He did this for 33½ years just so He could say it is now done away? He had already been Lord of the Sabbath for 4,000 years. HE STILL IS!

To all of you who may be Gentile-born, reread Romans 11:17-18, 23-26. And recall Ephesians 2:11-12. The promises made to Israel now apply to YOU.

Make note of this point. The very word *Gentile* means “unbeliever.” This is all that the word means! Once one has repented, accepted Christ, been forgiven, baptized and received the Holy Spirit, he is no longer an unbeliever! He is now a BELIEVER. Quite literally, HE IS NO LONGER A GENTILE. He is a spiritual Jew—a Christian!

The Spirit of God in you will help you obey the Sabbath—and all of God’s other spiritual laws. Ancient Israel was given a physical law of ceremonies and rituals (Gal. 3:16-19) because they did not have God’s Holy Spirit living within them. Various animal sacrifices, washings and other ceremonies were simply a “schoolmaster” (Gal. 3:24) intended to help their physical minds observe God’s Law until Christ came and offered His Spirit. The Sabbath is a spiritual command and God’s Holy Spirit will help you keep it. God explains that His love is “shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit” (Rom. 5:5). This means you will have the spiritual love, for God and man, to be capable of fulfilling His Law (I John 5:3; Rom. 13:10). Let no one tell you otherwise!

All those sincerely seeking to worship God in spirit and truth will want to be together. They will deeply desire to be with others who think, believe, understand, live and endure the same things—while seeking the SAME GOAL!

### God Commands Assembly

We started this chapter by explaining that Christians are *commanded* to assemble every Sabbath. By what authority do I say this?

God instructed Moses to write, "...the feasts of the LORD, which you shall proclaim to be HOLY CONVOCATIONS, even these are My feasts. Six days shall work be done: but the *seventh day* is the *sabbath* of rest, an HOLY CONVOCATION; you shall do no work therein: it is the sabbath of the LORD in all your dwellings" (Lev. 23:2-3).

The Hebrew word for "holy convocation" is *miqra*, meaning "something called out, an assembly, a reading." This is a *commanded assembly*. It is inseparable from the overall keeping of the Sabbath—and is as important as "resting" and "[doing] no work therein."

If Sabbath assembly is optional, then what is the point of Hebrews 10:23-26? *Why* the need to assemble? What are the PURPOSES for this?

In John 21:15-17, Christ directly told Peter (three times) that, if Peter loved Him (Christ), he would "FEED My sheep." This admonition was not lost on Peter. Later in his ministry, Peter instructed elders to "FEED the flock of God which is among you" (I Pet. 5:2).

Here is how Paul admonished the assembled elders at Ephesus of basically the same things: "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to FEED the Church of God, which He has purchased with His own blood" (Acts 20:28).

God's ministers—true shepherds—do not take this lightly. Ask: How could God command His ministers to feed sheep who were themselves *not* commanded to attend and eat the spiritual food served?

Here is why God has ordained a ministry: "For the *perfecting* of the saints, for the *work* of the ministry, for the *edifying* of the body of Christ: Till we all come in the *unity of the faith*, and of the *knowledge* of the Son of God, unto a *perfect man*, unto the measure of the stature of the *fullness of Christ*: that we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; But speaking the *truth in love*, may *grow up* into Him in all things" (Eph. 4:12-15). Also read I Cor. 12:28-29.

### A Vital Warning

Hebrews 10 states, "Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering...NOT FORSAKING THE ASSEMBLING OF OURSELVES TOGETHER,

as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: And so much the more, as you see the day approaching. For if we sin willfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remains no more sacrifice for sins” (vs. 23, 25-26).

Let’s take a closer look. Several points are important in this passage: (1) The context is *holding fast* to the truth. (2) This must be done without wavering—going back and forth. (3) We must *never stop assembling*. (4) Some *do* adopt this approach to Sabbath attendance. (5) We are to *exhort others* to attend. (6) It is “so much the more” important as we “see the *day* [of Christ’s Return] *approaching*.” And finally, (7) this is in the context of a direct *warning against willful sin*—leaving “no more sacrifice for sins.”

