



GOD'S
HOLY
SABBATH

{Does God Require Sabbath Observance?}

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INTRODUCTION

Does God require Christians to keep the Sabbath? Or has the Sabbath been abolished under the terms of the New Covenant? Does it really matter which day you choose to keep holy? Can you play golf on the Sabbath or go to the office for just a few hours without violating the Sabbath law? If people observe the Sabbath, are they to be considered legalists? Just how important is the Sabbath to God?

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Whose Opinion Matters?

Muslims observe Friday, religious Jews observe Saturday, and most professing Christians observe Sunday. Some people keep whatever day THEY choose as the Sabbath. Is it acceptable in God's eyes to take to oneself the authority to make a day, any day, holy?

Truth often flies out the door when overcome by human reasoning. Truth IS truth, however; and the truth about the Sabbath may surprise you! That truth is, Jesus Christ and the entire first century Church kept the seventh-day Sabbath...they did not keep Sunday...they kept the Saturday

Sabbath! In fact, Jesus Christ and the true Apostles never taught anyone to observe Sunday as the Sabbath of God! The fact that early New Testament Christians were seventh-day Sabbath keepers is a biblical and historical fact, one not even disputed by the Roman Catholic Church -- the largest Christian church in the World.

Still, people endlessly argue about Sabbath observance. Is the New Testament Sabbath Saturday or Sunday? Can you work on the Sabbath? Can you play at sports and watch TV on the Sabbath? Can you keep any day you choose "holy" so long as you observe one day in seven as a Sabbath?

The only source that can be considered authoritative enough to settle these questions is God's word -- the HOLY Bible. This booklet will take a candid look at the word of God to see what God's thinking is on the subject of Sabbath observance. God's Word will tell us what God thinks about it, and we will keep our human reasoning in check as we seek to understand this vital subject.

So now, let's take an unbiased look at what the Bible says concerning the question of Sabbath observance.

Jesus Kept the Sabbath

If you believe Jesus Christ is your savior, then all that really matters to you is what He believes about Sabbath observance. Human opinion on this matter will carry no weight whatsoever. What will be foremost in your mind is the example Jesus Christ set, not the example of others; unless, of course, their example follows after Christ.

So now we come to the question, What day did Christ keep as the Sabbath, and did He ever teach that the Sabbath was done away? Our actions reveal our beliefs. This was true of Jesus Christ. We can simply see from His actions what day He sanctified for Sabbath observance. Luke, chapter 4, tells us the following:

“So He (Jesus) came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up. And as His custom was, He went into the synagogue on the Sabbath Day, and stood up to read.” (Luke 4:16)

The Bible clearly shows that Jesus’ custom was to observe the Sabbath, attending services in the synagogue. He did this on the seventh day of the week...on Saturday...while in a synagogue, rising up to read a passage from the book of Isaiah. It was a message about setting people at liberty from bondage and the consequences of sin. If Jesus’ desire had been to do away with the Sabbath, this would have been an opportune time. Let’s see if He told the people they no longer needed to keep the Sabbath:

“And He was handed the book of the prophet Isaiah. And when He opened the book, He found the place where it was written: “The spirit of the Lord is upon Me, Because He has anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor, He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, To preach deliverance to the captives And recovery of sight to the blind, To set at liberty those who are oppressed, To preach the acceptable year of the LORD.” (Luke 4:18-19)

After reading this passage, Jesus returned the book to the rabbi and sat down. He did not mention anything about changing the Sabbath or annulling the Sabbath command.

If Jesus Christ had determined to do away with the fourth commandment, an identifying sign of the Jewish people, it certainly could be found in scripture somewhere. The plain truth is that you can search all the gospel accounts and NEVER find where Jesus said: “You don’t have to keep the Sabbath anymore;” or, “The Sabbath commandment will be nailed to the cross when I die;” or, “After my death you may change the Sabbath from the seventh day of the week to the first day of the week or to any day YOU choose.”

Is Jesus Our Sabbath Rest?

Many self-proclaiming Christians believe Jesus Christ is somehow a replacement for the Sabbath, that He is our “Sabbath rest”. But nowhere can you find a scripture that says, Jesus Christ replaced the Sabbath with anything... especially Himself.

Certainly Jesus had MANY opportunities to teach that the seventh-day Sabbath had been done away. Instead, Jesus emphatically stated that He was “Lord of the Sabbath” (Luke 6:5). His statement confirms that the Sabbath was and still is in force. A good question to ask is, How could He be the Lord of the Sabbath, if He was doing away with the Sabbath?

Did Jesus Change His Father’s Law?

Many view God the Father as a harsh, unforgiving, pedantic God. Yet His son, Jesus Christ, is seen as being gentle, forgiving, and tolerant. The Bible tells us that Jesus Christ

and the Father are the same in character and behavior. One is not harsh and the other gentle. Both the Father and the Son have perfectly balanced character. They manifest high standards like forgiveness, love and firmness. They are consistent in character and purpose.

In the book of Malachi God says, *“For I am the Lord, I do not change”* (Malachi 3:6). Would God proclaim His commandments in Exodus the twentieth chapter only to do away with them later? Is God fickle like a human? Certainly not! With God there is no double-mindedness, no “shadow of turning” (James 1:17). God is a perfect example of consistency: His character does not change. The Ten Commandments, including the Sabbath, are immutable!

Jesus said to Philip: *“Have I been with you so long, and yet you have not known Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; so how can you say, ‘Show us the Father’? Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father in Me? The words that I speak to you I do not speak on My own authority; but the Father who dwells in Me does the works.”* (John 14:9-10)

Jesus and the Father are one in character and purpose. Christ did not come to do away with His Father’s commandments! He came to MAGNIFY the Law of His Father. Christ taught the true intent of the Law. He taught that we should keep the law physically and SPIRITUALLY. This teaching applied to the Sabbath Day.

Jesus said, *“...as My Father taught Me, I speak these things”* (John 8:28). Jesus did not teach a different set of laws that

opposed the teachings of His Father. When a rich young ruler came to Jesus, he asked: *“Good teacher, what good thing shall I do that I may have eternal life? So He said to him, ... if you want to enter into life, keep the commandments”* (Matthew 19:16-17). Jesus plainly stated that those who will be given eternal life must strive to keep the commandments of His Father, all of them.

Who is our Savior...Jesus or the Law?

None of the laws of God can save you. Only Jesus Christ fulfills the role of savior. Does that mean we are now free to break the law, including the Sabbath law? God forbid! Jesus said, *“one jot or one tittle will BY NO MEANS pass from the law.”* (Matthew 5:18)

It is true that we are under grace if we have repented of our sins and accepted Jesus Christ as our personal savior, but grace does not give us permission to break God's law. Paul asserts that faith does not abolish the law: *“Do we then make void the law through faith? Certainly not! On the contrary, we ESTABLISH the law.”* (Romans 3:31)

Some 50 years after Jesus Christ died, the Apostle John upheld the law of God as a standard of right conduct. He said, *“For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome”* (I John 5:3). So why would a perfect God give us a law that men have generally come to believe is burdensome?

Is the Sabbath a Yoke of Bondage?

