

12 – Millions Fooled by a Myth (Sunday as a False Sabbath)



1

Don't Let it Happen to You



2

About 350 B.C., the great Greek philosopher, Aristotle, classified the spider as having six legs. For the next 20 centuries, it was accepted as fact. No one bothered to count and learn that, in actuality, spiders have eight legs!



3

Other myths have been more consequential. At the end of the eighteenth century doctors believed that sickness could be treated by bloodletting – draining blood from the patient's body. The first President of the United States, George Washington, died after nearly two quarts (liters) of blood were drawn from his veins, because he had a sore throat.



4

Could it be that a religious myth has slipped into the Christian church? Could it be that we are dealing with something much more important than a six- or eight-legged spider here?

In our last session, we discovered that the seventh-day of the week, Saturday, is God's true Sabbath. Yet millions of people worship on the first day of the week, believing it is the Bible Sabbath. Just like textbooks for 2,000 years taught, mistakenly, that spiders have six legs, so millions have accepted a myth regarding the Sabbath.

The reason you are attending this series of Bible presentations is because your heart longs for the truth, right? You want to know what God's word really says. God's word is the only safe guide for our lives.



5

We have learned that God has given us a special day each week—the Sabbath day—on which we worship Him and remember His work as our Creator.

We learned the Sabbath day is not just any day—but the seventh day of the week.

And we learned that the Sabbath will still be kept when this world ends and we are in heaven with our Creator.

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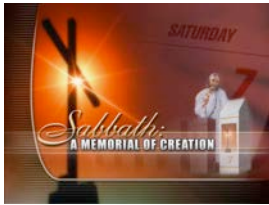


6

The Bible, from beginning to end, testifies to the fact that God has established a Sabbath day and that the Sabbath day is the seventh day of the week.

And in no place in the Bible does God indicate that He has changed that day of worship and rest – that sign between Himself and His people.

Let us review for a moment what we have found in these messages as we've studied God's Word.



7

When God finished creating Planet Earth and man, He created the Sabbath as a memorial of His Creation on the seventh day of that first week and throughout earth's history.



8

When God wrote His law at Mt. Sinai, He put in the very heart of those commandments, the Sabbath commandment.



9

Concerning His commandments, God, through Moses, told the people that they were not to take away from them or add to them.



10

(Text: Deuteronomy 4:2)

“Do not add to what I command you and do not subtract from it,



11

but keep the commands of the Lord your God that I give you.”
Deuteronomy 4:2.

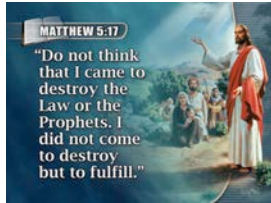
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12

Jesus Himself showed the same determination to exalt the Law that He had given on Mt. Sinai.

He told the people in the Sermon on the Mount that He did not come to set aside the Law of God but to fulfill it!



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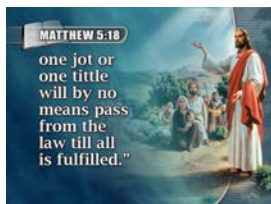
(Text: Matthew 5:17-19)

Notice His words: "Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill."



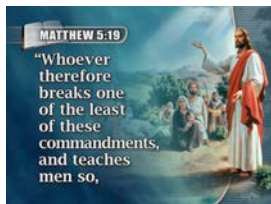
14

For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away,



15

one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled.



16

Whoever therefore breaks one of the least of these commandments, and teaches men so,



17

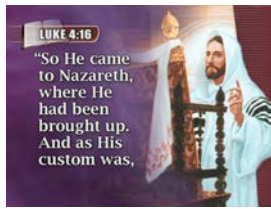
shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven..."
Matthew 5:17-19.



18

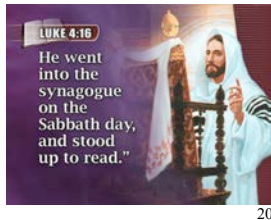
Jesus Himself demonstrated by His example that He wanted to honor the day that He and the Father had made holy in the first week of this world's history.

