

The Rest of The Story

INTRODUCTION

In an age when satellites streak around the world in an hour and a half, it is difficult to imagine how limited man's knowledge of the world must have been a few thousand years ago. Then it was unthinkable to sail beyond the sight of land because dark mystery and Intrigue haunted the open seas. In fact, men of old believed what had been passed down through the centuries as fact: The Earth was a flat platform at the center of the universe.

As late as the 15th century, old sailors ridiculed Columbus when he tried recruiting a crew for the voyage that brought him to America. They said his ship would fall off the edge of the Earth!

Yet, as far back as 250 B.C., the Greek astronomer Eratosthenes described the Earth as a sphere. However, people still clung to the old belief passed along from generation to generation. It was not until the 17th century, after the research of Galileo and Copernicus, that the idea of a globe became generally accepted. Strange isn't how we accept fiction as fact without investigating to see for ourselves!

Take the spider as an example. For nearly 20 centuries, people commonly believed that spiders had six legs. Incredible? Well, that's the way it was! About 350 B.C., the ancient Greek philosopher Aristotle had said that a spider was an insect that had six legs. No one questioned the wisdom of the great Aristotle. If he told spiders had six legs, well then, spiders had six legs! Some 20 centuries later, the biologist Lamarck closely examined a spider. What a surprise! He found that spiders had eight legs! And It's not an Insect; it's an arachnid!

Unbelievable? Wait until you hear the next commonly held belief and the rest of that story! Thousands of Christians have become aware of another belief passed along from generation to generation that will not bear the close scrutiny of history or Scripture.

DEVELOPMENT

Surprising as the thought may seem, millions of sincere Christians attend church on Sunday, the first day of the week, thinking that they are doing what God has

instructed them to do. They are totally unaware that they are keeping a day that God never set aside as a day of rest or worship.

As we turn to biblical history, we discover that God designated a specific period as a weekly appointment for himself and humanity. Let's go back to Lamarck, before Galileo, before Aristotle. Right back to creation week. In the first book of the Bible, we read...

Genesis 2:2, 3 "And on the seventh day God ended His work which He had done, and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had done. Then God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because in it He rested from all His work which God had created and made."

Before sin was known to man, God appointed this day as a memorial of creation. The birthday of the world! A day God said to remember. His exact words are:

Exodus 20:8-10 "Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord your God."

Now, let's 'take a look at a calendar. It is easy to see that the seventh day of the week is Saturday, not Sunday. Little wonder God instructed humanity to "remember." He must have known how man would forget! Maybe you are asking, How can we know which day is the seventh? Hasn't the calendar been changed? Hasn't the weekly cycle been altered?" Yes, the calendar has been changed, but the weekly cycle has never been altered. The Julian calendar, adopted in 46 B.C., was in use during the life of Christ and on until 1582 A.C. At that time, Pope Gregory XIII introduced the calendar that is in use today in most countries of the world, called the Gregorian Calendar. To bring the calendar into harmony with the seasons, Friday the fifth of October was changed to Friday the 15th on the new Gregorian calendar. But this change in no way affected the seven-day weekly cycle.

Of course, had the weekly cycle been altered between the time of Adam and the time of Moses, surely God would have rectified it when He wrote the Ten Commandments, which identifies the Sabbath as the seventh day. God certainly would not ask humanity to worship on the seventh day of the week if the man did not know which day it was. However, the children of Israel kept the seventh day Sabbath even before God spoke the Ten Commandments at Sinai. Three months before the children of Israel arrived at Sinai, God gave these instructions concerning the gathering of manna.

Exodus 16:26, 30 "Six days you shall gather it, but on the seventh day, the Sabbath, there will be none. So the people rested on the seventh day".

Has the weekly cycle been altered between Moses' time and the time of Christ, Jesus surely would have set the record straight. But we read this about Jesus.

Luke 4:16 "And as His custom was, He went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day."

Astronomers and historians confirm that time has not been lost and that no change has been made in the weekly cycle since before the days of Christ.

James Robertson, Director American Ephemeris United States Naval Observatory, wrote:

"We have had occasion to investigate the results of the works of specialists in chronology and we have never had the slightest doubt about the continuity of the weekly cycle since long before the Christian era There has been no change in our calendar in past centuries that has affected in any way the cycle of the week."

Orthodox Jews have worshiped on the seventh day since the Exodus, more than 3,500 years ago. They still recognize Saturday, the seventh day of the week, as the day God set aside for worship wherever they are in the world. Of course, if the Bible were our only source of information, we would still determine which day is the seventh day or the Sabbath. As we turn to the crucifixion account, the Book of Luke summarizes the events of that weekend. After Christ died on the cross on Friday, the Bible comments.

