

## WHY WE WORSHIP THE LORD ON SUNDAY

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*Lessons: I Samuel 21:1-6; Matthew 12:1-13; True Christian Religion 301*

Do you know the difference between the Sabbath day, which we read about in the Word, and Sunday? You will not find the word “Sunday” anywhere in the Word. Why not? Because it is the name of the first day of the week, according to our *present* calendar, a calendar adopted long after the Old and New Testaments were written. But on that day Christians worship the Lord and hold it as a day of rest (much like the Sabbath) because the Lord rose from the sepulcher on that day.

The Sabbath was the last day of the week. From the beginning of the human race, from the time of the first people on the earth, it had been the special day of rest from all work and for worshiping the Lord. It was so important that the Lord said in His Ten Commandments, “Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy” and told people that no work should be done on that day. And all the people who believed in the Commandments and lived according to them, especially the Jews, never did any work on the Sabbath, not even cooking. They ate only what had been gathered and prepared the day before the Sabbath.

This is why the Jews objected so strongly when the disciples plucked and ate grain on the Sabbath and when the Lord healed the sick on the Sabbath. It wasn't the disciples *eating* grain on the Sabbath day that they objected to, but their *plucking* it—gathering it while walking through the fields. That was work that the Jews thought should not be done. And that was why the women did not go to anoint the Lord's body after He had been crucified, but waited patiently during the whole of the Sabbath, then went to the sepulcher very early in the morning on the first day of the week.

So, with the Jewish people especially, the seventh day of the week was the Sabbath, and it was a day of rest and a time for everybody to worship the Lord. But the Lord changed all of that when He came on earth. Then He said that He was Lord even of the Sabbath day and also that the Sabbath was made for man and not man for the Sabbath. The Lord did not abolish the Third Commandment, but He did teach that the Sabbath was no longer a day of complete rest, on which no kind of work could be done. He also taught that there *should* be a day of worship, although He did not name that day then. He left people free to set aside such a day for His worship and as a day of rest from ordinary labors. He gave them a sign of which day it should be by rising from the sepulcher on the first day of the week, a day that ever afterwards became a day of worship of Him and that long afterwards was called “Sunday”.

We worship the Lord, whatever the day or hour, because we want to be led and taught by Him, because we want to show our love for Him, and for many other reasons. But we worship the Lord on *Sunday*, because this is the day of the week on which He rose from the sepulcher. And for this reason Sunday has been chosen by Christians as the one day of the week for everyone who believes in the Lord and wants to honor Him to show their love for Him publicly—to worship Him in the eyes of all people. And there is great strength in many people doing a thing like that together, at the same time. Not that worshiping the Lord on Sunday adds to *His* strength, but it adds to the spiritual strength of every one of us.

None of the meanings of the Sabbath day as the seventh day of the week have really been lost or given up. What is spiritual is eternal. And we have continued all the meanings of the Sabbath day as the seventh day of the week and placed them on the first day of the week. Sunday is now our Sabbath. This has been done so that we may always be reminded that the Lord has come, has been born and lived on earth, and has risen from the earth into heaven and above the heavens. By worshiping the Lord on Sundays we remember this and so look backwards to all that has been done—all that the Lord has done for us since creation. But we also look forward to all that He ever will do for us and for all people, and to the time when we also will go to the other world and live in His heavenly kingdom forever. *Amen.*