



## *What does the Bible Say about House Church?*

New Testament Churches met in the homes of those in the Church:

**Acts 2:46 - Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts...**

Here we see that in the very beginning they gathered in each others homes and the temple courts. The breaking of bread refers to eating meals and is what the phrase means as used in the New Testament, and of course included in it's meaning here would be the Lord's Supper as a full meal, as well as just ordinary daily meals the rest of the week. (See later!) From this point the temple gatherings fade from view completely as the Church spread outside of Jerusalem and eventually to the Gentiles. The temple was then a complete irrelevance, and we are left with the fact that whenever Churches are located in scripture they are always, and without exception, in people's homes.

**Acts 8:3 - But Saul began to destroy the Church. Going from house to house, he dragged off men and women and put them in prison.**

We here see that each Church Saul (later to become Paul the Apostle) destroyed was found in a house.

**Romans 16:3-5 - Greet Priscilla and Aquila, my fellow-workers in Christ Jesus. They risked their lives for me. Not only I but all the Churches of the Gentiles are grateful to them. Greet also the Church that meets at their house.**

**1Corinthians 16:19 - The Churches in the province of Asia send you greetings. Aquila and Priscilla greet you warmly in the Lord, and so does the Church that meets at their house.**

**Colossians 4:15 - Give my greetings to the brothers at Laodicea, and to Nympha and the Church that meets at her house.**

**Philemon 1-2 - Paul, a prisoner of Christ Jesus, and Timothy our brother. To Philemon our dear friend and fellow-worker, to Apphia our sister, to Archippus our fellow-soldier and to the Church that meets in your home.**

**James 2:1-4 - My brothers, as believers in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ, don't show favoritism. Suppose a man comes into your meeting wearing a gold ring and fine clothes, and a poor man in shabby clothes also comes in. If you show special attention to the man wearing fine clothes and say, "Here's a good seat for you," but say to the poor, "You stand there" or "Sit on the floor by my feet," have you not discriminated against yourselves and become judges with evil thoughts?**

James is quite clearly referring here to when they meet as a Church, and what he says only makes sense if they were doing so in a home as opposed to a public building. What is at a premium here is space, or otherwise why would the poor brother be required to sit on the floor or to stand? He could just be shuffled to a back seat out of the way somewhere!

And there you just about all the relevant verses in the New Testament which relate to where Churches were located when they met together, and it is quite undeniable that they met in houses. Neither is it the case that there are other verses to which I haven't referred which might indicate Churches sometimes didn't meet in homes, because any such verses and references are completely absent from the Bible. No-one who knows their biblical stuff would challenge the simple fact that the apostles established Churches to meet in the homes of those believers who were part of them, and there is not one word or hint in the New Testament that it was in any way envisaged that it should be any different.

New Testament Church gatherings were completely open and participatory with no one leading from the front:

In 1 Corinthians Paul's context from chapter 10 through to the end of chapter 14 is how the believers there ought to conduct themselves when they come together as a Church. He is particularly concerned, in the light of their obsession with the verbal gifts of the Spirit such as tongues and prophecy, that they understand the rules he had previously given them concerning the use of spiritual gifts. Further, he couches his teaching in terms of each person in the Church being a different part of a body, and that the key to a healthy body is that each part functions properly and according to it's design. Against this background it becomes clear that what Paul writes only makes any sense at all when understood as instructions and rules laid down for a corporate gathering, at which all present are free to take part without the controlling presence of someone leading the proceedings.

**1 Corinthians 12:7 - Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good.**

The key point here is that, when they meet as a Church, each one ought to have their personal manifestation and gift of the Spirit to bring in order that everyone present might be benefitted.

**1 Corinthians 14:23-25 - So if the whole Church comes together and everyone speaks in tongues, and some who do not understand or some unbelievers come in, will they not say that you are out of your mind? But if an unbeliever or someone who does not understand comes in while everyone is prophesying, he will be convinced by all that he is a sinner and will be judged by all, and the secrets of his heart will be laid bare. So he will fall down and worship God exclaiming, "God is really among you!"**

Paul is here saying that whereas uninterpreted public tongues are pointless in a public gathering (no-one, after all, has a clue what is being said), prophecy most certainly isn't. And the thing to note is that he therefore encourages everyone to prophecy. There you have it again, all present are free to take part!

