

What Is The Proper Day Of Worship?

This lesson will have a very simple answer, but you won't want to believe it. If you read the Bible it plainly gives only one answer, but that answer is so different from what everyone else believes and what you've always done, that it will be hard for you to accept it. So before we even begin, I want to ask you to think back over all you've learned in these lessons; all the places that the truth you've read in your Bible has contradicted the beliefs you've always heard in church.

And ask yourself if there is any place you won't go – any belief you won't hold – if you see it for yourself in the pages of your Bible? What can God ask that is too much, what belief too “different” from what those around you believe, for you to accept it?

Ask yourself in all seriousness what you won't do if the Bible says to do it. And give yourself a literal, verbal answer. I hope that your answer is “nothing”, for if it isn't, then you are not a true Christian, just one more person in search of a religion. And until “nothing” is your heartfelt answer, you have no hope of really understanding God.

And with that said, it's time to ask the Bible...

LESSON 9: WHAT IS THE PROPER DAY OF WORSHIP?

You've probably always been told it was Sunday. Do you know why? Can you point to the scripture that says “Worship God on Sunday”? Can your preacher? Oh, he can give you opinions, or tell you things like “Oh, we keep Sunday to commemorate the resurrection”, but where is the SCRIPTURE that says we should do this??

Where is the SCRIPTURAL command, suggestion, example, or even a HINT that we should commemorate Jesus' resurrection? Yes, it might sound like a good idea to the human mind, but God never mentioned it or even hinted at it – and what is the result of “the way that seems right to a man”? **Proverbs 14:12.**

Search the scriptures for yourself, ask your preacher to find it for you, and if you find it tell me – but I can tell you beforehand that there is no such scripture. It simply isn't there.

Nor is there any scripture commanding us to observe Sunday. It simply does not exist. There *are* a few scriptures that seem to show the apostles gathering on Sunday occasionally, and we will thoroughly examine those before this lesson is over. But in none of those scriptures is there anything resembling a *command* or instruction to keep Sunday holy. No one can argue that!

As I've said so many times (yet can never say too often), to properly understand the Bible you can't take one or two verses and build a doctrine around them; you have to take the ENTIRE Bible, using every verse that bears on the subject, push them all up into a pile, and see what they ALL say – because when you gather all of the verses on a subject and simply believe that each and every one of them is true, then they all speak in harmony and true doctrine becomes inescapable.

To do that, we are going to go through every verse that bears on this subject, starting at the beginning. Then follow along as God explains the day of rest more and more throughout the Bible, culminating in the New Testament where we will see just what day Jesus and the apostles kept holy.

What day did God initially rest? **Genesis 2:2**. Did God do anything special to that day? **Verse 3**. Why? (Same verse). Did God give the same seventh-day Sabbath to the Israelites? **Exodus 16:22-23**. To whom was this Sabbath observed? **Verse 25-26**. Why did God give them this Sabbath? **Verses 4-5**.

God gave them the Sabbath, as He said, “to prove them”, or as other versions say “to test them”, to see whether they would obey His law or not. So from the first, the Sabbath was a test command, to see whether someone really wanted to obey God – or preferred to go out and gather manna instead (or go out and earn a living to buy your “daily bread”).

The Sabbath command was the first one God gave them after they left Egypt; four chapters and a few weeks before the rest of the Ten Commandments were given. It far pre-dated the law of Moses, with the sacrifices, washings, and ceremonies. Clearly it was no part of whatever was done away in that law.

Was God angry when Israel went out to gather their daily bread on the Sabbath – a clear metaphor for working to earn a living? **Exodus 16:27-28**. After the rebels were dealt with, which day did the people rest on? **Verses 29-30**. Why did God give them the Sabbath? **Exodus 31:13**. A sign of what? (Same verse). How long will this Sabbath be kept? (Same verse). Was this sign temporary, only while they were in the wilderness, or did God say the same thing as much as 1000 years later? **Ezekiel 20:12**. Did God get furious when they broke the Sabbath, and rejected His sign? **Verse 13**.

Notice that it was a sign so you would know the true God! A sign that you are following Him, that He is your God. This sign was given to God’s people as a sign FOREVER, a PERPETUAL covenant – does that sound like something that was destined to be repealed or changed in the New Testament?

What was the penalty for breaking the Sabbath? **Exodus 31:14-15**. Was that ever enforced? **Numbers 15:32-36**. How long will Israel keep the Sabbath? **Exodus 31:16-17**. And why was the seventh day made special? **Verse 17**.

No other day can say that! The first day did not have God rest on it. Nor did God make the first day holy, nor did He bless it. No other day is a sign between God and His people. Only the seventh day.

Many people carelessly dismiss the Sabbath saying, “Oh, that’s just the Jewish Sabbath” – but is that what the Bible just said? Whose Sabbath is it? **Verse 13**. Is it the Jew’s Sabbath? Or GOD’S Sabbath?

Make this very clear in your mind that God NEVER calls it the Jewish Sabbath! God says “MY SABBATHS you shall keep” – it is not the Sabbath of the Jews, it is the Sabbath of the LORD.

Of which day is Jesus Lord? Which day of the week is the true “Lord’s Day”, according to the Bible? **Mark 2:28**. If God commands it to be made holy, should it be holy to you? **Exodus 31:14**. Do you, or anyone else, have the right to transfer that holiness to some other day? **Revelation 22:18-19** (Common sense also answers that question).

