

# SABBATH OR THE LORD'S DAY?

-A. Ralph Johnson

Under the Old Testament God's people were required to observe the seventh day Sabbath (Saturday) as a day of rest and worship in remembrance of His completion of creation (Ex. 20:11) and their deliverance from Egypt (Deut. 5:15). Anyone who so much as gathered sticks or built a fire on that day was to be stoned to death (Num. 15:32-36; Ex. 16:23; 35:3).

When Jesus died upon the cross he established a "New Covenant" (or "Testament"—the Greek word in the original is the same) and abolished the Old (Heb. 8:13; 9:15-17; Col. 2:14). Therefore, we are no longer to be judged by the laws of the Old Testament.

However, some insist that we must keep Saturday as our day of worship. They maintain that God had two sets of laws, one ceremonial, which passed away, and the other, moral, (the Ten Commandments) which remain. The Sabbath, being a part of the Ten Commandments, is considered to be "moral" and therefore still binding. This paper is to set forth the evidence that we are not bound by the Sabbath law.

## I. THERE IS NO EVIDENCE THE SABBATH WAS INTENDED FOR CHRISTIANS.

### A. The Sabbath law was nowhere required of Christians.

Where there is no law, there is no transgression (Rom. 4:15; 5:13). "To whom spoken" is an essential factor in establishing responsibility (Gal. 3:16, 17). The New Testament nowhere tells Christians to keep the Sabbath.

### B. Christians are a new nation under a new code of laws.

We are a new nation, free from the body of laws of the old. In the past we "*were no people but now are the people of God*" (Gal. 3:10, 23-28; Eph. 2:11-19; 1 Pet. 2:9-10). We are not obligated to the old.

**ILLUSTRATION:** California was once a part of Mexico. Mexico had laws against stealing and killing along with laws concerning holidays. California is now a part of the United States. We are not bound by any of the laws of Mexico, yet in our nation it is also a crime to kill or steal. These are not a continuation of Mexican laws but laws of the United States. The new nation has some laws like the old but any not passed under this government are not binding on this people. Likewise, unless the law concerning the Sabbath was re-enacted under the new constitution, it would not be binding.

### C. Deut. 5:2-3, 6, 15; 4:8. The Ten Commandments were made ONLY with Israel.

**D. Deut. 5:15.** The Sabbath was given as rest from their bondage in Egypt. Christians were never in Egypt.

**E. Ex. 31:13, 17.** It was a sign to ISRAEL—not to Christians (Ezek. 20:10-13).

OBJECTION: Christians are the true “ISRAEL OF GOD” (Rom. 9:6; Gal. 6:16).

ANSWER:

The “Israel” spoken to in Exodus is of the “flesh” (Rom 9:3-5, 31; 1Cor. 10:18). The New Covenant replaced theirs because of disobedience (Heb. 8:8-9).

OBJECTION: “All of God’s commands are established forever. (Ps. 111:7, 8)

ANSWER:

The Hebrew word here for “commands”<sup>1</sup> cannot be shown to exclusively mean the Ten Commandments. It is only found in the Psalms and is nowhere clearly used for the Ten Commandments.

Furthermore, the words translated, “for ever and ever” (“ad”<sup>2</sup> and #5769, “olam”<sup>3</sup>) do not necessarily indicate that it could not be abolished. God plainly says he abolished the law (Col. 2:14, 16, 17; Rom. 7:1-6 etc.).

The word, “ad,” means, “long or indefinite time, eternity”<sup>4</sup>

Example: Amos 1:11 “...his anger keeps tearing away forever (“ad”).

This is speaking of Edom but Edom no longer exists.

Likewise, “Olam” means “concealed, i.e. to the vanishing point...”<sup>5</sup>

-It is used of the time slaves served masters (Ex. 21:6).

-Lamps burning in the Tabernacle (Ex. 27: 21).

-Offering of the wave breast (Ex. 29:28).

OBJECTION: “The Sabbath is to last forever” (Ex. 31:17, 13).

ANSWER: the time is limited to “*throughout your generations.*” It also limits it as being a sign between God and “*the children of Israel.*” This statement was to the fleshly generations, not to spiritual Israel. Christians are a new nation (2Pet. 2:9-10) that is “*neither Jew nor Greek*” (Gal. 3:28; Col. 3:11).

Here again, the use of “forever” is the same as elsewhere said of other things in the law of Moses (Lev. 16:29-31, 34; 23:21, 31, 32; 2Chr. 2:4; Ex. 21:6; 12:14 etc.). The Hebrew is, “olam,”<sup>6</sup> “beyond sight,” but not beyond God’s ability to change in making a new covenant (Heb 8).

---

<sup>1</sup>#6490 -Strong's Concordance, Hebrew Lex. “pik-koo-deem”

<sup>2</sup>#5703 Strong's Concordance, Hebrew.

<sup>3</sup>#5769 Strong's Concordance, Hebrew.

<sup>4</sup>Davies Lexicon p.452

<sup>5</sup>#5769 Strong's Concordance, Hebrew.

<sup>6</sup>#5769 Strong's Concordance, Hebrew.

OBJECTION: "God will not alter what he has spoken" (Ps. 89:34).

ANSWER:

The "covenant" here mentioned is with David concerning his throne (v. 36). The passage says nothing about the Sabbath. This cannot be forced against scriptures like Heb. 8:7-13 which teach that the old was to pass away.

OBJECTION : "God does not change." (Mal. 3:6; Heb. 13:8)

ANSWER:

The text tells us in what He does not change. This can not be used against the teaching that when the purpose of the law was completed it was "changed" (Heb. 7:12).

OBJECTION: "The Sabbath will be kept even in heaven." (Isa. 66:22-23)

ANSWER:

It includes "new moons" along with Sabbaths. Must we keep the new moons? Since Sabbaths are counted by evenings and mornings, and in the new earth there will be "no night there" (Rev. 21:23, 25; 22:5), it would appear that Isaiah was using his usual poetic style, as when he speaks of the mountains singing (Isa. 44:23; 49:13) etc. This is no discrepancy.

Even if it were to be kept in heaven, we are not to be judged here and now concerning these things (Col. 2:16). The passages say nothing about us being required to keep these days, much less establish rules defining how they are to be kept.

OBJECTION : "The Sabbath was made for man" (Mk. 2:25-28).

ANSWER:

Yes, the Sabbath was made for man. So were the other six days of the week. Jesus chides the critics as acting like they thought man was made for the Sabbath. They had their priorities reversed.

This was before Christ died and abolished the Old Testament that contained the Sabbath (Heb. 9:15-17; 8:6, 13). It says nothing about the Sabbath being required under the New Testament.

OBJECTION: "The Sabbath was hallowed at creation, long before the giving of the Law." (Gen. 2:3; Ex. 20:11).

ANSWER:

That is questionable. The statement appears to be what is called a literary prolepsis. The statement was written by Moses, as commentary concerning God's hallowing of the day following their departure from Egypt.

The same reason was give in Exodus 20:11 at the time of giving the Ten Commandments.

---

Ex. 20:8 “Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. 9 Six days you shall labor, and do all your work; 10 but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God; in it you shall not do any work, you, or your son, or your daughter, your manservant, or your maidservant, or your cattle, or the sojourner who is within your gates; 11 for in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day; therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it. (Compare Ex. 31:17)

Deut. 5:15 gives a different reason for God commanding them to keep the Sabbath.

*Deut. 5:15 You shall remember that you were a servant in the land of Egypt, and the LORD your God brought you out thence with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm; therefore the LORD your God commanded you to keep the Sabbath day.*

Since God commanded them to keep the Sabbath because He had brought them out of Egypt, that places the time of giving the command AFTER that event.

Moses uses this same grammatical feature elsewhere in the chapter of Genesis.

*13 The name of the second river is Gihon; it is the one which flows around the whole land of **Cush**. 14 And the name of the third river is Tigris, which flows east of **Assyria**. And the fourth river is the Euphrates.*

Cush, the son of Ham, was not born until after the flood, at least 1600 years later (Gen. 10:6). Likewise, Assyria did not become a country until after the flood when the nations were formed (Gen. 10:11).

Nehemiah 9:13-14 says the Sabbath was “made known” at Sinai (cf. Ezek. 20:10-12).

Furthermore, Genesis 1:3 says that God rested. Nothing is said of Adam or his descendants keeping it.

Even if we assume that God intended for man to keep the Sabbath in Eden, that doesn't mean that He intended for Christians to keep it. Sacrifice of animals also started in Genesis (Gen. 4:4; 8:20; 22:1-13; 31:54).

The first recorded command to keep a seventh day was concerning the Passover that began the exodus from Egypt. (Ex. 12:15-16. cf. 13:6).

Exodus 16:23-30 is the first specific observance of the seventh day as the “*holy Sabbath*.”

