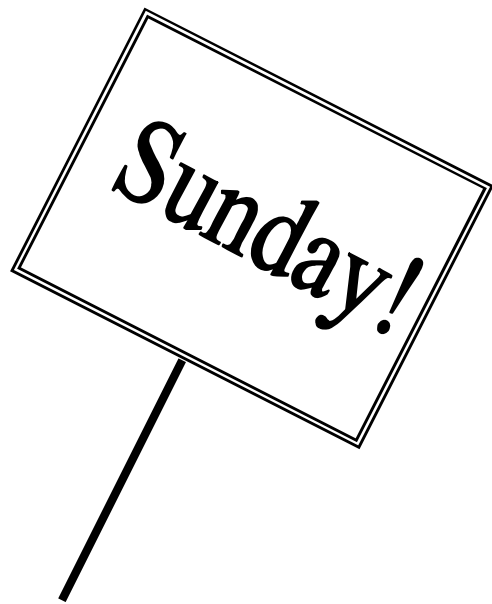


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Should Christians Worship on Saturday or Sunday?



*.... I felt I had to write and urge you to contend for the faith
that was once for all entrusted to the saints. Jude 1:3 NIV*

Should Christians Worship on Saturday or Sunday?

Colossians 2:16 (NIV) *“Therefore do not let anyone judge you by what you eat or drink, or with regard to a religious festival, a new moon celebration or a Sabbath day.”*

Romans 14:4-6 (NIV) *“⁴Who are you to judge someone else’s servant? To his own master he stands or falls. And he will stand, for the Lord is able to make him stand. ⁵One man considers one day more sacred than another; another man considers day alike. Each one should be fully convinced in his own mind. ⁶He who regards one day is special, does so to the Lord...”*

Acts 20:7 (NIV) *“On the first day of the week we came together to break bread...”*

1 Corinthians 16:1-2 (NIV) *“¹Now about the collection for God’s people: Do what I told the Galatian churches to do. ²On 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.”*

Revelation 1:10 (NIV) *“On the Lord’s day I was in the Spirit ...”*

For most Christians the devil’s usual attack on the church universal can be seen a mile away. However, for some reason, the subtle attacks launched against the universal church are seen by very few Christians. By subtle I mean those attacks the devil launches that are so cleverly disguised and to most, very palatable. To accomplish this, he uses arguments or disagreements that seem to make so much sense to both parties that most won’t even notice that it is actually an attack. These subtle attacks launched against the church, are unnoticed by even our leaders that are considered to be spiritually mature and familiar with the devil’s schemes.

Today, one of those subtle attacks launched against the church universal, for the express purpose of dividing God’s people, is the debate over the Christians day of worship. For some (primarily Seventh Day Adventists), Christians should be worshipping on the Sabbath day (Saturday) otherwise, their out of God’s will. While others (the vast majority of Christians) maintain the status quo and cling to Sunday (the first day of the week) as their day of worship.

Unfortunately, just as the enemy planned it, this issue has driven a wedge between some of God’s children, and instead of focusing on the up-building of God’s kingdom and reaching the lost for Christ, they’re wasting time trying to prove each other wrong. Unbeknownst to them, this is exactly what the devil wants. If he can continue to keep the church universal divided, he will

continue to have a great deal of success leading the world away from God. While the church universal is divided, this is some of what has been going on right under its nose:

- Our airwaves are filled with pornography, blatant homosexuality and false religions that blatantly attack our Christian faith
- Abortion clinics are still in business, killing the innocent unborn under the guise of “choice”
- The cults are bolder now than ever before and are stealing the lost that the church should be winning for Christ
- Same sex marriages are becoming legal in more states and the homosexual agenda is spreading like wild fire
- Our Christian values are being attacked more vigorously than ever before, soon Christians will be silenced
- Politicians that embrace unbiblical practices are being voted into office by professing Christians that should know better

This list could go on but space does not permit me to add more. The point is that while the universal and local church is wasting its time on issues that have no bearing on our eternal security, or right standing with God, the devil is wreaking havoc, right under our noses.

While it is true that there have been issues in the past and currently that the church universally and locally will debate over, the church should never divide over them and thereby become susceptible to the devil’s schemes. If we would focus on the essentials that we have in common (the deity of Jesus, the bodily resurrection, the second coming, the rapture of the church, etc.) instead of our differences, we could join forces against our common enemy, the devil.