We have already seen throughout the book how God views Sabbath observance, and keeping His time holy. This passage ties ignoring the need to assemble and fellowship to the unpardonable sin—“sinning willfully.”

Christ’s sacrifice does not license us to override acting on true knowledge. This is unforgivable. Notice that in Hebrews 4:9, Paul reminded God’s people that “There remains therefore A REST [Greek: *Sabbatismos*—most margins correctly add “a keeping of the Sabbath”] to the people of God.” This is another *New Testament* passage emphasizing God’s Sabbath command is still binding. Study it!

You must never “forsake the assembling of yourselves together” when within reasonable distance (Heb. 10:25). Just a few verses later, God gives insight—and powerful instruction—through Paul, regarding how He views those who waver, cease to hold fast and pull back from faithfulness: “But if any man *draw back*, My soul shall have no pleasure in him. But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that *believe* to the saving of the soul” (vs. 38-39). Have you *believed* God’s instruction throughout this book?

Remember that the people of the true Church of God will always continue steadfastly “in the APOSTLES’ DOCTRINE and FELLOWSHIP”!

### Why Assembling Builds Faith

There is another critical aspect of Sabbath assembly that is little understood. In fact, almost no one makes a connection to this principle at work in services. As you listen to spiritual messages and news of God’s Work around the world, something is quietly happening within you. Let’s see what it is!

Notice what Paul told the Roman congregation: “How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they

believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear *without a preacher?*” (10:14).

Yes, ministers are necessary so that people can be properly led within the truth. Yet members also have responsibilities toward the Church.

Desire to learn is important. In Acts 8:31, an Ethiopian eunuch answers Philip’s question, “Understand you what you read?” with his own question: “How can I, except *some man should guide me?*” In this question, he sought help. It took humility to admit that he did not “know it all.” He sought guidance. Yet the context shows that he was familiar with Isaiah’s writings and must have had his own personal copy. Like the eunuch, you must be willing to let God’s Church teach you.

Paul continues in Romans: “And how shall they preach, except they be *sent?*” (10:15). God’s ministers are always sent by His faithful Headquarters. They never come of their own authority, in rebellion against God’s chosen leadership.

Paul continues further: “...as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things! But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah said, Lord, who has believed our report? So then *faith comes by hearing*, and hearing by the WORD OF GOD” (vs. 15-17).

Paul added more in his letter to the Ephesian congregation about the role of different ministerial offices in the Church. Carefully read this longer passage:

“And He gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ: that we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; but speaking the truth in love, may grow up into Him in all things, which is the Head, even Christ: from whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplies, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, makes increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love” (4:11-16).

Listening to God’s instruction through His true servants is a faith-building exercise. God’s Word is LIVING—DYNAMIC! It is not sterile or useless to those hearing it. When sitting in Sabbath services, you are not simply “marking time,” you are *growing in faith*—if you are

actively engaged in every word that is being spoken. People leave services stronger than when they arrived.

The greatest reason we are to assemble on God's Sabbath is to be *spiritually nourished with* the pure word of truth and "the whole counsel of God" (Acts 20:27, NKJV). This is one of the most important ways that your faith is strengthened!

Remember this vital principle and how it works within the mind of a converted person!

### To Praise God

A second very important reason that God's people must assemble together is perhaps best summarized by three verses in Psalms: "Let them exalt Him also in the *congregation of the people*" (107:32), "Sing unto the LORD a new song, and His praise in the *congregation of saints*" (149:1), and "God is greatly to be feared in the *assembly of the saints*, and to be had in reverence of all them that are about Him" (89:7).

These scriptures make clear that God's people come together to praise God and to learn to fear and reverence Him—and they are to do this with other brethren, assembled *as the Church!* In the next chapter, we will discuss how one who has decided to keep the Sabbath can observe it correctly.

### Vital Fellowship

The third purpose for attending Sabbath services is to enjoy right, godly fellowship. It is a weekly opportunity for those who fear God to speak "often one to another" (Mal. 3:16).

This is one reason the New Testament records so many accounts of the brethren being "together" (I Cor. 5:4; 11:18; Acts 20:1-6). You have already seen several.

