

An Important Message for Men of God

An invitation to the Sabbath. “God so loved the human race that he gave us ... the Sabbath. When you think about that, you will realize how remarkable that is. ... Sabbath from the Hebrew *shabbat* means, very simply, rest. He gave us a day of rest. When everybody else, from the task masters of the Pharaoh with their whips, down to the slave owners of the South in this country, were saying work, lift, push, haul, God says *rest*, my Son, *rest* my daughter. The amazing thing is that there are some people who are so thick-headed that they won’t do it. ...”—Dr. D. James Kennedy, “The Gift of Rest,” *The Coral Ridge Hour*, November 4, 2001.

“God wrote the Sabbath into the very order of things. He said things would go better if you observe it.” —Jack Lowndes, president of the Lord’s Day Alliance.

“Our culture urges us to think that we need more of just about everything. In fact, we need less. ... Keeping sabbath is a conscious choice to restrict input. ...”—Donna Schaper, *Sabbath Keeping*, p. xii.

“From the beginning of the world the Sabbath was intended for the worship of God. ... Although man lost his knowledge of God, nevertheless God wanted this command about sanctifying the Sabbath to remain in force. On the seventh day He wanted men to busy themselves both with His Word and with the other forms of worship established by Him ...”—*Luther’s Works*, vol. 1, pp. 79, 80.

“... The Sabbath is a gift from God given to humanity right from the beginning...A vacation with God planned from the beginning to be enjoyed into eternity.” —Don Postema (pastor of the Campus Chapel at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor), *Catch Your Breath: God’s Invitation to Sabbath Rest*, pp. 5, 15.

Origin of the Sabbath. “The seventh day is the Sabbath of the LORD thy God.” *Exodus 20:10; Leviticus 23:3; Deuteronomy 5:14.*

“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 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 2:1–3.*

“Moses says, That in just six days the world, and all that is therein, was made. And that the seventh day was a rest, and a release from the labor of such operations; whence it is that we Celebrate a rest from our labors on that day ...”—Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews*, bk. 1, chap. 1, sect. 1, Whiston translation.

“The Sabbath was made for man.” Jesus (*Mark 2:27*).

“As the creation story in Gen. 1 centres on the creation of man on the sixth day, the author evidently intends the inauguration of the sabbath to be seen as the climax of the creation process as it applied to the man who had been formed ... this shows that the day was regarded as a source of blessing of universal significance and not merely for Israel ...”—Wilfred Stott, *The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology* (1986), vol. 3, p. 406.

How did Sunday become the “Lord’s Day”?

“Not any ecclesiastical writer of the first three centuries attributed the origin of Sunday observance either to Christ or to his apostles.”—Sir William Domville, *Examination of the Six Texts*, pp. 6, 7, supplement.

“To me it seems unaccountable that Jesus, during three years’ intercourse with His disciples, often conversing with them upon the Sabbath question, discussing it in some of its various aspects, freeing it from its false glosses, never alluded to any transference of the day; also, that during the forty days of His resurrection life, no such thing was intimated. Nor, so far as we know, did the Spirit, which was given to bring to their remembrance all things whatsoever that He had said unto them, deal with this question. Nor yet did the inspired apostles, in preaching the gospel, founding churches, counseling and instructing those founded, discuss or approach the subject.”—Dr. E. T. Hiscox (author of *The Baptist Manual*), in a paper read before a New York Ministers’ Conference, Nov. 16, 1893.

“He was distressed with the misguided teachings of the religious leaders in reference to Sabbath—not with the Sabbath itself. He loved and observed Sabbath.”—Martha Zimmerman (adjunct faculty member Carey Theological College), *Celebrating Biblical Feasts*, p. 22.

Was it the resurrection? “In the accounts of the resurrection in the Gospels there are no

sayings which direct that the great event of Christ's resurrection should be commemorated on the particular day of the week on which it occurred."—Harald Riesenfeld, *The Gospel Tradition* (1970), p. 124.

