Which Day is the True Christian Sabbath

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Part 1

The Reason for the Controversy

Most professing Christians believe that Jesus Christ is their Savior and that He died for their sins—which is true. They also believe that once a person has accepted Jesus Christ as personal Savior and Lord, then he or she is under the grace of God—which is true. But once under grace, they are taught to believe that a Christian has no obligation to keep the commandments of God—which is NOT true. Some professing Christians carry their theological error even further by claiming that Jesus Christ did everything for the Christian, so he or she has no requirement whatsoever to keep any laws or commandments of God. However, when such teachings are examined closely, it becomes plain that such arguments are only carnal human justifications for rejecting the Fourth Commandment of God regarding the seventh-day Sabbath—Saturday today—in order to keep Sunday.

As a result, millions have been taught to disregard and reject the Fourth Commandment of God, even though God Himself personally spoke those very words. When God gave the Ten Commandments, He clearly commanded that the seventh-day Sabbath is the only day to be observed as the weekly holy convocation of God.

However, mainstream Christianity teaches that Sunday, the first day of the week, is the Christian day of worship, the Lord's Day. It is claimed that Sunday has replaced the original seventh-day Sabbath of the Old Testament. The final, false conclusion is that the Old Testament seventh-day Sabbath, Saturday, was for the Jews only! On the other hand, Sunday, the first day of the week, is to be kept holy by Christians—but not the seventh-day weekly Sabbath! However, Sunday-keeping theologians, ministers and religious people who make these claims, teach this doctrine in spite of the fact that neither God the Father, Jesus Christ or the apostles ever taught or commanded, at any time, that the first day of the week was to be kept holy.

Are these outrageous claims true? What does the Bible itself record for us? What did Jesus Christ actually teach? What did the apostles teach? Which day did the apostles observe as the Christian Sabbath? What does the inspired record of the New Testament actually teach? As we will understand, the doctrine of Sunday-keeping is contrary to the Word of God and His commandments as found in both the Old Testament and New Testament.

Jesus Christ's Teachings About the Word of God

In order to understand the truth concerning the Christian Sabbath, we need to begin with some basic, easy-to-understand scriptures. First, "There is a way which seems right to a man, but the end thereof *is* the way of death" (Prov. 14:12;16:25). All the ways of a man are clean in his own eyes" (Prov. 16:2). The way of mankind is sin and death. The apostle John wrote: "Everyone who practices sin is also practicing lawlessness, for sin is lawlessness" (I John 3:4). Therefore, anyone who breaks the commandments of God is sinning! Sin brings death because "the wages of sin *is* death" (Rom. 6:23).

Jesus Christ came to bring life and teach us how to live God's way of life! He made it absolutely clear: "Man shall not live by bread alone, BUT BY EVERY WORD THAT PROCEEDS OUT OF *THE* MOUTH OF GOD" (Matt. 4:4; Luke 4:4; Deut. 8:3).

Nearly all professing Christians claim that they should strive to live by the teachings of Jesus Christ. Moreover, He personally gave some very explicit instructions concerning a person's attitude toward the laws of God. He taught, "Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not

come to abolish, but to fulfill" (Matt. 5:17). To "fulfill" does not mean to abrogate or abolish the Law and the Prophets. To "fulfill" means to fill to the full, to fill up, or, as Jesus taught, to "fill full" with true spiritual meaning and understanding—quite the opposite of abolishing or abrogating the laws of God.

In one of the most important prophesies concerning Jesus Christ and the Law, Isaiah was inspired to write, "The LORD is well pleased for His righteousness sake; He will magnify the Law [fill it to the full] and make *it* glorious [not abolish it]" (Isa. 42:21). That is exactly what Jesus did!

Moreover, Jesus Christ did not want us to be in any doubt whatsoever about what He said. Since He did not want anyone to even "think"—let alone ever teach—that He was going to abolish the Law or the Prophets, He made this statement based on the very existence of the heaven and earth. In the very next verse Jesus said, "For truly I say to you, until the heaven and the earth shall pass away, one jot or one tittle shall in no way pass from the Law until everything has been fulfilled" (Matt. 5:18). Heaven and earth still exist, therefore the laws, commandments and prophetic writings of God are still binding.

All the Commandments of God Are Founded on Love

Far from releasing Christians from their obligation to keep the commandments of God, Jesus Christ made it clear that they are to keep the commandments of God from their hearts, motivated by their love for God the Father and Jesus Christ. This is what Jesus Christ taught about commandment-keeping: "**IF YOU LOVE ME, KEEP THE COMMANDMENTS**—namely, My commandments" (John 14:15). The Greek is much more emphatic. The actual meaning is this: "If you are loving Me, keep the commandments, namely Mine!"

This statement is absolutely clear. Will you believe what Jesus said? Do you love Jesus Christ? If you love Jesus Christ, you will be keeping His commandments. Furthermore, Jesus left no doubt whatsoever that all the Law and the Prophets are based on love. Notice: " 'You shall love *the* Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.' This is *the* first and greatest commandment; and *the* second *one is* like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' ON THESE TWO COMMANDMENTS HANG ALL THE LAW AND THE PROPHETS" (Matt. 22:37-40).

In his first epistle, the apostle John amplified Jesus' statement even more. He wrote, "The one who says, 'I know Him,' and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. On the other hand, *if* anyone is keeping His Word, truly in this one the love of God is being perfected [made complete]. By this *means* we know that we are in Him. Anyone who claims to dwell in Him is obligating himself also to walk even as He Himself walked" (I John 2:4-6).

These inspired scriptures make it abundantly clear that anyone who is claiming to know and to love Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, but does not keep His commandments, is a liar!

Again, the apostle John makes it even more plain: "By this *standard* we know that we love the children of God: **when we love God and keep His commandments**. For this is the love of God: that we keep His commandments; and His commandments are not burdensome" (I John 5:2-3). The actual meaning of the *present tense* has been translated as it should be in order to convey the full meaning of what John wrote. He made it absolutely clear that a person must constantly be "keeping" or "practicing" the commandments of God.

Most professing Christians claim to "love the Lord," while at the same time they refuse to keep His commandments—in particular the seventh-day Sabbath command of God. They claim that the Sabbath commandment is a burden! However, God did not make the Sabbath a burden whatsoever. It is to be a delight!

You Cannot Love God and Reject His Commandments

Regardless of the claims and professions of men, **it is impossible to love God and not keep His**

commandments. Yet, this is what is typically heard from supposedly Christian pulpits. Somehow, such teachers claim to actually know more than God! They preach that Jesus did not mean what He said. In effect they are calling God a liar. But it is impossible for God to lie (Titus 1:2; Heb. 6:18). People are told that they don't have to keep the commandments of God. They are taught that a Christian is only required to love God and neighbor with a warm, emotional feeling in their hearts. If one feels good about it, it must be right. But such a profession of love or emotion is, in reality, spiritually empty and vain. Such misplaced emotionalism is not the kind of love that the Scriptures teach.

In the final analysis, the false conclusion they make is this: **Christians can choose which commandments they will or will not keep**. And the most important commandment that they choose to reject and not observe is the **Fourth Commandment**! God commanded, "Remember the Sabbath to keep it holy." However, because most people want their own way, they immediately ignore, forget and reject what God has commanded them to keep holy. The apostle Paul describes such an attitude. He wrote, "Because the carnal mind *is* enmity against God, for it is not subject to the law of God; neither indeed can it *be*" (Rom. 8:7).

This is a perfect description of the mindset that adamant Sunday-keepers hold toward the Fourth Commandment. They have great hostility, and in some cases great hatred, toward the seventhday Sabbath of God! But such an attitude is absolutely contrary to the teachings of Jesus Christ our Savior. He said, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of *the* mouth of God" (Matt. 4:4; Luke 4:4; Deut. 8:3). These words of Jesus make it abundantly clear that no one has the prerogative to pick and choose which commandments they will or will not keep. We are to live by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God. The question is this: Are we willing to live by every word of God?

In order to understand the Word of God, what are we to do? How are we to "live by" every word of God? What does the Bible tell us? If we are to uphold the truth of God, we are to "**examine the Scriptures daily *to see* if these things were so**" (Acts 17:11). Also, our responsibility is to "**PROVE ALL THINGS AND HOLD FAST *TO THAT WHICH* IS GOOD**" (I Thess. 5:21).

What does the Bible teach us about the commandments of God? Here is what King David, a man after God's heart, wrote about God's laws and commandments: "Your **LAW** is the **TRUTH**…. **ALL YOUR COMMANDMENTS** are **TRUTH**…. Your word is **TRUE** from the **BEGINNING**…. All your commandments are righteousness" (Psa. 119:142, 151, 160, 172). In His final prayer before He was arrested, Jesus asked God the Father to sanctify true Christians through His word. He prayed, "Sanctify them in Your truth, **YOUR WORD IS THE TRUTH**" (John. 17:17).

Unfortunately, too many professing Christians are under the misconception that if anything is in the Old Testament, they have the liberty to ignore it. After all, it is reasoned, "It was only for the Jews. Christians are only to follow the New Testament." But that is not true. The truth is that the New Testament reveals that all the commandments of God are to be kept. Moreover, true believers are to keep them in the "spirit of the law" as magnified by Jesus Christ, and not in the "letter of the law" only.

The apostle Paul wrote to Timothy, the young evangelist, about the Scriptures of God—the Old Testament. He did not ignore or reject them as useless, as so many ministers do today. He upheld the Word of God as the Truth of God, inspired of God. Notice: "And that from a child **you have known the Holy Writings**, which are able to make you wise unto salvation through faith, which *is* in Christ Jesus. **All Scripture *is* God-breathed and *is* profitable for doctrine, for conviction, for correction, for instruction in righteousness**; so that the man of God may be complete, fully equipped for every good work" (II Tim. 3:15-17). As we shall see, this applies directly to the Sabbath/Sunday question.

At Creation, God Created the Seventh-Day Sabbath as Holy Time

Most people are under the misconception that the seventh-day Sabbath was originally given to the Jews only. This is not true! The Bible clearly teaches that from the beginning of creation God made the

seventh day holy. “Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. And by *the beginning of* the seventh day [the Hebrew reads “the sixth day”] God finished 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 on it He rested from all His work which God had created and made” (Gen. 2:1-3).

Few people understand that Adam and Eve were not Jews. The scriptural truth is that the Jews did not come on the scene until nearly 3,000 years after creation. Furthermore, 3,000 years after the creation of the seventh-day Sabbath is nearly one-half of all human history! There is no question that God created the **seventh-day Sabbath for all mankind**. Jesus confirmed this when He said, “The Sabbath was made for man” (Mark 2:27). The Greek word *anthropos* means mankind in general. He did not say that the Sabbath was made for the Jews only.

The New Testament clearly teaches that true Christians are the spiritual children of Abraham. Notice: “And if you *are* Christ’s, then you are Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to *the* promise” (Gal. 3:29). If we are the spiritual children of Abraham, we are to follow His example and do the works of Abraham (John 8:29). When we examine the scriptural account of Abraham’s life, we find that he obeyed God in everything: “**Because Abraham obeyed My voice and kept My charge, My commandments, My statutes, and My laws**” (Gen. 26:5).

Since the Sabbath commandment was obviously given at creation, there is no question that Abraham kept the seventh-day Sabbath. If he did not, then it could not have been said that he kept the commandments of God. What the Bible is teaching us is this: Abraham, who is called the father of the faithful in the New Testament, went above and beyond rigid letter-of-the-law commandmentkeeping. He obeyed the voice of God and did those things which pleased Him, therefore Abraham was called “the friend of God” (James 2:23).

God Gave the Sabbath to the Children of Israel *Before* Mount Sinai and the Giving of the Law

When we examine the Scriptures, we find that God revealed the seventh-day Sabbath to the children of Israel as the weekly day of worship *prior* to the giving of the Ten Commandments at Mount Sinai. This was before the covenant with Israel was confirmed. God showed that Sabbath-keeping was obligatory before the institution of the Old Covenant. This again proves that the Sabbath commandment was binding from the time of creation.

