

Why Do Christians Worship on Sunday?

Exactly what day/date is the Sabbath?

When you look at the history of our present day calendar, you will find that our days, our weeks, months and years have undergone many changes.

We can't think that what is Sunday, February 20, 2011, is *really* a Sunday, the same 1st day of the week that has remained constant since the time of God's creation of the world!

For example:

“In 1582 Gregory XIII found a miscalculation in the calendar and decreed to drop October 5-14 and to drop 3 leap years in every century. In England 11 days (September 3-13) were dropped in 1752, in addition to other changes. “ (See *Heresies Exposed*, p. 167).

Did Christian Worship on Sunday come from Paganism?

No, it did not come from paganism.

Sunday was not a day of rest or worship among pagans and neither was it a weekly holiday in the pagan world.

In the early 20th century, D. M. Canright contacted highly qualified historians, including:

- **F.N. Pryce, British Museum, Department of Greek & Roman Antiquities**

- R. Rathborn, Smithsonian Institute
- George F Moore, Harvard University, Prof. of Ancient Roman and Greek History

Their responses can be summarized as follows:

The pagan Greeks & Romans did not have a regular weekly day of rest, festival or worship.

There was no special day for people to go to the temples to pray or make offerings.

For the Greeks & Romans, the month was the unit and not the week.

The Romans divided the month into three periods of 10 days:

- Kaleend – 1st
- Nones – 5th or 7th
- Ides – 13th or 15th

These subdivisions had no religious significance.

Every eight days the Romans had nundinal or market days – these had no religious significance.

The introduction of a 7-day week into the Roman calendar came from Egypt and was not earlier than the 2nd century AD.

The planetary week in which the days were named from their regents (Sunday, Monday...) was an invention of the astrologers, sometime in the 2nd century and had no relation to religion.

The sun god was not worshipped on Sunday, the Moon god on Monday, etc.

These names did not have religious significance – only astrological.

The 7-day period of dividing the month appears in the Roman calendar after 391 AD and in Roman law in a constitution of Constantine (321 AD).

WHO CHANGED THE SABBATH FROM SATURDAY TO SUNDAY? Was it the Emperor Constantine in 325 A.D.? Was it the Roman Catholic Church?

Constantine's edict reads:

"On the venerable Day of The Sun [venerabili dei Solis] 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" *Codex Justinianus*, book 3, title 12,3, trans. in Schaff, *History of the Christian Church* 5th ed. (New York: Charles Scribner, 1902), vol. 3, p. 380, note 1.

This historical inaccuracy has been perpetuated by Seventh Day Baptists for over 300 years and by Seventh-day Adventists since the latter part of the 19th century.

Often the question is asked, *"Isn't it paying homage to the Roman Catholic Church to worship on Sunday because didn't Constantine change the day of worship?"*

It is claimed that Constantine's edict of March 7, 321 changed the day of Christian worship from Saturday to Sunday.

He didn't change the day – Christians had always worshipped on the 1st day. He simply acknowledged and legalized the 1st day.

A careful examination of historical early church documents reveals that from the time of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ, Christians were gathering for worship on Sunday, the first day of the week.

Let's begin with the earliest historical evidence, the New Testament Record.

From the Resurrection of Christ, Christians have always worshipped on the 1st day of the week and never on the Sabbath.

Sunday is not a Christian Sabbath or a day of rest, or a holy day to be kept.

It is the day Christians gathered together to worship and eat the Lord's Supper. (Acts 20:7)

1). THE 7 POST-RESURRECTION APPEARANCES OF CHRIST.

- These appearances show that Jesus purpose-fully chose the first day of the week to meet with His disciples to encourage and exhort them.
- *The evidence shows that five of these appearances occurred on the 1st day of the week.*

We do not have a record of what the actual day on which the other appearances occurred to His disciples (John 21 and Acts 1:6-10). ***What we can say with accuracy is this, after Jesus' resurrection whenever He met with His disciples and the day is identified, it is NOT the Sabbath, it is the first day of the week!***

- ◆ ***Mary***, on the morning of the resurrection - Matthew 28:8-10; Mark 16:9; John 20:11-18
- ◆ ***Two disciples going to Emmaus*** - Luke 24:13-33; Mark 16:12-13
- ◆ ***Simon (Peter)*** - Luke 24:31-35.
- ◆ ***The eleven disciples*** on the evening of Resurrection Sunday - Mark 16:14-18; Luke 24:36-44; John 20:19-23

- ◆ *The eleven disciples* on Sunday, "eight days" later – John 20:26-29

2). THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH WAS "BORN" ON A SUNDAY.

