

# Pope John Paul II Visits America

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Wednesday, October 4, to Sunday, October 8, 1995

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## An Appeal to the Pope to Lead Christians Back to the Bible

*The following petition was made by Dr. Earnest R. Palen, pastor of one of New York City's leading cathedrals. The news article was headlined in bold type: "An Appeal to the Pope of Rome to lead Christians Back to the Bible." Here is the article:*

"Dr. Earnest R. Palen, pastor of New York's Marble Collegiate Church for more than thirty years, created a stir that hit the headlines, when on March 13, 1966, he delivered a sermon in which he called for Protestants and Roman Catholics to join in returning to the Bible Sabbath that Jesus kept—on Saturday.

"This Reformed Church in America theologian and pastor startled hearers by quoting from Exodus 20:8, and then saying:

" 'It should not be too great a break for us . . . to observe the same Sabbath day that Jesus Himself observed.'

"In this sermon, he pled for all the churches to return to the keeping of the Seventh-day Sabbath, and noting that mankind can only truly keep holy that day which the God of heaven has commanded to be kept holy, he said that this 'one day of the week really kept holy by Catholics, Protestants, and Jews would give an uplift to the moral tone of our day that nothing else could do.'

"Dr Palen, recognizing the well-known leadership of the pope in Sunday sanctification, asked that Pope Paul IV take the initiative in this matter.

"Dr. Palen predicted that if the pontiff would designate 'the Seventh day—the historical and Biblical Sabbath—as the day to keep holy,' that most of the major Protestant bodies of our time would 'go along.'"  
—Article by George Dugan, "Christians Urged to Join Jews in Observing Saturday Sabbath," *New York Times*, March 14, 1966.

## A Letter From Rome

*The Roman Catholic Church has also issued a challenge to Protestants. It was issued by the Vatican and released in America through a New York City publishing house.*

*Here is that appeal, issued by the Vatican:*

"I am going to propose a very plain and serious question, to those who fol-

low 'the Bible and the Bible only' to give their most earnest attention. It is this: **Why do you not keep holy the Sabbath Day?**

**"The command of Almighty God stands clearly written in the Bible in these words:**

" 'Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. **Six days shalt thou labor, and do all thy work; but the Seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God:** in it thou shalt not do any work' (Exodus 20:8-10). And again, 'Six days shall work be done; but on the Seventh day there shall be unto you an holy day, a Sabbath of rest to the Lord; whosoever doeth work therein shall be put to death. (Exodus 35:2-3). **How strict and precise**

**is God's commandment** upon this head! [in this matter!] No work whatever was to be done on the day which He had chosen to set apart for Himself and to make holy. And accordingly, when the children of Israel 'found a man that gathered sticks upon the Sabbath day,' 'the Lord said unto Moses, The man shall surely be put to death; all the congregation shall stone him with stones without the camp' (Numbers 15:35). **Such being God's command then, I ask again, Why do you not obey it? Why do you not keep the Sabbath day?**

"You will answer me, perhaps, that you do keep the Sabbath day; for that you abstain from all worldly business and diligently go to church, and say your

prayers, and read your Bible at home, every Sunday of your lives.

**“But Sunday is not the Sabbath day. Sunday is the first day of the week; the Sabbath day is the Seventh day of the week. Almighty God did not give a commandment that men should keep holy one day in seven; but He named His own day, and said distinctly: ‘Thou shalt keep holy the Seventh day’; and He assigned a reason for choosing this day rather than any other—a reason which belongs only to the Seventh day of the week, and cannot be applied to the rest. He says, ‘For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the Seventh day; wherefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and hollowed it’ [Exodus 20:11; Genesis 2:1-3]. Almighty God ordered that all men should rest from their labor on the Seventh day, because He too had rested on that day: He did not rest on Sunday, but on Saturday. On Sunday, which is the first day of the week, He began the work of creation; He did not finish it. It was on Saturday that He ‘ended His work which He had made; 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 2:2-3).**

**“Nothing can be more plain and easy to understand than all this; and there is nobody who attempts to deny it; it is acknowledged by everybody that the day which Almighty God appointed to be kept holy was Saturday, not Sunday. Why do you then keep holy the Sunday and not Saturday?**

