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CONTENTS

SECTION ONE: THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS CHRIST

CHAPTER ONE: IMPORTANCE

-The Importance of the Resurrection.....	5
-An Explanation.....	7
-Conclusion.....	8

CHAPTER TWO: THE EVENT

-Known Biblical Facts.....	10
-Inevitable Deductions.....	11
-Good Friday and Easter Sunday.....	12
-One Difficult Scripture.....	17
CHAPTER THREE: A FEW COMMENTS.....	19

SECTION TWO: THE SABBATH

Preamble: A MYTH?	21
CHAPTER ONE: ITS MEANING	23
CHAPTER TWO: GOD ESTABLISHED IT	26
CHAPTER THREE: JESUS DID NOT CHANGE IT	28
CHAPTER FOUR: HOW THEN DID SUNDAY WORSHIP COME TO BE?	37
CHAPTER FIVE: SOME IMPORTANT COMMENTS.....	41

FOREWORD

Please have a bible beside you as you read this book. Many bible references are given – don't just skim over them but take pains to look them up as they occur. You will then have a better and deeper understanding of what is being discussed.

Happy reading and God bless you!

The following **abbreviations** are used herein for various Bible versions:

RSV	-	Revised Standard Version
KJV	-	King James Version
NIV	-	New International Version
NEB	-	New English Bible
DARBY	-	Holy Scriptures & New Testament Bible by J. N. Darby
KIT	-	Kingdom Interlinear Translation of the Greek Scriptures
GNB	-	Good News Bible

SECTION ONE

THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS CHRIST

CHAPTER ONE: IMPORTANCE

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE RESURRECTION

The Resurrection of Jesus Christ is well known (or, at least, heard about) the world over since, every year, Christendom celebrates and publicizes it during Easter. But why is Christ's resurrection so important?

When Jesus was asked for a proof of His messiahship, he said the ONLY proof of that would be the Resurrection (Matthew 12: 39 – 40, John 2:18- 22). Also, in Acts 17:30- 31 we read that God the Father Himself used the Resurrection to tell the world the One whom he has recognized concerning "Judgment" (verses 31) and concerning "Repentance", i.e. Salvation (verse 30).

But why is resurrection the one thing which both God the Father and Jesus himself saw as the only sign that must be used to show all mankind who their Saviour is? What is there about resurrection?

To answer this question, we have to go back to the beginning. Why does man need a saviour, in the first place? What is he to be saved from? Why does he now need to be shown or taught the "way back to God"? What separated or alienated him from God at first? Why does he need to be taught how to be 'in tune with the Infinite'? What, in the beginning, put him out of 'harmony with nature' and still keeps him out of harmony?

The Bible answers that the root cause of mankind's problems is **sin**. (Albeit some people don't like the word "sin", but fancy other terms like 'disharmony', 'alienation', 'mundane living', etc.). We can read about the Fall of Man in Genesis chapter 3.

Therefore, if anyone claims to be Saviour of mankind he must first solve and overcome the root problem of sin. It is easy to claim to be saviour of mankind. I can claim it, you also can claim; but have we overcome sin? A saviour must first overcome sin by himself and then be able to solve the sin problem for all his followers.

Surprisingly, many men and women, dead or alive, have been claiming to have done just that! Many have claimed that after certain spiritual or mystical journeys, experiences or initiations in astral worlds, deserts, mountains, caves, forests, temples, etc, they finally attained 'perfection' and became the 'living perfect master', and have been teaching men various 'ways back to God' and various 'paths to perfection'. Some even claim to be 'the God of our time'.

But how can all these claims be tested and proved?

The ultimate physical consequence of sin is **death**. Yes, sin brought death. (Romans 5:12, Romans 6:23, Genesis 3:17-19, 22-24; Ezekiel 18:4). The "sting" of death is sin (1 Corinthians 15:55-56). That is, it is sin that gives death its awesome power and universal sway over mankind. Without sin, death loses its authority over somebody and cannot overpower that person nor hold him captive.

Thus, to demonstrate that you had overcome sin you have to truly and actually die and then rise again to die no more! If you don't rise, it means death still

found something in you which enabled him to hold you down. It means you had not overcome sin!

If you could not save yourself from the clutches of death, you had not overcome sin in yourself. Then, how can you save others? How can you be the Saviour of mankind?

Dear reader, do you clearly see why the all-wise God the Father and the Son Jesus Christ knew that resurrection from death to die no more is the one and only bona fide way of proving that one is the Messiah of mankind?

Christ's sacrifice and death on Calvary does not prove he is the saviour of mankind. His sacrifice was the actual work of saving man. But what is the proof that the work had effectively achieved what it was carried out to achieve? It is his Resurrection. Without resurrection, it would mean that Christ's work and death hadn't achieved salvation for men.

After all, various people have been dying for various causes they believed in; either as martyrs, suicide bombers or through hunger strikes. Does that make any of them the Saviour of mankind? No!

Only Christ was found worthy and acceptable and could not be withheld by death. (Acts 2:22-24). Hallelujah! Worthy is the Lamb!

Can you also see why, in Acts 17:29-31, God says he'll not accept ignorance as an excuse for holding other faiths (idolatry) after He has used the super sign of the Resurrection to tell the whole world who is their only recognized Saviour and way back to Him?

God expects that any true seeker of salvation and solution to mankind's problems should be excited on mere learning that there's one who has overcome that great and terrible leveler of all men called "Death". Anywhere in the world, a true seeker, on hearing what Easter celebrations are about, should wonder why the Resurrection deserves such grand celebration. He should then ask himself why the 'Saviour' or 'Master' he is following could not also rise from the dead. And, if he is really sincere and unbiased, should see why he should decide and repent from his vain 'faith' and turn to Christ. God sees that the Resurrection should lead all true seekers everywhere to repent and trust in Christ.

God says all men everywhere are now inexcusable, no matter their millions. Don't forget He's still the same God who was satisfied with only eight souls while the unbelieving millions perished in the world of Noah.

Romans 10:9 says that if you believe in your heart that God raised Jesus from the dead, and thus acknowledge him as **the** Lord, you will be saved.

The Bible is very bold in its statement in 1Corinthians 15:17-18. I urge you to read that whole Chapter 15, which is about resurrection, but let me here quote verses 17 and 18:

"If Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins. Then, also, those who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished". – RSV.

Why? Because non-resurrection would prove that the Saviour whom Christians believe and follow could not solve the sin problem and Christians who hold unto Him and His way until death, would die in their sins; and they have no future beyond death, being that their Master himself did not get beyond there.

Quite a bold statement -- and with very strong implications, too!

It implies that since Muhammad did not rise again, then the Mohammedan faith is futile, Mohammedans are yet in their sins and when they die their souls are lost. Likewise for believers in Buddha, Gopal Das, Confucius, Abd-ru-shin, L.W. de Laurence, Mary Baker Eddy, Saint Germain, Sri Krishna, Paul Twitchell, Baha'Ullah, Olumba Obu, Blavatsky, Guru Maharajji, Rabaza Tarzs, McGregor Mathers, Zoroaster, Uku Steward and many other Lords, Perfect Masters, Avatars and gods.

This is the unique and uncompromising message of Christianity – one that always provokes persecution when boldly declared. The resurrection of Christ sets Christianity apart from and higher than all other religions and brands of ‘consciousness’.

While all the other religions bundle themselves together and agree that they are alternative ways to God and their founders agree that they are co-revealers of saving truth to mankind, Jesus Christ stands apart and declares: “I am peerless, I am the only way to God, I am the only truth and life, nobody can get to God except through me. Except you believe in me, you have no life in yourself and you shall die in your sins. All other Masters and Saviours who come are thieves and robbers.” (John 14:6, John 8:24, John 6:53, John 10:8).

When asked: “How do you prove all these claims of uniqueness?”, he answers: “By rising from death (to die no more)” – John 2:18 -22. Again, he says: “I am the living one; I was dead, and behold I am alive for ever and ever! And I hold the keys of death and Hades”. (Revelation 1:18, NIV).

The bible even goes as far saying that without hope of resurrection men should eat and drink, indulge themselves and enjoy pleasures as much as they can in their short earthly lives, for, after all, tomorrow they would die. Without resurrection, every deprivation or denial of self for spiritual reasons would be meaningless.

If the founder of your ‘faith’ or ‘consciousness’ did not rise from the dead, then all your discipline and self-denial in that ‘faith’ make you the most pitiable fellow, because while others are enjoying themselves you are suffering for nothing. Your master could not solve the sin problem – you are still in your sins! He could not overcome death – when you die, everything ends there for you! (1 Corinthians 15:19, 30, 32).

However, the Christian can gladly say, “Glory be to God who has given us the victory though Jesus Christ our Lord”, and he can be sure that all his labour in Christ is not in vain (1 Corinthians 15:57 – 58). Hallelujah!

