

HOW WAS THE SABBATH CHANGED?

The Bible begins with a garden of Eden which was lost when Adam and Eve sinned, and closes with a new earth, a new garden of Eden so-to-speak, where every inhabitant is an overcomer of sin. Adam and Eve walked in the first Eden with God, and only overcomers will walk in the new earth with God. The ten commandments which reflect the holy principles of a holy God, were Adam's and Eve's guide to God's will, and will always guide as God will always exist. In fact, the lives of the redeemed will be a perfect reflection of those holy principles. And as Adam and Eve kept the seventh-day Sabbath in holy Eden (Genesis 2:1-3), so the Bible says that the redeemed will keep it forever in the new earth (Isaiah 66:22,23).

In our last four studies we have found that both the Ten Commandments and the seventh-day Sabbath are a part of God's truth throughout all of the ages between the two Edens. This raises two very serious and important questions. First, why do many fine people today believe that the Ten Commandments were done away with at the death of Christ? We have already answered that. But the second question we must also consider. What about the seventh-day Sabbath? Many lovely people believe that it has also been done away with since Christ's death, and that Sunday is to be kept as a memorial of His resurrection. Is this true? In this lesson we need to further examine the Bible to see if a change is really taught by its writers.

1. First, doesn't the New Testament contain texts about the first day of the week? Yes, there are eight of them. Summarize what they say.

(a) Matthew 28:1 _____
 (Mark 16:1,2; 16:9; Luke 24:1; and John 20:1 all deal with exactly the same thing. But they say nothing about worshipping on that day. So the first five of the eight are simple records of an event.)

(b) John 20:19 _____
 (Late in the afternoon of the resurrection, they were hiding, not worshipping.)

(c) Acts 20:7,8 _____
 (This took place about 30 years after the resurrection. As days were counted from sundown in Bible times, Paul was preaching on Saturday night and traveling on Sunday. There is no hint of a special sacredness of a new worship day. Just previously, in Acts 13, 16, 17, and 18, Paul and the apostles were all keeping the Sabbath.)

(d) 1 Corinthians 16:1,2 _____
 (You will notice that this passage says nothing about church or a day of worship. Rather Paul wanted them to put aside something weekly, probably at home, so that when he came he could quickly gather their gifts and take them to the poor in Jerusalem.)

2. What about the "Lord's day" in Revelation 1:10? Wasn't it Sunday? Quickly review it. Also re-read Matthew 12:8 and Exodus 20:10 and summarize the Bible's only definition of the term.

3. Doesn't the Bible teach us that Sunday was to be kept as a "memorial" of the resurrection of Jesus? The Bible does give us one memorial of the resurrection. What is it in Romans 6:3-5?

4. Two summary statements, one by a Protestant writer, the other by a Catholic writer, help us to understand better what we are trying to clarify.
- (a) R. W. Dale, a Congregationalist: "It is quite clear that, however rigidly or devotedly we may spend Sunday, we are not keeping the Sabbath. . . . The Sabbath was founded on a specific, divine command. . . . There is not a single sentence in the New Testament to suggest that we incur any penalty by violating the supposed sanctity of Sunday."---The Ten Commandments, pages 127-129.
 - (b) Cardinal James Gibbons, a Roman Catholic: "You may read the Bible from Genesis to Revelation, and you will not find a single line authorizing the sanctification of Sunday. The Scriptures enforce the religious observance of Saturday, a day which we never sanctify."---Faith of Our Fathers, page 86, 1895 edition.
5. If the Bible is silent about any change in the Sabbath by Christ or the apostles after Christ's resurrection, how, when, by whom, was the Sabbath then changed? Does the Bible say anything about an unwarranted change? Does it predict any attempt by man to change God's holy day?
- (a) Even in Paul's day, what did he say was happening? 2 Thessalonians 2:1-4,7.

(Terms like "man of sin," "mystery of iniquity," refer to a power characterized by lawlessness. Many Bible translations translate the terms this way. There was COMPROMISE, even in the early, first century Christian church.)