- ◆ Pentecost always occurred on the first day of the week!
- ◆ This doesn't make Sunday the Sabbath, but it tells us that after the resurrection of Jesus, the Sabbath is not emphasized.

3). Whenever a day of the week is mentioned in connection with the appearances of the risen Lord Jesus, IT IS ALWAYS THE FIRST DAY OF THE WEEK.

occurred in the life of the first followers of Christ on the first day of the week.

- ◆ Jesus startled them by appearing to them on the first day (John 20:19).
- ◆ Jesus received worship from Thomas on the first day of the week (John 20:27-28).
- ◆ Sunday evening Jesus took bread and blessed it and broke it and gave it to His disciples evidently like He had in instituting the communion meal (Luke 22:19) and their "*eyes were opened and they recognized Him*" (Luke 24:31).
- ◆ Sunday evening Jesus blessed His disciples twice saying "*Peace be with you*" (John 20:20; 26).

- ◆ That same Sunday evening Jesus *"...breathed on them and said 'receive the Holy Spirit'"* John 20:22.
- ◆ On Sunday evening Jesus gave His disciples the ecclesiastical authority to proclaim forgiveness to those who believe in Him through the Gospel (John 20:23).

Why did the Disciples meet on Sunday?

- ◆ Because it now carried a special symbolic/anti-typical significance for them.
- ◆ Jesus chose to reveal Himself to them only on Sunday, when we know what day it is. That must also hold some kind of Divine significance.
- ◆ Jesus could have chosen to meet with His disciple on the Sabbath. This would have clearly set a New Covenant precedent.
- ◆ He did not chose to do this. The Sabbath was the sign of a fulfilled covenant (see Exodus 31:17 & Hebrews 8:13).

4). THE FIRST CHURCH COUNCIL DID NOT INCLUDE THE SABBATH as an essential doctrine or practice for the church.

THE COUNCIL OF ACTS 15 CONVENED to determine what Gentile Christians must observe.

SABBATH KEEPING WAS CONSPICUOUSLY ABSENT.

Peter exhorted the leadership of the Church not to place the Gentiles under the Law:

Acts 15:10-11 – “Now therefore why do you put God to the test by placing upon the neck of the disciples a yoke which neither our fathers nor we have been able to bear? But we believe that we are saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus, in the same way as they also are.”

The final judgment of the Jerusalem Council contained no reference to Sabbath keeping.

In contrast, circumcision was discussed and deemed unnecessary (vss. 5-6; 19-20).

If Sabbath keeping were to be an essential part of the New Covenant relationship with God it would have been mentioned in the discussion because it would have been an unfamiliar practice to the Gentiles.

Sabbath keeping was not even discussed because it is not a requirement for New Covenant believers: Acts 15:28-29

"For it seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us to lay upon you no greater burden than these essentials; that you abstain from things sacrificed to idols and from blood and from things strangled and from fornication; if you keep yourselves free from such things, you will do well. Farewell."

NOTICE that the Holy Spirit told them NOT to lay upon the Gentiles any greater burden than THOSE ESSENTIALS.

OBVIOUSLY THE HOLY SPIRIT DID NOT THINK SABBATH

**KEEPING WAS AN ESSENTIAL
THING ANYMORE.**

**5). WHEN THE NEW TESTAMENT LISTS
SINS, SABBATH BREAKING IS
CONSPICUOUSLY ABSENT.**

- In Mark 7:21-22, 13 sins are listed. Jesus did not mention breaking the Sabbath.

"21 For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed the evil thoughts, fornications, thefts, murders, adulteries, 22 deeds of coveting and wickedness, as well as deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride and foolishness."

NASU

- In Romans 1:29-32, 20 sins are listed but not Sabbath breaking.

"29 being filled with all unrighteousness, wickedness, greed, evil; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, malice; they are gossips, 30 slanderers, haters of God, insolent, arrogant, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, 31 without understanding, untrustworthy, unloving, unmerciful; 32 and although they know the ordinance of God, that those who practice such things are worthy of death, they not only do the same, but also give hearty approval to those who practice them." **NASU**

In Galatians 5:19-21, a list of 15 sins are given.

"19 Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: immorality, impurity, sensuality, 20 idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes,

dissensions, factions, 21 envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these, of which I forewarn you, just as I have forewarned you, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.”

