

YOUTH BIBLE STUDY COURSE

Lesson 15: The Change of the Sabbath

In our last lesson we discovered that the Bible Sabbath is Saturday, the seventh day of the week instead of Sunday, the first day of the week, which is now kept by the majority of Christians.

Some say that it is not necessary to keep any particular day, but that we should keep every day. It is impossible, however, to keep every day **holy**, nor did God intend that we should. The same commandment that tells us to rest on the Sabbath, also tells us that there are six days in which we are to work.

Now you are probably wondering; if God told us to keep the seventh day of the week, why do so many Christians now keep Sunday, the first day of the week?

The Bible Sabbath

1. What day did Jesus regularly attend worship (the synagogue)? Luke 4:16. On the _____ day.

“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.”

2. Who is the only Person we are safe in following as an example? 1 Peter 2:21, 22. _____.

“For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth.”

Note: Though we were to take the most righteous of men for our example, even these men fall far short of the perfect example of Jesus Christ. In looking to them, we would be in danger of making grave errors, and fall far below the perfect standard of Jesus' life.

3. What day did the apostle Paul attend church? Acts 17:2. The _____.

“And Paul, as his manner was, went in unto them, and three sabbath days reasoned with them out of the scriptures.”

4. After Paul finished preaching one Sabbath, and the Jews had left the synagogue, what did the Gentiles ask the apostles to do? Acts 13:42. Preach to them the _____.

“And when the Jews were gone out of the synagogue, the Gentiles besought that these words might be preached to them the next sabbath.”

Note: This took place at least 15 years after the death and resurrection of Jesus. The Jews had all left the meeting and only the Gentiles were left. Paul was called of the Lord especially to be the minister to the Gentiles. If Jesus had expected the Christian church to keep a day other than the Sabbath, certainly Paul would have told these folks about it. The next day would have been the first day of the week, the day we call Sunday. If Sunday were to have been the Christian Sabbath, surely Paul would have arranged to meet with them the next day, but he did not do this.

5. When did the apostles answer the request of the Gentiles for another meeting? Acts 13:44. The next _____ day.

“And the next sabbath day came almost the whole city together to hear the word of God.”

6. In the future, how does the apostle Paul tell us many would relate to truth? 2 Timothy 3:2-5. They would love their O _____ S _____ more than _____.

“For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away.”

Note: In this text, Paul tells us of a great apostasy—a departure from the truth—that would take place within the Christian church. He calls this the mystery of iniquity, or mystery of lawlessness. In 2 Thessalonians 2:7, he told the church of his day: “For the mystery of iniquity doth already work:”

Paul warned that in the future, wicked religious leaders would come into the church and teach false doctrines, deceiving the followers of Jesus. He likened them to savage wolves. During a last visit that he had with the leaders of the church at Ephesus, near the end of his life, he told them: “For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them.” Acts 20:29, 30

Many people point to the fact that some customs and practices that have found their way into the Christian Church, did so long ago, and must, therefore, be right. They reason that because these things had their beginning in the times of the apostles, and the men who lived soon after the apostles, they must certainly be all right. However, from what Paul said, we know that even in his day there were false teachers.

To the Law and to the Testimony

7. What are we to compare all teachings to? Isaiah 8:20. The _____ and the _____.

“To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.”

Note: God’s word is to be our unerring guide. If men teach doctrines contrary to God’s Ten Commandments, we are not to follow them, for God’s Word tells us that if they do not speak according to the law and the testimony it is because their is no light in them.

It doesn’t matter when something began to be taught; if it was wrong in the beginning, it is still wrong. That it has been taught for a long time, does not make it right. Cain set up a false worship, doing his own thing, in the very beginning of time but God never accepted it and won’t accept it today either.

God’s Last Message

Note: In the book of Revelation, the last book of the Bible, we are told of some special messages for the people of the earth. The messages are so important that they are said to be given by angels flying in the heavens.

