

THE SABBATH IN HISTORY

1. WHEN and by what acts was the Sabbath made?

“And on *the seventh day* God ended His work which He had made; and He *rested* on the seventh day from all His work which He had made. And God *blessed* the seventh day, and *sanctified* it: because that in it He had rested from all His work which God created and made.” **Genesis 2:2, 3.**

2. What division of time is marked off by the Sabbath?

The week.

NOTES — One of the most striking collateral confirmations of the Mosaic history of the creation is the general adoption of the division of time into weeks, which extends from the Christian states of Europe to the remote shores of Hindustan, and has equally prevailed among the Hebrews, the Egyptians, Chinese, Greeks, Romans, and northern barbarians,—nations some of whom had little or no intercourse with others, and were not even known by name to the Hebrews.” *Horne’s “Introduction to the Critical Study and Knowledge of the Holy Scriptures,” Vol. I, page 69, edition 1841.*

“Seven has been the ancient and honored number among the nations of the earth. They have measured their time by weeks from the beginning. The original of this was the Sabbath of God, as Moses has given the reasons for it in his writings.” *“Brief Dissertation on the First Three Chapters of Genesis,” by Dr. Lyman Coleman, page 26.*

Genesis 7:4, 10; 8:10, 12, show that the week was known at the time of the flood.

3. How widely recognized is the seventh-day Sabbath in the different languages of the world today?

It is very generally so recognized.

NOTE — Some years ago the late Dr. William Mead Jones, of London, published a “Chart of the Week,” showing the style of the weekly cycle and the designations of the different days of the week in one hundred and sixty different languages. This chart shows very vividly that the seven-day period, or week,

was known from the most ancient times, and that in no fewer than one hundred and eight of these languages the seventh day is designated as the Sabbath, or holy day. The following is from this chart:—

<i>English</i>	<i>The seventh day</i>	<i>The Sabbath</i>
<i>Hebrew</i>	<i>Shabbath</i>	<i>Sabbath</i>
<i>Greek</i>	<i>Sabbaton</i>	<i>Sabbath</i>
<i>Latin</i>	<i>Sabbatum</i>	<i>Sabbath</i>
<i>Arabic</i>	<i>Assab</i>	<i>the Sabbath</i>
<i>Persian</i>	<i>Shambin</i>	<i>Sabbath</i>
<i>Armenian</i>	<i>Shapat</i>	<i>Sabbath</i>
<i>Turkish</i>	<i>Yomessabt</i>	<i>Day the Sabbath</i>
<i>Abyssinian</i>	<i>Sanbat</i>	<i>Sabbath</i>
<i>Russian</i>	<i>Subbota</i>	<i>Sabbath</i>
<i>Polish</i>	<i>Sobota</i>	<i>Sabbath</i>
<i>Hindustani</i>	<i>Shamba</i>	<i>Sabbath</i>
<i>Malay</i>	<i>Ari-Sabtu Day</i>	<i>Sabbath</i>
<i>Afghan</i>	<i>Shamba</i>	<i>Sabbath</i>
<i>German</i>	<i>Samstag</i>	<i>Sabbath</i>
<i>Prussian</i>	<i>Sabatico</i>	<i>Sabbath</i>
<i>French</i>	<i>Samedi</i>	<i>Sabbath day</i>
<i>Italian</i>	<i>Sabbato</i>	<i>Sabbath</i>
<i>Spanish</i>	<i>Sabado</i>	<i>Sabbath</i>
<i>Portuguese</i>	<i>Sabbado</i>	<i>Sabbath</i>

4. What reason did God assign at Sinai for having blessed and set apart the seventh day as a day of holy rest?

“For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that. in them is, and rested the seventh day.” **Exodus 20:11.**

5. What promise did God make to Israel, through Jeremiah, if they would keep the Sabbath?

“And it shall come to pass, if ye diligently hearken unto Me, saith the Lord, to bring in no burden through the gates of this city on the Sabbath day, but hallow the Sabbath day, to do no work therein; *then shall there enter into the gates of this city kings and princes sitting upon the throne of David, riding in chariots and on horses, they, and*

their princes, the men of Judah, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem: and *this city shall remain forever.*” **Jeremiah 17:24, 25.**

6. What did He say would happen if they did not hallow the Sabbath day?

“But if ye will not hearken unto Me to hallow the Sabbath day, and not to bear a burden, even entering in at the gates of Jerusalem on the Sabbath day; then will I kindle a fire in the gates thereof, and it shall devour the palaces of Jerusalem, and it shall not be quenched.” **Verse 27.**

7. What befell the city of Jerusalem when it was captured by Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, in 588 B.C.?