You may become part of a small congregation, one at the stage where you feel you are like Archippus, "The Church in *your house*" (Phm. 2), or as Paul wrote to the Romans about Priscilla and Aquila, "The Church that is in *their house*" (Rom. 16:5). Do not forget that Noah was alone. So was Lot. Like these men, you may be among a very few scattered in the "Sodom" of this world, but you are very important to God.

Do not "despise the day of small things" (Zech. 4:10). While the Church will grow larger, the New Testament era will almost certainly end as it started—many small home congregations full of zealous

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people. But in this age, when a minister cannot always be present, brethren must often gather around a high-definition video screen to be fed God's precious truth.



## *How to Make the Sabbath a Delight*

Like many of the Bible's teachings, proper, correct Sabbath-keeping has become a controversial issue. Is the Sabbath governed by a strict list of "do's and don'ts"? Christ said that the Sabbath was made for man. In theory, if men made the Sabbath, they would have the right to tell you how to keep it. But since it was made *for* man, not *by* man, man does not determine how it should be kept. God does! What does this mean? You can know how to properly keep and enjoy the Sabbath—as God intended!

God gave man His laws so that we can enjoy life to the fullest. Contrary to what many believe, those laws are not a burden (I Jn. 5:3). They were given so that we can have a proper relationship with God and our fellowman. Jesus also taught, "The thief comes not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly" (John 10:10).

Again, most professing Christians "agree" with nine of the Ten Commandments. They still at least vaguely understand that it is wrong to worship other gods and practice idolatry, although they unwittingly do so. Most would say that it is wrong to take God's name in vain. Some feel that it is at least a good idea to show some degree of respect to parents. Some are of the opinion that it is morally wrong to kill, steal, lie, commit adultery and covet the things of others.

Very few people actively attempt to *practice* these nine commandments as a way of life, however. After all, they just *know* that the law

“was nailed to the cross.” Nevertheless, they still basically accept them as “nice principles.”

But when it comes to God’s command to “Remember the Sabbath Day, to keep it holy” (Ex. 20:8; Lev. 23:3; Deut. 5:12), even those who desire to keep it simply do not know how. We have seen that assembling together in spirit and in truth to learn is part of God’s requirement, but what else does God require one to do in order to properly observe His day?

### Established at Creation

After creating the Earth and all its physical wonders in six days, God created the Sabbath by resting on the seventh day (Gen. 2:2-3). He did not rest because He was tired (see Psalm 121:3-4). By resting, He established the pattern He expects us to follow. We are to do all of our work, take care of all of our business transactions and enjoy our recreational pursuits during the first six days of the week. That is our time. The Sabbath is *God’s* time.

God is not the author of confusion (I Cor. 14:33). He does things decently and in order (vs. 40). He did not create Adam first, before everything else, and then say, “Okay, now let’s find something for you to do.” He created man and placed him in the Garden of Eden, with the instructions to “dress and keep it” (Gen. 2:15). Verse 19 shows that God sent all the animals to Adam so he could name them.

If the Sabbath would have been made first, before Adam, Christ could not have stated, “The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath” (Mark 2:27).

The Bible shows that *seven* is God’s number for completion and perfection. Aside from the *seven* days of creation, God states, through King David, that His Word is purified “*seven* times” (Psa. 12:6). We are to forgive those who sin against us “*seventy* times *seven*” (Matt. 18:22). God commands us to keep *seven* annual Holy Days (Lev. 23; Deut. 16). *Seven* seals and *seven* trumpets usher in the pouring out of God’s wrath upon a sinful, rebellious mankind (Rev. 6-9).

The Sabbath is holy time, something we cannot detect with our five senses. We *do not* have the right to determine what is holy. *God reveals to us* that this day is different.

Since God’s way is love (II Cor. 13:11; I Thes. 4:9), He would not say, “Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy,” then not tell you what day it is. This said, it *is* HOLY TIME, different from all other!

### Sabbath Not a Burden

The apostle John wrote, “For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments: and *His commandments are not grievous*” (I Jn. 5:3). This verse is one of God’s descriptions of His law, which He also calls “holy, and just, and good” (Rom. 7:12). It is not up to us to decide what God means by that statement. It is not up to us to determine what is “not grievous” and then say, “I know this is how God wants me to live, because *this is what feels good to me.*”

People usually take the *easy* route. Proverbs 14:12 and 16:25 state, “There is a way which seems right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death.”