God loves mankind! He gave us the seventh-day Sabbath for a much needed day of rest from our labor. To rest is not a burden; rest is pleasurable and restorative. Another and even more important purpose of the Sabbath is to give us the opportunity to worship God as a family and as a Church. The Sabbath is intended to be a delight. In Isaiah, chapter 58, we are told:

“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.” (Isaiah 58:13)

Many students of the Bible do not realize that it was Sabbath breaking, along with committing idolatry, which caused God to punish Israel and Judah with war, pestilence, famine, and captivity. God took Sabbath breaking very seriously; so should you! The lessons of ancient Israel are not just antiquated stories that have no meaning for us today. What happened to them was written down as a warning for New Testament Christians. Paul makes this very clear in I Corinthians 10:11 where he says, *“Now all these things happened to them as EXAMPLES, and they were written for our admonition, on whom the ends of the ages have come.”* We are wise to heed the lessons of why ancient Israel and Judah were punished by God.

Scribes and Pharisees Distort Sabbath Observance

In Jesus' day the scribes and Pharisees made the Sabbath a burden by imposing MAN-MADE rules on the people. They rebuked Christ and his disciples for walking through a field of grain, plucking grain to eat on the Sabbath. Christ pointed out to his accusers that David and his men, when fleeing from Saul, ate bread that was only given to the priests to eat. Christ said David and His men were blameless in their actions (Matthew 12:1-8). Why were they blameless? Because, in such unusual situations, God's mercy trumps the ceremonial law. That is why Christ said: "But if you had known what this means, 'I desire mercy and not sacrifice,' you would not have condemned the guiltless. For the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath." (Matthew 12:7-8)

The legalistic approach to keeping the Sabbath that was promulgated by the Pharisees made the Sabbath oppressive, something God never intended. Christ rebuked them for teaching the doctrines and commandments of men, and for distorting the true intention of the law: "...in vain they worship Me, Teaching as doctrines the commandments of men." (Mark 7:7)

The traditions of the elders had clashed with the very laws given to them by their creator, their God. Jesus confronted the Pharisees regarding their perverting of the Sabbath Law; then He restored the true meaning of the Sabbath. He made it clear how the Sabbath was to be kept: He did NOT do away with the Sabbath.

God's Sabbath remains permanent; just as the heavens and the earth remain permanent. Jesus said, *"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"* (Matthew 5:17-19). There is a very definite reward for those who continue to teach observance of the seventh-day Sabbath!

Who Changed the Sabbath to Sunday?

If Jesus Christ never changed the Sabbath, who did? Did God give someone the authority to change the Sabbath from Saturday to Sunday?

Many would say the Sabbath is still in effect, but that it was changed from the seventh day of the week to the first day of the week -- Sunday. The vast majority of Christian churches teach the observance of a Sunday Sabbath. How did this happen? History plainly reveals that it happened many years after the death of the apostles when a newly emerging, politically motivated, apostate religious system attacked the seventh-day Sabbath, changing the Sabbath to Sunday.

Jesus Christ kept the seventh-day Sabbath; the Apostles kept the seventh-day Sabbath; and the New Testament Church kept the seventh-day Sabbath. It was not until three centuries after the death of Christ that Emperor Constantine convened the Council of Nicaea in order to work toward abolishing the Saturday Sabbath. The Catholic AND her Protestant-

daughter churches recognize that the New Testament Church kept the seventh-day Sabbath:

Notice what mainstream churches teach concerning changing the Sabbath from Saturday to Sunday:

From the Writings of the Catholic Church:

“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 sanctified.”--- *James Cardinal Gibbons, Faith of Our Fathers, 88th ed., pp89.*

“The abandonment of the Sabbath and the adoption of Sunday as the Lord’s Day, are the result of an interplay of Christian, Jewish and pagan religious factors.” --- *Vincenzo Monachino, S.J., Chairman of the Church History Department, Pontifical Gregorian University, June 29, 1977.*

“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, which 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.” --- *Catholic Virginian, October 3, 1947, p.9 art “To Tell You the Truth.”*

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

“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.

“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.---It is always somewhat laughable, to see Protestant churches, in pulpit and legislation, demand the observance of Sunday, of which there is nothing in their Bible.” --- *Peter R. Kramer, Catholic Church Extension Society (1975), Chicago, Illinois*

“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.*

“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, in the sixth century.” --- “*Yes, I Condemned the Catholic Church*” (*Supreme Council, Knights of Columbus*), page 4.

From the Writings of the Baptist Church:

“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 as a religious day, as we learn from the Christian Fathers and other sources. But what a pity that it comes branded with the mark of paganism, and christened with the name of the sun god, when adopted and sanctioned by the papal apostasy, and bequeathed as a sacred legacy to Protestantism!” --- *Dr. Edward T. Hiscox, author of “The Baptist Manual,” in a paper read before a New York ministers’ conference held Nov. 13, 1893.*

“We believe that the law of God is the eternal and unchangeable rule of His moral government.” --- *“Baptist Church Manual,” Art. 12.*

“The first four commandments set forth man’s obligations directly toward God... But when we keep the first four commandments, we are likely to keep the other six... The fourth commandment sets forth God’s claim on man’s time and thought... The six days of labour and the rest on the Sabbath are to be maintained as a witness to God’s toil and rest in the creation... Not one of the ten words is of merely racial significance... The Sabbath was established originally (long before Moses) in no special connection with the Hebrews, but as an institution for all mankind, in commemoration of God’s rest after the six days of creation.

It was designed for all the descendants of Adam.” --- *Adult Quarterly, Southern Baptist Convention series, Aug. 15, 1937.*

“It may be that Jesus gave them an explicit command so to do [to change the Sabbath from the seventh day to the first; but of this we have no revelation.” --- *C. C. A. WALLACE. “What Baptists Believe,” page 167.*

From the Writings of the Methodist Church:

“In the days of very long ago the people of the world began to give names to everything, and they turned the sounds of the lips into words, so that the lips could speak a thought. In those days the people worshipped the sun because many words were made to tell of many thoughts about many things. The people became Christians and were ruled by an emperor whose name was Constantine. This emperor made Sunday the Christian Sabbath, because of the blessing of light and heat which came from the sun. So our Sunday is a sun-day, isn't it?” --- *Sunday School Advocate, Dec. 31, 1921.*

“This ‘handwriting of ordinances’ our Lord did blot out, take away, and nail to His cross. (Colossians 2: 14.) But the moral law contained in the Ten Commandments, and enforced by the prophets, He did not take away... The moral law stands on an entirely different foundation from the ceremonial or ritual law. ... Every part of this law must remain in force upon all mankind and in all ages.” --- *JOHN WESLEY, “Sermons on Several Occasions,” 2-Vol. Edition, Vol. I, pages 221, 222.*

From the Writings of the Presbyterian Church:

“God instituted the Sabbath at the creation of man, setting apart the seventh day for the purpose, and imposed its observance as a universal and perpetual moral obligation upon the race.” --- *American Presbyterian Board of Publication, Tract No. 175.*

“The observance of the seventh-day Sabbath did not cease till it was abolished after the [Roman] empire became Christian,” --- *American Presbyterian Board of Publication, Tract No. 118.*

From the Writings of the Church of England:

“Not any ecclesiastical writer of the first three centuries attributed the origin of Sunday observance either to Christ or to His apostles.” --- *SIR WILLIAM DOMVILLE, “Examination of the Six Texts,” pages 6, 7. (Supplement).*

“Where are we told in Scripture 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 church has enjoined it.” --- *ISAAC WILLIAMS, B.D., “Plain Sermons on the Catechism,” Vol. I, pages 334-336.*

“There is no recorded word of Christ, there is no word of any of the apostles, which tells how we should keep Sunday, or indeed that we should keep it at all. It is disappointing, for it would make our task much easier if we could point to a definite rule, which left us no option but simple obedience or disobedience. . . . There is no rule for Sunday observance, either in Scripture or history.” --- *DR. STEPHEN, Bishop of Newcastle, N.S.W., in an address reported in the Newcastle Morning Herald, May 14, 1924.*

From the Moody Bible Institute:

“The Sabbath was binding in Eden, and it has been in force ever since. This fourth commandment begins with the word ‘remember,’ showing that the Sabbath already existed when God wrote the law on the tables of stone at Sinai. How can men claim that this one commandment has been done away with when they will admit that the other nine are still binding?”