*23 And he said unto them, This is that which Jehovah hath spoken, Tomorrow is a solemn rest, a holy sabbath unto Jehovah: bake that which ye will bake, and boil*

*that which ye will boil; and all that remaineth over lay up for you to be kept until the morning. 24 And they laid it up till the morning, as Moses bade: and it did not become foul, neither was there any worm therein. 25 And Moses said, Eat that to-day; for to-day is a sabbath unto Jehovah: to-day ye shall not find it in the field. 26 Six days ye shall gather it; but on the seventh day is the sabbath, in it there shall be none. 27 And it came to pass on the seventh day, that there went out some of the people to gather, and they found none. 28 And Jehovah said unto Moses, How long refuse ye to keep my commandments and my laws? 29 See, for that Jehovah hath given you the sabbath, therefore he giveth you on the sixth day the bread of two days; abide ye every man in his place, let no man go out of his place on the seventh day. 30 So the people rested on the seventh day.*

OBJECTION: God wrote the Ten Commandments on stone, indicating they would not pass away.

ANSWER:

Yes, God wrote the old covenant upon cold hard stones. This was like their stony hearts (Ezek. 11:19; 36:26). Now God writes upon hearts of flesh (2Cor. 3:3; Heb. 8:10). That is more lasting because we will live forever.

## II. THE COVENANT CONTAINING THE SABBATH WAS DONE AWAY IN CHRIST.

**The Ten Commandments are specifically called, “*the Covenant.*”**

*Ex. 34:28* “...And he wrote upon the tables the words of the covenant, the ten commandments.”

*Deut. 4:13* “And he declared unto you his covenant, which he commanded you to perform, even the ten commandments; and he wrote them upon two tables of stone.”

*1Kings 8:9, 21* “There was nothing in the ark save the two tables of stone... 21 And there have I set a place for the ark, wherein is the covenant of Jehovah.”

### A. The “*ministration of death written and engraven on stones, was done away* (2Cor. 3)

The *old covenant* (3:14 cf. 3:6)

Written [with ink -3:3]

and *ENGRAVEN ON STONES* (3:3, 7)

was *glorious* (3:7-14, cf. Ex. 34:28-33; Deut. 4:13; 5:22, 24, 2; 10:1-4).

but caused *death* (3:7-14, cf. Rom. 7:10, 11; 5:20, 21; Gal. 3:10-12; Num. 15:32-36)

was *done away* (3:7, 11, 13, 14)

and replaced by a “*new*” and “*more glorious*” covenant (3:6, 8-11).

This passage clearly has reference to Ex. 34:28-33, which speaks of Moses bringing the Ten Commandments down from Mount Sinai the second time. His face glowed, so he covered it. He contrasts the temporary glory of the Old Covenant in Moses' face to the superior and everlasting glory under the new. This passage refers to the Ten Command-

ments (“*engraven on stones*”) as being the “old covenant” and defines them as being the “*words of the covenant.*” He says they were glorious but they were passing away.

OBJECTION: “It was the glory, not the Ten Commandments, that was passing away.”

ANSWER:

Verse 7 says *that which was written on the stones* “*was glorious.*” The Ten Commandments were on the stones.

Verse 11 says, *that which was passing away* “*was glorious.*” Therefore, the Ten Commandments, which were “glorious” were passing away.

It also includes what was “written.” That includes more than just the Ten Commandments.

OBJECTION: “Only the penalty of death was done away.”

ANSWER:

Nothing on the stones says anything about the penalty of death. Nor does 2Cor. 3 say anything about abolishing the death penalty.

The Old Covenant was on the stones. The Ten Commandments were called the Old Covenant (Ex. 34:28; Deut. 4:13). The Sabbath itself is specifically spoken of as included in the covenant (Ex. 31:16). That which was passing away was “glorious.” Death was not glorious.

OBJECTION: “The agreement, not the Ten Commandments, was what was done away.”

ANSWER:

The Ten Commandments were the words of the agreement (Ex. 34:28). The agreement to keep them was done away. Christians have a new agreement in which the Sabbath was not included.

**B. The Law, or covenant, has been “cast out” (Gal. 3:10-12, 19-25; 4:10, 11, 21-31; 5:1-4, 14, 18).**

The “law” or “covenant” is like a “schoolmaster” that Paul says brought them to Christ. Now that we have Christ we are *no longer under the schoolmaster*. The covenant from Mount Sinai (4:24) is to be “cast out” (4:30). We do not come to a mountain (Sinai) that shook. (Heb. 12:18-22)

**C. The “first covenant is vanishing away (Heb. 8:6-13; 9:15-17; 7:11-12, 16, 10, 19).**

The Old Covenant (8:13) or “first covenant” (8:7, 9; 9:15) from Mount Sinai (12:18-27) is *vanishing away* (8:13). Establishing a New Covenant, makes the first “old.”

**OBJECTIONS: “The old covenant agreement was done away but God’s Sabbath law is now written on our hearts” (Heb. 8:10).**

ANSWER:

It says nothing about the Sabbath or the Ten Commandments being written on our hearts. The laws of the “New Covenant” are written on our hearts today.

**OBJECTION: “There are two laws, one moral and the other, ceremonial. The ceremonial is done away. The moral remains.”**

**ANSWER:**

Neither term is found in the Bible. The weekly Sabbath is no less “ceremonial” than the yearly feast days or new moons. They are all a “shadow of things to come” (Col. 2: 16, 17 Heb. 4:1-11).

**Scriptural terminology makes no distinction.**

They are all called “The law” (Gal. 3:10, 23-25; 4:10, 11, 21-31; 5:14, 18)

The teachings of Moses are called the “Law of God” (Josh. 24:26).

They are called the “Law of the Lord” (Lk. 2:23-24, 39)

They are called (in Hebrew) the “Law of Jehovah” (2Chron. 31:3; 1Chron. 16:40)

They are called “commandments” (Lev. 27:34; Mk. 12:28-31. See Deut. 6:4, 5; Lev. 19:8)

They are all “forever” (Ex. 27:21; 9:28; 30:21; Lev. 6:18; 16:29, 31 etc.)

They were all “given by Moses” (Jn. 1:17; 7:19 “kill”; Mk. 7:10; Josh. 8: 32)

They were all written in the book by Moses.

There are many moral laws, scattered through the writings of Moses. The following are some examples. Must we obey these?

Deut. 23:19, 20. Laws concerning taking usury.

Deut. 23:15, 16; Ex. 21:2-11; Deut. 15:12-18. Laws concerning slaves.

Num. 35:9-24. Laws concerning cities of refuge for murders to escape.

Deut. 25:5-10. Levirate marriage. Taking brother’s widowed wife.

Ex. 25:2-7. Laws concerning letting the land rest.

Deut. 15:1-3. Laws concerning debts.

Lev. 18:6-18; 20:11. Marriage to near relatives

Deut. 22:1-5. Returning an animal that has strayed.

Deut. 22:5. Wearing garments of the opposite sex.

Deut. 22:9-11. Two kinds of animals, seed etc. being mingled.

Deut. 14:21. Eating a thing that dies of itself; Boiling a kid in it’s mother’s milk.

The Ten commandments, or “decatalogue” serve as a rough summary of all, including the ceremonial aspects.

When the people heard God speak they fled and begged that anything more be given through Moses. This God did, so Moses is said to have given the law. This included the Ten Commandments no less than the rest (Jn. 1:17; 7:19 see “kill”; Deut. 5:22-28; Ex. 34:28-33).

Even in giving the Ten Commandments, Moses said he stood between them and God to show them His word (Deut. 5:5). He also recorded them in the book and prepared the second set of stones (Deut. 5: 2-5, 22-33) which he then delivered to them. The full understanding and elaboration upon those ten principles is contained in the rest of

the writings of Moses. Moses even tells HOW to keep the Sabbath holy. If we must keep it, how can we disregard obeying what he says about how it is to be kept -- including death for picking up sticks (Num. 15:32-36)? Upon what basis may we regard these as “ceremonial”?

OBJECTION: “Rev. 12:17; 14:12 and 22:14 speak of Christians keeping the commandments of God.”

ANSWER:

As shown above, God’s “commandments” do not necessarily refer to the Ten. The yearly feasts are also commandments of God yet they have been removed (Col. 2:16), just as the sacrifices. The “commandments” in Revelation would be those we are under. The Sabbath was not binding in the New Testament. In 19:10 the “testimony of Jesus” is defined as “*the spirit of prophecy.*”

Ex. 23:15. The Feast of Unleavened Bread was “*commanded*” by Jehovah.

Ex. 27:20. Using pure olive oil in the lamps of the tabernacle was commanded.

Lev. 7:36-38. God commanded the sacrificial offering. (Also, Lev. 8:17-21)

Lev. 8:9-13. The garments of the priests were commanded by Jehovah

Lev. 16:34. Sacrifices on the Day of Atonement were commanded as an everlasting statute.

