



Law, Covenants and the Sabbath

Part 4 – The Sabbath

Table of Contents

• Introduction	3
• The Sabbath, God’s Special Day	3
• God’s Creatorship Identifies Him as the True God	3
• Sabbath Commandment: A Call to Worship the True God, the Creator	3
• Sabbath, A Sign Between God and His People	3
• Seven Day Cycle is Unique	4
• Key Points About the Sabbath	4
• On Which Day is the Sabbath?	4
• Sabbath – the Lord’s Day	6
• Sabbath Made for Mankind	6
• First Day Texts in the New Testament	6
• Keeping Sunday in Honour of the Resurrection	7
• Two Types of Sabbaths	8
• Linguistic Markers Between Weekly Sabbath and Yearly Sabbaths	8
• Don't Let Anyone Judge You Concerning Sabbath Days [Col. 2:16, 17].....	8
• “I worship God everyday, not just one day”	9
• Esteeming Different Days [Rom. 14:5, 6]	9
• Argument From the New Covenant in Favour of Sabbath-Keeping	10
• Calendar Change	10
• Change of Sabbath	10
• When the Sabbath Begins and Ends in the Bible	11
• The Sabbath in the New Earth	11
• Endnotes	12

Introduction

This is Part 4, the final section in the series on the Law, Covenants and Sabbath. In this module we will explore what the Sabbath is all about, on which day it falls, and look at some questions such as: 'Are we not to keep the first day in honour of the resurrection?' 'Doesn't the Bible say: 'Don't let anyone judge you concerning sabbath days?'' 'Wasn't the calendar changed?' and 'Aren't we suppose to worship God everyday and not just on the Sabbath?,' etc. These questions, and more, will be answered in this very exciting Bible study.

Prayerfully go through each of the passages and mark your Bible accordingly.

The Sabbath

The Sabbath, God's Special Day

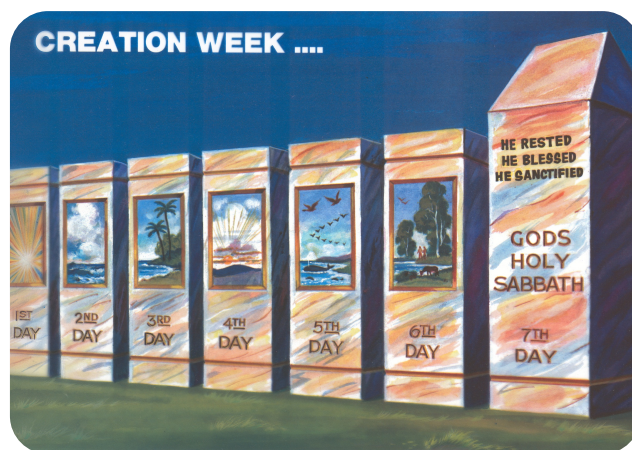
On the Sabbath, God did 3 unique things according to Gen. 2:3 (cf. Ex. 20:11)

- He ceased creating
- He blessed it
- He sanctified it (set it apart for holy use)

God's Creatorship Identifies Him as the True God

God's creatorship sets Him apart from other gods and makes Him worthy of worship:

- Ps. 96:5 – God is distinguished from gods because 'He made the heavens.' His Creatorship is His identifying mark.
- Jer. 10:10, 11 – The gods [idols] are false because they 'have not made the heavens and the earth'
- Jonah 1:9 – Jonah identifies the Lord as 'the God of heaven, who made the sea and the dry land'
- Acts 17:16, 22-24 – Paul proclaims God as the One 'who made the world and everything in it,' the 'Lord of heaven and earth'
- Rev. 14:6-7 – God is worthy of worship because He 'made heaven and earth, the sea and springs of water.'



Sabbath Commandment: A Call to Worship the True God, the Creator

- Ex. 20:8-11 – In this passage we find the Sabbath commandment. Notice that the reason for observing the Sabbath is found in vs. 11: because God is Creator.

Sabbath, A Sign Between God and His People

- Ex. 31:13, 17 – The Sabbath is an eternal sign between God and His people
- Eze. 20:20 – The Sabbath is a sign between God and His people. It is a weekly reminder that He is their Lord
 - The Sabbath is a sign that recognises the Creator God. Idolatry, in all its forms, is spreading over the world today. Sabbath observance says: 'God is my Creator and my God.'