These scriptures also plainly say that God did not give the Sabbath to the Jews; He gave it to Israel, a group of twelve tribes descended from twelve sons of Jacob, ONE of whom was named Judah, who fathered the tribe of Judah, which eventually came to be called “the Jews”. **So while the Jews were among those to whom it was given, it was not given exclusively to them.**

A simple search for “Sabbath” and “Sabbaths” in the Bible will show you the 148 verses that contain those words; this course isn’t meant to do work you can do yourself. This is meant to answer questions, and so not every one of those verses will be quoted – many of them say the same thing, after all. Instead we’ll focus on the unique ones.

Does buying and selling constitute work? **Nehemiah 13:15-17**. Did Sabbath-breaking get Israel kicked out of the promised land? **Verse 18**. If necessary, is it appropriate to lock your gates (or turn off cell phones!) to keep salesmen and other “unwanted guests” out? **Verses 19-21**. Does the command not to work on the Sabbath apply even when you really “need to” work on the Sabbath? **Exodus 34:21**.

Sabbath observance is a test command – a matter of faith. It is a weekly test of whether or not you have the faith to trust God that you won’t lose your job, or that if you do, you’ll find a better one – and that whether you do or not, you’re going to obey God. Read **Daniel 3:17-18**. They trusted that God was going to deliver them – “but if not”, they said, they were going to obey His commands anyway.

It is a weekly test where you will risk offending your friends, your family, and stand alone if necessary against the world. But it does require faith – not much really, in the grand scheme of things, but it does require faith. You must ask yourself...

Will God let your family starve because you obeyed Him? **Psalms 37:25**. Is God unrighteous to forget your good works? **Hebrews 6:10**. If you haven’t the faith to obey God in a good time, with a relatively easy thing like the Sabbath, do you suppose you’ll have the faith to obey God when they put a gun to your head and order you to renounce your belief in God? **Jeremiah 12:5**. Is the Sabbath made FOR you, or is it against you? **Mark 2:27**.

What admonition did Jeremiah give the backsliding, apostate nation of Judah about the Sabbath? **Jeremiah 17:21-27**. Is keeping the Sabbath a blessing? **Isaiah 56:2**. Will those who keep it, regardless of their status in this life, have a place in God’s house? **Verses 4-7**. But to get that blessing, to inherit a place in God’s house (i.e., salvation), what must you do? **Isaiah 58:13**. And what does He promise afterwards? **Verse 14**. On the other hand, if you don’t “call the Sabbath a delight”, and God doesn’t hear your prayers, why is that? **Isaiah 59:1-2**.

Before we move on to the New Testament, it’s important to summarize and then ask one more question. First, we have established the Sabbath was not given just to the Jews; that the Sabbath is a sign between God and all His people. That the Sabbath is the seventh day, and no special mention is ever made of the first day of the week. That Sabbath-breaking was so important to God it was a death penalty offense. That it is a blessing, and a requirement, if you hope to have a place in God’s house.

But what is the future of the Sabbath? After the New Testament times, even after this life, what happens in the future – after the new temple is built, does the Sabbath have any place there? **Isaiah 66:22-23**. And in that new temple (described in great detail throughout the latter part of Ezekiel), will people keep God’s Sabbath? **Ezekiel 44:24**. Will people still worship on the Sabbath? **Ezekiel 46:3**.

So if the Sabbath has always been kept, and is going to be kept in that period in the distant future... is it likely that God has completely shoved it aside now in favor of another day? If so, God must have said so very clearly in the New Testament. Did He?

WHAT DID JESUS DO?

We would surely expect Jesus to have known the true way of observing the New Testament Sabbath. After all, if He didn’t, why are we Christians? And surely He would have told the apostles, His closest friends, the true day of worship. So what did they do?

Who is our perfect example in all things? **1 Peter 2:21**. And should we walk (and teach) as Jesus walked? **1 John 2:6**. On which day did Jesus teach? **Mark 1:21**. Was it just one time, or did it happen again? **Mark 6:2**. Did Jesus make a habit of always attending church and (when His time was come) teaching on the Sabbath day? **Luke 4:16**.

So Jesus' example was to keep the Sabbath. Not Sunday – there is not one word that hints at Sunday being observed by Jesus, **ever**. Shortly before Jesus died, His disciples asked Him what would be the sign of His return – the end of the New Testament age (**Matthew 24:3**). And Jesus gave a long list of information, but among them He directly implied that His true disciples would be keeping the Sabbath day just before He returned:

Matthew 24:20 *But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the Sabbath day:*

If Jesus' death, a matter of mere days after this, was to change the Sabbath day to Sunday, why would Jesus prophesy that just before His return His disciples should pray that their flight not be “on the Sabbath day”? If the Sabbath was to lose all of its significance, as it has for so many Christians today, then why would they care WHICH day their flight was on – it wouldn't matter to them if their flight was on “the Jewish Sabbath”!

You have here a proclamation from the lips of Jesus Himself that the Sabbath day would be a matter of great importance to His disciples just before He returned. To His *true* disciples. Is it important to your church? Is it important to you?

But what about His closest friends, the ones who knew Him and His commands best – which day did they keep after His death? **Luke 23:56**. Surely, if anyone was to have changed the Sabbath to Sunday, Paul would have known about it – which day did he observe? **Acts 13:14**. Did he keep Sabbath with the Jews, but observe Sunday with the Gentiles? **Acts 13:42-45**.

Notice what happened there! **The Jews had LEFT the building! And the GENTILES asked to hear Paul again the next SABBATH!** And the next Sabbath, almost the whole city came together EXCEPT the Jews, who were “moved with envy”. With this whole group exclusively made up of Gentiles, if Sunday were the day of worship for New Testament Gentiles, surely Paul would have told them so, and kept Sunday with them, and Sabbath with the Jews – but your Bible says he did no such thing!

