

**As we start this important topic, I want to share a wonderful Bible promise:**

Psalms 43:3, <sup>3</sup> *Send forth your light and your truth, let them guide me; let them bring me to your holy mountain, to the place where you dwell.*

I hope we will each make this our prayer every day. "Lord, send out your light and truth to lead me!"

**One of the biggest questions today is: What is the truth?** The Bible gives three primary definitions of truth:

1. The first definition is found in John 14:6 <sup>6</sup>*Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.*

We're all safe in following Jesus.

2. The second definition is found in John 17:17 <sup>17</sup>*Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth.*

Scripture is a revelation from God therefore it is truth

3. The third definition is found in Psalm 119:142 <sup>142</sup> *Your righteousness is everlasting, and your law is true.*

The law is truth because it is a transcript of His character. Truth is an attribute of God! As we studied our last lesson, we discovered from Genesis to Revelation the truth about God's holy Sabbath day. Let's look back at the Sabbath in relation to these three areas of "Truth" so we can be assured; it's right.

**Let's start with Jesus.** In Matthew 12:8 we read that Jesus was Lord of the Sabbath. In Luke 4:16 we also learned Jesus Himself kept the Sabbath every week. In talking about the destruction of Jerusalem that would occur more than 40 years after his ascension. Jesus said,

Matthew 24:20 <sup>20</sup>*Pray that your flight will not take place in winter or on the Sabbath.*

It is obvious that Jesus still expected His people to be keeping the Sabbath after He returned to heaven. Jesus is truth, so we are safe in following Him.

**Then there is the *Bible*:** We read from Genesis to Revelation and found the seventh-day Sabbath, (Saturday), all throughout.

**In Genesis**, we see that God created the Sabbath.

**In Exodus**, we found that God again commanded it to the children of Israel.

**In Ezekiel**, we learn the Sabbath is a sign between God and His people.

**In the NT** we see Jesus had a habit of going to church on the Sabbath.

We see the disciples also going to church on the Sabbath

The Bible says that even in heaven we will keep the Sabbath.

So again, if the Bible is the truth, we know for sure that Saturday is the Sabbath. In fact, there are over 140 verses in the Bible establishing it.

**Then we have God's law:** Right in the heart of the *law* we read

Exodus 20:8-11, <sup>8</sup> *"Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. <sup>9</sup> Six days you shall labor and do all your work, <sup>10</sup> but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God. On it you shall not do any work, neither you, nor your son or daughter, nor your manservant or maidservant, nor your animals, nor the alien within your gates. <sup>11</sup> For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but he rested on the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.*

We know the law is truth, so there we have it!

The real issue in this study is not is Saturday the true Sabbath.

The issue is: Do we know the truth – and are we prepared to follow the truth when we discover it?

Why is following truth important in following God? Listen to what Jesus said in John 4:23 <sup>23</sup>*Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. <sup>24</sup>God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in spirit and in truth.*

Lets get another text in John 8:31<sup>31</sup>*To the Jews who had believed him, Jesus said, "If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. <sup>32</sup>Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."*

John 14:15 <sup>15</sup>*If you love me, you will obey what I command. <sup>16</sup>And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever— <sup>17</sup>the **Spirit of truth**. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you.*

John 16:13 <sup>13</sup>*But when he, the **Spirit of truth**, comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come.*

John 17:17 <sup>17</sup>**Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth. <sup>18</sup>As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world. <sup>19</sup>For them I sanctify myself, that they too may be truly sanctified.**

It is as simple as this, if Jesus had said Wednesday; we ought to worship Him on Wednesday. If Sunday, then we ought to worship on Sunday. If Saturday, then we ought to worship on Saturday. We want to worship in Spirit *and* Truth!

Now since many sincere Christians today worship on Sunday, the first day of the week, I think it fair that we look at every text in the New Testament that mentions

Sunday, or the first day. Would it surprise you to learn there are only eight texts? – and five of them refer to the same Sunday! (55 Sabbath in NT)

**Eight verses mention the first day:** So what are we looking for? We are looking for anything about it being holy, or sacred, or if there was a change from Saturday to Sunday. We are going to look at the first five together, I think you will see why in a minute.

The first one is Luke 23:56:

1. Luke 23:56 - 24:1, <sup>56</sup>*Then they went home and prepared spices and perfumes. But they rested on the Sabbath in obedience to the commandment.*

Luke 24 :1 <sup>1</sup>*On the **first day** of the week, very early in the morning, the women took the spices they had prepared and went to the tomb. <sup>2</sup>They found the stone rolled away from the tomb.*

The second one is Mark 16:1

2. Mark 16:1-2, <sup>1</sup>*When the Sabbath was over, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices so that they might go to anoint Jesus' body. <sup>2</sup>Very early on the **first day** of the week, just after sunrise, they were on their way to the tomb.*

The third one is Mark 16:9

3. Mark 16:9, <sup>9</sup>*When Jesus rose early on the **first day** of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom he had driven seven demons.*

The fourth one is John 20:1

4. John 20:1, <sup>1</sup>*Early on the **first day** of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene went to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the entrance.*

The fifth one is Matthew 28:1

5. Matthew 28:1, <sup>1</sup>*After the Sabbath, at dawn on the **first day** of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to look at the tomb.*

Now lets ask ourselves some questions;

1. Did any of these texts say that Sunday was holy?
2. Did any of these texts say that we are to worship on Sunday?
3. Did any of these texts say that the Sabbath had been changed?