- Some may argue that they can still believe in God as Creator, without observing the Sabbath. The problem with that argument is that **God gave** the Sabbath as a memorial of His Creatorship. It is like saying: “I believe in the atonement, in the broken body and spilled blood of our Lord, but I see no need of observing the Lord’s supper [which was given as a memorial of His death – 1 Cor. 11:23-26].^A

Seven Day Cycle is Unique

- There is no *astronomical* reason for a seven day week
 - A year is the time it takes for the earth to rotate around the sun
 - A month is the time it takes for the moon to go around the earth
 - A day is the time it takes for the earth to make one full rotation on its axis
 - A seven week?

The seven day cycle can only be traced back to the Bible. There in Gen. 1 it shows that **God** created the world in seven days. Not only did He institute the weekly cycle but He commanded us to keep the seventh day holy. The Sabbath is therefore clearly a divine institution that should not be tampered with.

Key Points About the Sabbath

- God instituted Sabbath at creation – He blessed and sanctified the seventh day (Gen. 2:2-3).
- God made the Sabbath for mankind (Mark 2:27)
- Abraham had to keep the Sabbath because He kept all of God’s requirements (Gen. 26:4-5)
- God required Israel to keep His Sabbath before He gave them His Ten Commandments (Ex. 16:4, 26-30)
- God reinforced His Ten Commandments in *stone*, with His *own finger* (to show its permanence). His grand display at Sinai was to give these recently-liberated slaves an exalted picture of His law. In thundering the law He told them to *remember* the Sabbath, i.e. don't forget what I had already told you before.
- Jesus’ custom was to keep the Sabbath (Luke 4:16)
- Jesus prophesied about events that would take place about 40 years after His death (i.e. in AD 70 with the destruction of Jerusalem). He underscored the fact that His followers would still be observing His sacred day then (Matt. 24:20)
- Jesus’ disciples kept the Sabbath after the Crucifixion (Luke 23:56; Acts 13:14, 42-44; 16:13; 18:4)
- All flesh – all of God’s redeemed people – will celebrate the Sabbath in the new heaven and new earth (Isa. 66:22-23)



On Which Day is the Sabbath? ^B

Three arguments can be used to prove Sabbath is on a *Saturday*:

1. *Biblical argument*

- Luke 23:54 – 24:1 the order is as follows:
 - Preparation Day (vs. 54) – the day Christ died
 - Sabbath (vs. 54) – when the women rested
 - First day of the week (24:1) – the resurrection

- Christians around the world are all united in calling the day Christ died **Good Friday** and celebrate the day Christ resurrected as **Easter Sunday**. This Easter celebration has not changed for the past 2000 years since Christ's death. The ONLY biblical conclusion is that Sabbath is on a Saturday.

2. *Linguistic argument*

- In over 108 languages of the world, the word for Saturday is defined as Sabbath. Here are a few examples:
 - Sabbaton (Greek), Sabbatum (Latin) Sábado (Spanish), Sabbado (Portuguese), Sobota (Polish), Samedi (French), Shamba (Hindustani), Shambin (Persian), Ari-Sabtu (Malay), Sobota (Bohemian), Subbota (Russian), As-Sabt (Arabic), Sabatha (Ndebele), Sabata (Shona).

3. *Astronomy argument*

- Mark Finley wrote the following letter to the Astronomer Royal at the Royal Greenwich Observatory, which keeps an accurate record of time of the entire world:

“Dear Sir:

I am currently doing research regarding the unbroken sequence of the weekly cycle. Various European astronomers state that the weekly cycle has come down to us unbroken from ancient times: in other words, the seventh day of our present week, for example is identical with the seventh day of the week of Bible times. My question is threefold:

- a. What does your investigation show regarding the unbroken antiquity of the weekly cycle from ancient times?
- b. Have our changes in the calendar in past centuries (Julian to Gregorian, etc.) affected in any way the cycle of the week?
- c. Is the Saturday of our present times the lineal descent in unbroken cycles of seven from that Saturday mentioned in the Bible record of the crucifixion?

I greatly appreciate your time in answering these questions and look forward to your soon reply.

