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Our Amazingly Jewish Heritage



Part 46 (000820PM)

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Please turn with me to [Romans 14:5](#). It is a real challenge to divide rightly the Word when good and godly men have come down on every side of the Sabbath concept. Just a brief reading in this realm shows how wondrous have been the lives, ministries, and writings of these great men of God and teachers of His Word.

OUR AMAZINGLY JEWISH HERITAGE

We are looking at a city made by God called the New JERUSALEM. It has 12 Gates named after the 12 JEWISH Apostles, There are 12 Foundations named after the 12 Tribes of ISRAEL, God sits on a hill called ZION, And we are heading to a Feast with ABRAHAM, ISAAC and JACOB already SEATED!

The challenge is this, we should not forget^[1][1] that:

- ✓ We serve the King of the Jews.
- ✓ We are members of a church founded by Jewish leaders; our highest authority is a Jewish Bible.
- ✓ Our God is Jewish for "Salvation is of the Jews" is what no less than God in human flesh, our Lord Jesus said in [John 4:22](#).
- ✓ All of our benefits are derivative from the Abrahamic covenant. We are grafted in the true olive tree, from the root of Abraham as Romans 11 exhaustively explains.

While we have been freed from the law, we still can enjoy the benefits of creation. So the Sabbath is intended as a time of devotion, not a subjection to burdensome rules. It is for the benefit of man, to be taken advantage of. As a demonstration of God's love, and a partaking of His blessing, the seventh day apparently has not been permanently set aside. We find it in the Millennium (Ezekiel 40-48) and in the New Heavens and Earth (Isaiah 66).

In our culture we enjoy two free days each week, in any case. The first-day worship is an opportunity to follow the example of the New Testament Church and honor Christ's resurrection. The seventh-day Sabbath is also still available to us as an opportunity, yet not under the law:

One man esteemeth one day above another; another esteemeth every day alike. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind. - [Romans 14:5](#).

Now, before we go to [Mark 2:23-28](#) this evening, look with me please at [Mark 3:1](#). What a blessing it must have been for Christ and the apostles as they stopped in for synagogue or temple worship services. The following ^[2][2] was the order of the Psalms in the daily service of the temple.

1. Sunday: On the first day of the week they sang Psalm 24, "The earth is the Lords," etc., in commemoration of the first day of creation, when "God possessed the world, and ruled in it."
2. Monday: On the second day they sang Psalm 48, "Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised," etc., because on the second day of creation "the Lord divided His works, and reigned over them."

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- Tuesday: On the third day they sang Psalm 82, "God standeth in the congregation of the mighty," etc., "because on that day the earth appeared, on which are the Judge and the judged."
- Wednesday: On the fourth day Psalm 94 was sung, "O Lord God, to whom vengeance belongeth," etc., "because on the fourth day God made the sun, moon, and stars, and will be avenged on those that worship them."
- Thursday: On the fifth day they sang Psalm 81, "Sing aloud unto God our strength," etc., "because of the variety of creatures made that day to praise His name."
- Friday: On the sixth day Psalm 93 was sung, "The Lord reigneth," etc., "because on that day God finished His works and made man, and the Lord ruled over all His works."
- Saturday: Lastly, on the Sabbath they sang Psalm 92, "It is a good thing to give thanks unto the Lord," etc., "because the Sabbath was symbolical of the millennial kingdom at the end of the six thousand years dispensation, when the Lord would reign over all, and His glory and service fill the earth with thanksgiving."

The seven [3][3] feasts are an elegant demonstration of God's prophetic timetable. Briefly, our Lord was crucified on Passover, buried on Unleavened Bread, raised on First Fruits, and sent the Holy Spirit on Pentecost. Those are the feasts we have seen fulfilled. Evidently in up-coming days He will hold the Rapture on the Feast of Trumpets and return in His Second Coming on the Day of Atonement. Finally, the triumphant Feast of Tabernacles will characterize the Kingdom itself.

God's redemptive New Testament timetable is pictured in the feasts of Leviticus 23.

The first great feast mentioned in that chapter is Passover. The killing of the Passover lamb pictured the death of Jesus Christ, the ultimate Passover Lamb (1 Cor. 5:7).

A second feast was the Feast of Unleavened Bread, celebrated on the day after Passover. During that feast, an offering of the first fruits of the grain harvest was made. Leviticus 23:15 commands that offering to be made on the day after the Sabbath. The Sadducees and Pharisees differed on what that Sabbath was. The Sadducees interpreted it as the weekly Sabbath, and hence the grain offering would always be on a Sunday. The Pharisees interpreted the Sabbath as the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread. According to that interpretation, the grain offering would always fall on the same day of the month but not the same day of the week. Until the destruction of the Temple in A.D. 70, the Sadducees' interpretation was normative for Judaism (F. F. Bruce, *The Book of the Acts* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1971], 53 n. 3). Hence, the day the first fruits were offered would have been on Sunday. That provides an apt picture of the Lord Jesus Christ's resurrection as the "first fruits of those who are asleep" (1 Cor. 15:20).