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(Text: Luke 4:16)

“So He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up. And as His custom was,

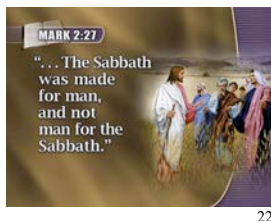


He went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and stood up to read.”

Luke 4:16.

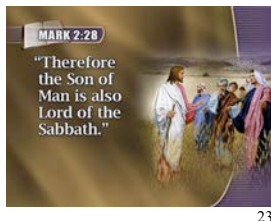


When the religious leaders accused Jesus’ disciples of violating the Sabbath, Jesus said He was the Lord of that day.



(Text: Mark 2:27, 28)

“The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath.

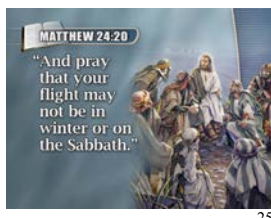


Therefore the Son of Man is also Lord of the Sabbath.”

Mark 2:27, 28.



Not only did Jesus honor the Sabbath day, but He asked His disciples to pray that they could keep His holy day far down into the future.



(Text: Matthew 24:20)

We find this request in Matthew 24:20: “And pray that your flight may not be in winter or on the Sabbath.”

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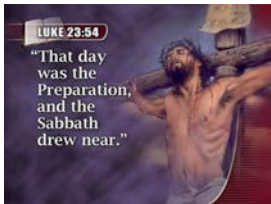
Here Jesus was speaking of the flight out of Jerusalem by His followers, just prior to its destruction by the Romans in A.D. 70.



27

Even if the Bible were our only source of information, we would still be able to determine which day of the week is the seventh day, or the Sabbath.

As we turn to the account of the crucifixion, the Book of Luke summarizes the events of that weekend.



28

(Text: Luke 23:54-56; 24:1)

After Christ died on the cross on Friday, the Bible comments: "That day was the Preparation, and the Sabbath drew near."



29

And the women who had come with Him from Galilee followed after, and they observed the tomb and how His body was laid.



30

Then they returned and prepared spices and fragrant oils. And they rested on the Sabbath according to the commandment.



31

Now on the first day of the week, very early in the morning, they, and certain other women with them,



32

came to the tomb bringing the spices which they had prepared. " Luke 23:54-56; 24:1.

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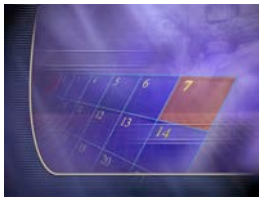
33

Most of the Christian world celebrates what is called Good Friday, in memory of Christ's death. They celebrate Easter Sunday, in memory of Christ's resurrection.



34

The Bible tells us that the day in between is the Sabbath, "according to the commandment."



35

Even though Luke wrote these words many years after the cross, he still referred to Sunday as "the first day of the week," and he still called the seventh day "Sabbath." The biblical record clearly distinguishes these two days.



36

In fact, the apostles continued to worship and preach on the seventh-day Sabbath for many years after the cross.



37

(Text: Acts 13:14, 42, 44)

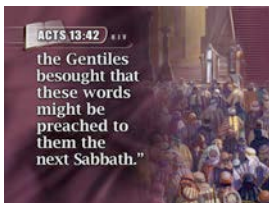
The Bible speaks of Paul and his companions when they visited Antioch they

"...went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and sat down."



38

Later, "When the Jews were gone out of the synagogue,



39

the Gentiles besought that these words might be preached to them the next Sabbath."

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"And the next Sabbath day came almost the whole city together to hear the word of God." Acts 13:42, 44.

It was Paul's custom to worship in the synagogue every Sabbath:



(Text: Acts 18:4)

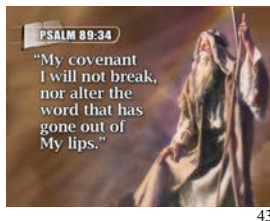
"And he reasoned in the synagogue every Sabbath, and persuaded both Jews and Greeks." Acts 18:4

From these biblical facts, one can easily see that there is no evidence that Christ or His disciples changed the day of worship. There is no record in the Bible commanding such a change!