Sincerely
Mark Finley”

Reply

“Dear Sir:

Your letter to the Astronomer Royal Greenwich has been sent onto us here, and the Director has asked me to reply.

The continuity of the seven-day week has been maintained since the earliest days of the Jewish religion.

The astronomer may be concerned in the decisions relating to the time, the calendar date, and the year number. But since the week is a civil, social, and religious cycle, there is no reason why it should be disturbed by any adjustment of the calendar.

Any attempt to disturb the seven-day cycle has always aroused most determined opposition of the Jewish authorities, and we are quite certain that no such disturbance has ever been put into effect. The change from the Julian to Gregorian calendar (1582-1927) has always been made so as to leave the weekday sequence undisturbed.

Sabbath – the Lord’s Day

- Ex. 20:10 – The seventh day is called the “**Sabbath of the Lord your God...**”
- Isa. 58:13 – God calls the Sabbath “**My holy day**” [i.e. it is the Lord’s Day].
- Matt. 12:8 – The Son of Man is “**Lord of the Sabbath.**” In other words, the Sabbath is here again seen as the Lord’s Day (see also Mark 2:27, 28)
- Rev. 1:10-11 – John says that he was in vision on the Lord’s Day, i.e. on the Sabbath.
- The biblical Sabbath, which is in on a Saturday, is therefore called the Lord’s Day.
- During the early centuries after Christ’s ascension, Sunday became known as the Lord’s Day, but there is no **biblical** support for that concept.



Sabbath Made for Mankind

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.”

- Some people infer the following from this text: “Since the Sabbath was made for mankind, a person can decide how and when he or she wants to observe it.” That argument does not hold water, since the very next line of the verse says: The Son of Man is **Lord of the Sabbath**. In other words, even though God made the Sabbath for humanity’s benefit, He still retains the right as **Lord** of that day. He did not give that over to mankind.
- These verses also imply that the need for the Sabbath is deeply hidden in human nature. Sabbath keeping is about a relationship with a loving God who wants to say something like –

“I have chosen a special day in the week to spend entirely with you. I have blessed I and sanctified it. This is My holy day – set apart for our special time together... Come apart from your earthly concerns. Come rest in Me. Join Me in this special day so that we may celebrate our relationship. As you abide in My Presence, your depression and discouragement will vanish. I will lift you this day to spiritual heights that look beyond this world. I will restore your joy. I will fill you to overflowing with hope. I will cause a peace that transcends all understanding to wash over you. Come, My child, for I love you and want to spend this time with you”^C

First Day Texts in the New Testament

There are only 8 texts in the New Testament that speak about the first day of the week. They are Matt. 28:1; Mark 16:2; Mark 16:9; Luke 24:1; John 20:1; John 20:19; 1 Cor. 16:2; Acts 20:7

- The first five texts above deal with the same event, viz. the resurrection which occurred on the first day of the week. NONE of these texts even hint at a change from the seventh day to the first day of the week in honour of Christ’s resurrection. We will look at the other 3 texts now:
- John 20:19 – “¹⁹ Then, 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.”

- This verse is used as a proof that the disciples assembled to worship on the first day of the week.
- The reason however the disciples met, was not for a worship service, but “for fear of the Jews.” They sought concealment instead.
- 1 Cor. 16:2 – “On 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.”
 - Some feel that Paul here advocated offerings (and thus worship) on the first day of the week.
 - The Apostle was promoting a special project in behalf of needy believers in Jerusalem (vs. 3). Thus he suggested that the Corinthian Christians set aside a specific portion of their income for believers at Jerusalem on the first day of each week. The reason for this was because many people reviewed their finances from the previous week’s business on Sunday morning in preparation for another week of business.^D
 - Furthermore, the phrase “each one of you” could be translated literally “each one of you for himself,” and suggests something done privately at home. So this verse has nothing to do with a **church** offering.^E
- Acts 20:7 – “Now 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.”^F
 - Some cite this as support that a worship service was held on the first day of the week, therefore endorsing Sunday worship.
 - The meeting was held, not because it was Sunday, but because Paul was “ready to depart.” He had been at Troas seven days; certainly he must have met with the believers there already more than once. Now he was to depart, and it was most logical that he would hold a final farewell meeting, and celebrate the Lord’s Supper with them.
 - Luke’s remark that this occurred on the first day of the week, rather than being a notice of specific Sunday-keeping, is quite in harmony with the whole series of chronological notes with which he fills his narrative of this voyage (see chs. 20:3, 6, 7, 15, 16; 21:1, 4, 5, 7, 8, 10, 15).

