

## Sabbath Tour: Introduction

Does it make any difference *which* day we observe—or whether we even keep one at all? Does the Bible establish *Sunday* as the Lord's Day? Was the [Sabbath](#) given for the Jewish people only—while Christians are commanded to [keep Sunday](#) as the Lord's Day?

Without a doubt, most professing Christians accept Sunday as the New Testament Lord's Day. Muslims observe Friday. Some religions observe no day. But there are those who insist the seventh-day Sabbath is still binding. Few take the Sabbath seriously—in fact, the vast majority of Christians have never looked into this question. Most never question Sunday-observance, unwittingly following the traditions of men rather than the clear command of God!

Few people realize that the Sabbath vs. Sunday controversy raged during the first three centuries of the Christian era, and thousands were tortured and put to death over this question both before and after the Emperor Constantine supposedly "resolved" the heated debate in his Sabbatical edict in AD 321. If so many chose death over observing a day not commanded by [God](#), could not this dispute be more significant than we may have thought?

What does the Bible really say about the Sabbath? It is generally assumed that Sunday is the correct day. Is it possible that *all* of these churches are wrong on this fundamental [doctrine](#)? And, after all, does it make any difference? Do we not have to adjust our religion to the changing times? Was not the law—including the Sabbath—"nailed to the cross" when [Christ](#) died? What about scriptures like [Galatians 4:10](#) or [Colossians 2:16](#)—do they not *prove* that it does not matter which day we keep? Was not Christ resurrected on Sunday, thus His day is the "Lord's Day"?

Such questions must be answered!

## Who Decides What Sin Is?

Because most people today leave [God](#) out of the picture, they take [sin](#) lightly. Mainstream Christianity teaches that "all we have to do is believe" and God will take care of the rest. This stems from not really *knowing* God or His purpose for us!

God created the entire universe—He set in motion, sustains, and controls every power, force and energy. He actively rules His creation. The laws that He set in motion, whether physical or spiritual, determine our well being—or lack of it.

What is sin? Scripture says, "Sin is the transgression of the law" ([I John 3:4](#)). Whoever establishes the law is the only one who can then define what sin is. The Bible is clear that God Himself establishes law ([Isaiah 33:22](#)) and God only ([James 4:12](#))! Thus, the laws God has set in motion cannot be undone except by Him.

God does not allow us—mere mortal, carnal human beings—to determine what sin **is**. He has already done that! However, He does allow us to decide whether **to sin**—and warns us that the penalty of sin is eternal death ([Romans 6:23](#); [Matthew 25:46](#); [II Thessalonians 1:9](#)).

Sin is doing what God says is harmful and injurious to oneself and/or others. It deprives a person of God's blessings—[peace](#), happiness, security, abundant and joyful living, as a condition to God's gift of [eternal life](#) ([Romans 2:13](#); [6:23](#); [Matthew 19:16-17](#)).

Many people commonly think that [God's law](#) has been "done away" or that it was "nailed to the cross" when Christ died. They believe that He came in human form to do away with a horrible set of guidelines that He had given in the first place ([James 4:12](#); [Exodus 20:1](#))! (See [I Corinthians 10:4](#) for the identity of the God of the Old Testament.) These false notions completely fail to take into account the plain words of Jesus Christ:

Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the [Prophets](#). I did not come to destroy but to fulfill. For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled. Whoever therefore breaks one of the least of these commandments, and teaches men so, shall be called least in the [kingdom of heaven](#); but whoever does and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. For I say to you, that unless your righteousness exceeds the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven.  
([Matthew 5:17-20](#))

It is difficult to imagine a society without an enforced law. It is painfully obvious that chaos and anarchy would result—a twisted sort of "survival of the fittest." How, then, can "doing away with law" be the path to peace, [joy](#), and liberty? On the contrary, an accepted standard of conduct is necessary to accomplish the goals of any social group—if its members abide by the rules.

Consider the same scenario on a universal scale. The Creator of mankind has put into place both physical and spiritual laws that reflect His character and way of life. As our creator, God knows how men can live an eternally peaceful, fulfilling, and abundant life—something mankind alone cannot figure out! Because of this fact, God has revealed to humanity—who clearly do not know how to get along ([Romans 3:17](#))—how to [love](#) Him (as shown by the first four of the [Ten Commandments](#)) and fellow man (the last six commandments). Christ explains in [Matthew 22:36-40](#) that the two Great Commandments encompass everything in "the Law and Prophets." Everything in the Word of God points out the way to have a right [relationship with God](#) first—which includes keeping the Sabbath—and with our fellow man.

[I John 5:2-3](#) makes this abundantly clear: "By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and keep His commandments. For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome."

## Jesus Christ's Example

Mark's gospel gives an account of the beginning of Christ's ministry and [the gospel](#) He taught. Repeatedly, Jesus says His gospel came directly from [God](#) the Father; it is God's message to mankind! [Mark 1:1](#) says, "The beginning of the gospel of [Jesus Christ](#), the Son of God." The gospel of Jesus Christ is not a gospel from *men* about the *person* of Christ. The "gospel of Christ" is [Christ's gospel](#), the gospel Christ preached. It is the good news of [salvation](#) God sent by Jesus for mankind!

"... Jesus came to Galilee, preaching the gospel of the **kingdom** [or government] of God," calling on men to repent and believe (verses 14-15). What should they believe? In the gospel that Jesus brought from God (verse 15; [John 14:10](#))!

As part of that gospel, Jesus Christ has a great deal to say and to teach about the Sabbath and its observance. Christ and His disciples "went into Capernaum, and immediately on the Sabbath He entered the synagogue and taught" ([Mark 1:21](#)). It is Jesus' "custom"—His **habit** or **manner**—to attend the synagogue services *on the Sabbath* ([Luke 4:16](#); [Mark 6:2](#)).

This is not some Judaic tradition that He followed because of the culture of the time. He speaks out quite forcefully against following the "traditions of men" when they are at variance with the "commandments of God" ([Matthew 15:3, 6](#); [Mark 7:7](#), 9, 13), which are still very much in effect!

Understand, neither the Sabbath nor the annual holy days are "Jewish" in origin, as the commands to keep them come directly from the mouth of God ([Exodus 20:1](#); [Leviticus 23:1](#)). Moreover, He never gives any indication of changing them. That the Jews of Christ's time and today observe the Sabbath makes it no more "Jewish" than their observing the commandment against adultery makes marital fidelity a "Jewish tradition"! It could only be classified as Jewish if it had originated with the Jews.

In the gospels, Jesus Christ has many disputes with the Jews, a number of which involve the Sabbath day. But they never disagree about *which* day is to be kept, only over what is acceptable for that day.

For example, when Jesus and His disciples walk through the grainfields on the Sabbath day ([Mark 2:23](#)), the Pharisees accuse the disciples of breaking the Sabbath by plucking ears of grain to eat. They agree on *which* day should be kept, but they question whether the disciples' behavior is appropriate.

Christ settles the question about what is proper on the Sabbath, and in doing so, He also asserts, first, that the Sabbath was made for *all mankind*, not merely the Jews (verse 27), and second, that He is "Lord of the Sabbath" (verse 28). Thus, any change to the Sabbath commandment must come from Him!

