

A DAY TO REMEMBER

James and I are sometimes asked why we observe the seventh day Sabbath. This study is an effort to give the reasons we have chosen to worship on this day. Most importantly, our first duty, as professed followers of Christ, is to reflect the character of our Savior. As He was not a “hunter” but rather a “fisher” of men, likewise, it is not our desire to shoot bullets into anyone’s belief system or attempt to force our position upon others.

It *is* a fact that the simple observance of the fourth commandment of the law of God is one of the most striking distinctions we can practice. As the vast majority of Christians set aside the first day, Sunday, as the day of worship, the observance of the seventh day makes us peculiar, if nothing else. Except for the Jews, this practice makes us different from the religious as well as the secular world. Our prayer is, that through conviction by the Holy Spirit, all who take the time to study these truths, will concede to the solid weight of Biblical evidence in favor of the seventh day Sabbath.

The law of God is as sacred as the Lord Himself. It is a revelation of His will, a transcript of His character, and the expression of divine love and wisdom. It is all encompassing, showing both our devotion and service to God in the first four commandments and the same for our fellow man in the last six. The two great commands given by Christ to love God with all of our hearts, minds and souls and our neighbors as ourselves is followed by this statement, “*On these*

two commandments hang all the law and the prophets,” Matthew 23:40. Our Savior leaves no stone unturned. When God has first place in our affections and hearts, the right place will be given to our neighbor. We shall love him as ourselves, and as it is impossible for any of us to love our neighbor impartially, it is only as we love the Lord supremely that we may possess a genuine care toward our neighbor. Since all of the commandments are summed up in love to God and to each other, it makes sense that not one precept can be broken without violating this great principle. It is not left for us to determine which principles of the law are of greater magnitude, and which are of lesser to no importance. All ten are a divine whole and teach us that our love for God should be shown by obedience to all of His commandments. The words of our Savior reinforce this principle. Jesus said, “If ye love me, keep my commandments.”

Let’s start at the beginning. The popular view is that the six days of creation were six indefinite and vast periods of time, and the day of God’s rest, the seventh day, another unspecified period. This has led many to believe that it is only a seventh part of our time that God requires, that day being left to our choice. Our Lord is not the author of confusion, so why would He command men to observe a week of seven literal days, Sunday through Saturday, while applying seven indefinite periods of time to them? This is contrary to His character and a charge against His wisdom and omnipotent power. While it may be innocent enough to conjecture beyond Bible history, we need to be sure our suppositions do not contradict the facts found in the sacred record. This argument concerning vast periods of time between “days” makes obscure that which God has made very plain. It is the seventh day, and not a seventh part of time, that the Creator has set apart and made holy. This will become clearer as we proceed.

To further dispel the idea of seven indistinct periods of time, we need only look to that sacred record given to us in Genesis 1: 11-19. Notice the sequence of events. The Lord generated all vegetation on the third day and He created the luminous bodies, that is, the sun and the moon, on the fourth. This was not without design. God knew that many would attempt to throw an unfavorable light on the Biblical creation account. It is written, *“I will destroy the wisdom of the wise”* and *“Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?”* 1 Corinthians 1:19,20. Vegetation cannot exist without sunlight and thus, the scriptures give straightforward and ample evidence that the seven day week of creation was a literal seven days. There could not have been a “thousand” years between “days” as has been argued by the higher critics, or all vegetation would have died out. This is made even clearer when we see that at the end of each of the six days of creation, we are told *“ the evening and the morning were the first day... the evening and the morning were the second day,”* and so on. An evening and a morning equal one day, nothing more and nothing less, simply a 24-hour period of time. The word “generations” in Genesis 2:4 does not mean that “thousands” of years took place between creative events. Rather, it refers to the act of God in “generating” or, producing, His creative work in six days.

In Genesis 2:2-3, we read, *“And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made. And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made.”* Notice the word “seventh” is repeated three times, and not without significance. Repetition is always given in the Bible for the purpose of emphasis. It would, therefore, behoove us to know which day truly is the seventh. Given the creation record, it will be admitted that Adam and Eve observed the seventh day Sabbath and the Jewish people have been observing this day since the giving of the law down to present day. Thus, the Israelites have

preserved, by weekly practice, the observance of the special day of the week, to be kept “holy to the Lord.” The seventh day is Saturday and has been since creation. Of the 160 ancient and modern languages and dialects, 108 of them actually know Saturday by the name of Sabbath, or its equivalent. The following are but a few examples. The Spanish word for Saturday is Sabado. In the cuneiform tablets of the Babylonians, the “Sabatu” is described as “a day of rest for the soul.” In Russian, the word is “Subbota”, in Ethiopian, it is “Sanbat”, it is “Subuta” in Serbian, and in Maba in Central Africa the word is “Sab”.

