

MY SABBATH

When a seventh-day Sabbath-keeping Christian is approached by a Jewish person, and the subject of the Sabbath is discussed, the Jewish person is usually surprised that a Christian should be keeping the Sabbath. The surprise is usually due to the lack of knowledge or the forgetfulness that Christianity is an offshoot of Judaism even though there are differences in the fundamental branches of each religion. The Rabbis and the majority of the orthodox people of the Jewish faith have the attitude that the seventh-day Sabbath is strictly Jewish and that Christians should not be observing it, because they believe it belongs to the Jewish people only. This is probably because when God called out a people from Chaldea, through Abraham, to be a righteous example to all the people of the world, God required His chosen people to keep the Sabbath. But this did not mean that they were to be the only people who had the right to observe the Sabbath. God sanctified the seventh-day as a day of rest at the completion of His creative works. It was made for all mankind. *"And he said unto them, The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath."* Mark 2:27. The sabbath was made long before there was ever a Hebrew people. The sabbath is given to all believers, that they may enter into rest with their God.

The seventh-day sabbath was NOT a day instituted by Moses as other sabbaths which were of Mosaic origin. Although it may be easy to understand how the Jews would consider God's Sabbath to be exclusively belonging to them, especially when the world had become so evil that God called out a chosen people to speak his Will unto all the world. *"For thou art an holy people unto the LORD thy God: The LORD thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth."* Deuteronomy 7:6. *"And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made."* Genesis 2:3. *"Six days shall work be done: but the seventh day is the sabbath of rest, an holy convocation; ye shall do no work therein: it is the sabbath of the LORD in all your dwellings."* Leviticus 23:3. The point being made is that the Jewish people believe the sabbath is exclusively theirs, and as already mentioned, some Jews believe no one else has the right to its observance, however, the seventh-day sabbath belongs to all mankind because God was the One that hallowed it before there was even a Jew.

At times, we will refer to "conformist" Christians. "Conformist" is used for all those Christians who conformed to the whims of the Emperor Theodosius, who, in 380 A.D., passed the following decree: *"...let us believe the one deity of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, in equal majesty and in a holy Trinity. We authorize the followers of this law to assume the title Catholic Christians, but as for the others, since, in our judgment, they are foolish madmen, we decree that they shall be branded with the ignominious name of heretics..."* Cononon populos, 380 A.D. (Cod. Theod. XVI,2.) Conformist Christians are also people who tell fundamental Christians that if they observe the seventh-day sabbath that they are Judaizing. As we will see, this attitude is nothing new; it began to originate at the end of the first and into the second century at Rome. As far as we

