

## Is Sunday the Christian Sabbath?

Is Sunday, the first day of the week, the Christian Sabbath? Did it replace the seventh day (Saturday) as the rest day of **Yahweh the Almighty God of Israel**? Has the fourth of the Ten Commandments as recorded in [Exodus 20:8-11](#) been changed or done away with? If all the praiseworthy characters mentioned in the Bible - including Yeshua and His disciples - kept the seventh day Sabbath, then why are the majority of Christians keeping Sunday?

These and similar questions are being asked today by believers all over the globe and the answers to them fall into three distinct categories.

1. *"The days of the week are all alike," say some believers, "so there is no need to become emotionally polarized about any particular one. Saturday, Sunday or even Friday for that matter, they are all the same to God. The important thing is to **keep yourself holy every day of the week and forget about a weekly Sabbath, because it no longer exists.** The Sabbath commandment has been fulfilled, superseded, done away with and nailed to the cross. Christians meet for worship on Sunday, not because it is the Sabbath of the ten Commandments, but because it is convenient. The law has been fulfilled by Jesus Christ and is now obsolete: so there is no longer a Sabbath commandment to observe. It is the Spirit that matters, not the day of the week on which you choose to rest."*
2. *"The law of God still stands" say others "but Sunday, the first day of the week, is the new Christian Sabbath. It commemorates the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is the Lord's Day and has replaced the seventh-day Sabbath by the authority of the inspired Apostles and, therefore, by Christ himself. Christians are certainly under obligation to observe it."*
3. *"Sunday is not the Sabbath day at all," says a third group. "The Almighty's Sabbath, according to His unalterable Ten Commandments ([Exodus 20:8-11](#), [Matthew 5:17-18](#)) is the seventh day of the week, the day commonly known as Saturday. You may read the Bible from Genesis to Revelation and you will not find a single verse authorising the observance of Sunday. The true weekly Sabbath of Yahweh, the Almighty God of Israel was, is, and ever will be, the seventh day of the week."*

Thus the arguments rage back and forth across the globe and are even now stirring the minds of many in your area. We trust that this article will settle the matter for you once and for all, and prepare you for the days ahead when this very issue concerning the Almighty's Sabbath becomes a deciding point for all the inhabitants of the earth.

## Is Sunday the Christian Sabbath?

Before we present our answer it is obvious that we should first settle the issue of whether or not a Sabbath day exists. In other words, does the Almighty still want

mankind to observe a Sabbath day - or are all the days of the week alike?

The answer to that question is: Yahweh's Sabbath still exists and He most certainly wants people to observe it. The following verses will prove that the Sabbath commandment was not done away with at the cross, but is still on the statute books of heaven.

**The First Proof Text is:**

*Matthew 24:20 "But pray that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the Sabbath day."*

In this passage Yeshua advised His followers to request his Father to so arrange circumstances for the early believers that Sabbath observance would be made easier for them at the time of Jerusalem's capture; an event which took place some **40 years after the crucifixion**. Now pause and think about that advice: If the Sabbath commandment was scheduled for cancellation at the cross - as some suppose - then why did Yeshua give his disciples this instruction about keeping the Sabbath? What was the point in advising them to pray to the Father about a commandment that would not be in existence in AD 70?

The answer is perfectly obvious: The Sabbath commandment was not scheduled for cancellation at the cross; it was to continue. The Messiah knew this, and that is why He advised his followers, who were mostly Israelites at that time, to pray to God to arrange a weekday flight from Jerusalem. They would not then be exposed to the temptation of breaking the Sabbath commandment in their haste to get away from the besieged city.

The presence of this text is irrefutable evidence that the Messiah had absolutely no intention of doing away with the Sabbath commandment; a fact which he had previously pointed out in the Sermon on the Mount when he said:

*Matthew 5:16-17 Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, **one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.***

**The Second Proof Text is:**

*Hebrews 4:9-11 "There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God. For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own work as God did from his. **Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief.**"*

In this passage, written about AD66, believers are reminded that the weekly Sabbath **remains**, and that all of us should rest a week's work just as the Almighty did after the creation of the world.

