***Catholicism; The Parable of the Talents; and, Sundays

Colossians 1:25-29

COL-424***

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This morning, we are studying "The Error of legalism," number 36, in Colossians 2:16-17.

The Old Testament way of life for the Jewish people was the observing of the Mosaic Law rituals. These rituals symbolize spiritual realities to be found in the future Messiah Savior Jesus Christ, and symbolize his work of saving grace on the cross as God's Lamb. The people of the Old Testament were saved by trusting in this coming Messiah Savior Who would pay the penalty of death for their sins. In contrast, the New Testament way of life in which we live is based on actually possessing these spiritual realities, given to us by the grace of God. And these are brought to us apart from all human doing. We too are saved by faith in the already-arrived Lord Jesus Christ.

**Fallen from Grace**

The practice of any part of the Mosaic Law rituals, however, as part of the Christian way of life, either to secure salvation or to secure sanctification (godliness) is downright forbidden by God, and we will totally fail if it is attempted. Colossians 2:16, which we have been studying, points that out to us when the apostle Paul says, "Therefore, let no one act as your judge in regard to food or drink; in respect to a festival (of the Mosaic Law festivals); a new moon; or, a Sabbath day." None of these things are to be imposed in the Christian way of life. If it is, the apostle Paul, in Galatians 5:4 observes, "You have been severed from Christ – you are seeking to be justified by the Law; by keeping rules; or, by doing things. You have fallen from grace." You have fallen from the grace of God.

**Legalism**

So, legalism is no small thing. It undermines the Christian's actual church-age, holy-power system of life by which you may produce service pleasing to God, and by which he may live a godly life. And it prevents the Christian from fulfilling his mission, for which God would reward him. Legalism is so easy to say. It is so common, and so widespread. This is where it's at in most churches. It is programs, and doing. And yet, that is exactly the way that Satan wants it, because that defeats everything that God has for us.

**The Rosary**

I was recently given this little booklet. It says, "The Rosary," and it's a coloring book for children. It is used in Roman Catholic schools for the instruction of its students. It's a very attractive book, and it is designed to teach. And the Roman Catholic system is one of the systems that is obviously, at the heart of it, it is earning your way to heaven – meriting (qualifying) yourself to have the merit of Christ applied to you. You are not saved in the Roman Catholic Church by an act of faith in Christ. You are not justified instantaneously. You are gradually, more-and-more justified. And only a few (people they call "saints") manage to complete the course before they die. The rest have to work it out in purgatory.

**Legalism**

However, it is all legalism. Sometimes people misunderstand what we say about legalism. It isn't that we're keeping rules. Of course, we're going to keep the moral code of God. You're going to be in big trouble if you don't. That is our way of life – to obey the church-age doctrines, and to obey the Christian way of life, and to do things God's way. Of course, there are guidelines, and we are to obey them. But legalism is doing something on a human level, by some monotonous rote routine, in order to gain the merit of God, apart from what Christ has done for us). It is our working ourselves into salvation. That's what legalism is all about.

Well, these small children are they're going to be sitting over at a Catholic school, coloring the pages of this book. And it's an excellent demonstration of what it is to be saved by legalism. On this page right here, Jesus asked Mary to be our mother, too. And she said, "Yes." She cares for us, and she listens to our prayers. So, a child will color these pictures, and will be instructed in that particular summary, will learn to pray to Mary. He will learn that Mary can hear him – that Mary, though she died, is now in her body in heaven, and she is next to Jesus Christ. And he will be taught that if you talk to her, she'll turn to her Son, and talk in your behalf.

So, these little children are taught to you pray to Mary. The "Hail Mary" prayer is one that is a primary one that these kids are taught to pray: "Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee. Blessed art thou among women. And blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now, and in the hour of our death. Amen." This is legalism. This is telling these children that if they go to Mary, not the Lord Jesus Christ, because He is a taskmaster, and He is not open to them unless Mary says, "Please, Jesus, be nice to this child."