Num. 19:2. Sacrificing a red heifer was commanded by Jehovah as a statute of the Law.

Num. 27:11. The law of inheritance was a statute and an ordinance as Jehovah commanded.

Num. 30:1-16. The law of vows was commanded by Jehovah.

OBJECTION:

“The Ten Commandments were IN the Ark. The writings of Moses were BESIDE it. This indicates superiority of the Ten.”

ANSWER:

Such analogies prove nothing. The book was beside the ark to be handy for recording. All of God’s laws were in the book, including the Ten Commandments. They were BOTH in the Most Holy Place, a type of heaven itself. Both were commanded by God, and both were prepared and delivered to the people by Moses.

Note that the rod of Aaron was also in the ark. Does that mean that the priesthood of Levi is still binding (Heb. 7:12)? While we are speculating, perhaps we should note that the tabernacle, the ark and tables of stones have long since disappeared. Only the book of the law written by Moses remains. Without it we would have no record of the Ten Commandments.

OBJECTION: “Nehemiah 9:13-14 makes a distinction between what was given through Moses and what was given by God.

ANSWER:

All of these things are said to have been “by Moses.” There is no distinction here indicating some were temporary and others eternal.

**D. We are freed from the Law (Rom. 7:1-4, 6, 7).**

We cannot be joined to both the Old and the NEW. We must be “free from the Law” (7:2), “loosed from the law” (7:3), “dead to the law” (7:4) and “delivered from the Law” (7:6) to become part of the bride of Christ. Being joined to Christ while still under the law is spiritual adultery (6:14; 3:21, 27, 28).

OBJECTION: “This is the ceremonial law”

ANSWER:

Romans 7:8 is speaking of “the commandment” and verse 7 specifies it is the one about coveting --one of the Ten (Ex. 20:17).

OBJECTION: Rom. 7:12, 14 says the law was good.

ANSWER:

The Law was not evil, but since mankind seems to be attracted to what is prohibited (as Eve was in the garden), coveting increases. Without law there is no transgression, but with law comes transgression (Rom 4:15). Without law there is no knowledge of sin, but with law comes the knowledge and accountability (Rom. 7:5). Gal. 3:23-25; 4:21-31, shows we are not under the Law.

OBJECTION: “This means that when we do what the Law says we are not under its condemnation. cf. Rom. 8:1.”

ANSWER:

The passage clearly says that marriage to a second husband while the first is living is adultery (Rom. 7:3). It says that the person must be dead to the law in order to be married to Christ. It shows that it is the authority of the law that included the ten that ceased (7:2, 3, 4, 6 -cf. 6:14-15; 3:21 etc.).

OBJECTION: “**Did not Paul keep the law?**” (Rom. 7:5; 8:4)

ANSWER: Indeed, Paul kept the law. He kept not only the ten commandments but also the ceremonial teaching (Ac. 21:17-27). When he went in and was at charges for the men giving offerings in the temple he was keeping the requirements of Num. 6:9-12. He did this that he might save the Jews (1Cor. 9:20-22). He also kept the law concerning circumcision in the case of Timothy (Ac. 16:3), but he refused to circumcise Titus (Gal. 3:3).

**E. Christ did not put his laws in old wineskins (Matt. 9:16-17).**

Christ did not just patch up the Old Covenant. He gave us a new covenant. Nothing passed from the law until it was ALL fulfilled (Matt. 5:17-18). Christ came to do just that. Now it is fulfilled and has passed away.

**III. THE SABBATH IS SPECIFICALLY CITED AS NO LONGER BINDING.**

**Col. 2:14-17, 20, 21<sup>7</sup>** says we are not judged by the Law.

---

<sup>7</sup>cf. Rom.14:1-6; Gal.4:10,11; Eph.2:15.

It says, that the bond written in ordinances<sup>8</sup> that was against us, he had "taken out of the way, nailing it to the cross." Verse 16 says, "Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of a feast day or a new moon or a Sabbath day: which are a shadow of things to come..."

Here we have the three-fold list of sacred observances:

1. "Feast days" (Greek. "heorte" 27 times in the NT, always of the yearly feasts. (Lk. 2:41; 22:1; Jn. 7:2; Ac. 18:21).
2. "New moons"—clearly the monthly holy days  
2Chron 8:13 *Even after a certain rate every day, offering according to the commandment of Moses, on the **sabbaths**, and on the **new moons**, and on the solemn feasts, three times in the year, even in the feast of unleavened bread, and in the feast of weeks, and in the feast of tabernacles.*

Note that the three solemn feasts are The Feast of Unleavened Bread (Passover), the Feast of Weeks (Pentecost), and the Feast of Tabernacles. They are not called "sabbaths." They are clearly distinguished.

3. "Sabbaths" (sabbatoon) is the weekly observances.

OBJECTIONS: "The word is plural, 'Sabbaths,' indicating the yearly Sabbaths."

ANSWER:

- a. The fact that it is plural in no way indicates it is not speaking of the weekly Sabbaths. If anything, the plural would include all. The plural form, "sabbatoon" is the common way of designating the weekly day of rest (26 times in the New Testament, Mt. 28:1; Lk. 4:16; Ac. 13:14; 16:13). It is never used of the yearly feasts in any form in the NT.
- b. In the Greek translation of the Old Testament (Septuagint) we find the plural commonly used of weekly Sabbath --even right in the Ten Commandments (Ex. 20:8; Deut. 5:12, 15. cf. Lev. 23:15, 38).
- c. On the other hand, it was rare to find the yearly feast days called "Sabbaths."  
**Lev. 16:31** #7676 shabbat #7677 shabaatown, translated, "Sabbath rest" defined by Strong as "a sabbatism or special holiday." --Day of Atonement, 10<sup>th</sup> day of the seventh month.  
**Lev. 23:24** #7677 "shabaatown," which Strong defines as "a sabbatism or special holiday." --Speaking of the Feast of Trumpets, first day of 7<sup>th</sup> month.

---

<sup>8</sup>Eph. 2:14 says, "...the law of commandments contained in ordinances...")

**Lev. 23:32** #7676 shabbath #7677 shabbathown, translated, “Sabbath rest,” defined as “a sabbatism or special holiday.” --Day of Atonement, 10<sup>th</sup> day of 7<sup>th</sup> month.

**Lev. 23:39** #7677 shabbathown “a sabbatism or special holiday.”

This was on the fifteenth day of the 7<sup>th</sup> month, 8 days later (one week, which again falls on the Sabbath)

This is distinctively designated as, “sabbata sabbaton,” unlike Col. 2:16, which only uses the word, “sabbaton.” Nowhere else is any form of this word used with reference to the yearly feasts. Interestingly, even in this chapter we find the yearly observances five times called “feasts.”

This three-fold grouping of yearly, monthly and weekly observances appears several times in the Bible, both as given here and in other orders. Other passages have them in a different order (1Chron. 23:31; 2Chron. 2:4; 8:13; 31:3; Neh.10:33).

Ezek. 45:17 and Hos. 2:11 have the same order as Col. 2. Note the following comparison:

Ezek. 45:17 (Septuagint)

En	tais	heortais	kai	en	tais	noumeniais	kai	en	tois	sabbatois
In	the	feasts	and	at	the	new moons	and	on	the	Sabbaths

Col. 2:16

En	meri	heortees	hee	neomeenias	hee	sabbatoon
In	respect	of a feast	or the	new moon	or of the	Sabbaths

In Gal. 4:10, speaking of their return to the Law (3:10, 12, 23-25; 4:4, 5, 21-30), he uses this order, “Ye observe days, and months, and seasons, and years...”

**OBJECTION:** “The Sabbath was not a ‘*hand-written ordinance*’.”

**ANSWER:**

God wrote on the stones with His hand. (Ex. 31:18; 32:16; 34:1; Deut. 10:1-4; 9:10; 4:13; 5:22; 2Kings 17:37).

Moses wrote it in the book with his hand (Ex. 34:21-28; 24:4. cf. Ex. 20).

The Greek word for “ordinance” is “dogma” and means “decree.” (cf. Ac. 16:4; 15:28, 29). Note: “fornication” is one of the Ten.)

**OBJECTION:** “Stones could not be ‘nailed’.”

**ANSWER:**

-Nor was the book “nailed.” Christ was nailed and in so doing he symbolically carried the old covenant to the cross with him (Heb. 9:15-17), both were written and engraven (2Cor. 3:3, 7).

**OBJECTION:** “The Sabbath was FOR man, not against him.”

**ANSWER:**

All of the law was intended *for* man’s good

Lev. 16:30; 23:28. The Atonement was “*for*” them.

Lev. 23:11. The wave sheaf sacrifice was “*for*” them.

Num. 35:11. The cities of refuge were “*for*” them.

