

Lord of the Sabbath

Program #29

Tired of Being Fooled about Sunday

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I will never forget the day when a Christian friend told me that keeping Sunday as the holy day for Christians was not taught, and could not even be found, in the Bible! My eyebrows went up as my mouth dropped open. I could not believe what I was hearing.

I was raised and married in the Roman Catholic Church. Our three sons were all confirmed as Roman Catholics. Our oldest son is a graduate of Notre Dame University. I had been taught in “Sunday school” that missing mass on Sunday without a valid excuse was a mortal sin. If such a mortal sin was not confessed and forgiven by God you would be condemned to hell. Keeping Sunday holy sounded pretty important to me as a boy.

Later, as a grown man, and still a member of the Roman Catholic religion, this friend tells me in all seriousness that I do not need to go to church on Sunday AT ALL! I knew that this man carried a well-worn Bible in a briefcase along with a notebook to some kind of religious service at an auditorium every Saturday. He typically spent a good part of a day there in group worship and fellowship. It all seemed sort of weird to me.

I had been baptized in the Roman Catholic Church as an infant. My parents almost always went to mass on Sunday. Those dedicated, unmarried, ordained sisters in their black habits taught the Catechism to me every Sunday morning for years and years in preparation for the sacraments of my first Holy Communion and my “adult” Confirmation.

I spent my summers on a farm with my aunt and uncle. Every Sunday, these tough bib-overhauled farmers donned suits and ties and went to the small rural Holy Rosary Roman Catholic Church down a dirt road. And, they did not do any harvesting work on Sunday. It was their day of rest and worship. Could they ALL be WRONG too?

Now, I was aware there were some major differences between the religions of the Roman Catholic Church and those of the Protestant and Orthodox Churches. I could not define them very well as a boy, but I knew they existed.

Two of my best childhood friends in the neighborhood were Lutherans. One died suddenly at about age 10 and I remember my mother said I could not enter the Lutheran Church for his funeral service. It was against our “religion.” I did not understand that at the time but I really did not want to go to a funeral of a playmate anyway, so I let it go.

That Lutheran Church was just a half city block away from my house. I knew Denny went to that church with his family on Sunday. They would walk past my house on the way. I remember my parents would be upset each Sunday because the Lutherans would

park their cars on the street in front of our house so that there was no place for us to park our car when we came back from mass. The Lutheran Church had no private parking lot.

It was clear to me that Lutherans went to Church on Sunday just like us Catholics. There was also a Presbyterian Church at the end of our alley. We used to play hide and seek around its grounds and buildings with girls who lived adjacent to the Church. One girl was the Pastor's daughter but she was not as friendly as the other Catholic girls. On Sunday afternoons, we could not play hide and seek there because people were still in the Church either having worship, or choir practice, as we could hear the singing in the alley.

So, it certainly wasn't just the Roman Catholic Church that assembled on Sunday for group worship. Could these Protestant Churches also be **WRONG** about Sunday worship? It seemed incredible. I had to check it out for myself. That came down to studying the Holy Bible for the first time in my life to see what it said about the **LORD'S** day of rest and worship.

What has my study of God's word over the years revealed about the seventh-day Sabbath?

- 1) It was none other than the pre-incarnate Jesus, as the Word of God, who spoke and created all things including a rest on the seventh day of His creation week.
- 2) It was at that time, by this same Word of God, that the seventh-day of the week was blessed and sanctified as holy to God.
- 3) When the God of Abraham brought forth a chosen people from all the families of the earth to be His peculiar nation called Israel, He gave them Ten Commandments to live by in covenant with Him and wrote them in stone for them with His very own finger.
- 4) The Fourth of those Ten Commandments was to "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it Holy" and it was to be a sign of their relationship to God.
- 5) These Ten Commandments were to be observed forever by His people in all their generations.
- 6) God's wrath so burned against His people for profaning His Sabbaths that He destroyed them in the wilderness and did not allow them to enter His Promised Land.
- 7) Jesus, the promised Messiah of Israel, kept the Sabbath day holy and worshipped at the local synagogue each week on the seventh day.
- 8) There is not one example in the Bible of Jesus attending a holy convocation at a synagogue, a church, or anywhere else, on a Sunday.
- 9) There is not one verse in Holy Scripture where Jesus instructs His disciples to keep Sunday, the first day of the week, holy in memory of Him instead of the seventh-day

Sabbath which God blessed and sanctified by His Word.

10) Jesus even calls Himself the Lord of the Sabbath in the New Testament as part of the New or Renewed Covenant in His shed blood.

