



Truth For These Times



14. THE CHANGE OF THE SABBATH

In our previous studies on the subject of the Sabbath, we discovered that the only day called the Lord's Day in Scripture is the Sabbath. In Isaiah 58:13 God calls it "My Holy Day". Nowhere in the Bible is the sanctity withdrawn from the Sabbath and placed on any other day. The Sabbath is a sign between God and His people that they belong to Him. It was made for the good and happiness of mankind. Mark 2:27. Christ and His apostles kept the Sabbath. Nowhere in the Scripture is there a record of any change concerning the day of worship, but there has been a change. In this study we will see how the Sabbath was changed from Saturday to Sunday.

Exodus 20:8-10 Remember THE SABBATH DAY, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but THE SEVENTH DAY IS THE SABBATH of the LORD your God.

Here is God's command concerning the day of worship. The location is clear; it is the seventh day of the week.

Psalms 89:34 MY COVENANT I WILL NOT BREAK, nor alter the word that has gone out of My lips.

God made an agreement or covenant with His people. They would receive the blessings if they were obedient and kept God's commandments. The people failed, but God remained unchanged. The basis of the agreement – the Ten Commandments – also remain unchanged.

Deuteronomy 17:3 ...who has gone and SERVED OTHER GODS AND WORSHIPED THEM, EITHER THE SUN or moon or any of the host of heaven, which I have not commanded.

The nations surrounding ancient Israel worshipped many gods, including the sun, moon and planets. God commanded those who did so to be put to death. The worship of the sun goes back many thousands of years, and the day "Sunday" is named after the sun god.

Webster's Dictionary 1973 Edition "Sunday: so called because this day was anciently dedicated to the sun".

Acts 18:4 And he reasoned IN THE SYNAGOGUE EVERY SABBATH, and persuaded both Jews and Greeks.

In contrast to sun worship, the apostle Paul was found worshipping on the Sabbath. This was twenty-three years after the resurrection of Christ. It is quite evident that the first day of the week had not taken the place of the seventh day at this stage. Because such a change cannot be found in the Bible, it must have occurred at a later time, which means the change does not have the authority of God's word.



Paul reasoning in the Synagogue.

Daniel 7:25

He shall speak *pompous* words against the Most High, shall persecute the saints of the Most High, and shall INTEND TO CHANGE TIMES AND LAW. Then *the saints* shall be given into his hand for a time and times and half a time.

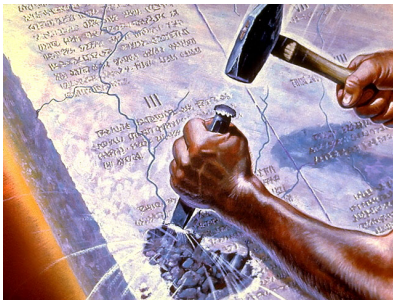
This chapter seven of Daniel is discussed fully in [Study 28](#). Notice the power mentioned here is said to “think to change times and laws”. Here is predicted a change in the law of God, and as we look back in history we can see the fulfilment of this prophecy. Changes were made in the law of God, and in particular, the commandment referring to time; “Remember the Sabbath day”. The church openly admits having brought about a change in transferring the solemnity of the Sabbath to Sunday. There is no record anywhere of God’s authorisation; rather, man changed it. The change did not occur suddenly, but was a gradual process until the seventh day was almost entirely lost sight of.



The little horns of Daniel Seven speaking great words against God.

HOW DID THE CHANGE OCCUR?

Christians faithfully observed the Sabbath after Christ died. But within the first few centuries there was rapid deterioration of the faith. The seemingly harmless roots of later changes go back to the time of the apostles, just as Paul predicted. While Philip and John were still living, Christians voluntarily commenced celebrating the crucifixion weekend. They centred their celebrations on the crucifixion day, which was the day of the Jewish Passover. Christians suffered much from their origin as a Jewish sect, and the commemoration of the Passover day in memory of the crucifixion was seen in Rome as further identifying Christianity with Judaism. They decided to make a change.