None of the New Testament writers told of any change of the Sabbath day!

It would have been the lead article in every New Testament Book of the Bible had such a momentous change occurred!

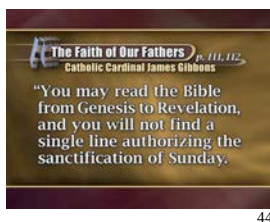


(Text: Psalm 89:34)

"My covenant I will not break, nor alter the word that has gone out of My lips." Psalm 89:34.

God has not changed His Law and no one has the right to alter God's Law!

Scholars from the various Sunday-keeping denominations acknowledge this.



Catholic Cardinal James Gibbons once wrote:

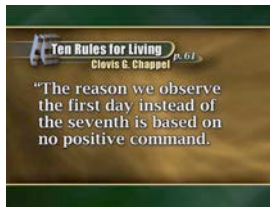
"You may read the Bible from Genesis to Revelation, and you will not find a single line authorizing the sanctification of Sunday.



The Scriptures enforce the religious observance of Saturday."

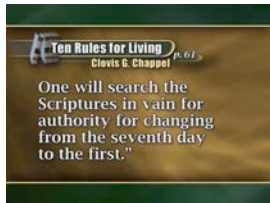
– The Faith of Our Fathers, pp. 111, 112.

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46

Clovis G. Chappell, a Methodist, makes the same point, when he says, "The reason we observe the first day instead of the seventh is based on no positive command."



47

One will search the Scriptures in vain for authority for changing from the seventh day to the first."

–Ten Rules for Living. p. 61.



48

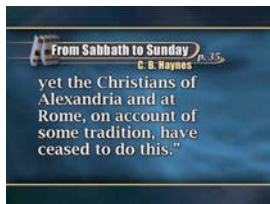
There is no biblical record that Christ or His disciples kept any other day or instructed others to do so!

"Then how did Sunday-keeping get started?" you might ask.



49

We learn from Socrates Scholasticus, a fifth-century historian: "Almost all churches throughout the world celebrate the sacred mysteries [the Lord's Supper] on the Sabbath of every week,



50

yet the Christians of Alexandria and at Rome, on account of some ancient tradition, have ceased to do this."

–Ecclesiastical History, as quoted by C. B. Haynes, From Sabbath to Sunday, p. 35.



51

Other historians record that many church groups observed the seventh-day Sabbath during the Middle Ages, and the practice is well-documented in modern times by Christians around the world.



52

Many church historians place the beginning of a gradual change of days sometime between A.D. 70 and 135, the dates when two bitter and bloody insurrections by the Jews were crushed by the Romans.

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53

The mounting hostility of the Romans against the Jews, coupled with the conflict between Jews and Christians, encouraged a rash of anti-Jewish literature, which, in turn, created strong anti-Jewish sentiment throughout the Roman Empire.

Christians became increasingly sensitive about identification with the Jews.

Since Sabbath-keeping tended to identify them with the Jews, many Christians began minimizing its obligations.



54

“Impressive indications (suggest) that Sunday observance was introduced at this time in conjunction with Easter-Sunday,



55

as an attempt to clarify to the Roman authorities the Christian distinction from Judaism.” Ibid., p. 237.



56

With this in mind, it is easy to see how Christians living in the capital city of the Roman Empire led the way in disassociating themselves from Sabbath-keeping.

They were located at the center where hostility was the strongest!



57

It is especially understandable that they might shy away from Sabbath-keeping, which was held in contempt by the Romans, in view of the fact that the church at Rome was composed predominantly of Gentiles, who were converts from paganism.



58

(Text: Romans 11:13)

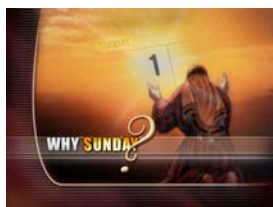
It is interesting to note how Paul addressed the church in Rome: “I am talking to you Gentiles...” Romans 11:13.