**1 Corinthians 14:26 - What then shall we say, brothers? When you come together, everyone has a hymn, or a word of instruction, a revelation, a tongue or an interpretation.**

What's the push here? That everyone ought to take part, and quite spontaneously as well. The Holy Spirit, and not some human master of ceremonies, leads the proceedings.

**1 Corinthians 14:29-31 - Two or three prophets should speak, and the others should weigh**

**carefully what is said. And if a revelation comes to someone who is sitting down, the first speaker should stop. For you can *all* prophesy in turn so that everyone may be instructed and encouraged.**

This verse shows clearly that the gatherings of the New Testament Churches were open and participatory, and without any human leadership 'from the front'. Such instructions would be nonsensical if directed towards a gathering that was led by someone who was directing affairs and conducting some kind of religious service. They make perfect sense, however, when understood to be instructions for the Church as a whole to adhere to and implement. Imagine it, someone already sharing something is to give way to another who indicates they now have something to bring. This is no Church service, it is the coming together of a group of believers in someone's home to function like an extended family. All are free to share together and take part, and to do so for the corporate good and spiritual well-being of each person present.

When New Testament Churches met they had the Lord's Supper as a full meal:

Another aspect of Paul's context in 1 Corinthians 10-14 is to make it clear to certain believers in the Church that they could no longer attend the love feasts at the Temple of Diana just down the road from them. These were sordid affairs with priestesses doubling for prostitutes, and the whole thing was basically a drunken orgy. Further, he has to address the fact that not only were believers in the Corinthian Church failing to maintain proper relationships with each other, and then eating the Church love-feast without first putting such behavior right with any they'd sinned against, but some were even getting drunk and starting to eat their meal before everyone had even arrived. Needless to say the apostle is not here correcting the abuses of some 'communion service' - the New Testament Church had nothing that even vaguely resembled such a thing - he is correcting the abuse of a corporate and shared meal which the Church had, and he calls this meal both the Lord's table, and the Lord's Supper. (The Greek word translated supper is *deipnon*, and it exclusively denotes the main meal of the day eaten towards evening.) His cure for the problems being encountered is to tell them that if they can't conduct themselves properly and treat the Church meal as something a bit special - it is, after all, the Lord's Meal - then they should just clear off home and eat too much and get drunk there.

**1 Corinthians 10:16-17 - Is not the cup of thanksgiving for which we give thanks a participation in the blood of Christ? And is not the bread that we break a participation in the body of Christ? Because there is one loaf, we, who are many, are one body, for we all partake of the one loaf.**

Using the terminology of the food and drink at the Passover, itself a full meal, Paul indicates that the food and drink represents, among other things, the unity we have because of what Jesus accomplished for us in His death. The truly awful phrase 'Holy Communion' comes quite misleadingly from the fact that in the Greek the word translated participation is *koinonia*, and it means fellowship. Hence one gets such associated words as communication, communicate and communion. As has already been stated though, the New Testament knows nothing of 'communion services'. The early Churches shared bread and wine as part of a communal Church meal, as simple as that. The idea of a 'communion service' tacked on to the end of a normal 'service' would have been quite ridiculous to them, and for the simple reason that they didn't even have normal 'services', let alone 'communion' ones afterwards.

**1 Corinthians 10:21 - You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons too: you cannot have a part in both the Lord's table and the table of demons.**

This is his warning to those who are coming to the Church love feast but who are still attending

those held at the pagan temple. And of course the love feasts at the pagan temple, as with those at the Christian Churches, were proper meals.

**1 Corinthians 11:20-21 - When you come together it is not the Lord's Supper you eat, for as you eat, each of you goes ahead without waiting for anybody else. One remains hungry, another gets drunk.**

How does a 'communion service' of a wafer of bread and tiny sip of wine or juice satisfy hunger, or enable someone to get drunk? It doesn't, of course! Remember, the early Church didn't have any 'services', let alone 'communion services'. They ate a full meal together and called it the Lord's Meal (deipnon - the main meal of the day towards evening). This is precisely what Jesus had told the apostles to do at the Passover meal just before His death.