NASU

- In 2 Timothy 3:1-4, there's a list of 18 sins, but not once is Sabbath breaking mentioned!

“1 But realize this, that in the last days difficult times will come. 2 For men will be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, arrogant, revilers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy, 3 unloving, irreconcilable, malicious gossips, without self-control, brutal, haters of good, 4 treacherous, reckless, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, 5 holding to a form of godliness, although they have denied its power.” NASU

6). WHY IS IT THAT NOWHERE IN THE NEW TESTAMENT IS IT TAUGHT THAT THE FOURTH COMMANDMENT MUST BE OBSERVED?

Christians do not keep the 10 commandment law of Moses.

This is not to say that Christians are free to steal, murder and commit adultery.

Christians are under a new law, a better law, the law of Christ (Gal. 6:2) and a better covenant (Heb. 8:6,7)

Galatians 6:2 - “Bear one another’s burdens, and thereby fulfill the law of Christ.” NASU

Hebrews 8:6-8 – “But now He has obtained a more excellent ministry, by as much as He is also the mediator of a better covenant, which has been enacted on better promises. 7 For if that first covenant had been faultless, there would have been no occasion sought for a second.” NASU

Nowhere in the New Testament is failure to keep the Sabbath day condemned as sin.

The fourth commandment itself is not repeated even ONCE in the New Testament.

- ***If Sabbath keeping is so important for a disciple of Christ, why was it not mentioned in Jesus’ Sermon on the Mount or in ANY of His teachings?***
- ***Why didn’t Jesus command Sabbath keeping?***
- ***Why didn’t any of the Apostles command Sabbath keeping?***
- ***Why didn’t the Jerusalem counsel command Sabbath keeping or condemn Sabbath breaking? (Acts 15)***

Some answer that the Jews already knew about the Sabbath so it was taken for granted that they would continue to keep it.

- ◆ But then, why were the other nine commandments reiterated?
- ◆ Would they not be taken for granted as well?

IT WOULD ALSO SEEM THAT WITH SO MANY GENTILES COMING INTO THE CHURCH, that if keeping the Sabbath was so important THERE WOULD BE INSTRUCTION IN THE NEW TESTAMENT EPISTLES somewhere concerning it.

There are instructions for them concerning morality, ethics, worship, Church order and family lifestyle.

Why would something as important as Sabbath keeping be ignored?

7). Sabbath keepers argue that THE EXAMPLE OF JESUS GIVES PRECEDENCE FOR SABBATH-KEEPING.

They say, "*Jesus kept the Sabbath, so I must keep the Sabbath. Jesus is my example,*" they say.

Well this kind of reasoning is flawed because *it only chooses Jesus' Sabbath keeping* and rejects the rest of His Jewish lifestyle.

- ◆ Jesus also kept Kosher laws.
- ◆ He kept the Passover, Unleavened Bread, Pentecost, Rosh Ha Shannah, Yom Kippur, new moon, offerings and sacrifices.
- ◆ Jesus worshipped in the temple.

Are we to follow His example in

Galatians 4:4-5 says that Jesus lived under the Law to redeem us from the Law.

"But when the time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under law, to redeem those under law, that we might receive the full rights of sons." NIV

JESUS WAS ACCUSED OF SABBATH BREAKING.

Apparently Jesus did break the Sabbath: "Therefore some of the Pharisees were saying, *"This man is not from God, because He does not keep the Sabbath."* John 9:15. If Jesus did not want us to understand that He was breaking the Sabbath why did He not speak against these accusations. It's because Jesus had the right and the authority to break the Sabbath because He is Lord of the Sabbath. The Sabbath does not bind Him. *Think about this, if it does not bind Him, are we not "in Christ"? Why would it be any more binding upon us?*

Why, if He wanted to be our "example" in Sabbath keeping, didn't He make it clear that He was NOT breaking the Sabbath?

Instead He clearly admitted to it.

HE ALSO ADMITTED THAT HIS DISCIPLES BROKE THE SABBATH, AND HE DEFENDED THEM

- In Matthew 12:1-14, Jesus clearly said that His disciples were like the priests who may work in the temple every Sabbath and be innocent of breaking the Sabbath.
- When Jesus said that He was "**Lord of the Sabbath**," He was declaring that He was above the Sabbath.
- Jesus could do what He wished on the Sabbath and therefore His disciples could do whatever they wished as well.

One of the issues that needs to be honestly faced is the fact that Jesus never commanded anyone to keep the Sabbath and none of His apostles ever commanded anyone to keep it either.

