

18. Which Day Shall Christians Keep?

The sermon tonight will be an introduction to the Sabbath question. The limitations of time will not permit me to cover all the aspects of the Sabbath question in one sermon. So please remember that if some of the items I present are not clear to you, they will be cleared up as I cover the other aspects of the Sabbath question in succeeding sermons.

If some man says things, which are just the opposite from the way you or I have been brought up, that doesn't necessarily mean that he is wrong. The only safe thing for any person to do, is to prove all things, and hold fast to that which is good. I don't ask you to take my word on any point, but I do ask you to take your Bible and check up on my statements and find the real truth for yourself.

I was brought up to believe that Sunday and Sabbath meant the same thing. When I became a Christian, I kept Sunday strictly because I sincerely believed that it was the day that Jesus Christ had appointed for Christians to observe in honour of His resurrection on the first day of the week. In fact I felt so sure that Sunday was the right day for Christians to keep, that when a certain man attempted to show me that Christians should keep the seventh day, or Saturday, I told my friends that the man was crazy. I said they ought not even to allow him to walk the streets. They ought to put him in an asylum. But that man stirred me to search my Bible to find the facts. Tonight I want to tell you what I found. I want to take you on a delightful tour of investigation of God's Word for a discovery of the real truth about the Sabbath.

Jesus tells us in John 8:31, 32 that if we continue in His word, we shall know the truth, and the truth shall make us free. Please bear in mind that this matter of which day we should observe is not a question of denominationalism. It cannot be settled by what I say or what any other minister says. It cannot be settled by what any certain church teaches; or by what any denomination does; or by what the law of the land says; or by what the encyclopaedia or the dictionary may say. If you want the real truth, you must let the Bible speak and tell you which day Jesus Christ wants you to keep.

“What says the Bible, the blessed Bible?
This should my only question be.
Teachings of men so often mislead us,
What says the Book of God to me?”

The first fact that I discovered was that Sunday is not the day God commands men to keep. Write Exodus 20:10 in your notebooks. I have placed this text on a piece of muslin that you might see for yourself just what God says in Exodus 20:10. (At this juncture a banner containing the words of Exodus 20:10 was lowered in view of the audience.)

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Exodus 20:10, a part of the fourth commandment, is one of the ten. The fourth commandment constitutes Exodus 20:8-11 in your Bible.

I would like to have all of us read this: “The seventh day is the Sabbath of **the Lord Thy God**. In it thou shall not do any work.” Exodus 20:10.

God says, keep the seventh day. Which day is the seventh day? If **you look at your calendar**, you see at once that the seventh day is the **day we call Saturday**. Then Saturday is the Sabbath according to the Ten Commandments.

I discovered further that Sunday cannot be the right **day to keep, because** Sunday is the first day of the week, while God commands us to keep the seventh day or the last day of the week. So I learned that Sunday and Sabbath do not mean the same thing. Many of you have used those terms synonymously. I once thought that Sunday and Sabbath meant the same thing, but that is not according to the Bible. Sunday and Sabbath do not refer to the same day any more than Thursday and Friday refer to the same day.

Sunday is a name that men gave to the first day of the week, because on that day from time immemorial the heathen people worshipped the Sun. Hence they called it the sun’s day, or Sunday. The Sabbath is a name that God gave to the seventh day of the week.

Like many other people I formerly thought that the keeping of the seventh day was intended only for the Jews. I would like to have you notice what Jesus says in Mark 2:27. “The Sabbath was made for?” Whom? The Jews? No, Jesus says, “the Sabbath was made for man.” Does that spell Jew? No! “The Sabbath was made for man,” and that means the race of mankind. I discovered that the keeping of the seventh day was no more intended for just the Jews than the commands, “Thou shall not kill,” and “Thou shall not steal,” and “Thou shall not commit adultery,” were only for the Hebrew people. The Ten Commandments are ten great principles of righteousness applicable to all people.