Yes, the calendar has been changed, and days have been added or dropped. For instance, the Gregorian calendar of A.D. 1582 dropped ten days; but Thursday, October 4 was followed immediately by Friday, the 5th. Our leap year updates the calendar every four years, but these changes have never affected the sequential order of the days. Though the calendar is constantly being updated to compensate for the 365 days, 5 hours, 48 minutes and 47.8 seconds in the year, the week of seven days has never been altered. This seven-day weekly cycle was put into effect at creation. Christ and His disciples observed the seventh day Sabbath while He was on earth, and His disciples worshipped on that day for decades **after** His death, well into the first part of the second century. Among their varied and abundant gifts, the Israelites were meticulous record keepers. The Sabbath pervaded all Hebrew reckoning of time and the Jews have kept it without break for at least three thousand years. The Christian church on the other hand, has observed Easter Sunday, the first day of the week, for nearly two thousand years. The weekly cycle has never been interrupted.

God the Father has always worked through His Son, both in creation and in redemption (Genesis 1:26, Hebrews 1:1 & 2,8,9,10, Colossians 1:16). It was Christ Jesus who created the world in six days and rested on the seventh day. *“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word*

was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by Him, and without Him was not any thing made that was made” John 1-3. And when man lost the image of God through sin in the garden, Christ came to restore that likeness by a new creation. On the cross, He cried out: *“It is finished”* John 19:30. This was on preparation day, after which He rested in the tomb on the Sabbath day from a finished work of re-creation, as He had originally rested on it from a finished work of creation. *“And that day was the preparation, and the Sabbath drew on. And the women also which came with him from Galilee, followed after, and beheld the sepulchre, and how his body was laid. And they returned ... and rested the Sabbath day according to the commandment”* Luke 23:54-56. Thus the seventh day Sabbath stands in the New Testament as a memorial of a “finished” or redemptive work in Christ. This work of our Lord, both in creation and in redemption, was for the whole human race and the Sabbath is a memorial and reminder of a finished work in our Savior. There is no distinction due to nationality, race or caste, recognized by our Creator. He is the Maker of all mankind and, as we are all of one family by creation, we are also one through His gracious redemption.

This differs widely from the commonly held belief that seventh day worship was given only to the Jewish nation. Biblically, this is simply not true. God instituted the Sabbath at creation (Genesis 2:2,3) long before the “father” of the Jews, Abraham, arrived on the scene and long before He wrote the moral law in stone and spoke it on Mount Sinai. In fact, the Lord showed the sanctity of the Sabbath in another way prior to giving His commandments. By a miracle, He preserved the Sabbath law through forty years of wilderness wandering. In Exodus 16, we learn that the Lord poured out manna from heaven daily, except on the Sabbath day. We note that a double portion was poured out on the sixth day so people would not have to gather it on the

Sabbath. Any manna left overnight on any other day of the week spoiled by the next morning, but that double portion given on Friday did not spoil. The Lord expressly asks in verse 28, *“How long refuse ye to keep my commandments and my laws?”* This question implies that, prior to this time, knowledge of His laws had been known and observed by His people. Because they had been slaves in Egypt for four hundred years and had become accustomed to Egyptian traditions, many, if not most of them, had forgotten His Sabbath.

The wording of the fourth commandment, therefore, was and still remains a reminder to remember the seventh day Sabbath. *“Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labor and do all thy work: But the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, nor thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it”* Exodus 20: 8-11. The blessing of the Sabbath is the Lord’s presence in it. Following the example of our Creator, man was to rest upon this sacred day, and as he should look upon the heavens and the earth, he would reflect upon His great work of creation and his heart would be filled with reverence for his Maker. The Sabbath was committed to Adam, the father and representative of the entire human family.

The Bible says, *“All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness. That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works”* 2 Timothy 3:16,17. On the road to Emmaus, Jesus met two men and *“Beginning at Moses, and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself”* Luke 24:27. We know that the only scriptures they had, at that time, were Old Testament scriptures. He also said, *“For had ye believed Moses, ye would*

have believed me: for he wrote of me. But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe my words?" John 1:46,47. Paul, while speaking to the new Christians in Corinth, wrote these words concerning the patriarchs and prophets of old: *"And did all eat the same spiritual meat; And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ ... Now these things were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted ... Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come"* 1 Corinthians 10:3,4,6,11. There are many today who believe the Old Testament is of little to no value to us living this side of the cross. These New Testament texts should dispel this myth. With this in mind, we continue.

*"To **obey** is better than sacrifice, and to hearken the fat of the rams "* 1 Samuel 15:22. *"And being made perfect, He became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that **obey** Him"* Hebrews 5:9. The Lord Jesus Christ does not change. *"Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, today and forever"* Hebrews 13:8. *"For I am God, I change not"* Malachi 3:6. There are valuable object lessons scattered throughout the Bible, both in the Old as well as New Testament. *"Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come. Therefore, let him that thinketh he stand take heed lest he fall."* 1 Corinthians 10:11,12. The entire Bible is an inspired whole and applies to our time. We are warned throughout not to mingle worldliness in our offerings, and place human teachings and wisdom above the sacred and direct instructions of the Lord. In His wisdom, God oftentimes utilizes what appear in our eyes to be insignificant matters to test the loyalty of his people, such as a specified day of rest. *"But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things*