know, it began with Justin Martyr, a Grecian philosopher, who converted to Christianity, and lived at Rome in 140 A.D. From his writings, he seemed to hate anything affiliated with Jewry. A passage from his writings, gives his reasoning for observing Sunday: ***“But Sunday is the day on which we all hold our common assembly, because it is the first day on which God, having wrought a change in the darkness and matter, made the world; and Jesus Christ our Saviour on the same day rose from the dead.”*** Justin Martyr’s reasoning was flawed, to say the least, since no man has the right to change God’s Sabbath on a personal whim, nor was Jesus raised on the first day of the week, but those are discussions for another time. This is what the Christian, Socrates, wrote as late as approximately 439 A.D.: ***“Almost all churches throughout the world celebrate the sacred mysteries on the sabbath of every week. Yet the Christians of Alexandria and at Rome have ceased to do this.”*** Even when the first day of the week was gradually being accepted throughout the world because of the Roman influence, the seventh-day sabbath was still observed by most churches except at Alexandria and Rome. Sozomen, in the year 460 A.D., wrote. ***“The people of Constantinople and almost every where, assemble together on the Sabbath, as well as on the first day of the week, which custom is never observed at Rome or at Alexandria.”*** Constantine and Crispus in 321 A.D., decreed that the first day of the week, the day of the sun, Sunday, was to be observed. Note that a few small groups of true believers have refused to accept and observe Sunday as a substitute for the Sabbath right up to the present day. Following is a partial copy of that written decree: ***“Let all judges, and all city people, and all tradesmen rest on the venerable day of the sun. But let those dwelling in the country freely and with full liberty attend to the culture of their fields, since it frequently happens that no other day is so fit for the sowing of grains or the planting of vines; hence the favourable time should not be allowed to pass lest the provisions of heaven be lost .- Given the 7th of March, Crispus and Constantine being consuls, each for the second time.”*** Codex Justin, lib.3 tit 12,1,2. And the 29th Canon of the Council of Laodicea, 364 A.D., reads. ***“Christians ought not to Judaize, and to rest on the sabbath; but preferring the Lord's day, [Sunday] should rest if possible as Christians. Wherefore if they shall be found to Judaize, [keeping the 7th day] let them be accursed from Christ.”*** We note that shortly after apostolic times, the city of Rome along with Alexandria had strayed from the apostolic back to apostate ways. This was without doubt because of the fanatical hatred they held for anything associated with Judaism. Therefore, the Roman converts considered God's Sabbath to be a Jewish institution because they, the Romans, did not have the knowledge that the sabbath day is given to all God's chosen, called-out believers, and further, the seventh-day sabbath is **NOT** one of the many sabbaths instituted by the prophet Moses. Many of the conformist Christians of today still hold this prejudiced view as to what they might consider Jewish; it is sad that they do so, for they reject that spiritual rest that they could have found in the heavenly Father. For those of us today who still uphold God's seventh- day sabbath, we are still accused by the conformists as “Judaizing”.

Where in the scriptures do you find where a Biblical figure such as Abraham or Moses instituting the seventh-day sabbath? You can search the scriptures from cover to cover but you will never find a verse showing that a man instituted the seventh-day Sabbath. You will, however, find biblical verses which forcefully instruct us in keeping the Sabbath and there are others which plead with people to observe the day with an attitude of respect for our God and creator as often commanded and instructed by Moses. Nehemiah also decreed many laws hoping to force the people into observing God's sabbath day: ***"In those days saw I in Judah some treading wine presses on the sabbath, and bringing in sheaves, and lading asses; as also wine, grapes, and figs, and all manner of burdens, which they brought into Jerusalem on the sabbath day: and I testified against them in the day wherein they sold victuals. ... Then I contended with the nobles of Judah, and said unto them, What evil thing is this that ye do, and profane the sabbath day? ... And it came to pass, that when the gates of Jerusalem began to be dark before the sabbath, I commanded that the gates should be shut, and charged that they should not be opened till after the sabbath: and some of my servants set I at the gates, that there should no burden be brought in on the sabbath day."*** Nehemiah 13:15,17,19. What we notice in all the writings, is that no man established the seventh-day sabbath, but God. Proof of this is found in Genesis 2:1 to 3. ***"Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made. And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made."*** And from Exodus 20:11 we read: ***"For in six days the LORD [YHVH] made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it."*** It is quite evident, that God, the Father established the seventh day sabbath at the end of creation and it was not instituted by man..

Some people have brought forward the argument, that when it is mentioned about the sabbath being "remembered", the term can also be used in the same way as for the Jewish feast of Unleavened Bread, therefore, Christians are obligated to observe this feast as they do the sabbath day because they maintain that the word "remember" is a sign of remembrance for all mankind to observe the fourth commandment. Let's examine this assertion. Following are the verses pertaining to the fourth commandment which instructs us to "remember" to observe God's Sabbath: ***"Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work. But the seventh day is the sabbath of the LORD thy God, in it thou shalt not do any work..."*** Exodus 20:8 to 10a. The following verses are those that the conformist Christians say that because the word "remember" appears for the feast of Unleavened Bread, Sabbatarians are obligated also to keep the feast: ***"And Moses said unto the people, Remember this day, in which ye came out from Egypt, out of the house of bondage, for by strength of hand the LORD brought you out from this place: there shall no leavened bread be eaten. This day came ye out in the month Abib ... thou shalt keep this service in this month."*** Exodus 13:3 to 5b. Look closely at these latter verses; the feast of