Here is the rosary. The rosary is a special way that Catholics have of going through legalism – through the rituals of earning merit with God – to divert the wrath of God from them. It is a special way of praying to God, that honors Mary, the mother of Jesus. Everything goes through Mary. While reciting prayers, you think about certain stories in the eyes of Jesus. These are called "mysteries," and so on.

**The Rosary Beads**

Now the rosary beads are used to keep count of the prayers and the mysteries. To say the rosary begins by making the sign of the cross, and to recite the Apostle's Creed, while you hold the crucifix. You have the rosary in one hand, and the crucifix in the other. You recite the apostles Creed: "I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Creator of Heaven and earth. I believe in Jesus Christ, His Only Son, our Lord. He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit, and born of the Virgin Mary. He suffered under Pontius Pilate. He was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended to the dead. On the third day, He rose again. He ascended into heaven. He is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit; the Holy Catholic Church; the communion of the Saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body; and, the life everlasting. Amen."

**Recitation**

So, to say the rosary – the legalism of getting merit with Go, you begin by making the sign of the cross. You recite the Apostle's Creed while you hold the crucifix in your hand. Then you say one "Our father." Here it is commonly called the Lord's Prayer. You say: "Our Father, Who are in heaven, hallowed be Your Name. Your kingdom come. Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. Amen." The reason I'm reading these is because I want you to know what they're going to be saying and saying and saying, repeatedly. That's legalism to gain access, blessing, and merit to God. You recite the Apostle's Creed while you hold the crucifixion. Then one "Our Father," three "Hail Marys," and a "Glory Be." After the three Hail Marys, "Hail Mary, full of grace," then you have the "Glory Be" at the end: "Glory be to the Father, to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, as it was the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end." In the Catholic school, these children are learning about the rosary. They're learning to recite.

We're studying Scripture verses that we explain to kids in Berean Academy. The Catholic kids are they're learning all of these particular prayers, in order to handle the rosary, because these children are told that: "Through the Rosary, you may come to Mother Mary, and you may, someday, hopefully, end up in heaven." And you think about each mystery, and recite "Our Father" on the large beads, and "Hail Mary" on each of the ten smaller beads. On those ten smaller beads, you say, "Hail Mary, Mother of God," and so on, again and again. And you finish with a "Glory Be," That makes one decade. The complete rosary consists of five decades. There are three sets of mystery, and five stories on each one. Each of these beads represents a particular story. And that's what they're referring to. As you recite these prayers, you think about a particular story out of the life of Christ. Well, there is Mary, and they're going through the routines, in order to gain access to her.

The rosary is what this child learns in school. And they learn the words to say: the creed; the "Glory Be;" and the "Our Father." It is all laid out for them in a monotonous, routine way. It is man's doing, in order to gain access to God.

**St. Dominic**

This picture that they color tells the children that, about the beginning of the 13th century, St. Dominic was given a rosary by Mary, our mother. He taught the people how to say the rosary, and to obtain great blessing from God.

**The Crusades**

Well, the truth of the matter is that, during the Crusades, when they rushed in order to conquer Jerusalem and the land of Israel once more from the Muslims, on the dead bodies of the Muslim soldiers on the battlefield, they would find these beads that the Muslims carried. And what they were, were prayer beads. And the Catholic crusaders picked these up. And the pope said, "This is a good idea." That's where it actually came. It wasn't Mary coming down from heaven, and handing it to St. Dominic. It came as a result of those crusader battles. But now it is a great, critical part of the Catholic system, of meriting favor with God. And at the heart of this is always Mary.

