

The Story of a Lost Day

MOST countries have their national days commemorating important events in their history which, like birthdays, fall on the same day every year. It cannot be on another day any more than a birthday anniversary can be on another date than that on which the person was actually born.

Did you know that when this world of ours was made, a special day was set aside as a memorial of its creation? Everyone who is familiar with the Bible record of the creation of this earth will recall that man, the crowning work of creation, was made on the sixth day: "Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. And on the seventh day God ended His work which He had made; and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had made."

—*Genesis 2:1, 2.* It was surely not a rest in the ordinary sense of the word, due to fatigue or severe mental exertion, for the record continues, "And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it He had rested from all His work which God created and made." —*Genesis 2:3.* The word "hallowed" signifies that the day was to be set aside for a sacred use, as a perpetual memorial of the creation of this world. If the Sabbath had always been kept as it should have been kept there would never have been an infidel or an evolutionist in the world today. There would be no room or place for doubt in God as our Creator, and in the Bible as our inspired guidebook from death to life.

Although great changes have taken place in this world since the days of the week were first set by the Creator, yet for nearly 6000 years the weekly cycle has been preserved. Now while the majority of the human race have forgotten to give the honor due to God in respecting the Sabbath day, since that very first Sabbath there have been faithful ones who have remembered "the Sabbath day to keep it holy." —*Exodus 20:8.*

There are some who may contend that back in the darker periods of earth's history we have lost track of time, hence no one can really be sure which day is the Sabbath. This objection cannot be sustained, in view of facts available. If we suggest that it may have been lost by man prior to the giving of the Law at Sinai, then God

would have made the necessary correction right then and there. From the time of Israel's inauguration as a nation until the time of Christ the Sabbath was most carefully preserved by the people and confirmed by the prophets. The surest evidence of this is that Christ recognized as the Sabbath the very day celebrated by the Jews. It is doubtful if any well-informed person would contend that the Sabbath was lost since the first advent of Christ. Both secular and church history will testify that the seventh day of the week was kept as sacred by a large section of the Christian church for many centuries. One man may lose track of a certain day, but it is inconceivable that millions of Jews, widely scattered among the nations, have all lost account of their national day of rest.

Have you, dear reader, ever given serious thought to this Sabbath question? Are you certain that you are keeping the true rest day established by God, or do you feel that it makes no difference which day you keep, so long as you keep one day? The Bible is our unerring guide, and if you would know the truth on this subject, you must search the Scriptures with an earnest desire to know God's will, and a willingness to obey. Hereunder we present a few facts about Sabbath and Sunday. Will you look at them carefully? Take your Bible and examine the texts of Scripture quoted:

Twenty Reasons for Sabbath Keeping

1. After the Lord had in six days made the heavens and earth, He rested on the seventh day, blessed it and sanctified it (*Genesis 2:1-3*).
2. The seventh day was called "the sabbath," which means "rest" (*Exodus 31:16, 17*).
3. The day of rest of the Lord, the Sabbath is called the "Lord's day" (*Compare Revelation 1:10 with Isaiah 58:13 and Mark 2:28*). The Bible never calls the seventh day "the Sabbath of the Jews," but calls it "the Sabbath of the Lord" (*Exodus 20:10*).
4. The Sabbath was instituted in the beginning, 2300 years before there were any Jews in existence.
5. When it is remembered that the Sabbath was made before there were any Jews, we can better understand

the statement of Christ, "the Sabbath was made for man" (*Mark 2:28*). No man then, whether Jew or gentile, has any right or authority to reject the day of rest which God made for Him, and choose another day. We are all to use the Sabbath for the purpose for which it was made, namely, for man to rest—all men.