Luke 23:54-56, 24 "That day was the Preparation, and the Sabbath drew near. And the women who had come with Him from Galilee followed after and they observed the tomb and how His body was laid. Then they returned and prepared spices and fragrant oils. And they rested on the Sabbath according to the commandment. So, Pilate gave sentence that it should be as they requested."

Most of the Christian world celebrates what is called "Good Friday" in memory of Christ's death. They celebrate Easter Sunday in remembrance of Christ's resurrection. The Bible tells us that the day in between is the Sabbath, "according

to the commandments." Even though Luke wrote these words many years after the cross, he still called Sunday merely "the first day" of the week, and he still called the seventh day "Sabbath." The biblical record carefully distinguishes these two days.

The apostles continued to worship and preach on the seventh-day Sabbath years after the cross. The Bible spoke of Paul and his companions when they visited Antioch.

Acts 13:14 "They... went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and sat down. So, when the Jews went out of the synagogue, the Gentiles begged that these words might be preached to them the next Sabbath. On the next Sabbath almost, the whole city came together to hear the word of God."

You see, it was Paul's custom to worship in the synagogue every Sabbath, for we read: Acts 18:4 And he reasoned in the synagogue every Sabbath. It is recorded 84 times in the New Testament that Paul and other Christians worshiped on Sabbath. From these biblical facts, one can easily see there is no evidence that Christ or His disciples changed the day of worship. There is no record in the Bible commanding such a change. Scholars from the various Sunday keeping groups acknowledge this.

Dr. Peter Heylyn of the Church of England wrote. History of the Sabbath, Part 2, Chapter I, page 410. **"Take which you will, either the Fathers or the moderns, and we shall find no Lord's Day instituted by any Apostolic mandate no Sabbath set on foot by them upon the first day of the week."**

Catholic Cardinal James Gibbons once wrote. The Faith of Our Fathers, page 89. **"You may read the Bible from Genesis to Revelation, and you will not find a single line authorizing the sanctification of Sunday. The Scriptures enforce the religious observance of Saturday."**

Episcopal Archbishop Carrington was quoted in a Toronto Daily Star article a few years ago:

Toronto Daily Star, Wednesday, October 26, 1949. **"Rev. Philip Carrington, Anglican Archbishop of Quebec, sent local clergy into a huddle today saying outright that there was nothing to support Sunday being kept holy. Carrington told a church meeting in this city of straight-laced Protestantism that tradition, not the Bible, had made Sunday the day of worship."**

There is no biblical record that Christ or His disciples kept any other day or instructed others to do so! "Well then," you say, "How did Sunday keeping get started? If God, Christ, or the disciples didn't change the day, who did? And more importantly, by what authority was the change made?" It happened over a long period with many political, social, and pagan factors involved.

Let's trace the most important developments in the change. Sabbath keeping continued to be practiced by Christians for several centuries as we learn from Socrates Scholasticus, a fifth century historian...

Socrates Scholasticus. Ecclesiastical History, Book 5, Chapter 22 (N.P.N.F. 2nd series, Volume 2, page 132). **"Almost all churches throughout the world celebrate the sacred mysteries (the Lord's Supper) on the Sabbath of every week yet the Christians of Alexandria and at Rome, on account of some ancient tradition, have ceased to do this."**

Other historians record that the Waldenses, Albigenses, and Celts observed the seventh-day Sabbath during the Middle Ages. And the practice is well documented in modern times by Christians around the world. Many church historians place the beginning of a gradual change of days sometime between 70 and 135 A.C., the dates when the Romans crushed two bitter and bloody insurrections by the Jews. To understand the causes for this change of days, we need to briefly consider the relationship between the Roman Empire and the Jews during this time.

Dr. Samuele Bacchiocchi states. Divine Rest for Human Restlessness. page 245. **"Beginning with the first Jewish Revolt against Rome (66 to 70), various repressive measures- military, political and fiscal-were imposed by the Romans upon the Jews on account of the resurgent Jewish nationalism, which exploded in violent uprisings. In 135 A.C., the Jewish revolt led by Bar-Kokhba was crushed by the armies of Emperor Hadrian. Outraged Hadrian at this time prohibited the practice of the Jewish religion throughout the empire; condemning, especially Sabbath observance. The mounting hostility of the Romans against the Jews, coupled with the conflict between the Jews and Christians, encouraged a rash of anti-Jewish literature, which created strong anti-Jewish sentiment in the Roman Empire. The Christians became increasingly sensitive about identification with the Jews. And of course, since Sabbath keeping was a practice held in common with the Jews, many Christians tended to minimize its obligations. Impressive indications suggest**

that Sunday observance was introduced at this time along with Easter Sunday as an attempt to clarify to the Roman authorities the distinction between Christianity and Judaism.”