However, through human weakness, the commandment which was unto life, was found to be unto death (Rom. 7:10; Gal. 3:10-13, 22, 23; 4:3, 5, 25; 5:3; Heb. 7:18, 19; 8:7, 8; 2Co. 3:7). Thus, the old localized concept of Sabbath was replaced by the universal concept of commemorating the resurrection of Christ.

OBJECTION: “The Sabbath was a memorial, looking backwards to creation, not a shadow of things to come.”

ANSWER:

The Passover looked back to the deliverance from Egypt and also forward to deliverance through the blood of Christ.” Likewise, the Sabbath looks backwards to both Egypt and creation. (Ex. 20:11; Deut. 5:15), and forward to our entrance into God’s rest (Heb. 4:1-11). The Jews kept the Sabbath yet they never entered that rest. We are told to labor to enter into it.

#### **IV. THERE IS NO NEW TESTAMENT TEACHING THAT CHRISTIANS MUST KEEP THE SABBATH.**

OBJECTION:

“Jesus indicated the Sabbath would still be observed at the fall of Jerusalem in 70 AD (Matt. 24:20). They were told to pray that their flight be not on the Sabbath day.”

ANSWER:

It was no sin to save life on the Sabbath. The problem was that Jerusalem would be dominated by Sabbath-keeping Jews who would have the city gates closed and restrict travel (cf. Neh. 13:19), not the sinfulness of fleeing on the Sabbath. There would be great “tribulation” (Matt. 24:21). Fleeing on the Sabbath was no more evil than fleeing in winter --also mentioned.

OBJECTION:

“Jesus customarily kept the Sabbath (Luke 4:16). We are to follow in his steps” (1Pe. 2:21).

ANSWER:

Jesus lived under the Law of Moses. He kept it perfectly (Gal. 4:4; 5:3; 3:10). He kept not only the Sabbath but also the New Moons, feast days and sacrifices. He did not marry and had a “custom” of going to the Mount of olives to pray (Lk. 22:39). Must we follow all these customs? The steps of Jesus specified in the passage that we are to follow is accepting suffering without complaining (1Pe. 2:21, 22). It is not speaking of keeping the Sabbath.

Besides, We live under the New Testament, not the Old (Heb 9:15-17). As Jesus faithfully kept the laws under which He lived, we should faithfully keep the laws under which we live.

**OBJECTION:**

“Did not John keep the Sabbath when he was in the Spirit on the ‘lord’s day’ (Rev. 1:10)? Jesus was lord of the Sabbath. (Mk. 2:24-28)”

**ANSWER:**

The two passages are speaking of entirely different things. In Mark 2:28 Jesus is affirming that he is lord ALSO of the Sabbath. They criticized his permitting the disciples to husk grain to eat on the Sabbath. They acted like they thought man was created for the Sabbath.

The parallel passages show that they opposed his using the Sabbath to heal and exercise of the power of God. He informed them that they were intruding on the province of God. He can heal or eat grain any day he pleases. He does not say the Sabbath is the Lord’s day. He says the son of man is lord also of the Sabbath.

Under the Old Testament the Sabbath was God’s holy day (Ex. 20:10; Isa. 58:13). When Jesus died, a new covenant came into force (Heb. 9:15-17). Jesus was given all authority (Mtt. 28:18). He triumphed over death on that day (Mk. 16:9; Lk. 24:1; Mtt. 28:1). The day of his triumph is the Lord’s day just as surely as when it speaks of “Lord’s death” (1Cor. 11:26), “the cup of the Lord” (1Cor. 11:27), “the Lord’s body” (1Cor. 11:29), “the table of the Lord” (1Cor. 10:21), and the “lord’s supper” (1Cor. 11:20).

In succeeding centuries they called the first day “the Lord’s day” and distinguished that from the Sabbath. (See VII. HISTORICAL RECORD at the conclusion).

**OBJECTION:** “Does not Heb. 4:4, 9, 10 teach that the Sabbath remains in force?”

**ANSWER:**

The “rest” which “remains” is not the Sabbath day but God’s eternal rest of which the Sabbath was a type, or shadow.

The subject is raised in Heb. 3:7 it quotes God in Ps. 95:11 as saying that because of their disobedience, “...they shall not enter into my rest” (cf. Heb. 3:11, 18; 4:3, 4).

When they left Egypt, God had promised them rest (Ex. 33:14; Deut. 3:20; 12:10; 25:19). When they entered the Promised Land, Joshua said they received rest (1:15; 21:44; 22:4; 23:1).

However, many years later, in Psalms 95:11, David quoted God as speaking of their “rest” as still future. Hebrews argues that if Joshua had given them the rest that God promised, David, many years later, would not have said it was still future. Thus, Jesus is better than Joshua because he provides a better rest.

The “rest” they entered at the time of Joshua was only a type of the rest that God entered from the foundation of the world when He rested from his works.

Unfortunately, the old King James Version translated this, “If Jesus had given them rest.” The problem is that in Greek, “Jesus” and “Joshua” are spelled the same. In their desire to bind the Sabbath, Sabbatarians have added a question mark to the sentence to make it sound like it is denying that Jesus gave us another day. This seriously distorts the intent of the text. Verse 9 is the major point of issue. Some translations render it, “*There remaineth therefore a Sabbath rest...*” However the Greek word here is not “sabbaton” (#4521) as elsewhere used of the seventh day, but “sabbatimos” (#4520),” which indicates a likeness to the Sabbath.

It clearly is not speaking of the weekly Sabbath, as may be seen by the fact that no one had entered this rest, although they had been keeping the Sabbath for 1400 years. This “sabbatimos,” is future. We are to labor to enter it (Heb. 4:11).

**OBJECTION: “Did not James teach that we must keep the Ten Commandments?” (James 2:9-11)**

**ANSWER:**

James was citing a principle, that when one command is broken, the whole law is violated. This is the same concept as found in Gal. 3:10; 5:3. A couple of the Ten Commandments are used by way of illustration. However, his focus is not on the Ten Commandments but on the “royal law”—loving one’s neighbor as himself, which is not one of the Ten, but appears in the book of Moses (Lev. 19:18).

He clearly distinguishes the law we are under from the Old by identifying it as a “*law of liberty.*” The Old Testament produced bondage (Gal. 4:24-30, 3). While the two commandments cited (adultery and killing) were incorporated into the New Testament. The Sabbath was neither mentioned nor anywhere enjoined in the New Testament.

**OBJECTION: “Did not Jesus say to keep the commandments?” (Matt. 19:17)**

**ANSWER:**

Yes, Jesus was “born under The Law” (Gal. 4:4) and told a man who was living under The Law to obey the commandments of that law. The New Testament did not come into force until after Jesus died (Heb. 9:15- 17). He also told another man to obey things in the Law of Moses (Matt. 8:4).

The two commands that Jesus selected in Matt. 19, are not stated in the Ten Commandments. They are commands in the Law of Moses (Deut. 6:5; Lev. 19:18). “Commandments” is not necessarily speaking of the Ten.

**OBJECTION: “Several scriptures in the New Testament admonish us to keep God’s commandments (Rev. 12:17; 14:12; 22:14; 1Jn. 2:3-4 etc.).”**

**ANSWER:**

Yes, but it is presumptuous to maintain that these include the Sabbath. Many times it is speaking of other commandments than the Ten. (Matt. 22:40; 1Cor. 14:37; Jn. 13:34;

15:12; Tit. 1:3; Heb. 7:5, 14-18; 1Jn. 2:7, 8; 3:23 etc.) He plainly teaches that the commandments under the law are no longer binding (Eph. 2:15; Heb. 7:18).

OBJECTION: "Jesus said that the Law would not pass away until heaven and earth passed away (Mat. 5:18)."

ANSWER:

No, Jesus said it would not pass until it was "fulfilled." Jesus did not come to destroy it but to complete its fulfillment. Even if the heavens and the earth passed, the Law would not pass away until all was fulfilled. Jesus kept it perfectly and thus confirmed the law as good. Having done so, it passed away as he said, and was superseded by the New which could provide true righteousness by faith.

Jesus did not say he was speaking of the "moral law." He included things other than the Ten Commandments. These were given in the Law of Moses.

Mat. 5:31 Divorce comes from Deut. 24:1, 3.

5:33 Swearing comes from Lev. 19:12; Num. 30:2; Deut. 23:21.

5:38 "Eye for an eye" comes from Ex. 21:24.

5:43 "Love your neighbor" is from Lev. 19:18.

Furthermore, notice that it includes not only the "law" but also the "prophets." Is everything in the portion of the Old Testament which the Jews called "the Prophets" still binding?

We cannot pick and choose. To be bound by part of the law is to be bound by all. "*For as many as are of the works of the law are under a curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in ALL things which are written in the book of the law to do them*" (Gal. 3:10-12; 23-25; 5:1-4; Rom. 10:4, 5).