**Jude 12 - These men (false teachers) are blemishes at your love feasts, eating with you without the slightest qualm...**

What love feasts? Churches don't have love feasts at which some people might be blemishes do they? Well, any Bible scholar will tell you that the Churches in the New Testament did have love feasts when they met! Does your Church?

The New Testament Churches met on the Sabbath:

## *Sunday Is it the Christian Sabbath?*

Is Sunday, the first day of the week, the Christian Sabbath? Did it replace the seventh day (Saturday) as the rest day of Yahweh the Almighty God of Israel? Has the fourth of the Ten Commandments as recorded in Exodus 20:8-11 been changed or done away with? If all the praiseworthy characters mentioned in the Bible - including the Savior and his twelve apostles - kept the seventh day Sabbath, then why oh why are the majority of Christians keeping Sunday?

These and similar questions are being asked today by believers all over the globe and the answers to them fall into three distinct categories.

"The days of the week are all alike," say some believers, "so there is no need to become emotionally polarized about any particular one. Saturday, Sunday or even Friday for that matter, they are all the same to God. The important thing is to keep yourself holy every day of the week and forget about a weekly Sabbath, because it no longer exists. The Sabbath commandment has been fulfilled, superseded, done away with and nailed to the cross. Christians meet for worship on Sunday, not because it is the Sabbath of the ten Commandments, but because it is convenient. The law has been fulfilled by Jesus Christ and is now obsolete: so there is no longer a Sabbath commandment to observe. It is the Spirit that matters, not the day of the week on which you choose to rest."

"The law of God still stands" say others "but Sunday, the first day of the week, is the new Christian Sabbath. It commemorates the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is the Lord's Day and has replaced the seventh-day Sabbath by the authority of the inspired Apostles and, therefore, by Christ himself. Christians are certainly under obligation to observe it."

"Sunday is not the Sabbath day at all," says a third group. "The Almighty's Sabbath, according to

His unalterable Ten Commandments (Exodus 20:8-11, Matthew 5:17-18) is the seventh day of the week, the day commonly known as Saturday. You may read the Bible from Genesis to Revelation and you will not find a single verse authorizing the observance of Sunday. The true weekly Sabbath of Yahweh, the Almighty God of Israel was, is, and ever will be, the seventh day of the week."

Thus the arguments rage back and forth across the globe and are even now stirring the minds of many in your area. We trust that this article will settle the matter for you once and for all, and prepare you for the days ahead when this very issue concerning the Almighty's Sabbath becomes a deciding point for all the inhabitants of the earth.

In your own interests, therefore, we will advise you to carefully study this page and be ready to answer this critical question: Is Sunday the Christian Sabbath?

Before we present our answer it is obvious that we should first settle the issue of whether or not a Sabbath day exists. In other words, does the Almighty still want mankind to observe a Sabbath day - or are all the days of the week alike?

The answer to that question is: Yahweh's Sabbath still exists and He most certainly wants people to observe it. The following verses will prove that the Sabbath commandment was not done away with at the cross, but is still on the statute books of heaven.

**The First Proof Text is: Matthew 24: 20: But pray that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the Sabbath day.**

In this passage the Master advised His followers to request his Father to so arrange circumstances for the early Church that Sabbath observance would be made easier for them at the time of Jerusalem's capture; an event which took place some 40 years after the crucifixion. Now pause and think about that advice: If the Sabbath commandment was scheduled for cancellation at the cross - as some suppose - then why did Jesus give his disciples this instruction about keeping the Sabbath? What was the point in advising them to pray to the Father about a commandment that would not be in existence in AD 70?

The answer is perfectly obvious: The Sabbath commandment was not scheduled for cancellation at the cross; it was to continue. The Savior knew this, and that is why He advised his followers, who were mostly Israelites at that time, to pray to God to arrange a weekday flight from Jerusalem. They would not then be exposed to the temptation of breaking the Sabbath commandment in their haste to get away from the besieged city.