God has promised not to put more on us than we can bear (I Cor. 10:13). Men customarily do this, with their customs and traditions (Luke 11:46). Christ stated, “For My yoke is *easy*, and My burden is *light*” (Matt. 11:30). God did not create the Sabbath to be a burden, but rather a *delight* (Isa. 58:13). It is time that He has *given us*, at the end of each week, to slow down from the hectic pace of our daily lives, and to reflect on His Way. The Sabbath is a weekly reminder that we are God’s people, and that He is our God.

Those who seek to truly please God will find that, just as *they* work for the first six days of the week, the Sabbath *works for them*.

Let’s now consider some principles that answer basic questions concerning Sabbath observance. The reader must understand there is a limit to how much that can be said about the questions that follow in a book.

### Dining Out on the Sabbath

“Is it permissible to eat at restaurants on the Sabbath? Is this ‘doing business’ or causing others to work?”

This is fine to do—in balance! Just don’t overdo it. Most restaurants are open for business on the Sabbath, whether we choose to dine out or not. By dining out, we are not creating work for them that they would not otherwise be doing.

This question has also arisen concerning dining out on annual Holy Days. The same principle applies. God does not expect us to skip meals on His feast days.

It is fine to have a meal at a restaurant with other brethren to continue Sabbath fellowship. But if it were to last several hours (due to extenuating circumstances or certain cultural traditions), you could be in danger of breaking the Sabbath.

Christ showed that it is not wrong to satisfy immediate hunger on the Sabbath (Matt. 12:1-5). He cited David's example of eating the showbread from the Temple (I Sam. 21:6).

### Watching Movies and TV on the Sabbath

“Is it wrong to watch films or documentaries with biblical themes on the Sabbath?”

To set aside time on the Sabbath to watch a Bible-related movie could potentially detract from God's intended purpose for the day—for us to reflect on His ways. As Christians, we have to determine if this helps us *properly keep* the Sabbath, or is something done *in place of* keeping the Sabbath.

It is not a *sin* to watch such movies. However, Hollywood's depiction of biblical events and circumstances is always inaccurate (sometimes almost completely). Film producers seek to promote their own ideas and misconceptions about the Bible, generally so that people will watch their films, and to make money. They know that people will more readily pay to watch *fiction* than *fact* (especially when it comes to the Bible).

Their films show great men of God having long hair (which the Bible states is a shame; see I Corinthians 11:14). They are portrayed as weak, odd and mentally unbalanced. The depiction of their attire is based on Hollywood's imagination rather than historical information.

As if trying to *convince* viewers of the humanity of God's servants, Hollywood places emphasis on their mistakes. To do this they use lurid scenes to titillate the senses. This clouds the PLAIN TRUTH of the Bible.

Also, in many such films, King James English is used. In ancient times, none of God's servants spoke English. It did not yet exist. These men generally spoke Hebrew, Aramaic or Greek. They would not have spoken in King James English: *No thee, thou, thine, couldst, wouldst, blesseth*, etc.

“Is it proper to watch news programs on the Sabbath?”

Christ instructs us to “Watch you therefore: for you know not when the master of the house comes” (Mark 13:35). We should be watchful not only six days of the week, but also on the Sabbath. To watch a news program, giving details as prophetic events unfold, is not wrong. But to make it an “all-day affair,” getting every network's angle, *is* breaking the Sabbath.

### Kindling a Fire on the Sabbath?

“Is it permissible to cook or build a fire on the Sabbath?”

Some have cited Exodus 35:3 as evidence that we are not to cook on the Sabbath: “You shall kindle *no fire* throughout your habitations upon the Sabbath day.” Certain sects of Orthodox Jews misunderstand this verse, taking it literally to mean that they cannot even turn on light switches or strike a match on the Sabbath for any purpose. This is not what the passage intends.

When the entire context of the scripture is examined, the meaning of God’s words becomes clear. The Israelites were showing extreme zeal in their desire to build the tabernacle. The people later brought an over-abundance of raw materials to construct the tabernacle. Many had to be turned away (36:5-6).

