

Kingdoms come and kingdoms go. There is only one kingdom that will never disappear and that is the Kingdom of God.

Jonas Clark

Prayer Study #317

**TORAH OR JUST NEW TESTAMENT;
SATURDAY OR SUNDAY? DOES IT MATTER?**

First Love Ministries, Inc. of Perry, Georgia

Therefore let no one act as your judge in regard to food or drink or in respect to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath day-things which are a mere shadow of what is to come, but the substance belongs to Christ.

Colossians 2:16-17

Many Christians today are returning to the Jewish roots of our faith. I think that we can learn much from the Jewish Old Testament customs and culture, and I am very much for showing our support for the nation of Israel and believe that natural Israel is the centerpiece of God's prophetic time clock and the Jews still very special to Him. Nevertheless, although we have been grafted in the vine, we are still Gentile believers, and we are under a New Covenant. Therefore, it is not necessary to go back to exclusively following the laws of the Torah, unless they apply to the New Covenant. This does not lessen the importance of studying the Old Testament. It is NOT OBSOLETE. There are many teachings in the New Testament that have their foundations in the Old Testament, and cannot be fully understood without understanding Old Testament scriptures, and furthermore there are prophetic words in the Old Testament that have not been fulfilled yet and will be part of the Last Days' eschatology. It is well to remember the old adage: *The New Testament is in the Old Testament concealed; the Old Testament is in the New Testament revealed.*

The Apostle Paul spoke against Judaizers or those Jews in the 1st Century Church who were trying to impose Torah law, including circumcision and dietary laws, on Gentile believers. These Jewish Christians believed that salvation for Jewish believers meant keeping the law as well as having faith in Christ. Thus, they felt that they should not violate the Jewish prohibition against eating with Gentiles, even Gentile Christians. In Chapter 2 of Galatians, Paul calls Simon Peter's hand for hypocritically withdrawing from table fellowship with Gentiles because of his fear of reprisal from these Jews. And in Chapter 2 of Galatians, Paul again alludes to the Jewish law, when he says, "*So let no one judge you in food or in drink or regarding a festival or a new moon or Sabbaths, which are a shadow of things to come,*

but the substance is of Christ” (Colossians 2:16-17). Here he is saying that Jesus set us free from the judgment of men. It is no longer about being circumcised or following *the handwriting of requirements* (Colossians 2:14) of the law, but it is about following Christ. Some today are even critical of us calling Him Jesus instead of Yeshua, and others insist that He should be called Joshua, or the Hebrew form of His name. Yet the Holy Spirit chose to write the original New Testament in Greek, because it was the universal language, and His Greek name is *Jesus*. We have seen too many miraculous things take place through that Name to believe that it is wrong to call Him Jesus.

To the other extreme are those who insist on hyper-grace, whereby we are told that we can do whatever we want, even sin in *any* area, because we are forgiven when we accept Christ. This is a very dangerous doctrine, and I believe a doctrine of demons. John wrote whoever is born of God does not habitually sin (1st John 5:18), and Jesus Himself said that if we loved Him, we would keep His commandments (John 14:23-24).

Furthermore, the Lord rebukes His churches for their sins and did not give them a ticket to walk in disobedience: the Ephesians who had left their first love; the Churches of Pergamos and Thyatira, which were allowing the believers to eat things sacrificed to idols and to commit sexual immorality; and the Laodiceans who were lukewarm. He praises the Ephesians because they hated the deeds of Nicolaitans. The Nicolaitans claimed they were believers, but they believed that the human body was inherently evil, and therefore it did not matter what the person did with it. Thus, they lived licentious lives.