Is that the only time Paul kept the Sabbath? **Acts 16:13**. Did Paul, like Jesus, make a HABIT of keeping the Sabbath regularly, week after week? **Acts 17:2**. With both Jew and Greek alike? **Acts 18:4**. **What about Jesus' other friends – like the women at the crucifixion? Luke 23:54-56.**

The women who had been present at Jesus' crucifixion returned after His burial – after He was dead and buried, His blood having completed the changes to the law, and they STILL returned and **kept the Sabbath** according to the commandment! Just as Paul REGULARLY kept the Sabbath, week after week, “as his custom was”!

These scriptures are clear. They are not vague, they cannot be misinterpreted, nor are they a matter of opinion. Jesus kept the Sabbath, it plainly says, so did Mary, the other Mary and Paul – who plainly kept the Sabbath with his Gentile and Jewish converts alike.

As I said, these are clear scriptures. And remember the rule of Bible study – a large number of clear scriptures ALWAYS, without exception, trumps a tiny number of vague, unclear verses. There are a handful of these unclear verses regarding Sunday, and we will go through them one by one.

If the Sabbath WAS changed to Sunday in the Bible, it is obvious that it must have taken place in one of the eight verses that mentions Sunday – called in Biblical times “the first day of the week”. We will go through every single verse and see if any of them commands, justifies, or even exemplifies a change from seventh-day worship to first-day worship.

The first verse is in **Matthew 28:1**. Does it show them observing Sunday, or does it show them working? Does it say the first day of the week was AFTER the Sabbath was over?

Next we have **Mark 16:2**, **Mark 16:9**, **Luke 24:1** and **John 20:1**. These all record the same events as **Matthew 28:1**, with minor details added or left out. Do any of these provide any evidence of worship, prayer, singing, preaching, reading the scriptures or anything else associated with a church service?

Then there is **John 20:19**. Does this show them assembling? Why? Was it for a church service, or was it out of FEAR of the Jews? Is anything said about a change in the day of worship in the context? **Verses 20-23**.

After that the next verse is in **Acts 20:7**. This is the first verse that shows anything like a church service. But before we get into examining it, exactly what does this say? Does it mention a change in the law, a canceling of the 148 verses that teach the Sabbath in the Old Testament? Does it say that Sunday is the new Christian Sabbath?

There are two basic assumptions people make about this verse, which when challenged, show what was really happening. The first assumption is that “breaking bread” is necessarily a part of a church service. Is it?

Read **1 Corinthians 10:16**. Does it say it is a part of a regular church service? Does it say it takes place every Sunday? Cast aside preconceptions! Does it say that? Or does it simply talk about a cup of communion and a bread that is broken, and then move on to other subjects? **Matthew 26:26**. Did the last supper take place on a Sunday? Wasn't Jesus dead, buried, and resurrected long before Sunday services could possibly have been kept? So then MUST breaking bread be a part of a church service?

Read **Acts 27:32-36**. Was Paul sharing communion bread on Sunday morning with pagan sailors? Or was he encouraging them to EAT, for sustenance, “for their health”? In **Luke 24:30**, what was the incognito Jesus doing before He broke the bread?

Notice! Jesus was EATING! Sitting at MEAT with them – when He broke bread and gave it to them. And this took place in the evening of the first day – possibly even after dark! (**Luke 24:29**). Surely this was no part of a church service, but a part of an ordinary meal that happened to have an extraordinary guest!

For thousands of years, man has not had access to fluffy bread. Even when bread was leavened, it was much like chewing on a brick. Much bread in the world is still eaten this way today. So it was a common practice to “break bread together” at a meal, an expression which still survives in our language to this day. It need have no particular connection to a church service – as for instance at the feeding of the 5,000 men (**Mark 6:41**), which we know took place in the evening (**verse 35**), or of the 4,000 (**Mark 8:6**).

Further, if breaking bread is done only, or even usually, as part of a Sunday church service, then how is it that the early apostles did it EVERY DAY? **Acts 2:46**. Or were they merely EATING in different houses each day? **Verses 42-45**.

So there is no reason to assume that “came together to break bread” meant taking communion – and every reason to assume they came together to eat dinner, which ALWAYS involved the breaking of bread. If you still are not convinced, there is more evidence later in the same chapter – as there usually is. Remember they initially came together to “break bread” on “the first day of the week”, which is alleged proof of Sunday observance.

Then read the story in **Acts 20:9-12** of the man who fell, died, was resurrected. This took place at about midnight (**verse 7**). Then look at what Paul did in **verse 11**! He broke bread AGAIN! Do you get the significance of that?

The Bible doesn't count time the way we do today. The days did not begin and end at midnight, as they do today – that was a Roman invention – they began and ended at sunset (**Genesis 1:5**, etc., and **Leviticus 23:32**). So Sunday night at 10 pm, by our reckoning, would actually be Monday according to Biblical reckoning. Monday begins as the sun sets Sunday evening. This was figured this way throughout the Bible.

So when Paul said they gathered “the first day of the week” (**Acts 20:7**), and “preached until midnight”, we have two choices.

First, they met sometime on the daylight portion of Sunday as most people believe and broke bread. The fact they broke bread is the biggest proof this was a church service, remember. So they came together to break bread, at noon, let’s say.

Then Paul preached a man to death, at midnight, *at which point it was no longer Sunday, but MONDAY, at which point Paul AGAIN broke bread!* (**Verse 11**).