**“You will tell me that Saturday was the Jewish Sabbath, but that the Christian Sabbath has been changed to Sunday. Changed! but by whom? Who has authority to change an express commandment of Almighty God? When God has spoken and said, Thou shalt keep holy the Seventh day, who shall dare to say, Nay, thou mayest work and do all manner of worldly business on the Seventh day; but thou shalt keep holy the first day in its stead? This is a most important question, which I know not how you can answer.**

**“You are a Protestant, and you profess to go by the Bible and the Bible only; and yet, in so important a matter as the observance of one day in seven as the holy day, you go against the plain letter of the Bible, and put another day in the place of that day which the Bible has commanded. The command to keep holy the Seventh day is one of the Ten Commandments; you believe that the other nine are still binding. Who gave you authority to tamper with the fourth? If you are consistent with your own principles, if you really follow the Bible, and the Bible only, you ought to be able to produce some portion of the New Testament in which this fourth commandment is expressly altered. Let us see whether any such passages can be found. I will look for them in the writings of your own champions, who have attempted to defend your practice in this matter.**

**“1. The first text which I find quoted upon the subject is this: ‘Let no man judge you in respect of an holy day, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days’ (Colossians 2:16) [the ceremonial—sacrificial—yearly sabbaths of Leviticus 23, which were done away at the cross]. I could understand a Bible Christian arguing from this passage, that we ought to make no difference between Saturday, Sunday, and every other day of the week; that, under the Christian dispensation, all such distinctions of days were done away with. One day was as good and as holy as another; there were to be no Sabbaths, no holy days at all. But not one syllable does it say about the obligation of the Sabbath being transferred from one day to another.**

**“2. Secondly, the words of St. John are quoted, ‘I was in the Spirit on the Lord’s day (Apocalypse [Revelation] 1:10). Is it possible that anybody can, for a moment, imagine that here is a safe and clear rule for changing the weekly feast from the Seventh to the first day? This passage is utterly silent upon such a subject; it only gives us Scriptural authority for calling one day, in particular (it does not even say which day), as ‘the Lord’s day.’**

**“3. Next we are reminded that St.**

Paul bade his Corinthian converts, ‘upon the first day of the week, let every one of you lay by him in store, that there might be no gatherings’ when he himself came (1 Corinthians 16:2). **How is this supposed to affect the law of the Jewish Sabbath?** It commands a certain act of alms giving [at home] to be done on the first day of the week. **It says absolutely nothing about not doing certain other acts of prayer and public worship on the Seventh day.**

**“4. But it was ‘on the first day of the week’ when the disciples were assembled with closed doors for fear of the Jews, and Jesus stood in the midst of them’ (John 20:19). What is there in these facts to do away with the obligation of keeping holy the Seventh day? Our Lord rose from the dead on the first day of the week, and on the same day, at evening, He appeared to His disciples. Let Protestants, if they will, keep holy the first day of the week in grateful commemoration of that stupendous mystery, the Resurrection of Christ and of the evidences which He vouchsafed to give of it to His doubting disciples; but this is no scriptural authority for ceasing to keep holy another day of the week which God had expressly commanded to be kept holy for another and altogether different reason.**

**“5. But lastly, we have the example of the apostles themselves. ‘Upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight’ (Acts 20:7). Here we have clear proof that the disciples heard a sermon on Sunday. But is there not proof they had not done the same on the Saturdays also? [Acts 13:14, 42-44; 16:12-13; 17:1-2; 18:1-4, 11]. It is expressly written concerning those early Christians, that they ‘continuing daily with one accord in the temple, breaking bread from house to house.’ (Acts 2:46). As a matter of fact, we do know from other sources that, in many parts of the Church, the ancient Christians were in the habit of meeting together for public worship, to receive Holy Communion and to perform the other offices on Sat-**

**“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 com-**

**mand you to keep holy the first day of the week. And lo! The entire civilized world bows down in reverent obedience to the command of the Holy Catholic Church.”—Priest Thomas Enright, CSSR, President of Redemptorist College, Kansas City, Mo., in a lecture at Hartford, Kansas, February 18, 1884, and the American Sentinel, a New York**