“Saturday is my day of rest because I generally preach on Sunday, and I look forward to it as a boy does to a holiday. God knows what we need.” --- *D.L. MOODY, “Weighed and Wanting,” page 47.*

Why Do Protestants Keep the Sabbath?

So why do Protestants keep the Sabbath? They do so because their mother church -- the Roman Catholic church -- changed the Sabbath to Sunday. The change from the seventh-day Sabbath to the Sunday Sabbath occurred long

after the writing of the New Testament. No clear reference to Sunday observance occurs in writing until A.D. 135!

The New Testament Church Kept the Sabbath

If Jesus wanted the Sabbath to be changed to Sunday, then surely we could find evidence of such a change in the New Testament scriptures. Abolishing or changing one of God's Commandments is a very serious matter! Certainly such a change would appear in a multitude of passages in the New Testament; and such a radical change in God's word would be made crystal clear. If the Apostles had abolished the Sabbath law, they would have supported their decision with an abundance of scriptures that demonstrated their authority to make such changes. But there are no scriptures that speak of altering God's law. Instead, the Bible affirms the Sabbath doctrine, and it teaches people how to keep the spirit of the law as well as the letter of the law.

Paul's Custom

Yet, some will argue the Apostle Paul taught the Sabbath had been done away. But once again, there is no scriptural proof Paul released the Church from keeping God's holy Sabbath. To the contrary, scripture tells us plainly that the Apostle Paul was a Sabbath keeper:

*"Then Paul as his custom was, went in to them, and for three Sabbaths reasoned with them from the scriptures," (Acts 17:2).
"But when they departed from Perga, they came to Antioch in Pisidia, and went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day and*

sat down.” (Acts 13:14). “And on the Sabbath day we went out of the city to the river-side, where prayer was customarily made; and we sat down and spoke to the women who met there.” (Acts 16:13). “And he [Paul], went into the synagogue and spoke boldly for three months, reasoning and persuading concerning the things of the kingdom of God.” (Acts 19:8).

The meeting places most often mentioned in the book of Acts for Christian gatherings are the temple (Acts 2:46), the synagogue (Acts 9:20), and private homes (Acts 5:42). God’s church frequently met in these places on the Sabbath day. But still, many today will ask: “But didn’t the Resurrection of Christ validate Sunday observance?”

Was the Resurrection on Sunday?

It is commonly assumed that Jesus Christ died on Friday and was resurrected on Sunday morning. The reasoning then follows that we should now keep the Sabbath on Sunday in honor of the resurrection. It may be shocking for you to learn that this conclusion is not supported in the New Testament record! In fact, none of the Apostles, including the Apostle Paul, taught that the celebration of the Sabbath was to take place on the first day of the week because of a Sunday resurrection. This reasoning, however sincere, is unscriptural.

To better understand this, it is important to realize that Jesus Christ said the only sign (supernatural proof) he would give to confirm He was the Messiah was that He would be three days and three nights in the grave. Jesus said, *“An evil and adulterous nation 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.” (Matthew 12:39-40)

Can we know for certain, or must we speculate on how many hours make up a day and how many hours make up a night? Does the Bible leave this definition open to debate? Christ said He would be in the heart of the earth for a specific period of time. Did He fulfill that time period?

Jonah 1:17 plainly states: *“And Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights.”* The Old Testament was written in Hebrew. Scholars acknowledge the phrase *“three days and three nights”* translated from the Hebrew language means a period of seventy-two hours. The Hebrew language does not allow you to waffle, declaring three days and three nights to be a much shorter period of time. A day had twelve hours, and a night had twelve hours. For Christ to be in the tomb three days and three nights, he had, according to the Hebrew, to be in the tomb a full seventy-two hours. Christ, Himself, was quoted as saying in John 11:9-10: *“Are there not TWELVE HOURS in a day?...But if a man walk in the night, he stumbles, because the light is not in him.”*

72 Hours in the Tomb

As already mentioned, it is commonly supposed that Jesus Christ was crucified on Friday, and the resurrection from the dead occurred at sunrise on “Easter” Sunday. But wait a moment! There is something wrong with this picture. You cannot fit three days and three nights into the timeframe of a Friday afternoon death and a Sunday morning resurrection.

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.”* If Christ was not in the grave three days and three nights, He would have contradicted the only sign He gave his followers that He was the Messiah. Do you believe Him?

If Jesus had been killed on Friday, counting three days and three nights would dictate a Monday, late afternoon resurrection. Read your Bible! Using the process of counting, there is absolutely no way you can squeeze three days and three nights between Friday afternoon and Sunday morning.

As stated before, Jesus Christ said, *“Are there not twelve hours in a day...but if a man walk in the night, he stumbles”* (John 11: 9-10). Three days (3 x 12 hours) is 36 hours. Three nights (3 x 12 hours) is 36 hours. When you add up three days and three nights you get 72 hours, or three, complete, twenty-four-hour days.

One more bit of evidence that Christ was in the grave the full length of time (72 hours -- three days and three nights) is found in the book of I Corinthians 15:3-4 which says: *“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.”* A Wednesday, late-afternoon crucifixion and a late-day Saturday resurrection fit the biblical narrative, perfectly.

Crucified in the Middle of the Week

The Bible tells us plainly the crucifixion occurred on the preparation day before the Sabbath (Matt. 27:62; Mark 15:42). This is where so many people become confused. The Sabbath spoken of in this context was NOT a weekly Saturday Sabbath. It was an annual festival Sabbath [a High Day, (see John 19:31)].

Jews will tell you that there are special days (Sabbaths), to be observed on an annual basis (see Leviticus 23). These annual days were also called Sabbaths (Leviticus 16:31; Leviticus 23:24, 26-32, 39). The preparation day for this High Sabbath fell on a Wednesday -- the middle of the week -- that year. Christ's body was taken down from the stake by Joseph of Arimathaea and placed in a tomb...BEFORE Thursday...the High Sabbath Day...began.

For most of the next three days, Christ was in the grave... Thursday, Friday, and Saturday. Then, late in the day, just before sunset (the time when days end and begin in the Bible) on the regular Sabbath (Saturday), Christ came out of his grave, His mission accomplished, having spent three days and three nights in the "*heart of the earth*" (Matthew 12:40), just as He had foretold (Mark 9:31 and John 2:19-21). The Easter myth of a Sunday resurrection collapses in light of these facts.

