

## *The Sure Word Bible Studies* *Lesson 16*

### **The Test (Part Two)**

In the previous lesson we learned that the Bible teaches the seventh day Sabbath is the Lord's Day, the true Sabbath. Yet many churches still keep Sunday as the day of worship. Does the Bible in any way support this? To be honest in our search for truth we must look at all the biblical passages that may support the first day as the day of worship. We will begin by looking at all the texts that mention the first day -

**Matthew 28:1** *"Now after the Sabbath, as the first day of the week began to dawn, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came to see the tomb."*

This text tells us the Sabbath was past. Two days are mentioned, the Sabbath and the first, drawing a distinction between the two.

**Mark 16:1,2** *"Now when the Sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices, that they might come and anoint Him. Very early in the morning, on the first day of the week, they came to the tomb when the sun had risen."*

**Verse 9** *"Now when He rose early on the first day of the week, He appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom He had cast seven demons."*

Again two days are mentioned, the Sabbath and the first day. But no change is made.

**Luke 23:54 - 56** *"That day was the Preparation, and the Sabbath drew near. And the women who had come with Him from Galilee followed after, and they observed the tomb and how His body was laid. Then they returned and prepared spices and fragrant oils. And they rested on the Sabbath according to the commandment."*

**Luke 24:1** *"Now on the first day of the week, very early in the morning, they, and certain other women with them, came to the tomb bringing the spices which they had prepared."*

This passage "lines up" the three days in order -

1. Preparation Day (Good Friday) - verse 54
2. Sabbath (Saturday) - verse 56
3. First day (Resurrection Sunday) - verse 1 of chapter 24

As we learned in lesson four, these days were the fulfillment of the events that the annual "feast days" of the sanctuary service pointed forward to:

1. Feast of Passover, which pointed to Christ's sacrificial death.
2. Feast of Unleavened Bread, which pointed to Christ's burial.
3. Feast of Firstfruits, which pointed to Christ's resurrection.

**Next - John 20:1** *"Now on the first day of the week Mary Magdalene went to the tomb early, while it was still dark, and saw that the stone had been taken away from the tomb."*

John is restating what the other gospel writers have already mentioned. But note verse 19 where he mentions a meeting held on the first day:

**Verse 19** *"Then, the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in the midst, and said to them, "Peace be with you."*

It is clear that this was not a worship meeting. John writes they were *"assembled for fear of the Jews."* The disciples were afraid the Jews would have them crucified too! In fact, up until that time, they did not even believe Jesus had been resurrected.

**Compare Mark 16:9-11** *"Now when He rose early on the first day of the week, He appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom He had cast seven demons. She went and told those who had been with Him, as they mourned and wept. And when they heard that He was alive and had been seen by her, they did not believe."*

The disciples did not believe until they saw Jesus for themselves later that day. The next passage that mentions the first day is in the book of Acts which we discussed in the last lesson.

**Acts 20:7,8** *"Now on the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul, ready to depart the next day, spoke to them and continued his message until midnight. There were many lamps in the upper room where they were gathered together."*

There are three points we need to recognize in this account.

1. It was nighttime - *"there were many lamps."* Paul spoke *"until midnight."*
2. This could have been the beginning of the first day which would be a Saturday night meeting (in Bible times the days began at sunset).
3. Breaking bread does not make it a holy day or a Sabbath, this is a Jewish term that simply meant they ate together. According to Acts 2:46, they *"broke bread"* everyday.

This was a farewell meeting for Paul. They sensed they would never see him again as this was to be his last missionary journey. In no way does this text suggest that Sunday was a holy day.

The next passage is found in I Corinthians.

**I Corinthians 16:1 - 3** *"Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given orders to the churches of Galatia, so you must do also: On the first day of the week let each one of you lay something aside, storing up as he may prosper, that there be no collections when I come. And when I come, whomever you approve by your letters I will send to bear your gift to Jerusalem."*

This was not a Sunday school offering being taken up in church as some suggest. Note the following points.

1. The term *"lay something aside"* refers to keeping it at home.
2. *"storing up"* meant it was to be put aside until Paul came to gather it. Paul was calling for a collection for the saints suffering in the famine in Jerusalem at the time. This is confirmed in the book of Acts.

**Acts 11:27 - 30** *"And in these days prophets came from Jerusalem to Antioch. Then one of them, named Agabus, stood up and showed by the Spirit that there was going to be a great famine throughout all the world, which also happened in the days of Claudius Caesar. Then the disciples, each according to his ability, determined to send relief to the brethren dwelling in Judea (Jerusalem). This they also did, and sent it to the elders by the hands of Barnabas and Saul."*

In none of the previous texts mentioning the first day is there any evidence of a change made regarding the day of worship by Christ or the apostles.

Now we will look at some other texts used to support Sunday worship even though neither Sunday or the first day are mentioned in them.

**Colossians 2:16** *"So let no one judge you in food or in drink, or regarding a festival or a new moon or sabbaths,"*

**Verse 17** *"which are a shadow of things to come, but the substance is of Christ."*

Before we draw any conclusions on this verse, note verse 17 says, *"which are a shadow of things to come."* These are the ceremonial days celebrated in the annual feasts. Note the following evidence.

**Hebrews 10:1** *"For the law, having a shadow of the good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with these same sacrifices, which they offer continually year by year, make those who approach perfect."*

This text in Hebrews is also speaking of the laws concerning the sacrifices made in the sanctuary services and yearly ceremonies which pointed forward to Christ and *"the good things to come."* What is often overlooked is these feast days were also called "sabbaths."

Read the entire chapter 23 in Leviticus that describe these yearly ceremonies. After reading the chapter, note the following verses.