Then I thought to myself, the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Old Testament, but Sunday, the first day of the week, is the Sabbath of the New Testament. You know there are a lot of people who think that if you go by what they call the old Bible, the seventh day is the right day, but if you go by what they call the new Bible, then the first day or Sunday is the day we should observe.

I thought that too once. So I searched the New Testament. I came to the second book in * the New Testament, which is the book of Mark. I want you to notice Mark 16:1, 2 and see what I found there. “When the Sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome, had bought sweet spices, that they might come and anoint Him. And very early in the morning the first day of the week,” (notice that after the Sabbath was past,) “very early in the morning the first day of the week, they came unto the sepulchre at the rising of the sun.”

The Sabbath was passed and gone when they came to the tomb at sunrise. I think you can see that the first day of the week could not be the Sabbath in the New Testament, because the Sabbath was past before the first day of the week dawned. The fact that the first day of the week was the next day after the Sabbath in the New Testament, showed me that the Sabbath, the day Jesus Christ wants me to keep, must be the day that comes just before the first day of the week, which everybody knows is Saturday.

As I read the New Testament I found that the word “Sabbath” in the New Testament refers to the same seventh day of the week that is called the “Sabbath” in the Old Testament. When it comes to the weekly day of observance, the word “Sabbath” in the entire Bible, the New Testament and the Old Testament, is applied to no other day except the seventh day as appointed by the Lord in the Ten Commandments. The Bible no more speaks of two different weekly Sabbaths, than it talks about two different true Gods or two different true Christs. One true God; one true Christ; one true Sabbath. And there need be no doubt as to which day is the one true Sabbath, because it is the seventh day that God specifies in the Ten Commandments.

Like many of you, I formerly thought that the resurrection of our Lord on the first day of the week made Sunday the right day for Christians to keep. But when I read the New Testament, I found that there is no scripture, **not a single** text, that says that Christians should keep the **first day of the week** in honour of our Lord’s resurrection. The resurrection of Jesus Christ on Sunday did not make Sunday the Sabbath or the Lord’s day any more than our Lord’s crucifixion on Friday made Friday the Lord’s day or the Sabbath.

Here is something I did find. Put this down. In the very beginning of the Bible in Genesis 2:3 I found this. “God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it because that in it He had rested from all His work which God created and made.” You will notice it says, “God sanctified the seventh day.” The word “sanctified” means set apart for a holy use. This is the only day for weekly observance that the Lord ever sanctified for man according to the record given in the Bible. This shows that the seventh day is the only day of the week that the Lord ever set apart for man. It is the only weekly day He ever made holy for man or commanded man to keep.

After I learned this the question came to me, just as it is coming to some of you right now, “Does it really make any difference which day a person keeps just so he keeps one day?” Many people think that if only a person keeps one day in seven that that is all that the Lord requires. They think any day that people want to select is satisfactory to the Lord.

We need to look at God’s answer to this question. Put down Exodus 20:10, 11. Again we shall read a part of the fourth commandment. We have placed it here on muslin so that you might see what God says. (At this juncture the words of this text on a piece of muslin were disclosed to the view of the audience.)

God says, “The seventh day is,” (not used to be, but is right now) “the Sabbath.” Notice He doesn’t say that a seventh day is the Sabbath. He doesn’t say your seventh day. He doesn’t say any seventh day is the Sabbath, but He says, “the seventh day is the Sabbath.” Then He tells us why. He says, “For,” (which means because) “in six days the Lord made heaven and earth ... and rested on the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day, and hallowed it.”

Here is something we need to follow very closely. God actually designates the seventh day, which He asks us to keep, to be the same day of the week upon which He rested. In fact God says, You keep the seventh day, because on that day I rested. God defines the seventh day that He wants us to keep as being the last day of the week, the day on which He rested.

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God specifies two reasons why man should keep the seventh day of the week. First, because the Lord rested on the seventh day after He made the world in six days. Second, because the Lord set the seventh day apart as a holy day.