As further proof of this, it is worthwhile to take a look at the actions of those who were close to Jesus and wished to

make sure of his proper burial. According to Mark 15:47, Mary Magdalene and another woman named Mary observed where Joseph of Arimathaea laid the body of Jesus. It was Wednesday, and Joseph had gone to Pontius Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus; then he purchased fine linen, wrapped Christ's body in the linen, and placed the body in the tomb, closing it over with a very large stone. All this had to be done before the start of the annual Sabbath. The women observed where the body was laid, then left. It was close to sunset and the annual Sabbath was about to begin. In Mark 16:1 we learn that Mary Magdalene did not buy spices to anoint Jesus' body until after the High Day (annual Sabbath) had passed.

After the annual Sabbath had ended (which had lasted from Wednesday sunset until Thursday sunset), Mary bought and prepared the spices. She did this on Friday, the preparation day for the regular weekly Sabbath. Then she rested on the weekly Sabbath, Saturday, according to the commandment.

Not a Sunday Morning Resurrection!

If you take a careful look at the events of Mark 16, you will find that Mary Magdalene, along with some other women, arrived at Christ's tomb "AS the sun was rising, (see Mark 16:2, KJV)" "When it was yet dark" (see John 20:1) on Sunday morning, only to find Jesus Body was not there. He had ALREADY risen, and an angel, sitting in the tomb, told them He was not there. The very large stone that covered the entrance to the tomb had already been rolled away! The body of Jesus was gone (Mark 16:6; Matthew 28:5-6). His

resurrection from the dead had taken place, as explained earlier, as the seventh-day Sabbath was coming to its close.

A change from Sabbath to Sunday worship can not be justified by these events. Unfortunately, most Christians do not understand the sequence of events leading up to and following the resurrection because they forget that Jesus and the disciples kept the annual Sabbaths (Leviticus 23) as well as the weekly Sabbath (Luke 4:16). A comparison of Luke 23:56 with John 19:31 proves there were two Sabbaths that week -- an annual Sabbath [The High Day (Leviticus 23:6-7)] which fell on a Thursday and a weekly Saturday Sabbath. There is nothing in any of these accounts to warrant a change of Sabbath keeping from Saturday to Sunday.

Did Paul Keep the Law?

Many ministers in this world persist in their argument, saying Paul taught the Sabbath was part of the ceremonial law that was nailed to the cross. Such a conclusion is a distortion of the truth! Two decades after the death of Jesus Christ, Paul said: *“for not the hearers of the law are just in the sight of God, but the doers of the law will be justified.”* (Romans 2:13)

The Apostle Paul taught Gentile Christians it was their duty to keep the commandments of God. In I Corinthians 7:19 Paul tells the members at Corinth (remember Corinth was a predominately Gentile church) *“Circumcision is nothing and uncircumcision is nothing, but keeping the commandments of God is what matters.”*

Paul upheld the law as a standard of right conduct, saying: *“Therefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy and just and good”* (Romans 7:12). In verse 22 of the same chapter Paul says, *“For I delight in the law of God according to the inward man.”*

Those who rush to the conclusion that faith in Jesus Christ annuls the law are making a grave mistake. Faith in the sacrifice of Jesus Christ is of the utmost importance, but that faith does not abolish the law of God. Paul is very clear about the need to keep the law, as we continue to live by faith: *“Do we then make void the law through faith? Certainly not! On the contrary, we establish the law.”* (Romans 3:31)

In Acts 21, Paul was greeted by James and the other elders as he came to visit the Jerusalem church. Accused by non-Christian Jews of teaching against circumcision and the customs of the Jews, James and the elders at Jerusalem encouraged Paul to pay for four men who were just completing the term of their vow. This was done so that the Jews outside the Church would see that Paul walked orderly, and kept the law. James and the elders would not have asked Paul to do something that was hypocritical. Paul did not pretend to keep the law just to please the Jews. Paul actually kept God’s law in the letter and the spirit. Notice this fact as revealed in Acts 21: 21-24:

“...but they have been informed about you [Paul] that you teach all the Jews who are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, saying that they ought not to circumcise their children nor to walk according to the customs. What then? The assembly must certainly meet, for they will hear that you have come. Therefore do what we tell you: We have four men who have taken a vow. Take them and be purified with them, and pay their expenses

so that they may shave their heads, and that all may know that those things of which they were informed concerning you are nothing, but that you yourself also walk orderly and KEEP THE LAW.”

Jews Never Accused Paul of Breaking the Sabbath

In Acts 24, we find Paul defending himself before the Roman governor Felix. Many Jews were angry about Paul teaching that Gentiles did not need to be circumcised to receive salvation; but they NEVER accused Paul of breaking the Sabbath. Take notice of this important point, it is CRUCIAL!

When defending himself before Felix, Paul stated: *“But this I confess to you, that according to the Way which they call a sect, so I worshipped the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the Law and in the Prophets”* (Acts 24:14). The Law and the Prophets taught seventh-day Sabbath observance. Paul believed that the seventh-day Sabbath was binding on all Christians, Jew and Gentile alike.

Is the Sabbath Only for the Jews?

Now we come to a common misconception. Many believe the Sabbath and the annual Sabbaths (or Holy Days) are Jewish, to be kept by the Jews only. This reasoning concludes with the notion that since many Christians are Gentiles, they do not need to keep the Sabbath. This type of thinking is in error!

Jesus Christ claimed He was “*Lord of the Sabbath*” and that, “*the Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath*” (Mark 2:27,28). Notice what Jesus did NOT say. He did *not* say, “The Sabbath was made *only* for the Jews.” He did not say, “The Sabbath will be voided after I die.” He did not say, “The Sabbath can be kept on any day a person chooses.” Instead, He said: “the Sabbath was made FOR MAN.”

In Leviticus 23, God inspired Moses to write about the Feasts of the Lord. Notice, He does not call them the Feasts of the Jews, or the Feasts of the Israelites, but the Feasts of the Lord: “*Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: The feasts of the LORD, which you shall proclaim to be holy convocations, these are My feasts.*” God calls them, MY Feasts. They belong to Him! They were made for man, but they belong to Him. They do not belong only to the Jews.

In verse 3 of Leviticus 23, the first Feast that God mentions is the Sabbath. Yes, the Sabbath is a *Feast day*. It should be a time of rejoicing! It is God’s day. He owns that day, and has designated it as HOLY. On that day, we do not do our own pleasure. It is a divinely appointed time when we are to honor our God (see Isaiah 58:13).

Jews and Gentiles will keep the Sabbath

Still, some will say that Gentiles do not need to observe the Sabbath. However, when Jesus Christ returns and sets up His Father’s kingdom, we are told that ALL flesh will worship God on the Sabbath:

“And it shall come to pass that from one New Moon to another, And from one Sabbath to another, ALL flesh shall come to

worship before Me, says the LORD.” (Isaiah 66:23)

“All” means everybody, both Jews and Gentiles. What your church teaches, or what your friends believe will be of no consequence to Him as you stand before Him to give account of your life: *“For it is written: ‘As I live, says the LORD, Every knee shall bow to Me, and every tongue shall confess to God.’ So then each of us shall give account of himself to God.” (Romans 14:11-12)*

The Sabbath and the New Covenant

Some theologians argue the Sabbath has been abolished under the terms of what is called the New Covenant. This is a contradiction of what the Bible clearly says. The Sabbath is one of the core commandments of God. And under the terms of the New Covenant, God actually writes His commandments, including the Sabbath command, in our minds and on our hearts. Read what the Bible says regarding 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) This means that God’s people will be given both a will and a desire to keep God’s laws.