The presence of this text is irrefutable evidence that the Savior had absolutely no intention of doing away with the Sabbath commandment at Calvary; a fact which he had previously pointed out in the Sermon on the Mount when he said:

**Matthew 5: 17: Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. 18: For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.**

The Second Proof Text is:

**Hebrews 4: 9: There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God. 10: For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own work as God did from his. 11: Let us labor therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief.**

In this passage, written about AD66, believers are reminded that the weekly Sabbath remains, and

that all of us should endeavor to rest after a week's work just as the Almighty did after the Creation week.

**Genesis 2: 1: Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. 2: 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. 3: 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.**

Sabbath keeping, in other words, is imitating the Almighty: doing in our small way what He did at Eden in order that we may enter that great spiritual REST OF GOD of which the weekly Sabbath is but a token. The writer of Hebrews goes on to warn the Church that some rebellious believers risk being lost by copying the example of disobedience. Isn't that a sobering warning to all who would violate the Sabbath commandment? We think it is.

The Third Proof Text is:

**Isaiah 66: 22: For as the new heaven and the new earth, which I shall make, shall remain before me, saith the Lord, so shall your seed and your name remain. 23: And it shall come to pass, that from one moon to another, and from one Sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before me, saith the Lord.**

This passage tells of the future - our future - when Jehovah, the Holy One of Israel will re-create the universe. (Revelation 21:1) And on that new earth all flesh (all of earth's redeemed host) will observe the weekly Sabbath. The above text proves conclusively that the Sabbath of the Almighty will last throughout eternity, from generation to generation - for ALL TIME. (Exodus 31:12-18)

The argument that the weekly Sabbath was done away with at Calvary is, therefore, groundless and too feeble to consider any further. The question remaining to be answered, however, is:

Is Sunday the Christian Sabbath, and did it replace the seventh day of the week as the rest day of the Almighty God?

To answer this question we will do two things:

First find in the Bible texts that specifically mention the first day of the week.

And then prayerfully examine those verses paying particular attention to see if any change of the Sabbath day took place.

By doing this we will avoid that vain and perilous pastime of substituting the traditions of men for the commandments of God. (Matthew 15:9)

In the Scriptures the days of the week are not named, but numbered from one to seven. The only exception is the seventh day of the week which is called the Sabbath. Consequently, the day we all know as Sunday is referred to in the Bible as the "first day of the week." And so in our search to answer the question about Sunday being the Christian Sabbath, we will need to examine every Bible verse in which the "first day of the week" is mentioned.

To our knowledge there are only nine such texts, one in the Old Testament and eight in the New. We will quote them in turn.

**"And God said, let there be light: and there was light. And God saw that it was good: and God divided the light from darkness. And God called the light day and the darkness He called night. And the evening and the morning were the first day." (Genesis 1:3-5)**

This text tells of what God did on the first day of the creation week. It says nothing about the Sabbath one way or the other, so we will pass it over without further comment.

The following five verses concern the Sunday after Christ's crucifixion. We will list and comment on them as a group, because they are separate accounts of the same event.

**"In the end of the Sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the sepulcher." (Matthew 28:1)**

**"And when the Sabbath was passed, Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of James, and Salome had brought sweet spices, that they might come and anoint Him. And very early in the morning, the first day of the week, they came unto the sepulcher." (Mark 16: 1-2)**

**"Now when Jesus was risen early the first day of the week he appeared first to Mary Magdalene out of whom he cast seven devils." (Mark 16:9)**

**"Now upon the first day of the week, very early in the morning, they came unto the sepulcher bringing the spices which they had prepared, and certain others with them." (Luke 24:1)**

**"The first day of the week cometh Mary Magdalene early, when it was yet dark, unto the sepulcher, and seeth the stone taken away from the sepulcher." (John 20:1)**

These five texts concern events that took place on the morning when Mary Madgalene and some others brought spices to anoint the body of the Master. It was the morning of the first day of the week - Sunday morning!.

What do the Gospel writers tell us? They tell us this: that when the first day of the week began, the Sabbath had ended - the Sabbath was past. In other words, the Sabbath day according to the Gospel writers, who were writing some 30 and more years after the resurrection, was still the seventh day of the week - the day that went before Sunday the first day of the week.