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59

These Christians, recently converted from paganism, were not as well established in Sabbath-keeping as were Jewish Christians, who had always practiced Sabbath-keeping.



60

But why was Sunday chosen rather than some other day of the week?

That's a good question!

The pagans in the Roman Empire had been sun worshipers for many years, celebrating Sunday as the sun's day.



61

The Roman emperors had even represented themselves as sun gods, stamping the emblem of the sun on their coins and buildings and demanding worship from their subjects.

Some theologians believe that the church saw an advantage in compromising with paganism.

By adopting a few pagan customs, the pagans would convert to Christianity more quickly and feel more at home.

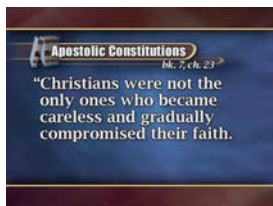
It would also benefit the empire by uniting its subjects into one great religion.



62

For centuries Sunday was celebrated, not as a holy day, but as a holiday.

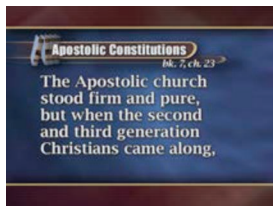
Later both days were kept as holy days.



63

We read the following from Apostolic Constitutions, chapter 23.

“Christians were not the only ones who became careless and gradually compromised their faith.



64

The Apostolic church stood firm and pure, but when the second and third generation Christians came along,

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65

we see evidence of compromise and apostasy. This started to erode the church's purity"



66

This drift into compromise was accented by the first civil Sunday law passed by the Roman Emperor Constantine on March 7, A.D. 321.



67

While still a pagan, he legislated: "On the venerable day of the Sun let the magistrates and people residing in the cities rest, and let all workshops be closed.



68

In the country, however, persons engaged in agriculture may freely and lawfully continue their pursuits."

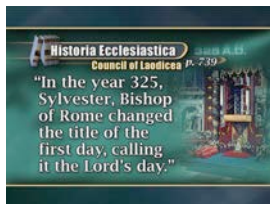
History of the Christian Church, 1902 ed., vol. 3, p. 380.



69

The next step in making Sunday-keeping an integral part of Christianity was taken by the Church of Rome in the Council of Laodicea.

It made the first religious law concerning the keeping of Sunday.



70

"In the year 325, Sylvester, Bishop of Rome, changed the title of the first day, calling it the Lord's day."

—Historia Ecclesiastica, p. 739.

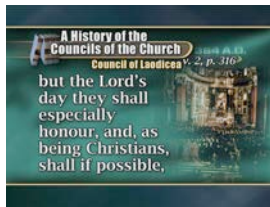
At another Council of Laodicea, held in 364, the following law was made:



71

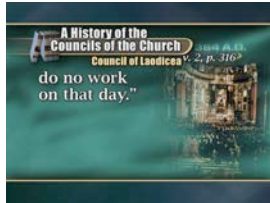
"Christians shall not Judaize [keep Sabbath] and be idle on Saturday, . . . but shall work on that day;

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72

but the Lord's day they shall especially honour, and, as being Christians, shall if possible,



73

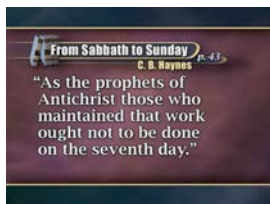
do no work on that day.”

—A History of the Councils of the Church, vol. 2, p. 316.



74

In spite of this, Christians were still observing the Sabbath in the sixth century, for Pope Gregory denounced



75

“As the prophets of Antichrist those who maintained that work ought not to be done on the seventh day.”

—The Law of Sunday, quoted in C. B. Haynes, From Sabbath to Sunday, p. 43.



76

Keep in mind that the Bible was not available to everyone at that time as it is now.

Doctrines were passed along by word of mouth until the laymen could scarcely distinguish between Scripture and tradition.



77

Most people hardly knew the truth as it was taught by Christ and His disciples.