However, since the question, **“Should Christians Worship on Saturday or Sunday?”** continues to come up, I thought I would provide some food for thought on this much debated issue. To do this, I will focus on four (4) subjects:

1. What day does the Bible say New Testament Christians gathered together? (possibly for worship)
2. What information do we get from the Church Fathers?
3. What New Testament facts give us a clue?
4. What does God seem to be telling us?

1. What day does the Bible say New Testament church gathered together?

While many will argue that there is no day of worship specifically spelled out in the New Testament, there is no doubt that Christians gathered together on the first day of the week,

Sunday. In **Acts 20:7** (NIV) we read, “*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.*” The other mention of the church gathering together is found in **1 Corinthians 16:1-2** (NIV), where we read, “*Now about the collection for God’s people: Do what I told the Galatian churches to do. ²On 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.*”

There are two points that we glean from Paul’s words in 1 Corinthians 16:1-2:

- 1) He told the Galatian churches to meet on the “**first day of the week**” also. Therefore, for whatever reason, he chose the first day of the week for the Galatian churches and the church at Corinth to meet instead of the Sabbath day.
- 2) He said, “**Every week,**” meaning this was to be the normal day of their meeting together.

While some will point out the fact that Paul was in the synagogue every Sabbath day (**Acts 18:4**) trying to persuade Jews and Greeks, it should be noted that there is no mention of Christians being in the synagogue for worship. Since Paul’s objective was to reach Jews and Greeks for Christ, he went where they could be found, the synagogues. The same holds true in other instances when the Apostles were in the synagogues. However, in either case, there is no mention of Christians being there for worship.

2. What information do we get from the Church Fathers?

There can be no study done on the history of the Early Church without reviewing the writings of the Church Fathers also known as the “**Apostolic Fathers.**” These writings give us a glimpse into the practices of the Early Church from approximately A.D. 70 to 300. It should be noted that I am in no way suggesting these writings are equal to God’s word. However, they will, without doubt, shed light on the issue at hand. For the lay person, the Apostolic Fathers are the ones who basically picked up where Paul and the other authors of the New Testament, left off after their death. Their main objective was to correct, encourage and give guidance to the early church. However, their writings did not make it into our New Testament. So what day did the Early Church worship according to the Apostolic Fathers? Consider the following:

- **Justin Martyr (100-165)** “*And on the day called Sunday, all who live in cities or in the country gather together in one place and memoirs of the Apostles or in the writings of the prophets are read, as long as time permits...**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 in matter, made the world; and Jesus Christ our Savior on the same day rose from the dead.”

- **Didache of the Apostles** – *“on the Lord’s own day, gather yourselves together and break bread and give thanks.”*
- **Ignatius, Bishop of Antioch** in the year A.D. 110 wrote, *“If, then, those who walk in the ancient practices attain to newness of hope, no longer observing the Sabbath, but fashioning their lives after the Lord’s Day on which our life also arose through him, that we may be found disciples of Jesus Christ, our only teacher.”*

It should be noted that some have used Mark 2:28 (*“So the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath” [Amplified]*) out of its context to suggest that the “Lord’s Day” is the Sabbath day. However, in its context, Jesus was simply telling the Pharisees that he, the “Son of Man,” could do whatever he wanted on the Sabbath. However, the **“Lord’s Day”** is Sunday, the first and eighth day, not Saturday as some attempt to make it. Cyprian, Bishop of Carthage (200-258) makes this clear, when he said, **“The Lord’s Day is both the first and eighth day.”**

3. What New Testament facts give us a clue?

While those in favor of Sabbath day (Saturday) worship will argue that there is no mention of Sunday worship found in the New Testament, they cannot avoid the obvious hints found for Sunday worship in the New Testament. This fact is important because there is no hint or mention of Saturday (Sabbath) worship found in the New Testament. Consider the following New Testament facts:

- Jesus rose from the dead on the first day of the week – Sunday **Mark 16:9** (NIV) says, *“When Jesus rose early on the first day of the week...”*
- All of Jesus’ appearances after he rose from the dead happen on the first day of the week – Sunday. **John 20:19** (NIV) says, *“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.’”* **Luke 24:1** (NIV) says, *“On the first day of the week, very early in the morning...”* Verse 13 says, *“Now that same day two of them were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem. ¹⁴ They were talking with each other about everything that had happened. ¹⁵ As they talked and discussed these things with each other, Jesus himself came up and walked along with them.”* Not one of