If breaking bread on a certain day proves church services are being held, and the Sabbath has been transferred to Sunday, then this verse proves not only the Sabbath was transferred to Sunday, **but to MONDAY as well!!**

That of course, is absurd – but allow me to offer a much more plausible alternative; a number of scriptures tell us clearly that Paul kept the Sabbath. Suppose that, as his custom was, he met with the disciples on Sabbath. They had a regular church service, just as they did every other time recorded in the Bible. Then after sundown on the Sabbath, it was the first day of the week!

And on “the first day of the week” which began just after sundown, perhaps at 7 pm (that would be, to us, 7 pm Saturday), the disciples came together to eat dinner! Not having eaten since church that morning, surely they’d be hungry! And naturally, at that dinner they broke bread! And then Paul talked until midnight, resurrected the man, then what did he think of next? Food! It had been 5 hours since he ate, so he was hungry again and ONCE AGAIN broke bread and ATE! Then he had the strength to talk till dawn, at which point the meeting broke up – perhaps because everyone was hungry again, as they surely would have been.

Does that not make more sense of the scriptures? Harmonizing 100% of them, not throwing away 98% of the scriptures – the clear ones – in order to cling to 2% of the scriptures – the vague ones? Honest Bible study makes the whole Bible fit itself; yet most Bible study forces a few scriptures in the Bible to fit preconceived ideas, and ignores the rest of them. It’s no wonder there are so many squabbling religions and differing opinions about God!

But I said initially there were two assumptions about this verse (Acts 20:7); I dealt with the more complicated one first. The other is simply that preaching necessarily makes a day holy. Did Jesus only preach on the Sabbath day? Did Paul? Of course not. Then clearly, that alone doesn’t make a day holy. What makes a day holy?

Genesis 2:3 (BBE) *And God gave his blessing to the seventh day and made it holy: because on that day he took his rest from all the work which he had made and done.*

Nothing else can make a day holy.

Finally, we have one last scripture that mentions the first day of the week directly, **1 Corinthians 16:2**. As always, what does this scripture actually say? Does it say the Sabbath has changed? Does it say they were to keep services on Sunday? Does it say a single word about reading scriptures, singing, preaching, teaching, praising, worship, or anything associated with church?

Next, this collection it speaks of – is this passing the offering plate as you’re used to? What does the context say? **Verse 1**. Is this same event recorded elsewhere? **Romans 15:25-26**.

Achaia was a region of Greece, the capitol of which was Corinth, where the letter to the Corinthians was addressed. So Paul mentions those of Achaia (i.e., the Corinthians), had made a contribution to “the poor saints of Jerusalem”. So this was not a regular tithe, or offering, but a special contribution for the poor of Jerusalem. So why did Paul tell them to do this on Sunday? Think about this!

If Sunday was the day of worship, and if these Corinthians knew this, why would he tell them to pass the plate on Sunday – like they were going to do anyway?

On the other hand, if Saturday was the Sabbath, and Paul was trying to tell the Corinthians to stop keeping Saturday and start keeping Sunday, was a single line about collections enough to do so? Seriously?

No, the reason Paul did this, far from proving the Sabbath is done away, actually proves Paul did this to keep it holy!

The saints at Jerusalem were to receive a special offering of money and goods; this was no part of a regular church service, and would only have served to distract from **the “rest” on the Sabbath day which Paul always observed in every single example we have**. So Paul commanded them to wait until SUNDAY to do this work, rather than defile the SABBATH day with donating, putting in order, and packing these donations! So Paul left explicit instructions to do this on the FIRST day of the week, to make sure the Corinthians did NOT do it on the Sabbath!

That is every single verse that mentions the first day of the week directly. Surely if the day was changed from Sabbath to Sunday, it would have to be mentioned in one of those eight verses! Where else would we look for proof, if not in these verses which mention the first day of the week?

And so the conclusion is clear. There is no Bible authority for a change from Sabbath to Sunday. In spite of this, men have concocted several other arguments against the Sabbath, as men have no shortage of arguments against truth, but they are all dealt with in the free booklet “Who Commanded You To Observe Sunday?” I won’t deal with them here because I try to keep these lessons focused on what the Bible DOES say, and avoid getting sidetracked disproving what it does NOT say unless absolutely necessary.

The booklet will also contain a great many quotes showing exactly who changed the Sabbath to Sunday, and why. It will also talk about the Mark of the Beast, and you definitely need to get it and read it to make sure you don’t ALREADY carry the Mark of the Beast that God hates! Request it immediately!

Meanwhile, there are a few more verses people use to discredit the Sabbath, and I will reference them here, and then ask you to do what these lessons have shown you how to do. Ask the questions you’ve learned to ask: “What does this actually say?”, “What is the context”, “Is that justification for ignoring two hundred verses supporting the Sabbath?” For a full explanation of these verses, request the booklet. The most common verses used to support Sunday against the Sabbath not already explained are **Revelation 1:10**, **Colossians 2:16**, and **Romans 14:5**.

There are always more arguments, but these are the primary verses, and by critically looking at each of them, you can see for yourself they do not justify ignoring God’s clear commands. I realize this is shocking, but the truth is, there simply isn’t any more Biblical basis for Sunday observance than there is for the Easter Bunny.

And now, having shown what the Bible plainly says about the Sabbath, for the rest of this article I will treat the Sabbath as what it is – a binding, Biblical command. And we are now going to use it to explain a large part of prophecy – the part we ignored in the last three lessons:

THE MILLENNIUM

Revelation 20:4-6 *And ... [the saints] ... lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.*

As you recall, we talked a great deal about the first resurrection, which happens at the beginning of this period, and about the second resurrection, at the end – but what about the thousand years in between? This

period has only one Biblical name “the thousand years”, so it is called the millennium. Three times in these three verses it refers to a period of a thousand years; what is this period, and why is it so important?