- Not once in the New Testament are we told to keep the Sabbath.
 - Those commands to the Church are conspicuously

8). *EVERY MENTION OF THE SABBATH IN THE BOOK OF ACTS without a single exception is in connection with Jewish worship on that day and not Christian celebration.*

Paul's evangelistic strategy was to go to the Jews first in a community and share the Gospel with them.

- Sabbath was the day when he knew he would find the most Jews gathering for worship. He knew he would have his best opportunity of sharing the good news of the Messiah to the Jews on Sabbath.
- It was not because he was meeting with a group of believing Christians. He was meeting with non-Christian Jews on the Sabbath.

9). *EARLY CHURCH DOCUMENTS OUTSIDE OF THE NEW TESTAMENT Testify that the Christian church worshipped on Sunday as early as the end of the first century.*

PLINY'S LETTER, 107 AD:

- Pliny was governor of Bithynia, in Asia Minor, from AD 106-108. He wrote in AD 107 to Trajan, the emperor, concerning the Christians. This is what he said:

“They were wont to meet together, on a stated day before it was light, and sing

among themselves alternately a hymn to Christ as God....When these things were performed, it was their custom to separate and then to come together again to a meal which they ate in common without any disorder."

We know the day the early church broke bread on was Sunday. *"Upon the first day of the week when the disciples came together to break bread"* Acts 20:7.

WHAT FOLLOWS IS SOME OF THE TESTIMONY OF THE EARLY CHURCH LEADERS TO THE TESTIMONY THAT CHRISTIANS WORSHIPPED ON SUNDAY.

THE HISTORICAL ACCURACY OF THEIR STATEMENTS IS CONSIDERED VALID BY ALL CHRISTIAN SCHOLARS.

From their writings we see that Sabbath-keeping was not a requirement for Christians and that worshipping on the first day was common for Christians.

THE DIDACHE or The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles 70-120 AD: is a letter that contains the earliest mention of worship on the 1st day by Christians outside of the New Testament.

"But every Lord's day [lit. "on the Lord's of the Lord's"] gather yourselves together, and break bread, and give thanks, having first confessed your sins so that your sacrifice may be pure." Didache 14:1 (compare with Rev. 1:10).

THE EPISTLE OF IGNATIUS TO THE MAGNESIANS, - 107 AD:

"If, therefore, those who were brought up in the ancient order

of things have come to the possession of a new hope, *no longer observing the Sabbath, but living in the observance of the Lord's Day*, on which also our life has sprung up again by Him and by His death...*Let us therefore no longer keep the Sabbath after the Jewish manner, and rejoice in days of idleness*; for 'he that does not work, let him not eat.' For say the [holy] oracles, 'In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat thy bread.' But let every one of you keep the Sabbath after a spiritual manner, rejoicing in meditation on the law, not in relaxation of the body, admiring the workmanship of God, and not eating things prepared the day before, nor using lukewarm drinks, and walking within a prescribed space, nor finding delight in dancing and plaudits which have no sense in them. And after the observance of the Sabbath, *let every friend of Christ keep the Lord's Day as a festival, the resurrection day, the queen and chief of all the days [of the week].*" Chapter IX
- "Let Us Live with Christ"

The *Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge* explains Justin's works:

"In these works Justin professes to present the system of doctrine held by all Christians and seeks to be orthodox on all points. The only difference he knows of as existing between Christians concerned the millennium. Thus Justin is an incontrovertible witness for the unity of the faith in the Church of his day, and the fact that the Gentile type of Christianity prevailed." Quoted by D. M. Canright in *The Complete Testimony of the Early Fathers*, Fleming H. Revell, 1916, pp. 24-25.

THE EPISTLE OF BARNABAS, 120

AD:

"Incense is a vain abomination unto me, and your new moons and Sabbaths I cannot endure. He has, therefore, abolished these things." Chapter 2

THE EPISTLE OF BARNABAS about 100 AD:

"Wherefore, also we keep the eighth day with joyfulness, the day also on which Jesus rose again from the dead." Chapter 25

JUSTIN MARTYR, 140 AD:

- Justin Martyr was a second century Christian apologist.
- Justin's 'Apology' was written at Rome about the year 140, only 44 years after the apostle John received the vision of The Revelation at Patmos.

At this early date (AD 140) the only major difference among Christians was concerning the millennium.

At that time they had no disagreement in keeping Sunday, and as you will see, Justin says that was the day on which all Christians worshipped.