- (b) The slow turning from God's Sabbath to Sunday is the sad record of the second and third centuries, AD. Then in the 300s, AD, a Roman general, CONSTANTINE, ambitious for the throne, adopted Christianity to gain political advantage, and a spirit of worldliness and paganism were incorporated into the faith and worship of the professed followers of Christ. He issued, on March 7, 321, the first law ever given making Sunday a day of rest. It read: "On the venerable Day of the Sun let the magistrates and people residing in the cities rest, and let all workshops be closed. In the country, however, persons engaged in agriculture may freely and lawfully continue their pursuits; because it often happens that another day is not so suitable for grain-sowing or for vine-planting; lest by neglecting the proper moment for such operations the bounty of heaven should be lost."---Codex Justinianus, translated by Philip Schaff, History of the Christian Church, Vol. III, page 380.

(The Christian church followed the leadership of Constantine, counseling Christian followers away from "Judaizing" on the Sabbath, and transferred the obligations of the seventh day to the first day of the week, which they called the Lord's day.)

- (c) Do you remember our study of Daniel 7? (See lesson 15.) The fourth, dreadful beast had ten horns, and then a little horn that came up among the ten. Form a description of this little horn power from Daniel 7:19-25.

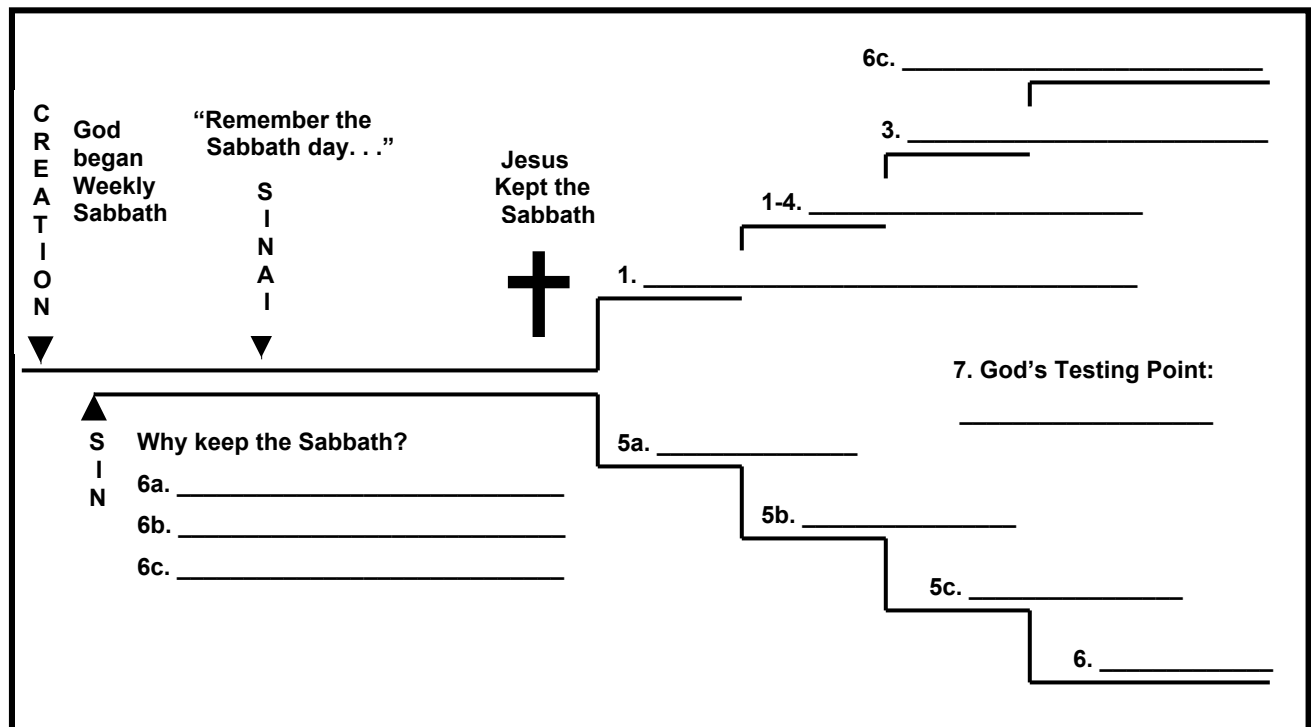
(If the fourth beast, pagan Rome, was divided into ten kingdoms, as it was from 350-476 AD, and the little horn power came up to uproot three of the ten, which it did by the early 500s, AD, then the description and timing clearly reveal that it represents papal