The Pharisees also condemn Christ for healing on the Sabbath ([Matthew 12:10-12](#); [Luke 13:14-15](#); [John 5:9-10](#)). Christ shows that they misunderstand the *intent* of the Sabbath day, not the day to keep it. Had Christ proposed changing the Sabbath, what a tremendous uproar would have ensued!

When examining the life of our Savior, it is evident that Jesus Christ kept the seventh-day Sabbath. He is the Lord—master, supreme authority—of the Sabbath day and gives no instruction to change it. After His death, the apostles and the church also kept it holy. Through His example, we know that Christians must still keep the seventh-day Sabbath!

## The Sabbath Was Created

Jesus, teaching as part of *His* gospel how to observe the Sabbath, says: "The Sabbath **was made** for man, and not man for the Sabbath. Therefore the Son of Man is also Lord of the Sabbath" ([Mark 2:27-28](#)).

Jesus asserts that the Sabbath was **made**—it was part of God's original creation. Therefore, it had to have a Maker. Who, then, made the Sabbath? [God](#) is the Creator. Yet Paul proclaims in [Ephesians 3:9](#), "God . . . created all things through Jesus Christ."

John's gospel begins:

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. . . . *All things were made through Him*, and without Him nothing was made that was made. In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. . . . And the Word became 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](#). ([John 1:1](#), 3-4, 14)

The Word is Christ, who became a human being and lived among men. Yet, He existed with God the Father from eternity. Christ is God! All things were made by Him—[Jesus Christ](#)! The Sabbath is one of those things that He made. God made it *through* Jesus Christ or *by* Him! Notice [Colossians 1:16](#), 18: "For by Him [Christ] all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible. . . . And He is **the head of the body, the church**. . . ."

Most overlook this fact, but it is evident that **Jesus Christ made the Sabbath!** No wonder, then, He says plainly that, as its Creator, He is Lord or Master of the Sabbath!

## The Sabbath Created for Whom and When?

"And [Jesus] said to them, '**The Sabbath was made for man**, and not man for the Sabbath. Therefore the Son of Man is also Lord of the Sabbath'" ([Mark 2:27-28](#)).

The Sabbath was not just created; it was made with someone in mind. The prevalent idea today is that the Sabbath was made "for the Jews"—but that is not what Christ says! Christ says it was made "**for man**"! It was something created for the benefit of all of mankind, **not** just for a certain group of people. [God](#) created the Sabbath immediately after He created the human race—not at the origination of the Jews:

Then God said, "Let Us [plural, God and the Word] make man in Our image, according to Our likeness." . . . So God created man in His own image; in the [image of God](#) He created him; male and female He created them. ([Genesis 1:26-27](#))

Verse 31 shows that this happened on the sixth day of creation week. Further, man was the very last thing or being created on that day. Man came into being, then, probably in the late afternoon of the sixth day.

And on the seventh day God ended His work which He had done, and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had done. Then God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because in it He rested from all His work which God had created and made. ([Genesis 2:2-3](#))

When "God said, 'Let Us make man,'" who spoke? As [John 1:1-3](#), 14 shows, [Jesus Christ](#) is also called the Word—that is, the Spokesman. He speaks only as the Father directs. God created all things by

Jesus Christ ([Ephesians 3:9](#); [Colossians 1:16](#)). Therefore, the One who became Jesus said: "Let Us make man." Jesus did the **work** of creation, as instructed by the Father.

Notice that He did not complete His creating on the sixth day, but it continued through the seventh day: "And on the seventh day God ended His work which He had done." God ended His work, but the creation week was not yet over! Creation Week was a full seven days of creation.

What did He create on the seventh day? He made the Sabbath! However, He made the Sabbath, not by *work*, but by *ceasing from it*. On the seventh day He ended the **work** of creation—what was created by work. He rested on the seventh day, and by doing so, created the Sabbath. He then blessed and set apart the seventh day as a day of rest and worship for mankind.

## Does It Matter Which Day We Keep Holy?

Does it really make any difference whether we keep the day [God](#) blessed and made holy? Can we substitute another day? Do we have to keep any day at all? Must the Christian respect what God makes holy?

God records a plain but effective explanation in an experience in [Moses'](#) life. Moses had been raised from a baby as a prince by Pharaoh's daughter, but he had killed an Egyptian guard who had been beating a Hebrew slave. He was forced to flee for his life to the land of Midian. There, after some time, he had married a daughter of Jethro the priest of Midian.

One day, leading a flock of sheep, Moses came to Mount Sinai, where he saw a large bush burning, yet the flames did not consume it. While pondering this strange sight, the Lord called to Moses out of the burning bush: "Moses, Moses! . . . Do not draw near this place. Take your sandals off your feet, for the place where you stand is **holy ground**" ([Exodus 3:1-5](#)).

Why did it make any difference *whether* Moses took off his shoes—or *where*? Because the ground where he stood at that moment was holy! God required him to treat holy ground with a respect he did not treat other common plots of ground. Why was this ground holy? Because God's presence was in it! God is holy, and His presence in the bush made the ground around it holy.

In the same way, God's presence is in His [Sabbath](#). He rested on the seventh day of Creation to put His presence in that day, making it holy time. Four thousand years later, when this same Being, the Word, lived in human flesh, He was still putting His presence in that same weekly recurring Sabbath: He went into the synagogues "as His custom was . . . on the Sabbath day" ([Luke 4:16](#)).

[Jesus Christ](#) is the same today as He was yesterday, and shall be forever ([Hebrews 13:8](#)). He has not changed in the least. He is still putting His presence in His Sabbath, making it holy!

God commanded Moses to take his shoes off that holy ground. Likewise, the same God commands mankind to take his foot off from trampling and profaning His holy time. God requires His children to treat that day with a respect not required of other time. Notice [Isaiah 58:13-14](#):

If you turn away your foot from the Sabbath, from doing your pleasure on My holy day, and call the Sabbath a delight, the holy [day of the Lord](#) honorable, and shall honor Him, not doing your own ways,

nor finding your own pleasure, nor speaking your own words, then you shall delight yourself in the Lord; and I will cause you to ride on the high hills of the earth, and feed you with the heritage of Jacob your father. The mouth of the Lord has spoken.

We honor God by keeping holy those things that He has made holy—and only God can make things holy! We dishonor Him when we speak our own words, saying, "Well, I think the ideas and ways of *men* must be right. I'd rather do as they do, and have them think well of me."

God commands: "Take your foot off My holy time. Quit trampling all over that which is holy and sacred to Me! Quit profaning My holy things." The [sin](#) is in profaning what God made holy.

God has never made any other weekday holy. Mankind has no authority to sanctify a day. One cannot keep a day holy, unless God has first made it holy, any more than one can keep cold water hot unless it is hot in the first place! God made this period of time holy, and He commands us to keep it that way!

## Lessons from Israel, Egypt and the Manna

After the deaths of Jacob and Joseph, the children of Israel became slaves in Egypt. "So the Egyptians made the children of Israel serve with rigor: And they made their lives bitter with hard bondage—in mortar, in brick, and in all manner of service in the field" ([Exodus 1:13-14](#)).

The Egyptians, observing no [Sabbath](#), lashed the Israelites in their slave labor on the Sabbaths just as on other days. The Israelites, then, for several generations, were not permitted to keep the Sabbath. They probably received no organized religious teaching in all that time. They likely had no written record of God's instruction to the patriarchs before them.