“And all the vessels of the house of God . . . he brought to Babylon. And they burnt the house of God, and brake down the wall of Jerusalem, and burnt all the palaces thereof with fire.” **2Chronicles 36:18, 19.**

8. Why was this done?

“To fulfill the word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah, until the land had enjoyed her sabbaths: for as long as she lay desolate she kept sabbath.” **Verse 21.**

NOTE — Israel’s Babylonish captivity, under Nebuchadnezzar and his sons, was seventy years long because that for 420 years, or for six times seventy years,—from the days of Solomon to Nebuchadnezzar’s time,—they had largely neglected the Sabbath. See **Ezekiel 22:8, 26; Jeremiah 25:8–11; 17:24, 27; 2Chronicles 30:15–21.** The seventy years’ desolation made for the 420 years of Sabbath desecration. So during the millennium, or the one thousand years after Christ’s second advent, the whole earth will lie desolate, or keep Sabbath, for one thousand years, because that for six thousand years the world’s inhabitants have disregarded the Sabbath. See this period and condition pointed out in **Revelation 20:1–4; Isaiah 24:1–6; Jeremiah 4:23–27.** The periods of rest and desolation of the land are divinely appointed sabbatical compensations for man’s irreligion, as manifested in Sabbath desecration. They are impressive lessons on the importance of keeping the Sabbath, and the results of breaking and disregarding it.

9. After Israel's restoration from the Babylonian captivity, what did Nehemiah say was the reason for their punishment?

“Then I contended with the nobles of Judah, and said unto them, What evil thing is this that ye do, and *profane the Sabbath day*? Did not your fathers thus, and did not our God bring all this evil upon us, and upon this city? yet ye bring more wrath upon Israel by *profaning the Sabbath*.” **Nehemiah 13:17, 18.**

10. How does he speak of God's giving the Sabbath to Israel?

“Thou camest down also upon mount Sinai, and spakest with them from heaven, and *gavest them right judgments, and true laws, good statutes and commandments: and madest known unto them Thy holy Sabbath*.” **Nehemiah 9:13, 14.**

NOTE — Let it be noted that this text does not say that God *made* the Sabbath then, but simply that He made it *known* to Israel then. They had largely forgotten it while in Egypt. See studies on, “God's Memorial,” and “Reasons for Sabbath Keeping.”

11. How did Christ, while on earth, regard the Sabbath?

“And He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up: and, *as His custom was, He went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day*, and stood up for to read.” **Luke 4:16.**

12. By what did Christ recognize the Sabbath law?

“And He said unto them, It is *lawful* to do well on the Sabbath days.” **Matthew 12:11, 12.**

NOTES —William Prynne says: “It is certain that Christ Himself, His apostles, and the primitive Christians for some good space of time, did constantly observe the seventh-day Sabbath.” “*Dissertation on the Lord's Day Sabbath*,” page 33.

Morer, a learned clergyman of the Church of England, says: “The primitive Christians had a great veneration for the Sabbath, and spent the day in devotion and sermons. And it is not to be doubted that they derived this practice from the apostles themselves, as appears by several scriptures to that purpose.” Morer's “*Dialogues on the Lord's Day*,” page 189.

The historian Neander says: "Opposition to Judaism introduced the particular festival of Sunday very early, indeed, into the place of the Sabbath. . . . The festival of Sunday, like all other festivals, was always only a human ordinance, and it was far from the intentions of the apostles to establish a divine command in this respect,—far from them, and from the early apostolic church, to transfer the laws of the Sabbath to Sunday. Perhaps at the end of the second century a false application of this kind had begun to take place; for men appear by that time to have considered laboring on Sunday as a sin." *Neander's "Church History," Rose's translation, page 186.*

Dr. Lyman Abbott says: "The current notion that Christ and His apostles authoritatively substituted the first day of the week for the seventh, is absolutely without any authority in the New Testament." *Christian Union, June 26, 1890.*

Archdeacon Farrar says: "The Christian church made no formal, but a gradual and almost unconscious transference of the one day to the other." *The Voice From Sinai," page 167.*

13. What was the first effort of the Roman Church in behalf of the recognition of Sunday?

In 196 A.D., Victor, bishop of Rome, attempted to impose on all the churches the Roman custom of having the Passover, or Easter, as it is commonly called, celebrated every year on Sunday. See Bower's "History of the Popes," Vol. I, pages 18, 19.