In **chapter 67** of his first Apology, entitled, *Weekly Worship of the Christians*, writing to the pagan emperor, Justin states:

"...we bless the Maker of all through His Son Jesus Christ, and through the Holy Ghost. And on the day called Sunday, all who live in cities or in the country gather together to one place, and the memoirs of the apostles or the writings of the prophets are read, as long as time permits; then, when the

reader has ceased, the president verbally instructs, and exhorts to the imitation of these good things. Then we all rise together and pray, and, as we before said, when our prayer is ended, bread and wine and water are brought... **But Sunday is the day on which we all hold our common assembly,** because it is the first day on which God, having wrought the change in the darkness and matter, made the world; and Jesus Christ our Savior on the same day rose from the dead." *The Ante-Nicene Fathers, Vol. 1, pp. 185-186 (emphasis added).*

IRANAEUS, BISHOP OF LYONS 155-202 AD:

"The Mystery of the Lord's Resurrection may not be celebrated on any other day than the Lord's Day, and on this alone should we observe the breaking off of the Paschal Feast."

DIONYSIUS, BISHOP OF CORINTH IN GREECE, 170 AD:

- Dionysius was Bishop of Corinth, the Church that Paul raised up and to which he gave the command about Sunday collections (I Corinthians 16:1-2). Dionysius said:

"We passed this holy Lord's Day, in which we read your letter, from the constant reading of which we shall be able to draw admonition." *Eusebius, Ecclesiastical History, Bk. 4, Chapter. 23 (emphasis added).*

NOTE: The early church explained why they prayed toward the east. It was because, "...as the lightning which lighteneth from the east and is seen even to the west, so shall the coming of the Son of man be.' that by this we might know and understand that He will appear from the east suddenly" *Ancient Syriac Documents, The Ante-Nicene Fathers, vol. 8, p. 668.*

CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA, in Egypt, 194 AD:

- Clement, writing around AD 194 says:

"He, in fulfillment of the precept, keeps the Lord's day when he abandons an evil disposition, and assumes that of the Gnostic, glorifying the Lord's resurrection in himself"
Book 7, Chapter 12 (emphasis added).

TERTULLIAN of Africa, 200 AD:

- In his Apology, Chapter 16, Tertullian says:

"We solemnize the day after Saturday in contradistinction to those who call this day their Sabbath, and devote it to ease and eating, deviating from the old Jewish customs, which they are now very ignorant of." "Others, with greater regard to good manners, it must be confessed, suppose that the sun is the god of the Christian, because it is a well-known fact that we pray towards the east, or because we make Sunday a day of festivity" *The Ante-Nicene Fathers, vol. 3, p. 123 (emphasis added).*

"Anti-Judaism played its part in second-century Christian polemic against Jewish Sabbath observance, but it does not follow that it motivated the introduction of Christian Sunday worship. For we have already argued that Sunday worship dates back to the first century, while few second-century writers compare and contrast the Jewish Sabbath and the Christian Sunday. Derogatory discussions of the Jewish Sabbath do not usually refer to the Christian Sunday. If Sunday were a recent substitute for the Jewish Sabbath, we should expect far more discussion of the superiority of Sunday to the Sabbath." R. J. Bauckham, *From Sabbath to Lord's Day*, p. 271, edited by D.A. Carson.

EUSEBIUS PAMPHILUS – 315 AD

The Ecclesiastical History of Eusebius Pamphilus is probably one of the most important works on early church history available. It covers the events of the first three centuries of the Church. Eusebius was a great historian and theologian.

"For as the name Christians is intended to indicate this very idea, that a man, by the

knowledge and doctrine of Christ, is distinguished by modesty and justice, by patience and a virtuous fortitude, and by a profession of piety towards the one and only true and supreme God; all this no less studiously cultivated by them than by us. They did not, therefore, regard circumcision, nor observe the Sabbath, neither do we; neither do we abstain from certain foods, nor regard other injunctions, which Moses subsequently delivered to be observed in types and symbols, because such things as these do not belong to Christians." *Eusebius Ecclesiastical History, Book 1, Chapter 5*

The Ebionites were a group that observed the Sabbath and Sunday, but they were heretical in their teachings.