Unleavened Bread was instituted by Moses, because of their freedom from the bondage of Egypt. It was the evening (15th Nisan) that they began their swift journey to freedom. This law was not written upon tables of stone by the finger of God, but written in the "book of the law", whose author was Moses. The sacredness and the ritual ceremony connected to this feast was instituted by Moses. This time of remembrance was for a particular people, the Hebrews, in remembrance of their flight from bondage. In contrast, the seventh-day sabbath was *blessed and sanctified* by God, our heavenly Father and not by man. It was set apart before there was a Hebrew, Greek or Roman nationality, therefore, the sabbath was set apart and made holy (sanctified) for all peoples, so that they may come into his spiritual rest. What we should remember is that *the seventh day is the sabbath of the LORD.* It is a memorial day to remember when God ceased from his work of creation and rested. Those who love Him will hold it in a holy state.

There is no doubt that the world of today has turned their back on God's holy Sabbath. We can see this by how many people who profess by mouth to be Christ-followers or Christians yet do not observe the day made holy by God. The world has rejected what God has blessed and set apart; it was given to mankind in the hope that they remember their Creator and can have time to commune with God physically and mentally. "*Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work: But the seventh day is the sabbath of the LORD thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates.*" Exodus 20:9,10. Today, we see that the conformist Christian churches have forsaken God's seventh-day Sabbath, which had been given to all peoples, including the Gentiles, who had within a short period of time, returned to their heathen tradition, not remembering who had given them the Sabbath. The same can be said of God's first people (the Hebrews), who were called out by God but has also forsaken, profaned and polluted His Sabbath.

The prophet Ezekiel wrote of God saying the following words against the Jewish people: "*Thou hast despised mine holy things, and hast profaned my sabbaths.*" Ezekiel 22:8. "*Her priests have violated my law, and have profaned mine holy things: they have put no difference between the holy and the profane, neither have they shewed difference between the unclean and the clean, and have hid their eyes from my sabbaths, and I am profaned among them,*" Ezekiel 22:26. The Jewish people treated God's Sabbath unworthily and degraded it, and not only the Jews, but also the conformist Christians starting at the beginning of the second century A.D. Putting no difference between God's pure, sanctified day (ie. the seventh day) and man's preferred day of their heathen ancestors (ie. the first day) is profaning God by showing disrespect of His Word and what He instituted. Even when the Jews had willingly observed God's Sabbath, they had polluted it, not only by abusing it's sacredness, but more so by their sacrifices and traditional ceremonialism. These pollutions were spoken about through God's prophets, Isaiah and Ezekiel: "*Blessed is the man that doeth this, and the son of man that layeth hold on it; that keepeth the sabbath from polluting it...*" Isaiah 56:2a. "*...They polluted my sabbaths: then I said, I would pour out my fury*

upon them ... Because they had not executed my judgments, but had despised my statutes, and had polluted my sabbaths..." Ezekiel 20:21b,24b. It's quite obvious that the Jews were continuously profaning and polluting God's Sabbath. Notice that all these preceding verses have clearly shown the seven-day sabbath as belonging to God.