The Sabbath of God was slowly replaced with the Sunday of man.

It was Sixtus, the bishop or the papa of the Church in Rome, who started the process that ended in transference of the day of worship. He led Christians to celebrate not the crucifixion, but the resurrection, and to use not the Passover day that fell on different days of the week each year, but rather a Sunday. However it was at first not a weekly, but an annual observance. The Christians in the city of Rome dreaded being confused with the Jews, who had become extremely unpopular because of a series of Jewish revolts against Roman rule. By changing this celebration to Sunday, and applying it to the resurrection, they hoped to avoid being thought Jewish.

Another interesting factor was that the first day of the week was a joyous festival in the Roman Empire in honour of the sun. The converted sun-worshipper would feel very much at home in the Christian spring festival, held on the sun’s day to honour the resurrection. The ecclesiastical trick of Sixtus in having Christians celebrate the resurrection the first day actually put them in the position of honouring the sun’s day.

How, and exactly when, the step from the annual resurrection celebration on Sunday, to weekly worship on Sunday, is made is not clear. But it did happen. And it happened in Rome. By A.D. 155 Justin Martyr could say:

“And on the day called Sunday, all who live in our cities or in the country gather together in one place, ... Sunday is the day on which we hold our common assembly, because it is the first day on which God, ... made the world; and Jesus Christ our Saviour on the same day rose from the dead”. *Our Firm Foundation*, page 649.

The next important act in the drama came in A.D. 200 when Pope Victor sought to enforce the annual observance of resurrection Sunday. He ordered all bishops excommunicated who would not follow the plan of celebrating the resurrection festival. Sunday observance was the vehicle the Bishop of Rome used in his attempt to gain control of the church. Rome’s influence, however, was still very limited, for in A.D. 450 Socrates, the skilled church historian, could write:



Constantine’s Famous Sunday Law of A.D. 321.

“For although almost all churches throughout the world celebrate the sacred mysteries of the Sabbath every week, yet the Christians of Alexandria and at Rome, on account of some ancient tradition, have ceased to do this”

The “ancient tradition” was no doubt the stress Sixtus and Victor had put upon honouring Sunday. The emperor of Rome, Constantine, was responsible for the compromise between the pagan religion and Christianity. He welded the two together and in so doing elevated the day of the sun above the Sabbath. The first law in favour of Sunday was passed in A.D. 321. The church took action in the council of Laodicea A.D. 336 by transferring the solemnity of the Sabbath to Sunday.

“On the venerable Day of the Sun let the magistrates and people residing in cities rest, and let all workshops be closed. In the country, however persons engaged in agriculture may freely and lawfully continue their pursuits.” Philip Schaff, *History of the Christian Church*, Vol.3, page 1902.

Various councils and laws increasingly condemned the seventh day and exalted Sunday. Thus the pagan institution became the Christian Sunday.

“The church ... took the pagan Sunday and made it the Christian Sunday ... and thus the pagan Sunday, dedicated to Balder, became the Christian Sunday sacred to Jesus.” *The Catholic World*, Vol.58, No.338, page 809.



The Roman Church Capitalised on Constantine’s Law and pressed it further.

“Sunday is recognised as a human ordinance, not a divine command.” *The History of Christian Religion and Church*, page 186.

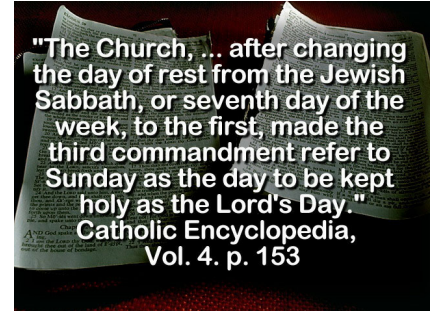
The festival of Sunday, like all other festivals, was always only a human ordinance, and it was far from the intention of the apostles to establish a divine command in this respect: far from them and far from the early apostolic church, to transfer the laws of the Sabbath to Sunday.