OBJECTION: "Paul said the law was not void (Rom. 3:31). It is *holy, just and good* (Rom. 7:12). It is 'spiritual' (Rom. 7:14). It is not against the promises of God (Gal. 3:21)."

ANSWER:

No problem, if we stick with the context. Rom. 3:31, in the Greek, says, "*Do we then make void law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish law.*" "The," is not in the Greek. We are under law to Christ (1Co. 9:21) --not to the old law.

Indeed, the law is "*holy, just and good.*" It is also "*spiritual.*" The fault lay not in the law but with their failure to keep it perfectly. Because of this it became a curse upon them (Heb. 8:8; Gal. 3:10-12; 5:1-4; Rom. 10:4-5).

-The law could make nothing perfect (Heb. 7:19).

-It had no provision for giving life (Gal. 3:21; Heb. 7:19).

-It was "weak through their flesh" (Rom. 8:3).

-It could only convict and condemn. Since none kept it perfectly it became a "ministration of death" (2Co. 3:7; Rom. 7:10).

-It concluded all under sin (Gal. 3:22).

Those laws were good in themselves. Those who kept them would be benefited. If there were a law which could have given life, "*verily righteousness would have been through the law*" (Gal. 3:21).

**V. THERE IS NO EXAMPLE OF A CHRISTIAN ASSEMBLY FOR WORSHIP ON THE SABBATH.**

OBJECTION: "They continued to keep the Sabbath in Lk. 23:54-56."

ANSWER:

It is not wrong to rest on the Sabbath any more than to keep the other Old Testament practices (Ac. 16:3; 21:23-26). That does not mean they were required to do so. They did not even have the Holy Spirit to guide them until Pentecost, 50 days later (Ac. 2). They were certainly not gathered to eat the Lord's supper as in Ac. 20:7; 1Cor. 11:17- 34.

OBJECTION:

"It was Paul's CUSTOM to worship in the synagogue or some place of prayer on the Sabbath." (Ac. 13:14, 27, 42-44; 16:13; 17:2; 18:4, 11)

ANSWER:

With the Jews, Paul behaved as a Jew (1Cor. 9:20; Rom. 13:7; Ac. 16:3; 21:23-26) that by some means he might save some. However, he would not permit these things to be bound on the church (Gal. 2:3-5). The time and place to speak to Jews was on the Sabbath when they met.

**Acts 13:14.** In Antioch of Pisidia Paul and Barnabas taught in the Synagogue. This was a Jewish meeting, not a meeting of the church.

**Acts 13:42-44.** Almost the whole city of Gentiles assembled to listen to Paul on two Sabbaths. This was in accord with the commission, "to the Jew first and then to the Greek (Acts 13:46; Rom. 1:16; 2:9). They were accustomed to meeting on the Sabbath. The Sabbath was a holiday. That was the logical time to meet with them. This was an opportunity to preach to pagans, not an assembly of the Christian Church.

**Acts 16:13.** As for the "place of prayer" (Ac. 16:13), such places were provided by the Jews when there were not enough men (10) to establish a synagogue. This obviously was no Christian church meeting.

**Acts 17:2.** As his manner was, Paul went in and preached to the Jews in the synagogue at Thessalonica. This lasted three Sabbaths until the Jews rejected. Again, he went to the Jews at the time they met.

**Acts 18:4** He reasoned in the Synagogue every Sabbath. We do not know how long this continued but we do know that because of opposition of the Jews they left the Synagogue and went to the house of Justus next door. Some attempt to use 18:11 to

prove they continued this on the Sabbath day for a year and six months. However, there is no evidence as to which day they met after they left the synagogue.

Sabbatarians expend great effort trying to draw inference from the number of times the Sabbath was mentioned. However, they can not cite a single occasion on which a meeting of the church for worship ever took place.

If the number of occasions of some significant event on a certain day is important then note the number of times things relating to the followers of Christ that took place on the first day of the week.

1. The most important event of history, the resurrection of Jesus, took place on the first day of the week. (Mark 16:9)
2. Jesus first appeared to his disciples after his resurrection on that day (Mt. 28:6-9; Lk. 24:36; Jn. 20:19)
3. He appeared to them the next first day. (Jn. 20:26)
4. He sent the Holy Spirit and established the church on that day (Acts 2)

Note: "Pentecost" means "fiftieth." From the Sabbath following the Passover they counted seven weeks (49 days) and the next day after the seventh Sabbath was Pentecost (the first day of the week).

*Lev. 23:15. And ye shall count unto you from the morrow after the Sabbath, from the day that ye brought the sheaf of the wave offering; seven Sabbaths shall be complete: 16 Even unto the morrow after the seventh Sabbath shall ye number fifty days.*

5. The church at Troas came together to break bread (the Lord's Supper) on the first day of the week (Acts 20:7)
6. The church at Corinth was told to lay by their offerings on the first day of the week (1Cor. 16:2)

## **VI. WE HAVE SPECIFIC SCRIPTURAL AUTHORITY FOR CHRISTIANS TO ASSEMBLE FOR WORSHIP ON THE FIRST DAY OF THE WEEK.**

### **A. The church at Troas was meeting to have the lord's supper on the first day of the week.**

**Ac. 20:7-11.** *"Upon the first day of the week when they gathered together to break bread, Paul preached unto them until midnight..."*

There is a question whether this was on what we would call Saturday evening, or Sunday evening but it clearly defines it as “Upon the first day of the week.”

1. The evidence for it being Saturday night.

It is called, “*mia toon sabbatoon*,” “first of the Sabbaths,” which is a Jewish description of time. That begins the new day at sundown (Gen. 1:5; Lev. 23:32).

If it were Roman time, it would begin at midnight and would be called, “Sunday.”

Adventists favor it being Saturday night as supporting their claim that Paul had kept the Sabbath, and after the Sabbath was past, on the first day they had an ordinary meal with the church. Then, on the first day of the week he walked to the ship. Thus he was not observing the first day as a day of rest.

The first problem with this sort of thinking is that it depends upon unscriptural Jewish tradition to define how far a person could walk on the Sabbath. Adventists themselves do not accept those restrictions.

The claim fails at a very key point. It assumes that Christians were to observe Sunday in the same way as required of the Sabbath. The New Testament says nothing of it being a day of rest or of the Sabbath laws applying. The first day was the day they gathered to honor Christ in eating of the Lord's table.

Until the time of Constantine the first day of the week continued to be a regular workday. Both the Bible and history show they met at night when they were off work. Can it be shown that all the rules for keeping the Sabbath, designed for a localized situation, were transmitted into the New Testament and bound upon those carrying the Gospel designed for “all the world”?

2. Most commentators favor this as being Roman time, with Paul meeting Sunday evening.

One evidence for this is that Jn. 20:19 appears to be employing Roman time. “*Then the same day at evening, being the first day of the week.*” If John, a Jew, followed Roman time, how much more likely would Luke, a Gentile, writing to Theophilus, a Gentile, do the same?

Furthermore, Troas was a Gentile city and Roman Colony. Would he not have used Gentile time?

Another argument is that Acts 20:7 says Paul was intending to depart on the “morrow.” The Greek word here (1887 *epaurion*), commonly is translated, “next day” or clearly meaning that. May it mean simply, “in the morning of the same day?”

“Morrow” would seem to be another day, the second day of the week, Roman time. He met with them Sunday evening and planned to depart on Monday.

However, Justin Martyr (AD 140) says they met on the day called Sunday “*very early, before daylight.*”

Regardless of which is the case it really does not change the fact that the first day was the day they met to have the Lord’s supper. Sunday is not the Sabbath and nothing is said of the Sabbath laws being observed on that day. It says they gathered on the first day. Paul waited a week to meet with them at that time, and preach to them.

Since Luke did not fill his account with a chronicle of the days they did things, it would seem have been a matter of special importance that he did so here. God certainly would have anticipated that these words would be understood as the day Christians were having the Lord’s supper (cf. 1Cor. 11:17-34). This clearly points to the fact that it was the day the church was regularly meeting for that purpose.

In fairness, had this been specified as the Sabbath there is no doubt that Sabbatarians would press it as prime evidence.

The significant fact that shouts to us with it’s deafening silence, is that Paul was in town seven days (20:6) yet this is the only mention of any church gathering. Nothing is said of them meeting on the Sabbath. The conclusion is inescapable that this was the day that the church gathered. This was no ordinary meal.

If they had met on the Sabbath, Paul would have spoken to them then rather than keeping them up all night Saturday (as they claim) – even resulting in one man falling asleep plunging out a window to his death. If they met on Saturday, it makes no sense to have stayed up all night when Paul and his companions, the next day had to travel without having slept for over 24 hours. Surely they would have slept that night and got a fresh start in the morning.

