

# From Sunday to Sabbath: Why I Switched

By Doug Batchelor

I haven't always believed that the seventh day was the Sabbath. Even though I'm half Jewish, when I first heard the claim that the Sabbath was on the seventh day, I was still observing Sunday and didn't want to believe that Saturday was the Sabbath. *How could so many people be wrong and so few be right?* I wondered.

**So what convinced me** to keep the Sabbath on the seventh day? Several things. One important factor was that Christians seemed to disagree on the reasons for keeping Sunday!

## Why keep Sunday?

**It's Jewish.** Some people claimed that the seventh-day Sabbath is strictly a Jewish day. But the Bible says that the Sabbath was one of the things God made at Creation (Genesis 2:2, 3). How many Jews were there in the world back then? None. So God made the Sabbath for the entire human race. That's why Jesus said that "the Sabbath was made for man," (Mark 2:27) for everyone, not just for the Jews.

**Change of the calendar.** Other Christians protest that the calendar has been changed so many times we can't know which day is the Sabbath. It is true that the calendar has been changed several times. However, these changes never affected the order for days of the week, only the numbering of the days of the month.

The most recent example occurred in 1582, when Pope Gregory XIII ordered that Thursday, October 4, should be followed by Friday, October 15. The calendar was changed, but the weekly cycle wasn't affected.

Furthermore, Jews have been keeping the seventh-day Sabbath for millenniums. It's inconceivable that an entire nation of people scattered all over the globe might become confused about which day of the week was the Sabbath!

There is one more thing: If the Jews have the wrong Sabbath, then everyone else has the wrong Sunday, because according to the Bible, Jesus rose on the first day of the week, the day after the Sabbath (see Matthew 28:1).

**In honor of the resurrection.** And that brings up another reason many people offer for observing Sunday. "Its in honor of the resurrection," they say. There's just one problem with that reason. There's not a single Bible text that says the Sabbath was changed from the seventh day to the first in honor of Jesus' resurrection.

Some people point to the fact that the disciples met together on resurrection Sunday, which is true. But they weren't meeting to celebrate the day. They were huddled together "for fear of the Jews" (John 20: 19). It's also true that Jesus met with them that evening. But you'll search the Gospel accounts of that meeting in vain for any evidence that Jesus told them this was the new Sabbath. (See Mark 16:12-14; Luke 24:36-49; John 20:19-30)

**No more Ten commandments.** Then there are those who claim that they observe Sunday instead of the Sabbath because the Ten Commandments have been abolished. I find that reason to be quite strange today, because I have never met a Christian who supported breaking the other nine. And now many of these very same Christians are lobbying to have the Ten Commandments posted in public places all over the United States in order to get

America back to its moral roots!

Paul was a firm believer in the Ten Commandments. He said that “through the law we become conscious of sin,” and, “I would not have known what sin was except through the law (Romans 3:20; 7:7). And James called the Ten commandments “the perfect law that gives freedom (James 1:25).”

**The New Testament church.** Some people suggest that the New Testament church changed the Sabbath to Sunday. I have found eight references to the first day of the week (Sunday) in the New Testament, but none of them says anything about God's changing the Sabbath to Sunday. Six of the eight Sunday references simply point to Christ's resurrection. That leaves two references to Sunday elsewhere.

The first one is in Acts 20:7, which says that Paul preached to a group in Troas on the first day of the week. Some people claim that this shows a trend toward Sunday observance in the New Testament. But a careful examination of the facts explains why Luke, the author of Acts, called attention to this gathering on the first day of the week. It was an all-night meeting, because Paul was leaving the next day. Even back then, I don't think people were accustomed to attending all-night church services on a regular basis! So, far from indicating a trend toward Sunday observance, Luke appears to have called attention to this meeting being held on the first day of the week because an all-night service was so unusual.

### **Church offering or home bookkeeping?**

The second New Testament reference to the first day of the week (apart from those in the resurrection story) is found in I Corinthians 16:1, 2. Paul had asked all the churches in Greece and Asia

Minor to collect a famine-relief offering for the Jewish Christians in Judea. He then made a tour of all those churches, picking up their contributions, which he delivered in person to the church leaders in Jerusalem.

Here is what Paul instructed the Christians in Corinth: “Now about the collection for God's people: Do what I told the Galatian churches to do. On the first *day* of every week, each of you should set aside a sum of money in keeping with his income, saving it up, so that when I come no collections will have to be made.” Advocates of Sunday suggest Paul was referring to the collection of an offering at church.

However, The King James Version says, “Let every one of you *lay by him* in store,” (Italics added) which is what the Greek literally says. So Paul's recommendation was that each person set aside his or her contribution week by week at home, not at church.

**When I looked at all the evidence**, it became clear to me that, while no one is saved by keeping the Ten Commandments, that code of laws is still God's standard of morality for Christians. They aren't called the Ten Recommendations or the Ten Suggestions. And there's no evidence that God changed His mind about the Sabbath in the New Testament. The Bible says that Jesus is “the same yesterday and today and forever” (Hebrews 13:8).

So I decided to keep the Sabbath the way the Bible says, not as a duty, but because I want to please my heavenly Father—and I've received a blessing from it ever since. Jesus said, " 'If you love me, you will obey what I command.' " (John 14:15)

This is why I keep the Sabbath.

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