“The Ebionites cherished low and mean opinions of Christ. For they considered Him a plain and common man, and justified only by His advances in virtue, and that He was born of the Virgin Mary, by natural generation. With them the observance of the law was altogether necessary, as if they could not be saved, only by faith in Christ and a corresponding life. These, indeed, thought on the one hand that all of the epistles of the apostles ought to be rejected, calling him an apostate from the law, but on the other, only using the gospel according to the Hebrews, they esteem the others as of little value. They also observe the Sabbath and other discipline of the Jews,

just like them, but on the other hand, they also celebrate the Lords days very much like us, in commemoration of His resurrection." *Eusebius Ecclesiastical History, Book 3, Chapter 27*

"The churches throughout the rest of the world observe the practice that has prevailed from apostolic tradition until the present time, so that it would not be proper to terminate our fast on any other but the day of the resurrection of our Savior. Hence there were synods and convocations of the bishops on this question; and all unanimously drew up the ecclesiastical decree, which they communicated to all the churches in all places, that the mystery of our Lords resurrection should be celebrated on no other day than the Lords day." *Eusebius Ecclesiastical History, Book 5, Chapter 23*

Some SABBATARIANS ARGUE THAT AT THE COUNCIL OF LAODICEA THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH changed the Sabbath from the Seventh day to the First day; this is not true.

The Sabbath was not changed at that Council.

- **What did take place at that Council was an anti-Semitic move to make it illegal for a Christian to worship on Saturday.** But one needs to note that thousands of Christians were already worshipping on Sunday, the first day of the week.

**APOSTOLIC CONSTITUTIONS:
Church life, 380 AD:**

"On the day of the resurrection of the Lord--that is, the Lord's Day-- assemble yourself together without fail, giving thanks to God and praising Him for those mercies God has bestowed upon you through Christ."

10). The Sabbath was not mentioned or commanded in the book of Genesis or during the time period of the book of Genesis.

- No one prior to the Exodus was commanded to "Remember the Sabbath".

The Sabbath is not mentioned in the book of Genesis.

- If God instituted the "Sabbath" before the "Fall of Man," it seems strange that the fact is not recorded in Genesis and that Adam was not told to observe it.
- Nowhere in the Book of Genesis do we read of Adam, any of his descendants, Noah, Abraham or any of the Jewish Patriarchs observing the Sabbath.

◆ ***1. The first mention of "seven days" is in the seven days of Creation – we will come back to this in a moment...I want to address this when we talk about the commandment "Remember the Sabbath" (Exodus 20:8).***

◆ ***2. The next mention of a "seven-fold" division of days is found in Gen. 7:4,10, when seven days of grace were granted before the Flood came.***

"For after seven more days, I will send rain on the earth forty

days and forty nights; and I will blot out from the face of the land every living thing that I have made...10 It came about after the seven days, that the water of the flood came upon the earth."

- ◆ 3. Genesis 8:8-12 records a seven day period elapsed between the sending forth of the dove to see if the flood waters had abated.

Although there are these references to seven-day periods of time, there is no mention, not even in passing or by inference, of the Sabbath in the Book of Genesis.

Melchizedek, the "King/Priest" of Salem is mentioned in the book of Genesis and in the New Testament book of Hebrews.

There is no mention of the Sabbath in connection with Melchizedek.

The Book of Job is the oldest book in the Bible. Job lived near the time of the Patriarch Abraham. There is no mention of the Sabbath in the book of Job.

We know that Job was a godly man (Job 1:1)

He prayed for his children and offered sacrifices to the Lord on their behalf. (Job 1:5)

God held him up as a righteous man. (Job 1:8).

"The LORD said to Satan, 'Have you considered My servant Job? For there is no one like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, fearing God and turning away from evil.'"

When Job defended his integrity, he never mentioned Sabbath-keeping as an example of his godly works.

The Scriptures are very clear that the Sabbath of the fourth commandment was not given before Moses:

The Ten Commandments was not made with the fathers. Deuteronomy 5:2-3 says *"The Lord our God made a covenant with us at Horeb. The Lord did not make this covenant with our fathers, but with us, with all those of us alive here today."*

In the book of Genesis and during the time period covered in the book of Genesis:

- The Creation
- The Fall of Man
- The Pre-Flood period
- The Post-Flood period through the Patriarchs and the death of Joseph

...there is absolutely no reference to the Sabbath, inferred, stated, kept or commanded.

11). *The first mention of the Sabbath is during the time of Moses and the deliverance of Israel from Egyptian slavery.*

The first mention we read of "Sabbath" in the Bible is in Ex. 16:22-23, in connection with the gathering of the manna.