78

Centuries passed, and the Protestant Reformation came, questioning many rites and traditions that had supplanted the teachings of God's Word.

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The cry of the reformation was, “The Bible and the Bible only as our rule of faith.”



Many, like Huss and Jerome, paid for their fidelity to the Bible by being burned at the stake!



However the Sabbath truth still lay almost dormant, hidden under centuries of tradition.

Few closely examined the Scriptures to find out what taught. They accepted what had been passed along through generations, never questioning whether it was fact or fiction.



Sometimes people accept things without questioning. For centuries, most people believed that the earth was the center of the universe. They believed the sun and all the planets revolved around the earth.

The free-thinking Copernicus challenged this myth.

He declared, “The sun, not the earth, was the center of the universe.” Do you know who opposed him the most?

Church leaders—religious teachers. They shouted, “You cannot change God’s heavens.”

Of course, Copernicus was not changing God’s heavens. He was simply exposing an aged tradition which had no solid scientific foundation. Copernicus was revealing the truth.

Merely believing something for a long time does not make it true. How was the Sabbath changed? Listen to the amazing following statements from Catholic authors whose church led the way in the change of the Sabbath to Sunday.



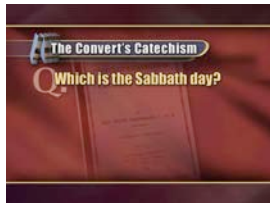
“The Catholic Church for over one thousand years before the existence of a Protestant, by virtue of her Divine mission,

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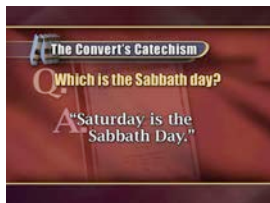
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changed the day from Saturday to Sunday.”
–The Christian Sabbath, p. 16.



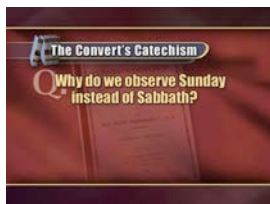
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From the Convert's Catechism we read:
“Question: Which is the Sabbath day?



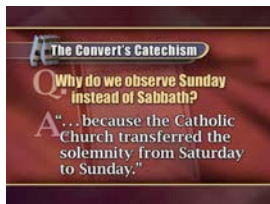
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Answer: Saturday is the Sabbath day.



87

Question: Why do we observe Sunday instead of Saturday?



88

Answer: ...because the Catholic Church transferred the solemnity from Saturday to Sunday.”
This change was made by the Council of Laodicea in A.D. 336.



89

Why, you may ask, did the Catholic Church, by its own free and open admission, institute this change?
The answer lies, at least in part, in the place of authority accorded by the Catholic Church to tradition.

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90

One of the main points of difference between Protestants and Catholics during the early days of the Reformation was over the authority of tradition in the church.

When Martin Luther declared that he must follow the Bible and the Bible only, he challenged many of the institutions of the Catholic Church that were based solely on tradition.

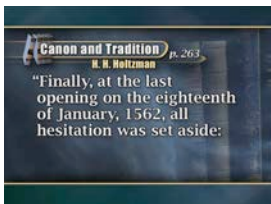


91

In fact, the Council of Trent was convened to decide exactly what position the Catholic Church should take on tradition and its relationship to the Bible.

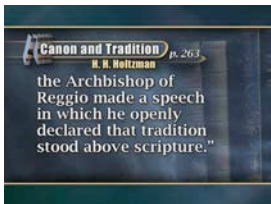
The question was finally settled.

Notice the summary given of the speech that turned the tide, as recorded by H. H. Holtzman:



92

“Finally, at the last opening on the eighteenth of January, 1562, all hesitation was set aside:



93

the Archbishop of Reggio made a speech in which he openly declared that tradition stood above Scripture.”

—Canon and Tradition, p. 263.

This acceptance of tradition as the basis for church doctrine is not supported in the Bible.



94

Do you remember the question Jesus asked the religious leaders of His day?