Surely these Gospel writers, who were mostly Jews, would have mentioned a change of the Sabbath day had it occurred? But there is no mention of a change; not a text, nor a word, not even a hint or suggestion.

Why?

Because there had been no change. The Sabbath day, as far as Matthew, Mark, Luke and John were concerned, was still the seventh day of the week, the day that preceded the first day.

Let us now move on to the next text.

**"Then the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in the midst and saith unto them, "Peace be unto you." (John 20:19)**

This meeting took place on the Sunday evening after the resurrection. The disciples were assembled, we are told, "for fear of the Jews."

Some, in a frantic bid to find Scriptural support for Sunday observance, use this text as though it proved that the Master sanctified Sunday by visiting the disciples on it, and that this meeting was called to celebrate the resurrection.

This, however, was not the case. The disciples met, we are plainly told "for fear of the Jews." In fact, some of them didn't even believe the Master had risen. (Mark 16:11-14, Luke 24:36-38) We would be deluding ourselves if we tried to classify this meeting as the inauguration of a new Sabbath day. The Sabbath is not even mentioned in this verse.

**"And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow, and continued his speech until midnight." (Acts 20:7)**

This text is also put forward as "proof" of Sunday sacredness. "Here is evidence," some exclaim, "that the early Church met on a Sunday and that a Communion Service was held!"

Let us examine this claim.

It is essential to read the chapter through to get a complete picture of the events. On doing this the following points will emerge.

The meeting was held in the evening of the first day of the week and continued till midnight or a little later. That is, it either began on Saturday evening and finished in the early hours of Sunday morning; or it began on Sunday evening and finished in the early hours of Monday morning. Both these methods of reckoning the "evening of a day" are to be found in the Scriptures. (Genesis 1 and John 20:19)

The "breaking of bread" took place after midnight. (verse 11)

Paul and his companions, after bidding farewell to their host, then walked from Troas to Assos (verse 13) - a distance of some 18 miles.

We reject the claim that this meeting testifies to Sunday sacredness and we do so for the following reasons:

If this was a Saturday night meeting, then a 18 mile walk on the following day (Sunday), after staying up most of the night, was hardly the way for a converted Pharisee like Paul to keep the new Sabbath. Eighteen miles on foot, over rough country roads, is no way to keep a Sabbath you may be sure; and it is quite unthinkable that Paul, a life-long Sabbath keeper, would have done this.

If on the other hand, this was a Sunday night meeting, then the "breaking of the bread" took place in the early hours of Monday morning: which, once again, is no way to celebrate a Sunday Sabbath day.

Besides, to "break bread" does not necessarily mean that a communion service was held. The Master "broke bread" on several occasions and fed thousands of people. (Matthew 14 and John 6) The early Christians also "broke bread daily from house to house." (Acts 2:46) It would be forcing the issue to suggest that at all these occasions communion services were held. The term "breaking bread" was a common expression in those days for having a meal, and that is what is meant in Acts 20. After the farewell, late night meeting, Paul and his host had a meal together and then Paul and his companions set off on foot to Assos. Most certainly this text does not prove Sunday sacredness.

**1: Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the Churches of Galatia, even so do ye. 2: Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come. 3: And when I come, whomsoever ye shall approve by your letters, them will I send to bring your liberality unto**



## **Jerusalem." (1 Corinthians 16:1-3)**

Paul is here instructing believers in Corinth to privately set aside some money for the famine stricken brethren in Jerusalem. The Greek word thesaurizon means "treasuring or storing up." It has been correctly rendered "lay by him in store." The Greek lexicon of Greenfield translates the Greek here as, "with one's self", i.e. at home. And this fact totally overthrows the idea that this text proves that a Church meeting on a Sunday is being referred to. If anything it indicates that the Corinthian believers did not meet on the first day of the week, but were in this instance being appealed to by Paul to do some private saving at home. Then at Paul's coming a general "gathering" (collection of money) would not be necessary. The already collected funds could be totaled and taken by trustworthy brethren to Jerusalem to help the believers there. The Sabbath day is not even mentioned in this verse.