AN EXPLANATION

When we say: “truly and actually dying and then rising to die no more”, what do we mean?

We mean being born a true human being, living and dying a confirmed actual bodily death, rising again bodily and being seen and felt (not just an apparition) and interacting normally with humans, and never dying again later.

This is different from materializing into the world and, after some years,

mysteriously disappearing into the spirit realm after completion of a mission on earth. It is also different from performing a well-controlled mystical experiment of suspended animation or soul travel inside a sanctum surrounded by your disciples and high initiates and then reviving sometime later.

Jesus Christ died a brutal and bloody death at the hands of his enemies, his disciples had fled. He was publicly executed, confirmed dead, and speared in the side to make assurance doubly sure. He was embalmed and entombed and His tomb was securely sealed and guarded by soldiers.

In spite of all that, he rose again BODILY, fully, powerfully and not as a frail man faintly trying to come round and in need of intensive medical care. People touched him; he ate physical food, lived with men and conversed freely with them for 40 days. He didn't die again later on. He ascended to heaven visibly and did not just disappear mysteriously from earth. (Matthew 28:9-10, Luke 24:36-51, from John 20:24 to Acts 1:11).

There are several people who were raised from death and one of them (Lazarus) had even been entombed for four days! (See 1 Kings 17:17-24; 2 Kings 4:18-36; 2Kings 13:20-21, Mark 5:35-43, Luke 7:11-15, John 11:38-45, Acts 20:7-12). However, all those people were raised from death by other people (men of God) while Jesus rose by himself through God's power (John 10:17 -18, John 5:26). Moreover, all those other people later on died when it was God's time for them to depart this life. They were not yet raised with the glorified, incorruptible body.

On the other hand, "*Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more*". (Romans 6: 9-10, Revelation 1:18). Christ's Resurrection was entirely different and far higher. Hallelujah!

CONCLUSION

Let us conclude this Chapter by stressing once again the importance of Christ's resurrection and reiterating Christianity's unique and uncompromising stance, as we quote 1John 5:9-12, 20-21.

*"We accept man's testimony, but **God's testimony** is greater because it is the testimony of God, which he has given about his Son.*

Anyone who trusts in the Son of God has the witness in himself, but anyone who does not believe God has made Him out to be a liar, because he has not believed the testimony God has given about his Son. And this is the witness: 'God has given us eternal life – and this life is in his Son'.

He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life.

We know that the Son of God has come and has given us understanding, so that we may know Him who is true. And we are in Him who is true, in his Son Jesus Christ. He is the true God and eternal life.

Dear children, keep yourselves from idols”

—— (NIV, Darby, NEB, RSV, GNB)

How do we “**know**” for sure? Answer: By his **Resurrection** – that super **testimony** which God has given about him to all men everywhere! (Romans 1:4, Acts 17:31).

Salvation, life, and the proper understanding about the true God are found in Jesus Christ alone. All other ‘teachers’ and their ‘ways’ are futile idolatry. Keep yourselves from them!

GOD BLESS YOU

CHAPTER TWO: THE EVENT

KNOWN BIBLICAL FACTS

Some Christians usually question the accuracy of the days chosen for the observance of Christ's death and resurrection.

Although the Bible does not state outright the days of the week on which Jesus died and rose again, it does give sufficient information for us to arrive at definite conclusions.

We shall here first list some facts about Christ's death and Resurrection as stated in the Bible. Please, note ALL that is written. Next, we shall consider the inescapable implications of these listed facts. As you read those deductions, remember they are based on the previously stated facts and if you have any difficulty, please refer again to those facts.

1) Jesus died on Passover day:

Two days before that day, Jesus told his disciples he would be crucified on that day (Matthew 26:1-2). John 18:28 says he stood before Pilate on Passover day, and 1 Corinthians 5:7 affirms that he is the true "Passover Lamb".

2) Jesus died at 3pm (or moments after):

All the Gospel writers agree on this. See Matthew 27:45-50, Mark 15:33-37, Luke 23:44-46.

(**NOTE:** Ninth hour means 3pm. Throughout bible times, a day began at 6pm and ended the next 6pm. From 6pm to 9pm was the 'first watch' of the night, 9pm to midnight was the 'second watch' of night, midnight to 3am the 'third watch', and 3am to 6am the final night watch. From 6am to 6pm were counted the twelve hours of daytime.)

3) Jesus was buried before 6pm of that same day:

John 19:31 states that according to Jewish law the bodies were not to be still hanging on the trees on Sabbath day, which was about to begin at that 6pm. So, Jesus was buried that late afternoon by Joseph of Arimathea. Read Mark 15:42-46 and Luke 23:50-54.

Hence, we are sure that Jesus was entombed sometime between 3pm and 6pm on that Passover day.

4) The day after Jesus' death and burial was a Sabbath:

See Mark 15:42-43 and Luke 23:54.

John 19:31 also gives the additional information that the Sabbath was a **High Day**. That is, not the usual weekly Sabbath but one of the **annual** High Day Sabbaths. In Leviticus 23, we see the calendar of the various annual feasts and their associated Sabbaths (days of “Holy Convocation” and “Rest”) instituted by God. One such Sabbath was the day after the Passover (Leviticus 23:5-7).

5) Jesus specified when he would rise:

(a) When the Jews demanded for a sign of his Messiahship, Jesus gave the following answers:

(i) He would remain entombed for **3 days and 3 nights** (Matthew 12:39-40). This equals 72 hours.

(ii) He would raise again his temple (body) in 3 days, when destroyed. (John 2:18-22).

(b) Jesus said he would rise **after 3 days** (Mark 8: 31). That is, after 72 hours.

However, after 3 days could mean 4 days, 5 days, 6, 7, 8, ... days, etc. But could it be that long? No! For, that would contradict the sign of Jonah who was just 3 days and nights in the belly of the fish, and was then vomited out.

Moreover, Jesus also made another statement, further limiting the time, as follows:

(c) Jesus said he would be raised **on the 3rd day** (Mathew 16:21). Not the 4th, 5th, 6th, 7th, etc. It would happen on that very day on which the 72 hours were completed! It would not pass into the next day. Right on the 3rd day; the 4th day would not yet begin!

6) Visitors met an empty tomb:

All the four Gospel writers consistently state that by the time the earliest visitors came to the tomb, the Resurrection had ALREADY taken place. Those earliest visits were made at the dawn of the first day of the week, but then Jesus had already risen.

No writer says any visitor met it happening; they met an already rolled-away stone, met an empty tomb with Jesus already out. Angels told them the thing had already happened before their visit. (Matthew 28:1-8, Mark 16:1-7, Luke 24:1-9, John 20:1-10).

INEVITABLE DEDUCTIONS

The specifications made by Jesus Christ himself meant that he would spend a period of 72 hours in the tomb, during which period he would complete the rebuilding of his destroyed temple (body), and would then rise.

72 hours from the time of his entombment meant exactly that same time of the day, but three days later. Therefore, Jesus rose again that same time between 3pm and 6pm three days later. That is, the Resurrection was also sometime between 3pm and 6pm on whichever day of the week it happened! Otherwise, Jesus would have failed to fulfill what he himself specified.

Moreover, it had to happen on the 3rd day after that Passover day of death and burial; the 4th day would not yet have arrived or commenced.

If the Resurrection was on Sunday, it had to be between 3pm and 6pm of Sunday. But all records say that by Sunday morning the tomb was already empty. This immediately and completely rules out a Sunday Resurrection, since the Resurrection happened sometime between 3pm and 6pm on whichever day it occurred.

Hence, the verdict of an empty tomb as at the dawn of Sunday is not only that Christ arose, but also that that Resurrection was not on Sunday!

Well, the late afternoon just prior to the dawn of the first day of the week is Saturday late afternoon. Or, can we extend the time of the great event further back to Friday late afternoon or Thursday late afternoon?

No, we can't! The description of events during those earliest visits to the tomb conveys that the Resurrection was still very recent. In fact, on reading Matthew 28:1-4 one can mistakenly think the women had witnessed the events. However, verses 5 to 7 confirm otherwise. Verse 6 confirms that Jesus had already risen just "as He said"; that is, according to his specifications of "after 72 hours" and "on the 3rd day".

Hence, it is conclusive that **Jesus rose sometime between 3pm and 6pm on Saturday.**

Notice that we have reached the above conclusion without debating about whether Matthew 28:1 should read "In the end of the Sabbath" or "After the Sabbath". Nor have we debated about whether "dawn" meant 6pm or 6am. All those debates are not necessary and do not matter. We only use the facts that the Resurrection had to be sometime between 3pm and 6pm, and that by the dawn of Sunday it had already happened. (Moreover, Matthew 28:1 does NOT state the time of Jesus' resurrection; it simply states when some women VISITED the tomb).

Counting backwards 72 hours from Saturday leads us to Wednesday. Hence, Jesus **died and was buried sometime between 3pm and 6pm on Wednesday.**

'GOOD' FRIDAY AND EASTER SUNDAY

What then of 'Good' Friday and Easter Sunday?