Under the New Covenant, the Ten Commandments do not change. There is, however, a change from the Old Covenant to the New Covenant concerning the law. During the time of the Old Covenant, the law of God was written on two

tablets of stone and was taught to the people (Deuteronomy 6:13). Under the terms of the New Covenant, the laws are put in the minds and written on the hearts of God's people:

“Behold the days are coming, says the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the House of Israel and with the house of Judah—But this is the covenant that I will make with the House of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I WILL PUT MY LAW IN THEIR MINDS, AND WRITE IT ON THEIR HEARTS: and I will be their God and they shall be My people.” (Jeremiah 31:31, 33)

With these scriptures in mind, it is clear the New Covenant includes Sabbath observance.

Sabbath Observance in the Kingdom of God?

Isaiah 66:22-23 describes the time in the future when God's Kingdom will be on this earth. Clearly, this passage informs us of what will take place in that coming Kingdom. Notice that the Sabbath will be the official day of worship in God's Kingdom:

“For as the new heavens and the new earth Which I will make shall remain before Me,” says the LORD, ‘So shall your descendants and your name remain. And it shall come to pass That from one New Moon to another, and from ONE SABBATH TO ANOTHER, all flesh shall come to worship before Me,’ says the Lord.” (Isaiah 66:23,24)

The people who are alive when Christ reigns on the earth will come up to worship in Jerusalem on the weekly and annual Sabbaths. Speaking of the relationship Israel will have

with Him, God says, *“Likewise the people of the land shall worship at the entrance to this gateway (inner court gateway of the newly built temple), before the LORD on the SABBATHS and the New Moons.”* (Ezekiel 46:3)

God is consistent (Malachi 3:6). Moses kept the Sabbath, David observed the Sabbath, Nehemiah observed the Sabbath, Christ kept the Sabbath, Paul kept the Sabbath and the people in the Kingdom of God will keep the seventh-day Sabbath.

Only God Can Make a Day Holy

One argument some make regarding Sabbath observance is that God allows people to unilaterally decide what day they may keep holy to Him, whether that day is Saturday, Sunday, or even Wednesday.

Open your Bible and read Genesis 2:2-3: *“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.”*

God is our great Creator. He put His presence into the seventh day of the week, making ONLY that day holy. To sanctify means to set apart for holy use. It is important to note that at creation all the other days of the week were simply numbered: the first day, the second day, the third day, etc. Only the seventh day was given a special title (Exodus 20:8-11). It is the *SABBATH DAY*. It is actually blasphemous for humans to say that they can make a day -- or anything

else -- holy, simply because they are Christians. Only God can make a day holy, by putting His presence into that day.

The Identity of the British and American People in Prophecy

It has been said, “truth is stranger than fiction.” Certainly, the truth of the identity of the British and American people (those of largely European descent) is an astounding story. If you haven’t done so already, request our free booklet, *The United States and Britain in Prophecy*, to discover their true identity. Historians refer to the House of Israel as the “LOST TEN TRIBES” of Israel. Secular history may have lost track of the tribes of Israel, as they were scattered into captivity, but God never has lost track of His people.

The descendants of God’s people, Israel, are present in the world today...One simply has to know how to identify them. The Bible tells us regarding these people: *“For surely I will command, and will sift the House of Israel among all nations, As grain is sifted in a sieve; Yet not the smallest grain shall fall to the ground”* (Amos 9: 9). Now, don’t make the mistake most people make in thinking all Israelites are Jews. Let’s briefly take a look at history to discover the Kingdom of Israel was split into two separate kingdoms, *THE HOUSE OF JUDAH and THE HOUSE OF ISRAEL*.

After the death of Solomon, the unified nation of Israel (composed of the 12 tribes of Israel) fractured. King Rehoboam, the son of Solomon, continued the high taxation policy of his father Solomon. Most of the tribes of Israel

seceded over the matter of this high taxation. You may read the story of this secession in I Kings 12. Notice that the House of Judah was on the verge of going to war against the House of Israel (I Kings 12:21). The House of Israel and the house of Judah became two separate people.

Not All Israelites Are from the Tribe of Judah

The Tribe of Judah, along with the tribes of Benjamin and Levi formed the nation called the HOUSE OF JUDAH. Their capital was Jerusalem. The other tribes -- Ephraim, Manasseh, Dan, Naphtali, Gad, Asher, Issachar, Zebulun, Reuben, and Simeon -- rebelled against the ruling House of Judah and became known as the HOUSE OF ISRAEL. Their capital was the city of Samaria in the territory to the north of Judah.

Sabbath Breaking Leads to National Captivity

History tells us that God punished the House of Israel by the hand of their enemy, the Assyrian nation, from 721-718 B.C. The people of the northern kingdom of Israel (called the House of Israel) were either killed or deported into slavery (2 Kings 17:20-23). Historians call them the "lost ten tribes of Israel". Between 604 and 585 B.C. the nation of Judah suffered captivity at the hands of the Babylonians. God allowed this as chastisement for their sins.

But why did God allow such a terrible punishment to fall upon His people? Because He was especially furious with them for their practicing of idolatry and their Sabbath

breaking. These two sins, above all others, opened the door to all kinds of depravity and lawlessness within the nations.

Ezekiel, chapter 20, tells us that God sent the nation of Israel into captivity because they broke His Sabbaths. The Sabbath of God is the sign God uses to identify Him as the one and only true God. The Sabbath is also a sign that identifies who God's people are. The Prophet Ezekiel was inspired to write:

“Moreover I also gave them My Sabbaths, TO BE A SIGN between them and Me, that they might know that I am the LORD who sanctifies them. Yet the House of Israel rebelled against Me in the wilderness; they did not walk in My statutes; they despised My judgments, which if a man does, he shall live by them; and they greatly DEFILED MY SABBATHS. Then I said I would pour out My fury on them.” (Ezekiel 20:12-13)

God's punishment for Sabbath breaking was to scatter Israel among the Gentiles and disperse them throughout the countries (Ezekiel 20:21,32). God obviously takes Sabbath observance *VERY seriously!*

The so called, “lost tribes of Israel” ended up settling in what we know today as Northwest Europe, in countries such as Switzerland, Finland, Norway, Sweden, France, Holland, Belgium and the British Isles. Many of the lost tribes of Israel reside in these western European countries to this day.

The tribe of Manasseh, in time, migrated to the United States. Yes, as fantastic as it sounds, many of the ancestors of the American people were sifted through the nations over the centuries (Amos 9:9), and were finally placed by God in the country we call the United States. But what does this have to do with the Sabbath command?

Will God Punish Again for Sabbath Breaking?

Shunning idolatry and Sabbath keeping were the two cardinal commandments of God that Israel and Judah stepped on again and again. Furious with them for their flagrant breaking of His laws, God punished the nations with famine, pestilence, war, and eventual captivity at the hands of their enemies. We need to remember that the example of Ancient Israel was written in the Bible for our admonition in the latter days:

“Now all these things happened to them as examples, and they were written for our admonition, on whom the ends of the ages have come.” (I Corinthians 10:11)

God is warning nations who claim they follow Him of what will happen if they do not keep His laws. He warns them not to repeat the sins of Ancient Israel and Judah! The book of Ezekiel shouts out a warning for modern-day Israel. Will we learn from the past mistakes of our ancient ancestors? If we repeat the sins of ancient Israel, Ezekiel tells us we shall also reap ancient Israel's fate -- NATIONAL SUFFERING AND CAPTIVITY!