11) Jesus says the Sabbath was made for man (not just for Israel).

12) All the Apostles continued to keep the Sabbath day holy decades AFTER Jesus had risen from the dead and ascended into heaven at the Father's right hand.

13) There is NO teaching, not one verse, by the Apostles after Pentecost to either Jew or Gentile in the Church of God that Sunday is the new "Day of the Lord" for "Christians."

14) The first mention of any kind of group worship on Sunday by Christians was about 135 AD almost a century AFTER Jesus ascended to heaven and a generation AFTER the last Apostle (John the Evangelist) had died.

15) The motivation by Bishops of the Churches to move away from the Sabbath day was initiated during the Second Century mostly out of growing disdain for the Jews (thought of as the murderers of Jesus) and for anything Jewish including their Feasts (especially Passover), their Sabbaths, their Fasts and their Dietary Laws.

16) By the Third Century, the claimed conversion of Emperor Constantine to Christianity after a vision in the sky, combined with the hatred of the Jews by the government of Rome, the citizens of Rome and the Church of Rome, all led to the official decree at the Council of Nicea in 325 AD to ban Sabbath-keeping and uniformly institute Sunday-keeping in all the Churches throughout the Roman Empire under the authority of the Bishop of Rome.

If any of you hearing or reading this message disagrees with any of these perceptions of mine, I hope you will contact me. I'd appreciate learning where and how I am wrong. However, if these are truths revealed from the very word of God, and the historic record of the early Christian church are accurate, I see no honorable choice but to stop keeping Sunday holy and instead keep the Saturday Sabbath holy. After all, the seventh-day Sabbath was commanded by God and kept by Jesus and His Apostles; although not in the ways the Pharisees taught and kept it.

But, this was only a start for me in a new way to walk with the Lord of the Sabbath. It took years of remembering and keeping the Sabbath holy BEFORE I could understand why Jesus said it was "made for man." It significantly changed my life, my mind, my spirit and my hope for the better. I could NEVER return to Sunday-keeping as it is practiced by the majority of main-line Christian Churches. Out of this knowledge and experience comes my zeal for the Lord of the Sabbath and for keeping His day holy.

I must confess that I was more angry with myself than with those who had duped, fooled and deceived me. I don't think that any of my false teachers were intentionally trying to

deceive me. They were following what they believed. But, how could I be so gullible to accept what men and women taught me without checking it myself against Scripture?

Having eventually become a convicted Sabbath-keeper (for me this includes both the weekly and annual Sabbath Feasts of the LORD), what should I do with this knowledge? Should I keep it to myself? Should I hide this demonstrated better way to acknowledge and worship God under a bushel? Should I not tell at least my close friends and family about the Sabbath and the Lord of the Sabbath? Was I ashamed of the Lord of the Sabbath and how He, and now I, worshipped God?

Obviously, through this Lord of the Sabbath radio program series, I felt led to write down and proclaim to anyone who will listen what has been revealed to me. Don't forget, my own search began when a friend in Christ shocked me by proclaiming that Sunday-keeping was NOT commanded in the Bible for Christians. It may cause you to also reflect on what you believe and why, and to test your own beliefs against the word of God.

In any event, it may be unfair to expect anyone to compare the Church's Sunday-way of worship with the Lord's Sabbath-way unless you have experienced both. I can't explain why I was led, or drawn, to discovering the twenty-four hour seventh-day Sabbath as the ONLY day of the week blessed and sanctified by God after decades of Sunday keeping in a Church building for only an hour. But, I am truly grateful to God for revealing His way to me. Praise God! Praise Jesus, the Lord of the Sabbath!

I admit to becoming tired of being fooled about Sunday being the Day of the Lord for Christians. It is still troubling to me to hear Church and ministry leaders speaking authoritatively about Sunday being the Lord's Day for Christians based on flimsy, and easily refutable, scriptural evidence. They are primarily repeating their tradition.

They often have fine-sounding arguments and interpretations to justify their beliefs and behavior. But, in trying to be as a Berean, once you realize that they are teaching the traditions of men, and not the true word of God, it makes you wonder just what else they teach that is false? You wonder just how well they know Jesus when they can't grasp and accept His very own claim from His lips of being the Lord of the Sabbath? Is there any believer anywhere who will argue that Jesus actually meant that He was the Lord of Sunday and sanctified the first day of the week but never mentioned it?