The erroneous idea that Jesus died on a Friday resulted from the knowledge that the day after Jesus' death was a Sabbath.

However, ignorance of the fact that it was **not** the usual weekly Sabbath of Saturday but the special annual High Day Sabbath after Passover day led to a mistaken declaration of a Friday crucifixion and death and burial of Jesus.

That High Day Sabbath was on Thursday, while the usual weekly Sabbath came on Saturday. This reconciles Mark 16:1 which says the women bought the spices AFTER the Sabbath, and Luke 23:56 which shows that they prepared the spices BEFORE the Sabbath. That happened on Friday, which came after Thursday High Day Sabbath and before Saturday weekly Sabbath. This reconciliation further buttresses the truths presented herein.

There is a false claim by some people that the Bible says Jesus died on Friday. The Bible says NO such thing! Jesus died on the “preparation” of Passover. All faithful Biblical texts translate the Greek word “*paraskeue*” as the English word “preparation”. “*Prosabbaton*” (Mark 15:42) surely means “before Sabbath”, and John 19:14 adds that the said Sabbath was a Passover Sabbath. The Jewish Passover does not have to always occur on Fridays, though it can fall on a Friday in some years.

It is well-known that the ancient polytheistic Greeks named the weekdays after the heavenly bodies and their gods. In ancient Greek, our Friday (Freya’s day) was named after their god Aphrodite (Cytherea) and called “*hemera Aphrodites*”. The modern naming of the sixth day “*Paraskeue*” is surely an ‘influenced’ and ‘adopted’ nomenclature. NO gospel writer says Jesus died on Friday. All Biblical texts leave *paraskeue* PLAINLY at “preparation” (of Passover). Preparation means preparation. Only **extra-biblical** patristic sources choose to go further to interpret that *paraskeue* “TECHNICALLY” means Friday – but those extra-biblical writers (however famous) were all human, and the misconception we’re talking about was already entrenched right from early second century A.D.! What does “technical” mean? And, why the need for technicality?

Just as we should not take the added notes of C. I. Scofield to be part of the Biblical text itself, likewise should we not make the subtle mistake of taking the interpretations of extra-biblical patristic personalities for gospel writers’ biblical text. I’m afraid too many people have been misled into substituting the phrase “bible text of gospel writers” for the phrase “extra-biblical interpretation of patristic sources”! No human writings (no matter how highly regarded and widely accepted) should be elevated to the status of being accepted as the God-breathed Word.

In spiritual matters, the phrase “thoroughly-researched, well-referenced and academically-documented” is not necessarily equivalent to the phrase “the actual truth”. Preponderance of literature (however long-standing) cannot turn error into sacrosanct truth of God. Majority does not always carry the vote in God’s matters. The words of 400 ‘recognized prophets’ (1Kings22:1-38) did not win against the God-given Word of only one person, Micaiah. Here, we have the plain Biblical text

of 4 inspired Gospel writers – “preparation” (of Passover) – versus the “technical” interpretation (Friday) of numerous extra-biblical patristic ‘authorities’. Which one should win the vote? I believe it should be the God-given plainly-stated testimony of the Biblical text rather than the “technically” interpreted testimonies of multiple extra-biblical sources. Their testimonies should not be revered as the sacrosanct Word of God. (1John5:9).

Let me here give a Scriptural parallel. This is very important. Look at the old KJV biblical text of James2:2-3. You will find the words “goodly apparel” and “gay clothing”. Consider what has happened to the word “gay” today – that is, society’s (extra-biblical) usage and understanding of the word “gay”. Homosexuals can pounce on that word in James2:3 today. Then future generations, say by the year 2584 A.D., can cite today’s abundant extra-biblical usage of “gay” in magazines, novels, videos, academic works, newspapers, etc. and claim that the epistle writer of the biblical text James2:3 was referring to homosexual dressing. By such future time, the ‘influenced’ and ‘adopted’ nomenclature would prevail and people would boldly declare: “In ancient and current English, gay, as was/is WIDELY used, means homosexual, thus James2:3 was definitely talking about homosexual dressing”. **WOULD SUCH DECLARATION BE THE TRUTH OF GOD?**

However, if you leave extra-biblical sources and remain with the Bible, you will see that James2:2 shows that “gay clothing” meant “goodly apparel”. If you remain with the Bible, you will accept that the gospel writers really meant “preparation of Passover”. If you cite abundant extra-biblical technical patristic usage, you will claim you have proof that the 4 evangelists rather meant Friday. You see?

I repeat that the substitution and adoption we’re talking about was already **entrenched** as early as the beginning of second century A.D.!

It should be clear that this *paraskeue* matter still boils down to the old issue of whether our Protestant Bible should be our only rule of faith and doctrine OR, as demanded by Catholics, pseudepigraphal, Apocryphal and other extra-Biblical works, early Church fathers and papal pronouncements are also additional rules of faith and doctrine.

“Choose ye this day whom ye will serve” – Joshua 24:15.

The Bible as the Word of God is complete in itself. Our Bible has sufficient internal evidence to interpret and explain itself. The Bible itself is the one final authority on the interpretation of its contents, not human beings. Scripture verses are best interpreted by other Scripture verses. The Greek of the following six **New Testament** verses shows that in New Testament times, Biblical usage of *paraskeue* meant **actual** preparation: 1Corinthians 14:8, Matthew 11:10, Luke 7:27, Hebrews 11:7, 1Peter 3:20, Luke 1:17. However, there is NO single New Testament verse that indicates that *paraskeue* MUST mean the sixth day or Friday! We should

rather believe the evidence of these other existing **six** New Testament verses instead of believing something that no other Bible verse supports, something taken only from extra-biblical sources. When we do not remain within the safe bounds of the Biblical text itself and let the Holy Spirit use His Scripture to explain His Scripture to us, but look to extra-biblical sources and over-regard them, then Satan the Old Serpent can really have a field day at deceiving us!

Was there ever a time in history when the Jews conquered and colonized the ancient Greeks and changed the culture and religion of the ancient Greeks from polytheism to Judaism such that ancient Greek language changed weekdays that had been named after Greek gods (e.g. *hemera Aphrodites*) and renamed them after Jewish religious festivals like the Passover (e.g. *paraskeue*)? Even if there were such a time in secular (extra-biblical) ancient history, that still would not overcome the **internal** evidence of the six New Testament verses we cited above.

Did *paraskeuasetai* in 1Corinthians14:8 mean “*will Friday himself* for battle”? Does Matthew11:10 mean “*will Friday thy way before thee*”? Does Luke7:27 mean “*will Friday thy way before thee*”? Does Hebrews11:7 mean “*he fridayed an ark*”? Does 1Peter3:20 mean “*the ark was a fridaying*”? Does Luke1:17 mean “*a people fridayed for the Lord*”? We should beware of the ‘paraskeue-meant-Friday’ **masterstroke** and not fall for it hook, line and sinker!

Nobody argues that the sixth day was not a preparation day for the usual weekly Sabbath, but I am stressing that the day before the Passover Sabbath (1st day of unleavened bread) was also always a preparation day for that Sabbath! And, John19:14 has SPECIFIED that the Sabbath in question was the Passover Sabbath! Should we reject John19:14 and claim it MUST be the usual weekly Sabbath? Or, are we trying to say the Passover Sabbath MUST ALWAYS fall on Saturday?

Also, a disregard of Jesus’ own specifications concerning the time of His Resurrection led people to mistakenly believe that Matthew 28: 1-4 means that Jesus could have risen sometime between midnight and 6am of Sunday. But we know that was impossible, being contrary to Jesus’ own statements.

Come to think of it, is it possible to squeeze in 3 days and 3 nights (or 72 hours) between Friday late afternoon and Sunday early dawn? No way! Some people resort to saying that we need not require whole days, but reckon that a section of a day can represent a day. However, even that system of reckoning will fail to meet Jesus’ specific statement of “3 days **and** 3 nights”. In that system, from late afternoon of Friday is taken as 1st day. Full nighttime of Friday is the 1st night. Full daytime of Saturday is 2nd day and full nighttime of Saturday is 2nd night. The tiny section of Sunday morning is taken as 3rd day. So we have 3 days and 2 nights. Where is the 3rd night? Thus, even that adopted questionable system of reckoning still fails to rescue the Friday-Sunday fallacy.