Ezekiel Written for Us Today!

The Prophet Ezekiel was commissioned to “GO” to the House of Israel and deliver a message: *“Go speak unto the House of Israel,”* God told him (Ezekiel 3:1). Ezekiel never physically took God's prophetic message to the House of Israel in his day. He could not leave Babylon because he was living in captivity in the land of the Chaldeans by the river

Chebar (Ezekiel 1:3). He did not have the freedom to travel to areas where the lost tribes of Israel had been dispersed.

By the time Ezekiel wrote down God's message on parchment, the captive tribes of Israel had begun migrating from Assyria, traveling north and west across Europe. Remember, Ezekiel was in captivity in Babylon. Yet he did deliver God's message to Israel. But how did he do it?

A Message of Warning

You need to keep firmly in mind that the northern tribes of Israel, not the House of Judah, had been taken into Assyrian captivity almost 130 years prior to when Ezekiel wrote down the words of God's prophecy. We must then ask the question, If Ezekiel was to go to the House of Israel (to the ten northern tribes that had been scattered in captivity), how could he carry out that commission if he was in captivity in Babylon? The answer is fascinating!

Many of the prophecies regarding the House of Israel speak of a time when the people of Israel will go into captivity... future tense. Jeremiah confirms that Israel, in the end-time, will suffer greatly (See Jeremiah 30:1-12).

What is so strange about these prophecies is that Israel had already gone into captivity nearly 130 years prior to the time Ezekiel and Jeremiah wrote them. Obviously, these men were speaking of a FUTURE CAPTIVITY yet to come upon the House of Israel.

God revealed to Ezekiel why he was angry with the ancient House of Israel: *"Yet the House of Israel rebelled against Me in*

the wilderness; they did not walk in My statutes; they despised My judgments, which, if a man does, he shall live by them; and they greatly defiled my SABBATHS. Then I said I would pour out MY fury on them in the wilderness, to consume them... because they despised My judgments and did not walk in My statutes, but profaned My SABBATHS, for their heart went after their idols.” (Ezekiel 20:13, 16)

Because modern-day Israel will not stop stepping upon God's holy Sabbath (and His other righteous laws) captivity will fall upon them -- the end-time descendants of the House of Israel which includes the British and American peoples.

What the Sabbath Foreshadows

Sin and the consequences of sin plague our world today. When we keep the Sabbath, we look forward to a time when we will live in a better world -- a world without war, disease, crime, and broken families. The Sabbath, as a day of rest, pictures the soon-coming Kingdom of God that is often referred to by God's people today as *The Wonderful World Tomorrow*. This period is likened to a rest that prophecies tell us will bring peace to this world (Hebrews 4:9; Isaiah 11:6-9).

The Sabbath reminds us of creation but also pictures a new world, a time ahead, when the laws of God will be enforced and respected...a time when the knowledge of God will be taught throughout the earth: *“They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain, For the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea. (Isaiah 11:9)*. That's one of the reasons God calls the Sabbath a delight and not a burden (See Isaiah 58:13). Without the Sabbath, you cannot understand the plan of God.

The Sabbath Identifies the True God

The Sabbath law is more than a physical law. The Sabbath identifies who the TRUE God is! Note that the Sabbath was a sign by which men might know who God is:

“Speak to the children of Israel, saying: ‘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)

“Moreover I also gave them My Sabbaths, to be a sign between them and Me, that they might know that I am the LORD who sanctifies them.” (Ezekiel 20:12)

There was absolutely no question in the minds of the Jews of Christ’s day as to what day was the Sabbath. The Sabbath was not an arbitrary doctrine they could toss aside or change at whim. Changing the Sabbath was tantamount to their worshipping another god.

As we have seen, there is nothing in scripture that states Jesus Christ, Peter, Paul or the New Testament Church changed the Sabbath to another day. As has already been written in this booklet, such a change would have inflamed the Pharisees and Sadducees of Christ’s day! If there had been such a change, scriptures would have stated that religious Jews persecuted God’s Church for changing the Sabbath to Sunday?

The Test Commandment

Many fail to realize that the Sabbath was the “test commandment” of God. In Exodus 16 we see that God used the Sabbath command to test the children of Israel to see if they would obey Him:

“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, that I may test them, whether they will walk in My law or not. And it shall be on the sixth day that they shall prepare what they bring in, and it shall be twice as much as they gather daily.’” (Exodus 16: 4-5)

The Israelites’ keeping of the Sabbath served as a litmus test to determine if they would be obedient to the other laws of God: *“...that I may test them, whether they will walk in My law or not” (Exodus 16:4)*. God promised to provide manna six days of the week, but the Israelites were to trust God to provide enough manna the sixth day of the week to feed them on the seventh day also. This was a test of faith and obedience.

Sadly, some of the people failed the test: *“Six days you shall gather it [manna], but on the seventh day, which is the Sabbath, there will be none. Now it happened that some of the people went out on the seventh day to gather, but they found none. And the LORD said to Moses, ‘How long do you refuse to keep My commandments and My laws.’” (Exodus 16:26-28)*

God emphasized the importance of keeping the Sabbath on a weekly basis by giving them a double portion of manna on the sixth day of each week. God did not send manna on the seventh day of the week -- it was the day of rest.

Conclusion

The Sabbath, as has been shown in this booklet, was established by God from the time of creation and is immutable. The Sabbath identifies who the true God is, and is holy to God the Father and His son, Jesus Christ!

To change the Sabbath to Sunday would require a decree from God. If such a change had occurred during the New Testament period, it would have been made clear, and would have created a huge uproar among the Jews of the day. However, there isn't a speck of evidence that the Sabbath was ever changed to Sunday. In fact, the early Christian church was considered by the Roman world to be just another sect of the Jews. The obvious identifying mark of the Jews was that they were Sabbath keepers. Both Jews and Christians kept the Sabbath.

Today, many sincere Christians believe that the resurrection of Christ changed Sabbath observance to a Sunday observance. When considering this, we must face the plain truth that the Bible record does not reveal any change of the Sabbath, but, in fact, clearly shows Christ was resurrected on the Sabbath just before sunset, not on Sunday.

The complete absence of any debate over the keeping of the Sabbath in the New Testament is proof that the Christian church of the first century continued to observe the seventh-day Sabbath. While it can be said this is an argument from silence, the absence of reference to changing the Sabbath from Saturday to Sunday is so profound, it speaks to the truth that the Apostles never altered the Sabbath command.

If you are a professing Christian, you believe that God's truth is precious! What then will you do with this knowledge regarding the Sabbath? Will you be swayed by the world around you – by the modern-day practices of men? Or will you keep God's Sabbath at the time He has determined it should be kept?

God rewards those who diligently seek Him (Hebrews 11:6). The Sabbath is a test commandment. If you choose to follow God by keeping His Sabbath holy, He will reward you, and bless you in ways you have never imagined!

Questions, Comments, and Answers

The following is a list of commonly asked questions and answers regarding Sabbath observance:

QUESTION:

I have always been taught that the law of God was done away after Christ died. If the law is done away, then the Sabbath is no longer in force. Isn't that True?