If the Sabbath was important to the church, why was it totally ignored? There is not one peep about any Christians gathering on Saturday to break bread.

Specification of Paul’s preaching as, “*when the disciples gathered to break bread,*” suggests a regular meeting. They did not gather to listen to Paul before he departed. He met with them on the occasion of their gathering.

The “breaking of bread” is undoubtedly the Lord’s Supper. Acts 2:47 identifies four things in which the Christians continued steadfastly after they were baptized— *the apostles’ teaching, fellowship, breaking of bread and prayers.* The connection with three religious activities, indisputably a part of their gatherings, indicates this was no common meal.

1Corinthians 11:17-34 clearly identifies the “breaking of bread” (10:16, 17; 11:23, 24, 26, 27) for which the church (11:18, 22) was to gather (11:17, 18, 20, 22, 33, 34) as the Lord’s Supper (11:20, 23- 29), “Lord’s table” (10:21) and “communion” (10:16).

This was to be continued until Jesus comes (1Cor. 11:26), yet there is not one single instance where this was ever done upon the Sabbath.

Some have sought to picture this as a common meal. Aside from the fact that they can provide no evidence for the claim, and in addition to the evidence otherwise already presented, they face other difficulties. Not the least of these is the fact that common meals were not commonly dated.

OBJECTION: “Acts 2:46 says they broke bread every day from house to house.”

ANSWER: That is identified as their “food” (“meat”). Paul told the Corinthians that was to be done “at home” (1Cor. 11:22, 34). Eating “food” was not something done on a specified day of the week.

OBJECTION: “Paul was not observing Sunday as Sabbath. When he left the meeting he walked several miles to the ship.”

ANSWER: New Testament Christians are not bound by Rabbinical tradition as to how far one may travel on the Sabbath. Anyone who views that as so important should note that Paul appears to have also been traveling on the previous Sabbath (Ac. 20:6).

## **B. Paul told the church at Corinth to take up their offerings on the first day.**

**1Cor. 16:2.** *“Upon the first day of the week let each one of you lay by him in store as he may prosper, that no collections be made when I Come.”*

Only one plausible reason accounts for Paul telling them to do this on the first day of the week. As in Acts 20, this was the day they assembled.

The claim of Sabbatarians that this is telling them to lay money aside “at home” will not wash. This was to be done so that no collections would be made when Paul came. If they laid their offerings aside at home, the collections would still need to be taken.

Why specify the first day of the week as the time to lay aside their offerings? They ordinarily received their pay at the end of each day (Matt. 20:8-12; Lev. 19:13). One could lay it aside any day. It makes no sense whatever to specify the day after the Sabbath unless they met on the day after the Sabbath.

When do Sabbatarians take their collections? They certainly don’t have their members set them aside on Sunday. They take their offerings when they meet on Saturday.

No doubt, Sabbatarians would be delighted to find a passage that said, “Now upon the Sabbath let each one of you lay by him in store that there be no collections when I come.”

By the way, where did the church ever take up an offering on the Sabbath?

That this refers to the weekly collections when the church assembled is evident because that is the only fair explanation that meets the stated objective—to avoid taking collections when he came.

OBJECTION: Some Bibles translate this, “lay by him at home” or in some way indicate the person was to do it privately.

ANSWER:

The overwhelming mass of Bibles translators indicate nothing of it being a private activity. Others indicate it was the offering at church.

Macnight renders it, “*let each one of you lay somewhat by itself...putting it into the treasury...*” The word, “thesaurizoon” (“in store”) means literally, “*put into the treasury.*” The phrase, “par heauto,” (“by him”), may be taken as the neuter reflexive pronoun and rendered, “by itself.” Paul intended that each week when they met, the money be set aside by itself so that it would be all collected when he came. The reason the “first day” is specified is that was the day they met.

**C. Revelation 1:10 says that John was “in the Spirit on the Lord’s day.”**

The natural import of these words is that on some day known as “the Lord’s,” John had a vision. While Sabbatarians have tried to make this out as Saturday, early Christian writers understood this as having reference to the day upon which Jesus arose. That is the natural import of the words.

Some would try to make this mean that John was projected in the Spirit to some time in the future known as the day of the Lord. That is unlikely. He was to write to the seven churches in Asia concerning their present condition. Rev. 1:19 says, “Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter;” This hardly sounds like John was in some far-off time warp.

The Greek is:

Rev. 1:10. *I was in the Spirit on the Lord’s day.*

egenomeen	en	Pneumati	En	tee	Kuriakee	heemera
I Came to be	in	Spirit	on	the	lord’s	day

The construction of other passages that speak of the day of the Lord is different.

1Thes. 5:2. *The day of the Lord.*

hee	heemera	Kuriou
the	day	of [the] Lord

2Pe. 3:10. *The day of the Lord.*

de	hee	heemera	Kuriou
But	the	day	of [the] Lord

1Cor. 1:8. *in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ*

en	tee	heemera	Tou	Kuriou	heemoon	Ieesou	Christou
in	the	day	The	Lord	of us	Jesus	Christ

1Cor. 5:5. *in the day of the Lord Jesus*

en	tee	heemera	Tou	Kuriou	Ieesou
in	the	day	of the	Lord	Jesus

2Cor. 1:14. *in the day of the Lord Jesus*

en	tee	heemera	Tou	Ieesou	Kuriou
in	the	day	of the	Lord	Jesus

Just as we read of the “Lord’s death” (1Cor. 11:26), “cup of the Lord” (1Cor. 11:27), “the Lord’s body” (1Cor. 11:29), “Lord’s table” (1Cor. 10:21), and the “lord’s supper” (1Cor. 11:20), so we have the “lord’s day” commemorating his resurrection. The early Fathers clearly used “Lord’s Day” to refer to the day of the resurrection upon which they met.

Note: for the answers to arguments for the “Lord’s Day” being the Sabbath, next below.

## VII. THE HISTORICAL RECORD CONFIRMS THAT EARLY CHRISTIANS HELD THEIR ASSEMBLIES ON SUNDAY, WHICH THEY CALLED THE “LORD’S DAY”

**Ignatius**, Bishop of Antioch of Syria, about 110 AD.

SHORT VERSION: “ Epistle To Magnesians, Chap. 9

*“If therefore those who were brought up in the ancient order of things have come to the possession of a new hope, no longer observing the Sabbath, but living in the observance of the Lord’s day on which also our life has sprang up again by Him and His death ...”*  
 --Ante-Nicene Fathers, Vol. I, p.62; (Ages Digital Library, Version 5, p. 126)

LONG VERSION: To The Magnesians, Chap. 9

*“Let us therefore no longer keep the Sabbath after the Jewish manner, and rejoice in days of idleness... But let every one of you keep the Sabbath after a spiritual manner... And after the observance of the Sabbath, let every friend of Christ keep the Lord’s Day as a festival, the resurrection-day, the queen and chief of all days [of the week]. Looking forward to this, the prophet declared, ‘To the end, for the eighth day,’ on which our life both sprang up again, and the victory over death was obtained in Christ...”*  
 --Ante-Nicene Fathers, Vol. I, p. 62, 63; (Ages Digital Library, Version 5, p. 127)

**Ignatius**, Bishop of Antioch of Syria, about AD 110, to the Trallians, Chapter 9, p. 70

*During the Sabbath He continued under the earth in the tomb in which Joseph of Arimathaea had laid Him. At the dawning of the Lord’s day He arose from the dead, according to what was spoken by Himself, “As Jonah was three days and three nights in the whale’s belly, so shall the Son of man also be three days and three nights in the heart*

*of the earth.” The day of the preparation, then, comprises the passion; the Sabbath embraces the burial; the Lord’s Day contains the resurrection.*

--Ante-Nicene Fathers, Vol. I, p.70, (Ages Digital Library, Version 5, p.141)

**Ignatius**, Bishop of Antioch of Syria, about AD 110 **to the Philippians**, Chapter 13.

*If any one fasts on the Lord’s Day or on the Sabbath, except on the paschal Sabbath only, he is a murderer of Christ.*

--Ante-Nicene Fathers, Vol. 1, p. 119 (Ages Digital Library, Version 5, p.231)

**Barnabas**, AD 100. Epistle of Barnabas, Chap. (15) XV

*“...we keep the eighth day with joyfulness, the day also on which Jesus rose again from the dead.”*

--Ante-Nicene Fathers, Vol. I, p. 147; (Ages Digital Library, Version 5, p. 273)

**The Didache**, or **Teaching of the Twelve Apostles**. AD 125. Chap. (14) XIV.

*“But every Lord’s day do ye gather yourselves together, and break bread”*

--Ante-Nicene Fathers, Vol. 7, p. 381; (Ages Digital Library, Version 5, p.764)