There are many conformist Christians that believe and teach that Jesus, being the Lord over the seventh-day sabbath, changed the observance day from Sabbath to Sunday. The only reply that can be made to this type of an unsubstantiated quote is "Where is a quote of the Sabbath day being transferred to Sunday in any part of the scripture?" Following are the verses which have been used to support the notion of a change in the day of worship: *"And he said unto them, **The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath: Therefore the Son of man is Lord also of the sabbath.**"* Mark 2:27, 28. Here we notice again, that the sabbath was NOT made for man as a day for his own desires (revelry, work, etc.), but was a day set aside by God for rest. And man can enter into that spiritual and physical rest by giving observance to that day by resting in the bosom of the Father through faith in His Christ. Verse 28 says Jesus is Lord of the sabbath. Now if Jesus has been made Lord over God's Sabbath, why would he change it to another day? What would be the motivation when he is Lord over God's Sabbath, and received Lordship over all things through obedience to God? *"For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet ... For he hath put all things under his feet. But when he saith all things are put under him, it is manifest that he [God] is excepted which did put all things under him. And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all."* I Corinthians 15:25, 27, 28. Jesus had been given all authority even over God's sabbath, which we have just read. *"Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things.."* Hebrews 1:2a. Jesus, the Son of God, was given Lordship over every thing in heaven and earth. Jesus became God's chosen because of his total obedience to God's Will. When we read of Jesus' words in Luke 16:17, it certainly does not sound like he would change God's fourth commandment: *"And it is easier for heaven and earth to pass, than one tittle of the law to fail."* Remember this law spoken of is the law of God, the Ten Words, of which we are making specific reference to the fourth. Certainly, there was no disannulment spoken of here concerning the seventh-day sabbath.

This writing on the whole is providing evidence that the seventh-day Sabbath is God's by His sanctification of it and only persons that that are obedient to God, are called out to enter into His rest. Hebrews 4 gives indisputable evidence that God's seventh-day Sabbath is considered as God's Sabbath. Only God blessed and sanctified this day, setting it apart from all the other days of the week. Read Hebrews for a good understanding of the relationship between God's Sabbath and man. *"For some when they had heard, did provoke: howbeit not all that came out of Egypt by Moses. But with whom was he grieved forty years? was it not with them that had sinned, whose carcasses fell in the wilderness? And to whom sware he that they should not enter into his rest, but to them that believed not? So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief."* Hebrews 3:16 to 19;

"Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it. For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them: but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it. For we which have believed do enter into rest, as he said, As I have sworn in my wrath, if they shall enter into my rest: although the works were finished from the foundation of the world. For he spake in a certain place of the seventh day on this wise, And God did rest the seventh day from all his works. And in this place again, If they shall enter into my rest. Seeing therefore it remaineth that some must enter therein and they to whom it was first preached entered not in because of unbelief: Again, he limiteth a certain day, saying in David, Today, after so long a time; as it is said, Today if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts. For if Jesus [Joshua] had given them rest, then would he not afterward have spoken of another day. There remaineth therefore a rest [should be "keeping of a sabbath"] to the people of God. For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his. Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief." Hebrews 3:16 to 4:11.

These verses should be separated and discussed in two parts. The first part that we begin with are the verses 3:16 to 19 and 4:1 to 3a. The first thing that we should note is that the Jews in Sinai had the good tidings preached to them in time past just as it has been preached to us Gentiles; we were called out from a world of heathenism just as they the Jews were called out of adulterous Egypt. Just as the Jews were called out from captivity in Egypt, so were Gentiles called out from the captivity of sinful heathenism. As God had made known to the Jews His sabbath, He has also given us Gentiles His Sabbath. Therefore, let us, who have been called out today show obedience in a fear of joy to His eternal Word, that we will not come short of entering into His rest by our observance of the seventh-day of which God blessed and sanctified, making it holy. How had the Jews not entered into His rest as mentioned in Hebrews 4:6? It was because of unbelief. Continuously, they had forsaken God. Remember what God had said to Moses of them in the Wilderness of Sin concerning the Sabbath: ***"And he said unto them, This is that which the LORD hath said, Tomorrow is the rest of the holy sabbath unto the LORD: Bake that which ye will bake today, and seethe that ye will seethe; and that which remaineth over lay up for you to be kept until the morning. And they laid it up till the morning, as Moses bade: and it did not stink, neither was there any worm therein. ... Six days ye shall gather it; but on the seventh day, which is the sabbath, in it there shall be none. And it came to pass, that there went out some of the people on the seventh day for to gather, and they found none. And the LORD said unto Moses, How long refuse ye to keep my commandments and my laws?"*** Exodus 16:23, 24, 26 to 28. The Jews were trespassing the sabbath regularly which is the reason why God asked ***"How long refuse ye to keep my commandments and my laws?"*** Even when God put the sabbath law on hewed stone, the fourth commandment began with the word "Remember". The Jews came short of the faith of believing, therefore, they did not enter into spiritual rest with God. But then again, today, hundreds of millions of conformist Christians observe the day of the Sun and have not entered into