WHO CHANGED THE SABBATH FROM SATURDAY TO SUNDAY?

A Doctrinal Catechism, page 174 – Father Stephen Keenan:

Question: Have you any other way of proving that the church has power to institute festivals of precept?

Answer: Had she not such power, she could not have done that in which all modern religionists agree with her; she could not have substituted the observance of Saturday, the seventh day ... a change for which there is no scriptural authority.



Plain Talk About Protestantism Today, page 225. Monsignor Segur:

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

The American Sentinal, New York – Father Enright:

“The Bible says, remember that thou keep holy the Sabbath day. The Catholic church says, no! By my divine power I have abolished the Sabbath day and command you to keep holy the first day of the week. And now the entire civilised world bows down in reverent obedience to the command of the Holy Catholic Church.”

Catholic Mirror (Official organ of the late Cardinal Gibbons) Sept.23, 1893.

“The Catholic church, for over 1,000 years before the existence of a Protestant, by virtue of her divine mission, changed the day from Saturday to Sunday...You may read the Bible from Genesis to Revelation, and you will not find a single line authorising the sanctification of Sunday. The Scriptures enforce the religious observance of Saturday, a day we never sanctify”

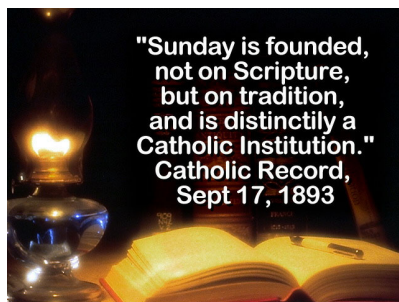
The Convert's Catechism of Catholic Doctrine, page 50, Peter Ceiermann:

Question: Which is the Sabbath day?

Answer: Saturday is the Sabbath day.

Question: Why do we observe Sunday instead of Saturday?

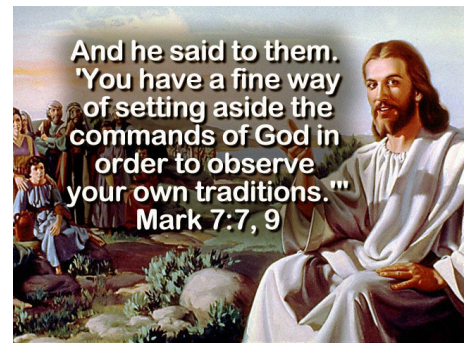
Answer : We observe Sunday instead of Saturday because the Catholic Church, in the Council of Laodicea (A.D.336), transferred the solemnity from Saturday to Sunday.



The church of Rome claims responsibility. There are many sincere Roman Catholics, and it is not our purpose to condemn them, or criticise their church. What we are stating are accurate historical facts. Outwardly the church of Rome made the change, but the issue goes much deeper than this. This was a program of sabotage by Satan. He is the one who is primarily responsible for the change of the Sabbath.

A special day of worship does not indicate one day is better than another: it is what these days stand for that counts. The seventh day belongs to Christ: it is a sign of His power. The first day is a counterfeit, in opposition to Christ. To keep the seventh day shows we give our allegiance to Christ, but to keep the first day shows we give our allegiance to man. Many have unknowingly accepted the counterfeit. In the time of their ignorance God does not hold them responsible, but when one discovers what is truth, one should immediately discard error, or suffer the consequences for rejecting the truth of God.

John 9:41 Jesus said to them, “If you were blind, you would have no sin; but now you say, ‘WE SEE.’ Therefore your sin remains.”



We will never be judged for believing error, but we will be held responsible for rejecting truth. When “we see” truth, we are expected by God to follow it. If we do not, it is accounted to us as sin.