**Ancient Syriac Documents: The Teaching of the Apostles #2**, AD 125.

*“The apostles further appointed: On the first day of the week let there be service, and the reading of the Holy Scriptures, and the oblation: [communion] because on the first day of the week our Lord rose...”*

--Ante-Nicene Fathers, Vol. 8, p. 668; (Ages Digital Library, Version 5, p.1334)

**Justin Martyr**, AD 140. First Apology, Weekly Worship of The Christians, Chap. 67

*And we afterwards continually remind each other of these things. And the wealthy among us help the needy; and we always keep together; and for all things wherewith we are supplied, we bless the Maker of all through His Son Jesus Christ, and through the Holy Ghost. And on the day called Sunday, all who live in cities or in the country gather together to one place, and the memoirs of the apostles or the writings of the prophets are read, as long as time permits; then, when the reader has ceased, the president verbally instructs, and exhorts to the imitation of these good things. Then we all rise together and pray, and, as we before said, when our prayer is ended, bread and wine and water are brought, and the president in like manner offers prayers and thanksgivings, according to his ability, and the people assent, saying Amen; and there is a distribution to each, and a participation of that over which thanks have been given, and to those who are absent a portion is sent by the deacons. And they who are well to do, and willing, give what each thinks fit; and what is collected is deposited with the president, who succors the orphans and widows and those who, through sickness or any other cause, are in want, and those who are in bonds and the strangers sojourning among us, and in a word takes care of all who are in need. But Sunday is the day on which we all hold our common assembly, because it is the first day on which God, having wrought a change in the darkness and matter, made the world; and Jesus Christ our Savior on the same day rose from the dead. For He was crucified on the day before that of Saturn (Saturday); and on the day after that of Saturn, which is the day of the Sun, having appeared to His apostles and*

*disciples, He taught them these things, which we have submitted to you also for your consideration.*

--Ante Nicene Fathers, Vol. I, p. 186; (Ages Digital Library, Version 5, p.343)

**Justin Martyr, Dialog With Trypho, Chapter 10**

*"Is there any other matter, my friends, in which we are blamed, than this, that we live not after the law, and are not circumcised in the flesh as your forefathers were, and do not observe sabbaths as you do?"*

--Ante-Nicene Fathers, Vol. I, page 199 (Ages Digital Libery, Version 5, p.374)

**Clement of Alexandria, AD 153-193-217. "The Stromata, or Miscellanies," Book 7, Chapter 12.**

*"He, in fulfillment of the precept, according to the Gospel, keeps the Lord's day, when he abandons an evil disposition,...glorifying the Lord's resurrection in himself."*

--Ante-Nicene Fathers, Vol. II, p. 545; (Ages Digital Library, Version 5, p. 1107)

**Bardesan of Edessa, AD 180. Memoirs of Edessa "The Book of the Laws of divers Countries"**

*"...wherever we are, we are all called after the one name of Christ—Christians. On one day, the first of the week, we assemble ourselves together..."*

--Ante-Nicene Fathers, Vol. 8 (VIII), p.733 **Ancient Syriac Documents**; (Ages Digital Library, Version 5, p.1459)

**Tertullian, AD 200. Apology, Chapter 16**

*...we devote Sun-day to rejoicing, from a far different reason than Sun-worship,...*

--Ante-Nicene Fathers, Vol. 3 (III), p. 31; (Ages Digital Library, Version 5, p. 54)

**Tertullian, AD 200. PART 1, #2, On Idolatry Chapter 14, "Of Blasphemy, One of St. Paul's Sayings"**

*"The Holy Spirit upbraids the Jews with their holy-days. 'Your Sabbaths, and new moons, and ceremonies' says He, 'My soul hateth' By us, to whom Sabbaths are strange... Not the Lord's day, not Pentecost, even if they had known them, even if they had known them, would they have shared with us; for they would fear lest they should seem to be Christians*

—Ante-Nicene Fathers, Vol. 3 (III), p. 70; (Ages Digital Library, Version 5, p. 128)

**Tertullian, AD 200. PART 1, #7 An Answer to the Jews, Chap. 2.**

*"In fine, let him who contends that the Sabbath is still to be observed...teach us that righteous men kept the Sabbath...and were thus rendered 'friends of God.'"*

—Ante-Nicene Fathers, Vol. 3 (III), p. 153; (Ages Digital Library, Version 5, p.274)

**Tertullian, AD 200. PART 1, #7 An Answer to the Jews, Chap. 4 "Of The Observance of the Sabbath."**

*"...the observance of the Sabbath is demonstrated to have been temporary."*

--Ante-Nicene Fathers, Vol. 3 (III), p. 155; (Ages Digital Library, Version 5, p.278)

**Tertullian**, AD 200. PART III, #3 On Prayer, Chap. 23, "Of Kneeling,"

*"We, however (just as we have received), only on day of the Lord's resurrection ought to guard not only against kneeling, but every posture and office of solicitude; deferring even our businesses lest we give any place to the devil...."*

--Ante-Nicene Fathers Vol. 3, p.689; (Ages Digital Library, Version 5, p.1250)

**Cyprian**, Epistles of Cyprian 58, Paragraph 4

*For in respect of the observance of the eighth day in the Jewish circumcision of the flesh, a sacrament was given beforehand in shadow and in usage; but when Christ came, it was fulfilled in truth. For because the eighth day, that is, the first day after the Sabbath, was to be that on which the Lord should rise again, and should quicken us, and give us circumcision of the spirit, the eighth day, that is, the first day after the Sabbath, and **the Lord's day**, went before in the figure; which figure ceased when by and by the truth came, and spiritual circumcision was given to us.*

--Ante-Nicene Fathers, Vol. 5, p.354 (Ages Digital Library, p.732)

**Fabian, Bishop of Rome**, AD 250. VI. THE DECRETALS, Decrees, "The Decrees of the same,..." I

*"On each Lord's Day the oblation of the altar should be made by all men and women in bread and wine."*

-- Ante-Nicene Fathers, Vol. 8, p.641; (Ages Digital Library, Version 5, p.1297)

**Apostolical Constitutions**, AD 250, Book 2, Sec. 7 "On Assembling in the Church, Chapter 59 (LIX)

*THAT EVERY CHRISTIAN OUGHT TO FREQUENT THE CHURCH DILIGENTLY BOTH MORNING AND EVENING*

*LIX. When thou instructest the people, O bishop, command and exhort them to come constantly to church morning and evening every day, and by no means to forsake it on any account, but to assemble together continually; neither to diminish the Church by withdrawing themselves, and causing the body of Christ to be without its member. For it is not only spoken concerning the priests, but let every one of the laity hearken to it as concerning himself, considering that it is said by the Lord: "He that is not with me is against me, and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad." Do not you therefore scatter yourselves abroad, who are the members of Christ, by not assembling together, since you have Christ your head, according to His promise, present, and communicating to you. Be not careless of yourselves, neither deprive your Savior of His own members, neither divide His body nor disperse His members, neither prefer the occasions of this life to the word of God; but assemble yourselves together every day, morning and evening, singing psalms and praying in the Lord's house: in the morning saying the sixty-second Psalm, and in the evening the hundred and fortieth, but principally on the Sabbath-day. And on the day of our Lord's resurrection, which is the Lord's day, meet more diligently, sending praise to God that made the universe by Jesus, and sent Him to us, and condescended to let Him suffer, and raised Him from the dead. Otherwise what apology will he make to God who does not assemble on that day to hear the saving word*

*concerning the resurrection, on which we pray thrice standing in memory of Him who arose in three days, in which is performed the reading of the prophets, the preaching of the Gospel, the oblation of the sacrifice, the gift of the holy food?*

--Ante-Nicene Fathers, Vol. 7, p. 423; (Ages Digital Library, Version 5, p.839-840)

**Apostolical Constitutions**, AD 250, Book 5, Section 3, chapter 20

*Do you therefore fast, and ask your petitions of God. We enjoin you to fast every fourth day of the week, and every day of the preparation, and the surplusage of your fast bestow upon the needy; every Sabbath-day excepting one, and every Lord's day, hold your solemn assemblies, and rejoice: for he will be guilty of sin who fasts on the Lord's day, being the day of the resurrection.*

--Ante-Nicene Fathers, Vol. 7, page 449 (Ages Digital Library, Version 5, p.892)

**Apostolical Constitutions**, AD 250, Book 7, Section 2, chapter 20

*But keep the Sabbath, and the Lord's day festival; because the former is the memorial of the creation, and the latter of the resurrection. But there is one only Sabbath to be observed by you in the whole year, which is that of our Lord's burial, on which men ought to keep a fast, but not a festival.*

--Ante-Nicene Fathers, Vol. 7, p.469 (Ages Digital Library, Version 5, p.934)