6. The institution of the Sabbath, for the rest of man (*Exodus 20:8-10*), was not dependent upon circumstantial factors, as were the ceremonial ordinances and special annual holy days of Israel, for the following reasons:

a) The Sabbath is a sign of creation for all men, at all times, and in all places. As the Sabbath was instituted before sin entered the world it was definitely a part of the original work of God (*Genesis 2:2, 3*). It is not the purpose of the Plan of Redemption to change the original work of God, but to restore all that was altered by Satan, and to bring man back to his Edenic state. (*Luke 19:10; Matthew 19:8; 1 John 3:8; Acts 3:21*).

b) Since the Sabbath was in existence before the entrance of sin into the world, it does not have a ceremonial significance; therefore it could not have been nailed to the cross together with the law of the symbolic atonement given after sin and because of sin. Many have given an erroneous interpretation to the words of Paul in Colossians 2:16, 17, making it appear that the Sabbath of the Fourth Commandment of the Decalogue is to be classified in the category of the annual "sabbaths" of the ceremonial law. There were seven of these "sabbaths" connected with the ritual service of Israel, but a careful perusal of the following texts—Leviticus 23:7, 8, 21, 24, 27-32, 35, and 36—makes it evident that these "sabbaths" could indeed be referred to as the "shadow of things to come." This is in direct contrast to the weekly Sabbath of the Decalogue, which was established as a memorial of creation, a sign of God's creative and redemptive work. It points us to the past rather than to the future. To include the weekly Sabbath with these ceremonial "sabbaths" would be to fall into the absurdity of classifying the works of creation as something which was still in the future at the time when the Law was given at Sinai.

7. The Lord wrote with His own finger the Sabbath

precept upon the tables of stone (*Exodus 31:18*). This Lord was Christ (*Acts 7:38; Malachi 3:1; 1 Corinthians 10:4, 9; Hebrews 11:26; John 1:1-3*). When He was on earth, He showed that His words which are found in the Moral Law cannot be annulled (*Matthew 15:3-6; Mark 7:7-13*).

8. The purpose of the earthly sanctuary with all its furniture, including the ark with the tables of the covenant, etc., were to "serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly things," as Moses was admonished of God when He was about to make the tabernacle: "for, See, saith He, that thou make all things according to the pattern shewed to thee in the mount" (*Hebrews 8:5*). There is therefore in heaven the original sanctuary of which the earthly one was only a copy. The heavenly tabernacle is called the "true tabernacle" (*verse 2*); the earthly sanctuary erected by Moses, referred to as the "holy places made with hands" were in actuality only "the figures of the true" (*Hebrews 9:24*). All that which existed and still exists in the true sanctuary in heaven was to be simulated in the tabernacle built by the Jews. The ark in both sanctuaries was made to hold the tables of the covenant. (*Deuteronomy 10:4, 5; 1 Kings 8:9*). John the Revelator was given in vision a view of the heavenly temple (*Revelation 11:19*) where he beheld the "ark of the covenant." This is most significant to us as the ark undoubtedly contains "His covenant . . . the Ten Commandments" (*Deuteronomy 4:13*). The Ten Commandments are therefore in heaven and within them is also the Sabbath of the Fourth Commandment.

9. Christ kept the Sabbath—the seventh day—during all His life on earth (*Luke 4:16; Matthew 5:17-20; John 15:10*). If He had failed to keep it in the least detail He would have been guilty of sin as "sin is the transgression of the law" (*1 John 3:4*). He could at all times make this challenge: "Which of you convinceth me of sin?" (*John 8:46*). So well did Christ keep the Sabbath that the Jews who were watching Him continually could not find even one fault by which to accuse Him before the Sanhedrin (*Luke 6:7*). Real proof of Sabbath transgression would have been sufficient to condemn Him to death. No, not even on the day when He was judged before Pilate could they accuse Him of transgression of the Sabbath (*John 18:29; Matthew*

26:59-66). There is not one text in the Scriptures which can be used to prove that Christ either by word or example absolved us from keeping the Sabbath.

10. Jesus declared Himself "Lord also of the Sabbath" (*Mark 2:28*). He identifies it in a special sense as His own—His property, we might say. How displeased must He be then when His earthly children desecrate and misuse His day? How would you feel, dear reader, if in your absence someone broke into your house, smashing doors and windows, damaging furniture, scattering abroad your possessions? Such a crime against you and your property is not nearly so serious as it is to desecrate and misuse the Lord's property.