For almost a decade I avoided telling family, friends and business associates, including Christians, about my Sabbath keeping. If someone invited me to play golf on Saturday or give a motivational speech on Friday night, I would decline usually saying I had other plans. This was not really a lie, but it was not the whole truth either.

I did not want to get into an argument about the Sabbath day. I did not want to disparage others Sunday religious practice. It seemed futile. I did not want to come off as "holier than thou" because I kept the Sabbath of the Lord holy. Besides, I often felt that when it came to the other Ten Commandments, my sins may have been more crimson than theirs.

Another Biblical term for this process of teaching falsely is deceiving people. Now, if any person, even a minister or servant of God, is intentionally practicing the deceit of people, it would be lying. Right? That violates the Ninth Commandment. And according to Rev. 21: 8, all unrepentant liars will suffer the second death in the lake of fire.

Are you surprised that any teacher would intentionally teach that Sunday is the Lord's day when they know deep inside it to be false compared to Scripture? Think again! In hierachal Church organizations you may well find teachers singing the party line for the sake of unity (and a paycheck) rather than admitting their own doubts or disagreements.

But, I suspect most proponents of Sunday-keeping have been taught Church traditions and doctrines by elders, parents and theologians whom they respected. Of course, if the teacher is deceived, their students will be deceived also. And, what seems clear is that when anyone is deceived, by definition, they do not realize it. So a deceived teacher of God can teach falsely without knowing it and unintentionally deceive their listeners.

Our Bible has this human phenomena wisely noted. In Mat. 15: 14, Jesus used this analogy about the Pharisees concerning their traditions on washing hands before eating:

Let them alone. They are blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind leads the blind, both will fall into a ditch.

I imagine that by now I have heard every conceivable reason why professed believers in Jesus teach traditions contrary to the Fourth Commandment of God. I don't know what else to call them but blind guides and leaders who will lead their blind disciples to both fall into a ditch. I will be content to take the advice of Jesus and just let them alone.

But, YOU surely do not need to remain blind to the facts concerning the true "day of the Lord." You do not need to follow blind leaders into a ditch off the path that God made for you to walk. If you would like a pamphlet titled "Ten Reasons Christians Don't Keep the Fourth Commandment" and their fallacies, request it and LawstSheep Ministries will send you one free of charge.

As my own zeal for Sabbath-keeping has grown, I no longer hide my light under a bushel. For example, I play tennis in a league where matches are set by mutual agreement. Since many opponents are younger and are still working, they often suggest playing our match on Saturday. I used to just ignore their suggestion and say, "No, Saturday would not be good for me, how about Sunday?" I think they think I am Jewish and practice Judaism.

I am amazed by how many Christians have no problem playing a tennis match on Sunday; their professed Lord's day. Many will play on Sunday morning since they view Sunday morning worship at their Church as optional. It seems they remain blind regarding God's will on when to worship Him. Of course, it does not help if their blind

teacher may also be openly playing tennis or golf on Sunday after their hour of morning worship.

A tough question for me, and for other Sabbath-keeping Christians, is what is the ultimate fate in God's view, and in His judgment, of those who believe in Jesus as Savior but, being blind, teach falsely and deceive their students? And, even tougher what is the fate of those who blindly accept and follow such a false teacher into a ditch? These sheep are not necessarily expected to have the spiritual knowledge and wisdom of a shepherd called by God to teach the word of God and to protect the flock from harm.

I have some good news and some bad news about these questions. The good news is that it appears that God will have mercy on His sheep who sin without foreknowledge or forethought. We have the example of both Jesus and Stephen praying to the Father to forgive their murderers for they did not know what they were doing. Their murderers were deceived and did not know the truth about who Jesus was. They responded and reacted to the actions and words of their own religious and governmental leaders. Some thought they were doing the will of God in killing these accused blasphemers.

Do you see the uncanny similarity here with those who disobey the Sabbath commands at the teaching and example of their own religious leaders? Most Sunday keepers also perceive that they are doing a good work by worshipping God on Sunday. So, I would hope and pray that God would be merciful to anyone who has been deceived about God's will for the day He commanded us to rest and to worship Him.

Now, for the blind religious teachers and Church leaders who proclaim that Sunday is the Day of the Lord for Christians, I would be a bit more concerned. Look what Jesus said about the religious leaders and teachers of His day. Look at what He said about the chance of the Pharisees entering into the kingdom of heaven. It is found in Mat. 5: 18-20:

For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled. Whoever therefore breaks one of the least of these commandments, and teaches men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever does and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. For I say to you, that unless your righteousness exceeds the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven.