In summary, we must guard against extremes in doctrine that have no real scriptural bases. Paul warns us in Ephesians 4:14 that *we should be no longer children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men...* I believe we are living in the time spoken of in 2nd Timothy 4:3-4: *“For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; and they will turn their ears away from the truth and be turned aside to fables.* Paul carries this theme even further when he writes to his spiritual son Timothy in 1st Timothy 4:1-5: *Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons, speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their own conscience seared with a hot iron, forbidding to marry and commanding to abstain from foods which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth. For every creature of God is good, and nothing is to be*

refused if it is received with thanksgiving, for it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer.” Finally, the writer of Hebrews warns us, *“Do not be carried about with various and strange doctrines. For it is good that the heart be established with grace, not with foods which have not profited those who have been occupied with them.”*

I acknowledge that this is an extremely long introduction which might seem to some to have nothing to do with the announced topic: *Saturday or Sunday? Does It Matter?* I wanted to show you, however, that we are living in a time when topics like this will be argued back and forth. The scripture warns us to *“shun profane and idle babblings”* (2nd Timothy 2:16) and to *“avoid foolish and ignorant disputes, knowing that they generate strife”* (2nd Timothy 2:23). Never argue the point. Just graciously ask the person who is disputing with you about scripture to kindly write down the scriptures that support the position they are arguing and to give this list to you so that you can look them up and study their point of view. Most, of course, have no concrete scriptures and will not respond, and you have avoided an argument.

Now let's get to the topic. For me personally, I have no issue with those who want to worship on Saturday, or the Sabbath, which is actually Friday sundown to Saturday sundown. I will attempt to explain, however, why most Christian denominations have their main worship service on Sundays.

There are at least three great events in the history of the Christian Church which happened on Sunday. First, the Resurrection of Christ Jesus took place on a Sunday morning. Secondly, the day of Pentecost was fifty days or seven Sabbaths plus one day, or on Sunday. Pentecost was the day when the Holy Spirit was poured out and the Christian Church was actually born. Finally, John's great revelation took place on the Lord's Day, which the early Church called Sunday, not Saturday or the Sabbath.

Many Old Testament types foreshadowed the Lord's Day. The Feast of Harvest, for example, took place on Sunday, the eighth day or first day of the week: *“Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, ‘When ye come into the land which I give unto you, and shall reap the harvest thereof, then ye shall bring a sheaf of the firstfruits of your harvest unto the priest; and he shall wave the sheaf before the Lord to be accepted for you; on the morrow after the Sabbath the priest shall wave it’”* (Leviticus 23:10-11). The sheaf that the priest waved before the Lord was the *“firstfruits of your harvest.”* Paul in 1st Corinthians 15:20 explains that the sheaf represented or typified the resurrection of Christ: *“But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept.”*

So many times in the Old Testament the Lord called for a holy convocation or solemn assembly, and these were to take place on the first

day of the week or the eighth day (eight being the Biblical number for new beginnings), which, of course, is Sunday. Examples of these can be found in Leviticus 23:21, Numbers 29:35, 2nd Chronicles 7:9, and Nehemiah 8:18, to name a few places. These solemn assemblies were a foreshadowing of the Christian Church. From the time of the resurrection of Christ, Sunday has been a day of the assembling of Christian believers.

Interestingly enough, almost all the 10 commandments are listed or implied in the New Testament except for one: “Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy.” Matthew 19:18-19 says: He [Rich young ruler] said to Him [Jesus], “Which ones?” Jesus said, **“You shall not murder. You shall not commit adultery. You shall not steal. You shall not bear false witness. Honor your father and your mother, and you shall love your neighbor as yourself.”** Romans 13:9-10 is another place where the Old Testament commandments are listed: “For the commandments, You shall not commit adultery. You shall not murder. You shall not steal. You shall not bear false witness. You shall not covet, and if there is any other commandment, all are summed up in this saying, namely, you shall love your neighbor as yourself. Love does no harm to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfillment of the law.” Throughout the New Testament it is implied over and over that you should have no other Gods, you should not make an idol to worship, and you should not take the name of the Lord in vain.

Jesus was regarded by the Jews as a Sabbath breaker. He Himself said in Mark 2:27: “The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath.” Jesus found the Sabbath had been overwhelmed by rabbinical traditions that had nothing to do with the law (Matthew 12:2).