*which are mighty” 1 Corinthians 1:27. As a simple object lesson of obedience, He forbade the eating of the fruit from a certain tree in the Garden of Eden. The test given to Adam and Eve was very light, but they failed, and disobeyed the Lord. Their transgression has brought untold woe upon our world. God accepted Abel's sacrifice of the firstling of his flock, yet He rejected Cain's offering of the fruit of the ground. Why did the Lord reject it? Cain wanted to do things “his way” and not according to the direct instructions of the Lord. Yet another example is the story of Abihu and Nadab. They died for presenting a different offering, “strange fire” instead of what the Lord had expressly demanded, please see Numbers 26:61 and 3:4. “To **obey** is better than sacrifice, and to hearken the fat of the rams.”*

In light of the Lord's impartial love and justice, the apostle Paul points to the spiritual nature of the original promise made to Abraham before the giving of the commandments at Mount Sinai. *“And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise” Galatians 3:29. God had told Abraham that in him would “all families of the earth be blessed” Genesis 12: 2,3. “In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed” Genesis 22:18. God chose the nation of Israel for the specific purpose of being a light unto the world, to reveal His law of love and abundant grace to others. In this commission, the Jewish nation, as a whole, sadly failed. We are saved individually, never by association or in groups. The word “Israel” means, “to prevail or overcome.” Thus every person who is converted and born again into Christ is considered by God to be a spiritual Israelite, regardless of fleshly inheritance. “There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female; for ye are all one in Christ Jesus” Galatians 3:28. “For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly, neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter...” Romans 2:28,29. “For*

they are not all Israel, which are of Israel...” Romans 9:6. The terms “Jew” and “Israel” in the New Testament, then, are not confined to the literal seed of Abraham, though he was chosen at first because he loved and obeyed God. When the middle wall of partition was broken down at the crucifixion of Christ, and the Gentiles were called in to be partakers of the blessings of Abraham, to be grafted into the natural vine, all of God’s people, both Jews and Gentiles were brought into a new and more intimate relation to God through His Son. All true Christians are now described as “*an Israelite indeed*” according to John 1:47. By the same token, Moses was a Christian. So were Isaiah, Abraham, Noah and all of the prophets and true believers of old. These all died in faith of the promised Redeemer, Jesus Christ. Please see Hebrews 11.

There is, therefore, perfect harmony between the Old and the New Testaments, for there is only one gospel and one plan of salvation for both Jew and Gentile. Christ saves all the faithful souls in Old Testament days as truly as he saves us today, and in the same manner. The gospel promise was given to the first pair in Eden when they had, by transgression, separated themselves from God, see Genesis 3:15. The gospel was preached to Abraham, as we read clearly in the New Testament, “*For the scriptures, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, in thee shall all nations be blessed*” Galatians 3:8. The Hebrews all drank of that same spiritual Rock, which was Christ, 1 Corinthians 10. It matters not to God where or when we are born, it matters only what we become through His divine grace.

In regard to the claim that the Sabbath commandment is not moral as are the other nine, but ceremonial, it need only be said that there is no statement to that effect in the entire Bible. The law that came to an end at the cross was the ceremonial law of ordinances. Paul says that Christ blotted “*out the handwriting of ordinances that was AGAINST us, which was contrary to us, and*

took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross” Colossians 2:14. In Deuteronomy 31:24, we learn what law Paul was referring to. Moses was directed to write the ceremonial laws. “... *When Moses had made an end of writing the words of this law in a book, until they were finished,*” he told the Levites, “*take this book of the law and put it in the **side** of the ark of the covenant of the Lord your God, that it may be there for a witness AGAINST thee.*” Moses wrote with his hand the words of this law after being directed by the Lord to do so. God, on the other hand, wrote the moral law with His own finger, twice. The ceremonial law is the one that both Paul and Moses referred to as “*against*” us. This is the law, which, along with its services and ceremonies, beautifully typified the coming Savior. It was abolished at the cross.

Let’s look at the clear distinction maintained in the Bible between the two laws, the moral and the ceremonial. Our Creator spoke the moral law or Ten Commandments to the people directly and He “*added no more*” Deuteronomy 5:22. He engraved them on two tables of stone with His own finger and had them placed **inside** the ark. “*And he gave unto Moses, when he had made an end of communing with him upon mount Sinai, two tables of testimony, tables of stone, written with the finger of God*” Exodus 31:18. “*There was nothing in the ark save the two tables of stone*” 1 Kings 8:9. The fact that the ten commandments were written by God’s own finger sets them apart from and above the rest of the Bible in importance. We use the expression, “written in stone” to signify something that is unchangeable. The Ten Commandments are eternal and immutable.