"Now on the sixth day they gathered twice as much bread, two omers for each one. When all the leaders of the congregation came and told Moses, 23 then he said to them, 'This is what the LORD meant: Tomorrow is a sabbath observance, a holy sabbath to the LORD. Bake what you will bake

and boil what you will boil, and all that is left over put aside to be kept until morning.”

Look again at vs. 23 “...*This is what the LORD meant: Tomorrow is a Sabbath observance, a holy Sabbath to the LORD...*”

That the seventh day of the creation week was a type of the Sabbath is clear from Ex 20:11 *“For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day; therefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day and made it holy.”* But we have no evidence that the Sabbath was commanded to be observed until after the Exodus and the reason is clear. God’s rest was broken by the fall of man, and there could be no “rest” until redemption was brought in, and this was typically brought in by the redemption of the Children of Israel from Egypt. The purpose of their deliverance was that they might find rest in Canaan from the weary toil and slavery of Egypt.

Moses had to explain why they had twice as much bread; he had to explain Sabbath observance.

This highlights the fact that they were not keeping a Sabbath day prior to the giving of manna.

Sabbath was an entirely new concept that had to be taught to them.

A few weeks later, the Old Covenant was given on Mt. Sinai;

The LORD said, Exodus 20:8-10

“Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. 9 Six days you shall labor and do all your work, 10 but the seventh day is a sabbath of the LORD your God; in it you shall not do any work, you or your son or your daughter, your male or your female servant or your cattle or your sojourner who stays with you.”

They were to “remember the Sabbath day” – what would they “remember”?

- They were to remember the first mention of the sabbath, when God sent the manna and Moses explained that there would be a sabbath rest on the 7th day.
- The Sabbath day they were to remember was not the seventh day on which God rested after Creation, but the

sabbath that God had appointed as **the sabbath day at the time of the giving of the manna.**

Nehemiah 9:13-14 says: "You came down on Mount Sinai; you spoke to them from heaven. You gave them regulations and laws that are just and right, and decrees and commands that are good. You made known to them your holy sabbath and gave them commands, decrees and laws through your servant Moses."
NIV

- They didn't have the Sabbath commandment before Mt. Sinai. The Sabbath was given as a part of the Old Covenant at Sinai.
- Nehemiah 9:13-14 indicates that the Sabbath was not given to be kept by anyone until it was given to Israel in the wilderness.

Exodus 20:11: "For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day; therefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day and made it holy."

God tied the new concept of Sabbath to His "rest" after creation.

God worked six days, and then rested on the seventh day from the work of creation. It was a completed work, so God didn't resume working on the 8th day!

Genesis 2:2-3 "By the seventh day God completed His work which He had done, and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had done. 3 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 rested because His work was finished. God rested because His work was not only finished but was GOOD.

But when God's perfect work was marred by sin, by the fall of man, His rest was broken.

As soon as man fell it was necessary for God to resume His work, this time not to continue the creation, but to accomplish redemption.

So Jesus in explaining His mission said, John 5:17

“But He answered them, ‘My Father is working until now, and I Myself am working.’”

In Genesis 2:2-3, we are simply told that God rested from His work of creating on the seventh day.

- ◆ The day is not called a Sabbath day.
- ◆ We are told that God blessed and sanctified it. That is, set it apart as a rest day.
- ◆ We are not told the length of the seventh day of creation.

12). THE NINE "MORAL" COMMANDS OF THE 10 COMMANDMENTS ARE REITERATED in the New Testament.

- 1). To worship the Lord God only (1st commandment): no less than 50 times

- 2). **Idolatry** (2nd commandment):
condemned 12 times
- 3). **Profanity** (3rd commandment):
condemned 4 times
- 4). **Honoring parents** (5th
commandment) is taught 6 times
- 5). **Murder** (6th commandment)
condemned 6 times
- 6). **Adultery** (7th commandment)
condemned 12 times
- 7). **Theft** (8th commandment) condemned 4
times
- 8). **False Witness** (9th commandment)
condemned 4 times
- 9). **Covetousness** (10th commandment)
condemned 9 times

"The other nine [commandments] were (and are) inherently right from the beginning, reflecting God's righteous nature and being naturally a part of man's moral character, who was made in the image of God (cf Romans 2:14). Which command other than the sabbath is lower than man-- subject to being set aside under certain circumstances? When, or under what circumstances, can man lawfully commit adultery? Obviously, never! Man's life is not above God's holy and moral laws. Yet even a sheep's life is more important than rigid enforcement of the sabbath (Matthew 12:10-12)!

(Gerald N. Wright, *Sabbatarian Concordance & Commentary*, Star Bible & Tract Corp., 1977, pp. 78-79).