I passed over this time period very lightly in the preceding lessons, and you may be wondering what this has to do with the Sabbath. To explain that, we turn to the following questions...

How long is a day, to God? **2 Peter 3:8**. And when God looks at a thousand year period, how does He perceive it? **Psalms 90:4**. Can a day mean any other time period than a literal 24 hour period? **Ezekiel 4:6**, **Numbers 14:34**. Is a week always literal? **Genesis 29:20, 27**. And is the Sabbath only referred to as the seventh literal day? **Leviticus 25:8**.

All of this means that, when God speaks in metaphor and symbol, a day can mean a day; it can mean a year; or it can mean a thousand years. And in many cases it means all three in at least one sense. In other words, when God says something will happen after three days, a shadow or part of the prophecy will happen after 3 days; another part, or type of the prophecy will happen after 3 years; and a real fulfillment of all parts of the prophecy will happen after 3,000 years. This is a fundamental principle required to correctly interpret prophecy, a subject we will cover thoroughly in due time.

In **Daniel 9:27** it says, “*He shall confirm the covenant with many for one week*” – the context shows us it is the Messiah who will do this (**verse 25**). And when Jesus came, He brought us the New Covenant which He made with us in His blood (**Matthew 26:28**). But notice it doesn’t say He will make the covenant with EVERYONE in that week – just with “many”. And while that prophecy is known to be a day-for-a-year, it is ALSO a day-for-a-millennium, as you will see!

In **chapter 3 of Hebrews**, Paul goes through the example of the ancient Israelites, and how their lack of faith kept them out of the promised land. He calls our attention to an odd phrase that God used at the time in **Hebrews 3:11**. Now why would God say, “*They shall not enter into my rest*” when He clearly meant they would not enter the promised land?

In **Hebrews 3:17-19** Paul shows it was a lack of faith that kept the Israelites out of God’s “rest”. Then in **Hebrews 4:1**, he says that WE have the opportunity to enter that same rest! The physical land of Israel has been settled long since, so what “rest”, or “promised land” could Paul refer to? Why, a SPIRITUAL promised land – a SPIRITUAL rest. What spiritual promises did God make to US? Why, salvation – eternal life – adoption into His family! And what is one of the most basic requirements for entrance? Faith! (**Hebrews 11:6**). And that is precisely what ancient Israel lacked! (**Hebrews 4:2**).

But now read on in **verses 3-5**, and you’ll see Paul brings up the seventh day – the Sabbath! Why would he do that? Remember he has been talking about “a rest”, and the Sabbath is the day of rest – in fact, *Sabbath* literally means “rest” in Hebrew. **Verses 6-9** make it clear the Sabbath “rest” is still in our future, and it lasts for one “day” (**verse 8**).

(It should be mentioned that “Jesus” is the Greek translation of the Hebrew name “Joshua”. Both mean “Savior”. This verse does not refer to Jesus the Christ, but to **Joshua** who led Israel across Jordan into the promised land.) **Verses 10-11** then tell us the awesome significance of the Sabbath day, though so few understand it! To understand what this rest is, think back over what you’ve just read, and compare it to relevant scriptures:

This rest is in our future (**Hebrews 4:7-9**).

It is about ceasing from our own works (**Exodus 20:9-11**).

It is a reward promised only to those who are faithful (**Revelation 20:4**).

It lasts one day (**Revelation 20:6**).

It is the seventh day of the “week” Jesus is “confirming the covenant” with “many” (**Daniel 9:27**).

We must labor for a certain amount of time, in order to enter this “day of rest” (**1 Corinthians 9:24**).

So the question is simple; what period of time lasts “one day” (remember how long a day is to God? 1000 years?), is promised only to those who are faithful and who work to enter into it – and is yet in the future? And the answer is obvious! The millennium! The millennium is that Sabbath of rest!

Now we see the pattern start to come together! Most Bibles have a chronology in them, and it shows the events of **Genesis 2-3** taking place approximately 4,000 B.C.; then 4,000 years later Jesus came, which was almost 2,000 years ago. So it is now nearly 6,000 years – six days, as God reckons time! – since Adam was created! The work-week is almost over!

And when Jesus returns, as will very likely happen in your lifetime, what will He do? Set up a kingdom and give it to the saints (**Daniel 7:22**)! After which they have REST from their enemies! Read **Deuteronomy 25:19** – and in the promised land, when they receive their inheritance, they have REST from their labors! Because on them, the second death has no power (**Revelation 20:6**)!

It will usher in an era of world peace, because we will have world government – but world government that is righteous, noble, and incorruptible, with God as its head – not a one-world government run by fallible, weak, power-hungry mortals! Soon, probably in your lifetime, the world will see how badly that sort of mortal government turns out for everyone!

This all follows the exact same pattern God set up in the very beginning in **Genesis 1 and 2** – six days of labor, followed by one day of rest! In the beginning, God gave man a simple purpose: **Genesis 2:15**. And God was going to help us do this – if we obeyed Him, He would gladly have taught us how to do it properly. But Man took of the forbidden fruit and took it upon himself to choose right from wrong, and good from evil. So God has, at Man’s request, stepped back and let man do it his way – for reasons laid out in the first two lessons – but God has set a definite time limit!

We have only six days to wreck this Earth, kill one another, and thumb our noses at God! And that time is nearly up! And when it runs out, God is going to come back and take possession of the kingdom personally, and give the power in that kingdom to those men who in this life chose to follow God’s way in spite of what other men thought was best!

The first day of the week could never fit that prophecy! The first day of the week is the day Man chose to follow Satan’s advice, which is why Satan has deceived the entire world into observing it, to commemorate HIS success with Adam and Eve!