The generation of Israelites that [Moses](#) led out of Egypt knew little, if anything, about the Sabbath. Time could have been lost—to them. However, [God](#) reestablished the right knowledge of the Sabbath through a series of miracles.

The Israelites came to the wilderness of [Sin](#) two months after leaving Egypt, and two weeks before arriving at Mount Sinai, when God gave them the [Ten Commandments](#) and made a covenant with them. Notice, His instruction concerning the Sabbath *predates* the giving of the law and the Old Covenant!

Here God reveals to them, miraculously, which day is the Sabbath and whether it makes any difference if we keep it:

Then the Lord said to Moses, "Behold, I will rain bread from heaven for you. And the people shall go out and gather a certain quota every day, [why?] that I may test them, *whether they will walk in My law or not.*" ([Exodus 16:4](#))

Although this happens before they receive the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20) or the Old Covenant is proposed, [God's law](#) is in full force and effect. God is testing them to see if they will obey one of its critical points.

Notice what happens. Some try to save a supply of manna over until the next morning, contrary to

God's command. "It bred worms and stank" (verse 20). On the sixth day, they gather a double portion of manna, and Moses explains why: "Tomorrow is a Sabbath rest, a holy Sabbath to the Lord" (verse 23). On the sixth day, then, they gather a supply of food for the Sabbath as well.

Miraculously, it does not breed worms or decay, as on all the other days (verse 24)! By this sign, God identifies which day is the Sabbath. Thus, Moses says: "Today is a Sabbath to the Lord; today you will not find it in the field. Six days you shall gather it, but on the seventh day, which is the Sabbath, there will be none" (verses 25-26).

Did it make any difference? It sure did!

Was it all right for some to go ahead and work on the seventh day, and then rest on the first day of the week? Just like most professing Christians today, some of these Israelites thought they knew better! Notice: "Some of the people went out on the seventh day to gather, but they found none." They thought the day they observed, or if they kept it at all, made no difference.

But it made a difference to God! On the six weekdays, God Himself had accomplished the *work* of raining down manna, but not on His Sabbath, which is holy to Him. On the seventh day, God rested from sending them manna! Notice verses 28-29:

And the Lord said to Moses, "*How long do you refuse to keep My commandments and My laws?* See! For the Lord has given you the Sabbath; therefore He gives you on the sixth day bread for two days. Let every man remain in his place; let no man go out of his place [to gather—to work] on the seventh day."

It certainly does make a difference to God! He is the same today as He was yesterday and will be forever ([Hebrews 13:8](#))! It still makes a difference!

God reveals through these [miracles](#) which day is His day—His Sabbath. Manna fell for six days—but none on the seventh day. For nearly forty years, God reminded them every week which day He had set apart. If they forgot, they did not eat!

This example also shows that keeping the Sabbath holy is part of His eternal law, for it occurs many days before He proposes the Old Covenant at Sinai. In this way, God reveals both which day His Sabbath is and that the keeping or breaking of it *does* make a difference. Failing to keep God's holy Sabbath is sin, and its penalty is death ([Romans 6:23](#))!

Finally, notice [Exodus 16:29](#): "For the Lord has given you the Sabbath." Nowhere in all God's Word is it said, "The Lord has given you Sunday," or "The Lord has given you the first day of the week." Who, then, gave the professing Christian world its [Sunday worship](#)? The answer appears in "church" history—carnal, pagan man, under the leadership of Constantine and in rebellion against God, gave professing "Christianity" Sunday worship *several centuries* after Christ died. Sunday-worship came out of paganism, and [the world](#) still follows the custom!

Maybe you should ask yourself, "What is the *source* of my religion?" Is it human reason, public opinion, or the traditions of man? Or is the Creator God the source of what you believe and practice?

## God Gave the Law - Not Moses!

At Sinai, [Moses](#) went up the mountain to meet [God \(Exodus 19:3\)](#). There God gave him a proposition to lay before the millions of Israelites. This proposition, or agreement, was what we now call the "Old Covenant"—the covenant agreement for making of these people God's own nation on earth.

The proposition provided that God was to be their sole King and Ruler. Their government was to be a theocracy. God was to be the Law Maker, not a congress, or parliament. God would appoint men to execute His orders. Moses returned and "called for the elders of the people, and laid before them all these words which the Lord commanded him" (verse 7).

The people unanimously accepted God's proposition. They were so intent on receiving what God promised in this contract—"you shall be a special treasure to Me above all people" (verse 5), that is, the greatest, most prosperous, most powerful nation on earth—that they did not consider too seriously the condition: "*If* you will obey My voice indeed, and keep My covenant."

What came from the [voice of God](#) for them to obey? A great law that already existed, just as the laws of gravity, inertia, physics, and chemistry already existed. Yet, this law was a *spiritual* law! God's voice revealed that living, inexorable law in specific words, as a definite code of conduct.

Before God began creating, He wanted humanity to be happy—to have [peace](#), and to enjoy life in security and vigorous, abundant living. To make such a happy state possible, God set in motion the spiritual laws that are an extension of His very nature, encapsulating what "[love](#)" is ([I John 5:2-3](#)). These spiritual laws form the way to physical, mental, and spiritual well being—real life! In them, He codified the way to *avoid* sorrow, suffering, anguish, insecurity, boredom, emptiness, frustration, violence, and death.

Notice these comparisons between God and His spiritual law:

» [Genesis 21:33](#): God is **everlasting**.

» [Psalm 111:7-8](#): The law is **everlasting**.

» [Psalm 25:8](#): God is **good**.

» [Romans 7:12](#): The law is **good**.

» [Psalm 145:17](#): God is **holy**.

» [Romans 7:12](#): The law is **holy**.

» [Deuteronomy 32:4](#): God is **just**.

» [Romans 7:12](#): The law is **just**.

» [I John 1:5](#): God is **light**.  
» [Proverbs 6:23](#): The law is **light**.

» [I John 4:8](#): God is **love**.  
» [Romans 13:10](#): The law is **love**.

» [Matthew 5:48](#): God is **perfect**.  
» [Psalm 19:7](#): The law is **perfect**.

» [Psalm 145:17](#): God is **righteous**.  
» [Psalm 119:172](#): The law is **righteous**.

» [John 4:24](#): God is **spiritual**.  
» [Romans 7:14](#): The law is **spiritual**.

» [Deuteronomy 32:4](#): God is **truth**.  
» [Psalm 119:142](#): The law is **truth**.

God's law is a gift to mankind, yet humanity thanklessly rejects it. As good and glorious as this law is, human nature is hostile to it ([Romans 8:7](#))! Selfishly, it wants to have everything God's way of life brings—but it rebelliously resents traveling the road God demands it take to obtain His blessings.

Now, notice how the [Ten Commandments](#) begin in [Exodus 20:1-2](#): "And God spoke all these words, saying: 'I am the Lord your God. . .'" It is vital to realize that the Israelites did not receive the commandments from Moses, as most people seem to believe today. Moses himself heard them for the very first time, in this form, along with the rest of the people.