Keeping Sunday in Honour of the Resurrection^G

- The fact that Christ rose from the dead does not hallow the first day. There is no biblical command to support that idea.
- Jesus did however give 2 emblems as memorials of His death and resurrection – communion and baptism.
 - Communion is a symbol of His death (1 Cor. 11:26). The broken bread and unfermented grape juice that are part of communion respectively represent the broken body and spilt blood of our Lord.
 - Baptism is a memorial of His death and resurrection
 - Rom. 6:4, 5 – Just as Christ died, entered the grave and was resurrected to new life, so the believer is crucified with Christ.
 - So baptism is a memorial of Christ’s resurrection, not Sunday worship.

Two Types of Sabbaths

Not only were there weekly Sabbaths, but the Bible also mentions annual sabbaths. On these sabbaths Israel was to “have a holy convocation” and “do no customary work” (Lev. 23:7).

Examples of annual sabbaths include the Feast of Trumpets (Lev. 23:24), the Day of Atonement (Lev. 23:32), etc.

Linguistic Markers Between Weekly Sabbath and Yearly Sabbaths^H

There are a number of linguistic markers that contrast the seventh-day Sabbath and the cultic sabbaths:

Seventh-day Sabbath	Cultic sabbaths
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> One must 'keep' or 'observe' it (Ex. 31:13; Lev. 19:30; Isa. 56:2) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> One must 'afflict' one's soul on them (Lev 16:31; 23:32)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The 'the' identifies it distinctly - <i>the Sabbath</i> (Ex. 20:8; Num. 15:32; 2 Chron. 2:4; Neh. 10:31, etc.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No definite article shows their indefiniteness (Lev 16:31; 23:32)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is the seventh 'day' of the week (Ex. 16:25; 35:2; Neh. 13:17, etc.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> They can be the seventh 'year' 'of the land' (Lev. 25:2-4; 26:34)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Connected with Yahweh, it is 'holy' (Ex. 20:8; 31:15; Neh. 10:31; Isa. 58:13, etc.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As linked to Israel, they are 'her' sabbaths (2 Chron. 36:21; Hos. 2:11)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Yahweh calls it 'My' Sabbath (Ex. 31:13; Lev. 19:30; Neh. 9:14; Isa. 56:4; Eze. 20:12, 13, 16, 20, 21; etc.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Yahweh says they are 'your' sabbaths (Lev. 23:32; 26:35)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is cyclical – 'week by week' 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> They can be annual (as in the Day of Atonement) or every 7 years (as in the sabbatical year)

Don't Let Anyone Judge You Concerning Sabbath Days^I

Col. 2:16-17 – “¹⁶ So let no one judge you in food or in drink, or regarding a festival or a new moon or sabbaths, ¹⁷ which are a shadow of things to come, but the substance is of Christ.”

- The closest parallel to Col. 2:16 is Hos. 2:11: both make no mention of any **daily** ritual activity (they only refer to annual, monthly and septennial [every 7 years] rituals), both consist of essentially three main terms ('feast,' 'new moon,' 'sabbath') given in the singular number and stated in the same sequence, both focus on the appointed times rather than the sacrifices, and both lack linguistic markers that identify the weekly Sabbath (see section called '*Linguistic Markers Between Weekly Sabbath and Yearly Sabbaths*').
- In Hosea we find the following:
 - The Hebrew word for *feast* of Hosea 2:11 refers to the three annual pilgrim festivals of Passover, Pentecost, and Tabernacles.
 - The *new moon* played a vital role in determining dates for other appointed sacred seasons.
 - The reference to "her sabbath" identifies this as Israel's ritual sabbath(s) rather than the weekly seventh-day Sabbath, which is never spoken of in this way (see comparison between seventh-day Sabbath and cultic sabbaths in table above)
- Similarly, the Greek word for *festival* in Col 2:16 is limited in the New Testament to the three annual pilgrim festivals (i.e., Passover, Pentecost, and Tabernacles), the Greek word for *new moon* indicates the monthly celebrations, while the Greek word for *sabbaths* includes the three ritual "rest" times (i.e., Trumpets, Atonement, and Sabbatical years – when the Israelites did not have to do a pilgrimage to Jerusalem).
- Putting this altogether, we can see that Paul is not referring to the weekly Sabbath, but to the cultic sabbaths that were part of the ceremonial system. These, he says, were

“shadows of things to come” (vs. 17) – i.e. they were symbols that pointed forward to the work of the Messiah.

