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The Day To Remember

We all have them.

Those special days that live in memory - good ones, painful ones; all significant

by James McBride

It's the same when we look at religious belief, for all religions have their special days. For Christians, Christmas holds special affection, and Easter. Or Sunday - that weekly recurring day on which Christians worship. It's deeply entrenched in the traditions of the Church and indeed without Sunday observance you would be classed as "Christian".

Of course, it hasn't always been so. The first three centuries of Christianity witnessed a running battle between those who wanted to observe Sunday, and those who wished to retain the apostolic practice of the seventh day or Sabbath. The Sunday-keepers won. Every Christian worth his or her salt, however, will want to follow what God reveals in Scripture. So, what does God's Word teach?

Sunday observance has become so much a part of Christianity that it is often called "the Sabbath". An article on Sunday trading from the Lord's Day Observance Society [LDOS] emphasizes this: "God did not create the sabbath day [the writer applies this to *Sunday*], and bless it, for it to be sacrificed on the altar of secularism and greed". And further. "The aim of the LDOS is to help people find a fuller sense of God's purpose concerning the one day in seven which He commanded us to remember and keep Holy".

Now this is strange, as LDOS are in fact promoting *Sunday*! Have a look at your Bible. In Exodus 20 verse 8 this command is applied to "the seventh day". It's a historical remembrance of the specific day on which God rested from creation - the *seventh* day (v.11). Moses sums up thus: "...[God] rested the *seventh* day, wherefore the Lord blessed the sabbath day and

blessed it". But Pope John XXIII (*Mater et Magistra*) based his reason for Sunday observance on this same false premise that Sunday equals Sabbath.

By every scrap of credible research the seventh day is the twenty-four hours ending at sundown on *Saturday*. And through the intervening centuries time has, despite the vagaries of the calendar, not been lost or gained.

Does It Matter?

History records how the Church - in the fourth century *changed* the time for weekly worship from Saturday to Sunday. But does it really matter? Isn't "one day in seven" - though most Christians say it must be *none but Sunday!* - just as pleasing to God?

Well, the evidence of the New Testament is that the primitive church continued to worship on the Biblical ("Jewish") Sabbath. It didn't cross their minds to change to Sunday! After all, they knew what Daniel had been inspired to write about the rebellious "little horn": "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" (ch 7:24-25).

Even the *Gentile* churches (e.g. Acts 18:4) observed the seventh-day Sabbath. Towards the end of his ministry the great "Apostle to the Gentiles" Paul - claimed: "Neither against the law of the Jews..have I offended at all" (Acts 25:8 *see also* ch 28:17). The seventh-day Sabbath was central to that Law! So since the end of the Book of Acts *someone* changed it.

FROM SABBATH TO SUNDAY... some observations by Sunday-observers:

"Centuries of the Christian era passed away before Sunday was observed by the Christian church as a sabbath. History does not furnish us with a single proof or indication that it was at any time so observed previous to the sabbatical edict of Constantine in AD321"

[Wm Domville: *Examination of Six Texts*]

"They know little who do not know that the ancient Sabbath remained and was observed by the Eastern churches three hundred years after our Saviour's passion"

[Prof. Brerewood: *Treatise on the Sabbath*]

"There is no word, no hint, in the New Testament about abstaining from work on Sunday ..into the rest of Sunday no divine law enters"

[Canon Eyton: *The Ten Commandments*]

"Take which you will, either the Fathers or the modems, and we shall find no Lord's Day instituted by any apostolical mandate, no Sabbath set on foot by them on the first day of the week"

[P Hcyllyn: *History of the Sabbath*]

...the transference to [Sunday] of the sabbatical obligation established by the promulgation of the 4th commandment has no basis whatever either in Holy Scripture or in Christian antiquity"

(Wm Smith: *Dict of Christian Antiquity*)

"Q: Have you any other way of proving that the [Roman] Church has power to institute festivals? A: Had she not such power she could not have done that in which all modern religionists agree with her - she could not have substituted the observance of Sunday, the first day of the week, for the observance of Saturday, the seventh day of the week, a change for which there is no Scriptural authority"

"It is quite clear that however devotedly we may spend Sunday we are not keeping the Sabbath...the Sabbath was founded on a specific divine command. We can plead no such command for the observance of Sunday"

[R W Dale: *The Ten Commandments*]

"In the interval between the days of the apostles and the conversion of Constantine [4th cent] the Christian commonwealth changed its aspect...Rites and ceremonies of which neither Paul nor Peter ever heard crept into use then claimed the rank of divine institutions"

[Dr Killen: *The Ancient Church*]

The Day To Remember

The argument that Jesus rose from the dead on Sunday is a fiction. The argument that “one day in seven” is just as pleasing to God is also a deceptive fiction. For there’s not a shred of evidence in the New Testament that any other day including Sunday - was an acceptable replacement for the Sabbath!