Next, notice [Deuteronomy 5:4-22](#), recorded nearly forty years later. Moses, reminding the Israelites of their history, says: "The Lord talked with *you* face to face on the mountain from the midst of the fire . . ."—then follow the words of the Ten Commandments (verses 6-21). It is a common and prevalent idea that Moses "gave the law," but clearly, the Ten Commandments did not come from Moses but from God!

Then, after reiterating the words of the Ten Commandments, Moses continues:

These words the Lord spoke to all your assembly in the mountain from the midst of the fire, the cloud, and the thick darkness, with a loud voice; and He added no more. And He wrote them on two tablets of stone and gave them to me. (verse 22)

Observe two additional facts from this verse: ". . . and He added no more." It is a *complete* and *spiritual* law. God added nothing further to that law. Any other laws—including the Old Covenant—are different, separate laws, apart from that spiritual law!

Second, "He wrote them on two tablets of stone." Not only did God speak the words, He Himself wrote them down—made them permanent and enduring—in stone. In essence, this is a double witness of their origin—God Himself! Moses was to place these tablets inside the Ark of the Covenant, symbolizing God's rulership and judgment based on His Ten Commandments.

So is this law only for the Jews? Does it apply to New Covenant Christians? Notice [Acts 7:38-39](#)—

five chapters *after* the beginning of the New Testament church:

This is he [Moses] who was in the congregation in the wilderness with the Angel who spoke to him on Mount Sinai, and with our fathers, the one who *received the living oracles to give to us*, whom our fathers would not obey, but rejected.

Speaking to the Jews, Stephen, a converted Christian, says that God gave these "living oracles . . . to us," Christian and Jew! They are still in effect today as a complete, spiritual law, and we—Christians and/or Jews—do not have the authority to choose which ones we want to obey!

This event on Mount Sinai was the basis for making the Old Covenant, but what is the basis of the New Covenant? "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 in their mind and write them on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people" ([Hebrews 8:10](#) quoting [Jeremiah 31:33](#)).

From these proofs, two points are clear:

1. God's law in the Ten Commandments is not a temporary one, designed to end or become obsolete at the cross or any other time.
2. His law is not a special law for one nation only. God is not a respecter of persons ([Acts 10:34](#); [Romans 1:16](#)). Neither Gentiles nor Christians are excluded from the laws of God (e.g., [Exodus 12:38](#), 48-49; [Isaiah 56:1-3](#), 6-7)!

## The Sabbath Command

Notice the beginning of the [Sabbath](#) command: "Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy" ([Exodus 20:8](#)). [God](#) commands us to **remember** this day. But instead men insist on forgetting or trying to change it to a different day!

Christ says, in the [Sermon on the Mount](#): "**Do not** think that I came to destroy the Law" ([Matthew 5:17](#)), so professing Christians think He came to destroy it!

Christ says: "Therefore you shall be perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect," so professing Christians say, "It's impossible [inconvenient] to keep [God's law](#), let alone to be perfect. Christ kept it in our place, and then abolished it."

But notice the rest of that same Sabbath command: ". . . to **keep it holy**." The word "keep" means to preserve in the same condition. One cannot *keep* ice water hot—one can only *keep* hot water hot. Likewise, a person *cannot keep an unholy day holy*! The only weekly day God ever made holy is His Sabbath. It is utterly impossible to [keep Sunday](#) or Friday holy because God never made them holy, and man has no power to make anything holy.

Now notice [Exodus 20:9-10](#): "Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord your God. In it you shall do no work. . . ." God does not mean just any seventh day! Not "one day in seven"—He says "the seventh day!" This remains true even after [the crucifixion](#) and resurrection of Christ—the Sabbath is still the seventh day, followed by the first day of the week

([Matthew 28:1](#)).

In this command, God also identifies to whom the Sabbath belongs. He does not say "the Sabbath of the Jews" or "the Sabbath of the Israelites." He says, distinctly, it "is the Sabbath of the Lord your God." If the seventh day is the Lord's Sabbath—the Sabbath of the Lord—then it is truly the only "Lord's Day"!

[I John 3:4](#) provides a biblical definition of what constitutes [sin](#): "Sin is lawlessness [*the transgression of the law*, KJV]." In [Romans 7:7](#), the apostle Paul tells us which law it is sin to disobey, the law that says, "You shall not covet," quoted from the [Ten Commandments](#) ([Exodus 20:17](#)).

The apostle James also tells us which law defines sin ([James 2:9-11](#)). It is a law, subdivided into "points" (verse 10), one of which is "Do not commit [adultery](#)," quoted from the Ten Commandments ([Exodus 20:14](#)). Another of its ten "points" is "Do not [murder](#)," also quoted from the same law (verse 13). [James 2:10](#) says that if we break any one of these ten points, we are guilty of sin!

The same law also says: "**Remember** the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. . . . [T]he seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord your God." According to the Bible, whoever disobeys the Sabbath command commits sin!

## An Eternal Covenant

It is commonly taught, without any scriptural authority, that the [Ten Commandments](#) were abolished at the cross. Proponents of this never stop to realize that, if there is no law, there is no transgression—as Paul plainly states in [Romans 4:15](#). This would mean that no one has sinned since Christ's death, and therefore, we would have no need for a Savior!

Yet, even if this perverted and deceptive argument were true—if [God](#) had abolished all ten of His commands at the cross, and then brought back nine of them in the New Testament, in order to get rid of the Sabbath—people are still without excuse! Why? God made the [Sabbath](#) a special and separate covenant, binding forever.

God added nothing further to the Ten Commandment law ([Deuteronomy 5:22](#)). It is complete. Any other law or covenant that came later is not a part of it but a separate law or covenant. Paul makes this plain in [Galatians 3:15](#): "Though it is only a man's covenant, yet if it is confirmed, no one annuls or adds to it."

The Old Covenant was confirmed, as described in [Exodus 24:4-8](#). It cannot be added to. *Later*, after both the Ten Commandments and the Old Covenant had been made complete, God made another separate and eternally binding covenant with His people throughout the ages, the Sabbath covenant.

God never does anything in vain. When He does anything, or makes anything, we can be sure there is an important purpose. God, through the Word ([John 1:1-3](#)), the One who became [Jesus Christ](#), made the Sabbath for a specific purpose.

Jesus Christ said the Sabbath was made for man, rather than man for the Sabbath ([Mark 2:27-28](#)). At

that time, He merely told for whom He had made it, but not for what *purpose*. That is why this special, separate Sabbath covenant is important: It reveals the basic purpose behind the Sabbath commandment.

The Sabbath Covenant is found in [Exodus 31:12-17](#): "And the Lord spoke to [Moses](#), saying, "Speak also to the children of Israel, saying: 'Surely My Sabbaths you shall keep. . . .'"

Again, notice which day is "[the Lord's Day](#)." God calls the Sabbaths "My Sabbaths." The Sabbaths, weekly and annual, are His; they do not belong to us, nor are they "Jewish Sabbaths" or "Gentile Sabbaths." The Sabbath is a space of time. That time, whenever it arrives, is not ours but God's. If we appropriate it for our own use, whether for work or pleasure, we are stealing that time from God! In [Exodus 20:8](#), He commands us to "keep it holy." God made it *holy time*, and commands us to keep it holy rather than profane it.