Some people make the mistake of disregarding the fact that in Bible times, days were reckoned from 6pm to 6pm. Days began from evening (dark period) and ended in daylight period. That is, evening and night was the FIRST half of a day while morning and afternoon was second half. (See Genesis 1:5, 8, 13, 19, 23, 31; Leviticus 23:32 and Nehemiah 13:19-21). Hence, the evening of the first day of the week was actually the time after 6pm Saturday. It was not Sunday evening for that would then have been called the evening (beginning) of the SECOND day of the week. Hence, Cleopas and Simon were on the Emmaus road sometime after 6pm Saturday – the evening of the 1st day – NOT on Sunday evening! The day that had declined or was far spent (Luke 24:29) was daytime of Saturday, while the evening of the first day that was progressing (Luke 24:29) was the one that had begun at that 6pm Saturday. It is important to know these things because ignorance of these has led some people to use Luke 24:21 and erroneously conclude that Sunday was “the third day” that Jesus had spoken about (hence Sunday morning resurrection). Then counting 3 days backward, they arrive at Friday (hence Friday crucifixion).

Early in a day or dawn or beginning of a day was actually the EVENING of that day! “Very early” on a day was sometime just after the 6pm starting point. By the time it got to the following morning, it was no longer early but already far into the **middle** of that day. The earliest visit to the tomb was surely some moments after 6pm Saturday. The Greek phrase “*proi skotias eti ouses*” in John 20:1, meaning literally “early of darkness yet being” (KIT), can as well be translated as “it was still the early part of darkness”. That is, still the early part of the dark period (evening, beginning) of the day. The sensational discovery of an empty tomb resulted immediately in a flurry of movements, giving of information, and various visits to the tomb. Jesus was seen first by Mary Magdalene EARLY on the first day of the week (John 20:1-18). There was also the Emmaus road conversation (evening or beginning of the 1st day); and Jesus visiting the disciples gathered in fear and giving them peace (that same evening). It means all that flurry of events took place from some moments past 6pm Saturday to, say, about 9pm or 9.30pm Saturday.

On the whole, if any of the various visits to the tomb is said to have taken place with “the sun having risen,” that stated time is the time of that visit and NOT the time of Jesus’ resurrection which had already occurred BEFORE **all** visits!

It is evident that much of the misconception had today about this matter arises from the fact that reckoning of days from sunset to sunset had later been replaced by Rome with reckoning of days from midnight to midnight. Moreover, the Roman Catholic Church was looking for a big enough reason to proffer so as to make sun-day worship acceptable.

ONE DIFFICULT SCRIPTURE

Some people go to great lengths to reconcile all details of the various accounts of the various visits to Jesus' tomb and to set them in chronological order. Very well, but not very necessary. However, it is imperative to examine **Mark 16:9**.

Two important facts should be noted about it:

1. Evidently, the problem of Mark 16:9 is that of **Wrong Punctuation**. In most Western bible translations since the Vulgate, a comma is inserted after the word "week", whereas this comma does NOT exist there in the original Greek text.

This insertion is too expensive, as it has given the sentence an entirely different meaning – a meaning at variance with other scriptures.

On analysis, Mark 16: 9 contains four things:-

- 1st: Jesus' resurrection
- 2nd: Time element – "early on the first day of the week"
- 3rd: Jesus appearing to Mary
- 4th: Additional information about demons having been cast out.

The 2nd thing (time) is written between the 1st (rising) and the 3rd (appearing). From the truths we've established from other bible portions, we know the "time" is for the "appearing" and NOT for the "rising" (John 20:1, Matthew 28:1,6; Mark 16:1-4, Luke 24:1-2). Therefore, a comma should rightly have been put after the word "rose" or "risen", instead of putting the comma after the word "week", because, after all, in the original Greek text there is NO comma after the word "week".

Hence, the correct punctuation of Mark 16:9 should be:

"After he rose, early on the first day of the week he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, from whom He had expelled seven demons" (- after KIT).

OR *"Now when Jesus was risen, early on the first day of the week he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom he had cast seven devils" (- after KJV).*

This correct punctuation clears all confusion, whereas the wrong punctuation conveys something that is out of tune with all other bible portions.

2. Most Bibles state openly that "the most reliable early manuscripts and other ancient witnesses do not have Mark 16:9-20", and do "not recognize it as being authoritative". (See NIV, KIT, RSV, NEB). These statements indicate that it was likely a later interpolation.

Most scholars affirm that the portion was added in early second century A.D., which was also the time at which Pope Sixtus 1 had introduced weekly Easter Sunday observance and Emperor Hadrian decreed against

Sabbath observance.

Interestingly, the original Greek text of this later interpolation does NOT have that misleading comma in verse 9. The misleading comma first appeared in the Latin Vulgate written in A.D. 405 by the Roman Catholic Saint Jerome as the official Roman Catholic bible version – and, of course, it's true that prevalent popular beliefs and biases could influence people to punctuate sentences in ways that support certain ideas. It has since then been perpetuated in nearly all Western bible translations. However, in September 1943, Pope Pius XII in his encyclical *Divino Afflante Spiritu*, alluding to some imperfections in the Vulgate, encouraged the composition of new translations of the bible, based on the original languages rather than on the Vulgate.

This does not mean that I do not believe that portion of the Word of God. I do! We should not throw the baby out with the bath water. It may have been a later addition that much later had some punctuation inserted at some point to suit Roman Catholic Easter Sunday tradition then imposed, but it is still canonical. There is no need for controversy. God has been watching over His Word. First, he made men realize that Mark 16:9-20 was a later addition, so as to lead men to discover that a misleading punctuation had been later inserted where it did not exist in the Greek original. Second, even though that portion of His Word was missing for some time, he caused it to be re-discovered, be recognized and accepted as Holy Writ, and be restored. Hallelujah! Jesus Christ actually made the true promises in verses 17-18, and I testify that he has continued to fulfill them for me and all his beloved children just like he did for his Apostles (verse 20).

CHAPTER THREE: A FEW COMMENTS

1. The only reason (namely, Sunday Resurrection) given for the sanctification of Sunday as “The Lord’s Day” or the “New Christian Sabbath” is bogus. Christ did not rise on Sunday.

God has never blessed Sunday or hallowed it, nor has He ordered any weekly commemoration of the Resurrection.

Weekly Sabbath is not linked to the Resurrection but to the creation. God ordered man to weekly commemorate the fact that He created the world in 6 days and rested on the 7th day.(Genesis 2:3 and Exodus 20:8-11).

Jesus instructed that his death be commemorated in the Holy Communion “as often as we would do it” (1 Corinthians 11: 23-26).

2. The victory and Resurrection of Jesus Christ is so great and deserves to be celebrated even, if possible, everyday. Thus we should not just condemn its commemoration at Easter Sunday.

Though Easter was originally a heathen annual festival to worship the goddess “Astarte”, and Sunday was the weekly day of worshipping the “sun god”, they were later “Christianized” by the Roman Catholic Church to become the celebration of Christ’s Resurrection and the weekly day of Christian worship service, respectively.

Some people condemn and reject such Christianization and say it has changed nothing. However, others say it glorifies God as a victory of God over Satan and of Christianity over paganism. They argue that it is just like when an idol shrine is pulled down somewhere and a cathedral is erected there; when Christians gather therein, they are not worshiping the ejected idol but Christ. (Compare with Judges 6:25-32).

When two or three gather in Christ’s name, and he is the foundation of that place, and they worship him in Spirit and in truth, Christ receives such worship and blesses the worshipers. However, no unbiblical or heathen practices should be part of those worship services or fellowships.

When true Christians worship God **properly** on Easter Sunday, they are not worshiping “Astarte” or “sun god”, but are celebrating their Lord’s victory for them. God receives it and blesses them.

I, this writer, usually evangelize on Easter Sundays, not to celebrate Astarte or “Easter” of course, but to spread Gospel.

3. The best and highest way to show our appreciation of Christ’s death and resurrection is to yield our lives in submission to his will and do his pleasure. This is what he deserves and desires (Romans 12:1-2).

SECTION TWO

THE SABBATH

(COMMEMORATION OF CREATION)

Preamble

A MYTH?

Sabbath – a commemoration of the Creation. We shall begin this section on the Sabbath by first examining some misconception about the Creation itself.

The idea is held by some people that the 7-day creation account in Genesis is mere myth – a human attempt to explain the unknown or inexplicable. Those people would rather believe only the historical accounts in the Bible that to some extent are corroborated by secular history. Even these biblical historical accounts are considered to be tainted by bias, subjectivity, primitive mentality and credulity. Secular historians, however ancient, are the ones who are considered to have written perfect accounts! Those who consider the biblical creation account to be myth fail to see the grave implications of such opinion.

The strongest objection to that opinion is found in Exodus 20, which begins by stating that “And God spake all these words saying...” Then in verse 11 we hear God making reference to the Genesis 7-day creation account, and further promulgating His fourth commandment based on it (Exodus 20: 8-11). **Can the omniscient God, who cannot lie, re-affirm and uphold a mere human myth and base a commandment of His on a falsehood?**

Either we believe Exodus 20:1 and that the Decalogue are truly God’s laws given by God Himself (in which case we are bound by Exodus 20:8-11 to *agree with God and uphold the Genesis 7-day creation account*) OR we believe the creation myth idea (in which case we would be *doubting the accuracy of God’s knowledge and the veracity of statements made by Him* like in Exodus 20:11). We would then be attacking the whole Decalogue itself, and the implications would be too grave!