**Leviticus 23:37** *"These are the feasts of the LORD which you shall proclaim to be holy convocations, to offer an offering made by fire to the LORD, a burnt offering and a grain offering, a sacrifice and drink offerings, everything on its day"*

These feasts described in Leviticus 23, because they were holydays and no work was to be done on those days, they were called sabbaths. But they were not to be confused with the seventh day Sabbath of the fourth Commandment. Note verse 38.

**Verse 38** *"Besides the Sabbaths of the LORD, besides your gifts, besides all your vows, and besides all your freewill offerings which you give to the LORD."*

The Hebrew word translated "beside" means "separate." In other words, these feasts or annual sabbaths were to be separate from the weekly seventh day Sabbath. Plus the ceremonial "sabbaths" could fall on any day of the week. Note the next verse.

**Verse 39** *"Also on the fifteenth day of the seventh month, when you have gathered in the fruit of the land, you shall keep the feast of the LORD for seven days; on the first day there shall be a sabbath-rest, and on the eighth day a sabbath."*

Just as Christmas falls on a different day of the week each year, so the "fifteenth day of the seventh month" would fall on a different day each year. These ceremonial sabbaths were to be celebrated until the Messiah came. Then when the good things which they pointed to, Christ, came, they were no longer necessary. Again, this is speaking of the annual ceremonial sabbaths and not the weekly seventh day Sabbath contained in the law of the Ten Commandments.

The next passage is used to say it doesn't matter which day we keep as the Sabbath -

**Romans 14:1 - 6** *"Receive one who is weak in the faith, but not to disputes over doubtful things. For one believes he may eat all things, but he who is weak eats only vegetables. Let not him who eats despise him who does not eat, and let not him who does not eat judge him who eats; for God has received him. Who are you to judge another's servant? To his own master he stands or falls. Indeed, he will be made to stand, for God is able to make him stand. One person esteems one day above another; another esteems every day alike. Let each be fully convinced in his own mind. He who observes the day, observes it to the Lord; and he who does not observe the day, to the Lord he does not observe it. He who eats, eats to the Lord, for he gives God thanks; and he who does not eat, to the Lord he does not eat, and gives God thanks."*

As discussed in Lesson One, the context of this chapter in Romans is judging others. But some quote verses 5 and 6 and use them to argue that it doesn't matter which day is kept as the Sabbath day. They quote the following -

*"One person esteems one day above another; another esteems every day alike. Let each be fully convinced in his own mind. He who observes the day, observes it to the Lord; and he who does not observe the day, to the Lord he does not observe it."*

This is verse 5 and only part of verse 6. They leave out the part about judging others and in doing so they are taking it out of context. The truth is that neither the Sabbath nor the first day is mentioned in this passage and Paul's intentions were not to say it didn't matter which day was kept as the Sabbath.

Today many preachers read things into these texts they do not say and in doing so they are saying *"Thus says the Lord – when the Lord has not spoken."* (Ezekiel 22:28)

Many say the reason for not keeping the Sabbath commandment is that it is not mentioned in the New Testament as the others are. But the Sabbath is mentioned in the New Testament in at least two places.

**Luke 23:56** *"Then they returned and prepared spices and fragrant oils. And they rested on the Sabbath according to the commandment."*

**Hebrews 4:4** *"For He has spoken in a certain place of the seventh day in this way: "And God rested on the seventh day from all His works"*

**Verse 9** *"There remains therefore a rest for the people of God."*

The word translated "rest" in this verse is the Greek word "sabbatismos" which literally means "Sabbath rest."

**Hebrews 4:9 actually says,** *"There remains a Sabbath rest for the people of God,"* and some of the modern translations of the Bible correctly translate it this way.

It is true, there remains a Sabbath rest. The Sabbath has never changed, men have only thought to change it. Those who "rest" on the Sabbath are people who placing their trust in God's word alone. Keeping the Sabbath command demonstrates whether or not we trust completely God's Word in spite of what the church may teach or any preacher may say.

As was mentioned in the last lesson, keeping the Sabbath is a test in the sense that if one knows the word of God and refuses to honor it, that is evidence that they:

- 1) Do not really trust God's Word, just as Adam and Eve in the garden.
- 2) They possess a rebellious spirit. They do what they want regardless.

The issue here not about this or that day, whether a person worships on Friday, Saturday or Sunday. The issue is about trusting God and being willing to follow His Word. And instead of being a sign that we are attempting to work our way to

heaven, keeping the Sabbath is a sign that we “rest,” in God, that we trust in His Word. And because the Sabbath is more than just a day - it’s a holy day which God has given to us “*for our good always.*” There are blessings in keeping the Sabbath according to God’s commandment.

Many people after learning the truth about the Sabbath have become concerned about their failure to keep it in the past.

**Acts 17:30** *"Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent."*

The word "*repent*" doesn't mean saying "I'm sorry." Repent means to "change one's mind." The Bible gives us assurance that the past is not counted against us when after learning the truth, we choose to change and do what’s right.

In this study we have looked at the texts commonly used by many Christian preachers and teachers to support worship on Sunday. In the previous study we looked at all the biblical evidence for keeping the seventh day Sabbath.

If you have not already, it’s now up to you to make an intelligent decision based on the evidence. When we learn truth – we must be willing to follow it. Remember the test is trusting God’s Word and doing it!

**Response Questions:**

1. After this additional study, I now agree Saturday is the Sabbath and the "*Lords Day*" of Scripture. Yes\_\_ No\_\_
  
2. I now believe I should keep the Sabbath day holy, that is, set it aside for worship and communion with God. Yes\_\_ No \_\_
  
3. Now I am ready to make the commitment to begin keeping the seventh day Sabbath. Yes\_\_ No \_\_

In our next lesson we will study about commitment.

© 2013 Bill Chambers