The ceremonial law of ordinances, by contrast, was spoken to the people by Moses, was written by him and placed “*in a book.*” It was, as noted above, placed in the side of the ark. If we believe the Sabbath to be part of the ceremonial law, then we must ask why the Lord would write a ceremonial law in the very heart and bosom of His moral Decalogue. If the seventh day

Sabbath is “against us” as some suggest from Colossians 2:14, then, by default, the other nine commandments are as well. If it was nailed to the cross, why do we find it in the center of the ten-commandment law? Such an act as changing or blotting out one of His commands would reveal a blatant inconsistency in God’s character. Has Christ’s death set me free to commit adultery, to steal, murder, take God’s name in vain and have other idols before God? No, of course not. No reasonable believer would suggest that these commandments were nailed to the cross, yet many ascertain with certainty that the fourth one was, and that we are free to change it at will.

In Colossians 2:16 & 17, Paul admonished the believers not to judge one another by meat and drink offerings or Sabbath days “*which are a shadow of things to come.*” These sabbath days were the yearly Sabbaths, not the seventh day weekly Sabbath of Genesis and the Decalogue. These “shadowy” sabbaths are described in full detail in the 23rd chapter of Leviticus, and are worthy of a good study. There were seven of them, which included a Sabbath for Passover and the feast of unleavened bread. These days were distinctly set apart and differentiated from the Lord’s weekly seventh day Sabbath. “*Six days shall work be done, but the seventh day is the Sabbath of rest, an holy, convocation, ye shall do no work therein: it is the Sabbath of the Lord in all your dwellings*” Leviticus 23:3. Following this text, Moses describes in detail the seven feasts, at the end of which, we read the following: “*These are the feasts of the Lord, which ye shall proclaim to be holy convocations, to offer an offering made by fire unto the Lord, a burnt offering, and a meat offering, a sacrifice, and drink offerings, every thing upon his day: Beside the Sabbaths of the Lord, and beside your gifts, and beside all your vows, and beside all your freewill offerings, which ye give unto the Lord.*” Leviticus 23:37,38. These yearly Sabbaths connected with the feast days were part of the ceremonial law and **were** nailed to the cross with

all their meat and drink offerings. The great ten commandment weekly seventh day Sabbath was not affected by that “blotting out” of ordinances.

Many of those living in Rome during the time Paul taught there were engaged in pagan rituals such as the “observing of times and seasons.” The newly converted Jews were insisting that the Jewish ceremonies should continue to be incorporated into the rites of the Christian religion. They were slow to discern that all the sacrificial offerings, rites and ceremonies of the Mosaic dispensation, that is the ceremonial law, which had foreshadowed the death of Christ, were no longer binding. *“One man esteemeth one day above another: another esteemeth every day alike. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind”* Romans 14:5. Paul was seeking to bring the minds of these men, as he was with the Colossians, to the great truth of that time; counseling them not to judge one another according to the days of feasting, customs, ordinances and rituals such as circumcision. Christ had put an end to these things, and those who were living under the gospel dispensation had been freed from their observance. However, God’s unchangeable law of Ten Commandments, including the seventh day Sabbath, Paul kept in spirit as well as in letter, as we will see shortly.

The moral law, then, was never a shadow or a type. It existed before man’s creation, or Adam could not have sinned, for the Word clearly tells us that to sin is to transgress the law. *“Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law, for sin is the transgression of the law”* 1 John 3:4. Christ came to elevate and magnify that law and to show that God is loving, merciful and just. *“Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just and good”* Romans 7:12. He came to be our example, and to make us one with God by bringing us into allegiance with His law, thus restoring us back to the divine image. The fact that Jesus has paid the debt for we sinners on the cross does not give us license to continue in transgression of the law of God;

we are saved “from” our sins, not in them, Matthew 1:21. *“By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments. This is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous”* 1 John 5:2,3. “Grievous means burdensome”. If we truly love the Lord, it will come natural to us to live in loving obedience to that ‘royal law of liberty’, as the apostle James calls it, through the indwelling spirit and faith of Christ in our hearts. Christ’s sacrificial offering of Himself in our behalf releases us only from the condemnation of the law; it does not release us from the law itself. Christ told us *“Think not that I have come to destroy the law or the prophets, I have not come to destroy but to fulfill. For verily I say unto you, till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled”* Matthew 5 17,18. Heaven and earth have not passed away, have they? *“There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set me free from the law of sin and death”* Romans 8:1,2. It’s the same law: one of sin and death when we attempt, as the Jews did, to keep it through our own works. But it is life eternal and the “royal law of liberty” to those who allow the “spirit of life in Christ Jesus” to dwell in them and, thus, set them free from all sin. If we are in Christ, we cannot sin. *“Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin, for his seed remaineth in him, and he cannot sin, because he is born of God”* 1 John 3:9 The law is the great standard by which all men will be judged.