By the way, can you see now why we dealt with the first 5 verses all together? They all deal with the same Sunday. All these passages are accounts of Jesus' death, his burial in the tomb over the Sabbath, and his resurrection on the first day. In each text the Bible Sabbath was the day *before* the first day - Sunday.

Well, having covered the first 5 references to the first day, there are three remaining.

Our next one is John 20:19

6. John 20:19, <sup>19</sup>*On the evening of that first day of the week, when the disciples were together, with the **doors locked for fear of the Jews**, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!"* <sup>20</sup>*After he said this, he showed them his hands and side. The disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord.*

A lot of people try to make this text say something it doesn't. They say the church met to worship on the first day of the week.

Let me ask you; why are assembled? Are they worshipping? No – they're hiding because Jesus had been crucified and they were afraid that they were next! Does this text say that Sunday was holy? Does this text say that we are to worship on Sunday?

That's six, only two left.

7. Our next one is 1 Corinthians 16:1-2, <sup>1</sup>*Now about the collection for God's people: Do what I told the Galatian churches to do.* <sup>2</sup>***On the first day of every week, each one of you should set aside a sum of money in keeping with his income, saving it up, so that when I come no collections will have to be made.***

Here Paul is writing to the Corinthian people whom he had earlier preached to "every Sabbath day"

Acts 18:1-4 <sup>1</sup>*After this, Paul left Athens and went to Corinth.* <sup>2</sup>*There he met a Jew named Aquila, a native of Pontus, who had recently come from Italy with his wife Priscilla, because Claudius had ordered all the Jews to leave Rome. Paul went to see them,* <sup>3</sup>*and because he was a tentmaker as they were, he stayed and worked with them.* <sup>4</sup>***Every Sabbath he reasoned in the synagogue, trying to persuade Jews and Greeks.***

Paul had worship and kept the seventh-day Sabbath with these believers. Tell me was this before or after Jesus rose from the dead? Clearly it was after – and here the man whom God used to write most of the New Testament is worshipping every Sabbath!

Here in this text he is asking for their help to assist in the needs of the saints in Jerusalem where there was a famine. Here Paul instructs them to "lay by in store" on the first day.

That required a lot of work, and Paul obviously had no regard for the first day as being the Sabbath, but rather treated it as a common work day.

Does this text say that Sunday was holy? Does this text say that we are to worship on Sunday?

OK, now the last one. It is in Acts 20:7-12

8. Acts 20:7-12, <sup>7</sup>*On the first day of the week we came together to break bread. Paul spoke to the people and, because he intended to leave the next day, kept on talking until midnight.* <sup>8</sup>*There were many lamps in the upstairs room where we were meeting.* <sup>9</sup>*Seated in a window was a young man named Eutychus, who was sinking into a deep sleep as Paul talked on and on. When he was sound asleep, he fell to the ground from the third story and was picked up dead.* <sup>10</sup>*Paul went down, threw himself on the young man and put his arms around him. "Don't be alarmed," he said. "He's alive!"* <sup>11</sup>*Then he went upstairs again and broke bread and ate. After talking until daylight, he left.* <sup>12</sup>*The people took the young man home alive and were greatly comforted.*

Here Paul is preaching a farewell, all night meeting on the first day.

Notice he preached until *midnight*. In the Bible, a new day begins at sundown. So here it was Saturday night, the sun set and it became the first day, Paul preached till midnight, he ate and talked until sunrise and then walked 30 miles with his baggage, caught a ship and went on his way.

This simply confirms a Saturday evening service, which extended into Sunday, and Sunday again was a day of common work and travel.

Does this text say that Sunday was holy? Does this text say that we are to worship on Sunday?

We have taken an honest look at every text in the New Testament that mentions Sunday or the first day, and we have found there is nothing to indicate Sunday being the Sabbath or a holy day.

As we studied in our previous lesson, it was the decrees of man that changed the day of worship. Let me share this quote from ***The Convert's Catechism of Catholic Doctrine***, by Rev. Peter Geirmann, Second Edition, p. 50:

**"Q. Which is the Sabbath day?**

**A. Saturday is the Sabbath day.**

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

**A. We observe Sunday instead of Saturday because the Catholic Church, in the Council of Laodicea (336 A.D.) transferred the solemnity from Saturday to Sunday."**

To understand how and why this happened, it's necessary to get some history.