And that, surprisingly enough, completes our survey of the texts in the Bible which mention the first day of the week. The reader will have noticed that in not a single instance has a change of the Sabbath day been mentioned or even hinted at. On the contrary the Gospel writers - though they were writing decades after the resurrection - still referred to the seventh day of the week as THE SABBATH.

And why not?

The seventh day of the week had been the Sabbath since the creation of the world. It was the day JEHOVAH (Yahweh) the Almighty God of Israel blessed and sanctified (set apart for sacred use) at Eden.

**Genesis 2: 2: 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.3: And God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it: because that in it He rested from all His work which God created and made.**

The seventh day of the week continued to be the Sabbath when some 2500 years later Israel wandered in the wilderness for 40 years; for Scripture tells of the special miracle Yahweh did each seventh day to identify it from other weekdays.

**Exodus 16: 25: And Moses said, Eat that to day; for to day is a sabbath unto the LORD: to day ye shall not find it in the field. 26: Six days ye shall gather it; but on the seventh day, which is the sabbath, in it there shall be none. 27: And it came to pass, that there went out some of the people on the seventh day for to gather, and they found none. 28: And the LORD said unto Moses, How long refuse ye to keep my commandments and my laws?**

The seventh day of the week was the Sabbath when the Master walked on earth; for we read that it was his custom to go to the synagogue each Sabbath day.

**Luke 4: 16: And he came to Nazareth, where he was brought up: and, as his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day.**

The seventh day was the Sabbath the Apostle Paul and the early Church kept long after the resurrection of the Savior.

**Acts 17: 2: And Paul, as his manner was, went in unto them and three Sabbath days reasoned with them out of the Scriptures.**

Also, as mentioned previously, the seventh day was the Sabbath which the Messiah advised his followers (mostly Jews at that time) to prayerfully remember at the fall of Jerusalem; an event which

took place some 40 years after the crucifixion! (Matthew 24:20)

And then there is that staggering prophecy in Isaiah 66:23 which tells of the Sabbath being observed by ALL MANKIND THROUGHOUT ETERNITY.

That, briefly, is the Scriptural position concerning the first and the seventh days of the week. The reader will have noticed that in not a single instance in the first day (Sunday) called the Sabbath. In Holy writ that sacred title belongs to the seventh day of the week and the spiritual realities it foreshadows.

"How then," you may well ask, "did Sunday observance begin? And why are millions of believers still endeavoring to keep it? If Sunday is not the Sabbath of the Almighty God, then how did the colossal error creep into the Church?"

The answer may well astonish you, but here it is.

Sunday observance is a product of paganism. It found its way into the Christian Church many years after the original Apostles died. At that time, Sunday was the rest day of the pagan Roman Empire in which the popular religion was Mithraism, a form of sun-worship. In the course of time, (during the second, third and fourth centuries) multitudes of sun-worshippers joined the Church. And when the Emperor Constantine ruled (AD 306-337) it became quite fashionable to follow his example and become a Christian. Sad to say, however, most of the multitude who joined the Church weren't truly converted. They had little or no love for the truth as taught in the Bible, and they naturally didn't want to give up their pagan ways - and days - for anything which was at variance with their cherished heathen traditions. Besides, these unconverted members in the Church had soon outnumbered the faithful. This gave them the power to implement their wishes and so the popular traditions of paganism were brought into the Church and the truths of the Most High were slowly pushed aside. The Church leaders - many of whom were themselves devoid of the Spirit of God - reasoned, that in order to appease and keep their congregations, the traditions of heathenism should be "christianised," given sacred titles and accepted into Christian worship. Thus it was that Sunday - the venerable day of the Sun God - along with a host of other pagan practices, too numerous to deal with in this article, was adopted by the fallen Church and hailed as the New Christian Sabbath - the LORD'S DAY!.

Sunday observance, in short is an "heirloom from heathenism," a pagan tradition which unlawfully entered the Christian Church centuries after the early Apostles died. It has absolutely no Scriptural authority whatsoever!

The following quotations are given to show how true this verdict is.