"Surely 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 who sanctifies you" ([Exodus 31:13](#)). Here, then, is the purpose of the Sabbath: ". . . it is a *sign*." A sign is a badge, symbol, mark, or token of *identity*. *Webster's Dictionary* defines a sign as "a display used to identify or advertise a place of business or a product. Something indicating the presence or existence of something else."

The word Moses wrote in Hebrew is '*owth*', which means "a sign, signal, distinguishing mark, banner, remembrance, warning; a token, ensign, standard, miracle, proof" (*Brown, Driver & Briggs Hebrew Lexicon*). A banner or flag identifies a nation or group. A signal like a beacon announces the existence of something, like a rocky shore, that others need to be warned about. A token is a visible sign that serves to make something known, such as a white flag is a token of surrender.

God commands His people to keep His Sabbaths as a sign. It is a sign between God's people and God: "It is a sign between Me and you." It is a badge or token of identity, advertising, announcing, or proclaiming certain identifying knowledge: ". . . that you may know that I am the Lord who sanctifies you."

The Sabbath is the sign that *identifies* to people who their God is. It is the sign by which we may know that He is the Lord. It identifies God, and by so doing, it identifies who His people are as well.

## The Purpose of the Sabbath

[God](#) gave man His [Sabbath](#) to keep mankind in the right knowledge and proper worship of the true God. But *how* does the Sabbath identify God? How does it point to the true God, rather than a false one? Would not Sunday work just as well?

Notice [Exodus 31:17](#): "It is a sign between Me and the children of Israel forever; for in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, and on the seventh day He rested and was refreshed." God rested from the work of creation on the seventh day of creation week. Not on Sunday, the first day of the week—only the seventh day of the week points back to Creation.

Creation is the proof of God's existence. The act of creating identifies the Creator. God set aside as holy the only day that is a memorial of the act of creating. He appropriated the only day that points,

constantly, every seventh day of the week, to the existence of the Creator.

God set that particular day apart from others as His day. He made that particular day sacred and holy to Him, designating it as the very day on which *He* commands His people to assemble for worship. It is the day man is commanded to rest from his own work and activities, and to be refreshed by assembling with other obedient worshippers in spiritual fellowship.

No other day is a memorial and reminder of the original creation. True, [Satan](#) has deceived [this world](#) into supposing Christ's resurrection occurred on Sunday morning at sunrise—the very time that has always been the time of pagan sun-worship. The [truth](#) is, however, that the [resurrection of Jesus Christ](#) actually occurred on the Sabbath, not on Sunday! Additionally, nowhere in the Bible does God tell us to celebrate the day of Christ's resurrection. Instead, Christ tells us to celebrate His death through the observance of [Passover \(I Corinthians 11:23-26\)](#).

So here we find a main purpose in the Sabbath: It identifies God! The very day which God set aside for assembly and worship points as a memorial to *whom* we are to worship—the Creator and Ruler of all that exists!

The Sabbath also was given as a sign that identifies who the people of God are. Not only does this special covenant say, "that you may know that I am the Lord," but it also says, "that you may know that I am the Lord *who sanctifies you*" ([Exodus 31:13](#)).

*Sanctify* means "to set apart for holy use or purpose." On the seventh day of creation week, God sanctified the Sabbath day—He set it apart for holy use. By adding the phrase "who sanctifies you," God says the Sabbath is a sign that He also sanctifies those who are His people. He sets them apart from other people as His, for His holy purpose.

So the Sabbath identifies both who God is and who God's people are!

## Which Day for the Gentiles?

Is the [Sabbath](#) Covenant for Israel only, excluding Gentiles?

[God](#) gave the Sabbath covenant to identify first the true God, and second to identify those who are His people. It was not given to distinguish between two kinds of God's people—that is, for example, two kinds of Christians, such as those who were Jewish-born from those who were Gentile-born. **God does not have two kinds of Christians!** Whether Jew or Gentile, male or female, old or young, Christians are all one in Christ Jesus ([Galatians 3:28](#)).

In Old Testament days, only the Israelites were God's people. God gave them the Sabbath as the sign to identify them as His people. In [Hosea 1:9](#), God pictures the house of Israel as *Lo-Ammi*, meaning "not My people." They had rejected God's Sabbaths and followed King Jeroboam's idolatrous feasts ([I Kings 12:26-33](#)).

God says, "Therefore, behold, I will hedge up your way with thorns, and wall her in, so that she cannot find her paths" ([Hosea 2:6](#)). He prophesies that Israel would lose her way, to lose her identity or

become lost. Today, they are known as the *lost Ten Tribes*! They lost all knowledge of their true God because they forsook the Sabbath.

In verse 8, God says Israel had taken all His blessings and prepared them "for Baal." They used their God-given wealth in Baal-worship on the day of the sun-god, today called Sunday. Notice what God says He will do about their apostasy: "I will also cause all her mirth to cease, *her* feast days, *her* New Moons, *her* Sabbaths—all *her* appointed feasts. . . . I will punish her for the days of the Baals" (verses 11, 13). He sent Israel into captivity for her idolatry and Sabbath-breaking (see Ezekiel 20).

But the prophecy does not end here!

"And it shall be, in that day [when Christ returns]," says the Lord, "that you will call Me 'My Husband [Ishi],' and no longer call Me 'My Master [Baali],' for I will take from her mouth the names of the Baals, and they shall be remembered by their name no more. In that day I will make a covenant for them [the New Covenant]. . . . [T]hen I will say to those who were **not my people**, 'You are My people!' and they shall say, 'You are my God!'" ([Hosea 2:16-18](#), 23)

This prophecy cannot really be understood unless one first understands the Sabbath covenant of [Exodus 31:12-17](#)! When Israel rejected the identifying sign of God's Sabbath, it most assuredly did not identify them! It did not distinguish them from Gentiles—in fact, they came to believe that they *were* Gentiles. The Gentile people of [the world](#) called them Gentiles. The Jewish people called them Gentiles! The Jewish people continue to recognize the Sabbath, and the whole world calls them "the chosen people"!

Why, then, did God not make this special everlasting Sabbath Covenant with Gentile nations too? Simply because all Gentile nations had cut themselves off, totally, from God. All had gone into idolatry. None knew the true God. Instead, God took a downtrodden slave people and made them His nation. God then gave this called-out people, descended from those with whom He had worked before, His right ways.

Why? To show other nations what blessings would follow obedience to His laws! To set an example to other nations! God gave His right ways and all His promises—including salvation through Christ—to Israel to make these ways and blessings known and available to the Gentiles!

In a world cut off from God and worshipping pagan deities of every stripe, He called out a despised, humiliated, slave people, descended from Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. They had listened to and obeyed God, and to a point, the Israelites, in their debased, beaten-down condition, were humble enough to listen to and obey their Creator as well. Through them, God purposed now to give all other nations a chance through this called-out people, Israel!

Of them, God says: "This people have I formed for Myself; they shall declare My praise" ([Isaiah 43:21](#)). Israel was to be His instrument, so that Gentile nations would see the desired results, tremendous blessings, and prosperity that would inure to those who obey Him.

Of course, the Israelites had human nature, and though God performed stupendous and most astounding miracles, they never followed God's ways for long. But through them God has taken away every excuse from all who rebel. Humanity has been given every chance to repent of its way!

