

Bible Study Lectures

later. At this time the Israelites were journeying from Egypt to Canaan. 1 Corinthians 10:1-4 tells us that the One who accompanied them on their journey was Christ. And Nehemiah 9:6-14 tells us that He who led them also gave them the Ten Commandments.

BIRTHDAY OF CREATION

Our next question is: Why was the Sabbath made? The answer is embodied in the commandment itself: "Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shall you labor, and do all thy work: but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God: 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 hallowed it." Exodus 20:8-11. The Sabbath, the birthday of creation, is to be observed as a perpetual memorial of the creative power of God. Psalm 111:4 states, "He hath made His wonderful works to be remembered." And this memorial is of everlasting duration, "Thy name, O Lord, endures for ever; and Thy memorial, O Lord, throughout all generations." Psalm 135:13. And Revelation 14:6, 7, giving the opening note of the final message to be heralded to the whole world prior to the return of Christ, admonishes us to worship God as the Creator.

Mr. Mitchell stated that it was his firm conviction that the reason why God has brought such a widespread and persistent agitation of the Sabbath question these late years is because it is to be especially emphasized at this time when the educational world, and the religious world to a great extent, is denying the Genesis account of creation. He stated that a two-year newspaper discussion, which the editor of the paper stated was the longest discussion ever published in any New Zealand newspaper, was concerning the Sabbath.

Our next point is, continued the speaker, For whom was the Sabbath made? In Mark 2:27 we read: "The Sabbath was made for man." The Greek word used here is the generic term "anthropos," and means all mankind. It is used 551 times in the New Testament, and refers to all peoples and nations under the heavens. The Sabbath certainly was not made exclusively for the Jew man, as is sometimes supposed. Isaiah 56:1-6 also teaches that it was for the Gentile man as well as for the Jew. It is part of the Ten Commandments the keeping of which Ecclesiastes 12:13, 14 states is "the whole duty of man."

Our final question is, How long is the world to observe the Sabbath? I answer that it is the sacred link that spans all time, from Eden's gates on into the new earth. The Sabbath of creation was the Sabbath of Sinai. It was the "Sabbath day according to the commandment" kept by the disciples when Christ was in the tomb. It was the only sacred day known to the disciples, before and after the crucifixion. It was to continue right on into the Christian dispensation. In Matthew 24:20 Christ, looking down to the destruction of Jerusalem, 40 years this side of the crucifixion, said: "Pray that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the Sabbath day." Revelation 14:12 pictures the saints waiting for the coming of Jesus as keeping the commandments, of which the Sabbath is a part. The last chapter in the Bible, speaking of the entrance into the eternal city of God, says: "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."

But my closing picture stretches right on into eternity, into the new earth: "And it shall come to pass, that from one new moon to another, and from one Sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before Me, said the Lord." Isaiah 66:23.

47. THE IDENTICAL SEVENTH DAY

Traced from Creation Week

WHEN in Invercargill, New Zealand I was conversing with an elderly Scotch lady, whose husband had formerly occupied the mayoral chair of the city. She was a woman of a very studious and logical turn of mind, and liked digging into the deep truths of Scripture, especially the prophecies. After attending several of my lectures she spoke to me regarding the seventh-day Sabbath saying, "Sunday must be the seventh day, for the commandment says, 'the seventh day is the Sabbath,' and we observe Sunday as the Sabbath, therefore Sunday must be the seventh day." I assured her that all scholarship and all sources of information taught that Sunday was the first day of the week, and not the seventh.

After proving my statement from the New Testament, I said: "Some of the old family Bibles have a list of the days of the week in them, and Sunday is listed as the first, and Saturday as the seventh day." She was a typical "canny Scot." She did not say much more just then. But on my next visit she produced

Bible Study Lectures

the large family Bible, which she had sought out to see if what I said was correct. She handed me the Bible, one of the oldest early English type Bibles that I have seen, published in the year 1793, by M. and C. Kerr, Edinburgh.

Now here is the list of the days of the week exactly as found in that Bible: "1 Day of the week, Sunday. 2 Day, Monday. 3 Day, Tuesday. 4 Day, Wednesday. 5 Day, Thursday. 6 Day, Friday. 7 Day or Sabbath, Saturday." When I showed the lady this in her own Bible, she was so astounded that she gave me the Bible, and told me I could show it to whom I wished.

FIRST AND SEVENTH DAYS

More than one has been surprised to learn that, although the fourth commandment says "the seventh day is the Sabbath," yet Sunday is actually the first and not the seventh day of the week. I have told others that their own catechism would teach them that Sunday is the first day of the week. But I think that some in their surprise would feel like arguing with their catechisms. It often happens that people become convinced that the seventh day is the Sabbath, and say they would keep it if they only knew which day it is.

Now before turning to evidence from the Scripture, let us note these facts: (1) All scientific, chronological, and legal records regard Sunday as the first day of the week, and, therefore, Saturday as the seventh day. All astronomical calculations recognize it as such. All the laws of the nations recognize it, and most of them make a legal holiday of Sunday under the name of "the first day of the week, commonly called Sunday."

(2) Sunday is a name applied to the first day of the week in all histories, encyclopedias, and lexicons, the title of Sabbath, or name of Saturday, being uniformly given to the seventh day.

(3) Sunday is called the first day of the week in all the standard works and by all the authorities of all the leading churches. There is not an exception to this rule.

(4) Sunday was the name given to the first day of the week (dies solis, day of the sun) by the heathen before it was recognized as a day of worship by Christians. See Webster and many other authorities.