In Exodus 16, we find that God revealed the Sabbath through the miracle of the manna. God told them that they were to gather manna day-by-day for six days. On each of the first five days they were only to gather enough for each day. If they gathered more than what was needed for a day, the manna would breed worms and stink.

However, on the sixth day, they were told to gather twice as much as on the other days and were commanded by God to keep it over for the seventh-day Sabbath. On the Sabbath, the manna that was kept over from the sixth day’s gathering did not breed worms or stink! God did not send manna on the Sabbath. The children of Israel were commanded not to go out to gather or look for manna on the Sabbath day.

However, some of the people did not believe God! During the week, some of the people gathered more than they were supposed to and the manna bred worms and stank. Some of the people went out on the Sabbath to look for manna, but did not find any.

What was God’s reaction?

“And the LORD said to Moses, ‘**How long do you refuse to keep My commandments and My laws**? See, because the LORD has given you the Sabbath, therefore He gives you the bread of two days on the sixth day. Let each one stay in his place. Do not let any one go out of his place on the seventh day.’ So the people rested on the seventh day” (Ex. 16:28-30).

Few people realize that the Sabbath is a gift from God. The Lord said that He *gave them* the Sabbath. Again, the Sabbath was made *for* man.

The miracle of the manna proves that the Sabbath is of primary importance to God. This account clearly shows that God required the children of Israel to keep His commandments and laws before the giving of the Law to Israel at Sinai. In fact, from the beginning the commandments and laws of God have been binding on all mankind.

Since that is the truth, each one of us needs to ask him or herself, "**How long am I going to continue to refuse to keep the commandments of God? How long am I going to refuse to keep the Sabbath of God?**"

The Fourth Commandment in Full

When the Lord God, the One Who later became Jesus Christ, gave the Sabbath commandment as part of the Ten Commandments, He also gave the reason for the Sabbath. Let us examine the Fourth Commandment very carefully: "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work. **But the seventh day *is* the Sabbath of the LORD your God**. In it you shall not do any work, you, nor your son, nor your daughter; your manservant, nor your maidservant, nor your livestock, nor the stranger within your gates;

"For *in* six days the LORD made the heaven and the earth, the sea, and all that *is* in them, and rested the seventh day. **Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and sanctified it**" (Ex. 20:8-11).

Now let's read the Fourth Commandment as it is recorded in Deuteronomy five: "**Keep the Sabbath** day to sanctify it as the LORD your God has commanded you. Six days you shall labor and do all your work. But **the seventh day *is* the Sabbath of the LORD your God**. *In it* you shall not do any work, you, nor your son, nor your daughter, nor your manservant, nor your maidservant, nor your ox, nor your donkey, nor any of your livestock, nor your stranger within your gates, so that your manservant and your maidservant may rest as well as you.

"And remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and the LORD your God brought you out from there with a mighty hand and with an outstretched arm. **Therefore the LORD your God commanded you to keep the Sabbath day**" (Deut. 5:12-15).

Furthermore, God has commanded that the Sabbath day is to be a holy convocation, or the calling of a holy assembly. The seventh- day Sabbath, which belongs to God, is the weekly day of worship and assembly, which He has commanded to be kept. "Speak to the children of Israel and say to them, '*Concerning* the appointed feasts of the LORD, which you shall proclaim *to be* **holy convocations**, even these are My appointed feasts. Six days shall work be done, but the seventh day *is* the Sabbath of rest, **a holy convocation**. You shall not do any work. It *is* a **Sabbath to the LORD** in all your dwellings" (Lev. 23:2-3).

Let's analyze all of the components of God's Sabbath commandment— the Fourth Commandment. What has God told us?

1. God has given us the Sabbath. It is a great gift from Him.
2. Remember the Sabbath to keep it holy—not some other day we choose.
3. God has given us six days to do all our work.
4. We are to rest from our work and labor on the seventh day.
5. It is a weekly memorial of God's creation of heaven and earth.
6. It is a memorial of Israel's slavery and lack of Sabbath observance while they were slaves in Egypt.
7. It is the only day of the week that God specifically blessed and made holy.

8. The seventh-day Sabbath is a holy convocation, a day of assembly and worship.
9. Perhaps the most important aspect of the Fourth Commandment is that **God owns the Sabbath. It belongs to God and He made it *for* mankind.** "**But the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord**."

Think of it this way: Since God owns the Sabbath and it belongs to Him, do men have the right to reject the commandment of God and claim that they have the authority to make another day holy? OF COURSE NOT! Regardless of any claim to the contrary, nowhere in the Scriptures did God the Father or Jesus Christ ever give that authority to any man, or to any church. The seventh-day Sabbath is God's special holy time, which He created for the good of mankind. God is the One Who commands what the seventh day is for and what is to be done on that day.

In reality, by appropriating Sunday and rejecting the seventh -day Sabbath—Saturday—men have arrogantly profaned the holy Sabbath of God. By doing so, they are more than doubly guilty before God. First, they have stolen God's holy time. Second, they are trying to earn salvation through their own works of Sunday-keeping. Third, they are trying to make a different day holy, which God did not make holy. **ONLY GOD CAN MAKE SOMETHING HOLY, BECAUSE HE IS HOLY!** No man can ever make anything holy because he is not inherently holy—only God is!

Viewed another way, God is the One Who commands men. Men do not command God or tell Him what to do. But, if men take to themselves the presumptuous act of telling God what to do–or what they will or will not do by human decree or tradition—**that is rebellion**.

In effect, that is what men do when they proclaim Sunday to be holy—they are rebelling against God. They are declaring that God must put His presence into the first day of the week and make it holy instead of the seventh-day Sabbath. But God is not under any obligation to obey any man, or any humanly-devised tradition, decree or custom. Rather, **all humanity is under obligation to obey God!** God is not under any obligation to any man that He should obey him. No man has the power to command God.

God Is the Lawgiver

The Scriptures reveal there is only one lawgiver. That one lawgiver is God. Carnal, rebellious men think that they have the right to judge the laws of God and decide for themselves which laws they agree with and will accept, and which laws they disagree with and reject. But what is man that he would presume to judge the Law and, hence, judge the Lawgiver? God has never given that prerogative to anyone. God alone is Judge and Lawgiver! The apostle James makes it very clear: "But if you judge *the* law, you are not a doer of *the* law; rather, *you are* a judge. **But there is *only* one Lawgiver**, Who has power to save and to destroy" (James 4:11-12).

These statements are most profound!

Think about it: Are not those who judge the Fourth Commandment as unworthy of their obedience actually judging the Law? Yes! Are they not then judging God Himself? Yes! What is man that he should presume to judge the Law? When anyone judges the Law, he is judging God. In effect, he is sitting in the seat of God and presumptuously assuming a prerogative of God to himself. In effect, he is proclaiming himself to be God!

However, as James wrote, "there is *only* one Lawgiver, Who has power to save and to destroy."

The Lawgiver never commanded that the first day of the week be kept holy! He alone created the seventh day and made it holy! Other proclamations by men to the contrary are null and void. As we will see later, that is exactly what the Israelites did. They rebelled and did not keep the Sabbath. They went after other gods. They went after Baal—the sun god. The sun god is worshipped on his day, Sun-day! The children of Israel and the children of Judah sinned against God because they had rejected God's holy

Sabbath and His holy days and were keeping Sunday and the pagan holidays of Baal, the sun god. People are doing the same thing today! In so doing, they are rejecting the holy convocations of God!

By exalting their traditions and commandments, the Roman Catholic Church and all of mainstream Christianity keep Sunday and have rejected the Sabbath commandment of God. This is the same spirit and attitude which motivated the Jews to reject the commandments of God. In denouncing the traditions of the Jews, Jesus said, "Well did Isaiah prophesy concerning you hypocrites, as it is written, 'This people honors Me with their lips, but their hearts are far away from Me. But in vain do they worship Me, teaching *for* doctrine the commandments of men.' For leaving the commandment of God, you hold fast the tradition of men, *such as* the washing of pots and cups; and you practice many other things like *this*" (Mark 7:6-8).

Everyone who observes Sunday and rejects the seventh-day Sabbath of God falls into this category. By rejecting the commandments of God and observing the traditions of men, they constitute themselves as sinners before God. Sunday-keeping is sin! Sunday-keeping is transgressing the Fourth Commandment of God! Sin is the transgression of the law! In the *King James Version*, I John 3:4 reads as follows: "Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth the Law, for sin is the transgression of the law." Whosoever means anyone—Jew or Gentile!

This translation is most profound when directly applied to those who reject the Fourth Commandment and substitute Sundaykeeping for Sabbath-keeping. They are constantly committing sin. Every week they are living and practicing a lie! Sunday-keeping is a sign of this world's false, apostate Christianity, whereas Sabbathkeeping is a sign of God's way.

Sabbath-Keeping Is a Sign Between God and His People

Just as Sunday-keeping is a sign of this world's apostate Christianity, Sabbath-keeping, including the annual holy day Sabbaths, is a sign between God and His people: "And the LORD spoke to Moses saying, 'Speak also to the children of Israel [the Church of God is called the *Israel of God* in Gal. 6:16], saying, "Truly you shall keep My Sabbaths, for it *is* a SIGN BETWEEN ME AND YOU throughout your generations to know that I *am* the LORD Who sanctifies you" ' " (Ex. 31:12-13). **NOTHING COULD BE CLEARER!** Part of being sanctified is the keeping of God's Sabbaths **as a SIGN!**

Continuing in Exodus 31, God reaffirms Sabbath-keeping as **a perpetual covenant**, just as it was from the beginning. "You shall keep the Sabbath therefore, for it *is* holy to you. Everyone that defiles it shall surely be put to death ["the wages of sin is death," and "sin is the transgression of the law" (Rom. 6:23; I John 3:4)], for whoever does *any* work on it, that soul shall be cut off from among his people.

"Six days may work be done, but on the seventh day *is* the Sabbath of rest, holy to the LORD. Whoever does *any* work on the Sabbath day, he shall surely be put to death. Therefore the children of Israel shall keep the Sabbath, to observe the Sabbath throughout their generations *as* a PERPETUAL COVENANT. It *is* a SIGN BETWEEN ME AND THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL [the Church is spiritual Israel] FOREVER; for in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, and on the seventh day He rested, and was refreshed" (Ex. 31:14-17).

A perpetual covenant is an everlasting covenant. As such, it supersedes and transcends all other covenants. This perpetual covenant has been included in every covenant of God from creation!

Sabbath-Breaking Is Rebellion Against God

In Ezekiel 20, we read that God commanded the children of Israel to put away the idols of Egypt, hence the religions of Egypt, and to keep His laws and Sabbaths. "And I gave them My statutes and showed them My ordinances, which *if* a man do, he shall even live in them. And also I gave them My Sabbaths to be a sign between Me and them, that *they* might know that I *am* the LORD who sanctifies

them.

"**But the house of Israel rebelled against Me in the wilderness; they did not walk in My statutes, and they despised My ordinances, which *if* a man does, he shall even live in them. And they greatly polluted My Sabbaths**" (Ezek. 20:11-13). Because of the sins of the children of Israel in the wilderness, God punished them with 40 years of wanderings until all those over age 20 died.

At the end of the 40 years, just before they went into the promised land, God again pleaded with the children of Israel. "But I said to their children in the wilderness, 'Do not walk in the statutes of your fathers, nor observe their judgments, nor defile yourselves with their idols. I *am* the LORD your God. **Walk in My statutes, and keep My ordinances, and do them, and KEEP MY SABBATHS HOLY; AND THEY** [the weekly and yearly Sabbaths] **S*HALL* BE A SIGN BETWEEN ME AND YOU, THAT YOU MAY KNOW THAT I *AM* THE LORD YOUR GOD**.'

"But the children **rebelled** against Me. They did not walk in My statutes, nor keep My ordinances to do them—the ordinances which, *if* a man do, he shall even live in them. And **they polluted My Sabbaths**…" (Ezek. 20:18-21). They rejected God; they rebelled and refused to keep His commandments and laws.