Rome. The earliest known pronouncement where papal Rome gives special acknowledgement to Sunday is found in the twenty-eighth Canon of the Third Council of Orleans in 538 AD: "Agricultural labor ought to be laid aside, in order that people may not be prevented from attending church.")

6. The conclusion that we must come to is that millions of sincere Christians today keep Sunday because it is CUSTOM, not because of any Bible command. At first the church COMPROMISED, then CONSTANTINE added pagan ideas to that compromise, the Roman CHURCH advocated Sunday worship, and CUSTOM today prevails. A closing question that we need to ask is, Why has Satan continually attacked God's law and particularly God's Sabbath? How do these three texts help to find the answer?

- (a) Exodus 31:17 _____
- (b) Ezekiel 20:12 _____
- (c) Isaiah 66:22,23 _____

7. In contrast to the little horn's work of seeking to change times and laws, where does loyalty to God in all things lead? Daniel 7:26,27.



Lesson 23, HOW WAS THE SABBATH CHANGED?

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Notes for the Instructor

Purpose of lesson 23: The purpose is clarified in the second paragraph of the lesson. The attempt must be made throughout to be crystal clear, but without unkindness to other churches, and with much charity for individuals who really believe in Sunday worship as in honor of the resurrection. The lesson has only two main sections. First, does the Bible give any evidence of the transfer of worship from Saturday to Sunday, and second, if there is no Bible evidence, then is there Biblical prediction that it will be illegally changed?

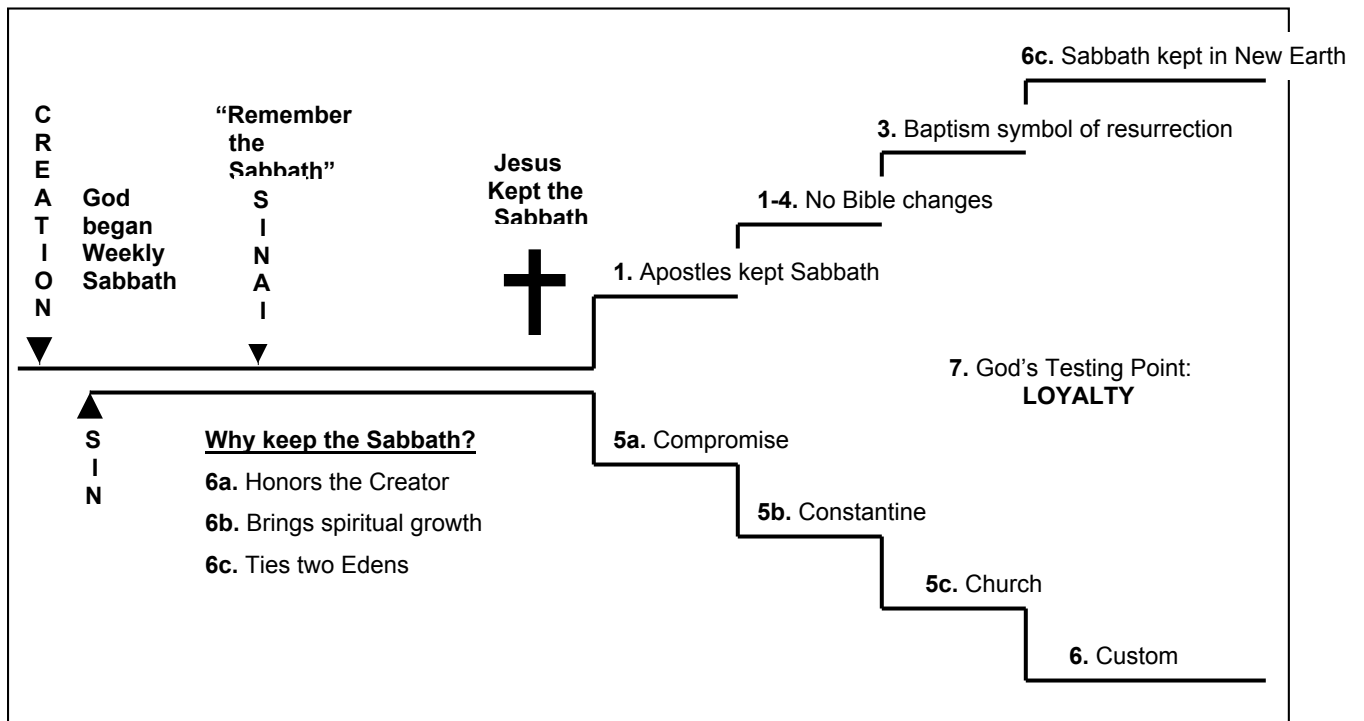
During the lesson itself: You may want to comment on the breaking of bread in connection with question 1(c). It may or may not be the Lord's supper. Compare Acts 2:42,46 where the disciples broke bread daily from house to house. The observance of communion is not proof that the first day was a day of worship.