Do you know friends that if you put any other day in that fourth commandment except the seventh day, you make the Bible contradict itself? We shall put in the first day of the week and read it to see how it comes out. "The first day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God . . . for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, and rested the first day." Hold on there! Right there you have a contradiction. You have God resting and working on the same day. You say, He made the world in six days. Well, the first day of the week was one of those six days. Then you say that He rested on the first day. You see it makes the commandment contradict itself. It destroys the commandment.

That isn't all! God has fixed the Sabbath so that man cannot tamper with it. You can take any other day of the week aside from the seventh-the first day, second day, third day, fourth day, or sixth day and place it in the fourth commandment as the Sabbath and it makes the commandment contradict itself. There isn't any day that will fit in this commandment except the one that God placed in it-the seventh day. This is a very significant point. **There is** only one way to obey this commandment and that is to keep the last day of the week, the day on which the Lord rested. The Sabbath cannot be any other day except the particular day of the week on which He rested and the day which He set apart or sanctified for man. Since the seventh day is the only day on which the Lord rested after He made the world, the only day He ever sanctified, then it must be the only right day to keep.

After I learned this, the thought came to me, as some of you are thinking now, "Yes, the seventh day is the right day to keep, but hasn't the calendar been changed, so that we cannot be sure that the seventh that God specifies in the Ten Commandments is the identical day that we call Saturday?" If you will study this, you will find that the change in the calendar did not alter the order of the days in the week. The order of the days of the week that we have in our calendar today is the same order of the days of the week that they had when Jesus Christ was here.

We have three charts here which will show that the seventh day which God specifies in the fourth commandment is identical with the day we now call Saturday. (Three charts were displayed depicting the sixth day as the day of the Lord's crucifixion, the following day as the Sabbath according to the commandment, and the next day-the first day of the week, as the day of the Lord's resurrection.)

On this first chart we see the three crosses and Christ on the middle cross. Jesus Christ was crucified on the sixth day of the week. The Bible plainly teaches this. The Bible shows that He was crucified on the day before the Sabbath. Here it is in Mark 15:42. Speaking of the day of the crucifixion it says, "It was the preparation, that is, the day before the Sabbath." Jesus was crucified on the day before the Sabbath.

Notice the next day in this cycle of three days as illustrated on the next chart. The next day after He was crucified was the seventh day. He was crucified the day before the Sabbath, so the next day was the Sabbath day. Notice in Luke 23:56 what Christ's own followers did on the day after the crucifixion. After they had seen Christ taken down from the cross and put in Joseph's new tomb, they returned to their homes. Then what did they do? It says, "They rested the Sabbath day according to the commandment." He was crucified the day before the Sabbath and the next day His followers kept the Sabbath according to the commandment of God.

Then what happened on the next day? The next day was the first day of the week. On this third chart you see the women at the tomb and the angel telling them that the Lord is risen. We find in Luke 24:1, that after they had kept the Sabbath, "Upon the first day of the week, very early in the morning, they came unto the sepulchre, bringing the spices which they had prepared."

You have three great days standing side by side. The sixth day of the week, when He was crucified; the next day, which His followers kept as the Sabbath; and the first day of the week upon which He arose. How plain! The day that God asks you and me to keep is the day that came in between the crucifixion on Friday and the resurrection on Sunday. It is a historical fact and no one can rightfully deny that Jesus was crucified on the day we call Friday; and rose on the day we call Sunday. If you know what day comes in between Friday and Sunday, then you know what you ought to do. If there is anybody in this auditorium who doesn't know what day comes between Friday and Sunday, will you please see me privately?

Mark well this point. The calendar that was in use in the time of Christ was the Julian Calendar named after Julius Caesar. This calendar was arranged by him forty-six years before Christ was born. That calendar without any modification so far as the weeks are concerned is the calendar that hangs on your wall tonight. This is positive evidence that the day we call Saturday is the seventh day of the fourth commandment.