**The Immaculate Conception of Mary**

Here's another picture that the children color. This one tells about the blessed virgin Mary appearing at Luchadores France to St. Bernadette. There were 18 appearances between February and July, 1858. The lady told her, "I am the Immaculate Conception." To this child, known as Saint Bernadette, Mary said, "I was born sinless. The only person you and I know who was born without a sin nature is the Lord Jesus Christ, because He did not have a human father through whom the sin nature is transmitted. But, she saw Mary in a vision. And I do not deny that this child actually saw her – a figure appeared before her, and she actually heard this figure speaking to her. Satan is fully capable of doing that. The Bible tells us that, in the tribulation, he will be the greatest miracle worker of all-time. And even people who are believers, are going to look and wonder whether the antichrist, perhaps, is the real thing.

So, here, whatever the circumstance, Mary is claiming Immaculate Conception. This is not an ancient doctrine. I think it was in the early 1950s that the pope finally declared the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception of Mary (or maybe it was earlier, in the 1800s). But what it means is that Jesus was sinless, because His mother was sinless. Now, how she became sinless is not explained. So this is the Immaculate Conception. And Catholics say, "OK, we believe that she appeared to this Bernadette, and told her that.

In these apparitions, Mary called for penance. Many miracles will take place at Luchadores, where people pray the rosary and ask for help. Well, there are some sick people who go to Lourdes, France, and they are healed. They have an experience of that kind. Again, don't dismiss the full capabilities of Satan to do this. He does it all the time. In fact, if he makes the person sick, who is under his power, he can also make that person well, and he does it all the time in charismatic circles.

Here's another one. People go into Catholic churches. You see them sitting there by themselves in the pew. What are they doing? They're doing legalism. This is what the word means. They're doing things to merit the favor of God. Many people pray the rosary every day to ask Mary's protection. Some people say it as a special favor of God. And you notice how access to the Lord Jesus Christ is always through Mary.

I told you once before, and I think it was about 1990, and Mrs. Danish and I were taking a tour, right after communism had fallen in Europe, of the major nation's capital cities of Eastern Europe, with their great cathedrals, and the great Roman Catholic Churches. Every one we would walk into always had a magnificent altar, and always the great picture in the center, above the altar. And there was always a picture of what? Mary. There was always the picture of Mary. When you sat in those churches, the heart of the Hapsburg Empire, the Catholic religion, was everywhere. And the direction was always to Mary. It was legalism in its grossest form.

**John Huss' Church**

Only one great cathedral (and that was Bethlehem Chapel) that we went into, in the city of Prague, John Huss' church, just the way it was, when 100 years before Luther, he preached the doctrines of justification by faith, apart from work, and the Catholics murdered him by burning him at the stake. This was only when you walked into John Huss' church. He didn't go far enough, in his studies and his escape from Catholicism, to realize that even the altar is an insult to what Christ has already accomplished, because there is no more sacrifice to be made. The altar is still there. And there is a big picture – a mosaic, right over the altar. But this time, it was a picture of Christ – not of Mary. I told Mr. Danish, "Isn't that interesting? Here's the one cathedral where the truth began to permeate of salvation by faith in Christ, apart from works, and apart from legalistic qualifications. And Who is the access to God? It was the way that the Bible puts it – through Christ. He's the only mediator between God and man. But these poor Catholics are told: "No, the mediator between God and man is Mary."

**The Appearance of Mary at Fatima**

A very big, major program was on TV this past week. It was about the appearance to three children of Mary at Fatima in Portugal. The blessed mother appeared, at Fatima in Portugal, to three shepherd children: Lucia dos Santos; Francisco Marto; and, Jacinta Marto, on six occasions between May 13th and October 13th, 1917. Mary revealed herself as "Our Lady of the Rosary," and called for conversion of the lies of all God's people. May is the month of the Blessed Mother, and October is the month of the Rosary. The program listed in detail how this came about.

Again, we cannot discount that these children actually saw an apparition, and saw a figure of a woman, and heard her speak, and she told them to turn to the rosary legalism in order to perform the rituals for their salvation. And people have come to Fatima, and they have been healed of their diseases. Satan was actively operating, as always.