That is far different than what most people have been taught by the Catholic and Protestant theologians. In their vicious attacks against God's commandments, the so-called "early church fathers" of the Roman Catholic Church viewed the Sabbath and holy days of God as an imposition against the Jews and a curse for their unfaithfulness. "Justin … did not hesitate to designate the Sabbath as a mark of unfaithfulness of the Jews, imposed on them by God to distinguish and separate them from other nations" *(Anti-Judaism and The Origin of Sunday*, p. 81, Samuele Bachiocchi, 1981). In his *Dialogue on 23:2*, Justin continued his attack against God's way when he wrote to Trypho saying, "We, too, would observe your circumcision of the flesh, your Sabbath days, and in a word, all your festivals, if we were not aware of the reason why they were imposed upon you, namely, because of your sins and your hardness of heart."

The early Catholic "fathers" taught that God gave the Jews the Sabbath as a penalty to curse the Jews. As a result, they repudiate the holy Sabbath of God as a curse imposed upon the Jews as a sign of their unfaithfulness. Such perverse thinking of theologians is hard to imagine—yet, it is the truth!

To justify their theological reasoning, they point to Ezekiel 20:25. "Wherefore I also gave them over to *their own* statutes that were not good, and *their own* ordinances which they could not live. And I defiled them in their own gifts." On the surface, it appears that their assessment is correct. However, they have deceitfully interpreted this passage, taking it out of context. The verse before, verse 24, clearly shows that they are absolutely wrong to conclude that the Sabbaths of God, the holy days and His statutes and judgments, were imposed on the Jews as a curse, to mark them because of their unfaithfulness.

Notice what the Scriptures record for us. When verses 24 and 25 are read together, they clearly relate a different story than what the so-called "early church fathers" would have us believe. God said: "Because they [the children of Israel] had not done My ordinances, but had despised My statutes and **had polluted My Sabbaths**, and their eyes were after their fathers' idols. Wherefore I also gave them over to *their own* statutes that were not good, and *their own* ordinances which they could not live. **And I defiled them in their own gifts**." These verses do not say that God's ways are a curse whatsoever! What God is telling us through Ezekiel is that because the children of Israel had rejected God's way, His statutes and judgments, and polluted His Sabbaths, that He *then* gave them over to their own devises and to their own statues and judgments.

The truth is that the Israelites had rejected God's Sabbaths and laws; they developed their own religions, patterned after Baal worship and the ancient Egyptian religions. They had their own "sabbaths"—which was the Sunday worship of Baal. They observed the annual pagan holidays—now called Christmas and Easter (see I Kings 12:25-33; 13:33-34). These sins were the causes that brought

the curses of God upon them. To faithfully keep the Sabbaths of God results in blessings, not curses.

In Ezekiel 20:25, the "statutes" and "judgments" were not God's commandments, statutes and judgments. Quite the opposite is true. God turned them over to, or gave them over to, their own "statutes" and "judgments" as part of their own pagan religious observances.

They deliberately rejected God's ways. Notice: "There is a conspiracy of her prophets in her midst, like a roaring lion tearing the prey. They have devoured souls; they have taken the treasure and precious things; they made many widows in her midst.

"Her priests have done violence to My law and have profaned My holy things. **THEY HAVE PUT NO DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE HOLY AND THE PROFANE**, and have not taught the difference between the unclean and the clean, and they **HAVE HIDDEN THEIR EYES FROM MY SABBATHS, AND I AM PROFANE AMONG THEM**" (Ezek. 22:25-26).

Not only was it true when Ezekiel prophesied these words, but this prophecy is also a perfect description of the Catholic, Orthodox and Protestant religions of today. The priests and ministers hide their eyes from the Sabbaths of God and He is profaned among them! No wonder our society is profane, evil and corrupt.

God means what He says about His Sabbath days. The tentribe nation of Israel rejected God's way and polluted His Sabbaths. The ultimate result was that He sent enemy invaders to destroy them. After the Assyrians took them captive, they were removed from the land that God had given them. God sent them into captivity for their sins of Sabbath-breaking, as well as for all their other sins. God recorded the full account of *why* He punished Israel for their sins: "Now it came to pass because the children of Israel had sinned against the LORD their God, Who had brought them up out of the land of Egypt, from under the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt, and had feared other gods, and walked in the statutes of the nations whom the LORD cast out from before the children of Israel, and of the kings of Israel, which the nations had made.

"Now the children of Israel secretly did things that *were* not right against the LORD their God. And they built high places in all their cities for themselves from the Watch Tower to the fortified city. And they set up images and groves [for worship] for themselves in every high hill, and under every green tree. And they burned incense in all the high places, like the nations whom the LORD had removed from before them, and they practiced evil things to provoke the LORD to anger, for they served the idols of which the LORD had said to them, 'You shall not do this thing.' And the LORD testified against Israel and against Judah, by all the prophets, *by* all the seers, saying, 'Turn from your evil ways and keep My commandments *and* My statutes, according to all the law which I commanded your fathers, and which I sent to you by My servants the prophets.'

"**Nevertheless they would not hear, but hardened their necks, like the neck of their fathers who did not believe in the LORD their God. And *they* rejected His statutes and His covenant which He made with their fathers, and His warnings that He testified against them**. And they went after vanity, and became vain, and went after the nations around them, concerning whom the LORD had charged them not to do like them. **And they left all the commandments of the LORD their God and made molten images, two calves for themselves. And they made a grove, and worshiped all the host of heaven, and served Baal**. And they caused their sons and their daughters to pass through the fire. And they used divination and sorceries, and sold themselves to do evil in the sight of the LORD, to provoke Him to anger. So the LORD was very angry with Israel and removed them out of His sight; not one was left, only the tribe of Judah by itself" (II Kings 17:7-18).

Perhaps we should ask ourselves some serious questions about our own "Christian professing" nation. Are we not doing the same thing that the ancient Israelites did? Are we not facing destruction from within and invasion from without because of our sins and Sabbath-breaking?

The prophecies of the Bible show that God is going to destroy this nation because of commandment-

breaking! If you don't believe that we are suffering from heinous national and individual sins, just look around and see what is really happening! The most obvious sins are Sabbath-breaking, idolatry and Sunday-keeping.

Read the entire chapters of Deuteronomy 28 and Leviticus 26 and you will understand why we are suffering from all the curses of God for our sins. God prophesied that these curses would come upon us if we rejected His commandments and refused to obey Him. As a society, and in nearly every Christian-professing denomination, not only are we breaking all the commandments of God with impunity, but Sunday-keeping is at the heart and core of all our national transgressions. Sunday-keeping is a lie! Sunday-keeping is not from God—and never has been! There is not one single text in the whole Bible to justify Sabbath-breaking and Sunday-keeping.

If you are a Sunday-keeper, ask yourself these questions: "How long will I refuse to keep the commandments of God? How many other lies and false doctrines have I been persuaded to believe because I have believed the lie of Sunday-keeping?"

Your Personal Salvation Depends Upon Seeking God and Keeping His Sabbath

In the New Testament, in the book of Hebrews, we are told that we must believe that God exists and that we must seek Him diligently. "Now without faith *it is* impossible to please *God.* For it is mandatory *for* the one who comes to God to believe that He exists, and *that* He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him" (Heb. 11:6).

How do we do this? Believe it or not, when you truly seek God with all your heart, you will understand Sabbathkeeping: "Seek the LORD while He may be found; call upon Him while He is near. Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return to the LORD, and He will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon" (Isa. 55:6-7).

This is exactly what we are commanded in the New Testament. We are to **REPENT** of our sins, which includes turning from our ways and returning to God and His ways. We are to accept the sacrifice of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of our sins, be baptized by full immersion in water, and receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. Then we are to lead a life of loving God with all our heart, mind and being, and love our neighbor as ourselves. And we are to keep the commandments of God, as led by the Holy Spirit (Luke 13:1-6; Acts 2:38; 3:19; Rev. 14:12; 22:14).

Isaiah prophesied that in the end times, just before the return of Christ, salvation would involve Sabbath-keeping. Notice: "Thus says the LORD, 'Keep justice and do righteousness; **for My salvation *is* near to come** [that is, the return of Jesus Christ], and My righteousness to be revealed. **Blessed** [not cursed] *is* the man who does this, and the son of man who lays hold on it; **who keeps the Sabbath from profaning it; and keeps his hand from doing any evil**…. Also the sons of the stranger, who join themselves to the LORD [the conversion of Gentiles through Jesus] to serve Him, and to love the name of the LORD, to be His servants, **everyone who keeps from profaning the Sabbath, and takes hold of My covenant** [the New Covenant]" (Isa. 56:1-2, 6).

God tells us there is a blessing for keeping His holy Sabbath, not a curse, as so many people have been taught. Moreover, Gentiles are also to keep the Sabbath. God never at any time appointed Sunday as the day of worship for Gentiles. The truth is that all sin is the transgression of the Law and that curses are the result of sin. Curses do come not from Sabbath-keeping; rather, curses come from Sabbathbreaking. Anyone who rejects the Fourth Commandment and does not keep the Sabbath is living in sin.

On the other hand, God gives a special blessing if we truly honor and keep His holy Sabbath. Notice God's promise: "If you turn your foot away from the Sabbath, *from* doing your own desires on My holy day [Sunday is not God's holy day], and **call the Sabbath a delight, the holy of the LORD**, honorable; and shall honor Him, not doing your own ways, nor pursuing your own desires, nor speaking *your own* words, then you shall delight yourself in the LORD; and I will cause you to ride upon the high places of

the earth, and feed you with the inheritance of Jacob your father, for the mouth of the LORD has spoken it" (Isa. 58:13-14).

When we read the histories of Israel and Judah as found in the books of Kings and Chronicles, we see that whenever they left God, they followed Baal and gods of the nations about them; they sinned by breaking the commandments and laws of God. However, when they repented and returned to God, one of the first things that they did was to restore Sabbath-keeping and holy day-keeping.

There are many other passages in the Old Testament that uphold the seventh-day Sabbath as the day that God created and ordained to be observed. As we will see, the New Testament also upholds the observance of the seventh-day Sabbath of God. We need to understand the true practices and teachings of Jesus Christ and the apostles.

Part 2

The Seventh Day Sabbath in the New Testament

Jesus Christ's Teaching on the Commandments of God

The most important key to understanding the Bible, Old Testament and New Testament, is to know who Jesus Christ was before He was conceived in the virgin Mary and born in the flesh. This has a great bearing on the person and authority of Jesus Christ.

Here is what the Gospel of John reveals about Jesus Christ. "In *the* beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in *the* beginning with God. All things came into being through Him, and not even one *thing* that was created came into being without Him" (John 1:1-3).

What is this plainly telling us? Let's examine it in the light of what we already know. We have seen that IN THE BEGINNING GOD CREATED ALL THINGS, AND THE ONE WHO DID THE CREATING WAS THE ONE WHO BECAME JESUS CHRIST.

This knowledge is of the utmost significance because it means that **Jesus Christ is the Creator of the seventh-day Sabbath. He was the one Who blessed it, sanctified it, made it holy, and commanded that it be kept forever**. Furthermore, the apostle John is telling us that the Lord God of the Old Testament, who became Jesus Christ of the New Testament, was, in fact, the one Who gave the Ten Commandments and all of the laws, commandments, statutes and judgments to ancient Israel at Mt. Sinai.

God has told us that these laws, commandments, statutes and judgments are holy, righteous and good. God gave these to us for our well-being and for our good, that He might bless us in everything, because God loves us. (See Deut. 4:1, 37-40; 5:29-33; 6:1-6, 17-18, 24-25; 7:6-15; 10:12-15; 11:1-28. Please read all these scriptures before you go on, so that you will understand the full impact of Jesus' teachings in the New Testament.)

When Jesus Christ began His ministry, He set the record straight as to where He stood in relationship to God's laws. These were the very laws and commandments, which He, as the LORD God of the Old Testament, created and commanded to be kept forever.

Jesus Christ Did Not Abolish the Law or the Prophets

When Jesus Christ began His ministry, He did not want anyone to be in doubt about the validity of the commandments and laws of God—as well as the prophets. Here is what He said, "**Do not think** [which means, do not even let it *enter your mind*] **that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish, but to fulfill**" (Matt. 5:17).