It is strongly advised that the instructor study carefully the comments on Colossians 2:1 - 17 (question 4) in the Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary, Vol. 7, pages 204-206 in the event that a question is raised. Note also the quotation from Albert Barnes, found on page 206.

The three points in question 7 could be summarized as follows: 7(a) The Sabbath gives authority to God; 7(b) The Sabbath gives God's people special opportunity for spiritual growth; and 7(c) The Sabbath ties Eden lost to Eden restored. All of these interfere with the deceptions of Satan, thus he wars against the Sabbath.

Appeal: Make another strong appeal to the student to pledge his loyalty to God Himself, in his pledging of loyalty to God's holy day.

Illustration: Note the visual attempt to show the pathways of truth and error, and the truth that they keep getting further apart.



Introduction**Genesis 2:1-3**

¹Thus the heavens and the earth, and all the host of them, were finished. ²And on the seventh day God ended His work which He had done, and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had done. ³Then God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because in it He rested from all His work which God had created and made.

Isaiah 66:22, 23

²² “For as the new heavens and the new earth
Which I will make shall remain before Me,” says the Lord,
“So shall your descendants and your name remain.
²³ And it shall come to pass
That from one New Moon to another,
And from one Sabbath to another,
All flesh shall come to worship before Me,” says the Lord.

1a. Matthew 28:1

¹Now after the Sabbath, as the first *day* of the week began to dawn, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came to see the tomb.

Answer: On the first day of the week (Sunday), after the Sabbath, the ladies went to the tomb of Jesus to complete their embalming which they had been able to complete on Friday, the day Jesus died.

Mark 16:1, 2; 16:9

¹Now when the Sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, Mary *the mother* of James, and Salome bought spices, that they might come and anoint Him. ²Very early in the morning, on the first *day* of the week, they came to the tomb when the sun had risen.

Luke 24:1

¹Now on the first *day* of the week, very early in the morning, they, and certain *other women* with them, came to the tomb bringing the spices which they had prepared.

John 20:1

¹Now the first *day* of the week Mary Magdalene went to the tomb early, while it was still dark, and saw *that* the stone had been taken away from the tomb.

1b. John 20:19

¹⁹Then, 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, Jesus came and stood in the midst, and said to them, “Peace *be with you.*”

Answer: The disciples were hiding, afraid of the Jews, they were not worshipping or celebrating the Resurrection.

1c. Acts 20:7, 8

⁷Now on the first *day* of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul, ready to depart the next day, spoke to them and continued his message until midnight. ⁸There were many lamps in the upper room where they were gathered together.

Answer: Paul preached Saturday evening until midnight, in anticipation that he would be leaving in the morning (Sunday morning).

1d. 1 Corinthians 16:1, 2

¹Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given orders to the churches of Galatia, so you must do also: ²On the first *day* of the week let each one of you lay something aside, storing up as he may prosper, that there be no collections when I come.