The final revelation was never revealed until recently of three major events which would take place. And those had to do with an attack upon the person of the Roman Catholic pope himself. And when one of the recent popes read it, he fainted. They never revealed this until they come to the papacy. And, of course, we know that this present pope was indeed attacked in an attempted assassination upon him. But here again, the focus of these children is where? It is on Mary.

Then, one of the mysteries that is involved (in what you think of), when you go through the Rosary, is called the fourth gloriousness mystery. Mary is assumed into heaven. Because Jesus loved His mother so much, that she was taken to heaven (body and spirit) when she died. From heaven, she cares for us. And these children are taught that Mary, physically, was taken directly to heaven. Sometimes this is worded a little differently – that she simply was taken to heaven without ever dying. She is very close, and the Pope has declared her to be the co-mediatrix with Christ. He is the mediator. She is the co-mediator with Him.

So, here it is. Mary was taken to heaven, so that she can be there, next to her Son, interceding for the Catholic faithful. The Catholic faithful – who do what? Who legalistically go through the beams of the Rosary; who legalistically do the sign of the cross; who legalistically light candles to be burned; who legalistically go through the ritual of the Mass; who give their money; and, who do all these things: doing, doing, doing, so that, hopefully, they might have some chance of getting into heaven.

**Mary is Portrayed as our Queen**

Then, near the end of the little color booklet, is the final declaration. The child is taught that Mary is crowned as our Queen. Jesus crowned Mary as queen of heaven. She is our queen. She's the queen of the universe. And because she is the queen, then Christ, the King, will listen to her. She has access to Him. This is interesting because, in the Old Testament, indeed, Israel was condemned by God, and disciplined for worshiping the queen of heaven, Semiramis, the mother goddess of the Babylonian mystery religion. This is the religion which Roman Catholicism, under Constantine, eventually absorbed into Christianity. So, the things in Roman Catholicism, that nobody finds in the Bible, are directly out of Babylonian doctrine, that were in that religious system, which was absorbed into Christianity, to make it easier for the pagans to accept Christianity, and to abandon the emperor worship, and the whole bit.

So, there it is. Not far from where we sit at this moment, a child sits in a Catholic school, with this little, attractive booklet is put before him. And he is given an opportunity to learn the legalism of the rosary, and everything else that's involved in the Catholic Church, to take him into heaven. Legalism will undermine the Christian's church-age, spiritual power system of the Holy Spirit. It will undermine your capacity to do divine good service. It will undermine your ability to live a godly life. We have seen, often enough (and we have experienced ourselves), how easy it is to step out of line of the godly life, and how easy it is to step out of godliness – even a Christian, who may be well-taught, and who has, in past, been a staunch supporter of the things of God, and of an exemplary person within the body of Christ. Once you start depending on yourself, you will never finish your mission. And once you start letting the sin nature, and its religious ways, dominate you, you will go down now.

The Christians calling is his mission, and his purpose in life (Ephesians 2:10). It begins with that Great Commission of Matthew 28:19-20 – the mission for every church-age believer, as he goes through his life, seeking to produce converts. How did you do this week? As you went through your life this week, and you went to the stores, and you went to your employment, and you went to the gas station, and you went to the mall? How did you do this week in thinking, and looking these people over, and saying, "Father, who's a convert potential? To whom should I give in evangelism brochure?" As you go through your life, that focus, and then baptizing in water those who believe the gospel, and teaching them church-age grace doctrines, and the power system of the Holy Spirit, and making them disciples of Jesus Christ, so that as for 2 Timothy 2:2, they will reproduce themselves in another Christian who will become an agent of converting people.

The Christian Service will have two consequences, we are told, as shown in 1 Corinthians 3:12-17: For divine good produced by the Holy Spirit, there'll be rewards eternally in heaven. For human good produced by the old sin nature, there will be loss of potential rewards. That is the bottom line of the Christian life. If you are doing God's work, you will be rewarded. If you're not doing God's work, you have wasted your life.