We travel back in time to the first world ruling kingdom of Babylon. In Babylon they worshipped the sun as it gave life and warmth.

In their false practice, they used "Sun Day," the first day, as their day of worship. This false worship was practiced by all the succeeding kingdoms, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome. Sun worship, on the first day, was so deeply entrenched it even influenced God's people and they practiced it.

Notice Ezekiel 8:14-16 <sup>14</sup> *Then he brought me to the entrance to the north gate of the house of the LORD, and I saw women sitting there, mourning for Tammuz.* <sup>15</sup> *He said to me, "Do you see this, son of man? **You will see things that are even more detestable than this.**"* <sup>16</sup> *He then brought me into the inner court of the house of the LORD, and there at the entrance to the temple, between the portico and the altar, were about twenty-five men. **With their backs toward the temple of the LORD and their faces toward the east, they were bowing down to the sun in the east.***

God said it was an abomination to Him.

As pagan Rome continued this sun worship, Papal Rome simply adopted it. Constantine, the emperor, was the first to legislate that Sunday, not Saturday be observed as a day of rest.

Now it was not celebrated in honor of the sun, but rather in honor of the resurrection of Jesus on Sunday.

### **Edict of Constantine**

The next step in making Sunday-keeping an integral part of Christianity was taken by the church at Rome in the Council of Laodicea.

It made the first **religious** law concerning the keeping of Sunday. While papal Rome's emphasis on Jesus' resurrection was commendable, it was also deadly, for it placed a tradition of man ahead of a commandment of God!

Jesus spoke of this very thing in Mark 7:7-9, 13

<sup>6</sup>*He replied, "Isaiah was right when he prophesied about you hypocrites; as it is written: " 'These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. <sup>7</sup>They worship me in vain; their teachings are but rules taught by men.' <sup>8</sup>You have let go of the commands of God and are holding on to the traditions of men." <sup>9</sup>And he said to them: "You have a fine way of setting aside the commands of God in order to observe your own traditions!*

Vs 13 <sup>13</sup>*Thus you nullify the word of God by your tradition that you have handed down. And you do many things like that."*

He speaks of it again in Matthew 15:8-9

<sup>8</sup>" *These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. <sup>9</sup>They worship me in vain; their teachings are but rules taught by men.*"

As this change was made, the Papal Church made it a strong point of doctrine and belief. Notice the following quotes.

**T. Enright, C.S.S.R.**, in a lecture at Hartford, Kansas, Feb. 18, 1844: "I have repeatedly offered \$1,000 to anyone who can prove to me from the Bible alone that I am bound to keep Sunday holy. There is no such law in the Bible. It is a law of the holy Catholic Church alone. The Bible says. 'Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy.' The Catholic Church says: 'No. By my divine power I abolish the Sabbath day and command you to keep holy the first day of the week.' And lo! The entire civilized world bows down in a reverent obedience to the command of the holy Catholic Church."

**D.B. Ray, *The Papal Controversy***, 1892, p. 179: "From this same Catholic Church you have accepted your Sunday, and that Sunday, as the Lord's day, she has handed down as a tradition; and the entire Protestant world has accepted it as tradition, for you have not one iota of Scripture to establish it. Therefore that which you have accepted as your rule of faith, inadequate as it of course is, as well as your Sunday, you have accepted on the authority of the Roman Catholic Church."

One can clearly see now why God says all the world wonders after, and worships the beast (**Revelation 13:3, 8**)!

Why do God's people in Revelation stand in contrast? Because they worship Him who made heaven and earth, (**Revelation 14:7**), and they keep the commandments of God. All ten - including the fourth!

Revelation 14:12 <sup>12</sup>*This calls for patient endurance on the part of the saints who obey God's commandments and remain faithful to Jesus.*

God is hurt when we choose to follow man rather than lovingly obeying Him. Today God is calling us back to follow the *truth!*

I encourage you to choose to be on God's side, and join the millions of others around the world who have found the delight of the seventh-day Sabbath!

Usually at this point a question comes up about all the many millions of people that kept Sunday and didn't know better. The Bible actually addresses that

Acts 17:30 <sup>30</sup>*In the past God overlooked such ignorance, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent.*

When you don't know, God just winks. Often people ask, "Are all people who keep Sunday lost? NO! Many have not had the privilege of hearing the truth yet, but when God reveals truth to us – tell me what is the only appropriate response?"

As you consider God's invitation to you – to join Him every week in experiencing His day with Him, a blessing awaits you – the blessing of following Him and growing in your walk with Him. No doubt some of you will be wondering how you're ever going to change your life around to become faithful to God's will for your life – I can tell you plainly – just follow what you know to be right. He who calls you is faithful – allow Him to work through the details as you resolve in your heart that you are going to be part of the group described in Revelation that worships the creator and that you are going to follow Him. May God bless you.

*Next Lesson #9 – “What Happens When We Die?”*