I hold in my hand photo stats of certain pages from Dio Cassius' History of Rome, which you all recognize as a standard work on the history of Rome. In these citations we find that the seventh day of the week, which we now call Saturday in English, was the day which the heathen anciently dedicated to Saturn. Roman history shows that this day of Saturn or Saturday was the same day of the week which is called the Sabbath in the Ten Commandments, and was so observed by the Israelites. These two photo stats of citations from Dio Cassius' History of Rome identify the day of Saturn, now called Saturday, as being the same day of the week which the Israelites kept as the Sabbath according to the fourth commandment of the Ten Commandments.

In his history he tells how Pompey captured Jerusalem by attacking it on the day of Saturn which was the same day as the Sabbath observed by the Jews. On that day the Jews would not fight so the city was taken.

In Dio Cassius' History of Rome Book 37, Chapter 16, **Loeb Classical Library, vol. 33**, pp. 125, 127 we read: "Most of the city, to be sure, he took without any trouble, as he was received by the party of Hyreanus; but the temple itself which the other party had occupied, he captured only with difficulty. For it was on high ground and was fortified by a wall of its own, and if they had continued defending it on all days alike, he could not have gotten possession of it. As it was, they made an exception of what are called the days of Saturn, and by doing no work at all on those days afforded the Romans an opportunity in this interval to batter down the wall." This was sixty-three years before Christ.

Then we have the identity of Saturday with the Sabbath made certain from that time to the present, because the orthodox Jews still consider the seventh day to be holy, and it still coincides with the day called Saturday in the calendar.

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Some people told me that the New Testament calls the first day of the week the Lord's day in honour of Christ's resurrection. What are the facts? I found this. The Lord's day is mentioned only one time, not two times, but only one time in the New Testament. This is in the last book in the New Testament in Revelation 1:10. John says, "I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet."

You will notice that he does not specify which day of the week is the Lord's day. We have no right to read into the Bible something that isn't there. He simply says, "I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day." Of course, the Lord's day means Christ's day. There is no question about that, but he doesn't specify which day of the week it was. There is only one way we can find out for a certainty which day of the week is the Lord's day, and that is to compare scripture with scripture and let the Bible decide.

The Lord's day must be the day of which Jesus Christ is the Lord. What day is Jesus Christ Lord of? In Matthew 12:8 we read, "The Son of man is Lord even of the Sabbath day." Since the Lord's day is the day of which Jesus Christ is Lord, and He is Lord of the Sabbath day, then the Sabbath day is the Lord's day. Since the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord, then the seventh day or Saturday is the true Lord's day.

If Jesus Christ is in the Sabbath, and He is, then you want Jesus Christ and the Sabbath. It seems to me, friends, that we should all be willing to follow the example of Jesus. In 1 Peter 2:21 the apostle says that Jesus left us an example, that we should walk in His steps.

When we take the New Testament and trace out Who is the Lord mentioned in this fourth commandment it becomes very clear that the seventh day is Christ's day, because He is the Lord that made the day holy for man to keep. The New Testament shows in seven different places that Christ, **the Son of God, is the creator** of this world. I shall give you those texts. John 1:1-3; John 1:10; Ephesians 3:9; Colossians 1:13-17; 1 Corinthians 8:6; Hebrews 1:1-3, and Hebrews 1:8-10.

Who is this Lord that made the seventh day to be the Sabbath by resting upon the seventh day, after He made the world in six days, and by sanctifying or setting apart that day? The New Testament tells us it was the Lord Jesus Christ. Isn't it plain that since Christ is the Lord Who made the seventh day the Sabbath by resting on that day after He made the world in six days, and by sanctifying that day that the seventh day is bound to be Christ's day, the Lord's day, the Sabbath of Christ for all Christians to keep? The keeping of the Sabbath day is a part of following Jesus as our Saviour. It is Christ's day. I love that day, because I know it is Christ's day. The seventh day is the only weekly day that the Lord Jesus Christ ever set apart or ever made holy for man to keep. When He lived here, He kept the seventh day holy. He says to you and me, as Christians, "Follow me."