So, Christians are to live, and to build up, the body of Christ, the church, by teaching the gospel of the grace of God, and then the full council of church-age doctrine. That's why a church service, if it is not a teaching service, is not a church service. People come to a church service to hear the Word of God. Mostly, they hear the word of man – if it is not the word of the preacher, then it is the word of some other person that he's quoting. Christians, however, who mislead members of the church body with legalism; with emotional orientation; with carnal entertaining; and, with religious programs of one kind or another, are all going to be held accountable by God the Father, and they will be disciplined. The people who are under your influence are your responsibility. And if you do not point them to the Word of God, and to the realities of the grace way of life, you will answer for misleading them.

Carnal Christians will be pursuing their own will, with their eyes on the materialism of the world system of Satan. They will not enjoy any peace with the Father. They will live a frenzied, unfulfilled life, trying to find where it's at. They will live a carnal lifestyle from the old sin nature. And you must remember, and never discount, what Scripture says. The apostle says, "Let him that thinks that he stands, take heed, lest he fall." People are always being shocked by some trustworthy person, having fallen into the lust patterns of the sin nature. But if you get into legalism, instead of into the walk by the Word of God, and feeding upon the Word of God, you will regret it. And that's why it's a tragedy, if you come to church, you've done your faithfulness by showing up morning and evening, within the circumstances, and availability, and possibility of your being able to do that in your life. And then you get nothing in the service, but emotional games, entertainment, and challenges. And you do not have the explanation, verse-by-verse, of what God has said, then that's a tragedy.

Well, what happens? You will you will go down spiritually. There is no question about it. Romans 14:10: "But you: why do you judge your brother? Or you again – why do you regard your brother with contempt? For we shall all stand before the Judgment Seat of Christ." So, mind your own business, and worry about your own report card that you're going to get first.

Verse 12: "So, then, each one of us shall give account of himself to God." Yep, you can go riding, high and mighty, in your estimation of yourself, but you better be sure that your estimate is what God thinks.

**The Parable of the Talents**

Then, there is the admission of Matthew 25:14-30, in the parable of the talents: this giving of value. The talents are a financial quality. And Jesus points out in this parable that there is an accountability for what you have. So, what are you good at? What is your spiritual gift? What is the capacity that God has given you, that you can do in such an excellent way, that the person next to you can't do? And what are you doing with it?

Matthew 25:14: "For it is just like a man about to go on a journey, who called his own slaves, and entrusted his possessions to them." There you go. The Lord has gone to heaven. He has entrusted to you (you are His steward) His material and spiritual possessions: "And to one, he gave five talents; to another, two; and, to another one – each according to his own ability. And he went on his journey." One of these men was very talented, gifted, and capable: "So, he got five talents – quite a large sum. He said to him: "You handle it for me. You're my steward. What are you going to do with it? Another one (not as gifted) was entrusted with two talents of God's resources. And the third one did not get much. He got one talent." But everybody got something.

So, everybody is now on the line, and the lord says, "Adios, I'll see you mañana," and he leaves: Immediately, the one who had received the five talents went and traded with him, and he gained five talents more (he doubled it). In the same manner, the one who had received the two talents, gained two more. But he you received the one talent, went away, and dug in the ground, and hid the master's money." This man wasn't sure, I suspect, whether the master was ever going to return. If he did return, then he's not going to be there to ask for his money. And this man thought, "I could chance investing it." But, you know, how, in his mind, he talked about how things were with Enron, and these other guys: "You never know. I think I'll just hide this money. He's probably not going to come back, and I won't take a chance on losing. I can't spend it – yet."

"Now, after a long time, the master of those slaves came to settle accounts with him. And the one who had received the five talents came up, and brought five talents more, saying, 'Master, you entrusted five talents to me, and I've gained five more.' His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful slave. You were faithful with a few things. I'll put you in charge of many things. Enter into the joy of your master.'" And into the millennium he goes, with multiple responsibilities. That's where the application comes to you and me. This man double the money. He was faithful in carrying for his master's possessions. He was a steward. He did not squander that, and he did not leave them idle. He put his money where his mouth (of profession) was.