The Decalogue sets forth and regulates man’s relationship to his God and his fellow men. Casting doubts on it implies challenging and trying to repudiate the authority of God, the accuracy of God’s knowledge, the accuracy and *reliability* of God’s statements, the soundness of the **bases** of God’s laws, biblical morality, law and order, human responsibility and accountability, proper interpersonal human relations, the whole Judaism, the whole Christianity, etc. Only a total atheist would repudiate all these things! Anybody who has any belief in God and Christ cannot safely hold the opinion that the Genesis account of creation is a myth. The implications of that line of thought are too grave.

If He is a God who can make laws based upon falsehoods, don’t you see that He then does not deserve to be the Lawgiver and Judge of the Universe? Don’t you see that then the lofty statements made about His words, precepts and laws in Psalm 119 are all vain statements? Don’t you see that then all who put their trust in Him and walk by His precepts are doomed fools? One cannot be both a Christian and a believer of the myth idea! [On the contrary, many great

scientists and astronomers have been confirming how amazingly exact and dependable His laws are right from the minute sub-atomic and chromosomal scales to the grand inter-galactic and universal scales.]

Our Lord Jesus (whose teachings we accept and follow) and the Apostle Paul (who wrote many of the Epistles), though not mentioning the 7 creation days specifically, at least made references to Adam and Eve and events in the Garden of Eden, not as mythical things but as real persons and events that had actually occurred. See 1Corinthians15:45-49, 1Corinthians15:21-22, 2Corinthians11:3, 1Timothy2:13-14, Mark10:6-8, Matthew19:4-5 and Ephesians 5:31. The **direct** reference to *7-day creation* is **by God** in Exodus 20:11. Whether each of those 7 days was of 24-hour duration or represents a much, much longer period of time is another issue entirely. For our present issue, we are satisfied that we have found a **reliable affirmation** that the *7-day* creation account was true (actual) and NOT mythical. Incidentally, even the New Testament also makes reference to the *7-day* creation account in Hebrews4:4.

Perhaps, doubting people may resort to claiming that those things in Exodus 20 were not dictated by God but were just very good precepts formulated by a wise and famous Jewish leader, named Moses, for his people. Such claim again would repudiate everything upon which everything stands and free man from biblical moral standards and from being accountable before God (or, is it before Moses? Ha! Ha!).

Hence, to an upholder of creation myth idea, what is hereinafter written may seem an unnecessary waste of time and energy; but to a believer of the Genesis account, one or two things can be learnt. However, I encourage all kinds of people with all kinds of beliefs to read on.

Chapter One

ITS MEANING

“Sabbath” is a Hebrew word for “rest”. The Sabbath day then means the day of rest when men should desist from work. It is a day for religious worship. (Leviticus 23:3). It is not just any day of the week but the seventh day which we call Saturday. (Genesis 2:2-3, Exodus 20:8-11).

From the beginning and throughout bible times, a day started from the dark period (evening/night) and ended in light (morning/afternoon). The first half of a day was the evening and night (dark period), while the following morning and afternoon was actually the second half of that day. That is, a day started from sundown (6pm) and ended at the next sundown (6pm). (See Genesis 1:5,8,13,19,23,31; Leviticus 23:32 and Nehemiah 13:19-21).

Hence, precisely speaking, the seventh day (the Sabbath) starts at 6pm on Friday and ends at 6pm on Saturday.

Reckoning of days from midnight to midnight is only a recent development introduced into Christianity by the Roman world power in the early centuries A.D. and adopted by England in Medieval times. But this man-made timing cannot erase the Creator’s timing.

Notice that God did not give man the liberty to choose any day the week and keep on observing that in 7-day cycles. God was careful to specify the ORDER of the days right from the beginning – Genesis 1:5, 8, 13,19,23,31. He specifically stated which day was the first, the second, the third, etc. And since then the constant cycle of night and day has been on.

Each day was tied to specific acts of creation, the seventh one being the one on which God rested. (Genesis 2:2-3). That particular day was the one he blessed and made holy, not any other day.

In short, Sabbath day denotes ‘the day God rested after his work of creation’. He then directed man to rest on that same day in consonance with him.

If we take the liberty of choosing another day (e.g. the first day) as Sabbath, then we are trying to say that God rested on that first day, made day

and night on the second day, created animals and men on the seventh day. This is bizarre distortion. It exposes the folly in saying that Sunday is the “Christian Sabbath” while Saturday is the “Jewish Sabbath”.

Christians and Jews believe the same God and the same Creation account. Sabbath is tied to creation. There is only ONE Creator-God, not two; only ONE CORRECT ORDER of creation, not two. There is only ONE Sabbath day on which God rested, not two different days. There cannot be a Christian ‘Sabbath’ day different from Jewish Sabbath day!

Some people compare Sabbath with Christmas and Easter. They rightly say that nobody knows the exact day of Christ’s birth and that Christendom has generally adopted 25th December for its commemoration. (No qualms about that when it is done without the trappings of paganism). Similarly for the Resurrection and Easter observance. However, people are mistaken when they think that the same should be true for the Sabbath. The same is NOT true of the Sabbath. The exact Sabbath day is NOT unknown. It is **clearly specified in the Bible** as the 7th day of the week. Moreover, its observance is not a human decision, adoption or establishment. God clearly **commanded in the Bible** that man should weekly commemorate His creative work and His subsequent Rest by Sabbath observance.

Some people have expressed the fear that the original Sabbath day might have been lost or missed in the long course of history, and that we cannot now be sure which day is the original seventh day.

Such doubts are actually unnecessary. Although lengths of months, years and calendars have been adjusted, the constant cycle of night-and-day cannot be (and has not been) altered. Also, God made the Israelites know his correct seventh day by constantly failing to give manna on that day, and the Israelites maintained that day until New Testament times. That was the Sabbath day Jesus and the Apostles observed and which the Jews have maintained till today. 6pm Friday to 6pm Saturday. No mistake.

Some people claim that due to the different time zones in the world and the international dateline, Sabbath cannot be on the same day in all parts of the

world. That claim is WRONG. A Wikipedia article on *Time Zones* states that ‘because the earliest and latest time zones are 26 hours apart, any given calendar date exists at some point on the globe for 50 hours.’ Remember that, biblically, the Sabbath is from Friday 6pm to Saturday 6pm. Consider when GMT is Saturday 6 a.m. Then local times at places from meridian 180° W to prime meridian will range from Friday 6pm to Saturday 6 a.m. while places from prime meridian to meridian 180° E will have local times ranging from Saturday 6 am to Saturday 6pm. Thus, the **whole** globe (180° W to 180° E) will then have local times ranging from Friday 6pm. to Saturday 6pm, which are some time or other of Sabbath day.

Further still, in the 24-hour period from Friday 6pm to Saturday 6pm, will all parts of the earth experience **daytime** of Saturday? Yes. When GMT is Saturday 6am, places from prime meridian to meridian 180° E will be experiencing local times ranging from Saturday 6am to Saturday 6pm (i.e. daytime of Saturday). When GMT gets to Saturday 6pm, places from meridian 180° W to prime meridian will be experiencing local times ranging from Saturday 6am to Saturday 6pm (i.e. daytime of Saturday). Hence in the period from GMT Saturday 6am to GMT Saturday 6pm, every place of the whole globe (180° W to 180° E) will have also experienced some daytime of Saturday.

In fact, even if you reckon Sabbath from Friday midnight to Saturday midnight, you’ll still have that when GMT is Saturday noon, then the whole globe from 180° W to 180° E will have local times within range of Friday midnight to Saturday midnight, which is still the SAME DAY in that system of reckoning. Also, in the 12-hour period from GMT Saturday 6am to GMT Saturday 6pm, every place on the globe will also have experienced some daytime of Saturday.

Hence, although there are particular times when only parts of the earth will be in Sabbath day while others are not, and although Sabbath will not be observed exactly the same time of day everywhere on earth, but it is possible **within a 24-hour period** for ALL parts of the world to be in Sabbath day since the earth would have made a COMPLETE rotation about its axis.

If the above analysis is not satisfactory, then we should at least see the sense in the comments made by Hon. Sol Bloom (1929) to the US House of Representatives: “the day does not begin on all parts of the world at the same time”, hence a person observing Sabbath in any land should “not be disturbed that it is not observed at the same identical instant of time by others in other lands”. Rather, he should be “particular about keeping the same day that they keep when it (that day) comes around to him”.

Chapter Two

GOD ESTABLISHED IT

2.1 God SANCTIFIED it (Genesis 2:3) and himself calls it his own holy day (Isaiah 58:13, Exodus 20:10). Notice that God sanctified it right at creation. At Mt. Sinai, it was only formally reiterated to the Israelites on tables of stone along with God’s other already existing moral laws.