*Roman Catholic journal in June 1893, p. 173.*

**“Of course the Catholic Church claims that the change was her act . . . AND THE ACT IS A MARK of her ecclesiastical power.”—From the office of Cardinal Gibbons, through Chancellor H.F. Thomas, November 11, 1895.**

urdays? Again, then, I say, let Protestants keep holy, if they will, their first day of the week, in order that they may resemble those Christians who were gathered together on that day in an upper room in Troas [a Troas meeting on Sunday in Acts 20:7, just prior to a Miletus meeting on Tuesday in Acts 20:17-38—although no one today keeps Tuesday sacred because of it]; **but let them remember that this cannot possibly release them from the obligation of keeping holy a day which Almighty God has ordered to be kept holy, because on that day He ‘rested from all His work.’**

**“I do not know of any other passages of holy Scripture which Protestants are in the habit of quoting to defend their practice of keeping holy the first day of the week instead of the Seventh; yet, surely those which I have quoted are not such as should satisfy any reasonable man, who looks upon the written word of God as they profess to look upon it, namely, as the only appointed means of learning God’s will, and who really desire to learn and to obey that will in all things with humbleness and simplicity of heart. For in spite of all that anyone might say to the contrary, it is fully and absolutely impossible that a reasonable and thoughtful person should be satisfied by the tests that I have quoted, that almighty God intended the obligation of Saturday to be transferred to Sunday.** And yet Protestants do so transfer it, and never seem to have the slightest misgivings lest, in doing so, they should be guilty of breaking one of God’s commandments.

**“Why is this? Because, although they talk so largely about following the Bible and the Bible only, they are really guided in this matter by the voice of [Roman Catholic] tradition.** Yes, much as they may hate and denounce the word [tradition], **they have in fact no other authority to allege for this most important change.** The present generation of Protestants keep Sunday holy instead of Saturday, because they received it as part of the Christian religion from the last generation, and that generation received it from the generation before, and so on backwards from one generation to another, by a continual succession, **until we come to the time of the (so-called) Reformation, when it so happened that those who conducted the change of religion [from Catholicism to Protestantism] left this particular portion of the Catholic faith and practice untouched.**

“But, had it happened otherwise,—had some one or other of the ‘Reformations’ taken it into his head to denounce the observance of Sunday as a Popish

corruption and superstition, **and to insist upon it that Saturday was the day which God had appointed to be kept holy, and that He had never authorized the observance of any other,**—all Protestants would have been obliged, in obedience to their **professed principle of following the Bible and the Bible only,** either to acknowledge this teaching as true, and to return to the observance of the ancient Jewish Sabbath [the Bible Sabbath given by God at the Creation, Genesis 2:1-3—2000 years before there was a Jew], or else to deny that there is any Sabbath at all.

“And so, in like manner, any one at the present day who should set about, **honestly and without prejudice, to draw up for himself a form of religious belief and practice out of the written Word of God, must needs come to the same conclusion: He must either believe that the Seventh-day Sabbath is still binding upon men’s consciences, because of the Divine command,** ‘Thou shalt keep holy the Seventh day’ or he must believe that no Sabbath at all is binding upon them. Either one of these conclusions he might honestly come to; **but he would know nothing whatever of a ‘Christian sabbath’—distinct from the Biblical Sabbath [that is], celebrated on a different day, and observed in a different manner—simply because Holy Scripture itself nowhere speaks of such a thing.**

“Now, mind, in all this you would greatly misunderstand me if you supposed I was quarreling with you for acting in this matter on true and right principles,—**in other words a Catholic principle** (viz., the acceptance without hesitation, of that which has been handed down to you by an unbroken tradition). I would not [then] tear from you a single one of those shreds and fragments of Divine truth [Catholic truth] which you have retained. God forbid! They are the most precious things you possess, and by God’s blessing may serve as clues to bring you out of that labyrinth of [Protestant] error in which you find yourselves involved, far more by the fault of your forefathers three centuries ago [when in the Reformation they left Rome] than by your own. What I do quarrel with you for, is not your inconsistency in occasionally acting on a true principle [such as Roman Catholic Sunday-keeping], but your adoption, as a general rule, of a false one [your Protestant refusal to accept the rest of Roman Catholic traditional teachings].