Verse 22: "The one also who received the two talents, came up and said, 'Master, you entrusted to me two talents. See that I have gained two more talents.' His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful slave. You were faithful with a few things. I'll put you in charge of many things. Enter into the joy of your master." Now, basically, they both got the same reward. Why? Because we don't expect, if you're not really multiple-talented spiritually, and in other human realms (areas), that you are able to carry responsibilities, and you're able to perform at a level above average, we're not going to expect you to be able to perform at that level – just where you are. To the extent that God has gifted you, and to the extent that you have at your stage of life, the capacity to perform, it is matched up against your potential.

Now we come to verse 24: "And the one who had received the one talent, who also had potential, came up and said, "Master, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you did not sow, and gathering where you scattered no seed." Now he wants to make this look nice. He said, "Lord, I didn't do anything with your money, but I still have it. I kept it very carefully. I didn't spend it. It is still here." And he thinks that now he's OK. What did he do? He says, "Lord, I never gave. I never gave money to the church. I never came by to meet when I could – the great needs of the opportunity of the Lord's work. I just hung on. Yeah, it was your money, but I hung onto it – tooth and nail. You didn't get a lick of it." Does that sound familiar?

In verse 25, now he tries a sympathy routine: "'I was afraid, and went away, and hid your talent in the ground. See. You have what's yours. Here it is. You gave me one. And you got one.' But the master answered, and said to him, 'You wicked, lazy slave. You knew that I reaped where I did not so, and gathered where I scattered no seed. Then you ought to have put my money in the bank, and on my arrival, I would have received my money back with interest. You should have used my resources in my service. When you use your resources financially, and your talents, and the resources that you have in God's service, you'll be blessed now, and you will be rewarded in eternity. It's a win-win situation.'"

Verse 28: "Therefore, take away the talent from him, and give it to the one who has ten talents." That seems odd: "OK, take this one talent away from this bummer, here. Give it to the one who has ten." You might say, "Well, why not give it to the guy with five. The guy with the ten talents – this guy is already loaded." Yeah, but he's loaded because he's trustworthy.

The master says, "The man (or the woman) that I see is trustworthy, that I can count on, who will not be swayed by all the screaming voices of the world, or by all the advice given to him, and who can walk the straight road with the voice of God in his ear, and fulfill his mission? I can trust him more than I can anybody else. Give him the extra blessing. For to everyone who has, shall more be given, and he shall have an abundance. But from the one who does not have, even what he does have shall be taken away." What does this one have? He has the trustworthiness. He has his eye on the Lord. The other one has his eyes on himself. He's burdened with all the things of life. He's always crying, and weeping, and grousing, and discontented with his situation in life. Well, some of those we bring on ourselves by what wrong moves we made. But grace always carries us through to the next stage.

The one-talent man had no excuse: "And then he said, 'Cast out the worthless slave into outer darkness, in that place where there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." And don't think that that's talking about salvation. That's got nothing to do with salvation. The place of outer darkness is out of the favor of blessing of the Millennial Kingdom. It's like being in a great, lighted, banquet hall with sumptuous food on the table. And the one-talent guy is thrown out. And he climbs up, and he looks in the window. And there is the ten-talented guy, and the five-talented people having a wonderful time at the Lord’s Table, as the lord serves them. And this guy is on the outside, grinding his teeth, and weeping because he played the fool.