**Apostolical Constitutions**, AD 250 Constitutions..., Book 7, Sec. 2, Chapter 30 (XXX)

*"On the day of the resurrection of the Lord, that is, the **Lord's day**, assemble yourselves together, without fail, giving thanks to God, and praising Him for those mercies God has bestowed upon you through Christ. . ."*

--Ante-Nicene Fathers, Vol. 7, p. 471; (Ages Digital Library, Version 5 p.937)

**Victorinus, Bishop of Petau**, AD 304. Creation of the World

*"On the former day (sixth) we are accustomed to fast rigorously, that on the Lord's day we may go forth to our bread with giving of thanks. And let the parascève become a rigorous fast, lest we should appear to observe any Sabbath with the Jews...which Sabbath He in His body abolished..."*

--Ante-Nicene Fathers, Vol. 7, p. 341-342; (Ages Digital Library p.698)

**Peter, AD 306, Bishop of Alexandria**, Canon 15 (XV)

*On the fourth day, indeed, because on it the Jews took counsel for the betrayal of the Lord; and on the sixth, because on it He himself suffered for us, But the Lord's day we celebrate as a day of joy, because on it He rose again, on which day we have received it for a custom not even to bow the knee.*

--Ante-Nicene Fathers, Vol. 6, p. 278; (Ages Digital Library p.512)

**Eusebius, AD 324, Bishop of Caesarea**. Church History, Book I, Chap. 4.

#8. "...They (Abraham and Isaac etc.) did not care about observing Sabbaths, nor do we."

-- Nicene & Post Nicene Fathers, Series 2, Vol. I, p. 87 (Ages Digital Library, Version 5, p.163)

**Eusebius, AD 324, Bishop of Caesarea.** Church History III, Chapter 27

*“The Sabbath and the rest of the discipline of the Jews they [the Ebionites] observed just like them [the Jews], but at the same time, like us, they celebrated the Lord’s days as a memorial of the resurrection of the Saviour.”*

--Nicene, & Post Nicene Fathers, Series 2, Vol. I, p. 159; (Ages Digital Library, Version 5, p.240)

**Eusebius, AD 324.**

“I think that he (the Psalmist) describes the morning assemblies in which we are accustomed to assemble throughout the world.” -Sabbath Manual, (Series II, Nicene & Post Nicene Fathers, Vol. I, p. 125)

From this it is clear that the early church had its day of assembly each first day of the week to eat the Lord’s supper. This was called, “The Lord’s Day” in remembrance of the day Jesus arose from the dead.

OBJECTION: “Did not Constantine or the Pope change the Sabbath? The Catholic church claims they did.”

ANSWER: It is obvious from this historical evidence that Christians were keeping Sunday long before Constantine. Except for the Ebionite heresy, there is no evidence that they held their services on Saturday. They did sometimes fast on Saturday but they held their regular church gatherings on Sunday.

Constantine made Christianity the state religion. Before that, Sunday was not a holiday. It was a work day like the others. Christians met at night to hold their services. Constantine made it a holiday but did not require it to be observed as the Sabbath.

As for claims of some obscure Catholic Catechism, the Catholic Church has made many false claims to bolster their having the only true church. They also claim that the Bible was given by them. That does not make them right.

## **VIII. THE SABBATH, AS ESTABLISHED IN THE OLD TESTAMENT, WAS NOT PRACTICAL AS A UNIVERSAL LAW.**

All of the Old Testament laws were good (Rom. 7:12; Gal. 3:21) but they were designed for a specific people (The Jews) with a temporal kingdom in a specific location (Palestine) rather than a universal spiritual kingdom. When Jesus sent his disciples into all the world he focused primarily on the Spirit rather than a national religion (John 4:21-24).

Restrictions about unclean meats, though good, were exchanged for emphasis on a clear conscience (Col. 2:16, 17). What came out of the heart was more important than what went into the belly (Mark 7:15-23).

Physical circumcision was replaced with circumcision of the heart (Col. 2:11).

Worshipping at a temple in Jerusalem was replaced with worshipping in spirit and in truth (John 4:21-24).

The physical rest of the Sabbath was changed to a spiritual rest in heaven (Hebrews 4).

The Sabbath laws are clearly local in nature.

The laws prohibiting lighting a fire on the Sabbath make sense in a semi-tropical area but are completely unreasonable in severely cold areas. Keeping a day of rest worked fine in Palestine when it was a nation but became a serious difficulty in other nations. Abiding by the dietary laws posed a serious barrier to reaching the gentiles (Gal. 2:11-14).

The Sabbath was required to be strictly kept from sundown to sundown. On pain of stoning it was forbidden to pick up sticks, build a fire or cook food (Num. 15:32-36; Ex. 16:23; 35:3). Even Adventists today can not strictly adhere to all these rules in frigid areas of the world.

The vision of Mrs. White of the Adventists that the Sabbath is kept in heaven is absurd. Does God's sun run on Jerusalem time? How would it be observed in heaven where the Bible says there is "no night there" (Rev. 22:5). Few realize it but from the time a day begins in Israel until the last hour has continued around the earth it takes 48 (not 24) hours. Thus, if people are scattered around the earth, those in heaven can not be observing the Sabbath with them on a 24 hour time period. They do not even keep the Sabbath at the same time.

How would those who travel in space observe the Sabbath from sundown to sundown? When people are on the moon, must they keep the Sabbath by Earth days or moon days? What about those who live in the far north or south? They have no sunset for weeks at a time.

In fact, on a round earth, one can travel in either direction and gain or lose a day. If they kept time by the sun, when they arrived at the place they started they would be observing a different day. To solve this, a purely arbitrary line has been established in mid-Pacific, based on Greenwich time in England, known as the International Date Line. When this is crossed, the day of the week is recalculated. Interestingly enough, at one point in working out the line, in the effort to get a group of islands on the same time, a rearrangement caused those who had been observing Sunday on some islands to be changed to meeting on Saturday.

Legalism results in the most confusing problems.

## **CONCLUSION:**

The Law was a schoolmaster to bring us to Christ. It was just and good, but could make nothing perfect. It was weak through the flesh. No man except Christ kept it perfectly, so it became the ministration of death, a demonstration of our need for God because we can not save ourselves by our works.

So, Christ came, and to demonstrate the righteousness of God's law, he fulfilled it. He then took it out of the way and nailed it to the cross. He did not just patch up the old (Mark 2:21, 22). He instituted a New Covenant with better promises. Under it, Christ paid for our sins with his blood and upon our acceptance of himself he imputed his righteousness to us. In addition God gave us the Holy Spirit to help us to conform to the image of his son.

Does that mean there is no law? May we sin that grace may abound? God forbid. Nay, by faith we establish the rule of Christ over us. But now we are under a new covenant, governed by the law of liberty.

What about those who insist on binding the Old Covenant?

1. They are under a curse. "Cursed is he who continues not in ALL things" (Gal. 3:10-13; 5:3; Rom. 4:15)
2. They have a veil upon his face so they cannot see. (2Cor. 3:15)
3. They are under a ministration of death and condemnation. (2Cor. 3:7, 9; Rom. 7:9-11; 1Cor. 15:56)
4. They are in spiritual adultery (Rom. 7:3, 41)
5. They are in a spiritual prison (Gal. 3:23)
6. They are under a yoke of bondage (Ac. 15:10)
7. They are fallen from grace (Gal. 5:4; Heb. 10:25-31; 1Cor. 10:1-12)

What about those who turn from the Old to the New Covenant?

1. They have a better source of guidance than the angels who gave the law. (Heb. 1:4 cf. Heb. 2:2; Gal. 3:19; Ac. 7:53; Ex. 23:20; Num. 20:16)
2. Their loyalty is to one who has more glory than Moses who administered the Old Covenant (Heb. 3:3; 2Cor. 3:1-18; Ex. 34:28-35)
3. They are better than those who return to the law (Heb. 6:9; Gal. 5:4; 4:7)
4. They have a better high priest (After the order of Melchizedek) (Heb. 7:7)
5. They have a better hope (Heb. 7:18, 19; Rom. 8:23, 24, 31-39!)
6. They have a better covenant (Heb. 7:22; 8:6, 8, 13), a new one (2Co. 3:6, 14)
7. They have a mediator with a more excellent ministry than under Moses. (Heb. 8:6; 9:15; 12:24; 1Tim. 2:5)
8. They have a greater and more perfect tabernacle (Heb. 9:11, 24; 8:2)
9. They have a better sacrifice (Heb. 9:23; 10:1, 19)
10. They have a better possession and an abiding one (Heb. 10:34 cf. 10:39)
11. They have a better country (Heb. 11:16)
12. They have a better resurrection (Heb. 11:35) than mere resurrection to die again as they sometimes did.
13. They have something better provided in that, apart from Christians, those under Moses cannot be made perfect. (Heb. 11:40)
14. They have blood which speaks better (calls for mercy) than that of Abel (which called for vengeance) (Heb. 12:24)