Fifty days after the first Sunday following Passover, the Feast of Pentecost was celebrated (Lev. 23:15ff.). At Pentecost another offering of first fruits was made (Lev. 23:20). Completing the cycle of the typical fulfillment of the feasts, the Spirit came on Pentecost as the first fruits of the believers' inheritance (cf. 2 Cor. 5:5; Eph. 1:13-14). Further, those gathered into the church on that day were the first fruits of the full harvest of believers to come. God sent the Spirit on Pentecost, then, following the pattern of Leviticus 23, not in response to any activity of men. [4][4]

The weekly Sabbath [5][5]: God orders our times (Lev. 23:1-3). The weekly Sabbath wasn't one of the annual feasts (Ex. 20:8-11), but it was an important day for the Jewish people, and they were expected to honor it. To dishonor it meant death (Num. 15:32-36). God gave the Sabbath to Israel for several reasons.

- For one thing, it provided needed rest and refreshment for the people, the farm animals, and the land. ("Sabbath" comes from a Hebrew word that means "to rest, to cease from labor.") Based on Genesis 2:1-3, the weekly Sabbath reminded the Jews that Jehovah God was the Creator and they were but stewards of His generous gifts.
- The Lord also ordained Sabbath years and the Year of Jubilee to keep the Jews from exploiting the land and impoverishing it (Lev. 25). God's tender concern for His creation is seen in the Sabbath laws.
- The Sabbath was also a special sign between God and His covenant people (Ex. 31:12-17). Other peoples might work on the seventh day and treat it like any other day, but the Israelites rested on the seventh day and thereby gave witness that they belonged to the Lord (Neh. 13:15-22; Isa. 58:13-14). Nehemiah made it clear that the Sabbath law wasn't given to Israel until they arrived at Sinai (Neh. 9:13-14), while Psalm 147:19-20 indicates that the law was never given to the Gentile nations. Although believers today aren't commanded to "remember the Sabbath Day" (Rom. 14:1ff; Col. 2:16-17), the principle of resting one day in seven is a good one.

Turn to Mark 2:23-28 as we look at the Biblical teaching on the Sabbath. Jesus clearly sets the tone for the controversies of the day and speaks to us to this day on the Sabbath.

- First, SABBATH PURPOSES: What did Jesus say about the Sabbath? As Lord of Sabbath He said one thing: The Sabbath was made for man to worship God. It was not a prison, a straight jacket, a death squad to hunt Sabbath breakers; no, it was a delightful offer of spiritual communion with God.
- Second, SABBATH PROMISES: Do we need to rest and to cease from our wearying schedules? Yes, and that is what this Old Testament picture teaches us New Testament saints! God offers rest!
- Third, SABBATH LAWS: Should we really meet on Sunday or on the Sabbath Day, which is Saturday?
- Fourth, SABBATH BLESSINGS: How do we apply all this to our lives? How do we cultivate a rest, a cessation from weariness in our lives? How do we make worship of the Lord special on our Day of Gathering, the Lord's Day?
- Fifth, SABBATH THIEVES: What takes away the blessings and promises of the rest God offers? This morning we start this examination of what robs us of the blessings of a personal Sabbath rest.
- Sixth, SABBATH PLANS: What are some simply wonderful plans we can make to heighten our worship, our communion with God? Some real blessings can come with some small changes and some preparations.
- Seventh, SABBATH PICTURES: What are the illustrations that Jesus, His apostles, and all the Old Testament saints used to show the plan of God? God's holidays, the feasts, and each is a wonderful picture and pathway to deepening our devotion to Jesus..
- Finally, SABBATH REST: What does God want more than anything? Our minds. What is the key to our spiritual success? A mind that rests upon and is fixed upon the Lord

Jesus actually never broke the Sabbath by any of His or His disciples' actions. And He declared as Lord of the Sabbath, it was His place and purpose to supercede and fulfill the Sabbath by the institution of the Lord's Day. This was accepted and followed by the early church and attested to in the New Testament.

So why do we worship and meet on Sunday? In six specific ways we see this supercession of Sunday replacing Saturday:

1. Christ's resurrection was on the 1st day or Sunday in [Matthew 28:1](#); [Mark 16:1](#); [Luke 24:1](#); and [John 20:1](#).
2. Christ's meeting with and revelation to the Emmaus Road disciples in [Luke 24:13-35](#) was on the 1st day or Sunday.
3. Christ's confirmation of Thomas also took place a week following the 1st Lord's Day on the 1st day or Sunday in [John 20:19, 26](#).
4. Christ's promised coming of the Holy Spirit most likely fell on a 1st day of the week or Sunday if we check the Temple [6] [6] chronology held by the Sadducees.
5. Christ's Church chose to meet on the 1st day or Sunday in [Acts 20:7](#) for breaking of bread and in [I Corinthians 16:2](#) for collections to be taken up. And these seem to be regularly occurring.
6. Christ's meeting with John on Patmos was a special time when the 1st day or Sunday was called the Lord's Day in [Revelation 1:10](#).