That's legalism. Legalism was the one-talent man's forte. That's what he thought was his strong suit. And legalism always brings you down to destruction. So, whether it's Roman Catholicism, and its religious legalism, you'll lose. Or whether it is you as a Christian, who know the Word of God, but who get tangled up, and forget who you are as a member of the royal family of God, and forget where your best interests lie. If you do that, then you won't know what to do with your week. You won't even know what to do with Sunday. You'll have a hard time knowing what you should do Sunday morning. You'll have a hard time knowing what you should do Sunday night. And Sunday morning and Sunday night – that's your lifeline. If you don't have that, you’re on very thin ice. That is where the strength comes.

So, the Christian service will have two results: great reward; or, great loss of reward. And those who mislead the people of God are going to pay a very great penalty for doing that.

Now God identifies Himself to Israel, as a separate group of saints, and He identifies Himself with the church as a totally different body of believers. One way that He does this is by giving each of them their special day. For the Jew under the Mosaic Law, the Saturday Sabbath day was their special day. The Old Testament Mosaic Law Sabbath day was a day of rest from work. It was Israel's special day with God. It identified the Jews as its people. And when six o'clock Friday hit, everything stopped, even as they try to do in Israel to this day. And everybody turns to think about God, and everybody leans back and breathes. The one thing they don't do is work. It is basically an inactivity time. This law was part of the moral code of Israel – part of the ten principles of freedom called the Ten Commandments. It was a divine requirement. When Saturday came, you rested. The seventh day is not to be observed by the church body of believers. The Saturday, Sabbath, no-activity, rest day does not apply to gentiles or to Christians. It's not in force.

All of the commandments of the Mosaic Law for righteous living are reiterated to church-age believers in the New Testament. And they are given the Holy Spirit that enables them to enforce those rules. There's only one that is not, and that is the one on the Sabbath. That's the one rule from the Old Testament which is never repeated for Christians in the New Testament. Why do Christians do that? Why do Christians call Sunday "the Sabbath day?" Why do some of them even try to be so consistent, that they go to church on Saturday? It is because they do not do what 2 Timothy 2:15 tells us to do.

Paul says, "Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman, who does not need to be ashamed – handling accurately the Word of truth." They do not provide the Word of Truth between what applies to the Jewish way of the life of the Old Testament, under the Mosaic Code, and what applies to Christians under the grace way of life of the church.

On the other hand, the church age has its: Sunday. It is the Lord's Day. The church is the body of Christ, and, in the future, we will be His bride. It has a different special day with God the Father: Sunday. That is because that's a day on which Christ was resurrected. It's the day when, after 72 hours in the grave, He was raised to life. And Sunday is to be a change-of-pace rest from your normal activities. Sunday is not a day of absolute inactivity. So, don't press it into being a Sabbath day, because it's not. Sunday is actually a day of spiritual activity. It's a day where you change your pace from work, but it's a day where you engage in all kinds of personal, family, and spiritual enjoyment, not the least of which is that the family of God in the local church services.

**Christ's Resurrection**

There are various events which took place in the New Testament which stressed (emphasized and revealed) that Sunday became the special day of Christianity. For example, it is the day on which Jesus Christ arose from the dead. He was crucified by six o'clock Wednesday. On Good Wednesday, He was put into the tomb, and 72 hours clicked by. And when, after 72 hours, Sunday had come into being, and Christ was raised by the Father, because He had accomplished satisfying the justice of God for 72 hours for sin, Jesus Christ stood up in that tomb, and He walked right through the great rock rolled against the entrance. After He left, an angel came by, and nudged the rock over. So, the tube was wide open for the soldiers to look in, and realize that the Lord that they had been guarding was gone. All of this was early Sunday morning. That made it a special day.

**The Disciples**

Secondly, Sunday is the day when Christ first met with the disciples after the crucifixion. It was early on Sunday morning, after daylight now, that the women found that He was gone. Mary Magdalene was the first one to see Him alive. Others then are gathered, and the Lord appears to them. Sunday was a special day, when he revealed that what He had said, He had done. He was alive.