It is true that man should serve God everyday of his life. It is true that anytime anywhere when true Christians gather in Christ’s name to worship God properly in Spirit and in truth, Christ is there with them and receives the worship and blesses the worshippers (Matthew 18:20). Yet it is also true that the need for a weekly rest day (usually associated with religious observances) is recognized by the whole world. In fact, there is no country in the world that is operating a 7-day workweek. Now, if we want to choose a day of the week as ‘special’ day of worship and rest, why don’t we simply take the one God himself made ‘special’? That is, the seventh day -- Saturday.

2.2 God COMMANDED man to observe it (Exodus 20:8). It is not just a suggestion or recommendation but a command, the obedience of which would bring blessings.

Jesus says the seventh day Sabbath was made for MAN (Mark 2:27), not just for the Jews. It was sanctified at creation (Genesis 2:2-3), long before Abraham was called, long before Israel (Jacob) and Judah were born, long before Moses and the exodus.

Acts 18:4, 8-11; Acts 13:44-48; Acts 16:13-15 and Acts 17:2-4 all record that GENTILES (including Christian converts) also observed the seventh day Sabbath.

2.3 God has even gone as far as explaining WHY it should be observed. Read Exodus 20:11 Thus, Sabbath is a weekly memorial of creation. Those keeping it are testifying that they believe and accept the biblical account of how God created the world.

Failure to keep the Sabbath day is comparable in two ways to failure to observe the Eucharist. First, consider a church which says it truly believes that Christ died to redeem her, and knows that the Redeemer commanded all believers of his redemptive work to commemorate it in the Eucharist. Would a church be right to ignore doing it? Comparably, if the church says it truly believes the bible account that God created the world, and knows that the Creator commanded all believers of his creative work to commemorate it in Sabbath observance, would the church be right to ignore doing it?

Secondly, if a church accepts to observe the Eucharist, would the church be right in choosing to observe it using chicken and spaghetti instead of bread and wine as taught by Christ? Comparably, if we accept to observe Sabbath, are we right if we choose to observe it on the 1st day of the week (and call it Christian Sabbath) instead of the 7th day as taught by the Creator?

Chapter Three

JESUS DID NOT CHANGE IT

3.1 Jesus himself always **observed** it (Luke 4:16) and even declared that it is his day -- our Lord's day (Luke 6:5). He also expressed the desire that future adverse circumstances wouldn't cause his disciples to break the Sabbath (Matthew 24:20). This indicates that He expected His disciples to still keep the Sabbath long after His Ascension.

The Pharisees accused Jesus of Sabbath-breaking when he purposely defied their man-made rules or by-laws which they had added to God's word, thereby making Sabbath observance a superficial, legalistic and enslaving affair. Jesus had no anti-Sabbath attitude; he merely corrected the abuses and taught that the observance should be in true spirit of righteousness and service to God. In all his statements about the Sabbath, he never said or hinted that it should no longer be observed but always taught that **good** should be done on the Sabbath since man's salvation and deliverance are greater than superficial legality and protocol. (See Matthew 12:1-13, Mark 2:23 to 3:5, Luke 6:1-10, Luke 13:10-16, Luke 14:1-6, John 5:15-17, John 7:23).

3.2 The followers of Jesus observed the Sabbath after his crucifixion (Luke 23:56). The **Apostles** and the early Gentile Christian churches kept observing it after His Ascension (Acts 13:14, 42, 44; Acts 16:13; Acts 17:2, Acts 18:4, 11).

If their Lord and Master had changed it, would the Apostles not have known? Would they continue to observe it even after his resurrection and their Pentecost experience? Wouldn't they have changed to Sunday? Shouldn't we continue in the example of Jesus and the Apostles and the earliest Church?

Some people refer to the works of secular historians like Josephus, Foxe's Book of Martyrs, etc. that state that the early Christians usually met on Sunday. But the question is: should we believe the statements of Josephus & Co. rather than all the references found in the Acts of the Apostles? Should we accept and

be guided by secular history rather than the Bible, the Word of God? Do the works of those secular historians pre-date the record of the Gospel writer and INSIDER, St. Luke, the beloved physician? Acts of the Apostles is the earliest record of the acts of the earliest church. It is more accurate than the work of Josephus and pre-dates the works of those secular historians, almost all of which were written very many years later, by which time Constantine and the Roman Catholic Church had already introduced various changes.

3.3 Jesus did not take away the **Ten Commandments** (Matthew 5:17 and 19).

In his famous Sermon On The Mount (Matthew 5,6,7), Jesus did not abrogate any of the Ten Commandments but further strengthened them by teaching that obedience should not be by outward action alone but should also go down to the very intentions of the heart. However, the strengthening of those laws by extending them to the deeper spiritual level does not mean that the original laws concerning the physical acts have been abrogated. For instance, the fact that lust is now also adultery does not mean that the law about physical act of adultery no longer holds. The fact that bitter hatred is now also murder does not mean that the law about actual killing no longer holds. It is a fact that Jesus now calls people to come to him (Matthew 11:28) and have for their souls the true spiritual rest or refreshing which God had proposed to the weary (Isaiah 28:11-12). However, as is the case with the physical action aspect of the other laws, this cannot mean that the law about weekly rest-keeping (Sabbath) no longer holds.

In his law reforms of Matthew 5:17-48, Jesus did not mention the Sabbath; neither did He say anything elsewhere about changing the weekly Sabbath day. Whenever a set of existing laws is being reformed and nothing is said or done about a particular law, does the silence mean that that particular law is then abrogated? Doesn't it rather mean that it still subsists as it was?

In Matthew 19:16-21, Jesus said the commandments should be kept; he recounted the six neighbor-oriented commandments and summarized the four God-oriented ones into requiring man to be able to forsake all and follow him.

The laws abolished at Christ's death were the statutes and ordinances of the Old Covenant made solely with Israel. Those involved sacrifices and temple rituals within the levitical priesthood, and circumcision and diets. They also involved the civil code that regulated divorce, inheritance, reciprocation, agriculture, health practices, criminal acts, and spelt out the penalties for various offences. (Hebrews 9:1,9,10). Those were called the "Laws of Moses", their mediator, which God gave him to write down in a "Book of the law". They distinguished Israel from other nations, and were the partitioning wall between Jews and Gentiles which has now been broken down. (Ephesians 2:12-16, Colossians 2:13-14). They served only until Christ, the promised Seed, came. (Galatians 3: 14, 19).

In 2 Corinthians 3:6-15, it is wise to note that it was not the Ten Commandments but the Book of the Law of Moses that spelt out various death penalties which were enforced under Moses' ministration of the Old Testament. What 2 Corinthians 3 verse 14 calls "old testament", verse 15 calls it "Moses", that is, the Law of Moses. One should also realize that those Laws of Moses had also been written on stones. (Read Deuteronomy 27:1-8 and Joshua 8:30-35).

The Ten Commandments are declared to be "spiritual" and there is life in the keeping of them (Romans 7:14, Luke 10:26-28). Only the ordinances of the sanitary, dietary and tabernacle sacrificial systems are called "carnal" and pronounced curses. (Hebrews 9:10, Hebrews 7:16).

Hebrews 9:1-21 gives a lengthy description of the ingredients of the old testament and in verses 19,20,21 makes us see that the said testament (verse 20) was contained in the Book on which Moses had sprinkled blood (verse 19) and that its ministration was that of the tabernacle with all its vessels (verse 21). That is what was "done away" or abolished, as confirmed by Hebrews 8:13.

On the other hand, the Ten Commandments (Decalogue) are God's moral laws. They summarize man's responsibility to and relationship with his God (the first four laws) and his fellow-men (the last six laws). They existed right from creation, cut across all races and are the moral standards by which right and evil are determined. (1 John 3:4; Romans 2:9-15).

For instance, Cain's murder of Abel in Genesis 4 was sin; Ham's disrespect of his father in Genesis 9:22-25 was sin; God restrained the God-fearing gentile king Abimelech from sin of adultery in Genesis 20; Joseph recognized adultery as sin in Genesis 39:9. All these were long before Exodus 20. Indeed, the moral Laws of God that predated the temporary Levitical laws do also outlast/outlive them, and are still in place!

The Ten Commandments are constantly applicable. Till tomorrow, it will still be wrong to murder, lie, worship other gods, etc. Paul calls these moral laws "good" (Romans 7:12, 14, 16, 22) and says that in the New Testament they are written in the hearts of Christians (Hebrews 10:15-16). He even says the moral laws will be applicable on the Judgment Day (Romans 2:9-16, *NIV*).

What of the fourth commandment about the weekly Sabbath-keeping? Why do men single that out as being no longer applicable? Why did God include it in his Decalogue? Is it a moral law or not?

God was not mistaken. The weekly Sabbath-keeping is a **moral** law! There are two aspects of its morality. The first and greater moral aspect is towards God, while the second moral aspect (lesser) is towards man. These two reasons (Exodus 20:11 and Deuteronomy 5:14-5) given for keeping the Sabbath are not contradictory but complementary.