Yet, it is claimed by the majority of professing Christian ministers that Jesus Christ came to do away with the laws and commandments of God—though Christ made it absolutely clear that He did not come for that purpose!

Now you need to judge your beliefs in relation to the teachings of Jesus Christ. Ask yourself this question: "**Will I believe God, the Word of God, Jesus Christ and His teachings, or will I believe the teachings and doctrines of men?**"

With this in mind, read this next verse: "For truly I say to you, **until the heaven and the earth shall pass away, one jot or one tittle shall in no way pass from the Law until everything has been fulfilled**" (verse 17).

Do heaven and earth still exist? The answer is a resoundingly, **YES! They still exist**. What does that mean? **The heaven and earth are a witness that the laws and commandments of God are still in full force and effect**.

Furthermore, how does Jesus Christ look at commandmentkeeping? Does He curse the commandment-keeper, as so many religious leaders and pastors claim, or does He say there is a *blessing* for commandment-keeping? What does He say about commandment -breakers?

LISTEN TO THE WORDS OF JESUS CHRIST! IF YOU BELIEVE HIM TO BE YOUR SAVIOR, ARE YOU WILLING TO BELIEVE HIS WORDS? ARE YOU WILLING TO OBEY HIS TEACHINGS? ARE YOU WILLING TO FOLLOW HIS EXAMPLE?

Your eternal salvation is at stake!

Jesus clarified which laws and commandments He was talking about! "Therefore, whoever shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven, [which means that he will never attain the kingdom of God and never receive salvation]; but whoever shall practice and teach *them*, this one shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven" (verse 19). Jesus Christ Himself said that we are blessed, not cursed, if we do and teach even one of the least of the commandments.

Furthermore, when asked what a person must do to inherit eternal life, Jesus gave this answer: "If you desire to enter into life, keep [Greek, *poiaoo*, to be *practicing*] the commandments" (Matt. 19:17). The young, rich man responded by saying that he had kept the commandments from his childhood. Jesus then replied that he should share his riches with the poor, because commandment-keeping, while required to enter into life, is not enough by itself.

This is exactly what early New Testament Christians were taught. In the 90s AD, the apostle John made it clear that Christians were to keep the commandments of God. "And whatever we may ask we receive from Him **because we keep His commandments and practice those things that are pleasing in His sight**…. And **the one who keeps His commandments is dwelling in Him**, **and He in him**; and by this we know that He is dwelling in us: by the Spirit which He has given to us" (I John 3:22, 24).

When the apostles were called into question about their preaching and Christian practices, notice what they said: "But Peter and the apostles answered *and* said, '**We are obligated to obey God rather than men**…. And we are His witnesses of these things, as *is* also **the Holy Spirit**, **which God has given to those who obey Him**' " (Acts 5:29, 32). There is no question that we are still obligated to obey God, rather than men. We must be willing to forsake the teachings of men. If we do not, we will never receive the Holy Spirit or eternal life.

All of God's Laws are Based on Love

Jesus Christ taught that the whole foundation for the laws and commandments of God is the love of God. A lawyer questioned Jesus about the law, saying, "Master, which commandment *is the* great commandment in the Law?" Notice Jesus' answer: "And Jesus said to him, '**You shall love *the* Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.' This is *the* first and greatest commandment**; and *the* second *one is* like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' **On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets**" (Matt. 22:37-40).

As recorded in the Gospel of John, Jesus expanded the meaning of these two great commandments. "If you love Me, keep the commandments—namely, My commandments.... **The one who has My commandments and is keeping them, that is the one who loves Me; and the one who loves Me shall be loved by My Father, and I will love him and will manifest Myself to him**.... If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our abode with him. The one who does not love Me does not keep My words; and the word that you hear is not Mine, but the Father's, Who sent Me" (John 14:15-24).

Nothing could be more clear! If we love Jesus Christ, we will be keeping His commandments. As this precise translation of the Greek shows, if anyone loves God the Father and Jesus Christ, that love is active and on-going. There is no doubt whatsoever that Jesus Christ means that we are to keep His commandments, but also His sayings and words. Moreover, those commandments are the words and sayings of God the Father! Does God want you to keep the Sabbath? Absolutely! No doubt about it.

Keeping the commandments of God, which includes the seventh- day Sabbath, is the standard by which we know that we love God: "By this *standard* we know that we love the children of God: **when we love God and keep His commandments. For this is the love of God: that we keep His commandments; and His commandments are not burdensome**" (I John 5:2-3). Furthermore, commandment-keeping is a key to answered prayer. "And whatever we may ask [in prayer] we receive from Him **because we keep His commandments and practice those things that are pleasing in His sight**" (I John 3:22).

Surely, keeping the Sabbath in a loving, godly way, and worshipping God "in spirit and truth," is pleasing to Him. This is all a part of loving God. One cannot truly love God if he or she is transgressing the commandments of God! With these things in mind, we can now completely understand Jesus Christ's teaching and example concerning the Sabbath.

Jesus' Teaching and Example Concerning the Sabbath Jesus Christ Kept the Sabbath

Jesus Christ observed the weekly, seventh-day Sabbath as a custom; it was something He always did. Notice, for example, when Jesus began preaching the Gospel in Galilee: "And He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up; and **according to His custom, He went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day and stood up to read**" (Luke 4:16).

After Jesus left Nazareth, He continued throughout all Galilee teaching the people on the Sabbath. He did not proclaim that He had come to do away with the Sabbath commandment. Notice! "Then He went down to Capernaum, a city of Galilee, and TAUGHT THEM ON THE SABBATH DAYS. And they were astonished at His teaching, for His word was with authority" (Luke 4:31-32).

Jesus preached on many consecutive Sabbaths. The Sabbath, as we have previously learned, was made to be a blessing for all mankind. Jesus used the Sabbath to preach and teach; He also used the Sabbath to extend God's blessings of healing and the casting out of demons. Jesus Christ used the Sabbath to release people from sin—**NOT TO LEAD THEM INTO SIN!** Hence, the Sabbath day is a day of redemption and salvation—a day of blessing!

Jesus Healed on the Sabbath Day to Set an Example of Doing Good

Mark also recorded that Jesus healed people on the Sabbath. Notice: "And again He went into the synagogue, and a man who had a withered hand was there. And they were watching Him *to see* if He would heal him on the Sabbath, in order that they might accuse Him [notice the picky, hateful, unmerciful attitude of the Jewish religious leaders]. Then He said to the man who had the withered hand, 'Stand up *here* in the center.' And He said to them, 'Is it lawful to do good on the Sabbaths, or to do evil? To save life, or to kill?' But they were silent. **And after looking around at them with anger, being grieved at the hardness of their hearts**, He said to the man, 'Stretch out your hand.' And he stretched *it* out, and his hand was restored *as* sound as the other. Then the Pharisees left *and* immediately took counsel with the Herodians against Him *as to* how they might destroy Him" (Mark 3:1-6).

God never made the Sabbath a burden for people. However, the Jewish religious leaders legislated hundreds of "letter-of-the-law" do's and don'ts that burdened the Sabbath with rigorous, harsh restrictions. This made it impossible to truly keep the Sabbath as God intended—as a day of rest, rejoicing and worshiping God in spirit and truth.

The Sabbath was created as a day of release from our labors and physical work. It was intended to be a day of loving God, drawing close to Him and fellowshipping with Him (I John 1:3-4). Just as the

Sabbath is a day of rest from our labors, it should also be used as a day of release from our sins.

This is why Jesus continually healed on the Sabbath. In the account of John five, we again find the loving, forgiving, healing attitude and actions of Jesus contrasted with the hypocritical, super self-righteousness of the Pharisees. In fact, in the minds of the Pharisees, Jesus' act of healing on the Sabbath constituted what they claimed to be Sabbath-breaking.

In reality, Jesus' act of healing was an extension of God's loving-kindness, which was a most appropriate expression of the meaning and intent of the Sabbath. God created the Sabbath so mankind could be in contact with God and receive His blessings. What greater blessing could a crippled man receive from God than to be healed on the Sabbath?

Let's examine this account more closely. "Now a certain man was there who had been *suffering with* an infirmity for thirtyeight years. Jesus saw him lying *there*, and, knowing that he had been there a long time, said to him, 'Do you desire to be made whole?' And the infirm *man* answered Him, 'Sir, I do not have anyone to put me in the pool after the water has been agitated. But while I am going, another *one* steps down before me.' Jesus said to him, 'Arise, take up your bedroll and walk.' And immediately the man was made whole; and he took up his bedroll and walked. Now that day was a Sabbath.

"For this reason, the Jews said to the man who had been healed, 'It is *the* Sabbath *day*. It is not lawful for you to take up your bedroll.' [This was in reference to a *traditional law* that the Jews had added; Jesus would never command anyone to sin.] He answered them, 'The one Who made me whole said to me, "Take up your bedroll and walk." ' Then they asked him, 'Who is the one Who said to you, "Take up your bedroll and walk"?' But the man who had been healed did not know Who it was, for Jesus had moved away, *and* a crowd was in the place.

"After these things, Jesus found him in the temple and said to him, 'Behold, you have been made whole. **Sin no more, so that something worse does not happen to you**' " (John 5:5-15).

How did the Jews react? Were they happy that Jesus had healed a man? No! Did they desire to follow Him as the Son of God? Decidedly not! Notice their reaction: "And for this cause, the Jews persecuted Jesus and sought to kill Him, because He had done those things on a Sabbath. But Jesus answered them, 'My Father is working until now, and I work.' So then, on account of this *saying*, the Jews sought all the more to kill Him, not only because He had loosed the Sabbath, but also *because* He had called God His own Father, making Himself equal with God. Therefore, Jesus answered and said to them, 'Truly, truly I say to you, the Son has no power to do anything of Himself, but only what He sees the Father do. For whatever He does, these things the Son also does in the same manner' " (verses 16-19).

The Jews did not understand that spiritual work—such as healing, helping the poor and destitute—on the Sabbath glorifies God, and that doing so is part of the good works of the Sabbath day. It is not a work of labor for gain.

Jesus Christ is Lord of the Sabbath; He is Not Lord of Sunday

After another dispute about Sabbath-keeping—when the disciples had plucked ears of grain to eat on the Sabbath—Jesus made it absolutely clear that He was *Lord of the Sabbath*.

"And He said to them, '**THE SABBATH WAS MADE FOR MAN, *AND* NOT MAN FOR THE SABBATH** [Jesus ought to have known, because He created it!] **THEREFORE, THE SON OF MAN IS LORD EVEN OF THE SABBATH**' " (Mark 2:27- 28). Nothing could be more true—Jesus Christ, as Creator of the Sabbath, *owns* it.

READ THESE SCRIPTURES AGAIN! WHAT DAY DID JESUS SAY WAS THE LORD'S DAY, HIS DAY? WAS IT SUNDAY? Absolutely not!

The Lord's day is not Sunday, as most professing Christians have been taught. **Jesus said that the**

Lord's day was the Sabbath day. He is Lord of that day! The Sabbath day is the seventh day of the week, known as Saturday. It is not Sunday, the first day of the week. Therefore, the true Lord's day of the New Testament is the seventh-day Sabbath.

The Apostles Kept the Sabbath

Jesus Christ's last command before ascending into heaven was very clear. Notice what He commissioned the apostles to do and teach: "And Jesus came *and* spoke to them, saying, 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me. Therefore, go *and* make disciples in all nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. **TEACHING THEM TO OBSERVE ALL THINGS THAT I HAVE COMMANDED YOU**. And lo, I am with you always, *even* until the completion of the age' " (Matt. 28:18-20).

According to the very words of Jesus Christ, the apostles were to teach and do *only* those things they had learned *from* Him. The original apostles never taught Sunday worship because they never learned or practiced Sunday worship. In fact, history shows that it was almost 300 years later that the pagan Roman Emperor Constantine *imposed* Sunday as a day of worship (which was his preferred day of worship). It is also abundantly clear from Scripture that Constantine had no legitimate authority to change the Sabbath commandment of God.

In the book of Acts, we find that the apostle Paul taught the people on the Sabbath. In fact, when Paul first began preaching in Greece proper, he personally observed the Sabbath. Because there were no synagogues in the area, he sought out a place of prayer where people were keeping the Sabbath.