ANSWER:

The idea that the law was somehow done away with in the New Testament is unscriptural. Jesus Christ said: *"if you want to enter into life keep the commandments"* (Matthew 19:17). Christ observed the Sabbath (Luke 4:16, 31). The Apostle Paul said in Romans 7:12: *"Therefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy and just and good."* This includes the Sabbath command.

The last book written in the New Testament, the book of Revelation (about A.D. 95), reveals that the commandments of God, including the Sabbath, will be kept by God's true church just before the return of Jesus Christ. Read Revelation 14:12, where the saints of God are described as, *"those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus."* The Apostle John, at the end of his life, thus verified for us that the commandments of God, including the Sabbath, were still in force.

Jesus Christ also informs us that His disciples, at the end time, will be keeping the Sabbath. Just before Christ returns, when armies are surrounding Jerusalem, Christ warns Christians: *"And pray that your flight may not be in winter or ON THE SABBATH"* (Matthew 24:20). Read it in your Bible! Christ said, *"Pray that your flight MAY NOT BE ON THE SABBATH!"* Jesus was a seventh-day Sabbath keeper. He could only have been talking about the seventh day of the week -- the day we call Saturday. This proves that right at the very end of this present evil world, God's people will be keeping the Sabbath.

QUESTION:

I understand that Christians need only keep the moral laws, such as do not kill and do not commit adultery. The Sabbath law was a physical and ceremonial law only, not a moral law. So, isn't it true that the Sabbath is no longer binding on Christians today?

ANSWER:

Contrary to what many Christians believe, the Sabbath command is very much a MORAL law, not just a physical

law. Morality concerns itself with actions that are right and wrong. The Ten Commandments define right from wrong, and the Sabbath is one of the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20:10). To work on the Sabbath is a sin. Sin is the violation of the law of God (I John 3:4) -- a transgression of God's standard of morality.

Six days of the week are common days, but the seventh day of the week is holy. That day is to be hallowed, because God puts His presence in that Day, and that day alone. We respect the holiness of the Sabbath by not working on that day, nor seeking our own pleasure -- like playing sports or going to the movies. Instead, we are to spend time honoring God in prayer, studying of His word, and worshipping Him in Church services (Hebrews 10:25).

Honoring God is a moral issue! Breaking the Sabbath command is dishonoring God. Dishonoring our Father by stepping on His Sabbath is a TERRIBLE breach of morality. Notice God's emphasis on the holiness of His Sabbath:

"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 Isaiah 58:13-14".

The Promise of God is clear. God will bless you for keeping His Sabbath holy!

QUESTION:

Isn't keeping the Sabbath being legalistic, something Christ and the Apostles admonished us not to do?

ANSWER:

Jesus Christ was not a legalist. To Christ, keeping the Sabbath was not an act of legalism (Luke 4:16). When asked by a rich young ruler, *"what good thing shall I do that I may have eternal life?"* Jesus said, *"If you want to enter into life, keep the commandments"* (Matthew 19:17). The commandments, of course, include the Sabbath command.

However, you can become a legalist if you think that by law-keeping and good works you can earn your salvation. The most righteous person, the strictest commandment keeper, cannot earn his way into the Kingdom of God through commandment keeping. Eternal life is a gift from God. But it is a gift we cannot have if we do not show respect for the Father's commandments (Revelation 22:14-15).

QUESTION:

The Sabbath is not mentioned in any of the lists of do's or don'ts in the New Testament. Doesn't this imply that the Sabbath command is no longer binding on Christians?

ANSWER:

You must remember that the Churches mentioned in the New Testament studied from the Old Testament Scriptures (Acts 17:11; I Corinthians 10:11; Luke 16:31). Paul never said the writings of the Law and the Prophets were done away with. To the contrary, he said those writings were, *"... profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness"* (II Timothy 3:16). Paul was referring to what

we call the “Old Testament scriptures” today; at that time there were no other scriptures.

Since the Old Testament Scriptures teach the absolute importance of Sabbath observance, it was not necessary to continually restate the importance of Sabbath keeping when it was thoroughly emphasized in books like Exodus, Nehemiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel. The limited references concerning the Sabbath in the New Testament simply affirm that the New Testament Church, both Jews and Gentiles, kept the Sabbath. Historical records also reveal the first century church members were Sabbath keepers.

The change from Sabbath to Sunday came long after the writing of the New Testament. Sunday keeping first entered the church during the reign of Emperor Hadrian about 130 A.D.

Also, the Pharisees, who vigorously pressured the Gentiles in the Church to be circumcised (Acts 15), would have aggressively attacked Paul and the other Apostles if they had taught Sunday observance. Yet, there is no recorded attack upon Paul or the other Apostles by the Pharisees regarding changing the Sabbath to Sunday.

QUESTION:

Does I Corinthians 16:1-2 tell us to take up a collection at Sunday church services?

ANSWER:

You need to look closely at these verses. This passage does not say that a church service was being held on the first day of the week (Sunday). The New Testament was written over

a period of several decades, and nowhere does it say that the Church kept Sunday in place of Saturday as their Sabbath. A collection did take place on the first day of the week, but no religious service was held on that particular Sunday.

What was taken up was a special collection (not a weekly collection). The collection was for the Saints in Jerusalem (verses 1, 3). Famine had struck Judea, and the members in Corinth, Macedonia, and Achaia (Acts 11:28-30; Romans 15:25, 26) were asked to lay aside food to be delivered to the members of the Church in Jerusalem.

To advance the argument that members were to take up a collection every Sunday based on I Corinthians 16:1-2, is to falsely interpret the clear meaning of scripture. We must guard against reading our personal interpretation into the scriptures.

QUESTION:

Didn't the New Testament Church break bread every Sunday (Acts 20:7)?

ANSWER:

It is wrong to assert that every time breaking bread is mentioned in the Bible it is a reference to a religious service like observing the Passover (Luke 24:30, 35; Acts 27:35). "Breaking bread" was an expression that simply meant eating a meal. It is not something that always involves a religious service.

Paul had kept the Sabbath with the members at Troas. Paul continued speaking with the people well past midnight, into the early hours of Sunday morning. Owing to the lateness, a young man fell asleep and fell out of the balcony to his

death. Paul went over to the young man and raised him to life (Acts 20:9-10).

After this healing, Paul stayed with the members until daylight (Sunday morning), eating (breaking bread) and fellowshiping (Acts 20:11). That Sunday morning, just after daybreak, Paul left Troas and walked twenty miles on foot, crossing the peninsula to the city of Assos. Paul actually walked 20 miles on Sunday, something he would not have done on the Sabbath.

QUESTION:

Doesn't John mention Sunday as being the Lord's Day in the Book of Revelation?

ANSWER:

John said in Revelation 1:10: *"I was in the Spirit on the Lord's Day, and I heard behind me a loud voice, as of a trumpet.* Actually, John never mentions Sunday as being the Lord's Day in the Book of Revelation at all. The Bible doesn't define the Lord's Day as being the first day of the week. Christ tells us plainly that He is the "Lord" of the Sabbath, which is the seventh day of the week (Luke 6:5).

The expression "Lord's day" used in Revelation 1:10 is the only time that expression is used in the Bible. The context of John's vision had nothing to do with a particular day in the weekly cycle. It is an expression that references a time yet in the future called "the Day of the Lord" (Jeremiah 46:10; Acts 2:20, I Thessalonians 5:2; 2 Thessalonians 2:2). This phrase is not speaking of a single day, but rather end-time events just preceding the return of Jesus Christ as King of Kings. The theme of the book of Revelation deals with the events to occur during the "Day of the Lord".