8. What does the first angel say is taking place? Revelation 14:6, 7. The _____ of His _____ is come.

“And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to Him; for the hour of His judgment is come: and worship Him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters.”

Note: Notice that in telling us to worship and give glory to God, it speaks of Him as the God who created all things. It is not possible for us to worship God and give Him glory as the Creator, unless we are keeping the Sabbath that He gave us as a memorial of Creation.

9. What is God’s last message to the obedient? Revelation 22:12, 14. My _____ is with me.

“And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be. Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.”

Note: The Bible describes God’s people in the last days as a commandment-keeping people. The reason for this is that for centuries many Christians have been keeping only nine of the Ten Commandments. Although there have always been some faithful ones keeping God’s true Sabbath all through

history, only during the past one hundred years has there been a worldwide movement back to God and to the keeping of all of the Ten Commandments. In lesson fourteen we learned that nearly all the world has forgotten about the fourth commandment, which tells us to keep holy the seventh day of the week.

According to message of this angel, God's people in the last days will return to the keeping of all ten of his commandments, including the fourth. The call to return to the observance of God's true Sabbath (Saturday), the seventh day of the week, is closely related to the last message that is to be given to the world.

The keeping of the true Sabbath was not an issue in the days of such great men as Calvin, Luther, Knox, Wesley, or Roger Williams although there were people at that time who kept it. The Sabbath movement has to do with these last days just before the end. Although people in the past were accepted by God while observing the first day of the week, God's worldwide call today is for men to observe all of the commandments, including His holy Sabbath. The reformation is to be completed with a return to 'The Bible and the Bible only'.

You may be greatly surprised to learn that there have been men who have offered as much as \$1,000 cash to anyone who could find one text in the whole Bible which teaches that Sunday is sacred.

The first day of the week is mentioned only eight times in the New Testament, and not once is it referred to as the Sabbath or a holy day. The whole Bible teaches the observance of only the seventh-day Sabbath (Saturday). No one has been able to win that \$1,000 reward because Sunday is a man-made day of worship, and Sunday-keeping is not taught in the Bible.

10. Does Jesus care if we follow man made rules of worship? Matthew 15:3, 9. He says they worship Him in _____.

"But he answered and said unto them, Why do ye also transgress the commandment of God by your tradition? But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men. But he answered and said, Every plant, which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up."

Note: What could be plainer? Jesus has told His followers for all time that, if they follow tradition (man-made rules and teachings) instead of His commandments, they worship Him in vain and their beliefs shall be rooted up. It is very important that we know for ourselves which teachings are taught in the Word of God, and which rest merely on the traditions of men. The only way we can know this is to study for our self as we dare not trust what people tell us as they may be deceived also and not know it.

As you talk to your friends about the Sabbath and ask them to keep it, they will often say that the Sabbath was just for the Jews. Many believe that the Sabbath was to be kept only until Jesus died on the cross. But the New Testament shows that the Sabbath was the only day that was ever kept by Jesus or His disciples

and that it was the only day which they taught the people to keep holy. These verses show that Paul in his work for the Gentiles observed Saturday as the Sabbath instead of Sunday.

The Bible records only one meeting that Paul had on the first day of the week, a farewell service. (See Acts 20:7, 8.) This was really a Saturday night meeting. No one keeps Saturday night holy. As we learned in our last lesson, a day according to God's reckoning of time, is considered to begin at sunset. Since this meeting was at night, and the first day of the week began when the sun went down on the Sabbath, this meeting was really held on what people today would call Saturday evening.