- Col. 2:16-17 can therefore be paraphrased as follows: “Don't let anyone judge you now that you, as Christians, are *not* observing the Jewish ceremonial system which involves meal and drink offerings, annual pilgrim festivals, new moon celebrations or annual sabbaths (such as Trumpets, Day of Atonement, etc.). These are part of the old ceremonial system which pointed to the Messiah, but now that Christ has come, you no longer have to keep them.”

“I worship God everyday, not just one day”

- It is true that we should worship God every day, but it is equally true that we CANNOT (biblically speaking) keep the Sabbath every day for the following reasons:
 - God **only sanctified the seventh day as His Sabbath**, not the other days (see Ex. 20:11)
 - If anyone keeps the Sabbath everyday, that person would **never** work, for God said that no work should be done on a Sabbath (Ex. 20:10). How would that person make a living or provide for their family?
 - **A supporting argument from tithing.** The principle of tithing and Sabbath observance have a common denominator. Tithing is reserving a tenth of one's **income** for the Lord; the Sabbath, a seventh of one's **time**. When we tithe and keep the Sabbath, we are giving a fraction of our life as a token of our **total** commitment to Him. We are really saying, “I am giving you a seventh of my time as an indication that you have control over the rest of my time as well,” or “I am returning a tenth of my income as a symbol that you are also Lord over my other nine-tenths.”
 - So worshipping God on the Sabbath is a symbol of a life of total consecration to Him throughout the rest of the week. Sabbath keeping is not just a mechanical act of worship done every seventh day after six days of secular and worldly living. Thus a true Sabbath-keeper worships God everyday, but does so in a special sense on the seventh day.
 - Worshipping God on the Sabbath does not prevent a person from worshipping on other weekdays in the same way that returning God's tithe does not prevent a person from using the other nine-tenths for God.

Esteeming Different Days¹

Rom. 14:5, 6 – “⁵ One person esteems one day above another; another esteems every day alike. Let each be fully convinced in his own mind. ⁶ He who observes the day, observes it to the Lord; and he who does not observe the day, to the Lord he does not observe it...”

- The context of Romans 14 is about **disputable matters** – “Accept him whose faith is weak, without passing judgment on *disputable matters*” (vs. 1). The Sabbath and the Ten Commandments in which it is embedded was never a disputable matter.
- What evidently had come to dispute within the Jewish Christian community was whether Christians could or should observe the ceremonial festivals, feast days and holy days such as Passover, which had been fulfilled by Christ's sacrifice, as distinguished from the Sabbath which was instituted at creation. Paul responded by saying: ‘In these *disputable matters*, let each decide for himself.’
- During the transitional period from the ceremonial system to a correct understanding and application of Christ's death/resurrection, etc., there was no sin in having a personal/subjective view of such ceremonies (see Acts 20:6 cf. *Acts of the Apostles*, p. 390-391). Thus Jewish Christians were not to feel that Gentile Christians *had to* attend such feasts. Each person had to be ‘fully convinced in his own mind’ regarding this matter.

- Some commentators see these days as a reference to 'fasting' days. There was apparently more merit in fasting on certain days. Thus Paul would simply be saying: "Let each person decide on which day he/she would like to fast since it is between them and the Lord. Let the person make their own choice in this regard."
- However one interprets the passage above, it has nothing to do with the Sabbath.