QUESTION:

Galatians 4:9-10 tells us that we do not need to observe “days and months and seasons and years.” Don’t these verses tell us that the Sabbath is no longer to be kept?

ANSWER:

The converts to whom Paul was writing in this passage were Gentiles. At one time *“they had no hope and were without God in this world”* (Ephesians 2:12). Hearing the truth, they repented and became part of the Church. Paul was warning the churches of Galatia that false teachers were perverting the gospel and teaching them to fall back into pagan practices.

Paul could not have been talking about the Sabbath when using the expression “days, months, and years” because the gentiles never kept the Sabbath before they came into God’s church. How could they go back to something (Sabbath keeping), if they never practiced it in the first place? What they were going back to were their pagan religious observances of “days, months, and years”.

Never in the scriptures do we find God inspiring the expression “weak and beggarly elements” as a reference to God’s holy Sabbath or Festival days. “Weak and beggarly elements” was an expression Paul used to define the false religious practices of the gentile mystics and Jewish astrologers. The gentile Christians were tempted to mix the true teachings of Christianity with false beliefs. Paul was warning them against doing so.

QUESTION:

Isn't it true that Colossians 2:14-17 reminds Christians that the old Mosaic law was nailed to the Cross. So why do I need to keep the Sabbath?

ANSWER:

Satan has deceived this world's churches into the belief that God's law was done away -- that Jesus, rather than paying the price in human stead for transgressing the law, did away with it -- "nailing it to his cross."

The expression used by Protestants "nailing the law to his cross" can mean only one thing: Christ abolished the law, making it possible for humans to sin with impunity. This is Satan's teaching. What actually was nailed to the cross was Christ our sin bearer, who took on himself our sins, paying the death penalty in our stead, so that we are freed from the ultimate penalty of sinning...not made free to sin with impunity! Therefore, the fourth Commandment, which requires all men to observe the Sabbath, was not nailed to the cross.

QUESTION:

Romans 14:5-6 seems to say that all days are alike, which means I can keep the Sabbath on any day I choose. Is my understanding of this correct?

ANSWER:

Take note that there is no mention of the Sabbath in this passage. It is a mistake to read into this passage that Paul was referring to Sabbath observance. The reference here is simply to "days". The Sabbath was not the issue at hand.

Rather, Paul was writing to the Church in Rome -- a church that had a composite of Jews and Gentiles as its members. In verses 2, 3 and 6 of Romans 14, Paul clearly identifies the issue as vegetarianism, not Sabbath observance. Paul was addressing a question of eating or not eating meat on particular days.

Certain members in Rome were abstaining from eating meats on certain days as a religious act. This practice was not related to the Sabbath, because God made it clear the Sabbath was a feast day (Leviticus 23:1-3). The word Sabbath was not used in Paul's letter to the Romans. Paul was emphasizing the fact that whatever we do in terms of eating or not eating on a particular day, needs to be handled in a way that does not cause a brother to stumble (Romans 14:21).

QUESTION:

Will the Sabbath be kept in the coming Kingdom of God?

ANSWER:

Isaiah 66:22-23, clearly informs us of what will take place in the coming Kingdom of God. Notice that the Sabbath will be the official day of worship in God's Kingdom:

“For as the new heavens and the new earth Which I will make shall remain before Me,” says the LORD, ‘So shall your descendants and you name remain. And it shall come to pass That from one New Moon to another, and from ONE SABBATH TO ANOTHER, all flesh shall come to worship before Me,’ says the Lord.” (Isaiah 66:23, 24)

The people who are alive when Christ reigns on the earth will come to worship in Jerusalem on the weekly and annual Sabbaths. Speaking of the “new covenant” relationship Israel

will have with God, God says, *“Likewise the people of the land shall worship at the entrance to this gateway [inner court gateway of the newly built temple], before the LORD on the SABBATHS and the New Moons.”* (Ezekiel 46:3)

QUESTION:

I believe in a Sabbath Day but does it really matter what day I keep, as long as I worship God on one day of the week, a day of my choosing?

ANSWER:

Leviticus 23:2 reveals that the Sabbath is one of God's appointed feasts: *“Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: ‘The feasts of the LORD, which you shall proclaim to be holy convocations, these are My feasts.’”* (Leviticus 23:2)

The Sabbath is GOD'S feast, and it is to be observed at a very specific time. Think of it this way: If you have an appointment for a job interview, are you not careful to show up at the appointed time? No potential employer wants a job interviewee showing up late. When you attend a wedding or funeral, isn't there an APPOINTED time to be present and seated? To be late or to show up on another day for such an important occasion would be considered rude and dishonoring. We are careful to respect our appointments with humans. Yet many ignore God's command to meet with Him on the day He appoints. If we say we respect God, our actions will follow our words, we will keep holy the day that God chooses.

In Mark 2:28 Jesus said, *“Therefore, the Son of Man is also Lord of the Sabbath.”* Only Jesus Christ and the Father have the authority to fix a particular day of the week as the holy Sabbath. The Sabbath is mentioned over one hundred times

in scripture, and not one single reference reveals the Sabbath can be kept on any day other than the seventh day of the week.

QUESTION:

The Gentiles were not required to keep the Sabbath. I am a Gentile, therefore I am not required to keep the Sabbath, correct?

ANSWER:

Millions assume the Sabbath is only a “Jewish” holy day not binding upon Christians. If this were the case, we would expect the Apostle to the Gentiles, Paul, to advocate doing away with Sabbath observance. Let’s read what Paul and Barnabas did when they preached to the Gentiles:

“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 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.’”
(Acts 13:14-15)

Paul then spoke to them about Jesus Christ. When the Jews left the synagogue, the Gentiles pleaded with them to preach to them again the next Sabbath: *“And when the Jews WENT OUT of the synagogue, the Gentiles begged that these words might be preached to them NEXT SABBATH”* (Acts 13:42). Paul, the Apostle to the Gentiles, had a golden opportunity right then and there to tell the Gentiles, “you do not need to keep the Sabbath on the seventh day of the week; we can meet together on Sundays.” But Paul never said anything about a Sunday observance!

Many years after the crucifixion of Christ, Paul kept the Sabbath on the seventh day of the week: *“And Paul, AS HIS MANNER WAS, (meaning custom or habit), went in to them and for three Sabbaths reasoned with them from the Scriptures,” (Acts 17:2).* Biblical historians believe the time setting of chapter 17 was somewhere between 59-62 A.D. This means that Paul and the New Testament church, both Jew and Gentile alike, were still observing the Sabbath many years after Christ's death.

QUESTION:

Can I stay home and keep the Sabbath?

ANSWER:

The Bible clearly tells us we are to gather together with other brethren on the Sabbath, if possible, to hear the word of God spoken on that day! We all need the fellowship and support of a Church service. The Bible admonishes Christians to not be *“forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.” (Hebrews 10:25)*

For additional information regarding the Sabbath, Please visit our web site at wonderfulworldtomorrow.org to download or request a free copy of our Bible Study, “God's Weekly Sabbath”; or write for you free copy to Church of God, P.O. Box 3332, Modesto, California 95353.

This booklet is provided as an educational service and is not to be sold.