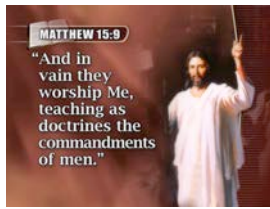


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(Text: Matthew 15:3, 9)

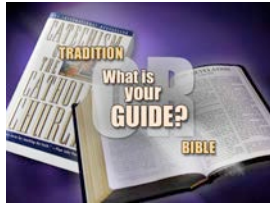
He asked, “Why do you also transgress the commandment of God because of your tradition?”

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96

And He added, "And in vain they worship me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men." Matthew 15:3, 9.



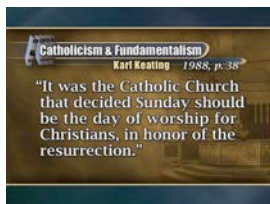
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Do you see the issue?
It is not merely a matter of days and numbers.
It is a matter of masters!
Will you follow Christ and the Bible—or human traditions?
That is the real issue!



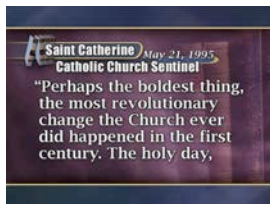
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Let's turn now from the historical sources to some modern discussion of the change of the Sabbath.



99

We notice this statement: "It was the Catholic Church that decided Sunday should be the day of worship for Christians in honor of the resurrection." –Karl Keating, Catholicism and Fundamentalism, 1988, p. 38.



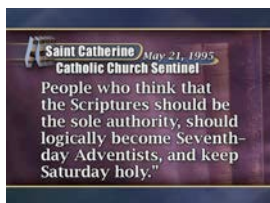
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Another statement that will cause you to stop and think comes from the Saint Catherine Catholic Church Sentinel, May 21, 1995. It said,
"Perhaps the boldest thing, the most revolutionary change that the Church ever did, happened in the first century. The holy day,



101

the Sabbath, was changed from Saturday to Sunday.... not from any directions noted in the Scriptures, but from the Church's sense of its own power....



102

People who think that the scriptures should be the sole authority should logically become Seventh-day Adventists, and keep Saturday holy."

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103

In the prophecy of Daniel 7, God revealed to Daniel that the “little horn” of Daniel 7:21, 25, was to



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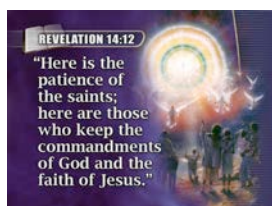
(Text: Daniel 7:25)

“think to change times and laws.”

WHAT A PROPHECY!

Here is a clear prediction that an earthly religious power would attempt to change God’s law. There is only one commandment in the ten that talks about time, and that is the Sabbath commandment.

But the prophecies also predict that not everyone will follow religious traditions. There will be a people prepared for the coming of Jesus who remember His commandments. They are described in this way:



105

(Text: Revelation 14:12)

“Here is the patience of the saints; here are those who keep the commandments of God and the Faith of Jesus.”

Revelation 14:12.



106

It goes without saying that those who have the faith of Jesus will, out of a heart of love for God, be keeping His commandments.



107

Yes, God asks us to REMEMBER Him as our Creator by keeping His holy day.

To do as He asks, means we show our loyalty to Him.

When a person keeps a man-made Sabbath, he is obeying man’s traditions.

When we discover God’s will, it is our joy to follow it. You see, it is really a matter of the heart.

A matter of love.

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108

(Text: 1 John 5:3)

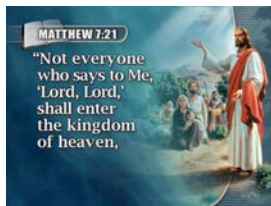
The Bible says, "This is love for God: to obey his commands. And his commands are not burdensome."

1 John 5:3.



109

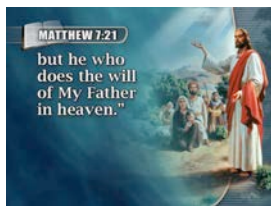
Jesus, as He was teaching one day, told His listeners that not all who profess to be Christians would in the end be saved.