This is entirely logical, for God has always defined how He ought to be worshiped. Indeed both the House of Israel and the House of Judah were removed from their national territory because they substituted other days for worship in place of those revealed to them. *It does snake a difference!*

The seventh-day Sabbath was introduced *at the creation of man*: “So God blessed the seventh day, and hallowed it” (Genesis 2:3). That’s the only day for weekly worship that God has *ever* revealed! In fact, when Israel was formed as a nation God made the seventh day a sign that helped identify His people: “...*it is a sign* for ever between me and the people of Israel that in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, and on the *seventh* day he rested, and was refreshed” (Exodus 31:17).

The New Testament

Jesus cast aside all the silly restrictions which the Pharisees had added to God’s original Law of the Sabbath. “The sabbath”, he said, “was made for man” (Mark 2:27) for both Jew and Gentile. Clearly, he doesn’t “do away” with the Sabbath! Indeed throughout the New Testament, observance of the seventh-day Sabbath is assumed. *No text urges or even hints at observing Sunday!* The texts which have been used to suggest this are clearly explained, text by text, in our booklet “*Why Do You Observe Sunday?*” You are invited to request a free copy.

The early Christians continued, with new understanding, to worship on the seventh-day Sabbath, and indeed on the various Holy Days revealed in Leviticus 23. No way would they dare “to change times and laws” (Daniel 7:25)! But along

“The seventh-day Sabbath was solemnized [ie observed] by Christ, the Apostles and the primitive Christians - until the Council of Laodicea did, in a manner, quite abolish the observance of it. The Council (AD364) first settled the observance of the Lord’s Day”
[Wm Prynne: Dissertations on the Lord’s Day. Prynne was a 17th cent Puritan]

“Since the institution of the Sabbath at the close of creation., there has been an unbroken ‘line of God-loving men who have kept the seventh day of the week... In the Western Church the seventh day continued to be observed quite generally till the fifth century”

the way the organized church grew powerful enough to do just that. They had the audacity to flaunt their usurped carnal authority in the face of God. Moses, Jesus Christ, the Apostles and indeed all of God’s people through the millennia!

The Roman Catholic position is summed up by St Thomas Aquinas: “[Sunday replaced Sabbath] *by the institution of the Church* and the custom of the Christian people”. And Catholic author J G Shea stated: “Protestantism, in discarding the authority of the Church, has no good reasons for its Sunday theory, and ought logically to keep Saturday as the Sabbath”.

In today’s world, the observance of God’s Sabbath may draw - even from Christians! - ridicule, spite, persecution, loss of job and even death as anciently, for example under Roman Emperor Hadrian in the second century. But Jesus never said his way would be easy, but “promised” such rejection.

If you have truly been drawn to repentance then certainly this is one Bible teaching that you must examine. What’s important is not what you have done all your life, or what your pastor or denomination teaches, or what you would *like* to do. It’s God’s revealed Word - the Scriptures - *that alone* must govern our belief.

In Paul’s words, “Examine yourself whether you are in the faith”!

When Was Jesus Resurrected?

It is commonly suggested that Jesus was resurrected Sunday morning - and this is a main plank in the argument that Christians ought, in celebration, to observe Sunday.

The notion is widespread but not in accord with the Bible account!

- when the two Marys arrived Jesus had already risen (Matthew 28:1,6)

- the time of this visit was “late on the Sabbath as it was getting dusk toward the first day of the week” [v.I: *Englishman’s Gk VT*]

- “began to dawn towards” [KJV; Gk *epiphosko*]. Dean Alford, at Luke 23:54, states: “...used of the conventional day beginning at sunset” [*Greek Testament*]. Recall that the “day” anciently began at sunset: “evening and morning were the first day...etc” (Genesis 1)

- the tomb was already empty when some women came to the tomb early morning with spices etc (Luke 24: 1ff)

- Jesus had predicted he would be in the tomb “three days and three nights” (Matthew 12:40). Other Bible texts determine this was from late Wednesday until late on Saturday - by sunset. As Jesus was resurrected by the end of the Sabbath - see above - clearly there’s no way “three days and three nights” (no matter how calculated) could be fitted in with a *Friday* afternoon crucifixion!

Published by:

The Churches of God Outreach Ministries
PO Box 54621
Tulsa, OK 74155-0621
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