What God was forbidding (35:3) was the burning of *industrial fires* on the Sabbath. In the course of building the tabernacle, the Israelites were engaged in metal-working. God did not want them to do this on His Sabbath. Of course, this command is still applicable in the case of any fires in regard to the workplace.

This command in no way forbids cooking on the Sabbath. However, the main preparations should always be done on the preparation day (Friday), before the Sabbath.

### Husbands and Wives

“Is it proper for a husband and wife to have intimate relations on the Sabbath?”

God does not command married couples to abstain from sexual contact on the Sabbath. Notice Genesis 1:26-28: “And God said, Let Us make man in Our image, after our likeness... So God created man in His own image, in the image of God created He him; *male and female created He them*. And God blessed them, and God said unto them, *Be fruitful, and multiply*, and replenish the earth, and subdue it...”

God created Adam and Eve on the sixth day of the creation week, just before the Sabbath (vs. 31). “And the LORD God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet... Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: *and they shall be one flesh*. And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed” (2:18, 24-25).

Would God have created man and woman, given them the instructions we have just read, and then have said, “Now wait until after the Sabbath to come together”? Of course not!

“Should Sabbath concessions be made for *unconverted* mates, as long as they are ‘pleased to dwell with you’?”

Let's look at an example: Is it wrong for a wife to prepare a meal for an unconverted husband on the Sabbath?

This is not breaking the Sabbath, unless the husband were to make unreasonable demands (e.g., expect the wife to go to the store on the Sabbath, or to prepare an elaborate meal that would be time-consuming and distracting). If your mate is truly pleased to dwell with you, he or she will not seek to cause you to compromise.

“Is it wrong to attend a dinner function with an unconverted mate on Friday night?”

Again, the same principle applies. Consider the influences that would be present. Would you benefit by going? Probably not! Or would you *both* ultimately benefit if you respectfully decline (I Cor. 7:14, 16)? Almost certainly, yes! Remember: “...whatsoever is not of faith is sin” (Rom. 14:23).

### Weddings and Funerals

“Is it wrong to attend a wedding or funeral on the Sabbath?”

As long as either of these activities do not conflict with Sabbath assembly, it is not wrong to attend a ceremony for someone close to you. Again, certain judgments have to be made. If attending the ceremony would keep you from Sabbath services, it would be wrong. (There *could* be an exception in the case of the funerals of very close relations, if the circumstances are beyond a believer's control.) If you can attend both (with *proper* emphasis placed on Sabbath-keeping), then it would not be wrong.

Also, be careful of the other elements of weddings that occur before sundown on the Sabbath, such as dancing, the wrong kind of music typical at weddings in the world, the use of alcohol, leading to loose conversation and loud celebrating, as well as the kinds of improper attire now also common in weddings held in the world.

### Doing Good on the Sabbath

“Is it acceptable to do ‘good deeds’ on the Sabbath?”

Some have asked: Is it wrong to help someone with a flat tire, or other mechanical difficulties, on your way to Sabbath services? If it is someone you know, such as a Church member also on his way to services or neighbor, or someone else in obvious genuine need, the answer is it is not wrong. However, in this day and age, when it is potentially *dangerous* to stop and assist *strangers*, you must rely on God's wisdom to make the right decision.

Christ's example was to do good on the Sabbath *as situations presented themselves*. This would generally always involve unusual circumstances (Matt. 12:1-9, 12; Mark 3:4; Luke 6:7-9; Jn. 5:7-9). Christ did not go out of His way *in search of* good deeds to do on the Sabbath.

What would God expect you to place more importance on: An opportunity to render *physical* assistance to an *unconverted* person (who, in doing his own thing on God's Sabbath, ran into minor difficulties)—or the opportunity to serve (spiritually and physically) brethren of like mind, with whom we usually fellowship only on the Sabbath?

Again, we must use *good judgment*. If it is someone you know, then it would not be wrong to stop and offer assistance. Remember, you—your example—may be the only Bible some ever read. Some may see your good deeds and "...glorify your Father which is in heaven" (Matt. 5:16).