*Genesis 2:1-3 "Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. And on the seventh day God ended his work which He had*

*made; and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had made. And God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it: because that in it He had rested from all His work which God created and made."*

Sabbath keeping, in other words, is imitating the Almighty: doing in our small way what He did at Eden in order that we may **enter that great spiritual REST OF GOD of which the weekly Sabbath is but a token**. The writer of Hebrews goes on to warn the early believers that some rebellious believers risk being **lost** by copying the example of disobedience. Isn't that a sobering warning to all who would violate the Sabbath commandment? We think it is.

**The Third Proof Text is:**

*Isaiah 66:22-23 "For as the new heaven and the new earth, which I shall make, shall remain before me, saith the Lord, so shall your seed and your name remain. And it shall come to pass, that from one moon to another, and from one Sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before me, saith the Lord."*

This passage tells of the future - our future - when **Yahweh**, the Holy One of Israel will re-create the universe. ([Revelation 21:1](#)) And on that new earth **all flesh (all of earth's redeemed host) will observe the weekly Sabbath**. The above text proves conclusively that the Sabbath of the Almighty will last throughout eternity, from generation to generation - for **ALL TIME**. ([Exodus 31:12-18](#))

The argument that the weekly Sabbath was done away with is, therefore, groundless and too feeble to consider any further. The question remaining to be answered, however, is:

**Is Sunday the Christian Sabbath, and did it replace the seventh day of the week as the rest day of the Almighty God?**

To answer this question we will do two things:

1. First find in the Bible texts that specifically mention the first day of the week.
2. And then prayerfully examine those verses paying particular attention to see if any change of the Sabbath day took place.

By doing this we will avoid that vain and perilous pastime of substituting the traditions of men for the commandments of God. ([Matthew 15:9](#))

In the Scriptures the days of the week are not named, but numbered from one to seven. The only exception is the seventh day of the week which is called the **Sabbath**. Consequently, the day we all know as Sunday is referred to in the Bible as the "**first day of the week**." And so in our search to answer the question about Sunday being the Christian Sabbath, we will need to examine every Bible verse in which the "**first day of the week**" is mentioned.

To our knowledge there are only nine such texts, one in the Old Testament and eight

in the New. We will quote them in turn.

3. *"And God said, let there be light: and there was light. And God saw that it was good: and God divided the light from darkness. And God called the light day and the darkness He called night. And the evening and the morning were the **first day**."*(Genesis 1:3-5)

This text tells of what God did on the first day of the creation week. It says nothing about the Sabbath one way or the other, so we will pass it over without further comment.

The following five verses concern the Sunday after Messiah's crucifixion. We will list and comment on them as a group, because they are separate accounts of the same event.

4. *"**In the end of the Sabbath**, as it began to dawn toward the **first day of the week**, came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the sepulchre."* (Matthew 28:1)
5. *"**And when the Sabbath was passed**, Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of James, and Salome had brought sweet spices, that they might come and anoint Him. And very early in the morning, the **first day of the week**, they came unto the sepulchre."* (Mark 16: 1-2)
6. *"Now when Yeshua was risen early the **first day of the week** he appeared first to Mary Magdalene out of whom he cast seven devils."* (Mark 16:9)
7. *"Now upon the **first day of the week**, very early in the morning, they came unto the sepulchre bringing the spices which they had prepared, and certain others with them."*(Luke 24:1)
8. *"The **first day of the week** cometh Mary Magdalene early, when it was yet dark, unto the sepulchre, and seeth the stone taken away from the sepulchre."* (John 20:1)

These five texts concern events that took place on the morning when Mary Magdalene and some others brought spices to anoint the body of the Messiah. It was the morning of the **first day of the week - Sunday morning!**

What do the Gospel writers tell us? They tell us this: **that when the first day of the week began, the Sabbath had ended - the Sabbath was past.** In other words, the Sabbath day according to the Gospel writers, who were writing some 30 and more years after the resurrection, was still the seventh day of the week - the day that went before Sunday the first day of the week.