110

(Text: Matthew 7:21)

Then He said, "Not everyone who says 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven,



111

but he who does the will of My Father in heaven."

Matthew 7:21.



112

That is very plain. God knows those who are His by looking at the fruit of their lives.

It is not just those who say they belong to God, but those who do what He has told them to do. It is those individuals who will be welcomed into the kingdom of God.



113

If you love Him, you will let Him be the One who runs your life so that you can do His will.

When we keep the Sabbath, we not only keep God's command for us, but we open our lives to wonderful blessings.



114

As we spend that special day each week remembering our Creator and reaching out to Him, we come to know Him more and better.

Our lives are so busy these days.

Everyone seems to be in a rush.

So much to do—and so little time to get it all done!

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115

In the middle of all this rushing and stress and hurry, God invites us to come away for one day a week and rest.

He invites us to spend the day with Him—worshiping Him, talking with Him, listening to Him as He speaks to us through His Word, the Bible.

What a privilege—to spend a full day each week thinking about and communicating with the One who made us!



116

Our ushers are going to be passing out a decision card at this time. Let me make the issue plain to you, friend.

On one side we have truth – on the other, tradition.

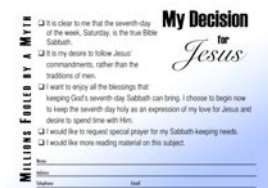
On one side we have the Bible – on the other, human teachings.

On one side we have God’s command – on the other, the doctrines of men.

On one side we have the Sabbath – on the other, we have Sunday.

It is not a matter of a day – it is a matter of who will set the agenda for our lives.

The card you should be receiving in your hands right now simply allows you to think through your decision for Jesus tonight. I invite you to take this little card and as we read through it together, just prayerfully select the options that best describe what the Holy Spirit has impressed on your mind as we’ve studied this topic the past two nights.



117

First of all, I want to know if our topic tonight has been clear. Our first selection says, “It is clear to me that the seventh day of the week, Saturday, is the true Bible Sabbath.” If that is clear to you tonight, just check that box.

Second, “It is my desire to follow Jesus’ commandments, rather than the traditions of men.” If that is your desire, just indicate such by checking the second box.

Third, “I want to enjoy all the blessings that keeping God’s seventh-day Sabbath can bring. I choose to begin now to keep the seventh day holy as an expression of my love for Jesus and desire to spend time with Him.” If this is your desire and decision tonight, just indicate the same by marking this box.

Some of you may face some obstacles in Sabbath-keeping, so tonight we want to have special prayer for you. Perhaps it’s a job situation or a family situation. But if you’d like to have special prayer for your situation tonight and in the coming days, just check

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the selection “I would like to request special prayer for my Sabbath-keeping needs.”

And finally, if you still have unanswered questions on this topic, indicate it by checking the box “I would like further reading material on this topic.”

Make sure your name is on your card tonight, and hand it to one of the ushers at the doors as you leave [ACTUAL INSTRUCTIONS MAY VARY]. Tonight we’ve covered a heavy topic, but an important one. We need to pray that God will bless the decisions that have been made tonight, that God will bless each one of you. Let’s pray together.

[SUGGESTED PRAYER NEXT SLIDE]



Suggested Prayer:

Dear Father in heaven, thank you for loving us enough to care about our physical, emotional, and spiritual needs. Thank you for giving us a sanctuary in time, Your holy Sabbath day, and for reserving that time for us and You. Tonight we’ve seen how many have not known of the special blessing You placed upon the Sabbath. We’ve seen how many have followed tradition rather than Your word. And tonight we just want to say that we want to follow You. We want to obey Your word, rather than tradition. We want to enjoy all of the blessings that keeping Your holy day can bring. Tonight we want to lift up to You those who have requested special prayer. Lord, honor the faith of those who have chosen to obey and live for You. Strengthen them for whatever difficulties they may face. Give them courage and comfort, hope and joy as they follow the path You are revealing to them. Bless each home and family represented here this evening, and bring us together again safely to study Your word together next time. In Jesus’ name we pray, Amen.