If, in your zeal to get to services on time, you show no concern for your neighbor, you have missed an opportunity to "Let your light so shine before men." Your assistance would have shown him: (1) You keep the Sabbath; (2) It is alright to do good on the Sabbath.

Everything in life requires good judgment. For instance, it would not be wrong to stop at the scene of an accident in which someone is obviously injured and in need of immediate help (and to do what you can until emergency personnel arrive). In such a case, it would be wrong to callously drive by (Gal. 6:10; Jms. 4:17).

### What About an "Ox in the Ditch"?

"What if an *emergency situation* appears, requiring work on the Sabbath?"

Many have struggled with the issue of what qualifies as an "ox in the ditch" situation. Through that example (Matt. 12:10-11; Luke 14:1-5), Christ defined it as an unforeseen situation beyond our control.

Some have liberalized this issue by digging a ditch on Friday, intentionally unlocking the gate, leading the ox onto the road, and *pushing* it into the ditch. They are often Pharisaical in their lists of "do's and don'ts," but then try to get around them by pushing the ox into the ditch. Some forget that the Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath. Overly focusing on the *day*, they go to the opposite extreme, worshipping it, instead of the GOD who made it.

We must exercise good judgment and planning. For instance, if you are inviting brethren to your home after Sabbath services, look ahead and anticipate what you will need.

Even if you are not expecting guests, you should plan for the Sabbath so that you and your family can keep it as God commands. For instance, if you know that you are running short on particular foods that you normally enjoy on the Sabbath, or if there is something special that you would like to eat, plan ahead.

Also, make sure that you have enough fuel for the car before the Sabbath arrives. It is generally also a good idea to check the tires and other vital fluids. To experience mechanical problems on the Sabbath—and miss God’s services—can certainly make it very difficult to rejoice. Although we cannot foresee every possible problem, addressing those we can is an important part of proper Sabbath planning.

To address every potential “ox in the ditch” scenario would require more than a chapter. These can come in every conceivable size, shape and color.

As Proverbs 22:3 states, “A prudent man foresees the evil, and hides himself: but the simple pass on, and are punished.” Different circumstances require different levels of planning and preparation.

One example of a regularly scheduled (but avoidable) “ox in the ditch” is experienced by dairy farmers. Cows have to be milked twice daily. It is a manual chore that requires approximately fifteen minutes per cow. Even if done mechanically, certain intermediate steps must still be done by hand. It is time-consuming.

Keep in mind, many of God’s Old Testament servants were farmers or ranchers—and God blessed them. They must have planned their various duties so that they did not interfere with proper Sabbath-keeping. They got the job done!

In the past, successful dairy farmers in God’s Church tended to the needs of their livestock without breaking the Sabbath. They simply confined nursing calves with their mothers before sunset Friday, and released them after sunset Saturday. The job got done, and the Sabbath was not violated!

There are many other farm-specific issues that could be addressed. But if Abel, Noah, Abraham, Jacob, Moses, David and others made it work, it can also be done today.

In today’s society, based on greed, “factory farming” is the standard. Farms are increasingly becoming corporate-owned “assembly lines,” operating “24/7.”

But this was never God’s intention. God had placed Adam in the garden of Eden to “...dress it and to keep it” (Gen. 2:15). God never places people into situations that force them to compromise with the laws He commanded them to keep (Jms. 1:13).

However, if a farmer regularly finds himself in Sabbath predicaments due to *improper planning*, he should consider how to reduce his workload or even consider another occupation. The same applies to any other profession of similar problem.

### What Is Your Attitude Toward the Sabbath?

Do you view the Sabbath as God intended? Do you *anticipate* it each week, as time to put aside daily concerns (going to work, paying bills, shopping, etc.) and to focus on a relationship with your Creator? Or do you view it as a burden, as time taken away from you? Do you watch the clock on the Sabbath, waiting for sunset, so you can “get back to your life”?

The Sabbath is God’s weekly *gift* to His people. We should consider it much like His command to tithe. Similarly, God gives us nine-tenths of our income after we pay the first tenth that belongs to Him. God gives us six-sevenths of the week to do with as we please, within the confines of His Law. All He requires in return is that we keep the seventh day holy.