Origin of Sunday-keeping

For thousands of years the heathen have worshiped the sun. The Old Testament contains many warnings against sun worship, for it was a common practice in those days. This type of worship was even practiced at times by Israel. See Deuteronomy 4:19; 17:3; 2 Kings 23:5, 11

During the time of Ezekiel, Israel was doing many things that grieved and displeased God. In a vision, God showed Ezekiel some of the things Israel was doing that were most displeasing to Him. After showing Ezekiel several other things they were doing in their worship that were detestable to Him, He said: "Have you seen this, O son of man? Turn again, you will see greater abominations than these. So He brought me into the inner court of the Lord's house; and there, at the door of the temple of the LORD, between the porch and the altar, were about twenty-five men with their backs toward the temple of the LORD and their faces toward the east, and they were worshiping the sun toward the east." Ezekiel 8:15, 16

As the early church grew in power, it grew in popularity. Being popular, it became rich and worldly. Growing worldly, the leaders began to bring into the original Christian church, many false doctrines and heathen practices. They did this because many heathen priests had joined the church in name but were still heathen at heart. They wanted to hold to their former beliefs which the commandments of God condemned. To please these people, the leaders ignored the Ten Commandments or changed them to conform to their former beliefs. One thing they did was to start letting idols be worshipped in the church.

In A. D. 321 the Roman Emperor Constantine decreed that the whole Roman Empire should celebrate the first day of the week as a national holiday. All government offices were to close. In making this decree, he openly called the first day of the week "the venerable [honorable] day of the sun." He knew that Sunday was a pagan holiday on which sun worship was practiced. (You may read about this in the encyclopedias and history books in your library.)

"Probably very few Christians are aware of the fact that what they call the 'Christian Sabbath' (Sunday) is of pagan origin.

“The first observance of Sunday that history records is in the fourth century, when Constantine issued an edict (not requiring its religious observance, but simply abstinence from work) reading, ‘let all the judges and people of the town rest and all the various trades be suspended on the venerable day of the sun.’ At the time of the issue of this edict, Constantine was a sun-worshipper; therefore it could have had no relation whatever to Christianity.

“The Sunday law has neither Scriptural authority nor standing room in the law of God. A. H. Lewis, D.D., Seventh-day Baptist.”

A few years later, at the time of the Council of Laodicea (about A. D. 364), the church voted to change the Sabbath from Saturday to Sunday. Thus the church joined hands with the government in forsaking the fourth commandment. They explained that in making this change they would from thenceforth observe Sunday in honor of the resurrection of Christ. But no man or group of men can make such a change nor actually make a day holy. Sunday remained what it always had been, an ordinary working day celebrated as a pagan feast day.

For a long time many could not decide whether to continue to keep the Sabbath which Jesus kept or to change and keep Sunday, the man-made day. Of course, most of them didn’t care, the same as today. As you talk to people about keeping God’s true Sabbath, the seventh day of the week, they shrug their shoulders and say, “Oh, what difference does it make?” They don’t seem to realize that, when the Bible light comes to them, they will be held responsible in the judgment for refusing to keep the Sabbath.

For several hundred years some people kept Saturday while others kept Sunday, and many observed both days. Then the church began to persecute people who kept Sabbath—many were killed and many more fled into far away places in the mountains where they could serve the Lord on His holy day. But in time nearly everyone followed the Roman Government and the church, and kept Sunday, the man-made day of worship. How sad it is to think that Bible truths taught by Jesus, the Light of the world, were shut out by the professed church.

Millions today, without realizing it, are dishonoring God by worshiping on the heathen holiday of the sun-day. But we must make Jesus our guide and not follow the teachings of men!

God is bitterly disappointed when ministers close their eyes to His Sabbath! Speaking of ancient Israel, He said: “Their priests have violated My law, and have profaned Mine holy things: they have put no difference between the holy and the profane, neither have they shewed difference between the unclean and the clean, and have hid their eyes from My Sabbath, and I am profaned among them.”
Ezekiel 22:26

Today the decision is yours. You must decide if you will follow the Lord in all things, or if tradition and the teachings of men will be your guide. In the near future the whole world is going to have to make a decision about this—I pray each one of us will be found on the side of the Lord of the Sabbath!