But the seventh day pictures the time when Satan is bound, helpless, cast into a bottomless pit for a thousand-year day! Of course he hates it, and does his best to deceive anyone who will listen into keeping another day – ANY day – holy!

WHAT WILL IT BE LIKE?

The pattern is clear; a thousand year Sabbath of rest for the world, a promised rest from the wars and suffering that have so abounded since Man first ate the forbidden fruit almost six days ago. And we have read again and again the saints will be given that kingdom at the beginning of the millennium. But what sort of a world will we inherit?

We have depleted the soils, killed off most of the wild game, utterly wiped out many species, polluted the oceans, the air, the land, wrecked the ozone layer, messed with the climate, created the deserts – yes, the deserts weren’t always there, in fact they are only about 4,000 years old and growing every year. And that’s before God punishes the world with the various plagues in Revelation (for example, **Revelation 8:7-9**)! So the world will be in shambles – totally wrecked by sin.

If Jesus doesn't return when He does, will ANYTHING be saved alive? **Matthew 24:22**. How will we change things? **Isaiah 2:2-4** [Note: A mountain is always a Bible symbol for government; hills are symbols for less powerful governments]. What is the beginning of wisdom? **Job 28:28**. And how will God teach that to the nations? **Psalms 96:9-13** (And all of **Psalms 97** continues the thought). What does God call this period when He "strikes through kings"? **Psalms 110:5-6**. How long is it? **Acts 17:31**.

"The *day* of His wrath". "A *day* in which He will judge the world". Notice that word – "day". How long is a day? That's right – 1,000 years. Literally hundreds of times in Bible prophecies, you'll encounter phrases like "the day of the lord", "in that day", "in the day" – nearly all of which refer to the same day. The same *thousand year day*. It's one of the huge keys to understanding Bible prophecy, in fact.

WHY THE MILLENNIUM?

God is doing this for our benefit. His plan is to save mankind. But God must be just when He judges. Even in our human courts, if the judge has a conflict of interest or is in any way involved in the matter, he cannot preside over the trial. So God must be absolutely beyond reproach, so that NO ONE can go to God and say, "But God, if you'd only done THIS", or "but God, I'd have done it right if you hadn't given me that worthless Old Testament law that I could not keep. I COULDN'T PLEASE you no matter what I did! It wasn't my fault!"

Is it important that God be justified when He judges? **Psalms 51:4**. And has God Himself admitted the Old Testament was not the best it could be? **Hebrews 8:6-7**.

So then, if someone came to God and said, "But God, if you'd only have given me the New Covenant, I'd have been a perfect saint!" – what can God say? How can He answer, and be beyond reproach? How can He be justified in His judgments against a person to whom He gave an inferior law?

At the moment, He can't. And so God must prove, beyond all question, to all beings for all time, that His law was not flawed. That it would indeed have allowed any person who obeyed it to receive salvation *if only that person had truly obeyed it!*

What did God find fault with in the Old Covenant? **Hebrews 8:7-8**. Was the fault with IT (the covenant) or THEM (the people)? (Same verse). What was wrong with THEM? **Verse 9**. If they had kept the Old Covenant, would they have lived? **Ezekiel 20:11**. But what happened? **Verses 12-13**. And after God begged them to change (**verses 14-20**), what happened? **Verse 21**. So what did God do? **Verse 23**. And once they were scattered, what did God give them? **Verses 25-26**.

Many preachers use these last verses to try and prove the laws (meaning the Ten Commandments) "were not good". And yet several times in the immediate context God said His laws WERE good, and if they had only KEPT them, they would have lived! He tried again and again to get the people to obey them, and KEEP the covenant they had made with Him at Sinai, but they wouldn't!

Since they wanted to serve idols so badly, God let them follow the laws of their idols, those laws that were not good – the laws of Baal, the laws of Molech, and so on, and serve them they did, with a fervency and dedication they never displayed toward their true God, even to causing their own children to **pass through the fire** to be burned alive to their idols – and God says He permitted them to do this, "*that I might make them desolate, to the end that they might know that I am the LORD*".

This Old Covenant was never given an honest chance, because in every single generation they followed after other gods; a good king would come along, and all the people would praise God; then a bad king would show up, and all the people would praise Baal – and the nation NEVER kept God's covenant for more than a few years, so honestly, no one really knows HOW the law would have worked, because it was never kept!

But the problem wasn't the covenant – not the letter of the covenant anyway, the problem was the covenant was made with a NATION of people. And no nation of physical beings, managed by physical beings, will ever keep that covenant, so God made the covenant a PERSONAL thing – involving only two people, you and Him. That's the New Covenant He has offered to you and me.

But God still needs to prove to all of those people, and you and me as well, the Old Covenant wasn't just a bad idea from the beginning – and during the millennium He will do just that.

Will the priesthood of Levi return? **Isaiah 66:21** [Note: Back up and read the context to see that the return of Christ, hence the Millennium, is the time frame.] Will the Levites be offering burnt offerings? **Jeremiah 33:14-22**. After God gathers Israel back together and builds a new temple, will there still be Levites? **Ezekiel 44:10-16** [Note: The rest of the chapter is also devoted to describing the physical priesthood after the return of Christ]. Will Jesus purify the sons of Levi so they can do this? **Malachi 3:1-4**.

Will there be physical sacrifices in the Millennium? **Zechariah 14:21**. Will even the heathen Egyptians bring sacrifices to God “in that day” (something which has never happened)? **Isaiah 19:21**. Will ALL people bring sacrifices to God's holy mountain (His future government)? **Isaiah 56:7**.