Let’s return to the Sabbath issue and take a look at the gospels. *“And that day was the preparation and the Sabbath drew on. And the women also, which came with him from Galilee, followed after, and beheld the sepulchre, and how his body was laid. And they returned, and prepared spices and ointments; and rested the Sabbath day according to the commandment”* Luke 23:54-56. *“And when the Sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of*

James, and Salome, had bought sweet spices, that they might come and anoint him. And very early in the morning the first day of the week, they came unto the sepulchre at the rising of the sun,” Mark 16:1,2. Jesus was not there. All Christians, everywhere, agree that the resurrection took place on Sunday, and all first day Christians will give the resurrection as the reason why they choose to worship God on this day. So, by their own admission, tradition and practice, all must readily admit that Sunday is the “first day” in the New Testament. This is the day that Mary went to the grave, the day the Bible defines as the “*first day of the week.*” Throughout the gospels, we find that the first day is unequivocally Sunday. Other mentions of Mary going to Jesus’ grave on the first day of the week can be found in Matthew 28:1, Mark 16:9, Luke 24:1 and John 20:1. If Sunday is the first day in the New Testament, Saturday is, without dispute, the seventh. I find it interesting that many Christians claim the New Testament, and particularly the four gospels, as their guide and practice, yet they claim the Sabbath was done away with. The women rested on the Sabbath day, according to the “commandment.” By the way, Jesus gave us a fitting memorial concerning His burial and resurrection, the ordinance of baptism by immersion.

Much has been made of John 20:19 in reference to the keeping of the first day of the week. “*Then the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in their midst, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you.*” It is important to note here that there is neither prayer nor exhortation given by Christ to inaugurate the first day of the week as the new holy day. In fact, the disciples did not even believe at that time that the resurrection had taken place. In reference to this meeting just quoted in John 20, we learn in Mark 16:14 that “*Afterwards he appeared unto the eleven as they sat at meat, and upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart*

because they believed not them which had seen him after he was risen.” The disciples were huddled together in that room for one reason. They were afraid and had *“the doors locked for fear of the Jews.”* If Jesus had truly risen, as they had heard, the authorities would most certainly be looking for them as the culprits. They were not there to inaugurate a new day of worship, for there is no mention of such in this text.

Continuing on, there are nine mentions of the Sabbath in the book of Acts and one mention of the first day in chapter 20. Nowhere in all the book of Acts do we find Paul preaching or exhorting on the first day of the week. Remember that Paul was chosen by Christ himself to be the apostle to the Gentiles. The followers of the Master met *“every Sabbath”* to hear the word of God; the scriptures were read *“every Sabbath day.”* Historically, the city of Philippi had no synagogues. Yet in Acts 16:13, Paul, Silus and Timothy had prayer with a woman named Lydia and her household on a riverbank outside the city on the Sabbath. The result of this meeting brought about the baptism of she and her family. In Acts 18:4, we read *“And he reasoned in the synagogue every Sabbath and persuaded the Jews and the Greeks.”* That is, the Gentile converts in Corinth were equally instructed with the Jews, to rest on the day we call Saturday, the Sabbath, having just been converted to Christianity, the “Jews and Greeks” collectively. Also, in vs. 11, we read that Paul *“continued there a year and six months, teaching the word of God.”* That means Paul taught the Jews and the Greeks in Corinth for 78 consecutive Sabbaths.

“And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached to them, ready to depart on the morrow, and continued his speech until midnight” Acts 20:7. This text is often argued in favor as proof of first day sanctity. A day in Bible reckoning begins at sunset and ends the following sunset. You’ll remember, as stated earlier, that in Genesis we learn the “evening and morning were the first day” ... “the evening and morning

were the second day”, and so forth. The seventh day, Biblically, begins at sunset Friday and ends at sunset on Saturday, at which point the first day begins. (The Catholic Church under Pope Gregory changed this in favor of what we now understand as one day, starting at midnight and ending 24 hours later). So, with Biblical reckoning in mind, this meeting in Acts 20 took place in the dark part of the first day of the week, Sunday, what we call Saturday evening. Again, the Lord leaves no stone unturned; we know it was dark, because we read that there were “many lights in the upper chamber” and one young man had fallen into a “deep sleep.” Paul was leaving “at the break of day” and had much to share with the others before his departure. While they did come together to “break bread”, the scriptures are clear that they met daily to fellowship and to “break bread.” For we read in chapter 2, verse 46 that “*they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart.*” It’s so important, friends, to study God’s Word comparing scripture with scripture. As the disciples and early followers of Christ loved their Lord zealously and desired His presence continually, it is natural that they would seek His presence daily, which included “breaking bread together.” So, once again we find no prayer, exhortation or mention of a changed day of rest in Acts 20:7. The Sabbath is mentioned 61 times in the gospels, Acts and epistles, while the first day is mentioned only eight times.