The full meaning of this passage is interpreted in various ways. The part I am focusing on are those who break even the least of the commandments AND teach men so, will be called the least in the kingdom of heaven. I have little doubt that anyone who breaks the Fourth Commandment AND teaches men to also break it will be least in the kingdom of heaven. Do you doubt it? This is straight from the lips of Jesus, the Lord of the Sabbath.

What does a religious leader, bishop, minister, pastor or priest who does not keep the Sabbath holy AND so teaches his students that it has been done away and instead

declares Sunday as a holy day for Christians say about this verse? Please ask him (or her) for me. Aren't you curious about the answer you will get? Explain to me how the Ten Commandments, or just the Fourth, has passed away but the tiniest jot or tittle of the law of God will not have passed away before heaven and earth pass away. The heaven and earth that existed at the time when Jesus spoke these words are still with us, aren't they?

Do you know what a jot or tittle in the law of God is? A "jot" refers to the smallest letter in Hebrew alphabet: the "yohd." It is made with one stroke of a pen similar to what in English would be an apostrophe. And, a "tittle" is a small extension of a letter similar to a serif in an English typeface style. Jesus' point is very clear isn't it? Not one word in the law of God in the first five books of Moses will pass away until heaven and earth passes away. The Fourth Commandment has not passed away. Jesus said so. Jesus kept the Sabbath command to the letter in truth and in the right spirit regarding the weightier matters of God's law. Why would we who claim to follow Jesus do otherwise because some ordained minister or priest or bishop keeps Sunday and tells us to do the same?

What this scripture seems to say to me is that even a deceiving false teacher who teaches against the Sabbath, but who believes in Jesus, will make it to the kingdom of heaven. This is therefore not a salvation issue. However, the bad news is that God's judgment will render that teacher to be least in the kingdom of heaven! Now, I doubt that most Sunday-keeping and proclaiming popes, evangelists, bishops, pastors and teachers will be very happy to find that their place in heaven after all their good deeds, works and wonders will make them least of everyone there. Surely as dedicated servants of God, they might rightly anticipate a more exquisite mansion in the sky?

I will be pleasantly surprised if by obeying and teaching the law regarding Sabbath-keeping, as I am trying to do, will result in me being called great in the kingdom of heaven. That is quite a reward. Amen! I'll take it. But, I did not come to this conviction to gain a reward in heaven. The truth is I found Sabbath keeping to be a reward in this present life on the earth. After all Jesus said the Sabbath was made for me as a human made in the image of God!

Now, while I feel that being the least in heaven may be the effect of ignoring the Sabbath, I want to make it clear that I hold nothing against any Sunday worshipper. I certainly believe one can worship God any and every day of the week. In my opinion, the deceit issue; the disobedience issue; the sin issue is about NOT remembering and keeping holy the Sabbath. So, I hope that any of you who are Sunday keepers will at least consider what I have taught about the Lord of the Sabbath and the day of the Lord. I hope you will better understand why I no longer go to a Church on Sunday. But, if we both see Jesus as more important than the Sabbath day itself, we can hopefully remain friends in Christ despite our difference in worship days or practice.

However, I feel that I can't stop today with my possibly mild view of what God reveals about the fate of Sunday teachers. For starters, there are prominent Christian preachers who have a more dire understanding of the phrase "least in the kingdom of heaven." One

is the national preacher John MacArthur. He is heard on many Christian radio stations around the world and is a frequent guest on the Larry King television show concerning Christianity and related topics.

Here is what John MacArthur says in “The MacArthur Study Bible” concerning being the “least in the kingdom” on the note on Page 1400. And I quote:

“Any violation of God’s law makes one least in the kingdom, which is equal to being outside the kingdom and under condemnation. The one who keeps God’s law is great, which is equal to being in the kingdom and in God’s salvation. In Chapter 13, the parables of the tares and the dragnet indicate that in the visible, external kingdom of those who identify with God there will be true and false people. The “least” refers to those who will be judged and cast out while the “great” shall be included and rewarded.

Wow, teaching against God’s law by MacArthur’s definition sounds like a condemnation to hell fire. Of course, John is a Sunday-teaching pastor. Now, you know there must be more to this story or he would be one of the “least” in the kingdom.

My time is already up today. Next week I will share some of the other theories about how God views and will judge those who deny His Sabbath and keep Sunday instead, or perhaps no day at all, holy to the LORD. They might surprise you. They might scare you. This is Brother Kenny praying that, until the next Sabbath day, God will be gracious to you.