With this in mind, it is easy to see how Christians located in the capital city of the Roman Empire led the way in disassociating themselves from Sabbath keeping. They were located at the center where hostility was the strongest! Understandably, they might shy away from Sabbath-keeping (which was held in contempt by the Romans) Since the Church of Rome was composed predominantly of Gentiles, converts from paganism.

It Is Interesting to note how Paul addressed the church In Rome. **Romans 11:13** **"For I speak to you Gentiles..."** These Christians recently converted from paganism were not as well established In Sabbath-keeping as were the Christian Jews who had always practiced Sabbath keeping.

But you say, "Why was Sunday chosen rather than another day of the week?" That's a good question! The pagans in the Roman Empire had been sun-worshippers for centuries, celebrating Sunday as the sun's day. The Roman Emperors had even represented themselves as sun gods, stamping the emblem of the sun on their coins and buildings and demanding worship from their subjects. Some theologians believe that the church saw an advantage in compromise with paganism. By bringing in some pagan customs, the pagans would convert to Christianity more quickly and feel more at home. It would also benefit the empire by uniting its subjects into one great religion. For centuries Sunday was celebrated not as a Holy day but as a holiday. Then, both days were kept as holy days.

We read the following from Apostolic Institutions. Apostolic Institutions, Book 7, Chapter 23 (A.N.F., Volume 7, page 469) **"Keep the Sabbath (Saturday) and the Lord's Day (Sunday) festival; because the former is the memorial of Creation and the latter of the Resurrection."**

But the Roman Christians were not the only Christians who became careless and gradually compromised their faith. The erosion of the purity of the church spread throughout the Christian world. The centuries tell their story. The church stood firm and pure as long as the apostles were alive. But when the second and third generation Christians came, we saw evidence of compromise and apostasy.

One historian described this period of church history. Ecclesiastical Researches, page 51.

“Toward the latter end of the second century: most of the churches assumed a new form the first simplicity disappeared... as the old disciples retired to their graves.”

Dr. W. D. Killen adds. Ancient Church, Preface, pages XV, XVI. **“In the interval between the days of the apostles and the conversion of Constantine... Rites and ceremonies, of which neither Paul nor Peter ever heard, crept silently into use and then claimed the ranks of divine institutions.”**

This drift into compromise was accepted by the first civil Sunday law passed by the Roman Emperor Constantine on March 7, 321 A.D. While still a pagan, he legislated. History of the Christian Church, 5th edition, Volume 3, page 380. Roman Emperor Constantine on March 7, 321 A.D. **“On the venerable Day of the Sun let the Magistrates and people residing in the cities rest, and let all workshops be closed. In the country, however, persons engaged in agriculture may freely and lawfully continue their pursuits.”**

The next step in making Sunday keeping an integral part of Christianity was taken by the Church of Rome in the Council of Laodicea. It made the first religious law concerning the keeping of Sunday.

Ecclesiastical History, page 739. **“...In the year 325, Sylvester, Bishop of Rome... officially changed the title of the first day, calling it the Lord’s Day.**

At Council of Laodicea, held in 364, the following law was made. Council of Laodicea, held in 364 A.D. History of the Church Councils, Volume 11, page 316. **“Christians shall not Judaize (keep Sabbath) and be idle on Saturday (Sabbath original) but shall work on that day; but the Lord’s day they shall especially honor, and, as being Christians shall, if possible, do no work on that day If, however, they are found Judaizing, they shall be shut out from Christ.”**

However, Christians were still observing the Sabbath in the sixth century, for Pope Gregory denounced them.

James T. Ringgold. The Law of Sunday, pages 265, 266. **“...as the prophets of Antichrist those who maintained that work ought not to be done on the seventh day.”**

It is vital that we keep in mind that the Bible was not available to everyone as it is now. Doctrines were passed down by word of mouth until the laity could barely distinguish between Scripture and tradition. Few really knew the truth as Christ did, and his disciples taught it. Centuries passed and the Protestant Reformation arrived, questioning many rites and traditions that had supplanted the teachings of the Word of God. The cry of the reformers was: "The Bible and the Bible alone as our only rule of faith." Like Huss and Jerome, many paid for their fidelity to the Bible by being burned at the stake.

However, after the sixth century, the truth of the Sabbath remained almost dormant, hidden under centuries of tradition. And like the spider, few closely examined the Problem to find out what the Scriptures taught. They accepted what had been passed down from generation to generation, never questioning whether it was fiction or reality. The following statements are made by the church that led the way by giving ecclesiastical legislation for the change that was made...