He commands us to use the sixth day of each week to *prepare* for the Sabbath. This means *proper* planning—looking ahead and making sure that everything is in place well before sunset Friday, so that we are ready to *receive* the Sabbath, in the same way that we receive blessings for obeying God’s tithing command: “I will...open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be enough room to receive it” (Mal. 3:10).

Unlike tithing, God gives us *our* six-sevenths of the week “up front.” Only at the end of the week does He test us “...whether [we] will walk in [His] law, or no” (Ex. 16:4).

Those with children should plan activities for them that will help them properly appreciate the Sabbath. Proverbs 22:6 states, “Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it.”

We should take the time to sit down with our children *regularly*, and read God’s Word to them. This way, not only will they be more attentive to the messages given on the Sabbath, but they will also be able to better understand and appreciate that Christianity is a WAY OF LIFE, not just a one-day-a-week event.

Take periodic walks with your children on the Sabbath and point out the beauty of God’s creation. Always remember that God is offering your children the same reward He is offering you. We should do everything we can to instill within them the desire to inherit the Kingdom of God.

### Sabbath Dress

“How should we dress for the Sabbath?” This is another aspect of Sabbath-keeping that has been liberalized and watered down among God’s people. Many have forgotten that they are *coming before God*. While you may not have a large congregation to meet with, and are keeping the Sabbath in your home (or the home of just a few other brethren), you are still assembling in God’s presence. Even if no one else sees how you are dressed, God does.

Remember Herbert W. Armstrong’s example when traveling abroad, visiting world leaders: If he had two shirts—one to wear for his Friday meeting with a king, president, prime minister, etc., and one for the Sabbath—he would reserve the nicer of the two for the Sabbath. He knew he would be coming before God.

Your Sabbath attire should not be loud and extravagant, drawing attention to yourself. Our focus should be on *God* and how we can serve *others*.

Men should wear a suit and tie. For women, dresses or skirt-and-blouse ensembles are appropriate. Modesty is the rule in determining such things as proper skirt length, etc. We should never base our clothing choices on current Hollywood standards, which are set by worldly (and in many cases, homosexual) fashion designers.

### A Delight

The Sabbath is a time to put aside the previous six days’ events and more squarely focus on the importance of our calling. It is the time God has given us to assemble and fellowship with those of like mind (Phil. 2:5). We should use it to encourage one another (Heb. 10:25).

It should not be spent simply “downloading” all our problems and difficulties on brethren. While we should mention certain trials we are enduring, so that others can pray for us, that should not be the main focus of our conversation. We should focus on the *positive*.

Remember, the Sabbath is a weekly reminder of the millennial rest and rejuvenation that the *entire world* will enjoy after Christ’s Return (Heb. 3:11; I Pet. 3:8).

Recall the Exodus 3 account of God speaking to Moses from a burning bush. Most professing Christians are familiar with this passage. But there was the overlooked lesson in it pertaining to the Sabbath. In verse 5, God had commanded Moses, “Draw not near here: put off your shoes from off your feet, *for the place whereon you stand is holy ground.*”

What is the connection here to the Sabbath? We saw that Isaiah was inspired to write, “If you *turn away your foot from the Sabbath*, from doing your pleasure [business] on My holy day; and call the Sabbath a *delight*, the holy of the LORD, *honorable*; and shall honor Him, NOT doing your *own ways*, nor finding your *own pleasure*, nor speaking your *own words*: then shall you delight yourself in the LORD; and I will cause you to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed you with the heritage of Jacob your father: for the mouth of the LORD has spoken it” (58:13-14).

The Sabbath is *holy time* that points to God; we must not profane it. It is our weekly opportunity to rehearse the coming spiritual rest for all mankind, when all people will learn God’s Way.

By keeping the Sabbath as God intended, we express our desire, “Your kingdom come” (Matt. 6:10).

### **But Only With the Living, Active, One True Church**

With whom should I assemble on the Sabbath? The subject of the Sabbath is inseparable from that of the identity and location of the true Church, introduced earlier. Of course, many groups claim to be God’s true Church. Some of these observe the Sabbath to one degree or another, or in one form or another. Yet, in every case, all “Sabbath-keeping churches”—there are no exceptions—teach a great many false doctrines.