God said (and it is morally right) that men should recognize him as their ONLY God (1st law); this only God is the ONLY one worthy of worship (2nd law); this only God should be so respected that even his name should not be treated with levity (3rd law); and men should acknowledge this only God as the CREATOR (4th law).

Is it morally obligatory for man to acknowledge God as his creator and creator of the universe? God says, "yes", and I concur, "yes". God then requires

this acknowledgment of him as creator to be not just verbally but to be shown on the seventh day of the week that you truly believe the Genesis account of creation (Exodus 20:8-11).

The lesser moral aspect of the weekly Sabbath, which is man-oriented, is stated in the Decalogue in Deuteronomy 5:12-15. The requirement that even one's slaves and beasts of burden should not be overworked but given humane consideration and allowed some rest is surely moral.

Thus, the 4th law of seventh day Sabbath-keeping is as moral as all the other laws of the Decalogue and continues to be applicable.

3.4 Some people feel that the **Epistles** teach us to discontinue Sabbath observance. They consider scriptures like Romans 14:5-6, Colossians 2:16-17 and Galatians 4:9-10 as bases for disregarding the weekly seventh-day Sabbath.

However, Romans 14:5-6 makes no mention of "Sabbath". The whole Romans 14 is about food and drink and how people's beliefs about food and drink should not be interfered with. The days talked about were the traditional fast days (which were not expressly commanded by God) that could be optionally observed according to each believer's conscience. A man could eat or not eat, keep the day or not keep the day. He that does not eat regards the fast day. He that eats does not regard the fast day. Concerning those traditional fast days, compare Zechariah 7:2-6 with Romans 14:6.

On the contrary, God's command to keep the seventh-day Sabbath was mandatory and never optional.

Colossians 2:16 should not be quoted out of context but should be recognized as being within the context of verses 8 to 23, which aimed to persuade the Colossians not to return to ordinances and ceremonial observances that had to do with subservience to angels, elemental spirits, principalities, powers and human teachings and philosophies. (Remember, there also existed various sabbaths other than the weekly seventh-day Sabbath).

Likewise, Galatians 4:9-10 are part of the whole Epistle to the Galatians which persuades them not be blackmailed to relapse into Judaism practices

(especially, circumcision). Also, the preceding verse, Galatians 4:8, refers to their former idolatrous life of service to various gods which were weak, beggarly elemental spirits (verse 9), whose days, months, festivities and celebrations they had been observing (verse 10). This cannot refer to Jehovah's sanctified Sabbath day. How could the Apostles condemn in their epistles something that they themselves and the gentile churches were observing? (Acts 13:14, 42, 44; Acts 16:13; Acts 17:2 and Acts 18: 4, 11).

3.5 Hebrews 4:1-11 explains that the “**Rest**” which God promised to his people through Moses (Exodus 33:14, Deuteronomy 12:9-10) was not merely having rest once they settled down in Canaan under Joshua’s leadership; nor was it the weekly seventh-day rest of Genesis 2:2 which the Israelites were observing, since the oath that unbelieving Israelites wouldn’t enter it came a long time after Genesis 2:2.

The scriptures from Hebrews 3:7 to 4:11 teach that the real spiritual “Rest” is entered into by believing in Christ, abiding in him and living Spirit-filled and Spirit-led lives of obedience. This is why many people have realized that “the Holy Spirit is the true Rest”, in agreement with Isaiah 28:11-12 **cum** Acts 2:4. Quite correct! This is the “Rest” wherein one can cease from his old works of the flesh and live in true harmony with God. (Hebrews 4:10, Romans 8:13-14, Galatians 5:16).

However, this great spiritual truth does not in any way tell us to stop observing God’s seventh-day Sabbath, which is a memorial of creation. Jesus was filled with Holy Spirit without measure; he abode continuously in that Rest in perfect obedient fellowship with the Father; he is the very author of that Rest (Matthew 11:28); yet he always observed the weekly Sabbath. The Apostles were filled at Pentecost (Acts 2:4) and lived Spirit-led lives (Galatians 2:20), yet they always observed the weekly Sabbath. Indeed, Hebrews 4:9 comments that even though the true refreshing rest (Greek: *katapausin*) is life in the Holy Spirit of Christ, yet the Sabbath-rest (Greek: *sabbatismos*) still remains for the people of God. The people of God now are

the Christians. Hence, Hebrews 4:9 is a **new testament** passage that states that even in this era of the Holy Spirit, the Sabbath-rest still remains – either now or in future – for Christians. Hebrews 4:9 does NOT say that Sabbath- rest has now been done away with for the people of Christ. The word “remaineth” (Greek: *apoleipetai*) was also used in Hebrews 4:6 and surely did NOT mean ‘done away with’ or ‘temporarily suspended’. Thus, it cannot mean so in verse 9. NOR can we say that *apoleipetai* “absolutely means it’s not here yet, it’s lacking”. This is because what it referred to in verse 6 is taking place now in this long indefinite Day of Salvation called “Today”. Today people are believing in Christ, receiving his salvation, receiving his Holy Spirit and experiencing his refreshing rest. This is now going on even though the ultimate rest will be in heaven. Indeed, the real final rest will be in heaven. Life in heaven has been described as the “eternal Sabbath”. Since a type always continues until the antitype supersedes it, the typical earthly Sabbath-rest must continue till the antitypical heavenly Sabbath-rest arrives (Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary). In fact, the *Aramaic Bible in Plain English*, ©2010 renders Hebrews 4:9 as – “*So then, it remains for the people of God to keep the Sabbath.*”

If Sabbath was merely for resting, then the coming of the Holy Spirit would be enough reason for us to do away with the shadow rest (Sabbath). But rest for man, beast (or machine) was only the second and lesser moral reason for Sabbath; the first and foremost moral reason was the acknowledgement of God as Creator and commemoration of His work of creation. That makes its observance still applicable.

Similarly, if Sabbath were just for resting, then doing it on any day would be all right. But since it is a commemoration of creation, then it must be done on God’s specified day which is in line with the Genesis account.

Some people may still insist that Sabbath observance was not a commemoration of God’s work of creation (the six days) but of God’s rest (the 7th day). And, based on that, they argue that the coming of the true Rest (Holy Spirit) that is enjoyed every moment of our lives should end the

shadowy commemoration. The response to that is that when God Himself ordered the commemoration, He did not just say ‘remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy for on the seventh day God rested’. Rather, He said : “*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.*” (*Exodus 20:11*). So, God Himself included His creative work in the Commemoration Order. So we cannot sever the link with Creation.

On the other hand, even if we grant that Sabbath commemorates only rest, that still CANNOT overcome the fact that Jesus the author of rest and the Apostles who were filled at Pentecost and the earliest Gentile churches observed the Sabbath. **Of course, they did not keep the Sabbath in the pharisaic, legalistic and enslaving way complete with sacrifices etc. But they recognized it as the day for rest and religious assembly.** Why did they continue to regard it until AD 364, at which time the Roman Catholic Church outlawed it and fought against its observance using force, anathematization and persecution? Were those APOSTLES and early GENTILE Christians ignorant of New Covenant truth? Or, had they not received the Holy Spirit and enjoyed its continual rest? WHATEVER MADE THEM TO CONTINUE THE OBSERVANCE AFTER PENTECOST FOR MORE THAN THREE AND A HALF CENTURIES SHOULD MAKE US TOO TO CONTINUE!

Indeed, I need not say “whatever” made them to continue observing it. It is obvious that they did so because they knew very well (and wrote it down for posterity too) that *katapausin* does **not** preclude (and had not precluded) *sabbatismos*. The *apoleipetai* they used and meant concerning the *katapausin* enjoyed Today in this Day of Salvation (*Hebrews 4:6*) was the same *apoleipetai* they used and meant concerning the abiding *sabbatismos* for God’s people, the Christians (*Hebrews 4:9*). Be careful what you say, because if you claim that *apoleipetai* means that *sabbatismos* has been suspended, you are automatically also claiming that *katapausin* has been suspended. Again, if you claim that *apoleipetai* means that *sabbatismos* is ‘yet lacking here’, you are automatically also claiming that *katapausin* is not being entered into and experienced Today.

I sincerely wish the English were as precise as the Greek to distinguish between *katapausin* and *sabbatismos*, possibly by using phrases like “continual refreshing soul rest” and “7th-day creation commemoration rest”, instead of just using the same word “rest” for both of them, (though the word “rest” is not wrong).

Now, while some people err by claiming that *sabbatismos* had ceased with the Old Testament Age, some others err in another way by claiming that the gifts and miraculous signs accompanying the life the has entered into *katapausin* had ceased with the Apostolic Age. My dear reader, Hebrews 4 has explained that *katapausin* and *sabbatismos* **both** still REMAIN Today for the people of God!

