

honouring the Lord's Day, and, if they can, resting then as Christians. But if any shall be found to be judaizers, let them be anathema from Christ."

So, keeping the Sabbath on Saturday was considered "judaizing," which was considered a great evil.

Constantine, at the Council of Nicaea in A.D. 325, was reported by the historian Eusebius as saying, "It appeared an unworthy thing that in the celebration of this most holy feast [Passover] we should follow the practice of the Jews. ... Let

Keeping the Sabbath on Saturday was considered "judaizing," which was considered a great evil. ... Since Christians wanted nothing to do with Jews, they wanted to have a different day for rest and worship: Sunday.

us then have nothing in common with the detestable Jewish crowd." Thus, since Christians wanted nothing to do with Jews, they wanted to have a different day for rest and worship: Sunday.

The bottom line

The Sabbath was never changed from Saturday to Sunday by Christ or the apostles. Sunday became the day of rest and worship for mainstream Christianity through the Catholic Church claiming authority to overrule Scripture, through pagan influences and through anti-Semitism.

Those who try to base their Christianity upon the teachings of Christ and the apostles should know the history behind what happened to Saturday and then ask one question based on Mark 7:8: Am I following Christ or the tradition of men?

Life Hope & Truth

When and How Did the Change in Worship From Saturday to Sunday Occur?

The Bible commands observance of the seventh-day Sabbath, not Sunday. And that was the practice of Jesus Christ and the apostles. So what happened?

The vast majority of mainstream Christians rush off to church every Sunday and are shocked to hear about some Christians actually going to church on Saturday. Yet the Bible speaks of observing the seventh-day Sabbath. So, how did this come to be? History provides some shocking details.

The Bible makes it clear that Jesus Christ observed the Saturday Sabbath, and His apostles also observed the Sabbath after His death.

Many defenders of mainstream Christianity try to attribute the origin of keeping Sunday to the apostles. Even so, many Sunday-keeping churches have to admit that there is no scriptural basis for switching to Sunday, nor is there any command by the apostles to not keep the Saturday Sabbath.

So what made the mainstream Christian church change the day of rest and worship from Saturday to Sunday so long ago? The major causes

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seem to be a combination of church authority overriding scriptural principles and the influences of sun worship and anti-Semitism.

Church claiming authority to change scriptural principles

Around A.D. 400, Augustine, a respected Catholic theologian, proclaimed that “the holy doctors of the Church have decreed, that all glory of the Jewish Sabbath is transferred to it [Sunday]. Let us therefore keep the Lord’s Day as the ancients were commanded to do the Sabbath.”

The *Catholic Encyclopedia* section on “Sunday” mentions St. Caesarius of Arles reinforcing this teaching in the sixth century as well. These men put the changing of the Sabbath in the hands of the doctors of the church (post-apostolic church officials).

In its section on the Ten Commandments, the *Catholic Encyclopedia* says: “The Church, on the other hand, after changing the day of rest from the Jewish

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Sabbath, or seventh day of the week, to the first, made the Third Commandment [we count it as the Fourth] refer to Sunday as the day to be kept holy as the Lord’s Day.” Here is another instance in which Sunday worship was put into practice based on the Catholic Church’s claim of authority to change a scriptural principle. Again, mainstream church authorities will assume it is what the apostles wanted.

Other Catholic writers made it clear that Sunday

services and worship are not endorsed by biblical teachings, but only by their church’s authority:

The Catholic Universe Bulletin said in 1942: “The Church changed the observance of the Sabbath to Sunday by right of the divine, infallible authority given to her by her Founder, Jesus Christ. The Protestant, claiming the Bible to be the only guide of faith, has no warrant for observing Sunday. In this matter the Seventh Day Adventist is the only consistent Protestant.”

The Catholic Virginian said in 1947: “All of us believe many things in regard to religion that we do not find in the Bible. For example, nowhere in the Bible do we find that Christ or the Apostles ordered that the Sabbath be changed from Saturday to Sunday. We have the commandment of God given to Moses to keep holy the Sabbath Day, that is the 7th day of the week, Saturday. Today most Christians keep Sunday because it has been revealed to us by the Church outside the Bible.”

Thomas Aquinas, a very influential theologian, wrote: “In the New Law the observance of the Lord’s day took the place of the observance of the Sabbath, not by virtue of the precept but by the institution of the Church and the custom of Christian people.”

These examples make it clear that the Sabbath was not changed to Sunday by Jesus Christ or the apostles, but rather by those who believed they had the authority to change biblical principles. Since Hebrews 13:8 says, “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever,” it is hard to understand why a change Christ never authorized was made.

Mithraism (sun worship)

Constantine was the first so-called “Christian” Roman emperor. Though he did stop much of the persecution of Christians as a whole, it seems he did more to introduce sun worship into Christianity than any before him.

Historian Paul Johnson details some of this influence: “Constantine was almost certainly a Mithraic, and his triumphal arch, built after his ‘conversion’, testifies to the Sun-god, or ‘unconquered sun’. ... Constantine never abandoned sun-worship and kept the sun on his coins. He made Sunday into a day of rest, closing the lawcourts and forbidding all work except agricultural labour” (*A History of Christianity*, 1976, pp. 67-68).

So, a royal decree to rest and worship on Sunday

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instead of Saturday was made by the Roman emperor, a sun worshipper. Now, thanks to Constantine, Christians were celebrating on the same day the Mithraics worshipped the sun. This is a blatant example of pagan influence in Christian practices.

Christians, now holding services on the venerable day of the sun, became so confused in their worship that, during the reign of Emperor Julian, Johnson notes: “The Bishop of Troy told Julian he had always prayed secretly to the sun” (p. 67). Thus Christianity took on a major facet of pagan sun worship that lives on today due to Constantine’s influence: worshipping on Sunday.

Anti-Semitism

Surging anti-Semitism in post-apostolic times also played a major role in the change to Sunday. The Council of Laodicea in A.D. 365 decided: “Christians must not judaize by resting on the Sabbath, but must work on that day, rather