Here is what Luke records for us: "And from there *we went* to Philippi, which is *the* primary city in *that* part of Macedonia, *and* a colony. And we stayed in this city *for* a number of days. Then **on the Sabbath** we went outside of the city by a river, where *it* was customary *for* prayer to be *made;* and after sitting down, we spoke to the women who were gathered together *there*" (Acts 16:12-13).

Paul was preaching to the Gentiles in this part of Greece. More importantly, we see that the Gentiles were keeping the Sabbath *before* Paul preached to them. This is quite the opposite of what theologians claim. Because they despise God's laws, they teach that the Sabbath is for the Jews, and that Sunday is for the Gentiles! That is completely false! Paul taught Gentiles on the Sabbath and taught them to keep the Sabbath!

What a perfect opportunity for Paul to begin teaching the Gentiles that they did not have to observe the seventh-day Sabbath. But what did Paul teach? The Sabbath!

Let's see some more examples of Paul's teachings and practices.

"And as was the custom with Paul, he went in to them and for three Sabbaths reasoned with them from the Scriptures" (Acts 17:2).

Paul Taught the Gentiles on the Sabbath Day

If Paul wanted to proclaim that the day of worship had, in fact, been changed from the seventh-day to the first-day of the week, he most certainly would have done so on this following occasion. The account in the book of Acts disproves the allegation that the Sabbath was for the Jews only and that Sunday was the new day of worship for the Gentiles. "They came to Antioch in Pisidia; and they went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day" (Acts 13:14). After preaching Jesus Christ to them, many of the Jews were offended. However, some of the Jews and most of the Gentiles wanted to hear more about the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Notice: "And when the Jews had gone out of the synagogue, the Gentiles entreated *him* that **these words might be spoken to them on the next Sabbath**. Now after the synagogue had been dismissed, many of the Jews and the proselytes who worshipped *there* followed Paul and Barnabas, who, speaking to them, **persuaded them to continue in the grace of God. And on the**

coming Sabbath, almost the whole city was gathered together to hear the Word of God" (Acts 13:42-44).

If it were true, as taught by theologians and believed by millions of churchgoers, that Sunday was for the Gentiles, Paul certainly missed a golden opportunity to teach them about Sunday. **He could have instructed them to come back the very next day, the first day of the week, and could have begun holding Sunday services instead of Sabbath services—but he didn't!**

Grace and Sabbath-keeping Go Hand-in-Hand; Grace Does not Eliminate Sabbath-Keeping

The apostle Paul and Barnabas did not teach the Gentiles that grace eliminated the need to obey the Fourth Commandment. Rather, they were told to continue in the grace of God with Sabbath-keeping! Yet, mainstream Christianity teaches that if one keeps the holy Sabbath of God, he or she has fallen from grace. But nothing could be further from the truth. In fact, Acts 13:42-44, as quoted above, shows that Paul taught that grace and Sabbath-keeping go hand-in-hand. On the Sabbath, the Gentiles were being taught how to "**continue in the grace of God**." Grace does not give anyone license to reject God's seventh-day Sabbath and replace it with Sunday. However, most Sunday- keeping ministers make the false claim that it is through the grace of God that they have the authority to reject the Sabbath and proclaim Sunday as the Lord's day. However, the teachings of the apostle Paul show that, in order to remain within the grace of God, the Gentiles were to keep the Sabbath—not Sunday!

In his epistle to the Romans, the apostle Paul taught that grace establishes the law. Notice: "Since *it is* indeed one God Who will justify *the* circumcision by faith, and *the* uncircumcision through faith. Are we, then, abolishing law through faith? MAY IT NEVER BE! Rather, we are establishing law!" (Rom. 3:30-31).

Again, Paul makes it absolutely clear that a Christian cannot continue in sin, transgressing the commandments of God—including the Fourth Commandment. He leaves no doubt whatsoever. Notice: "What then shall we say? **Shall we continue in sin, so that grace may abound? MAY IT NEVER BE! We who died to sin, how shall we live any longer therein?** Or are you ignorant that we, as many as were baptized into Christ Jesus, were baptized into His death?

"Therefore, we were buried with Him through the baptism into the death; so that, just as Christ was raised from *the* dead by the glory of the Father, in the same way, we also should walk in newness of life. For if we had been conjoined together in the likeness of His death, so also shall we be *in the likeness of His* resurrection. **Knowing this, that our old man was co-crucified with *Him* in order that the body of sin might be destroyed, so that we might no longer be enslaved to sin**; because the one who has died *to* sin [through the operation of baptism] has been justified from sin" (Rom. 6:1-7).

When we fully understand the New Testament Scriptures, there is not one hint that the apostles of Jesus Christ, including Paul, who was the apostle to the Gentiles, ever taught Sunday observance. **Never at any time did they teach that Sunday would replace the seventh-day Sabbath**. All the way through the book of Acts, and in the writings of all the apostles, the Sabbath is upheld as the day of worship.

When the apostle Paul came to Corinth, he taught on each Sabbath for a year and a half. "And he reasoned in the synagogue every Sabbath, and persuaded *both* Jews and Greeks. Now when Silas and Timothy came down from Macedonia, Paul was stirred in his spirit *and* was earnestly testifying to the Jews *that* Jesus *was* the Christ. But when they set themselves in opposition and were blaspheming, *Paul* shook *his* garments *and* said to them, 'Your blood *be* upon your heads. I am pure *of it*. From this time forward I will go to the Gentiles.'

"And after departing from there, he went into *the* house of a certain one named Justus, who worshipped God, whose house adjoined the synagogue. But Crispus, the ruler of the synagogue, believed in the Lord with his whole house; and many of the Corinthians who heard believed and were baptized. And the Lord said to Paul in a vision in *the* night, 'Do not be afraid; but speak, and do not be silent, for I

am with you; and no one shall set upon you to mistreat you because I have many people in this city.' And he remained *there for* a year and six months, teaching the Word of God among them" (Acts 18:4-11).

Again, we see that when Paul turned to the Gentiles, He did not institute Sunday-keeping. Neither did he ever teach that Sunday was the weekly day of worship for the Gentiles.

If One Transgresses One of the Commandments, He is Guilty of Breaking Them All

The major commandment that is rejected by mainstream Christianity today is the Fourth Commandment. Yet, as strange as it may seem, those who reject this commandment will profess to keep the other commandments and claim that they are doing the will of God. But the apostle James declares that breaking even *one* of the commandments of God is sin, and brings the same condemnation as breaking them all.

In his epistle, James shows that Jesus' teachings concerning the spirit of the law did not eliminate the need to obey the letter of the law. James explains that Jesus' command to "love your neighbor as yourself" requires obedience to the commandments of God. James specifically refers to the sixth and seventh commandments, and makes it clear that to break any of God's commandments is sin: "If you are truly keeping *the* Royal Law according to the scripture, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself,' you are doing well. But if you have respect of persons, you are practicing sin, being convicted by the law as transgressors; for *if* anyone keeps the whole law, but sins in one *aspect*, he becomes guilty of all. For He Who said, 'You shall not commit adultery,' also said, 'You shall not commit murder.' Now if you do not commit adultery, but you commit murder, you have become a transgressor of *the* law. In this manner speak and in this manner behave; as those who are about to be judged by *the* law of freedom" (James 2:8-12).

The same standard also applies to the Sabbath commandment of God, to keep the seventh-day Sabbath holy. Let us examine God's Word: "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work. But the seventh day *is* the Sabbath of the LORD your God. In it you shall not do any work, you, nor your son, nor your daughter; your manservant, nor your maidservant, nor your livestock, nor the stranger within your gates; for *in* six days the LORD made the heaven and the earth, the sea, and all that *is* in them, and rested the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and sanctified it" (Ex. 20:8-11).

Nowhere in the entire Bible do we find a single scripture that changes the day of rest and worship from the seventh day of the week, Saturday, to the first day of the week, Sunday. There are some scriptures that have been misinterpreted to make it *appear* that Sunday is the day on which Christians should worship. However, when those passages are properly understood and interpreted, it is clear that Jesus Christ did not change the Sabbath day from the seventh day of the week to the first day of the week.

Contrary to the teachings of mainstream theologians, God did not command Sabbath keeping for the Jews only. In the beginning, God created the Sabbath day, hallowing the seventh day as the weekly day of worship, when there was not a single Jew on earth. The only humans at that time were Adam and Eve, the progenitors of all mankind. It was for *all humanity* that God blessed and sanctified the seventh day, making it holy: "Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. And by *the beginning of* the seventh day God finished 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 on it He rested from all His work which God had created and made" (Gen. 2:1-3).

The seventh day was sanctified at the creation of the world. God established that day as a time for rest and the day of worship from the beginning. He sanctified it, and blessed it, and rested on it, setting the example for mankind. Down through the ages, the record of this act of God has been preserved in the book of Genesis, one of the books of the Law. Remember what Jesus Christ declared concerning the

Law: “For truly I say to you, until the heaven and the earth shall pass away, one jot or one tittle shall in no way pass from the Law until everything has been fulfilled” (Matt. 5:18).

God created time. On earth, time is measured by the movement of the earth in relationship to the heavens. As long as the heavens and earth exist, the seventh-day Sabbath will not pass from the Law. Consequently, the Fourth Commandment is still in force and remains binding upon all mankind.

Contrary to what mainstream Christianity may teach or what people may practice, Sunday has never been nor will ever be the Lord’s day. The seventh day of the week, called Saturday today, is the Lord’s Sabbath day. Jesus Christ emphatically declared that He is Lord of the Sabbath day: “And He said to them, ‘The Sabbath was made for man, *and* not man for the Sabbath; therefore, the Son of man is Lord even of the Sabbath” (Mark 2:27-28).

Some Scholars Understand that the Sabbath Is to be Kept

Many theologians have misconstrued Jesus’ declaration that He is Lord of the Sabbath as signifying that He was abolishing the Sabbath by His authority. This interpretation of Jesus’ words is completely unfounded. Among the scholars who understand the true meaning of these scriptures are writers of *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*. Notice what they have written about these critical verses: “At times Jesus is interpreted to have abrogated or suspended the Sabbath commandment on the basis of the controversies brought about by Sabbath healings and other acts. Careful analysis of the respective pas- sages does not seem to give credence to this interpretation. The action of plucking the ears of grain on the Sabbath by the disciples is particularly important in this matter. Jesus makes a foundational pronouncement at that time in a chiastically structured statement of antithetic parallelism: ‘The Sabbath was made for man and not man for the Sabbath’ (Mark 2:27). The disciples’ act of plucking the grain infringed against the rabbinic *halakhah* of minute casuistry in which it was forbidden to reap, thresh, winnow and grind on the Sabbath (*Sabb*. 7.2). Here again rabbinic Sabbath *halakhah* is rejected, as in other Sabbath conflicts. Jesus reforms the Sabbath and restores its rightful place as designed in creation, where the Sabbath is made for all mankind and not specifically for Israel, as claimed by normative Judaism (*cf Jub*. 2:19-20, see D.3). The subsequent logion, ‘The Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath’ (Mark 2:28; Matt. 12:8; Luke 6:5), indicates that man-made Sabbath *halakhah* does not rule the Sabbath, but that the Son of Man as Lord determines the true meaning of the Sabbath. The Sabbath activities of Jesus are neither hurtful provocations nor mere protests against rabbinic legal restrictions, but are part of Jesus’ essential proclamation of the in-breaking of the Kingdom of God in which man is taught the original meaning of the Sabbath as the recurring weekly proleptic ‘day of the Lord’ in which God manifests his healing and saving rulership over man” (*The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, Vol. 5, pp. 854-855).