Answer: The focus is not worship, but putting aside funds to be taken by Paul when he went to Jerusalem.

2a. Revelation 1:10

¹⁰I was in the Spirit on the Lord's Day, and I heard behind me a loud voice, as of a trumpet,

Matthew 12:8

⁸For the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath."

Exodus 20:10

¹⁰but the seventh day *is* the Sabbath of the Lord your God.

Answer: Jesus is "Lord . . . of the Sabbath" and the "7th day is the Sabbath of the Lord you God", so when John refers to a day as "the Lord's Day", he is talking about the 7th day Sabbath.

3. Romans 6:3-5

³Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? ⁴Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

⁵For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be *in the likeness* of His resurrection,

Answer: Baptism is how we participate and celebrate the resurrection of Jesus, not worshipping on Sunday.

4. No Texts

5a. 2 Thessalonians 2:1-4, 7

¹Now, brethren, concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, we ask you, ²not to be soon shaken in mind or troubled, either by spirit or by word or by letter, as if from us, as though the day of Christ had come. ³Let no one deceive you by any means; for *that Day will not come* unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition, ⁴who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.

⁷For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only He who now restrains *will do so* until He is taken out of the way.

Answer: People were being deceived about Jesus promise to return and turned people to worship him in the place of God

5b. No Text**5c. Daniel 7:19-25**

¹⁹“Then I wished to know the truth about the fourth beast, which was different from all the others, exceedingly dreadful, *with* its teeth of iron and its nails of bronze, *which* devoured, broke in pieces, and trampled the residue with its feet; ²⁰and the ten horns that *were* on its head, and the other *horn* which came up, before which three fell, namely, that horn which had eyes and a mouth which spoke pompous words, whose appearance *was* greater than his fellows.

²¹“I was watching; and the same horn was making war against the saints, and prevailing against them, ²²until the Ancient of Days came, and a judgment was made *in favor* of the saints of the Most High, and the time came for the saints to possess the kingdom.

²³“Thus he said:

‘The fourth beast shall be
A fourth kingdom on earth,
Which shall be different from all *other* kingdoms,
And shall devour the whole earth,
Trample it and break it in pieces.

²⁴ The ten horns *are* ten kings
Who shall arise from this kingdom.

And another shall rise after them;
He shall be different from the first *ones*,
And shall subdue three kings.

²⁵ He shall speak *pompous* words against the Most High,
Shall persecute the saints of the Most High,
And shall intend to change times and law.
Then *the saints* shall be given into his hand
For a time and times and half a time.

Answer: The 4th Beast power would change from primarily a political kingdom to a religious kingdom and would claim to take the place of God and change His law (The 10 Commandments).

6a. Exodus 31:17

¹⁷It is a sign between Me and the children of Israel forever; for *in* six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, and on the seventh day He rested and was refreshed.”

Answer: The Sabbath is a “sign” that identifies people who are loyal to the God who created them.

6b. Ezekiel 20:12

²⁰hallow My Sabbaths, and they will be a sign between Me and you, that you may know that I *am* the Lord your God.’

Answer: Worship of God on the “Sabbath” is a sign that He is the God of the worshiper.

6c. Isaiah 66:22, 23

²² “For as the new heavens and the new earth
Which I will make shall remain before Me,” says the Lord,
“So shall your descendants and your name remain.
²³ And it shall come to pass
That from one New Moon to another,
And from one Sabbath to another,
All flesh shall come to worship before Me,” says the Lord.

Answer: The Sabbath will continue to be part of God’s family even in the “new earth”.

7. Daniel 7:26, 27

²⁶ ‘But the court shall be seated,
And they shall take away his dominion,
To consume and destroy *it* forever.
²⁷ Then the kingdom and dominion,
And the greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven,
Shall be given to the people, the saints of the Most High.
His kingdom *is* an everlasting kingdom,
And all dominions shall serve and obey Him.’

Answer: The 4th Beast power will have his power taken away and the power will be given to the saints of the Most High and they shall serve and obey Him in heaven, just as they served and obeyed Him on this earth.