We read in Mark 2:27,28 the following words, “*The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath: Therefore the Son of man is Lord also of the Sabbath*”, see also Matthew 12:8, Luke 6:5. This beautiful day was never designed to be a burden to us, but rather a blessing and a joy. It is not a “work,” as some refer to it - it is a rest for God’s people and a blessed time to commune with Him and others on the day He has chosen and set apart. Regretfully, the Jewish priests of Christ's day and before had made the Sabbath a heavy burden and bound themselves

and others in a fixed rut of ceremonial works. Christ, in his dispute with these men, rejected their form of worship, denouncing it as a religion of their own making. They were filled with self-righteousness, exclusivity, bigotry, and spiritual pride. Christ accused the Pharisees of teaching ‘*for doctrines the commandments of men*’, Matthew 15:9, as they were more interested in maintaining their authority over the people than in living and teaching the truth. Jesus said to them in Matthew 22:29, “*Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures nor the power of God.*”

It comes as no surprise that they condemned Him for his acts of mercy in healing on the Sabbath. Our Lord tried to show the Jewish leaders it’s true nature when they asked Him if it was lawful to heal on this day. Jesus said “*What man shall be among you that shall have one sheep, and if it fall into a pit on the Sabbath day, will he not lay hold on it, and lift it out? How much then is a man better than a sheep? Wherefore it IS lawful to do well on the Sabbath days*” Matthew 12:10-12. Jesus did not come to destroy confidence in His own instruction, but He did seek to break through the walls of the **traditional** requirements of the Hebrews. So, while setting aside their false interpretation of the law, He guarded His disciples against yielding up the vital truths that had been committed to the Jews. He never criticized the Jewish leaders for keeping His seventh day Sabbath; He criticized the spirit in which they were observing it. Jesus came to uphold, magnify and exalt that law in all of its lovely spiritual fullness. He Himself declared, “*..I have kept my Father’s commandments and abide in His love*” John 15:10.

“*Now concerning the collection for the saints, ... upon the first day of the week, let every one of you lay by him in store...*” 1 Corinthians 16: 1,2. There is no reference made here either of any public meeting. This money was to be laid aside privately at home. There was a famine in Judea at that time (Acts 11:26-30) and Paul was writing to ask the churches in Asia Minor to help out. These new Christians kept the Sabbath day holy, so Paul suggested that on Sunday

morning, after the Sabbath was over, they put aside something for their needy brethren so it would be on hand when he came. It is helpful here to recall the actions of the apostles and holy women on Good Friday before sundown. They brought the spices and anointments after He was taken down from the cross and suspended all action until the Sabbath "*holy to the Lord,*" had passed. It was not until Sunday morning that they took steps to complete the process of embalming the sacred body of Jesus. It is for this same reason that Paul suggested that the collection for the saints be laid aside on the first day.

It has been said that the "Lord's day" is the usual term for the first day of the week in John's day. In truth, we find just the contrary in the scriptures. "*The son of man is Lord also of the Sabbath.*" Can we deny that the Sabbath day is the Lord's Day of which He has emphatically declared it to be? Neither the Father nor the Son has ever claimed the first day as His own. Pope Sylvester (314-337 AD) coined the phrase "the Lord's day" from the pagan festival of worshipping the sun. Let's see how the Bible defines this day. "*The sun shall be turned into darkness and the moon into blood, before that great and notable day of the Lord come*" Acts 2:20. "*Who shall also confirm you unto the end, that you may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ*" 1 Corinthians 1:8. "*To deliver such a one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus*" 1 Corinthians 5:5. "*Being confident of this very thing, that He which hath begun a good work in you, will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ*" Philippians 1:6. "*But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night*" 2 Peter 3:10. "*Waiting for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire, shall be dissolved and the elements shall melt with fervent heat*" 2 Peter 3:12. Clearly Luke, Paul and Peter in these passages are speaking about the Day of Judgment.

There is only one place in the Bible that refers to the Lord's Day in any other context. "*I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day...*" Revelation 1:10. Though John may have had a vision concerning the Day of Judgment, which in fact, he did, he could not have had one on that day as it was yet in the future. "*After this, I looked up and behold, a door was open in heaven.*" A voice then said to him, "*Come up hither, and I will show you the things which must be hereafter*", Revelation 4:1,2. In reference to these two texts, here is the record: John ascended in spirit to heaven (which simply means he was given a most exalted measure of the Holy Spirit) on the Sabbath, that is, the Lord's Day, and was ordered to write his vision as to what was to take place preceding and accompanying the Day of Judgment. The inspired writers, Matthew, Mark, Luke, Paul and John (in his gospel as well as in the Revelation), speak of the first day of the week as just that, "the first day of the week."

Of all the Ten Commandments, the fourth is the only one that deals with time. It is also the only one that contains the official seal of the Lawgiver. As with any official seal or mark, it contains his name (Lord, thy God), His Title (Creator-one who made the universe), and His jurisdiction (whole universe, which is His creation). We have, through the fourth commandment, a weapon against all idolatry. The law cannot be applied to false gods who have not made the heavens and the earth. There are many in the world that worship the sun and the moon as God, for instance. The worshiper of images could say, "this idol before me is my God, his name is God and these (the commandments) are his precepts." Only man is the maker of graven images and idols, which are dead, having no breath or life in them. This is why the second commandment forbids the worship of graven images. The one true and living God is the only one who made the heavens, the earth, the waters and all that is in them. "*Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else*" Isaiah 45:22. We see,

therefore, that without the fourth commandment, the Decalogue is null and void, as far as pertaining to the definition of the worship of the true God. We also see that the Sabbath is a matter of authority, it is not “just a day” as so many lightly ascertain. It’s a question of authority. Do we obey man’s requirements and traditions? Or will we obey the Word of the Lord, even if it places us in an unpopular position?