“You keep Sunday, and not the Saturday; and you do so rightly, for this was the practice of all Christians when Protestantism began [**in the sixteenth cen-**

**tury, as Catholics think]; but you have abandoned other Catholic observances which were equally universal at that day,** preferring the novelties, introduced by the men who invented Protestantism, to the unvarying tradition of the above 1,500 years [of Catholic teaching]. We blame you not for making Sunday your weekly holyday instead of Saturday, **but for rejecting tradition [the saying of Rome], which is the only safe and clear rule by which this observance [of Sunday] can be justified.** In outward act we do the same as yourselves in this matter; we too no longer observe the Sabbath, but Sunday in its stead. **But there is this important difference between us, that we do not pretend—as you do—to derive our authority for so doing from a book [the Bible],** but we [Catholics] derive it from a living teacher, and that teacher is the [Roman Catholic] Church. Moreover, we believe that not everything which God would have us to know and to do is written in the Bible, but that there is also an unwritten word of God [the sayings of popes and councils and saints], which we are bound to believe and obey . . .

**“We Catholics, then, have precisely the same authority for keeping Sunday holy instead of Saturday as we have for every other article of our creed, namely, the authority of ‘the Church of the living God, and ground of truth’ (1 Timothy 3:15); whereas you who are Protestants have really no authority for it whatever; for there is no authority for it in the Bible, and you will not allow that there can be authority for it anywhere else. Both you and we do, in fact, follow [Catholic] tradition in this matter;** but we follow it, believing it to be a part of God’s Word, and the [Catholic] Church to be its divinely appointed guardian and interpreter. You follow it, denouncing it all the time as a fallible and treacherous guide which often ‘makes the commandment of God of none effect’ (Matthew 15:6).

—“*Why Don’t You Keep Holy the Sabbath Day?*” pages 3-15, in *The Clifton Tracts, Volume 4, published by the Roman Catholic Church in 1869. Originally released in North America through the T.W. Strong Publishing Company of New York City, so that those outside the papal fold might know the pathway back to the authority of the Mother Church of the Vatican.*

**The Seventh day is the Sabbath, for God never changed it.**

**—And Protestant leaders and writers agree. Please turn the page.**

# PROTESTANTS AGREE

**EPISCOPAL:** "The Bible commandment says on the Seventh-day thou shalt rest. That is Saturday. **Nowhere in the Bible is it laid down that worship should be done on Sunday.**"—*Phillip Carrington, quoted in Toronto Daily Star, October 26, 1949. Carrington was Anglican archbishop of Quebec.*

**BAPTIST:** "There was and is a command to keep holy the Sabbath day, **but that Sabbath day was not Sunday.** It will, however, be readily said, and with some show of triumph, that the Sabbath was transferred from the Seventh to the first day of the week, with all its duties, privileges and sanctions. Earnestly desiring information on this subject, which I have studied for many years, **I ask, where can the record of such a trans-action be found? Not in the New Testament—absolutely not. There is no scriptural evidence of the change of the Sabbath institution from the Seventh to the first day of the week . . .**

"**I wish to say that this Sabbath question, in this aspect of it, is the gravest and most perplexing question connected with Christian institutions which at present claims attention from Christian people;** and the only reason that it is not a more disturbing element in Christian thought and in religious discussion is because the Christian world has settled down content on the conviction that somehow a transference has taken place at the beginning of Christian history.

"**To me it seems unaccountable that Jesus, during three years' discussion with His disciples,** often conversing with them upon the Sabbath question, discussing it in some of its various aspects, freeing it from its false glosses [of Jewish traditions], **never alluded to any transference of the day; also, that during forty days of His resurrection life, no such thing was intimated. Nor, so far as we know, did the Spirit, which was given to bring to their remembrance all things whatsoever that He had said unto them, deal with this question. Not yet did the inspired apostles, in preaching the gospel, founding churches, counseling and instructing those founded, discuss or approach the subject.**