There are other verses that say the same thing, but the point is made; in the future, sometime after Jesus returns, the Levitical system will be reinstated, and the sacrifices and hence, the law of Moses, will be reinstated.

But there will be one key difference – the covenant will be the same as Israel had. The people will be the same sort of people. But now, instead of having a government run by fallible kings, the government will be under King David (**Hosea 3:5**). With him will be the saints saved from this life. So the law will have a real chance to work – to see that, as Paul said, “*the law is not of faith: but, The man that doeth them shall live in them*” (**Galatians 3:12**).

This is the righteousness that will create peace; will make the deserts blossom; will bring happiness to mankind. It did, in those few brief moments when it was obeyed – **2 Chronicles 9:7** for instance. And Gentiles **should have been saying that about Israel all along (Deuteronomy 4:7-8)**... and the only reason they weren't, was because of Israel's lack of faith. Their unbelief. Which, Paul said, is why they didn't enter into God's rest – why they won't be in the first resurrection. Because “*the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished*” (**Revelation 20:5**).

THE END OF THE MILLENNIUM

God will at no time overrule free will – if Man chooses to defy God during the millennium or any other time, he will be free to do so. Of course, he may well be executed according to the laws God gave Israel, or die in the rebellion at Armageddon, but he will always have free will.

Even the most evil man is deceived and as Jesus said, “*knows not what he does*” (**Luke 23:34**). As God's new government gradually spreads over this world (**Zechariah 14**), as the spirit of God flows out from Jerusalem (**Zechariah 14:8**), and they go up to Jerusalem to learn God's way and receive His laws (**Micah 4:2-5**), the world will achieve peace and even those evil among them will see that yes, this really does work better. That even they, themselves, are happier helping others than they were being the privileged rich.

And as the millennium goes on, people will become more and more righteous, crimes will be more and more rare, and the world will gradually return to the way it was in Eden – only better. (**Isaiah 51:3**). And yet something will still be lacking. See, the Old Covenant is merely a PHYSICAL covenant. When kept perfectly, it brings happiness, long life, and untold blessings – but only PHYSICAL blessings.

The physical obedience only involves outward actions – you must merely refrain from actual murder to be within the physical, outward law. And so you only get physical, outward blessings. But you may recall from

Lesson 3 the New Covenant forbids us to even hate without cause, else we are murderers in our heart already. This takes the laws and moves them INSIDE us, so that the blessings can likewise be placed INSIDE us!

And yet the people in the millennial version of the Old Covenant will have these laws written only outside them, on stones! They will only be obeying the PHYSICAL, OUTWARD portion of the law. And why isn't that good enough? That's the whole point. God must prove why physical obedience alone is not enough – why the people MUST allow Him access to their heart in order to receive eternal life.

After 1,000 years of the Old Covenant being properly enforced and obeyed upon this earth, the Earth will be a glorious place indeed. No one will be able to imagine why these people are not good enough for immortality! And so God must test them and prove to all that men must change not only their actions, but their thoughts as well, to be worthy of salvation.

For 1,000 years they've been righteous, but that righteousness was never challenged by a powerful adversary. What must God do to correct that – to test the quality of the people after all this? **Revelation 20:3, 7**. And what will Satan do? **Verse 8-9**. And then what happens to the devil? **Verse 10**.

Understand! After 1,000 years of righteous habits, a millennium of proper government. Ten centuries of progress and complete recovery from the damage sin did to this world, then Satan is loosed for only “a little season” and IMMEDIATELY the nations are deceived and go up to make war with Jerusalem, and fight against the saints!

By then these people will have been happy obeying God their entire lives, having tasted the sweet fruits of righteousness, and yet Satan's song of rebellion will so quickly turn their ears! How is this possible??

What does the spirit in us want – bottom line? **James 4:5**. Is there anything good in us? **Romans 7:18**. Did even Jesus, as a man, object to being called good? **Matthew 19:17**. What is the heart of Man like? **Jeremiah 17:9**. Did God make Man upright? **Ecclesiastes 7:29**. But what did Man do? (Same verse).

The heart of Man is evil. It is not basically good, but rather basically selfish. And no amount of external Old-Covenant righteousness will ever change that. You can keep the law in the flesh for a thousand years, or a billion, and your heart will still be swayed by lust the minute someone comes along and offers you a way to rebel against God.

The millennium will prove, once and for all, that for Man to be saved, his heart must die. That Man is not fit to live forever, no matter how well he is trained, unless his heart is changed. Unless the laws of God are written on that heart, and the spirit of God dwells in his mind, Man will always sin eventually – it's only a matter of time.

This is why Satan must be loosed – to prove that Man cannot be trusted unless God's seed remains in Him, and he cannot sin (**1 John 3:9**). And after that is proved, God can at last be justified when He judges the Old Covenant people, for He will have iron-clad proof it was a great covenant. And in that Old Covenant, many who truly loved God did succeed in advancing to the New Covenant – Job, David, Daniel, and many others all passed beyond that covenant and voluntarily chose to write the laws of God on their hearts and thus put themselves under the New Covenant and received the spirit of God.

Anyone from Ahab to Herod could have done the same, if he had wanted to. If his heart had truly loved righteousness. Those obedient men, and the example of the millennium, will prove that.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The best way to conclude is by letting the Bible lay out the sequence of events in order in its own words – so let's see just what happens in the millennium as Jesus returns! Start reading in **Isaiah 34:1**. Read through

verse 7. This describes the period around Armageddon and the last plagues. What does **verse 8** call this? Notice the word “day”!