Why is it that the duty to keep the Seventh day as Sabbath is not mentioned ONCE in the New Testament?

The Sabbath was not a part of the "moral" Law to be kept by all mankind from the beginning.

13). When did Sabbath Keeping start in the History of the Church?

As referenced above, The Ebionites, a heretical group observed the Sabbath and Sunday.

THE FIRST HISTORICAL RECORD OF METHODOICAL SABBATH-KEEPING BY Christians who stopped worshipping on the 1st day of the week, was two active Anabaptist leaders, Andreas Fisher and

Oswald Glait.

- In 1527, they began promoting the concept of Christians worshipping on the 7th day Sabbath.
- When they began to teach this, Christian theologians were sent to persuade them to abandon the “Jewish Sabbath.”

14). SOME SABBATARIANS CLAIM THAT THE SABBATH IS THE SEAL OF GOD, BUT THE SEAL OF GOD IS NOT the Sabbath!

The Bible tells us clearly that THE SEAL OF GOD IS THE HOLY SPIRIT indwelling the believer the moment he is saved.

Ephesians 1:13 says,

"And you also were included in Christ when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation. Having believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession--to the praise of his glory."

Ephesians 4:30 warns,

"And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption."

2 Corinthians 1:21-22 states

"Now He who establishes us with you in Christ and anointed us is God, who also sealed us

and gave us the Spirit in our hearts as a pledge."

15). IS A SABBATH KEEPING CHURCH THE "REMNANT" OR COMMANDMENT KEEPING CHURCH THAT IS SPOKEN OF IN REVELATION 12:17?

Revelation 12:17 says, "... the dragon was enraged with the woman, and went off to make war with the rest of her offspring, who keep the commandments of God and hold to the testimony of Jesus."

Does this verse refer to the Ten Commandments?

IN THE NEW COVENANT, WHAT ARE THE "COMMANDMENTS" OF GOD?

This verse is not referring to the Ten Commandments.

The Greek word used for the Ten Commandments is "NOMOS."

That word is not used in Revelation 12:17.

The word used is "ENTELE" and means "teachings."

John actually tells us what the "commandments" are that we are to keep:

I John 5:1-3 says, "*Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God; and whoever loves the Father loves the child born of Him. By this we know that we love the*

children of God, when we love God and observe His commandments. For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments; and His com-mandments are not burden-some."

These verses are often used to teach people that they must keep the Ten Commandments, especially the Sabbath.

However, the Apostle John defines the "commandments" for us.

In the prior chapter he defines them explicitly. I John 3:21-24a.

"Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence before God; and what-ever we ask we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments and do the things that are pleasing in is sight. And this is His commandment, that we believe in the name of His Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, just as He commanded us. And the one who keeps His commandments abides in Him, and He in him..."

16). NEW LIGHT ON CEREMONIAL SABBATHS AND COLOSSIANS 2:16

An unbiased reading of Colossians 2:16,17 will show that this is not just talking about "ceremonial Sabbaths."

"Therefore no one is to act as your judge in regard to food or drink or in respect to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath day, 17 things which are a

mere shadow of what is to come; but the substance belongs to Christ."

The words for "**Sabbath Day**" (vs. 16) are "ton sabbaton," and are the same words translated "Sabbath day" in Exodus 20:8 in the Septuagint (the Jewish translation of the Old Testament into Greek).

Paul reasons this way: "Let no one judge you regarding a:

- ◆ festival - yearly Sabbaths,
- ◆ a new moon - monthly Sabbaths,
- ◆ or a Sabbath day - weekly Sabbaths (or if you wish Sabbath days)

CHRIST, he goes on to say, is the "Substance", these things were shadows.

When this passage is compared with Galatians 4:9 an obvious connection in Paul's teaching is revealed:

"But now that you have come to know God, or rather to be known by God, how is it that you turn back again to the weak and worthless elemental things, to which you desire to be enslaved all over again? You observe days and months and seasons and years."

Verse 10 flatly states, "**you observe...**",

- ◆ days (weekly Sabbaths, corresponding to "Sabbath days in Col. 2)
- ◆ months (new moons, corresponding to "a new moon" in Col. 2)
- ◆ seasons (the 7 feasts, corresponding to "festivals" in Col. 2)
- ◆ and years (the sabbatical year and the 50th year of Jubilee)

Obviously Paul is clearly speaking about

**the observances of all Jewish holy days,
including the Sabbath.**