The seventh day Sabbath will even be kept in heaven. *“For as the new heavens and the new earth, which I will make, shall remain before me, saith the Lord, so shall your seed and your name remain. And it shall come to pass, that from one new moon to another, and from one Sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before me, saith the Lord.”* Isaiah 66:22,23. Throughout the ceaseless ages of eternity, all of the redeemed will come together to worship God on every Sabbath. The seventh day is the Sabbath of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. There is no Biblical evidence to suggest that God or His Son changed the sanctity of the seventh day fourth commandment or that He left it to the disciple’s discretion to choose any day and call it holy. As Protestants, we maintain the Bible and the Bible only as the standard of all doctrines and the basis of all reforms when it comes to religious faith. We demand a plain “thus saith the Lord” to support any and all claims to the truth as it is in our Savior, or at least we should, as good Protestants. Many of us have forgotten what it means to be a true Protestant. The truth is, like our Catholic friends, we also uphold tradition and the teachings of the professed “church fathers.” This pleases the enemy of God well, for he is constantly endeavoring to attract our attention to the knowledge of learned men, instead of the commandments of God. *“But in vain, they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men”* Matthew 15:9. *“Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ”* Colossians 2:8.

Who then changed the fourth commandment? And why do the majority of sincere hearted Christians who love the Lord worship on the first day of the week instead of the seventh, without Biblical authority? The prophetic books of Daniel and Revelation, both rooted in history and focusing on the future, hold the key. In Daniel 7:25, we read of a beast. When used prophetically in the Bible, a beast is always defined as a “kingdom” or “kings” as clearly defined for us in Daniel 7:17. One beast is introduced as such in Daniel 7:25, *“And he shall speak great words against the most High, and shall wear out the saints of the most High, and think to change TIMES and LAWS; and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time.”* The fourth commandment was not changed by the hand of God, but by this “beast” power, spoken of in Daniel 7 and in Revelation, chapters 13-20. It is this religious/geo-political power that took it upon herself to attempt to change God’s appointed *“times and laws”*.

It is important here to mention that Biblically, the words, “seal”, “mark”, “sign” and “token” are used synonymously (see Genesis 17:11 Romans 4:11, 7:3 and Ezekiel 9:4). *“And I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the SEAL of the living God, and he cried with a loud voice to the four angels to whom it was given to hurt the earth and the sea. Saying, Hurt not the earth neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads.”* Revelation 7:2,3. So, it is clear from Daniel 7:25 and from Revelation 7:2,3, as only two of several texts, that there is a “mark or seal of the beast” as well as a “seal or mark of God.” The fourth commandment constitutes the seal of the law of God, or His seal. The Scriptures give direct testimony on this conclusion. The Lord expressly says that the Sabbath is a “sign” between He and His people, *“Verily My Sabbaths ye shall keep; for it is a sign between Me and you throughout your generations; that ye may know that I am the Lord that doth sanctify*

you” Exodus 31: 13. It is stated again in Ezekiel 20:12,20. The Lord said that the very object of observing the Sabbath was that we might know that He is the true God.

In Revelation 13:11-16, we read the following: *“And I beheld another beast (kingdom or nation) coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns (symbols of strength) like a lamb and he spake as a dragon. And he exerciseth all the power of the first beast (nation) before him, and causeth the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed ...And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a MARK (of his authority) in their right hand, or in their foreheads; and that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name.”* This two horned beast, known for both it’s civil and religious liberty, is none other than the U.S, who will be instrumental in making an “image to the (first) beast.” The “first” beast is the papacy who, after 1260 years of world wide civil and religious rule (what we recognize as the Dark Ages), received a “deadly wound” in 1798. That deadly wound would be healed as we read in Revelation 13:3, *“And I saw one of his heads as it were wounded to death: and his deadly wound was healed and all the world wondered after the beast.”* The whole world would be amazed, in awe of, this beast. Can we think of any religious power today that commands the attention of the entire world?

The “antichrist” power has always been and still is the papacy, and this is nothing new. All the great Protestant Reformers preached this truth in their respective times. Men like John Huss and Jerome 100 years before the time of Luther; Knox, Calvin, and scores of others. All of these men came to this great truth through one means, sincere, deep and prayerful study of the Bible and the Bible alone. I cannot emphasize enough here that this refers to a “system”, not to the people. There are many dear Catholic people who are sincerely serving God according to all the light and

knowledge they have been given, but the church that represents them has no credibility due to their past history. She holds the doctrine of infallibility, which says that “the Church” is the “voice of God” and, as such, cannot be wrong or ever make a mistake. Therefore, all the atrocities committed by them in the past, such as the Inquisition, St. Bartholomew’s Day massacre, and the crusades were God’s will for the earth, according to her creed. *“And in her was found the blood of prophets, and of saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth”* Revelation 18:24.