Surely these Gospel writers, who were mostly Jews, would have mentioned a change of the Sabbath day had it occurred? But there is no mention of a change, not a text, nor a word, not even a hint or suggestion.

Why?

Because there had been no change. The Sabbath day, as far as Matthew, Mark, Luke and John were concerned, was still the seventh day of the week, the day that

preceded the first day.

Let us now move on to the next text.

9. *"Then the same day at evening, being the **first day of the week**, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Yeshua and stood in the midst and saith unto them, ☐Peace be unto you."* (John 20:19)

This meeting took place on the Sunday evening after the resurrection. The disciples were assembled, we are told, *"for fear of the Jews."*

Some, in a frantic bid to find Scriptural support for Sunday observance, use this text as though it proved that the Messiah sanctified Sunday by visiting the disciples on it, and that this meeting was called to celebrate the resurrection.

This, however, was not the case. The disciples met, we are plainly told *"for fear of the Jews."* In fact, some of them didn't even believe the Messiah had risen. (Mark 16:11-14, Luke 24:36-38) We would be deluding ourselves if we tried to classify this meeting as the inauguration of a new Sabbath day. The Sabbath is not even mentioned in this verse.

10. *"And upon the **first day of the week**, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow, and continued his speech until midnight."* (Acts 20:7)

This text is also put forward as "proof" of Sunday sacredness. "Here is evidence," some exclaim, "that the early believers met on a Sunday and that a Communion Service was held!"

Let us examine this claim.

It is essential to read the chapter through to get a complete picture of the events. On doing this the following points will emerge.

11. The meeting was held in the **evening of the first day of the week** and continued till midnight or a little later. That is, it either began on Saturday evening and finished in the early hours of Sunday morning; or it began on Sunday evening and finished in the early hours of Monday morning. Both these methods of reckoning the *"evening of a day"* are to be found in the Scriptures. (Genesis 1 and John 20:19)
12. The *"breaking of bread"* took place **after midnight**. (verse 11)
13. Paul and his companions, after bidding farewell to their host, then walked from Traos to Assos (verse 13) - **a distance of some 18 miles**.

If this was a Saturday night meeting, then a 18 mile walk on the following day (Sunday), after staying up most of the night, was hardly the way for a converted Pharisee like Paul to keep the new Sabbath. Eighteen miles on foot, over rough country roads, is no way to keep a Sabbath you may be sure; and it is quite

unthinkable that Paul, a **life-long Sabbath keeper**, would have done this.

If on the other hand, this was a Sunday night meeting, then the "**breaking of the bread**" took place in the early hours of Monday morning: which, once again, is no way to celebrate a Sunday Sabbath day.

Besides, to "*break bread*" does not necessarily mean that a communion service was held. The Master "*broke bread*" on several occasions and fed thousands of people. (Matthew 14 and John 6) The early believers also "*broke bread daily from house to house.*" (Acts 2:46) It would be forcing the issue to suggest that at all these occasions communion services were held. The term "**breaking bread**" was a common expression in those days for **having a meal**, and that is what is meant in Acts 20. After the farewell, late night meeting, Paul and his host had a meal together and then Paul and his companions set off on foot to Assos. Most certainly this text does not prove Sunday sacredness.

14. *"Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the congregations of Galatia, even so do ye. Upon the **first day of the week** let every one of you **lay by him in store** as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come. And when I come, whomsoever ye shall approve by your letters, them will I send to bring your liberality unto Jerusalem."* (1 Corinthians 16:1-3)

Paul is here instructing believers in Corinth to privately set aside some money for the famine stricken brethren in Jerusalem. The Greek word **thesaurizon** means "treasuring or storing up." It has been correctly rendered "*lay by him in store.*" The Greek lexicon of Greenfield translates the Greek here as, "**with one's self**", i.e. **at home**. And this fact totally overthrows the idea that this text proves that a church meeting on a Sunday is being referred to. If anything it indicates that the Corinthian believers did **not** meet on the first day of the week, but were in this instance being appealed to by Paul to do some **private saving at home**. Then at Paul's coming a general "gathering" (collection of money) would not be necessary. The already collected funds could be totaled and taken by trustworthy brethren to Jerusalem to help the believers there. The Sabbath day is not even mentioned in this verse.