Later, during Christ's earthly ministry and after, God used His church in the same manner. Christ

called out the church as special called-out people, not merely to preach His gospel to the world, but to show the world the desired results reaped from obedience! The church, too, was to be a *light*! "You are the light of the world," Jesus tells His disciples. "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven" ([Matthew 5:14](#), 16). The church is to set an example!

The Ephesians were Gentiles, but they heard [Christ's gospel](#), repented, believed, and obeyed. They became converted Christians. To them, Paul writes:

Therefore remember that you, once Gentiles . . . 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 once were far off have been made near by the blood of Christ. . . . Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God. ([Ephesians 2:11](#), 12-13, 19)

To become a converted Christian, one must become, spiritually, an Israelite! Jesus says, "Salvation is of the Jews," who are Israelites ([John 4:22](#)). It is "for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek" ([Romans 1:16](#)). Paul later writes, "For they are not all Israel [physically] who are of Israel [spiritually]" ([Romans 9:6](#)). The church of God—composed of Israelites and Gentiles—he calls "the [Israel of God](#)" ([Galatians 6:16](#)).

But were not Gentiles excluded under the Old Testament? They were not! What God gave for Israel was for the Gentiles also. The Sabbath was for Gentiles, as well as Israelites! Gentiles could always come into the congregation of Israel, and many did. Even as they left Egypt, "a [mixed multitude](#) went up with them" ([Exodus 12:38](#)). In the instructions for observing the [Passover](#), God says:

And when a stranger [Gentile] sojourns with you and wants to 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 a native of the land. One law shall be for the native-born and for the stranger who sojourns among you."

Gentiles could become naturalized citizens of Israel any time, and thousands did.

In [Mark 2:27](#), [Jesus Christ](#) says the Sabbath was made for man, not Jews or Israelites only. Not only that, He made it for all mankind for all time, including today! Notice [Isaiah 56:1-3](#), 7:

Thus says the Lord: "Keep justice, and do righteousness, for My salvation is about to come, and My righteousness to be revealed. Blessed is the man who does this, and the son of man who lays hold on it; who keeps the Sabbath, and keeps his hand from doing any evil. Do not let the son of a foreigner who has joined himself to the Lord speak, saying, "The Lord has utterly separated me from His people." . . . Even [him] I will bring to My holy mountain, and make them joyful in My house of prayer."

[Hebrews 9:28](#) explains when His salvation will be revealed: "So Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many. To those who eagerly wait for Him He will appear a second time, apart from [sin](#), for salvation." Christ brings salvation when He appears the second time! Jesus says: "And behold, I come quickly; and My reward is with Me, to give to every one according to his work" ([Revelation 22:12](#)). Isaiah's prophecy is for the time just before Christ's second coming—today!

God says that no Gentile who has been converted and joined himself to the Lord Jesus Christ, should say that Christ has separated him from God's people Israel! No, the Sabbath is *not* a sign to separate

Israelites from Gentiles! Gentiles are not excluded!

The Sabbath was made for mankind, for Gentile as well as Israelite. God Himself made His Sabbath binding forever ([Exodus 31:12-17](#)). It is binding forever, perpetually, throughout the generations of Israelites. Their generations have not ended. "Forever" has not ended.

Israelite Christians, then, are bound to keep God's holy Sabbath. But what about Gentiles? Gentiles become Christians through Christ, the same as Israelites. They, too, must keep it. They become Israelites, spiritually, when they receive God's [Holy Spirit](#) and become truly converted Christians.

God does not have one way for Jew and one for Gentile. He does not have one day for Jew and another for Gentile. Christ is not divided! God is no respecter of persons! We are all one in Christ!

## Is Sunday Worship Mentioned in the New Testament?

The word "Sunday" does not appear any place in the Bible, but the phrase "[first day of the week](#)" is found in the New Testament. It occurs in exactly eight places. Examining these eight texts will prove insightful.

If the day was changed by Bible authority—if Christians are to find any biblical authorization whatsoever for observing Sunday as the "[Lord's Day](#)" today—then we must find that authority in one of these eight texts!

Since the Bible clearly establishes the seventh day of the week as the [Sabbath](#) up to the time of [the crucifixion](#), there can be no biblical authority for Sunday observance unless we find it clearly and plainly stated in one of these eight New Testament passages. We should examine them carefully, honestly, prayerfully.

**1. [Matthew 28:1](#):** "Now after the Sabbath, as *the first day of the week* began to dawn, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came to see the tomb." Matthew wrote these words, under inspiration of the [Holy Spirit](#), several years after the New Testament church came into being.

This scripture tells us plainly that three days and three nights after all that was done away had been securely "nailed to the cross," the Sabbath was still the day *before* the first day of the week—still the seventh day of the week.

One point is here plainly proved. Many tell us that the Sabbath command is merely for "one day in seven"—that it does not have to be *the* seventh day of the week, but merely the seventh part of time. They argue that Sunday, being one day out of seven, fulfills the command. But this passage states in plain language that, three days after all abolished things had been done away, the Sabbath still existed and that it was the seventh day of the week. But was the day changed later?

**2. [Mark 16:2](#):** "Very early in the morning, on *the first day of the week*, they came to the tomb when the sun had risen." This first day of the week was, according to verse 1, "when the Sabbath was past." This text, then, proves the same thing as [Matthew 28:1](#). The Sabbath was still the seventh day of the week.

3. [\*\*Mark 16:9\*\*](#): "Now when He rose [*was risen*, KJV] early on *the first day of the week*, He appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom He had cast seven demons." This text, poorly translated, speaks of [Jesus](#)' appearance to Mary Magdalene later the same day (see "The Resurrection Was Not on Sunday" and/or "[After Three Days](#)" for a better translation).

Nothing here calls the first day of the week the Christian Sabbath. Nothing here calls it "[the Lord's Day](#)." Nothing here hallows Sunday or says [God](#) made it holy. Nothing here commands us to observe it. Nothing here sets it apart as a memorial of the resurrection, or for any purpose. It contains no command or example of rest on this day—no authority for observing Sunday.

4. [\*\*Luke 24:1\*\*](#): "Now on *the first day of the week*, very early in the morning, they, and certain other women with them, came to the tomb bringing the spices which they had prepared." This text reiterates the same event recorded by Matthew and Mark. It also shows that on the first day of the week these women came to do the work of a common weekday, *after* having rested the Sabbath day "according to the commandment" ([Luke 23:56](#)).

The Holy Spirit inspired this statement. God knew the Sabbath was not abolished, and had Luke write this approximately thirty years after the establishing of the New Testament church! God inspired Luke to say that the "rest" these women took on the Sabbath day was "according to the commandment"—a statement that would not be possible had the commandment been abolished.

This text, then, establishes Sunday as a common workday, and that, at the time of its writing, the command to keep the Sabbath had not been abolished.

5. [\*\*John 20:1\*\*](#): "On *the first day of the week* Mary Magdalene came to the tomb early, while it was still dark. . . ." This, written more than sixty years after the crucifixion, is merely John's version, describing the same visit to the tomb. It confirms the facts above.

6. [\*\*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, Jesus came and stood in the midst, and said to them, [Peace](#) be with you." Let us examine this carefully, for some claim this was a religious service called to celebrate the resurrection.