There Remains Sabbath-Keeping for the People of God

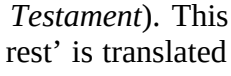
As these scholars show, the gospel accounts do not support the widespread belief that Jesus abolished the Sabbath day. Rather, as the Lord of the Sabbath, He taught the true meaning of the Sabbath day and set the example for its proper observance. His apostles continued to keep the Sabbath and to teach the early believers to keep it, as Paul’s epistle to the Hebrews clearly demonstrates. The apostle Paul wrote this epistle between 62 and 65 AD, more than thirty years after the beginning of the New Testament church. In his epistle, Paul makes it absolutely clear the seventh-day Sabbath had not been abolished. At that time, there were false ministers who were teaching that Sunday had replaced the Sabbath. To counter these false teachings, Paul gave the brethren a sober warning that to reject the Sabbath and accept Sunday was sin, just as the children of Israel rebelled against God in the wilderness.

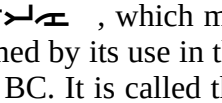
The New Testament shows that Sabbath-keeping and entering into the Kingdom of God go hand-in-hand. The comparison between the Israelites not entering the promised land—a physical type of the coming Kingdom of God—because of their Sabbathbreaking is drawn between professing Christians who

will not enter into the Kingdom of God because of their unbelief and Sabbathbreaking. Notice: “For He spoke in a certain place about the seventh *day* in this manner ‘**And God rested on the seventh day from all His works**’; and again concerning this: ‘If they shall enter into My rest—’ Consequently, since it remains *for* some to enter into it, and those who had previously heard the gospel did not enter in because of disobedience, again He marks out a certain day, ‘Today,’ saying in David after so long a time (exactly as it has been quoted *above*), ‘Today, if you will hear His voice, harden not your hearts.’ For if Joshua had given them rest, He would not have spoken *long* afterwards of another day. **There remains, therefore, Sabbath-keeping for the people of God**” (Heb. 4:4-9).

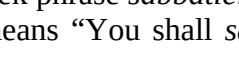
Paul does not say, “There remains Sabbath-keeping for the Jews.” He clearly declared, “There remains Sabbath-keeping for the people of God.” The people of God include the Gentiles as well as the Jews (I Pet. 2:10; Eph. 2:11-13).

Many ministers and theologians have applied the opposite meaning to Hebrews 4:9. They have completely misinterpreted the *King James Version* of this verse, which reads, “There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God.” They teach that Christians are no longer required to observe the Sabbath because Jesus Christ has given them “rest” by releasing them from commandment-keeping, and thereby He “fulfilled the law” for them. As a result, they are told that he or she has entered into a spiritual “rest” from sin and does not have to keep the commandments of God. Such reasoning is completely false. Jesus Himself said that He did not come to abolish or “do away with” the laws and commandments of God, but to fulfill them. Neither did Jesus Christ fulfill any commandment for anyone in order to release him or her from the obligation to keep them. He set the example for us—to free us from committing sin (I Pet. 2:21- 22; I John 3:4).

When we understand the meaning of the Greek text, there is no question that the New Testament upholds the authority of the Fourth Commandment for Christians today. The Greek word that is used in Hebrews 4:9 is *sabbatismos* () which means “Sabbath rest, Sabbath observance” (Arndt and Gingrich, *A Greek- English Lexicon of the New Testament*). This definition of *sabbatismos* is confirmed by other historical works: “The words ‘sabbath rest’ is translated from the GK noun *sabbatismos*, [and is] a unique word in the NT. This term appears also in Plutarch (*Superset. 3 [Moralia 166a*]) for Sabbath observance, and in four post-canonical Christian writings which are not dependent on Heb. 4:9” (*The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, Vol. 5, p. 856).

Sabbatismos is a noun. The verb form is *sabbatizo*  , which means “to keep the Sabbath” (Arndt and Gingrich). This definition of *sabbatizo* is confirmed by its use in the Septuagint, a Greek translation of the Old Testament which dates from third century BC. It is called the Septuagint, meaning “seventy,” because the first five books were translated by seventy scholars who were Greek-speaking Jews in Alexandria, Egypt. Jews used the Septuagint in synagogues throughout the Roman empire; the translation was also used by Greek-speaking Jewish and Gentile converts in the early New Testament church. Paul quotes extensively from the Septuagint in his epistle to the Hebrews. When Paul used *sabbatismos* in Hebrews 4:9, he knew that the meaning of this word was well known to the Greek-speaking believers of that day. The verb form, *sabbatizo*, was used in the Septuagint, which was as familiar to Greek-speaking Jews and Gentiles of New Testament times as the *King James Bible* is to Christians today.

The use of the verb *sabbatizo* in Leviticus 23:32 in the Septuagint leaves no room to mistake its meaning. The *Greek English Lexicon* of the Septuagint defines *sabbatizo* as “to keep Sabbath, to rest” (Lust, Eynikel, Hauspie). The English translation of this verse in the Septuagint reads: “It [the Day of Atonement] shall be a holy Sabbath [literally, ‘a Sabbath of Sabbaths’] to you; and ye shall humble your souls, from the ninth day of the month: from evening to evening shall ye keep your Sabbaths” (*The Septuagint With the Apocrypha*, Brenton).

The phrase “shall ye keep your Sabbaths” is translated from the Greek phrase *sabbatieite ta sabbata* (), which literally means “You shall *sabbathize* the

Sabbaths." The form of the verb *sabbatizo* is the second person plural *sabbatieite* (𐤔𐤁𐤕𐤉𐤕𐤄𐤉𐤕𐤄), which means, "ye shall keep." Since *sabbathize* means "to keep the Sabbath," this term is a special verb that also defines "Sabbath-keeping" as it relates to God's commanded seventhyear land Sabbath. In the entire Septuagint, *sabbatizo* is never used to define the "keeping" of anything else. Rather, it is only used in relation to "Sabbath-keeping." In keeping with this definition, the *KJV* translates *sabbatieite* as, "shall ye celebrate your sabbath."

There is no question that the Greek verb *sabbatizo* in Leviticus 23:32 is specifically referring to Sabbath observance. This meaning applies equally to the noun form, *sabbatismos*, which we find in Paul's epistle to the Hebrews. The fact that Paul used the Septuagint translation in this epistle confirms that the meaning of *sabbatismos*, as used in Hebrews 4:9, is in complete accord with the meaning of *sabbatieite ta sabbata* as found in Leviticus 23:32. Clearly Paul is upholding the observance of the Sabbath, the seventh day of the week.

The use of *sabbatismos* in Hebrews 4:9 contradicts the teachings that the Fourth Commandment has been abolished. As the context of this verse shows, the observance of the seventh day as a day of rest and worship is as binding for the people of God today as it was for Israel of old. In addition to the weekly Sabbath, the annual holy days that God commanded, which are also called Sabbaths, are included in the Fourth Commandment. In the same manner true believers are commanded to keep the seventh-day Sabbath, they are also commanded to observe the annual holy days of God. The early New Testament church kept the holy days of God as determined by the calculated Hebrew Calendar. The apostle Paul kept the holy days and commanded Gentile converts to keep them (I Cor. 5:7-8). None of the apostles or the early converts to Christianity observed the pagan holidays that are now called Christmas and Easter. These holidays, which originated in sun worship, were later adopted into Christianity through the influence of the Roman church. They became false substitutes for the annual holy days that are commanded by God, just as Sunday has become a false substitute for the weekly Sabbath.

Paul carries his instruction even further, showing that Christians must keep the Sabbath or lose salvation. "For the one who has entered into His rest [keeping the Sabbath], he also has ceased from his works, just as God *did* from His own *works* [when He created the Sabbath day].

"We should be diligent therefore to enter into that rest [Sabbath-keeping, as well as striving to enter into the Kingdom of God], lest anyone fall after the same example of disobedience. For the Word of God *is* living and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of both the soul and spirit, *and* of both *the* joints and *the* marrow, and *is* able to discern *the* thoughts and intents of *the* heart" (Heb. 4:10-12).

What could be more clear? God's Holy Word reveals that if we want to be true Christians, we must be loving God the Father and Jesus Christ. We must be living by every word of God, keeping His commandments. This is how we are to follow Jesus Christ and the teachings of the Bible. There is no question that we should be observing the seventh-day Sabbath as the day of worship and fellowship.

Summary

We have seen from God's Word the following truths about the seventh-day Sabbath of God:

1. God created the seventh-day Sabbath as a day of rest for all of mankind from the beginning of creation.
2. Abraham kept the Sabbath.
3. The Sabbath commandment was given to the Israelites prior to Mt. Sinai.
4. The Sabbath commandment is the fourth of the Ten Commandments and we are commanded to remember and keep holy the seventh-day Sabbath.

5. God owns the Sabbath—it is His.
6. Jesus Christ was the Creator of the Sabbath.
7. Jesus Christ is Lord of the Sabbath day, which means that the Lord's day is the Sabbath, not Sunday.
8. Jesus Christ observed the Sabbath and taught and healed on the Sabbath.
9. The apostles never changed the day of worship to the first day of the week.
10. The apostle Paul taught the Gentiles to observe the Sabbath.
11. The apostle Paul taught that grace and Sabbath-keeping go hand-in-hand.
12. The Bible nowhere teaches that the Sabbath was changed to Sunday.
13. Hebrews 4:9 is a direct command for Christians to keep the Sabbath.
14. Sabbath-keeping is essential for salvation and is a sign that we love God and keep His commandments.

Now that you know the biblical truth about the seventh-day Sabbath, what will you do? Will you repent of your sin of Sabbathbreaking and truly follow God's way—or not? Will you show your love for God the Father and Jesus Christ by observing the Sabbath? The decision is yours!

Part 3

Rejecting the Commandments of God Is Lawlessness

Everyone who teaches disobedience to the laws and commandments of God is following in the steps of Satan, who was the first lawbreaker. That is why Jesus told the Pharisees that their father was the devil (John 8:44). While professing to teach and practice the laws and commandments of God, they were teaching and practicing their own religious laws and traditions in place of the commandments of God. During His ministry, Jesus condemned the religious leaders of Judaism for their traditions, which they held in higher esteem than the laws and commandments of God. He made it clear that in observing their own human traditions, they were rejecting the commandments of God: "[The] Pharisees and the scribes questioned Him, *saying*, 'Why don't Your disciples walk according to the tradition of the elders, but eat bread with unwashed hands?' And He answered *and* said to them, 'Well did Isaiah prophesy concerning you hypocrites, as it is written, "This people honors Me with their lips, but their hearts are far away from Me. But in vain do they worship Me, teaching *for* doctrine the commandments of men." For leaving the commandment of God, you hold fast the tradition of men, *such as* the washing of pots and cups; and you practice many other things like *this*.'

"Then He said to them, 'Full well do you reject the commandment of God, so that you may observe your *own* tradition. For Moses said, "Honor your father and your mother"; and, "The one who speaks evil of father or mother, let him be put to death." But you say, "If a man shall say to *his* father or mother, 'Whatever benefit you might receive from me *is* corban' (that is, *set aside as* a gift to God), he is not obligated to help his parents." And you excuse him from doing anything for his father or his mother, nullifying the authority of the Word of God by your tradition which you have passed down; and you practice many *traditions* such as this' " (Mark 7:5-13).

Most of the world's professing Christians have committed the same mistake as the Pharisaic Jews. Many church denominations teach that divine revelation is contained in church tradition as well as in Holy Scripture. In the majority of churches, the religious leaders elevate their traditions to a higher status than the Word of God. It is evident that they have done so with the Fourth Commandment. They have exalted their unscriptural tradition of Sunday-keeping above the Sabbath commandment of God. In rejecting the commandment of God to keep the Sabbath day holy, they have become lawbreakers in His eyes. According to Jesus' teaching, they are workers of lawlessness. Likewise, churches that use any form of idols— including statutes, pictures, relics, icons or other symbolic objects— are rejecting the Second Commandment for the sake of their tradition. Because they are breaking the commandments of God, they are guilty of practicing lawlessness.

In his first epistle, the apostle John clearly defines lawlessness: "Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law, for **sin is the transgression of the law**" (I John 3:4, *KJV*). Although this is a correct translation, it does not convey the literal meaning of the Greek text. Here is a more precise translation of John's words: "Everyone who practices sin is also practicing lawlessness, for sin is lawlessness."

To practice lawlessness is to live in a state of sin, committing sin as a habitual way of life. In other words, lawlessness is the habitual breaking of God's laws and commandments, which is sin. Religious leaders who teach and practice lawlessness appear to be righteous because they use the names of God and Jesus Christ and often quote Scripture. However, they are not true servants of God because they reject His laws and commandments.