When individuals first learn about the Sabbath, they often believe that they can assemble with *any* Sabbath-keeping organization or group. But just because a church meets on the true Sabbath does not mean it is the TRUE Church of God.

Jesus said that He would build “His Church” (Matt. 16:18). He called it “a building” that is “fitly framed together” (Eph. 2:21), and built with Himself as the foundation. Jesus Christ is literally “building a building” consisting of brethren whom He calls “lively [living] stones” (I Pet. 2:5). Psalm 127:1 declares, “Except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it.”

Christ is continuing to build His Church today, and you have come in contact with it!

Lives are changing every day due to the Work of God, the Work that Christ is doing through His human instruments in HIS Church.

God commands you to assemble with the Body of Christ—a single, unified organization of Spirit-begotten sons of God! There is only ONE such group. Just any organization will not suffice—no matter what men may say! To those who are unsure about which “Church

of God” to attend, do not misunderstand! You cannot please God *and* assemble with those who compromise God’s truth. That does not please God! Read II John 7-10, Titus 3:9-11 and Romans 16:17.

You are urged to carefully study my thorough and fascinating book *Where Is the True Church? – and Its Incredible History!*

### **The Choice Is Yours!**

Some might fear to step out and obey God’s Sabbath command, saying, “It’s impossible to keep the Sabbath. I would lose my job. I would lose my home. My family would starve!”

But consider. It takes real, active FAITH to obey the living God—and to trust in His ability to take care of you. Do you have enough faith to trust Him with your job, and by extension your home and family’s well-being?

If you find yourself in a situation in which you are working on the Sabbath, ask God to help you approach your employer. Ask God for wisdom! But be sure you do not *ask* your employer if you can have off from work on Saturday. Instead, very politely—and in a quiet, non-confrontational tone—*inform* your employer that you are no longer able to work on this day. Let him know you have learned that God has set apart Friday sunset to Saturday sunset as holy time, and that you are commanded by Him to abstain from work of *any* kind, not just your job. Sincerely mention you are truly sorry for any inconvenience this may cause him or the company. And if it applies to your type of work, tell your employer that you are willing to work on Sunday or any other day of the week on which you do not normally work.

It has been my experience that those who approach their employers in this manner—and beforehand earnestly ask God to grant them favor—do NOT lose their jobs! Most companies prefer not to interfere with a person’s religious beliefs. But even those who have lost their jobs usually found better ones.

So what will YOU do? Will YOU believe God? Will YOU obey His clear instruction to keep the Sabbath holy?

Never forget. God decides what is and what is not sin. You do not have this power. But you do have the power to OBEY!

You must choose between obeying God and obeying man, even when obeying God is not popular—and it almost never is! Rebellion ultimately ends with eternal PUNISHMENT of everlasting DEATH.

It is possible to trust—BELIEVE—God! But you must mix FAITH with OBEDIENCE (Jms. 2:18-26). Are you willing to do this? Sadly, the fact of history is that most are not.

You have seen that the weekly cycle has remained unbroken through the ages. You have also seen that Christ was not crucified on Friday, nor was He resurrected on Sunday. You have learned about the Sabbath connection to Israel and Judah going into captivity, along with verses showing the New Testament Church kept the Sabbath. You read that disobedience to the Sabbath is directly connected to the MARK of the BEAST. You have been shown and seen crumble one so-called “proof” after another of why many observe Sunday. These have collapsed under the weight of facts from history and from your Bible.

It is my responsibility to inform you of the truth of what God’s Word says about the Sabbath. I have done this—I have “cried aloud” and “lifted up my voice like a trumpet” (Isa. 58:1)! You have been made aware of your sin in regard to the Sabbath command. All aspects have been thoroughly covered throughout this book. Now you know the truth.

Responsibility comes with knowing the truth. Carefully consider all that you have learned. You will be judged by what you do with knowledge given (Jms. 4:17; Heb. 10:26).

The all-powerful living God calls YOU to repentance (Acts 2:38; 17:30), which means *change*. All excuses for inaction have been removed. Now you must decide for yourself whether you will obey God’s command. You cannot avoid a decision—and realize that *no decision IS a decision!* God will not force you into obedience.

Will you OBEY God—or men? You alone will decide!

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