Notice this is the same first day of the week that followed the Sabbath. It was Jesus' first opportunity to appear to His disciples. For three and a half years, He had been constantly with them, on all days of the week. His meeting with them, of itself, could not establish any day as a Sabbath.

Were they meeting together to celebrate the resurrection, thus establishing Sunday as the Christian Sabbath in honor of the resurrection? The text gives the reason they were together: "for fear of the Jews"! The Jews had just taken, tried, and handed their Master over to the Romans for crucifixion. They were afraid! The doors were shut and probably bolted because of their fear. In addition, they were there because they all lived together in this upper room ([Acts 1:13](#)). Finally—and conclusively—they did not assemble to celebrate the resurrection because *they did not believe Jesus was risen* ([Mark 16:14](#); [Luke 24:37](#), 39, 41).

Nothing in this text calls this day the "Sabbath," the "Lord's Day," or any sacred title. Nothing here sets it apart or makes it holy. Scripture gives no authority here for changing a command of God!

7. [\*\*Acts 20:7\*\*](#): "Now on *the first day of the week*, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul,

ready to depart the next day, spoke to them and continued his message until midnight."

Here, at last, we find a religious meeting on the first day of the week, but it was not a "Sunday meeting," that is, a church service. . Notice, Paul continued his speech until midnight, and verse 8 says, "There were many lamps in the upper room where they were gathered together." It indeed occurred *after sunset*, before midnight, thus on the first day of the week. This meeting and Paul's preaching—at most, it was what we would call a Bible study today—took place during the hours we now call Saturday night.

However, it is clear from subsequent verses that Paul and his companions treated this first day of the week, beginning at sundown, as a normal workday. Paul's companions sailed around a peninsula from Troas to Assos (verse 13)—a distance of fifty or sixty miles—while Paul, afoot, walked overland more than 19 miles (verses 11, 14). His companions were engaged in the *labor* of rowing and sailing a boat while Paul was preaching that Saturday night. Then, at the break of day Sunday morning, he set out to walk from Troas to Assos—a good hard day's work! He would not do this except on a common workday!

Does this text not say, as many claim, that the disciples always held communion every first day of the week? Not at all! This scripture says nothing about anything being done weekly or customarily. It simply relates the events of this one particular first day of the week. The first-century church kept the Lord's Supper once each year on the [Passover](#) ([I Corinthians 11:24](#)).

That "the disciples came together to break bread" means merely that they gathered to eat a meal. This expression was commonly used to designate a meal in past times (see [Luke 24:30](#); [Acts 2:46](#); [27:35](#) for further examples of "breaking bread"). Scripture interprets it only as eating a meal, not as a Communion service.

**8. [I Corinthians 16:2](#):** "On the first day of the week let each one of you lay something aside, storing up as he may prosper that there be no collections when I come." Often we see this text printed on the little offering envelopes in the pews of churches, and many preach that this text sets Sunday as the time for taking up the church collection for doing God's work and paying the minister and church expenses.

This verse says nothing of the sort!

Verse 1 tells us what kind of collection is being made: "Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given orders to the churches of Galatia, so you must do also." First, it is a collection—not for the preacher, evangelism, or church expenses—but "for the saints." The members of the church in Jerusalem were suffering from drought and famine. They needed, not money, but *food*.

Notice that Paul had given similar instruction to other churches. He tells the Romans:

But now I am going to Jerusalem to minister to the saints. For it pleased those from Macedonia and Achaia [where Corinth is located] to make a certain contribution for the poor among the saints who are at Jerusalem. . . . Therefore, when I have performed this and have sealed to them this fruit, I shall go by way of you to Spain. ([Romans 15:25-28](#))

It was not money, but *fruit* that was being prepared for shipment to the poor saints at Jerusalem! The Greek word can also refer to grain, wine, and other produce that can be stored a long time without

spoiling.

In [I Corinthians 16:2](#), does Paul say they should give money at a church service? Not at all! He says, "Let each one of you lay something aside, storing up. . ." Note this! He is telling them to put something aside for a special use, to store it—at home! Why? Because Paul did not want there be any collecting done when he arrived. He wanted this gift for the Jerusalem church to be ready for shipment.

"And when I come, whomever you approve by your letters I will send to bear your gift to Jerusalem. But if it is fitting that I go also, they [more than one] will go with me" (verses 3-4). Apparently it was going to require several men to carry this collection, gathered and stored up, to Jerusalem. If it were a tithe or offering for the minister or to spread [the gospel](#), Paul could have carried the money alone.

Thus, once again, the first day of the week is a *workday*, a day for gathering fruit and food out of the orchards, fields, and gardens, and for storing it up. This labor was to be done on the first day as soon as the Sabbath was past!

Upon honest examination, not one of the texts speaking about "the first day of the week" sets it apart as a rest day. Not one makes it holy, calls it the Sabbath or by any other sacred title. In *every* case, the first day of the week was a common workday. In *none* of them was there a religious meeting and preaching service being held on the hours we now call Sunday. In *none* of them can we find a single shred of Bible authority for Sunday observance!

## What Is The True Sabbath of the New Testament?

Let us look briefly through the New Testament to find which day Paul kept and taught Gentile converts to keep.

**1. [Acts 13:14-15, 42-44](#):** "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 to them, saying, 'Men and brethren, if you have any word of exhortation for the people, say on.'"

Then Paul stands up and preaches [the gospel](#) to them. "And when the Jews went out of the synagogue, the Gentiles begged that these words might be preached to them the next Sabbath" (verse 42). Since Paul was preaching "[the grace of God](#)" (verse 43), here is his opportunity to explain to these Gentiles that the Sabbath was done away. But he does no such thing.

Why should he wait a whole week to preach to the Gentiles on the next Sabbath? If the day of worship had been changed to Sunday, why did Paul not tell them they would not have to wait a week, but the very next day, Sunday, was the proper day of worship?

Instead, "And the *next Sabbath* almost the whole city came together to hear the word of God" (verse 44). Here Paul waits a whole week, passing up a Sunday, to preach to the Gentiles on the Sabbath.

**2. [Acts 15:1-2, 14-21](#):** Certain men had come from Judea to Antioch, teaching that the Gentile converts must be circumcised and keep the law of [Moses](#) to be saved. Paul and Barnabas vigorously contested

this teaching. It was decided, then, that Paul and Barnabas should go to Jerusalem to seek counsel of the apostles and elders on this matter.

At the conference at Jerusalem, James gives the decision: "Therefore I judge . . . that we write to them to abstain from things polluted by idols, from sexual immorality, from things strangled, and from blood" (verses 19-20). Notice he does not say they should not keep the Ten Commandments—they were not even in question—but only the rite of circumcision, which is an altogether different law. He merely prohibits four common practices of Gentile religion.

James continues, "For Moses has had throughout many generations those who preach him in every city, being read in the synagogues every Sabbath" (verse 21). The writings of Moses were taught in the synagogues every Sabbath. Attendees heard [God's law](#) expounded every Sabbath and did not need further instruction. The apostles wrote this concise judgment, then, because *Gentile converts attended church on the Sabbath* and thus already knew what to keep! In addition, the apostles' letter does not reprove them in any way for keeping the Sabbath.