Some people told me that the keeping of the seventh day was binding only until Jesus died upon the cross. When I searched my Bible, I found that this was not true. I found that the keeping of the seventh day was binding after the crucifixion and resurrection of our Lord. The apostles kept the right day. You can depend on that. They followed the real truth which they had received direct from Christ. If you want to be sure which is the right day to keep, all you need to do is to find what day the apostles called Sabbath and keep it. Put down Acts 13:14, 15.

This thirteenth chapter of Acts gives an account of a striking sermon Paul preached in the Jewish synagogue in Antioch about A. D. 45, or about fourteen years after the crucifixion and resurrection of our Lord. Notice what it says: "When they departed from Perga, they came to Antioch in Pisidia and went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and sat down."

They went into the Jewish synagogue on the Sabbath day, when the Jews were assembled for their weekly worship. Tell me upon what day of the week did the Jews in the time of Paul meet for their weekly worship? There can be only one answer to that question. The Jews in the time of Paul met for their weekly worship on the seventh day or Saturday. Notice that the Holy Spirit speaking through Luke calls this seventh day or Saturday when the Jews met for their weekly worship, "the Sabbath day."

This reveals two very important facts. The seventh-day Sabbath was not abolished at the cross for here we have the Acts of the Apostles calling it "the Sabbath day," some fourteen years after the crucifixion and resurrection of Christ. The apostles recognized Saturday as the Sabbath in their religion by calling this day upon which the Jews met for their weekly worship, "the Sabbath day." You will find this fact set forth eight times in the book of Acts. As a matter of fact the seventh day or Saturday on which the Jews met for their weekly worship is called the Sabbath eight times in the book of Acts.

It is true that the ceremonial laws of Moses were nailed to the cross and have been abolished. However, the Ten Commandments, as the eternal law of righteousness, were binding after the cross just as before. Hebrews 8:10 shows that the same Ten Commandments which God wrote on stone under the old covenant are written upon the Christian's heart by the Holy Spirit under the new covenant.

In Numbers 28:9 we learn that the Israelites were required by the Mosaic Law to offer two lambs as a burnt offering every Sabbath day or every Saturday. Christians today don't need to offer lambs as sacrifices. Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God, offered Himself on Calvary's cross nineteen hundred years ago once for all. In fact if we should offer lambs for our sins, we would be denying Jesus Christ as the Lamb of God. That Mosaic law about offering two lambs every Sabbath was nailed to the cross. This is why Christians should not keep the Sabbath according to the Mosaic Law, but should keep the Lord's day according to the example of Jesus Christ.

If I should ask how many believe that these Ten Commandments such as Thou shall not kill; Thou shall not steal; Honour thy father and thy mother; and Thou shall not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain, are binding today, everyone here would raise his hand. Mark this. The keeping of the seventh day, or Saturday, is a part of those Ten Commandments. It is the fourth one of the ten. This means just as surely as the Ten Commandments are binding, the keeping of the seventh day is binding. The Ten Commandments constitute the only document in this world which ever came to man direct from God. God spoke the ten with His own voice and wrote them on everlasting stone. The great God of all, has forever settled this Sabbath question by saying, "The seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shall not do any work."

Some of you will say, "Mr. Shuler, I thought you weren't going to preach denominationalism in this Bible Institute!" Listen, the keeping of the seventh day is not denominationalism. It is one of God's Ten Commandments for everybody in the world. Jesus Christ and the Ten Commandments are not confined to any one denomination. They are for all Christians. The

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keeping of the seventh day is for all Christians. The keeping of the seventh day is not denominationalism any more than the keeping of the commandment, "Thou shall not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain!" You can't make one of those Ten Commandments belong to one denomination and give the remaining nine to the rest. You don't want to do that, do you? They belong to all, and that is why I am preaching this. I am not referring to any denomination at all. I am simply telling you what the Bible says.

Did you know that this fourth commandment for the keeping of the seventh day is a commandment of the Lord Jesus Christ? Here are two references. Put them down. 1 Corinthians 10:4 and Nehemiah 9:12-15. 1 Corinthians 10:4 shows that the Lord God, Who led Israel through the wilderness by that pillar of cloud by day, and pillar of fire by night, was Christ. Paul says, "They drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ!"