Chapter Four

HOW THEN DID SUNDAY WORSHIP COME TO BE?

Some people believe that passages like John 20:19, Acts 20:7 and 1 Corinthians 16:1-2 teach Sunday observance. However, in John 20:19 the disciples were assembled FOR FEAR OF THE JEWS and not for a worship service.

In Acts 20:7-11, it was a night-time meeting which continued till midnight since Paul intended to travel the following morning. Since days were reckoned from sundown to sundown, this meeting was in the time that we now call Saturday night. (It wasn't Sunday night, for that would then have been called the second day of the week!).

In 1 Corinthians 16:1-3, there's no hint of a religious service, but simply an instruction that on Sunday (then a normal working day) they should, from the proceeds of their various occupations, spare something that would be sent to the needy brethren in Jerusalem when Paul would come.

We have seen that Jesus, his believers, the Apostles and the early Gentile churches all observed the seventh-day Sabbath. How then did Sunday observance come into Christianity?

It was introduced by the Roman Catholic Church after Christ and the Apostles were gone! After Rome had crushed the second Jewish revolt, Emperor Hadrian in about A.D.135 banned Judaism (and, with it, Sabbath observance) in Rome. This imperial decree helped strengthen the weekly Easter Sunday observance already introduced in Rome by Sixtus 1 (Bishop of Rome) in about A.D. 125. Although Rome was a sun-worshipping nation, the generality of Christians could not accept the sun-day observance. Many still kept the Sabbath. Even many Catholic churches outside Rome still observed Easter annually on any day of the week upon which it rightly fell, until Pope Victor 1 in about A.D. 195 insisted that it always be held on a Sunday. Many Catholic churches in Asia Minor did not accept this and Victor excommunicated them all – an act that was seen as an abuse of power and generated wide protests.

Sunday observance – not having any basis in the teachings and practice of Christ and the Apostles – was not easy to entrench. Sunday continued to be a working day until when the Roman emperor Constantine on March 7th, 321 A.D. created the Sunday holiday by an Edict, and I quote: “*Let all judges, and all city people, and all tradesmen rest on the Venerable Day of the Sun. But let those dwelling in the country freely and with full liberty attend to the culture of their fields as usual...*” The Roman Catholic Church thus adopted Sunday as the new holy rest day, and in A.D. 538 even country labour on Sunday was also prohibited by its third Council of Orleans. To further entrench Sunday observance, the Catholic Church had at the Council of Laodicea in A.D. 364 outlawed the keeping of the Sabbath, and urged all persons to labour on the seventh day under penalty of anathematization. She also executed Sabbath-keepers during the Dark Ages.

The Catholic Church openly boasts that she changed the Sabbath from seventh day to the first day by virtue of her sole God-given authority to change or add to God’s laws, and that Sunday observance now by the whole Christian world is a mark and confirmation of this her authority.

Publications abound on these matters, for instance *Roman Catholic Confessions About Sunday* obtainable FREE from God’s Watchman, P.O.Box 558, St. Maries, Idaho 83861, USA. However, let us here make a few quotations from some Catholic official publications, cardinals and priests:

- i) “*Nowhere in the Bible is it stated that worship should be changed from Saturday to Sunday. The Church, by God’s authority, substituted the observance of Sunday the first day of the week, for the observance of Saturday the seventh day; a change for which there is no scriptural authority*”– (*The Catholic Mirror*, official organ of J. Cardinal Gibbons, Sept. 23, 1893; AND *The Convert’s Catechism of Catholic Doctrine* by Peter Geiermann, 1946, p.50).
- ii) “*If we consulted the Bible only, we should still have to keep the Sabbath day, that is, Saturday. We Catholics do not accept the Bible as the only rule of faith. Besides the Bible we have the authority of the living*” 38

Church as a rule to guide us. We accept her change of Sabbath to Sunday. We frankly say, yes, the Church made this change, made this law, as she made many other laws, for instance the Friday abstinence, the unmarried priesthood, the regulation of Catholic marriages, and a thousand other laws". – (A Course in Religion for Catholic High Schools and Academies, Vol. 1 (1936 ed) p.51, by John Laux; AND Father P. Kraemer, Catholic Church Extension Society, Chicago, Illinois).

- iii) *"Which church does the whole civilized world obey? Protestants call us every horrible name they can think of, and yet by their solemn act of keeping Sunday, they acknowledge the power of the Catholic Church. The Bible says: 'Remember the Sabbath day to keep it Holy'. But the Catholic Church says, 'No, keep the first day of the week', and the whole world bows in obedience." – (Father T. Enright, Kansas City, Mo.)*

It is such boasts as the above that have led some people to consider that Sunday-keeping is the seal of authority of the Roman Catholic Church and the Mark of the Beast. However, one should not hold such a view; the mark of the beast is something much more than that.

Apart from claiming divine right to change laws, another reason proffered to make Sunday acceptable is that Jesus rose on Sunday. But the truth is that Jesus died on Wednesday late afternoon and rose on Saturday late afternoon. Publications abound that amply demonstrate this truth: for instance, *The Testimony of Truth*, No. 536, July 2008, pp. 11-22, obtainable FREE from People of the Living God, 366 Cove Creek Road, McMinnville, TN 37110-9512, USA; AND *Christianity Versus Churchianity* – Part 2, pp.4-14, obtainable FREE from God's Watchman, P.O.Box 558, St. Maries, Idaho 83861, USA; AND my earlier piece about *The Resurrection of Jesus Christ*.

However, even if we accept the false claim that Jesus rose on Sunday morning, does God say anywhere in the Bible that he has changed his Sabbath

day because of that? Has God in any place in the Bible said he has now blessed the first day and hallowed it? Has God in any place of the Bible COMMANDED men to remember Sunday and keep it holy? The Resurrection and the Creation are two distinct important events, each of them deserving commemoration in its own right. Hence, commemoration of the Resurrection (which, by the way, is also done annually at Easter) should not have been used as the reason to discontinue the weekly commemoration of creation which our Creator had instituted and commanded (Genesis 2:2-3, Exodus 20:8-11).

One interesting question is: If things had continued as they were without the Catholic Church using force and persecution to later effect the change to Sunday, would Christians TODAY demand a change to Sunday observance? Surely not! We wouldn't, especially as we are splintered into countless denominations with differing voices. For instance, is there any Christian denomination now even dreaming of demanding that the Day of Pentecost be observed, say, every Tuesday? None – simply because nobody has any reason or basis for such a demand. Likewise would it have been with the Sabbath observance – nobody would now have any reason or basis to even dream of asking for a change to Sunday observance!

Another interesting question is: Is there any day from 1st January to 31st December that Christendom has adopted and set aside as annual Creation Commemoration Day? (Not just the secular environment-oriented Earth Day or Creation Day). Does it mean we are atheists, believers of myth theory, evolutionists, or whatever? Or, better still, why don't we take the weekly one God Himself sanctified and instituted?

Chapter Five

SOME IMPORTANT COMMENTS

5.1 The observance, now, of the regular weekly Sabbath should no longer involve the offering of sacrifices. It should only involve rest from work and gathering in solemn assembly to worship God and learn from the Scriptures. It can also involve charitable Christian services like visiting the sick, orphan, widow and needy to pray for them and share with them. It can also involve evangelization.

It is sad to see how some present-day Christians that keep the Sabbath also go all the way to observe various feasts and ordinances or make sacrifices. In fact, they have gone back to the practices of Old Testament Judaism or into spiritism. This is a great error and is very unchristian. It even causes problems for other Christians who just assemble and worship God on Saturdays, because people mistakenly class them with those groups and shun them.

Observing God's weekly Sabbath has no link with delving into sacrifices and observances which were abolished by Christ's death on the cross.

5.2 Sabbath-keeping is not the "Seal of God", nor is Sunday-keeping the "Mark of the Beast", as is proclaimed by some people. Sabbath-keeping does not secure salvation for anyone. Salvation is through faith in Jesus Christ. Some Sabbath keepers will go to hell and some to heaven. Likewise, some Sunday keepers will go to heaven and some to hell. All depends on one's relationship and walk with Christ.

However, Sabbath-keeping is one of God's various commandments, all of which true Christians know that they are obliged, out of love, to keep. (John 14:23).

5.3 Notice that this book does not condemn worshipping God on Sunday as being unacceptable before Him. God can be and should be worshipped at all times. This book rather explains and stresses the NECESSITY of not ignoring the God-ordained Sabbath observance.

I Samuel 15:22 says obedience is better than sacrifice.

Dear friend, if this book has been a blessing to you, then own a copy for reference; and, please, do the good work of helping your friends and others get copies of this liberating truth. May God bless you.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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NOTE TO THE PUBLISHERS

The cover design and illustration is by the author and is aimed at portraying that Sabbath is linked with Creation. This cover could be laminated or glossed. The prints of the book should not be too tiny so as not to discourage the average reader.

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