Jesus' appearances after his resurrection happen on the Sabbath day (Saturday). (See also, **Matthew 28:5-9 and Luke 24:34**)

- The Church was born at Pentecost which was on the first day of the week – Sunday (Acts 2:1-4). Pentecost, also known as the “Feast of Weeks” occurs the 50th day after the Sabbath (Saturday) of Passover week. In **Leviticus 23:15-16** (NIV) we read, “¹⁵*From the day after the Sabbath, the day you brought the sheaf of wave offering, count of seven full weeks. ¹⁶Count off fifty days up to the day after the seventh Sabbath, and then present an offering of new grain to the Lord.*”
- The promised Holy Spirit fell on the disciples on the day of Pentecost – Sunday (**Acts 2:1-4**)
- The only time Christians are recorded to have assembled together was on the first day of the week – Sunday. Never do we find Christians assembling on the Sabbath day – Saturday (**Acts 20:7 and 1 Corinthians 16:1-2**)
- The church at Corinth and the Galatian churches are commanded by Paul to meet every first day of the week, not the Sabbath day. In **1Corinthians 16:1-2** (NIV) we read, “¹*Now about the collection for God's people: Do what I told the Galatian churches to do ² on the first day of every week, each one of you should set aside a sum of money...*”
- Christians are recorded breaking bread (probably communion) on the first day of the week – Sunday, not on the Sabbath – Saturday (**Acts 20:7**)
- The first time Jesus broke bread after his resurrection with his disciples was on the first day of the week – **Sunday (Luke 24:1, 13, 28-35)**

4. **What does God seem to be telling us?**

While some would be bold enough to disagree with Jesus himself to uphold any of the beliefs and practices of their church, I believe God's word supersedes everything and everybody, myself included. That said, I believe that God does not make mistakes, we do. Nor does he leave out the critical information that should be in his word, that we need in order to live in a way that pleases him. In my opinion, if God intended the New Testament Church to worship on the Sabbath day (Saturday), he would have said it somewhere in the New Testament. Instead, everything of significance to the Early Church (the resurrection, Pentecost/The birth of the church, Jesus' appearances and the assembly to break bread) happened on the first day of the week. For me, this is an unmistakable message from God and not a coincidence. In addition, because God expected the Jews to keep the Sabbath, he repeats it time after time in

the Old Testament (**Ex. Exod. 20:8, Deut. 5:12, Isa. 56:2**). If God intended for the church to worship on the Sabbath, I believe he would have been consistent and repeated himself time after time to the church. However, this is not what we find in the New Testament. In fact, there is not so much as a hint to be found. Therefore, I am fully convinced in my own mind that Sunday, the first day of the week, is to be my day of worship. While there are many that disagree with my position, none can erase the facts found in God's word.

While I have my reasons for clinging to Sunday as my day of worship, it does not in any way negate the right of my brothers and sisters in Christ to worship on Saturday. Consider Paul's words found in **Romans 14:4-6, 10, 12-13** (NIV), "*⁴ Who are you to judge someone else's servant? To their own master, servants stand or fall. And he will stand, for the Lord is able to make him stand. ⁵ One man considers one day more sacred than another; another man considers every day alike. Each one should be fully convinced in his own mind. ⁶ He who regards one day as special, does so to the Lord. He who eats meat, eats to the Lord, for he gives thanks to God; and he who abstains, does so to the Lord and gives thanks to God. ¹⁰ 'You then, why do you judge your brother? Or why do you look down on your brother? For we will all stand before God's judgment seat.' ¹² 'So then, each of us will give an account of himself to God. ¹³ Therefore let us stop passing judgment on one another. Instead, make up your mind not to put any stumbling block or obstacle in your brothers way.'*"

Therefore, it is unchristian to judge or divide with my brothers and sisters in Christ that choose to worship on Saturday instead of Sunday. Likewise, those who choose to worship on Saturday should extend the same freedom to those that worship on Sunday. In my opinion, to judge or divide with my brothers and sisters in Christ because of their day of worship violates the commandment Jesus gave us to love one another (**John 13:34-35**).

Besides, we are told not to allow anyone to judge us with regards to a Sabbath (Col. 2:16), and we are told not to judge one another regarding days or put a stumbling block or obstacle in our brothers way (**Romans 14:5, 12**).

My prayer is that this article will shed light on the subject as well as remove the wedge that is dividing God's children.

God Bless,
Pastor D. M. Duncan

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