

Why Saturday Church?



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Reggie Whiddon / Pastor / HCAssembly 2019

In the western culture, attending church on a regular basis is popular among many people. In America, attending church services on Sunday is as traditional as “baseball, hot dogs, apple pie and Chevrolet.” It is just the norm. However, some people have abandoned that tradition and have made a ‘new tradition’ of church attendance on Saturday. Why would anyone depart from a tradition that is part of American culture; one that grandma and grandpa probably participated in? There are volumes of books written about this subject, therefore, it is not the intent to re-write what many great authors have described in abundant detail already. However, the intent is to summarize, in easy to understand language, why so many have abandoned the Sunday tradition in favor of a different day to participate in church attendance.

IT IS ALL ABOUT THE SABBATH

The book of Genesis reveals the creation account of how God created heaven, earth, all living things (including human life), etc., in six days. On the seventh day, He rested from His labor. He not only rested on the seventh day, He also blessed and sanctified it

And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made. [Genesis 2:3 KJV]

In other words, God made the seventh day unlike the other days; this one He set apart as different. This one also has a unique name; Sabbath, which means rest.

When God, as creator and designer, called this day sanctified, set apart from all others, He did so on the seventh day. It was His decision; not a day to be chosen by man. He never gave mankind the option to choose another day as the Sabbath. On the contrary, God spoke clearly to

Moses, while giving the Ten Commandments to him. The fourth commandment coming from God to Moses was

“Remember the Sabbath day, to **keep** it holy” [Exodus 20:8 KJV].

The wording here is paramount to understand how important this is; Remember the Sabbath day, that is, be aware of it, and keep it holy (set apart). Furthermore, God said

You have six days each week for your ordinary work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath day of complete rest, an official day for holy assembly. It is the LORD's Sabbath day, and it must be observed wherever you live. [Leviticus 23:3 NLT]

Moses was never given instructions to observe any other day as a holy day, rather, God reminded him that the Sabbath day was already holy. His instructions were to remember it and keep it for its original purpose! Only God can decide what is holy unto Him. Man hasn't been given authority to purpose anything to be holy or replace what God has made holy.

SABBATH WAS UNDERSTOOD

In an honest reading and searching the Bible for truths, patterns, and understandings, it is obvious that the men, women, and children understood what God said about the Sabbath. It was to be a seventh day weekly memorial to celebrate His creation. Throughout the entire Bible, the Sabbath was recognized, honored, and revered. Never was there a question, or even a mention, of changing God's instructions to mean something else. It was quite clear to everyone what He said and all of Israel kept the Sabbath as a holy day. Moses, all the prophets, kings, disciples, apostles, Paul, first century Christians, Jews, Gentiles, etc, all kept the Sabbath day holy and set apart. Jesus and others taught in the synagogue on Sabbath. It was His custom¹. He did not come to change the custom, but to honor

¹ “And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up: and, as his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and stood up for to read.” [Luke 4:16 KJV]

it². It was their understanding of what God intended to continue from creation. He set the Sabbath in place and everyone understood it and honored it.

SO, WHAT HAPPENED?

There is absolutely no biblical text stating that God, Jesus, or anyone else, ever changed the Sabbath. There is not even a hint of such a change anywhere in scripture; NONE! Not even one verse mentions it! However, it was changed long ago. It may shock you to know that the Roman Catholic Church takes full responsibility for the change.

It started when Emperor Constantine I, a pagan sun worshipper, came to power in A.D. 313, he legalized Christianity and made the first Sunday-keeping law on March 7, 321, which reads as follows:

“On the venerable Day of the Sun let the magistrates and people residing in cities rest, and let all workshops be closed.”³

Catholic leaders proudly proclaim:

“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, [the Catholic Church] never sanctify.”⁴

“The Catholic Church, by virtue of her divine mission, changed the day from Saturday to Sunday.”⁵

² “Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill.” [Matthew 5:17 KJV]

³ Codex Justinianus 3.12.3, trans. Philip Schaff, History of the Christian Church, 5th ed. (New York, 1902), 3:380, note 1.