Nehemiah 9:12-15 shows that the same Lord God Who led them through the wilderness was the One Who spoke the Ten Commandments at Sinai. That shows that Christ is the Lord God who spoke the Ten Commandments. Consequently the fourth commandment for the keeping of the seventh day is a command of Jesus Christ.

The words of the Ten Commandments about the seventh day being the Sabbath of the Lord are equivalent, according to the New Testament, to saying, the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord Jesus Christ because He spoke the Ten Commandments. If you read this New Testament through one hundred times, you will not find where Jesus Christ ever told anybody to keep the first day of the week for any reason whatsoever. Christ did speak the Ten Commandments and told men what day they should keep. The seventh day is the only day that the Lord Jesus has ever asked anybody to keep. My friends, if we obey the Lord Jesus Christ, what else can we do but keep the seventh day as He tells us?

What does all this mean to you? What does it mean to me? It means that if we are not already keeping the seventh-day Sabbath, we had better make up our minds to begin keeping it as one of God's commandments just the same as the commandments Thou shall not steal; and Thou shall not **bear false** witness, etc.

There are two facts which forever settle this whole question. **The seventh day is the only day of weekly observance that Jesus Christ ever told man to keep. The seventh day is the only day of weekly observance that Christ ever blessed or sanctified or hallowed or set apart for man.**

Now I am going to put the capstone on all this evidence by reading a text that shows that this seventh-day Sabbath will be kept throughout eternity by the redeemed in the earth made new. You may put down Isaiah 66:22, 23. The prophet is talking about the new earth. He says, "As the new heavens and the new earth, *which I* will make, shall remain before me, said the Lord, so shall your seed and your name remain. 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."

This shows that the seventh-day Sabbath will be kept throughout eternity. It was here before sin entered. It will be here when sin is gone. It is like a great rainbow arch reaching from Eden lost to Eden restored; from paradise forfeited through disobedience to paradise regained by obedience to Jesus.

The most important matter of all is for us to make sure of an eternal happy home in God's wonderful new earth. We need Jesus to help us to be there. It would be better for us never to have been born than to miss a home in His wonderful kingdom. "Mat will it profit a man, if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?"

Friends, I want to be there and I want Christ to help me to be there. How many of you with me want to raise your hand as a silent prayer, "Lord help me to so follow Thy Word that I may live forever in Thy wonderful kingdom?" Yes, it seems that every hand is raised. (Prayer)

Blessed Lord Jesus, we thank Thee for Thy great sacrifice upon the cross. We thank Thee that through that sacrifice we have the hope of eternal life. We thank Thee for this glorious new earth that Thou wilt prepare, this New Jerusalem that Thou hast already prepared for Thine own. Dear Lord, we want to be there. It is all we have to live for, and tonight we have raised our hands for Thee to help, us. Oh, Lord, do help us to follow Thee that we may have an eternal happy home in the place Thou hast prepared for us. We ask it in Jesus' name. Amen.

ADDITIONAL NOTES ON THE IDENTITY OF THE SEVENTH DAY

Some people think that the calendar has been changed therefore we cannot be sure that the seventh day commanded in the Ten Commandments is the day now called Saturday. Since the days of Christ only one change has been made in the calendar, and that was the change from the Julian calendar to the Gregorian. This did not in any way affect the days of the week. By 1582 A. D., due to Julius Caesar having inserted a leap year too often, the calendar had drifted away from the seasons. The spring equinox, instead of coming on March 21st came on March 11th. To correct the calendar ten days were dropped. Friday, October 5th was called Friday, October 15th. It was still Friday, and Saturday followed as usual. Neither Saturday nor Sunday was affected. Some countries who delayed adoption of the reform calendar till 1752 found it necessary to call September 3rd of that year September 14th, thus dropping eleven days. It was a Thursday, and Friday followed as usual. In other words, the changes in the calendar did not affect in any way the order of the days of the week. Hence the seventh day of the week continues as the true seventh day of the week, the day we call Saturday.