Argument From the New Covenant in Favour of Sabbath-Keeping^K

- Some say that according to Ex. 31:12, 17 the Sabbath was a sign between God and the *children of Israel*. Therefore the Sabbath does not need to be kept by New Testament Christians in the new covenant era.
- The difficulty with that reasoning, is that the new covenant (which almost all Christians say is applicable to New Testament believers) is also made with the "*house of Israel*" (see Heb. 8:8, 10).
- So why should the new covenant (made with the house of Israel) be kept today, but the Sabbath (which too is made with the house of Israel) not be kept?
- Even though the house of Israel historically referred to the Jewish nation, Gal. 3:7 defines Israel – Abraham's children – as 'those who believe'
- It is therefore reasonable to say that just as the new covenant, which is 'for the house of Israel,' applies to 'those who believe,' so the Sabbath, which is God's sign between Himself and Israel likewise applies to 'those who believe'
- Many Christians acknowledge that the new covenant is for New Testament believers, but sadly are unwilling to acknowledge the Sabbath's validity as well

Calendar Change^L

Did the calendar change from the Julian to Gregorian calendar affect the Sabbath?

- The Julian calendar was introduced by Julius Caesar in 46 BC.
- It had a regular year of 365 days divided into 12 months, with a leap day added to February every four years. The Julian year was, therefore, on average 365.25 days long.
- It was intended to approximate the solar year, but was 11 minutes and 10 seconds too long each year.
- As a result, the calendar year gained about three days every four centuries. By the 16th century, the excess calendar time had increased to place the Julian calendar 10 days ahead of the normal season sequence. **The excess was not of real-time, but of calendar time.**
- Pope Gregory XIII took the initiative to correct this widening gap. In 1582 an Italian astronomer devised a new formula, which was approved by Pope Gregory. He proposed that every 100th year should not be counted as a leap year (unless it was exactly divisible by 400). This formula works to keep the seasons in almost exact pace with the calendar years. This became known as the Gregorian calendar, which is also referred to as the Western or Christian calendar.
- So to put the civil year back on schedule Pope Gregory approved that 10 calendar days (i.e. dates of the month) be treated as non-existent. Tuesday, 5 October 1582 was simply renumbered to Wednesday 15 October 1582. Although the **date** was altered, the **day** was not. The weekly cycle was not changed at all.

Change of Sabbath

The Catholic church openly admits that it has changed the Sabbath from Saturday to Sunday. Here are some statements from **Catholic sources**:

- "I have repeatedly offered \$1,000 to anyone who can prove to me from the Bible alone that I am bound to keep Sunday holy. There is no such law in the Bible. It is a law of the

holy Catholic Church alone. The Bible says, 'Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy.' The Catholic church says: 'No. By my divine power I abolish the Sabbath day and command you to keep holy the first day of the week.' And Lo! The entire civilized world bows down in a reverent obedience to the command of the holy Catholic Church"^M

- "The Catholic Church for over one thousand years before the existence of a Protestant, by virtue of her divine mission, changed the day from Saturday to Sunday"^N
- Authority of Pope to change God's commands:^O
 - **Question:** What Bible authority is there for changing the Sabbath from the seventh to the first day of the week? Who gave the Pope the authority to change a command of God?
 - **Answer:** "If the Bible is the only guide for Christians, then the Seventh-day Adventist is right in observing the Saturday with the Jew. But Catholics learn what to believe and do from the divine, infallible authority established by Jesus Christ, the Catholic Church. Is it not strange that those who make the Bible their only teacher should inconsistently follow in this matter the tradition of the Church?"
- When was change made?^P
 - **Question:** What is the Sabbath day?
 - **Answer:** Saturday is the Sabbath day.
 - **Question:** Why do we observe Sunday instead of Saturday?
 - **Answer:** We observe Sunday instead of Saturday because the Catholic church, in the Council of Laodicea (AD 336), transferred the solemnity from Saturday to Sunday" – Peter Geiermann, The Convert's Catechism of Catholic Doctrine, Second Edition, 1910, page 50.
- Power of the Catholic church:^Q
 - **Question:** Have you any other way of proving that the Church has power to institute festivals of precept?
 - **Answer:** "Had she not such power, she could not have done that in which all modern religions agree with her: she could not have substituted the observance of Sunday the first day of the week for the observance of Saturday, the seventh day, a change for which there is no Scriptural authority."

When the Sabbath Begins and Ends in the Bible

A day in the Bible began at evening:

- Gen. 1:31 – At Creation God set the daily cycle to begin at evening
- Lev. 23:27, 31-32 – Here the Israelites were to celebrate the Day of Atonement, an annual sabbath, from evening to evening – according to normal biblical reckoning of a day.