**The Road to Emmaus**

Third, Sunday was the day upon which He instructed the two men on the road to Emmaus, who were so disappointed over what had happened in Jerusalem. And Jesus fell in with them, explaining from Scripture why they did not understand that everything that had happened had been predicted in the Old Testament – that the Messiah would go through. And suddenly, their eyes were opened, and they saw it was Jesus. They rushed back to Jerusalem, and said, "He is alive."

**Christ's Ascension**

Sunday was the day in which Jesus ascended into heaven. He is called the Firstfruits of the human resurrection. 1 Corinthians 15:20: "He is the Firstfruits." He is the first human being raised from the dead, forever. And a large number (all of us) will follow after Him. So, we will have glorified bodies which can never die again.

**Jesus Breathed the Holy Spirit upon His Disciples**

Sunday was the day that Jesus breathed the Holy Spirit on His disciples, for the new Holy Spirit, spiritual power-system way of Life.

**The Holy Spirit Descended on Pentecost**

Sunday was the day that the Holy Spirit descended on Pentecost to begin the church body as the body of Christ. A new group of saints from Israel (Acts 2:1-4) gathered in that upper room. Suddenly, the Holy Spirit congeals them into one unified body – the church. And they are all baptized into Christ, and they're all filled with the Holy Spirit. And there was the external evidence of the flames above them, on their heads, that this had happened – to show that something new had taken place, different from Israel.

**Paul Met with the Believers at Troas**

Sunday was the day that Paul met with the believers that tries to teach church-age doctrine. Christians gathered to worship on Sunday. In Acts 20:6-7, Paul says, "And we sailed from Philippi, after the days of unleavened bread (following the day of the celebration of the Passover meal, and then the days of unleavened bread followed). We sailed, and we came to Troas within five days. And there we stayed seven days. And on the first day of the week (Sunday), when we were gathered together to break bread (the Lord's Supper), Paul began talking to them, intending to depart the next day. And he prolonged his message until midnight."

A church service that begun in the morning. They held the Lord's Supper. And then they went all the way to midnight. How long would you like to stay this morning? Is McDonald's still open at midnight?

**The Lord's Supper**

It was on Sunday that Christians gathered for the Lord's Supper. Acts 20:6-7 tells us that. That's when they did it. They didn't do it on Saturday.

**Lay Aside our Money**

It was on Sunday that we were told to take our money, and lay it aside. I hate to read this passage. But you know me. I don't like to make people feel uncomfortable. I do everything possible to make people like me, without much success. 1 Corinthians 16:2: "On the first day of every week." is there anybody who does not know what the first day of the week is? What? Thursday? No, you're wrong. It's Sunday. The first day of the week is Sunday: "Let each of you (each one of you Christians) put aside, and save, as he may prosper, that no collection to be made when I come." This was collecting for the poor saints in Jerusalem, Paul says, "This collection is being made. The pastor-teacher has announced the fund. And every Sunday you come, and you designate your money, and you put it in that fund, along with the money you give for conducting this local ministry. And you do it – wait a minute: "On the first day of every week." You might say, "No, he surely doesn't mean every week. Every three months is good enough." No, you see the regularity – every week. This is a routine thing. You don't go months and months, and say, "Hey, I haven't given anything for I don't know how long. What has happened?" Well, the preacher starved. They couldn't pay his salary. He's gone now. Doggone it (or: "Hooray") – one or the other. Well, Sunday is the Day. That's the Lord's Day.

**John on Patmos – The Revelation**

Finally, Sunday is probably the day when the Lord appeared to John on the island of Patmos, and gave him the revelation. I won't say that that's exactly the case, but in Revelation 1:10, it says, "And I was in the Spirit on the Lord's Day." But in the Greek, it's "the Lordly Day." It's an adjective: "a lordly day. It may refer to the Day of the Lord, which is what the Revelation was all about. But it wouldn't surprise me if it was on Sunday.

So, there it is – a great difference between what identifies Israel, and what I identifies the church, and their special relationship to God. And you're part of the better side of that relationship.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1995

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