11. That the Sabbath of the Jewish dispensation was to be preserved in all its sacredness in the Christian dispensation was confirmed by Christ in His instruction to His disciples relating to the destruction of Jerusalem, forty years after the crucifixion. "But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the Sabbath day" (*Matthew 24:20*).

12. The passing from the old to the new covenant does not annul the Sabbath. If we compare the terms of the first one with that of the second (*Hebrews 9:19; Exodus 24:7, 8; Ezekiel 36:25-27; Jeremiah 31:33, 34; Hebrews 8:10*), we can note that the one important aim in both covenants is to bring man to obey the law of God. Actually the difference between the covenants is the manner in which this obedience is obtained. The weakness in what was called the "first covenant" was that obedience depended upon the promise of the people. "All that the Lord hath said will we do" (*Exodus 24:7*). The second covenant, however, is not dependent upon the good intentions of man, but upon the strong "I will" of God (*Ezekiel 36:27*). Under the first, the law was engraved upon tables of stone, but the people, trusting in their self-confidence, were unable to obey it, hence to them it was but a law of condemnation. In the second, however, the same law is written, "not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart" (*2 Corinthians 3:3*).

"But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; after those days, saith the

Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts." (*Jeremiah 31:33; Hebrews 8:10.*) The terms of this new covenant are better because through the power of grace we are enabled to render perfect obedience to the law of God.

The law remains unchanged, however, with the Sabbath of the Fourth Commandment still an integral part of it.

13. The moral law of God, which includes the Sabbath, remains in force throughout the entire Christian dispensation. More than 300 texts from the New Testament could be brought forward to prove this. They are distributed in the following order:

a) About 50 texts tell us directly that the law is unchangeable.

b) Another 150 texts tell us of the existence of sin. If we admit the existence of sin, then we have no alternative but to recognize the binding claims of the law, as the Scriptures make it plain that "the strength of sin is law" (*2 Corinthians 15:16*). The strength (or evil) of the sin of stealing, for instance, is the fact that the law says, "Thou shalt not steal" (*Exodus 20:15*). If this commandment is abolished, stealing is not sin. If the law is now abolished, sin has not strength, because "without the law sin was dead" (*Romans 7:8*). Therefore every passage in the New Testament which confirms the existence of sin proves that the law of God is still in force.

c. In the New Testament there are more than 100 texts which tells us of the dynamic power of grace without which there can be no salvation. But grace is necessary only where there is sin, and sin can come only by transgression of the law. "Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound." —*Romans 5:20*. If the law was abolished as some claim, then there can be no more sin (*Romans 4:15, 7, 8*), and there is therefore no reason for grace. Every text that shows the existence of grace also confirms the validity of the law of God.

14. Under the New Covenant, which was confirmed by the death of Jesus (*Hebrews 9:16-18*), the disciples of Christ kept the Sabbath (*Luke 23:56*). This is just

one evidence that this custom was not abolished thereafter, but rather to the contrary it continued to be observed in the New Testament era. After the establishment of the New Testament by the death of the testator, this change could not be brought about, because once a covenant or testament is confirmed, no one has the right to add to or subtract from it (*Galatians 3:15*).

15. It was the custom of the apostle Paul to preach on the Sabbath day (*Acts 17:2, 3*). In the book Acts of the Apostles we find 84 occasions where Paul preached on the Sabbath, not only to the Jews in their synagogues, but also to the Gentiles, both in the house of worship and in the open air (*Acts 13:14, 42, 44; 16:13; 17:2; 18:4, 11*).