The Sabbath in the New Earth^R

The Sabbath will be celebrated in the New Earth. Notice what Isa. 66:23 says: "'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. 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.'"

- Isaiah is the only Old Testament prophet that uses the phrase 'new heavens and new earth,' a clear reference to Creation (Gen. 1:1). By linking Isa 66 to Creation, the prophet, in the passage under discussion, is pointing to a total renewal of Creation.
- The phrase 'new heavens and new earth' is picked up in by Peter (2 Pet. 3:13) and John (Rev. 21:1) in the New Testament, who both seem to be alluding to Isa. 66. In those verses, these New Testament writers are speaking about the New Earth – giving indication that they understood Isaiah to be referring to it as well.

- Isa. 66's universal language includes the Gentiles as full members of God's people, even incorporating them as priests (vss. 18-21). As further indication of the universal nature of Isa. 66, vs. 24 speaks of 'all flesh' (NIV: 'all mankind') who will come and worship before the Lord. That phrase throughout Scripture is always used for all humankind, not just Israel.
- Concerning 'New Moon,' in vs. 23, standard lexicons agree that in connection with the special grammatical construction of this verse, the preferred translation is 'month,' thus rendering it 'from month to month.' Ninety percent of the time the Hebrew word is translated as 'month,' and 10% as 'new moon.' The Geneva Bible, Young's Literal Translation, New English Bible, the Septuagint, etc., correctly translate this phrase as 'month to month' – which links up well with Rev. 22:2 (the tree of life that yields fruit every month).
- Vs. 24 uses metaphorical language to speak of complete destruction, picturing the end of sin and sinners.
- Putting it altogether, Isa 66:22-24 tells us that in the New Earth, the saints will have a special monthly worship service (presumably coinciding with the new fruit from the tree of life) **and will observe the weekly Sabbath**. We are also reminded that in the New Earth sin and sinners will be completely destroyed.

Conclusion

In this study, we have explored the richness of the Sabbath, a day which: God instituted at Creation, identifies Him as the true God, serves as a sign between Him and His people, He made for mankind, Jesus personally kept while on earth, and will be celebrated in the New Earth. It is no wonder why Satan has put so much effort into attacking the Sabbath.

Prepared by Shandrell Penniken

Endnotes

^A Walker, Allen. The Law and the Sabbath. Roseville: Amazing Facts, 2009, p. 60.

^B Finley, Mark. The Almost Forgotten Day. Siloam Springs: The Concerned Group, Inc. 1994, pp. 21-26

^C Shelton & Quinn, p. 89

^D Finley, p. 111

^E Rodriguez, Angel. Stewardship Roots: Toward a Theology of Stewardship, Tithe & Offerings. Silver Spring: Dept of Church Ministries, General Conference, 1993, p. 67.

^F The argument countering Sunday worship in this verse is taken from F.D. Nichol, vol. 6, pp. 387-388

^G Finley, pp. 133-135

^H du Preez, R. Putting the Sabbath to Rest: A Scriptural Study of Col. 2:16. Michigan: LithoTech Graphic Services, 2006, pp. 5-14

^I An abbreviated summary of the 208-page book by Ron du Preez, Judging the Sabbath: Discovering What Can't Be Found in Colossians 2:16 (Berrien Springs: Andrews University Press, 2008), the most extensive study on the meaning of *sabbata* in Colossians 2:16.

^J MacCarty, p. 191

^K MacCarty, pp. 183-184

^L Breaden, Frank. Instruction Manual for the New Pictorial Aid. Warburton: Signs Publishing Company, 1987, p. 113

^M Bishop T. Enright, C.S.S.R., in a lecture at Hartford, Kansas, Feb. 18, 1884

^N The Catholic Mirror, Sept. 23, 1893.

^O Conway, B.L. The Question Box Answers. 1903 Edition, pp. 254, 255

^P Geiermann, P. The Convert's Catechism of Catholic Doctrine, Second Edition, 1910, p. 50

^Q Keenan, S. A Doctrinal Catechism, p. 50

^R This section is summarized from: du Preez, R. Feast-Keeping and the Faithful. Michigan: LithoTech Graphic Services, pp. 96-99 and 138-139