The papacy changed the Sabbath from the seventh day to the first, but don’t take my word for it. Consider the following statements. **“Of course, the Catholic church claims that the change (from Sabbath to Sunday) was her act. And the act is the MARK of her ecclesiastical power and authority in religious matters.”** C.F. Thomas, Chancellor of Cardinal Gibbons of Baltimore. **“Reason and sense demand the acceptance of one or the other of two alternatives: either Protestantism and the keeping holy of Saturday or Catholicity and the keeping holy of Sunday. Compromise is impossible.”** James Cardinal Gibbons, Catholic Mirror, Dec. 23, 1893. **“Question: How prove you that the Church hath power to command feasts and holy days? Answer: By the very act of changing the Sabbath into Sunday, which Protestants allow of, and therefore fondly contradict themselves, by keeping Sunday strictly..”** Daniel Ferres, ed, Manual of Christian Doctrine, (1916), p.67. **“Is Saturday the seventh day according to the Bible and the Ten Commandments? I answer yes. Is Sunday the first day of the week and did the Church change the seventh day – Saturday – for Sunday, the first day? I answer yes. Did Christ change the day? I answer no! Faithfully yours, J. Card. Gibbons”** The Catholic Mirror, official publication of James Cardinal Gibbons, September 23, 1893. And I particularly appreciate this one by Dwight L Moody, from “Weighed

and Wanting”, pg 47,48. **“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 man claim that this one commandment has been done away with when they will admit that the other nine are still binding?”** These are but a few of the many frank admissions by leaders of the Catholic church who boastfully claim they changed the day of worship from the seventh to the first day of the week. Many honest Protestant leaders are also aware of this change, as noted by the statement by Mr. Moody.

God shines upon and accepts all sincere Christians who love Him and who live according to the light they have been given. There will be multitudes of first day Christians in heaven who never had the opportunity to learn of the fourth commandment truth. By the same token, we recognize that just because a person has kept the seventh day does not guarantee them a place in heaven. The true gospel does not cheapen God’s grace nor make void His law. It magnifies His grace and upholds the law. Why is the Sabbath so important? There is a time coming in the not too distant future when there will be only two churches, those that keep the commandments of God and those who keep the commandments of men. There will be an “image” made to the beast, Sunday worship will be enforced, and all those who, through the dictates of their own conscience, continue to observe the Sabbath, will be severely persecuted. At this time, all will have a decision to make: loyalty to God or loyalty to that *“man of sin”* who *“opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped ... so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God”* 2 Thessalonians 2:4. Even today, the entire world is *“wondering after the beast”* Revelation 13:3. The last battle will be a battle over worship, not a physical battle in the Middle East somewhere.

We cannot submit our faith in God to any man or man-made authority. *“Cease ye from man, whose breath is in his nostrils: for wherein is he to be accounted of?”* Isaiah 2:22. While we are to love, lift up and help one another in our burdens, we are not to search for the truth as it is in Christ in the teachings of well learned men, no matter how many top ten best selling books they have written or how much we may respect them. We cannot receive anything through man, but by the Spirit only. *“Sanctify them through thy truth. Thy word is truth”* John 17:17. Jesus told us that the Comforter, the Holy Spirit would lead us into all truth; He did not say that our priests and ministers would. *“To the law and to the testimony. If they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them”* Isaiah 8:20. Everything we hear and read, we need to test whether or not it agrees with the moral law and the testimony of Christ. We must hang our helpless souls upon the Word, Christ, and on Him alone. If there is a point of truth that we do not understand, upon which we do not agree, we are called to investigate, to compare scripture with scripture and to sink the shaft of truth deep into the mine of God’s word. Should we not lay our “feelings” and our opinions on the altar of God, put away our preconceived ideas, and let the spirit of heaven guide us into all truth?

Salvation is freely given to us through Gods saving grace, not through our works, but the fruitage of that grace is obedience to the commandments of God. We are motivated in keeping all of them for, through His empowering grace, we develop a love for Him, which results in a desire to reflect HIS obedience. It is not through “works” that we observe the Sabbath day, as so many argue. I have lost count of how many times I have personally heard “you folks are under the law and doing works to earn your salvation.” This is not true. It is through and by faith that

we worship on God's appointed day. In fact, it requires much faith to persevere when most of the Christian world is at odds with us on this issue. *"For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments; and His commandments are not grievous"* John 5:3. *"He that sayeth I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him"* John 2:4. We uphold God's law because we are Christians, not in order to become Christians.

"Thy word is true from the beginning and every one of thy righteous judgments endureth forever" Psalm 119:160. *"It is time for thee, Lord, to work, for they have made void thy law"* Psalm 119:126. *"He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be an abomination"* Proverbs 28:9.

"Blessed are they that do His commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city" Revelation 22:14. Solomon, in his wisdom, wrote these words. *"Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter. Fear God, and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man."* Ecclesiastes 12:13.

Here is the sum and substance of the law of God: *"If ye love me, keep my commandments"* John 14:15.

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