James 4:17 Therefore, TO HIM WHO KNOWS TO DO GOOD AND DOES NOT DO IT, TO HIM IT IS SIN.

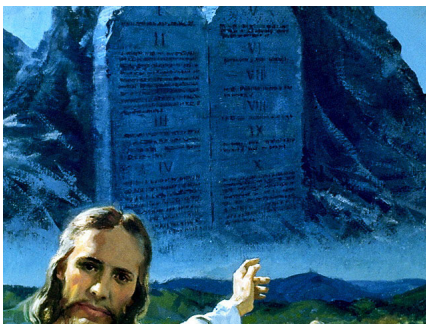
It is a sin to break God’s law. One of His commandments is, “Remember the Sabbath day”

Mark 7:7,9 And IN VAIN THEY WORSHIP ME, TEACHING AS DOCTRINES THE COMMANDMENTS OF MEN. He said to them, “All too well you REJECT THE COMMANDMENT OF GOD, THAT YOU MAY KEEP YOUR TRADITION.”

Sunday observance is built upon tradition, the commandments of man. Christ said plainly that it was in vain to follow the traditions placed upon man by the Jewish leaders. He had no confidence whatever in tradition. Likewise, Sunday observance is a tradition of man, and is not acceptable to God.

Romans 6:16 Do you not know that to WHOM YOU PRESENT YOURSELVES SLAVES TO OBEY, YOU ARE THAT ONE’S SLAVES whom you obey, whether of sin leading to death, or of obedience leading to righteousness?

We have the choice of obeying God or man, the commandments of God or the commandments of a church. We can choose to keep the first day, Sunday, the counterfeit, or the seventh day, the Sabbath, the genuine. Our choice of a day of worship indicates who we choose as Master.



Who will you follow – Jesus and His word or man and his tradition?

Acts 5:29 But Peter and the *other* apostles answered and said: “WE OUGHT TO OBEY GOD RATHER THAN MEN.”

There is only one logical choice – obedience to God.

Hebrews 5:9 And having been perfected, He became the author of ETERNAL SALVATION TO ALL WHO OBEY HIM.

Eternal life is given to those who obey Him. The great issue is, “Who will you obey?” Keep the Sabbath and you obey Christ – keep Sunday and you obey man and the church of Rome. Jesus said, “If you love me keep My commandments”. Jesus showed His love for us by giving Himself at Calvary. We show our love to Him by our loyalty and obedience. Which day will you keep? Why not choose to keep the same day Jesus kept.

Review Sheet – The Change of the Sabbath

Assignment: Read the Bible study carefully before answering the following questions.

1. Which day did God say was the Sabbath day? Exodus 20:8-10
But the _____.
2. Was it God's intention to change His mind regarding the covenant? Psalm 89:34
My _____.
3. What did many people worship in ancient times? Deuteronomy 17:3
And worshiped them, _____ etc.
4. From where did the name "Sunday" originate? *Webster's Dictionary*
Sunday ... so called because _____
5. Well after the resurrection, upon which day did Paul worship? Acts 18:4
And he reasoned in the synagogue _____.
6. What prophecy indicated an unauthorised change in God's law? Daniel 7:25
And he shall speak *pompous* words against the Most High ... and shall intend _____.
7. When was the first law in favour of Sunday established? _____ A.D.
8. When did the church transfer the solemnity of the Sabbath to Sunday? _____ A.D.
9. Are we expected to follow the truth we know and understand? James 4:17
Therefore _____,
10. Did Christ have any confidence in man's commandments? Mark 7:7-9
In vain they worship me, _____ ...
All to well you reject the commandment of God, _____.
11. Whom did Peter and the apostles say we should obey? Acts 5:29
We ought to _____.
12. Who receives eternal salvation? Hebrews 5:9
He became the author of eternal salvation _____.

Can you see that keeping Sunday is keeping Man's commandment, but not keeping God's commandment? _____