⁴ Faith of Our Fathers, 92nd ed., p.89.

⁵ The Catholic Mirror, official publication of James Cardinal Gibbons, Sep. 23, 1893.

“Protestants do not realize that by observing Sunday, they accept the authority of the spokesperson of the Church, the Pope.”⁶

“Of course the Catholic Church claims that the change from Saturday Sabbath to Sunday was her act...And the act is a mark of her ecclesiastical authority in religious things.”⁷

“Sunday is our mark of authority.the church is above the Bible, and this transference of Sabbath observance is proof of that fact.”⁸

“Is it not strange that those who make the Bible their only teacher should inconsistently follow in this matter, the tradition of the Catholic Church?”⁹

ONE MORE THOUGHT PROVOKING QUOTE...

“But since Saturday, not Sunday, is specified in the Bible, isn’t it curious that non-Catholics, who profess to take their religion directly from the Bible and not from the Church, observe Sunday instead of Saturday? Yes, of course, it is inconsistency, but this change was made about fifteen centuries before Protestantism was born, and by that time the custom was universally observed. They have continued the custom, even though it rests upon the authority of the Catholic Church, and not upon an explicit text from the Bible. That observance remains as a reminder of the Mother Church from which the non-Catholic sects broke away, like a boy running away from home, but still carrying in his pocket a picture of his mother, or lock of her hair.”¹⁰

ORIGINAL SABBATH ABANDONED

Clearly history reveals how the day God set aside to be Holy was changed to another day. For three centuries, Sabbath was observed on the seventh day, as God commanded. Out of convenience and desire to fit in with the

6 Our Sunday Visitor, February 5, 1950

7 H.F. Thomas, Chancellor of Cardinal Gibbons.

8 Catholic Record of London, Ontario, Sept 1, 1923

9 The Question Box, Cardinal Gibbons, p. 179

10 The Faith of Millions, p. 473

world, the day was changed to Sunday. Surely, there was some resistance to the change at the beginning, however, after many centuries have gone by, nearly all resistance has ended. Sunday has become the accepted “Lord’s Day” and even renamed as Christian Sabbath day. Most all churchgoers and worshippers attend Sunday worship services, without even giving thought that the day was changed. Most have no clue. If asked, “why do you attend church on Sunday,” the answer would probably be, “because that is the day we always go.” We have been so conditioned and comfortable to fit in with tradition, that we have ignorantly ignored God’s Holy Day. Even though churchgoers enthusiastically attend houses of worship each Sunday morning, they are joining hands with the Roman Catholic Church and continue the marriage with her, even though the church claims authority over the Bible.

DOES IT REALLY MATTER WHICH DAY?

Of course it matters! The Biblical Sabbath Day is the only day God said to “remember and keep sanctified.” If believers have the freedom to pick and choose which day to observe as Sabbath, then the other nine commandments are also negotiable. While it may be more convenient to recognize Sunday over Sabbath as the day of rest and worship, obeying God is on His terms, not ours.

Most Christian believers, perhaps, are unaware of the history of the Sabbath change. I, too, was unaware and never really thought about it until I read a book exposing it. After reading the book five times and being convinced of the truth, I begin seeking what God would have me to do. Since that time, I have been enlightened, refreshed, and energized. Returning to the original, appointed day of worship, Sabbath, has changed my life and understanding of God’s Word. The Lord’s Sabbath is now a delight. God oftentimes winks at ignorance, however, once the truth is exposed, He requires deliberate obedience.

May I encourage you to study this subject in great detail? As you earnestly search the Scriptures for truth, you will find what is very dear to God’s heart. Once you are enlightened to the beauty of His Sabbath, you will be highly motivated to honor its beauty. There will most likely be a diminished desire to continue the man made tradition of Sunday worship. For sure,

Sunday worship will take a second place position because it can no longer satisfy, like Sabbath worship. Continuing the Sunday tradition will feel like you have missed the main event, in that, you arrived a day late. However, honoring the Sabbath, feels like having a front row seat during the main event . Once you experience the joy of sitting on the front row, sitting in the balcony is no longer appealing.

Experience the Sabbath - It's a delight!