The apostle Jude, the brother of Jesus Christ, witnesses the rise of lawlessness among the churches

of his day. Jude delivered an urgent plea to the believers to reject ungodly teachers of lawlessness, who were turning the grace of God into license to sin. They were preaching a false gospel of faith without obedience, replacing the commandments of God with traditions that originated in ancient paganism. Notice what Jude wrote: "Beloved, when personally exerting all *my* diligence to write to you concerning the common salvation, I was compelled to write to you, exhorting *you* to fervently fight for the faith, which once for all *time* has been delivered to the saints. For certain men have stealthily crept in, those who long ago have been written about, condemning *them* to this judgment. *They are* ungodly men, who are perverting the grace of our God, *turning it* into licentiousness, and are personally denying the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ" (Jude 3-4).

The apostle Peter also warned of false teachers who would reject the way of obedience to God's commandments: "But there were also false prophets among the people, as indeed there will be false teachers among you, who will stealthily introduce destructive heresies, personally denying the Lord who bought them [by rejecting His teachings], and bringing swift destruction upon themselves. And many people will follow as authoritative [exalting church tradition] their destructive ways; and because of them, the way of the truth will be blasphemed" (II Pet. 2:1-2).

Those Who Practice and Teach Lawlessness Judge the Law and the Lawgiver

Those who teach religious lawlessness not only blaspheme the truth of God, but they also judge the laws of God in unrighteousness. In their lawlessness they claim that all the laws and commandments of God have been abolished or rendered inoperative. Notice: "In fact, the whole law of Moses has been rendered inoperative. The New Testament message is clear for all who have 'ears to hear.' The whole of the law of Moses has been rendered inoperative by the death of the Lord Jesus. The law, in its entirety, no longer has any immediate and forensic authority or jurisdiction whatsoever over anyone…. Christ is the complete end and fulfillment of all of the laws' 613 commandments, ending their jurisdiction over us completely" (Tardo, *Sunday Facts & Sabbath Fiction*, p 26-27).

By judging the law in this manner, teachers of lawlessness are rejecting God as Lawgiver and are not doers of the law. The apostle James condemns this ungodly attitude. "Brethren, do not talk against one another. The one who talks against a brother, and judges his brother, is speaking against the law, and is judging the law. But if you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law; rather, you are a judge. But there is only one Lawgiver, Who has power to save and to destroy. Who are you that you presume to judge another?" (James 4:11-12).

Not only are they judging the law as unworthy, they are, in fact, judging God, Who is the only Lawgiver, as unworthy. To judge God and reject His laws and commandments and to reject Him as Lawgiver is the epitome of lawlessness. This spirit of judging God and His laws is the spirit and attitude of Satan the devil. Moreover, it is the very foundation that has been used to establish various religions that are based on the traditions and commandments of men, while they profess the name of Jesus Christ.

The ancient patriarch Job perfectly obeyed God in the letter of the law. However, he was trusting in himself and his ability to be righteous, rather than trusting in God. He bragged and boasted of his own righteousness. His boasting was so great that God brought a grievous trial upon Job. After he was smitten with boils from his head to his toes, his trial was almost more than he could bear. Three of his four friends were unable to give Job any understanding or comfort. Only one, Elihu, stood for God. Notice what he told Job: "Hear my words, O you wise men; and give ear to me, you who have knowledge; for the ear tries words, as the palate tastes food. Let us choose for ourselves what is right; let us know among ourselves what is good. For Job has said, 'I am righteous; but God has denied me justice' " (Job 34:1-5).

Then Elihu revealed Job's sins to him: "Job has spoken without knowledge, and his words were without wisdom. My desire is that Job may be tried unto the end because his answers are like those of wicked men. For he adds rebellion to his sin; he claps his hands among us, and multiplies his words

against God" (verses 35-37). Then Elihu asks, "Do you think this to be right, you that say, 'My righteousness is more than God's'?" (Job 35:2).

After several long lectures by his friends—and diatribes by Job defending his own self-righteousness—he finally desired that God Himself would speak. God obliged and answered him, revealing Job's true attitude of judging God: "And the LORD answered Job out of the whirlwind, and said, 'Gird up your loins now like a man. I will demand you, and you declare unto Me. Will you even annul My judgment? Will you condemn Me so that you may be righteous?' " (Job 40:6-8).

This is the same self-righteous attitude that today's workers of lawlessness have toward God's laws and commandments. They deny God's judgment—that His laws and commandments are holy, righteous and spiritual. Instead, they judge them as evil and harsh, declaring them to be a curse. In doing so, they also condemn God, in order that they may establish their own righteousness. With Job's attitude, they tacitly claim that Sunday-keeping is more righteous than Sabbath-keeping.

Furthermore, they utilize select portions of the Scriptures and retain *some* of the commandments of God in their self-righteous religions, believing that their way will lead to salvation. However, self-righteous traditions, regulations and false grace will not bring them salvation. That is the same mistake Job made. Since God alone is Savior, He powerfully declared to Job that his own righteousness could never save him. Notice: "And have you an arm like God? Or can you thunder with a voice like His? Deck yourself now with majesty and excellency, and array yourself with glory and beauty. Cast abroad the rage of your wrath; and behold everyone who is proud, and abase him. Look on everyone who is proud, and bring him low; and tread down the wicked in their place. Hide them in the dust together; and bind their faces in darkness. Then I will also confess to you that your own right hand can save you" (verses 9-14).

Finally, after God humbled him, Job forsook his own self-righteousness and deeply abhorred himself and repented to God in "dust and ashes" (Job 42:6). This is what the Christian-professing religions of the world need to do—forsake their own self-righteous ways that they have established for themselves and submit to the righteousness of God the Father and Jesus Christ. The "workers of lawlessness" need to quit judging God in order to be righteousness in their own eyes.

A close examination of the history of Christianity will show that this is precisely what has happened. Men have established their own self-righteous religions and have rejected the true righteousness of God. True Christianity, as originally taught by Jesus Christ and His apostles, was subverted from within by false teachers of lawlessness. The teachings of these "ungodly men" that Jude and Peter wrote about were passed down in the writings of the "early church fathers" and were accepted by the Roman church as authoritative traditions. Through the centuries the Roman church grew in power, using its influence to stamp out every remaining vestige of the true teachings of Jesus Christ. After a power struggle between the bishop of Rome and Constantinople, the church split into the Roman Catholic and the Eastern Orthodox churches. As the influence of the Orthodox church dominated the East, so the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church molded the thinking of the entire Western world.

The authority of Catholic doctrine and tradition was not seriously challenged until the time of Martin Luther. When Martin Luther rejected the corruption and lawlessness of the Roman Catholic Church, he appeared to be seeking the truth of God. He labored diligently to translate the Scriptures into the German language so that the common people could read and learn from the Word of God. But the religion that developed as a result of Martin Luther's teachings, known as Lutheranism, did not restore the true teachings of Jesus Christ. The reformation that Martin Luther began was not complete, because he still rejected the second and fourth commandments. The result was another form of religious lawlessness. Luther claimed that a person who had been saved through the grace of God could not lose salvation, regardless of the degree or intensity of the sins that might be committed. This perverse teaching is clearly expressed in a letter written by Luther: "Be a sinner, and let your sins be strong, but let your faith in Christ be stronger, and rejoice in Christ who is the victor over sin, death, and the world. We will commit sins while we are here, for this life is not a place where righteousness can exist. No sin can

separate us from Him, even if we were to kill or commit adultery a thousand times each day" (Martin Luther, *Saemmtliche Schriften*, Letter 99, 1 August 1521; translated by Erika Flores in the Wittenberg Project, Wartburg Segment, as published in *Grace and Knowledge*, Issue 8, September 2000; Article: "Ecclesiasticus: The Wisdom of Ben-Sirach," p. 27).

The words of Martin Luther reveal the depth of lawlessness to which many religious leaders have descended. Luther's teaching is the epitome of a perverted "grace" that rejects the commandments of God and grants license to commit sin without limitation. Luther's teachings concerning murder and adultery are diametrically opposed to the teachings of Jesus Christ, Who magnified and expanded the commandments to show their spiritual application.

Teachings of lawlessness have succeeded in deceiving the vast majority of professing Christians into accepting a false grace. As the New Testament shows, this distorted view of grace does not lead to salvation. In the Day of Judgment, teachers of lawlessness— though they have been honored as religious leaders and have done noteworthy deeds in the name of Jesus Christ—will nevertheless be rejected: "Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy through Your name? And did we not cast out demons through Your name? And did we not perform many works of power through Your name?' And then I will confess to them, 'I never knew you. Depart from Me, you who work lawlessness' " (Matt. 7:22-23).

The workers of lawlessness will depart into the "lake of fire" to suffer the judgment of eternal death, from which there is no resurrection: "But the cowardly, and unbelieving, and abominable, and murderers, and fornicators, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone; which is the second death" (Rev. 21:8).

The teachings of Jesus Christ, as recorded in the Sermon on the Mount, carry the full authority of God the Father. When Jesus taught the spiritual application of God's laws and commandments, the people who heard Him were astonished: "Now it came to pass that when Jesus had finished these words, the multitudes were amazed at His teaching; for He taught them as one Who had authority, and not as the scribes" (Matt. 7:28-29). Indeed, Jesus taught the spiritual intent and application of the laws and commandments of God for the New Covenant. His teachings represent the spiritual standard by which the true believer is to obey the laws and commandments of God.

Part 4

The Biblical Truth About Sunday-Keeping

Sunday, the first day of the week, is purported to be the Christian day of worship. It is commonly taught and believed that Jesus Christ and the 12 original apostles—and especially the apostle Paul—taught that Christians are no longer required to observe the Fourth Commandment, to keep the seventh-day Sabbath holy. It is alleged that commandment-keeping, and particularly the Sabbath commandment, was "nailed to the cross." It is further claimed that Sunday is now the Christian "Day of Worship."

Is this claim true? Can such a teaching be proved from the inspired Word of God, the Holy Scriptures? The answer to these questions is, *no*. The truth is, these assumptions cannot be supported nor proved by the Scriptures! Are you willing to believe the Word of God, or accept the teachings of men as more important than the biblical teachings of God?

If you believe that Sunday worship is Christian, and that God's inspired Word teaches Sunday-keeping, then search the Scriptures. You will find that there is *not*…

1. One text that says that the Sabbath was ever changed from the seventh to the first day of the week.
2. One text where the first day of the week is ever called a holy day.
3. One text where we are told to keep the first day of the week.
4. One text that says that Jesus ever kept the first day.
5. One text where the first day is ever given a sacred title.
6. One text that tells us to keep the first day in honor of the resurrection of Jesus Christ.
7. One text that affirms that any of the apostles ever kept the first day as the Sabbath.
8. One text from any apostolic writings that authorizes Sunday observance as the Sabbath of God.
9. One text where it says it was customary for the Church to observe, or meet on, the first day of the week.
10. One text where we are told not to work on the first day of the week.
11. One text where any blessings are promised for observing Sunday.
12. One text where any punishment is threatened for working on Sunday.
13. One text that says the seventh day is not now God's Sabbath day.
14. One text where the apostles ever taught their converts to keep the first day of the week as a Sabbath.
15. One text that says the seventh day Sabbath is abolished.
16. One text where the first day is ever called the Lord's Day.
17. One text where the first day was ever appointed to be kept as the Lord's Day.
18. One text that says that the Father or the Son ever rested on the first day of the week.
19. One text that says that the first day of the week was ever sanctified and hallowed as a day of rest.
20. One text that says that Jesus, Paul or any of the apostles taught anyone to observe the first day of the week as the Sabbath.
21. One text that calls the seventh day the "Jewish Sabbath," or one text that calls Sunday the "Christian Sabbath."

22. One text authorizing anyone to abrogate, abolish or set aside God's Holy Sabbath and observe any other day.

(Adapted from the Bible Sabbath Association, Fairview, Oklahoma.)