The Christian Sabbath, page 16 (Published by The Catholic Mirror, 1905). **"For over one thousand years before, the existence of a Protestant, by virtue of her Divine mission changed the day from Saturday to Sunday by virtue of her Divine mission."**

Again. Catholic Record, September 17, 1893. **"Sunday is founded, not on Script re, but tradition, and is distinctly a Catholic institution."**

From the Convert's Catechism we read. The Convert's Catechism of Catholic Doctrine, 1957, page 50.

"Q. Which is the Sabbath day?

A. Saturday is the Sabbath day.

Q. Why do we observe Sunday instead of Saturday?...

A. We observe Sunday instead of Saturday because the Catholic Church transferred the solemnity from Saturday to Sunday."

But you say, "Surely God knew this would happen. Why didn't He warn us?" He did! The finger of prophecy points to a great religious power that would try to change God's law. From the prophetic book of Daniel, we read. **Daniel 7:25 "He shall speak pompous words against the Most High, shall persecute the saints of the Most High, and shall intend to change times and law."**

Exodus 20:8-10 "Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord your God."

The Roman Church confesses to its part in "thinking to change God's time and His law" ...

Catholic Encyclopedia, Volume 4, page 153. **"The Catholic Church, after changing the day of rest from Saturday, the seventh day of the week, to Sunday, the first day caused the third commandment to refer to Sunday as the day to be kept as the Lord's Day."**

By now, you are probably wondering how this church has the audacity to frankly admit they changed one of God's commands and replaced the day He made holy. In order to comprehend why they openly make this claim, we must understand the leaching of the Catholic Church concerning tradition and the Bible. The church states that tradition gave them the right to change the day of worship.

Rev. A. Nampon says. Catholic Doctrine as Defined by the Council of Trent, page 157 (1869). **"Tradition, not Scriptures ... is the rock on which the church of Jesus Christ is built."**

Again. Catholic Belief, page 45, J. F. Bruno. **"Like two sacred rivers flowing from Paradise, the Bible and divine tradition contain the Word of God... Though these two divine streams are of equal sacredness... still, of the two, tradition is to us clearer and safer."**

One of the main points of difference between Protestants and Catholics during the early days of the Reformation was the authority of tradition in the church. When Martin Luther declared he must follow the Bible and the Bible only, he challenged many of the institutions of the Catholic Church, which were based solely on tradition. The Council of Trent was convened to decide the Catholic Church's position on tradition and its relationship to the Bible. The question was finally settled. Notice the summary given of the speech that turned the tide, as recorded by theologian H. J. Holtzmann: Theologian H. J. Holtzmann. Canon and Tradition, page 263. **"Finally, at the last opening on the eighteenth of January, 1562, all hesitation was set aside: the Archbishop of Reggio made a speech in which he openly declared that tradition stood above Scripture. The authority of the Church could therefore not be bound to the authority of the Scriptures"**

because the Church had changed... the Sabbath into Sunday, not by command of Christ, but by its own authority."

What swung the pendulum when all seemed at a standstill? It was the fact that the church had chiseled from the law of God one of its precepts-on the authority of tradition! Misunderstanding, compromise, practicality, and tradition are the foundation of Sunday worship. But is that enough? Hardly! Do you remember the question Jesus asked the religious leaders of His day?

He asked. **Matthew 15:3 Why do you also transgress the commandment of God because of your tradition?**

Then He said. **Matthew 15:9 And in vain they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.**

CONCLUSION

Do you see the issue? Will we follow Christ and the Bible or human traditions? It is not merely a matter of days and numbers. It is a matter of masters! That is the real issue! God asks us to remember Him as our Creator by keeping the Sabbath day. To do as He asks means we show our loyalty to Him.

When a person keeps a man-made Sabbath, he obeys man's traditions. When we discover God's will, it is our joy to follow it. That is why Jesus once said in sadness. **Mark 7:6,7,9 This people honor Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me. And in vain they worship Me teaching as doctrines the commandments of men. He said to them, all too well you reject the commandment of God, that you may keep your tradition.**

Jesus said, **"their hearts are far from me."** You see, it is really a matter of the heart. A value of love. The Bible says. **1 John 5:3 For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome.**

The way we show our love for God is by our willingness to obey Him. It is easy to love Him when considering His great love for us. No amount of love on our part can ever compare with the love God has for us.

1 John 4:9,10 In this the love of God was manifested toward us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world that we might live through Him. In

this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.

Oh; yes, friend! "The love of God is greater than tongue or pen can ever say. It goes beyond the highest star.

The question for you and me is, how will we respond to His great love?