God's rest. Even the few true believers who do enter into His rest should always remember not to come short in the observance of God's sanctified day. The verses from Hebrews 4:3 to 11 leaves no doubt in our minds that the phrase used of "entering into his rest" is referring to the seventh-day Sabbath for God's faithful – "there remaineth therefore a keeping of a sabbath to the people of God". Verses 3 to 7 are definitely in reference to a certain day and it tells us that day is the seventh. And though we (the believers) do have a continuous spiritual rest with God, these texts are referring to us as coming into communion with God on that day of rest that God separated from the other six days of the week: ***"For he spake in a certain place of the seventh day on this wise, And God did rest the seventh day from all his works. And in this place again, If they shall enter into my rest."*** Hebrews 4:4,5. ***"And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made. And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it, because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made."*** Genesis 2:2,3. ***"And Moses said, eat that today; for today is a sabbath unto the LORD today ye shall not find it in the field. .. See for that the LORD hath given you the sabbath, therefore he giveth you on the sixth day the bread of two days; abide ye every man in his place ... So the people rested on the seventh day."*** Exodus 16:25, 29a, 30. An important fact that we feel should be emphasized is that it was not man that instituted or made the seventh-day sabbath. We see that our Creator, upon finishing the works of creation, separated the seventh day from the six days of work of creation of the worlds which he made. That seventh day God made holy and by this means, He also made the seven day week. Man chose the first day of the week as a day of rest; God did not recommend observance of this day, and neither did Jesus, the Christ of God.

We know God is not limited to time as we are; there is no time with God, there is no beginning nor end. So why did God set a day apart, make it a day of rest, then call it His day, though the day was made for man? This may be hard for some to understand and especially for those who do not observe God's Sabbath. God made all things, even time. The day is made for the purpose of mankind, and man's life is rhythmic and subject to the 24-hour day. God is not! The Sabbath is a memorial to His six days of creative works, and is also for a spiritual communion period that we may rest (or cease) from our six days of frolicking and work and enter into a solemn, spiritual time of harmony without hindrance from our routine daily living chores.

The mainstream Christian churches, as previously mentioned, allude to the Hebrews 4 verses above as meaning entering into an everyday spiritual atmosphere with God – we do believe in living spiritually everyday as well, although, these verses, if closely scrutinized, is in reference to God's seventh-day sabbath. Not even Jesus (Joshua) gave us another or new day of rest unlike the Catholic church did by acknowledging a man-instituted day, Sunday. ***"For if Jesus [Joshua] had given them rest, then would he not afterward have spoken of another day. There remaineth therefore a rest [keeping of a sabbath] to the people of God. For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his."*** Hebrews 4:8, 9, 10. ***"For he [God] spake in a***

certain place of the seventh day on this wise, And God did rest the seventh day from all his works. And in this place again, If they shall enter into my rest...Again, he limiteth a certain day... Hebrews 4:4, 5, 7a. God had reserved a certain day for His believers. The true believers in God are seventh-day Sabbath keepers; they are not first day Sunday keepers.

Yes, Jesus is Lord over God's Sabbath, but Jesus did not institute the first day or ever had "***spoken of another day.***" God's seventh-day Sabbath has been with us since the foundation of the world and now, more than seven thousand years since the beginning of the cultured world, it is still being observed as "***a rest to the people of God***".

It is hoped that this writing has brought forth the knowledge that the seventh day is for us to worship God on His Holy Sabbath. To close, what else can be said except those who do believe and revere the Creator will observe only that day blessed and sanctified by Him. "***And hallow MY sabbaths, and they shall be a sign between me and you, that ye may know that I am the LORD your God.***" The seventh day is God's Sabbath and was meant to be observed by all of God's people, Jews and Gentiles alike.

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