Verses 9-15 describe what will happen to the great kingdoms of this world that stand against God at Armageddon; **verses 16-17** are about how these kingdoms will be recycled, as it were, into places for the wild animals to flourish. Then reading on into the next chapter, in **verses 1-2** you see these deserts will actually blossom – abundantly! Why? **Verses 3-6.** The blind will see – not just the physically, but the spiritually blinded, the mentally blinded will SEE!

This world has been destroyed because Man did not properly dress and keep it! Because Man ignored scientific breakthrough after breakthrough that would have led to health and prosperity for all, and chose instead quick profits for themselves – after Jesus returns that blindness will be removed! And the water will spring forth in the deserts, *when man understands what he has done wrong and starts dressing the Earth the way God intended!*

Read **verses 7-8** in at least one other translation to get the true meaning of the awkward verse. This “highway of holiness” is the WAY of obedience to God! And over this highway no unclean person or sinner can go! And those who DO walk this highway, choosing God’s way over their own lusts and greed “will not be turned out of the way by the foolish” – will not be deceived by the foolish men and women who have deceived the world today!

They will have lost their power to deceive because their angelic king will be bound in the bottomless pit, and their chieftains will have been slain at the return of Christ! **Verse 10** – this will indeed be a day of REST and rejoicing! The seventh-day Sabbath of the seven-thousand year plan of God!

God said in the Sabbath commandment we are to labor for SIX days doing OUR pleasure, doing what WE think is best – and look at the horror and suffering that has resulted from our decisions!

But the seventh day belongs to GOD; on it we will be doing HIS pleasure (**Isaiah 58:13**), doing things HIS way, which is why that day is called the day of the LORD, the LORD’S DAY. Not Sunday! Sunday is your day, my day, to do with what we please; so are Monday and Thursday; But God has claimed the Seventh day for Himself both every week, and for a thousand years at the end of this age. On HIS day we will be seeking HIS pleasure.

The beginning of that “great and notable day of the Lord” will be a period of great upheaval as the nations battle to keep doing things their way; as they, like so many today, struggle to break God’s Sabbath. But God will smite them with a rod of iron if necessary, because on the millennial Sabbath day “*every knee shall bow to me*” (**Romans 14:11**). They will keep His Sabbath!

If you back up now and read **Isaiah 32**, you’ll see the same story told again from a slightly different angle (notice how **Isaiah 32:14** compares to **Isaiah 34:9-17**), and notice what changes it: **Isaiah 32:15-18!**

Get that! God isn’t going to return, wave a magic wand, and suddenly the Earth will be Eden again! No! Man destroyed the Earth by breaking the laws of God, but by obedience to God Man will REVERSE all the damage! It plainly says, “*And the WORK of righteousness shall be peace; and THE EFFECT OF RIGHTEOUSNESS quietness and assurance for ever*” (**verse 17**).

RIGHTEOUSNESS – keeping the commandments – will CREATE this quietness on the Earth! It will CREATE this rest we will enjoy! The WORK of righteousness will cause PEACE! And that is the ONLY way we will ever get peace! And when this happens, it will prove once and for all God’s law was a GOOD law – not only did it produce peace, but it was able to UNDO all the damage Satan has done, with our help for the past six millennia!

The majority of Isaiah, and a good portion of all the prophets, is devoted to telling that same story – and to get the complete picture, you must add all the pieces together, making connections like **Isaiah 32:14** and **Isaiah 34:9-17**, and then match up the surrounding scriptures to make a story. Overlay every verse in the Bible on prophecy in this way, and you will completely understand prophecy.

Many times now I've said you must OBEY God before you can UNDERSTAND God. This lesson proves my point. If you believe Sunday to be the day of rest, you're looking for these prophecies to be fulfilled on the first day, not the seventh – which makes no sense! So this enormous pile of understanding is hidden from you, because you didn't believe or obey God when He said, "*Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy.*"

Nor can you understand this if you think the seventh day of creation never ended, and therefore this is still the Sabbath – when Hebrews plainly says the Sabbath is yet FUTURE, even for us – not in the present, but something in the future that we HOPE to one day enter!

To understand God, you must obey Him. The Bible leaves no doubt which day is the true day of rest – Your friends and neighbors keep Sunday because of habit, tradition, and ignorance. Your preacher probably knows the Sabbath is the true day of worship – this is no secret – but he also knows if he teaches that, he'll lose his job, his flock, and be kicked out of his own church.

If you ask him, he may tell you this is true, but that sometimes you must sacrifice a bit of the truth for the sake of the church. **And then you'll have to decide if you want to join him and all the other deceived billions who, for lack of faith and trust in the word of God, will not enter into God's rest.**

Truth cannot be sacrificed for you, me, the church, nor an angel from heaven. The Sabbath is truth. All that remains is for you to decide to obey God, or reject Him as so many others have done.

Matthew 7:21-23 *Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.*

I told you to begin with, that you wouldn't like this answer – but beyond any question it is the only answer in the Bible.

Luke 6:46 *And WHY call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?*

Do you want to bear a sign that says "here goes a true Christian"? Keep the seventh day Sabbath holy. It is the only sign God ever gave you.

NOTES

This work is completely non-denominational and is meant to fulfill Christ's great commission to "*preach the gospel to every creature*" (**Mark 16:15**). **This publication is not to be sold;** "*freely ye have received, freely give*" (**Matthew 10:8**).

The Bible tells us to PROVE ALL THINGS, and The Simple Answers encourages people to do just that. If you cannot PROVE what you believe, you have no right to believe it! Many of the things we print are shocking because they are different from what you've heard, but if something we say offends or upsets you, we hope you will take the time to set aside your preconceived ideas and PROVE your point from the Bible to see if you truly have been right all these years.

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