UNIVERSALITY OF WEEKLY CYCLE

Now just a word about the weekly cycle. Unlike the year, month, and the day, it is not governed by any planetary motion. And yet all nations have observed this arbitrary fixture of time. This seven day period was observed from the earliest times, from Europe to the remote shores of Hindustan, just as equally as it prevailed among the Hebrews, Egyptians, Chinese, Greeks, Romans, and the northern barbarians of remote antiquities nations some of whom had little or no intercourse with others, and were not even known by name to the Hebrews.

The universal recognition of the weekly cycle by all nations on the face of the earth is evidence that mankind had a common origin, and that before their dispersion into different regions, they observed the weekly cycle as given to mankind at creation. The great truth of creation thus memorialized by the observance of the seven-day period of time apparently was never totally obliterated from the memory of the Gentiles, even though their language was confounded, and they were dispersed throughout the world as recorded in Scripture.

Having thus noticed the historical setting of the antiquity and universality of the weekly cycle, we shall now catch a glimpse of the mountain tops in the Scriptural setting.

Genesis 2:1-3 gives the record of the original seventh day of creation week. Then we skip over the centuries to the time of the Exodus of the children of Israel from Egypt. Exodus 16 records the working of a threefold miracle for forty years which preserved the identity of the seventh day. The manna fell from heaven six days of the week, but none on the seventh day. On the sixth day twice as much fell.

It remained wholesome over the Sabbath, whereas during the week it would not keep from day to day.

CHRIST'S OBSERVANCE

Then coming further down through the centuries we find the Savior Himself observing the Sabbath during His life on earth. If there were any doubt about the preservation of the identical seventh day, this fact must surely remove it, for Christ observed the correct day. Luke 4:16. Then the circumstances surrounding the crucifixion of Christ have enabled us to establish the identical seventh day ever since.

The closing verses of Luke 23, and Luke 24:1 give us a list of three days of the week. The day of the crucifixion and burial of Christ is called the "preparation" day, which is kept up to this day as "Good

Bible Study Lectures

Friday.” The day following is called “the Sabbath day according to the commandment,” which must have been the identical seventh day, for the commandment says, “the seventh day is the Sabbath. And the day following that, the resurrection day of Luke 24:1, is called ‘the first day of the week.’”

The Easter festival observed through the centuries of the Christian era, even to our time, with its corresponding days of the week, thus establishes beyond all shadow of doubt that the seventh day of the week is Saturday, the day that follows Friday, and the day that precedes the first day, Sunday.

48. SUNDAY IN NEW TESTAMENT

The First Day of the Week

THE first day of the week is mentioned only nine times in the whole of the Bible, once in Genesis 1:5, where it is referred to as the first day of creation week, and eight times in the New Testament.

Startling as it may seem, it is not once stated in the entire Bible that God, Christ, or the apostles ever changed the Sabbath to the first day; or that they ever blessed or sanctified that day; or that they ever commanded anyone to observe it as a weekly Sabbath in memory of Christ’s resurrection; or that they or the apostolic church ever kept it holy or even made it a rest day; or that they ever called it the Sabbath, the Christian Sabbath, or the Lord’s day; or that they ever pronounced blessings for keeping it or threatening against its profanation.

Here are the eight references to the first day, as found in the New Testament: Matthew 28:1; Mark 16:2, 9; Luke 24:1; John 20:1, 19; Acts 20:7, 1 Corinthians 16:2. None of these eight texts attach any sacredness to the day; it is simply called “the first day of the week.” On the other hand, three of these texts refer to the day before it as “the Sabbath.”

RESURRECTION SUNDAY

Six of these eight texts mention the first day of -the week merely incidentally, in connection with the resurrection of Christ. There is no need for lengthy comment here, except to note that the resurrection Sunday was by no means observed as sacred in honor of the resurrection, for even “when they had heard that He was alive, and had been seen,” they “believed not.” Mark 16:11. Luke chapter 24, plainly teaches that even on that Sunday night, when Christ appeared to the disciples as they were having their evening meal, it was difficult for Him to convince them that it was really He, and that He had been resurrected according to the prophecies. John 20:24-28 records that more than a week elapsed before Thomas, after seeing the nail prints, was able to say, “My Lord and my God.”

Why, the term “doubting Thomas,” which is in common use even to this day, originated because of his difficulty really to believe that Jesus had been resurrected. Therefore it is plain that the resurrection Sunday was not observed as sacred in honor of the resurrection.

On the other hand, the New Testament record teaches that the disciples and all the followers of Christ strictly observed the Sabbath on the seventh day, the day before the resurrection. Let us turn to the record as given in Luke 23:52-56 and Luke 24:1. Here we have three days mentioned. The crucifixion day is called the preparation day. That was Good Friday, which is still observed as such. Now the next day following the crucifixion Friday is called “the Sabbath day according to the commandment.” After the body of Christ was placed in the sepulcher, late on Friday afternoon, by the followers of Christ, “they returned, and rested the Sabbath day according to the commandment.” Luke 23:56.

SATURDAY IS THE SABBATH

That is two days. First the preparation day, corresponding to our Friday, followed by “the Sabbath day according to the commandment,” corresponding to our Saturday. Now the next day mentioned was the resurrection day, and it is referred to in the next verse simply as “the first day of the week.” It is evident from this Scriptural record that the day observed as sacred, the Sabbath day, came between Good Friday and Easter Sunday. In other words, Saturday, the day between Friday and Sunday, is the Sabbath according to the New Testament record. No man ever rose early enough on Sunday morning to find the Sabbath day.

Matthew 28:1, Mark 16:1-2, 9, and Luke 24:1 show that Sunday is the first day, and always comes after the Sabbath is ended. Matthew wrote his gospel six years after the resurrection. Mark was written 32 years after, and Luke 28 years after the resurrection, and yet each of the se writers refers to the day before