And that, surprisingly enough, completes our survey of the texts in the Bible which mention the first day of the week. The reader will have noticed that **in not a single instance** has a change of the Sabbath day been mentioned or even hinted at. On the contrary the Gospel writers - though they were writing decades after the resurrection - **still referred to the seventh day of the week as THE SABBATH.**

And why not?

The seventh day of the week had been the Sabbath since the creation of the world. It was the day **Yahweh** the Almighty God of Israel blessed and sanctified (set apart for sacred use) at Eden.

*Genesis 2:2-3 "And on the seventh day God ended His work which He had made: and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had made. **And God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it: because***

*that in it He rested from all His work which God created and made."*

The seventh day of the week continued to be the Sabbath when some 2500 years later Israel wandered in the wilderness for 40 years; for Scripture tells of the special miracle Yahweh did each seventh day to identify it from other weekdays.

*Exodus 16:25-28 "Then said Moses, 'Eat this today, for today is a Sabbath for the Eternal; you will not find any of the food of the fields today. Gather it for six day, **but on the seventh day, on the Sabbath, there shall be none.**' And on the seventh day when some of the people did go out to gather it, they found none. The Eternal said to Moses, 'How long will your people refuse to obey my order and rules?'" (Moffatt Bible)*

The seventh day of the week was the Sabbath when the Messiah walked on earth; for we read that it was his custom to go to the synagogue each Sabbath day.

*Luke 4:16 "And he came to Nazareth, where he was brought up: and, **as his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day.**"*

The seventh day was the Sabbath the Apostle Paul and the early believers kept long after the resurrection of the Messiah.

*Acts 17:2 "And Paul, **as his manner was, went in unto them and three Sabbath days** reasoned with them out of the Scriptures."*

Also, as mentioned previously, the seventh day was the Sabbath which the Messiah advised his followers (mostly Jews at that time) to prayerfully remember at the fall of Jerusalem; an event which took place some **40 years after the crucifixion!** (Matthew 24:20)

And then there is that staggering prophecy in [Isaiah 66:23](#) which tells of **the Sabbath being observed by ALL MANKIND THROUGHOUT ETERNITY.**

That, briefly, is the Scriptural position concerning the first and the seventh days of the week. The reader will have noticed that in not a single instance in the first day (Sunday) called **the Sabbath**. In Holy writ that sacred title belongs to the seventh day of the week and the spiritual realities it foreshadows.

"How then," you may well ask, "did Sunday observance begin? And why are millions of believers still endeavoring to keep it? If Sunday is not the Sabbath of the Almighty God, then how did the colossal error creep into the church?"

The answer may well astonish you, but here it is.

**Sunday observance is a product of paganism.** It found its way into the Christian church many years after the original Apostles died. At that time, Sunday was the rest day of the pagan Roman Empire in which the popular religion was **Mithraism, a form of sun-worship**. In the course of time, (during the second, third and fourth centuries) multitudes of sun-worshippers joined the church. And when the Emperor Constantine ruled (AD 306-337) it became quite fashionable to follow his example

and become a Christian. Sad to say, however, most of the multitude who joined the church weren't truly converted. They had little or no love for the truth as taught in the Bible, and they naturally didn't want to give up their pagan ways - **and days** - for anything which was at variance with their cherished heathen traditions. Besides, these unconverted members in the church had soon outnumbered the faithful. This gave them the power to implement their wishes and so the popular **traditions of paganism** were brought into the church and the **truths of the Most High** were slowly pushed aside. The church leaders - many of whom were themselves devoid of the Spirit of God - reasoned, that in order to appease and keep their congregations, the traditions of heathenism should be "christianised," given sacred titles and accepted into Christian worship. Thus it was that Sunday - the **venerable day of the Sun God** - along with a host of other pagan practices, too numerous to deal with in this article, was adopted by the fallen church and hailed as the **New Christian Sabbath - the LORD'S DAY!**

**Sunday observance, in short is an "heirloom from heathenism," a pagan tradition which unlawfully entered the Christian Church centuries after the early Apostles died. It has absolutely no Scriptural authority whatsoever!**

The following quotations are given to show how true this verdict is.