NOTE.— This, Dr. Bower, in his "*History of the Popes," Vol. I, page 18,* styles "the first essay of papal usurpation."

14. What was one of the principal reasons for convoking the Council of Nice?

"The question relating to the observance of Easter, which was agitated in the time of Anicetus and Polycarp, and afterward in that of Victor, was still undecided. It was one of the principal reasons for convoking the Council of Nice, being the most important subject to be considered after the Arian controversy." *Boyle's "Historical View of the Council of Nice," page 23, edition 1836.*

15. How was the matter finally decided?

“Easter day was fixed on the Sunday immediately following the full moon which was nearest after the vernal equinox.” *Id.*, page 24.

16. In urging the observance of this decree on the churches, what reason did Constantine assign for it?

“Let us have nothing in common with the most hostile rabble of the Jews.” *Id.*, page 52.

17. What had Constantine already done, in 321 A.D., to help forward Sunday to a place of prominence?

He issued an edict requiring “the judges and town people, and the occupation of all trades” to rest on “the venerable day of the sun.” See Encyclopedia Britannica, article “Sunday;” and this work, page 443.

18. Who did Eusebius, bishop of Caesarea, and one of Constantine’s most ardent supporters, say had transferred the obligations of the Sabbath to Sunday?

“All things whatsoever that it was duty to do on the Sabbath, *these WE have transferred to the Lord’s day.*” Eusebius’s “*Commentary on the Psalms,*” quoted in Cox’s “*Sabbath Literature,*” Vol. I, page 361.

19. What did Sylvester, bishop of Rome, 314 A.D. to 337 A.D., do for the Sunday institution by his “apostolic authority”?

He officially changed the title of the first day, calling it the **LORD’S DAY**. See “*Historia Ecclesiastica,*” by M. Ludovicum Lucium, cent. 4, cap. 10, pages 739, 740, edition Basilea, 1624.

20. What did the Council of Laodicea decree in 364 A.D.?

Canon 29. “Christians shall not Judaize and be idle on Saturday [Sabbath], but shall work on that day; but the Lord’s day they shall especially honor.” “*A History of the Councils of the Church,*” Charles Joseph Hefele, Vol. II, page 316.

21. How late did Christians keep the Sabbath?

“Down even to the fifth century, the observance of the Jewish Sabbath was continued in the Christian church.” Lyman Coleman’s “*Ancient Christianity Exemplified,*” chap. 26, sec. 2.

22. How generally does the historian Socrates, who wrote about the middle of the fifth century, say the Sabbath was observed by the Christian churches of his time?

“Although almost all churches throughout the world celebrate the sacred mysteries on the Sabbath of every week, yet the Christians of Alexandria and at Rome, on account of some ancient tradition, refuse to do this. *“Socrates’s “Ecclesiastical History,” book 5, chap. 22.*

23. What day was observed in the dark ages by some of the Waldenses?

“They kept the Sabbath day, observed the ordinance of baptism according to the primitive church, instructed their children in the articles of the Christian faith and the commandments of God.” *Jones’s “Church History,” Vol. II, chap. 5, sec. 4.*

24. Who among the early Reformers raised this question of Sabbath observance?

“Carlstadt held to the divine authority of the Sabbath from the Old Testament.” *“Life of Luther,” by Dr. Barnes Sears, page 402.*

25. What did Luther say of Carlstadt’s Sabbath views?

“Indeed, if Carlstadt were to write further about the Sabbath, Sunday would have to give way, and the Sabbath—that is to say, Saturday—must be kept holy.” *Luther, Against the Celestial Prophets, quoted in “Life of Martin Luther in Pictures,” page 147.*

26. What claim is now made by the Roman Church concerning the change of the Sabbath to Sunday?

“Question.— Have you any other way of proving that the church has power to institute festivals of precept?

“Answer.— Had she not such power, she could not have done that in which all modern religionists agree with her,— she could not have 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.” *“Doctrinal Catechism,” by Rev. Stephen Keenan, page 174.*

NOTE — Through want of sufficient light and investigation, and because of the efforts of some who opposed the Sabbath during the Reformation, Sunday was brought from Catholicism into the Protestant church, and is now cherished as an institution of the Lord. It is clear, however, that it is none of His planting, but rather the work and result of apostasy. But a message is now going forth to revive the truth on this point, and calling for a

genuine reformation upon it. See studies on “The Judgment-Hour Message;” “The Fall Of Modern Babylon”; “The Closing Gospel Message,” and the next study.