Part 5

The Biblical Truth About Sabbath-Keeping

Sunday, the first day of the week, is almost universally observed by "professing Christians" today. Yet, the Bible teaches that the only day that is holy to God is the seventh day of the week, called the Sabbath day in the Word of God. The Roman calendar in use in the United States today shows that the seventh day of the week is Saturday. However, in Europe, their calendars have been changed to show Sunday as the seventh day of the week. In spite of that change, the true biblical Sabbath of God, which is holy to Him, is still Saturday. The Bible clearly commands: "REMEMBER THE SABBATH DAY TO KEEP IT HOLY. SIX DAYS SHALL YOU LABOR AND DO ALL YOUR WORK: BUT, THE SEVENTH-DAY IS THE SABBATH OF THE LORD YOUR GOD" (Exodus 20:8-11).

One of the most profound teachings revealed in the New Testament is that before Jesus Christ came in the flesh He was the Lord God of the Old Testament. As such, He was the CREATOR OF THE SABBATH DAY. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through Him, and not even one thing that was created came into being without Him" (John 1:1-3). THIS MEANS THAT JESUS CREATED THE SABBATH. When we read in the Old Testament the passages that pertain to the Sabbath, the One Who spoke those words was, in fact, the One who became Jesus Christ. Therefore, when Jesus Christ said that He was "Lord of the Sabbath," He said it with full authority because He created the Sabbath for mankind, for our good (Mark 2:27-28).

Here are some profound reasons from the Bible that show why we should be observing the seventh-day Sabbath as the weekly day of worship in our age today:

1. In the beginning God created the Sabbath day (Gen. 2:3).
2. God rested from His labors on the seventh day (Gen. 2:2).
3. The Sabbath was made for man, that is, for all mankind (Mark 2:27).
4. God blessed the seventh day because on it He rested from the work of His creation (Gen. 2:2; Ex. 20:11).
5. God blessed the seventh day and named it the Sabbath (Ex. 20:10-11).
6. God not only blessed the seventh day, He also sanctified it—that is, made it holy by His presence and declaration (Gen. 2:3).
7. There is no record in all the Scriptures that God ever removed His blessing from the Sabbath and placed it upon another day of the week.
8. God's people kept the Sabbath before the Ten Commandments were given at Mount Sinai (Ex. 16:22-26).
9. God ordained that man should keep the Sabbath (Ex. 20; Heb. 4:3-9).
10. God forbade work on the Sabbath even in harvest time (Ex. 34:21).
11. God promised the Gentiles, those of all nations, a blessing if they kept the Sabbath (Isa. 56:2).
12. God promised to bless anyone who keeps the Sabbath (Isa. 56:2).
13. Nowhere in the Bible do we find a command to observe any other day of the week as holy, as a substitute or replacement for the seventh-day Sabbath.
14. God calls the Sabbath His holy day (Ex. 20:10; Lev. 23:2 -3; Isa. 58:13; Mark 2:28).

15. The keeping of the Sabbaths, weekly and annually, is a sign between God and His people (Ex. 31:12-17).
16. Observance of the Sabbath shows our love and obedience towards God (Ex. 20:8-11; Deut. 5:12-15; Matt. 22:37-40).
17. Jesus kept and observed the Sabbath as a habit, which expressed His love and obedience toward God the Father (Luke 4:16).
18. Jesus Christ is Lord of the Sabbath; thus, the Sabbath is the true Lord's Day (Mark 2:28; Isa. 58:13; Matt. 12:8).
19. Jesus Christ recognized the Sabbath commandment as binding (Matt. 12:12; 5:17-18; Mark 3:4).
20. Jesus Christ kept His Father's commandments, which included the seventh-day Sabbath (John 15:10; 8:29; 5:46-47).
21. The Sabbath was observed at the time of the crucifixion (Luke 23:56).
22. Observance of the Sabbath was the practice years after the crucifixion (Acts 17:2).
23. Paul recognized and observed the Sabbath during his ministry (Acts 13:27).
24. Paul taught the Gentiles on the Sabbath day, at their own request (Acts 13:42).
25. Paul preached to an entire city on the Sabbath day (Acts 13:44).
26. Paul attended a prayer meeting on the Sabbath day, when no synagogue was available (Acts 16:13).
27. It was Paul's custom to preach Jesus Christ on the Sabbath day (Acts 17:2-3).
28. At Corinth, Paul preached every Sabbath for eighteen months (Acts 18:1-4, 11).
29. James recognized the Sabbath many years after Christ's resurrection (Acts 15:21).
30. The seventh-day Sabbath will be observed during the time of the Millennium (Isa. 66:23).
31. The apostle Paul made it clear that the day of rest, the seventh-day Sabbath, was to be observed as a holy day (Heb. 4:4).
32. The Sabbath day was never changed by Jesus Christ or the apostles to the first day of the week; neither was it changed by the resurrection of Christ. Christ rose at "THE END OF THE SABBATH," and not on Sunday (Matt. 28:1-6, *KJV*).
33. As part of our Christian requirements to receive eternal life, we must keep all of God's Ten Commandments (Matt. 19:17; Rev. 22:14).
34. The seventh-day Sabbath remains as the day of rest for God's people (Heb. 4:9).
35. Jesus warned that in the end time, as the Great Tribulation was beginning, we should not flee on the Sabbath (Matt. 24:20).
36. The sign of God's people in the end time is that they would be keeping the commandments of God (Rev. 12:17; 14:12).

Part 6

Catholic and Protestant Admissions About Sabbath/Sunday

Catholic Admissions

The Roman Catholic Church understands that the Bible specifically sanctifies the seventh-day Sabbath. Furthermore, it also admits and boasts that the establishment of Sunday worship is based solely on the ecclesiastical authority of the Roman Catholic Church and not on the authority of the Scriptures. Here are some wellknown statements made by Catholic officials in regard to the seventh -day Sabbath and the first day of the week, Sunday:

"You may read the Bible from Genesis to Revelation, and you will not find a single line authorizing the sanctification of Sunday. The Scriptures enforce the religious observance of Saturday, a day which we never sanctify" (Cardinal Gibbon, *Faith of Our Fathers*, 1892, p. 111).

"Sunday is a Catholic institution, and its claims to observance can be defended only on Catholic principles…. From the beginning to the end of Scripture, there is not a single passage that warrants the transfer of weekly public worship from the last day of the week to the first" (*Catholic Press*, Sydney, Australia; August 25, 1900).

"The festival of Sunday, like all other festivals, was always only a human ordinance, and it was from the intentions of the apostles to establish a divine command in this respect, from them, and from the early apostolic church, to transfer the laws of the Sabbath to Sunday. Perhaps at the end of the second century a false application of this kind had begun to take place, for men appear by that time to have considered laboring on Sunday as a sin" (*Church History*, Neander; Rose's Translation, p. 186).

The Roman Catholic Church boasts that by its authority alone they changed the day of worship from the Sabbath to Sunday. "Question: Which is the Sabbath day? Answer: Saturday is the Sabbath day. Question: Why do we worship [on] Sunday instead of Saturday? Answer: We observe Sunday instead of Saturday because the Catholic Church, in the Council of Laodicea (AD 336), transferred the solemnity from Saturday to Sunday. Question: Have you a way of proving that the [Roman Catholic] Church has the power to institute festivals of precept? Answer: Had she no such power, she should not have done that in which all modern religions 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, a change for which there is no Scriptural authority" (*Doctrinal Catechism*, p. 147 and *The Convert's Catechism of Catholic Doctrine*, p 50, 1927 edition).

In the Bible, God tells us that He and He alone is the highest authority in the universe and on earth. The apostle Paul wrote that "at the name of Jesus every knee should bow of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of the Father" (Phil. 2:10-11, *KJV*). However, the Catholic Church states that it is above the Bible: "Sunday is the mark of authority. The church is above the Bible, and this transference of Sabbath observance [to Sunday] is proof of that fact" (*Catholic Record*, London, Sept. 1, 1923). Again, this claim of such authority is made: "Of course the Catholic Church claims that the change [to Sunday] was her act…. And that act is a mark of her ecclesiastical authority in religious things" (H. F. Thomas, Chancellor of Cardinal Gibbons).

Since God never gave that authority to any man or any church, the Catholic Church has taken that authority to herself. Not only does the Catholic Church claim such authority, they also boast that they have made the whole world bow to her authority. Notice: "My brethren, look about you upon the various

wrangling sects and denominations. Show me one that claims or possesses the power to make laws binding on the conscience. There is but one on the face of the earth—the Catholic Church, that has the power upon the conscience, binding upon God, binding upon the pain of hell fire. Take, for instance, the day we celebrate— Sunday. What right have the Protestant churches to observe that day? None whatsoever. You say it is to obey the commandment, 'Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy.' But Sunday is not the Sabbath according to the Bible and the record of time.

"Everyone knows that Sunday is the first day of the week, while Saturday is the seventh day, and the Sabbath, the day consecrated as a day of rest. It is so recognized in all civilized nations. I have repeatedly offered $1,000 to anyone who will furnish any proof from the Bible that Sunday is the day we are bound to keep, and no one has called for the money. If any person in this town will show any scripture for it, I will tomorrow evening publicly acknowledge it and thank him for it. It was the Holy Catholic Church that changed the day of rest from Saturday to Sunday, the first day of the week. And it not only compelled all to keep Sunday, but at the Council of Laodicea, AD 364, anathematized those who kept the Sabbath and urged all persons to labor on the seventh day under penalty of anathema.

"Which church does the whole civilized world obey? Protestants call us every horrible name they can think of—anti-Christ, the scarlet colored beast, Babylon, etc, and at the same time profess great reverence for the Bible, and yet by their solemn act of keeping Sunday they acknowledge the power of the Catholic Church. The Bible says: 'Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy.' But the Catholic Church says, 'No, keep the first day of the week' and the whole world bows in obedience" (From a lecture by Father T. Enright, Roman Catholic Priest, one-time president of Redemption Father's College in Kansas City, Missouri; published in the *Industrial American*, Harlan, Iowa, December 19, 1889).

Protestant Admissions

The Protestant world also understands that the seventh-day Sabbath is the only day of weekly observance commanded in the Scriptures. Yet, they cling to Sunday observance, which the Catholic Church instituted solely on human authority. As a result, Protestants are following the authority of the Roman Catholic Church for Sunday worship, while they knowingly reject the seventh-day Sabbath of God. As the Catholic Church boasts, Protestants bow to the authority of Rome, beginning with Martin Luther:

"Even such is the observance of the Lord's day, of Easter, of Pentecost, and the like holy days, and rites. For they [who] judge that, by the authority of the Church, the observing of Sunday instead of the Sabbath day was ordained as a thing necessary to do, greatly err. The Scripture permits and grants that the keeping of the Sabbath day is now free; for it teaches that the ceremonies of Moses' law, since the revelation of the gospel, are not necessary. And yet, because it was needful to ordain a certain day, it appears that the church did appoint Sunday, which day, as it appears, pleased them rather than the Sabbath day, even for this cause, that men might have an example of Christian liberty, and might know that the keeping and observance of either Saturday, or any other day, is not necessary" (*Augsburg Confessions*, Article 15, New York, 1850).

"Is there no express commandment for observing the first day of the week as [the] Sabbath, instead of the seventh day? None whatsoever. Neither Christ, nor His apostles, nor the first Christians celebrated the first day of the week instead of the seventh [day] as the Sabbath" (*New York Weekly Tribune*, May 24, 1900).

"The Scriptures nowhere call the first day of the week the Sabbath. There is no scriptural authority for so doing, nor of course any scriptural obligation" (*The Baptist Watchman*).

"The observation of the first instead of the seventh day rests on the testimony of the church, and the church alone" (*Hobort Church News*, July 2, 1894; Episcopalian).

The overwhelming evidence of the Bible and of history proves that the seventh-day Sabbath—

Saturday—is the true day of rest and worship. God puts His presence into the Sabbath day. He fellowships with His people on that day, as well as on the annual holy days.

Now that you have this knowledge, God holds you responsible. What will you do? Jesus Christ commands, “Repent and believe the Gospel.” Will you repent of sin and turn to God, or will you continue in your sins? Your eternal life is at stake. *Turn to God and live!*