As we page through the history of the Church, we find an almost complete ignoring of any references to the Sabbath day. By the time of the Reformation the reformers were universal in their stated belief that the Lord's Day was not the same as the Sabbath day and that the Sabbath law had been superceded by the Lord's Day.

However, latter generations of one branch of the reformed movement changed all that. In the 1648 Westminster Confession the English Puritans wrongly identified the Sabbath day as Sunday and called it the Christian Sabbath. This view has no support from God's Word just from the Puritan theologians. Although there are many similarities between the Sabbath and the Lord's Day in the weekly nature of each, the commemoration of God's work in the Passover ([Deuteronomy 5:15](#)) and Christ's resurrection, and the emphasis each have upon worship, the similarities end there. Just as we are bound by God's Word to regular, corporate worship ([Hebrews 10:24-25](#)), we are not commanded to rest like the Old Testament Sabbath demanded. Rest for us in this Age of Grace is a humble, prayerful choice, which God says will bring many precious rewards. God offers us rest, renewal, refreshment, and refocus - He doesn't force it upon us!

After the Resurrection the Sabbath is only mentioned three times and then only in reference to the Jews' meeting at synagogues. See [Mark 2:27](#)

1 WORSHIP THE RISEN CHRIST

The New Testament Church picked Sunday as the day of worship. [Acts 2:46](#) – Everyday but this was to honor Christ's resurrection – [Matthew 28:1](#); [Mark 16:2](#); [Luke 24:1](#); [John 20:1,19](#);

Note Specifically:

[Acts 20:7](#) first day

[I Corinthians 16:2](#) first day

#2 DON'T JUDGE

However – Beware of anyone who makes Sunday your Sabbath. [Galatians 4:10](#); [Colossians 2:16](#)

What was Christ saying? [Mark 2:23](#)

- God made the Sabbath for intimacy with Him by us
- New Testament we have reality Christ
- Sunday is the day we focus as an assembled Church upon Him and His Word
- Obey Him, meet necessities, do good and don't judge

So what do we celebrate on Sunday, the Lord's Day? The Lord's Supper is a look back where we remember the great work of Christ's cross nearly 2,000 years ago. Note these past events:

- Christ died, Christ rose, and Christ ascended to God's right hand,
- Christ took my penalty upon Himself, Christ imputed His righteousness upon me,
- Sin was dealt with, guilt was passed away, and sin's shackles were broken,
- Satan was defeated, the fear and power of death was destroyed, eternal life was given, and the destiny of Hell was blotted out of the future for all who came.

Contrary to the claims of some today, Christians are not required to worship on the **Sabbath day**. It, like the other Old Covenant holy days Paul mentions, is not binding under the New Covenant. There is convincing evidence for that in Scripture.

1. First, the Sabbath was the sign to Israel of the Old Covenant ([Ex. 31:16-17](#); [Neh. 9:14](#); [Ezek. 20:12](#)). Because we are now under the New Covenant (Heb. 8), we are no longer required to keep the sign of the Old Covenant.
2. Second, the New Testament nowhere commands Christians to observe the Sabbath.
3. Third, in our only glimpse of an early church worship service in the New Testament, we find the Church meeting on Sunday, the first day of the week ([Acts 20:7](#)).
4. Fourth, we find no hint in the Old Testament that God expected the Gentile nations to observe the Sabbath, nor are they ever condemned for failing to do so. That is certainly strange if He expected all peoples to observe the Sabbath.
5. Fifth, there is no evidence of anyone's keeping the Sabbath before the time of Moses, nor are there any commands to keep the Sabbath before the giving of the law at Mount Sinai.
6. Sixth, the Jerusalem Council did not impose Sabbath keeping on the Gentile believers ([Acts 15](#)).
7. Seventh, Paul warned the Gentiles about many different sins in his epistles, but never about breaking the Sabbath.
8. Eighth, Paul rebuked the Galatians for thinking God expected them to observe special days (Including the Sabbath) ([Gal. 4:10-11](#)).
9. Ninth, Paul taught that keeping the Sabbath was a matter of Christian liberty ([Rom. 14:5](#)).
10. Tenth, the early church fathers, from Ignatius to Augustine, taught that the Old Testament Sabbath had been abolished and that the first day of the week (Sunday) was the day when Christians should meet

for worship. That disproves the claim of some that Sunday worship was not instituted until the fourth century.

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- [1] [1] Missler Article Sabbath.
[2] [2] Edersheim, p. 116.
[3] [3] Zola Levitt Newsletter, 1999.
[4] [4] MacArthur, John F., *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary*, (Chicago: Moody Press) 1983.
[5] [5] Warren W. Wiersbe, *Be Holy*, (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books) 1994.
[6] [6] Hughes, p. 74.

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