16. After the ascension of Christ, the Christian Jews met regularly in the temple (*Luke 24:53; Acts 2:46*), and the converts among the Gentiles attended the synagogues (*Acts 15:19-21*). At first the disciples regarded the customs and ceremonial laws of Moses in the same light as the Jews. They continued in the practice of circumcision and were prejudiced against those who were not circumcised (*Acts 11:2*), and considered the gentiles as unclean (*Acts 10:15, 28*). When it was decided that it was not necessary for the gentiles to be circumcised according to the law of Moses, there was great discussion about this subject (*Acts 15:1-11*). The apostle Paul has quite a lot to say on this controverted point of circumcision and other ceremonial practices of the Jews, but we find no question or agitation in regard to the Sabbath, as all, both Jews and Christians, regarded it as God's holy day. As a matter of fact, Ananias would not have had a good testimony from all the Jews if he had not been a strict Sabbath keeper (*Acts 22:12*).

17. In the Christian dispensation there remain the same basic motives for Sabbath keeping as when first given to man at the creation of the world.

a) A sign between God and His people that He is the creator of the heavens and the earth (*Genesis 2:2, 3; Exodus 20:11, 17, 31*).

b) A sign of sanctification. The Sabbath was set apart for a holy use and thus signifies God's calling out from this world of sin (symbolized by spiritual Egypt) a

people who have consecrated themselves fully to His service (*Deuteronomy 5:15; Ezekiel 20:12, 20; 1 Peter 2:9*).

The apostle Paul in the epistle to the Hebrews (*Hebrews 4:1-8*) refers to God's resting on the seventh day as a pledge of the eternal rest when all God's children will enter the kingdom prepared from the foundation of the world. Only He who truly keeps the Sabbath can enter into the spiritual rest which Christ offers and which is a foretaste of our rest in heaven (*Hebrews 4:9, 10*).

18. Through historical records we know that the Sabbath was gradually changed to Sunday during the third and fourth centuries of the Christian era.

19. According to prophecy (*Malachi 4:5, 6*) before Christ was to be manifested as the Messiah, some one represented by Elias (Elijah) was to prepare the way for Him. This was partially fulfilled by John the Baptist, who came "in the spirit and power of Elias" (*Matthew 11:11-14*), and it was his mission "to restore all things." The prophet Isaiah portrays Christ's mission and that of His followers as an effort to "build the old places" and "raise up the former desolations, and . . . repair the waste cities" (*Isaiah 61:1-4*).

Before Christ's second coming the prophecy of Malachi 4:5, 6 must have its complete fulfillment through those who proclaim the last warning message to a perishing world. Connected with this work of spiritual restoration and reformation is a definite call to Sabbath reform. They will "call the Sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord honorable" (*Isaiah 58:12-14*). In our days also the gentiles are called to keep the Sabbath (*Isaiah 56:1-7*).

20. In the new earth, the sabbath is to be observed as a memorial day to the Almighty. ". . . from one Sabbath to another shall all flesh come to worship before me, saith the Lord" (*Isaiah 66:22, 23*).

How long will it be worthy of commemoration that God created us, that He is our Creator and we His creatures? Evidently as long as we exist, to all eternity. But after redemption is accomplished, after sin and its long train of wretchedness are but a memory of the past, after creative power in creating "has made all things new," God's power in creating and His love in

redeeming will be gratefully observed by all the loyal beings of His universe.

In the light of the evidence presented, we find that God's desire concerning His holy day is not recorded in just one or two books of the Bible but is found throughout the whole Scriptures. Like a golden chain the Sabbath truth stretches from Genesis to Revelation; from paradise lost to paradise regained.

Everything that is necessary to give importance to the day—that is calculated to induce a proper observance of the Sabbath—is produced in favor of the seventh day. But nothing of this kind can be produced in favor of Sunday, the first day of the week. No sanctity, no commandment, no penalty, no blessing.

Shall we obey the word of God or hold to the traditions of men? Shall we follow Christ or antichrist? Shall we observe the Sabbath of the Lord, or the Sunday of the man of sin?

Shall we obey the law of God as it came from the Lawgiver and observe the Bible Sabbath? or shall we obey the law as changed by the papacy and observe the Roman Sunday? The Saviour says, "In vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men." —*Matthew 15:9*. "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." —*Revelation 22:14*.



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