"Unquestionably the first law, either ecclesiastical or civil, by which the sabbatical observance of that day is known to have been ordained, is the edict of Constantine. 321 AD." (Chambers Encyclopedia 1882 ed. Vol. VIII, p.401, art. "Sabbath")

"You may read the Bible from Genesis to Revelation, and you will not find a single line authorizing the sanctification of Sunday. The Scriptures enforce the religious observance of Saturday, a day which we never sanctify." (Cardinal Gibbons (Catholic) in his book: The faith of our Fathers, page 111)

"Question - "Which day is the Sabbath day?"

Answer - "Saturday is the Sabbath day."

Question - "Why do we observe Sunday instead of Saturday?"

Answer - "We observe Sunday instead of Saturday because the Catholic Church in the Council of Laodicea (AD 336) transferred the solemnity from Saturday to Sunday." (The Convert's Catechism of Catholic Doctrine. Second edition, page 50)

"Is there any command in the New Testament to change the day of weekly rest from Saturday to Sunday? - None." (Manual of Christian Doctrine - (Protestant Episcopal) page 127)

"It is quite clear that however rigidly or devoutly we may spend Sunday, we are not keeping the Sabbath ... The Sabbath was founded on a specific, divine command. We can plead no such command for the obligation to observe Sunday. There is not a single sentence in the New Testament to suggest that we incur any penalty by violating the supposed sanctity of Sunday." (Dr R W Dale (Congregationalist) in his book Ten Commandments, page 127-129)

"The observance of the Lord's Day (Sunday) is founded, not on any command of God, but on the authority of the Church." (Augsburg Confession of Faith (Lutheran))

"Where we are told in Scripture to keep the first day at all? We are commanded to keep the seventh; but we are nowhere commanded to keep the first day ... The reason why we keep the first day of the week holy instead of the seventh is for the same reason that we observe many other things, not because the Bible, but the Church has enjoined it." (Rev. Isaac Williams (Church of England) in his Plain sermons on the Catechism. Volume 1, pp. 334-336)

"There was and is a command to keep holy the Sabbath day: but the Sabbath day was not Sunday. It will be said, however, and with some show of triumph, that the Sabbath was transferred from the seventh to the first day of the week, with all its duties, privileges and sanctions. Earnestly desiring information on this subject, which I have studied for many years, I ask: Where can the record of such a transaction be found? Not in the New Testament, absolutely not. There is no Scriptural evidence of the change of the Sabbath institution from the seventh to the first day of the week." (Dr Edward T Hiscox, author of the Baptist Manual)

In his magnificent book From Sabbath to Sunday Carlyle B Haynes (Adventist) draws this inspired conclusion on page 34: "After a careful examination of the Bible, of history, both civil and ecclesiastical, of theological writings, commentaries, Church manuals, catechisms and the candid admissions of Sunday observers, we are compelled to conclude that there is no authority in the Holy Scriptures for the observance of Sunday, no authority given to man to make such a change from the seventh to the first day, no divine sanction given the change now that man has made it; that this substitution of a false Sabbath for the true Sabbath of the Lord was entirely the work of an antichrist movement which adopted the observance of a purely pagan day and presumptuously established it in the Christian Church; and that this observance has no binding obligation upon Christian believers, but should be instantly discarded as a matter of practice, and the true Sabbath of God restored to its rightful place both in the hearts of His people and in the practice of His Church."

Now that you know the truth about Sunday observance and can see it has no Scriptural authority at all, we will urge you to take stock of your position and consider your future course of action.

What are you going to do about Sunday - which is an ordinary work-day posing as the Sabbath of the Almighty? And, more importantly, what are you now going to do about the seventh day of the week, the Sabbath of the Almighty God? Bear in mind that the seventh day of the week was, is and ever will be the True Sabbath Day. Those who ignore this fact are guilty of breaking one of the Ten Commandments. (Exodus 20:8-11) And that is sin: for sin is the transgression of the Almighty's Law. (1 John 3:4)

In view of that awesome fact, we will advise you to carefully consider the message of this tract and to act upon it; for to continue in sin is a dangerous thing. Very soon this matter about the True Sabbath Day is going to engage the minds of every soul on earth. It is going to be the main issue in the "coming spiritual election" in which all mankind will declare their spiritual preference either for the Traditions of Men, or for the Commandments of God.