15. *"Unquestionably the first law, either ecclesiastical or civil, by which the sabbatical observance of that day is known to have been ordained, is the edict of Constantine. 321 AD." (Chambers Encyclopedia 1882 ed. Vol. VIII, p.401, art. "Sabbath")*
16. *"You may read the Bible from Genesis to Revelation, and you will not find a single line authorising the sanctification of Sunday. The Scriptures enforce the religious observance of Saturday, a day which we never sanctify." (Cardinal Gibbons (Catholic) in his book: The faith of our Fathers, page 111)*
17. *"Question - "Which day is the Sabbath day?"  
Answer - "Saturday is the Sabbath day."  
Question - "Why do we observe Sunday instead of Saturday?"  
Answer - "We observe Sunday instead of Saturday because the Catholic Church in the Council of Laodicea (AD 336) transferred the solemnity from Saturday to Sunday." (The Convert's Catechism of Catholic Doctrine. Second edition, page 50)*
18. *"Is there any command in the New Testament to change the day of weekly rest from Saturday to Sunday? - **None.**" (Manual of Christian Doctrine - (Protestant Episcopal) page 127)*
19. *"It is quite clear that however rigidly or devoutly we may spend Sunday, we are not keeping the Sabbath ... The Sabbath was founded on a specific, divine command. We can plead no such command for the obligation to observe Sunday. **There is not a single sentence in the New Testament to***

*suggest that we incur any penalty by violating the supposed sanctity of Sunday.*" (Dr R W Dale (Congregationalist) in his book Ten Commandments, page 127-129)

20. *"The observance of the Lord's Day (Sunday) is founded, not on any command of God, but on the authority of the Church."* (Augsburg Confession of Faith (Lutheran))
21. *"Where we are told in Scripture to keep the first day at all? We are commanded to keep the seventh; but we are nowhere commanded to keep the first day ... The reason why we keep the first day of the week holy instead of the seventh is for the same reason that we observe many other things, not because the Bible, but the church has enjoined it."* (Rev. Isaac Williams (Church of England) in his Plain sermons on the Catechism. Volume 1, pp. 334-336)
22. *"There was and is a command to keep holy the Sabbath day: but the Sabbath day was not Sunday. It will be said, however, and with some show of triumph, that the Sabbath was transferred from the seventh to the first day of the week, with all its duties, privileges and sanctions. Earnestly desiring information on this subject, which I have studied for many years, I ask: Where can the record of such a transaction be found? Not in the New Testament, absolutely not. There is no Scriptural evidence of the change of the Sabbath institution from the seventh to the first day of the week."* (Dr Edward T Hiscox, author of the Baptist Manual)

In his magnificent book **From Sabbath to Sunday** Carlyle B Haynes (Adventist) draws this inspired conclusion on page 34:

23. *"After a careful examination of the Bible, of history, both civil and ecclesiastical, of theological writings, commentaries, church manuals, catechisms and the candid admissions of Sunday observers, we are compelled to conclude that **there is no authority in the Holy Scriptures for the observance of Sunday**, no authority given to man to make such a change from the seventh to the first day, no divine sanction given the change now that man has made it; that this substitution of a false Sabbath for the true Sabbath of the Lord was entirely the work of an antichrist movement which adopted the observance of a purely pagan day and presumptuously established it in the Christian Church; and that this observance has no binding obligation upon Christian believers, but should be instantly discarded as a matter of practice, and the true Sabbath of God restored to its rightful place both in the hearts of His people and in the practice of His church."*

What are you going to do about Sunday - which is an ordinary work-day posing as the Sabbath of the Almighty? And, more importantly, what are you now going to do about the seventh day of the week, the Sabbath of the Almighty God? Bear in mind that the seventh day of the week was, is and ever will be the True Sabbath Day.

The fourth commandment is as follows:

Exodus 20:8-11 8: Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. 9: Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work: 10: **But the seventh day is the sabbath of the LORD thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates:** 11: For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it.