Any NT record of Sunday observance? "A perfectly unquestionable and decided mention of the ecclesiastical observance of Sunday among the Gentile Christians, we cannot find in the times of the apostle Paul..."—Augustus Neander, *History of the Planting and Training of the Christian Church by the Apostles*, p. 99.

"Some theologians have held that God likewise directly determined the Sunday as the day of worship in the New Law, that He Himself has explicitly substituted the Sunday for the Sabbath. But this theory is now entirely abandoned. It is now commonly held that God simply gave His Church the power to set aside whatever day or days, she would deem suitable as Holy Days. The Church chose Sunday, the first day of the week, and in the course of time added other days, as holy days."—Vincent J. Kelly, *Forbidden Sunday and Feast-Day Occupations*, p. 2.

Is human authority enough? "The festival of Sunday, like all other festivals, was always only a human ordinance, and it was far from the intentions of the apostles to establish a Divine command in this respect, far from them, and from the early apostolic Church, to transfer the laws of the Sabbath to Sunday. ..." —Lutheran Church historian, Augustus Neander, *The History of the Christian Religion and Church*, Rose's translation, (1843), p. 186.

"There is no record of a statement on the part of Jesus authorizing such a change, nor is there recorded such a statement on the part of the apostles."—James P. Wesberry, "Are We Compromising Ourselves?" *Sunday*, April-June, 1976, p. 5.

"If we under the gospel are to regulate the time of our public worship by the prescription of the decalogue, it will surely be far safer to observe the seventh day, according to the express commandment of God, than on the authority of mere human conjecture to adopt the first."—John Milton (author of *Paradise Lost*), *The Works of John Milton*, vol. 17, chap. 7, p. 193.

Many Christians continued observing the Sabbath. "The ancient Sabbath did remain and was observed (together with the celebration of the Lord's day) by the Christians of the East Church above three hundred years after our Saviour's

death. That church being the great part of Christendom, and having the apostles' doctrine and example to instruct them, would have restrained it if it had been deadly."—Edward Brerewood (professor at Gresham College, London), *A Learned Treatise of the Sabbath*, Oxford (1630), p. 77.

What about a Sunday Sabbath? "If any thing of the creation were made the cause of a sabbath, it ought to be the end not the beginning, it ought to be the rest not the first part of the work; it ought to be that which God assigned, not which man should take by way of after justification."—Bishop Jeremy Taylor, *Ductor Dubitantium 1.2.2.6.45*.

"You know yourselves do not keep the Sabbath, that is, the seventh day, &c."—*The Complete Writings of Roger Williams, vol. 6, p. 346*.

"Efforts were made in the Church sporadically, from the fourth century on, to suspend work on Sundays, but these never succeeded ... Had the leaders of early Christian opinion been inspired by feelings of humanity, and not by mere theological hatred, they would have encouraged instead of discouraging the Jewish day of rest."—Frederick C. Conybeare, *The Origins of Christianity*, p. 157.

Why not rest on the seventh day? "It should not be too great a break for us to observe the same Sabbath Day that Jesus himself observed.

"Our madly rushing, neurotic society needs the therapy of the silence and quietness that flows from a day kept holy, really holy. A day when our thoughts are of God, our actions are tempered by a desire to serve God and our families, a day that is so different from other days that it could make us different in our relationships to God and to our fellow men."—Dr. Ernest R. Palen reported by George Dugan, "Christians Urged to Join Jews in Observing Saturday Sabbath," *The New York Times*, March 14, 1966, p. 20.

"We propose that Saturday be set aside as the day of rest for all people.... For Protestants and Catholics it should prove no theological hardship: apart from the fact that our Lord rose from the dead on the first day of the week, there is nothing in Scripture that requires us to keep Sunday rather than Saturday as a holy day."—Harold Lindsell, *Christianity Today*, November 5, 1976, p. 42.

A day still blessed. "And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it." *Genesis 2:3*.

"For thou blessest, O LORD, and it shall be blessed for ever." *1 Chronicles 17:27*.