**3. [Acts 16:12-15](#):** Paul and Silas arrive in Philippi. "And we were staying in that city for some days. And *on the Sabbath day* we went out of the city to the riverside, where [prayer](#) was customarily made; and we sat down and spoke to the women who met there. Now a certain woman named Lydia heard us. She was a seller of purple from the city of Thyatira, who worshipped God. The Lord opened her heart to heed the things spoken by Paul. And . . . she and her household were baptized. . . ."

Here again Paul and his companions waited until the Sabbath, and then went to a place of worship and preached. This woman, probably a Gentile, was converted. The passage says it was customary to meet there on the Sabbath, just as it was Paul's custom to go to a place of prayer and worship when the Sabbath day came.

**4. [Acts 18:1-11](#):** "After these things Paul departed from Athens and went to Corinth. And found a certain Jew named Aquila . . . with his wife Priscilla . . . and he came to them. So, because he was of the same trade, he stayed with them and worked; for by occupation they were tentmakers. And he reasoned in the synagogue *every Sabbath*, and persuaded both Jews and Greeks."

If we could find one New Testament text giving as strong authority for Sunday observance as this one does for keeping the Sabbath, we would certainly have Bible authority for it! Here Paul worked weekdays, but went to church and taught Gentiles as well as Jews every Sabbath.

He preached the gospel of the Kingdom, but when the Jews became offended and blasphemed, he turned away from the Jews altogether. From then on he preached only to Gentiles (verse 6). He continued there a year and six months (verse 11), working weekdays and preaching every Sabbath just to the Gentiles!

To these Gentiles of Corinth, Paul commanded: "Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ" ([I Corinthians 11:1](#)). "Paul, as his custom was, went in to them, and for three Sabbaths reasoned with them from the Scriptures" ([Acts 17:2](#)). It was his customary practice to keep the Sabbath, as the Bible proves by its recording of eighty-four different Sabbaths Paul kept.

Did he imitate [Jesus](#) in this? Indeed! Jesus, "as His custom was . . . went into the synagogue *on the Sabbath day*" ([Luke 4:16](#)). Keeping the Sabbath was Jesus' custom. Paul followed Him, and commanded Gentile converts to follow him, just as he followed Christ. Should we not do the same?

## The Truth About Christian Fellowship

Only the true [Sabbath](#) day can be the day for assembled Christian [fellowship](#). [Jesus Christ](#) says, "I am the vine, you are the branches" ([John 15:5](#)). We are told to abide in Him (verse 4), or, spiritually, we can do nothing. A grape branch cannot produce grapes unless joined to the vine.

Next, notice the basis of Christian fellowship in [I John 1:3](#), 6-7:

... that which we have seen and heard we declare to 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 [disobey [God](#)], we lie and do not practice the [truth](#). But if we walk in the light [obey God] as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.

We can have true Christian fellowship only when each individual Christian is joined to Christ and to the Father, as a branch of a grapevine joined to the vine.

Now what joins the many branches of that vine to one another? When people meet on their own human-appointed day, trying to join themselves together in a church group, Christ is not present with them in that fellowship. He never put *His presence* in that day! Such people are like a bunch of grape branches, cut off from the vine, trying to join themselves together!

How does Jesus Christ put His presence in His Sabbath? On that day He *rested* and was refreshed, and He blessed that day, set it apart for holy use and purpose as His day. He hallowed it and made it *holy time*. And how did He make it holy? Christ's presence makes holy whatever or wherever He is ([Exodus 3:4-5](#)), just as we can be holy if Christ's presence by the [Holy Spirit](#) is within us. Thus, Christ's presence in the Sabbath makes that space of time holy.

So His very presence is in His day. When God's own obedient children, each joined to Christ assemble on His holy day, they actually have fellowship with Christ. He is there in their midst, in Spirit! Then Christ joins them together in fellowship with Him and the Father!

When people assemble on a day other than one set apart by God, Christ's presence is not in that day!

What about public or church-group worship in a weekly service on Sunday or Friday? The Bible says: "God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship Him in spirit and truth" ([John 4: 24](#)). The churches of [this world](#) say, "[Worship God](#) according to the dictates of your own conscience"—totally contrary to what God says!

How does one worship God in spirit and in truth? Jesus says plainly: "Your word is truth" ([John 17:17](#)). God's Word is the Bible, and the Bible authorizes only the Sabbath as God's weekly holy day for assembly and worship. There is no biblical authority to [worship on Sunday](#). To worship God in spirit and in truth is to worship Him how and when (so far as congregational assembly is concerned) He says in His Word, which is the truth.

We find in [Leviticus 23:2-3](#) that God sets apart the Sabbath day as "a holy convocation," which means a commanded assembly. He sets apart as the day for congregational assembly the one day that identifies the God whom we are to worship! No other day can fulfill that great and glorious purpose!

Does it make any difference which day or whether we, as Christians, keep the Sabbath? It certainly does! The Bible definition of a Christian is one who has received the gift of God's Holy Spirit, and is being led by the Spirit of God ([Romans 8:9-11](#), 14). In other words, Christ in us is our [hope](#) of glory ([Colossians 1:27](#))! The Holy Spirit is the life-imparting Spirit that emanates from the very Person of the Father and of Christ! The Holy Spirit in us gives us, not only the [love](#), power, [faith](#), and life of Jesus Christ, but also His mind ([Philippians 2:5](#); [I Corinthians 2:10-16](#)).

It means, literally, that Christ Himself is in us, not in Person, but in spirit ([Galatians 2:20](#)). Jesus Christ is a Savior who literally comes inside us—in our minds—to clean us up and save us from within! It means that Jesus Christ is living His life within us!

Now if Jesus Christ is in us—and we are not a truly converted Christians unless He is!—will He, in us, profane His holy day and observe a pagan day?

Impossible!

Jesus Christ has not changed. He is the same yesterday, today, and forever ([Hebrews 13:8](#)). He made the Sabbath by resting on that very first Sabbath! Christ spoke to the Israelites about the Sabbath ([Exodus 16](#)). He kept the Sabbath as His custom ([Luke 4:16](#)). Jesus Christ has always put His Presence in His own holy day! If Christ is in us, He will keep no other day!

God gives His Holy Spirit only to those who obey Him ([Acts 5:32](#)). The conditions to receiving the Holy Spirit as God's gift are to [repent](#) and [be baptized](#) ([Acts 2:38](#)). [Sin](#) is the transgression of [God's law](#) ([I John 3:4](#)), which is spiritual ([Romans 7:14](#)). The penalty for transgressing that law is *death for all eternity* ([Romans 6:23](#))! The [fourth commandment](#) of God's law instructs us to "remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy"!

There are no loopholes! There is no escape for those who disobey! God's laws are enforced automatically! We are dealing with the Almighty God on this question of keeping the Sabbath!

God is love! God loves mankind. God loves each individual! God made His Sabbath holy for a purpose: to keep us in His fellowship, that is, to keep us in a loving relationship with Him! It is truly wonderful!

It keeps us in Christ's own fellowship—in close contact. It bestows upon us His security, [peace](#) of mind, happiness, and abundant living!

The Sabbath command is a spiritual command. It has to do with our fellowship, assembly, and worship of God. This is why the Sabbath was made for man—as a blessing! God created it to be enjoyed, to refresh us spiritually, in blessed fellowship and communion with Jesus Christ our Lord!

It takes living faith to obey God! Now it is up to you!