"Of course, I quite well-know that Sunday did come into use in early Chris-

tian history as a religious day, as we learn from the Christian Fathers and other sources. **But what a pity that it comes branded with the mark of Paganism, and christened with the name of the sun god, then adopted and sanctified by the Papal apostasy, and bequeathed as a sacred legacy to Protestantism.**"—*Dr. E.T. Hiscox, author of the Baptist Manual. From a photostatic copy of a notarized statement by Dr. Hiscox.*

**D.L. MOODY:** "**I honestly believe that this commandment is just as binding today as it ever was.** I have talked with men who have said that it has been abrogated [abolished], **but they have never been able to point to any place in the Bible where God repealed it. When Christ was on earth, He did nothing to set it aside;** He freed it from the traces under which the scribes and Pharisees had put it, and gave it its true place. 'The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath' " [Mark 2:27]. It is just as practical and as necessary for men today as it ever was—in fact, more than ever, because we live in such an intense age.

"**The [Seventh-day] Sabbath was binding in Eden, and it has been in force ever since. This fourth commandment [Exodus 20:8-11] begins with the word 'remember,' showing that the Sabbath already existed when God wrote this law on the tables of stone at Sinai.** How can men claim that this one commandment has been done away with when they will admit that the other nine [adultery, murder, lying, theft, etc.] are still binding?"—*D.L. Moody, Weighed and Wanting, 1898, pp. 46-47 [D. L. Moody (1837-1899) was the most famous evangelist of his time, and founder of the Moody Bible Institute].*

**AMERICAN CONGREGATIONALIST:** "The current notion that Christ and His apostles authoritatively substituted the first day for the Seventh, is absolutely without any authority in the New Testament."—*Dr. Lyman Abbott, in the Christian Union, June 26, 1890.*

**DISCIPLES OF CHRIST:** "**If it [the Ten Commandments] yet exist, let us observe it . . . And if it does not exist, let us abandon a mock observance of another day for it. 'But,' say some, 'it was changed from the Seventh to the first day.' Where? when? and by whom?—No, it never was changed, nor could it be, unless creation was to be gone through again: for the reason assigned [in Genesis 2:1-3], it must be changed before the observance or respect to the reason can be changed. It is all old wives' fables to talk of the 'change of the Sabbath' from the Seventh to the**

first day. **If it be changed, it was that august personage who changes times and laws ex officio.—I think his name is 'Doctor Antichrist.'**"—*Alexander Campbell, The Christian Baptist, February 2, 1824, Vol. 1, No. 7.*

**METHODIST:** "**It is true that there is no positive command for infant baptism. Nor is there any for keeping holy the first day of the week.** Many believe that Christ changed the Sabbath. **But, from His own words, we see that He came for no such purpose.** Those who believe that Jesus changed the Sabbath **base it on a supposition.**"—*Amos Binney, Theological compendium, 1902 edition, pp. 180-181, 171. [Binney (1802-1878), Methodist minister and presiding elder, whose Compendium was published for forty years in many languages, also wrote a Methodist New Testament Commentary].*

**LUTHERAN:** "They [the Catholics] allege the change of the Sabbath into the Lord's day, as it seemeth, to the Decalogue [the Ten Commandments]; and they have no example more in their mouths than the change of the Sabbath. They will needs **have the Church's power to be very great, because it hath dispensed with a precept of the Decalogue.**"—*The Augsburg Confession, 1530 A.D. (Lutheran), part 2, art. 7, in Phillip Schaff, the Creeds of Christendom, fourth edition, Vol. 3, p. 64. [This important statement was made by the Lutherans and written by Melanchthon, only thirteen years after Luther nailed his theses to the door and began the Reformation.]*

**ANGLICAN:** "**And where are we told in the Scriptures that we are to keep the first day at all? We are commanded to keep the Seventh; but we are nowhere commanded to keep the first day.** The reason why we keep the first day of the week holy instead of the Seventh is for the same reason that we observe many other things,—**not because the Bible, but because the church, has enjoined [commanded] it.**"—*Issac Williams, Plain Sermons on the Catechism, Vol. 1, pp. 334-335.*

**EPISCOPALIAN:** "We have made the change from the Seventh day to the first day, from Saturday to Sunday, on the authority of the one holy, catholic, apostolic church of Christ."—*Episcopalian Bishop Symour, Why We Keep Sunday.*

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