To help you further understand the significance of this vitally important message, Stewarton Bible School (a non-denominational Christian group) offers another paper entitled The Mark of the Beast. It explains the Bible prophecy where that "end-time spiritual election" is detailed. Also available is an online booklet entitled Understand the Revelation. If you really want to know about coming world events, then this is a booklet you must read or request by e-mailing sbs777@rmplc.co.uk for a free copy! Please give your full postal address (including country!) when doing so.

Meanwhile we will prayerfully commit you to the Almighty, trusting that He will grant you the wisdom, the courage and the power to recognize and obey His will; for as His Son has so correctly said in Matthew 19:17

"...If you will enter into life, keep the commandments."

**The fourth commandment is as follows: Exodus 20: 8: Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. 9: Six days shalt thou labor, and do all thy work: 10: 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: 11: For in six days the LORD 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.**

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SBS Home Calendar Page

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Now we come back to Acts 20:7, because it gives us additional insights as to the nature of Church leadership.

**Acts 20:7 - 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 Greek doesn't say that Paul spoke to the people at all, and it certainly doesn't say, as some translations would have you believe, that "...he preached to them until midnight." We have already seen that when Churches met their gatherings were interactive and open for all to participate in, and no one person dominated and did all the talking and leading or whatever. So it should come as no surprise that the Greek word here, quite wrongly translated 'spoke' or 'preached' to, is *dialogomai*; and it means to talk with, to discuss, or to dispute with. It is actually where the English word dialogue comes from, and far from indicating a monologue, with just one person talking, it rather means a two way verbal intercourse that is mutual, participatory and interactive. Even Paul the Apostle didn't lead a 'service' (remember, they didn't have them) or preach a sermon when he visited a Church on a Sabbath. What he did do though was to talk with the people who comprised that Church and share interactively with them.

Each Church practiced non-hierarchical plural male leadership that had arisen from within itself. These men were known as elders, pastors (or shepherds) and bishops (or overseers), these being synonymous terms in the New Testament:

We shall be back to this subject (as with others we have touched on so far) in later articles, but for the time being we will see what the New Testament shows us without too much comment.

**Acts 11:30 - This they did, sending their gift to the elders by Barnabas and Saul.**

**Acts 14:23 - Paul and Barnabas appointed elders for them in each Church and, with prayer and fasting, committed them to the Lord in whom they had put their trust.**

**Acts 20:17, 18a, 28 - From Miletus Paul sent to Ephesus for the elders of the Church. When they arrived he said to them, “.....Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers (or bishops). Be shepherds (or pastors) of the Church of God which He bought with His own blood.**

**Acts 21:18 - The next day Paul and the rest of us went to see James and all the elders were present.**

**Philippians 1:1 - Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus, to all the saints in Christ Jesus at Philippi, together with the overseers (or bishops) and deacons.**

**1 Timothy 4:14 - Do not neglect your gift, which was given you through a prophetic message when the body of elders laid their hands on you.**

**1 Timothy 5:17 - The elders who direct the affairs of the Church well are worthy of double honor, especially those whose work is preaching and teaching.**

**Titus 1:5 - The reason I left you in Crete was that you might straighten out what was left unfinished and appoint elders in every town (locally grown in each Church), as I directed you.**

**James 5:14 - Is any one of you sick? He should call the elders of the Church to pray over him and anoint him with oil in the name of the Lord.**

**1 Peter 5:1-4 - To the elders among you, I appeal as a fellow elder, a witness of Christ's suffering and one who also will share in the glory to be revealed. Be shepherds (or pastors) of God's flock that is under your care, serving as overseers (or bishops) - not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not greedy for money, but eager to serve; not lording it over those entrusted to you (see below), but being examples to the flock. And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that will never fade away.**

**Matthew 20:25-28 - Jesus called them together and said, “You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be your slave - just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and give His life as a ransom for many.”**

So there you have it! This isn't just my idea or something, it's what is quite clearly and unmistakably there in the pages of scripture. It's not what I say, it's what the Bible says! Still not sure though? Then let me entice you to the next article so you can see for yourself what the biblical scholars and experts have to say about it.