The Biblical scholar C.I Scofield says this: “The fact that Paul and others sometimes attended Sabbath services in Jewish synagogues does not prove that the apostolic Church kept the seventh day as a special day of worship. It only shows that the early missionaries took the Gospel message wherever and whenever they found people gathered together. This witness was carried on daily (Acts 2:47; 17:17; 19:9) in every possible way (1st Corinthians 9:19-22). The early church was specifically warned against submitting themselves to the bondage of any legalistic observance of Sabbath days (Colossians 2:16). On the other hand, in the exercise of Christian liberty (Romans 14:5-6), these same churches voluntarily chose the first day of the week as an appropriate time for fellowship and worship (Acts 20:7; 1st Corinthians 16:2), the day on which the Lord arose and repeatedly appeared to His disciples (John 20:19-24; 25-29). It was a new day for a new people belonging to a new creation (2nd Corinthians 5:17), a day of commemoration and joy (Matthew 28:8-9), service (Matthew 28:10),

and spiritual rest (Hebrews 4:9-10). This observation of the first day of the week is corroborated by the early fathers; in the writings of Barnabas (AD100), Ignatius (AD107), Justin Martyr (AD 145-150), and Irenaeus (AD 155-202). The edict of Laodicea (4th Century AD) did not change the day of worship from the seventh to the first day of the week, as sometimes alleged, but rather put the stamp of official approval upon an observance already long established in the early churches.”

Scofield goes on to compare the Jewish Sabbath with the Lord's day: *“The Sabbath commemorates God's creation-rest; the first day, Christ's resurrection. On the seventh day God rested; on the first day Christ was ceaselessly active. The Sabbath commemorates a finished creation; the first day, a finished redemption. The Sabbath was a day of legal obligation; the first day, one of voluntary worship and services.”*

A good passage that shows the early Church meeting on Sunday is found in Acts 20:7: *“And on the first day of the week, when we were gathered together to break bread, Paul began talking to them, intending to depart the next day, and he prolonged his message until midnight.”* Here we have the model for the 1st Century Church. They were meeting on Sunday to have communion and to listen to Paul's preaching. Furthermore, Luke did not use the Jewish system of counting days, sundown to sundown, but the Roman system, midnight to midnight. In 1st Corinthians 16:1-2, Paul directs the churches to meet on the first day of the week and to put money aside. In Revelation 1:10-11, John writes that he was in the Spirit on the Lord's Day. Almost all Bible scholars believe this was Sunday, the day of Jesus' resurrection. The New Bible Dictionary tells us that this term “Lord's Day” in the Greek suggests that it was a formal designation of the church's worship day and is used to designate Sunday.

We would all do well to heed Paul's words in Romans 14:5-6: *One man regards one day above another, another regards every day alike. Let each man be fully convinced in his own mind. He who observes the day, observes it for the Lord; and he who eats, does so for the Lord, for he gives thanks to God; and he who eats not, for the Lord he does not eat and gives thanks to God. And in Colossians 2:16-17, Therefore, let no one act as your judge in regard to food or drink or in respect to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath day, things which are a mere shadow of what is to come, but the substance belongs to Christ.*

So, in summary, I say, to me, it does not matter when we hold a worship service. We should be worshiping Him every day. There can be no doubt, however, that the Christian Church has traditionally worshiped on Sundays, while the Jews have worshiped on the Sabbath.

I KNOW A MAN WHO CAN
Jack Campbell

I can't take a heart that's broken, make it over again.
But I know a man who can.
I can't take a soul that's sick and wash it white as snow.
But I know a man who can.

I can't walk upon the water, and I can't calm a raging sea.
But I know a man who can.
And I can't cause blinded eyes to be open,
Or the lame to walk again.
Oh, but I know a man who can.

CHORUS

Some call Him Savior, the redeemer of all men.
I call Him Jesus for He's my dearest friend.
If you think that no one loves you,
And your life is out of hand.
I know a man who can.