

SABBATH EXCUSES EXAMINED AND ANSWERED – PART 7

Since the Sabbath commandment was given to the Hebrews at Mount Sinai (Exodus 20:8-11), people then claim that the Sabbath was only for the Jewish people and has now been replaced with Sunday in this New Covenant period.

This particular belief is one of the most widely used of all excuses against the Sabbath. But first of all, the Seventh day Sabbath was given by God long before the Jewish people were born!

"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.

This clearly shows that God's seventh day Sabbath was given more than 2000 years before the first Hebrew or Jewish person was born! So God's holy Sabbath day was already in existence long before it was delivered by God to the Israelites at Mount Sinai.

This pre-existence of God's seventh-day Sabbath was also revealed before the Israelites came to Mount Sinai. After God had led His people out of Egypt, and began feeding them with manna in the desert, they were specifically told to gather each morning enough manna for that day only, and any unused portion became wormy and stank. But on the sixth day, or Friday, they were instructed to "prepare that which they bring in and it shall be twice as much as they gather daily....And they laid it up until morning...and it did not stink...So the people rested on the seventh day." Exodus 16:5, 24, 30.

This clearly shows that the Israelites had a knowledge of keeping holy God's seventh day Sabbath before the 10 commandment law which included this Sabbath was given to them at Mount Sinai!

These facts of Biblical truth plainly reveal that God's seventh day Sabbath was already in existence before the Israelites, before Jacob, before Abraham were born, and even before the flood itself occurred. Hence at the very beginning of this world's history, before sin had occurred, and for over 2000 years before the first Jew walked the earth, God's holy seventh day Sabbath was already in existence!

These facts clearly shows to all that the seventh day Sabbath of God was not a Jewish institution given specifically and only for them, but it was given for all mankind to enjoy. Thus God's seventh day Sabbath could not pass away when the Gospel Dispensation arrived, but is still in force as part of God's holy and righteous law today!

But where did this teaching and belief originate from that the seventh day Sabbath was only for the Israelites, and has now been replaced by Sunday in this New Covenant period? It is definitely not a modern belief, but it goes back more than 1800 years!

Ignatius (also called Theophorus) (about 107 A.D.)

“Be not deceived with strange doctrines, nor with old fables, which are unprofitable. For if we still live according to the Jewish law, we acknowledge that we have not received grace....

“Be not deceived with strange doctrines, "nor give heed to fables and endless genealogies," and things in which the Jews make their boast. "Old things are passed away: behold, all things have become new." For if we still live according to the Jewish law, and the circumcision of the flesh, we deny that we have received grace.” The Epistle of Ignatius to the Magnesians, Chapter VIII.-Caution Against False Doctrines, in Early Church Fathers, Ante-Nicene Fathers, Vol. I, <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/anf01.v.iii.viii.html>, accessed 3-5-13.

“If, therefore, those who were brought up in the ancient order of things have come to the possession of a new hope, no longer observing the Sabbath, but living in the observance of the Lord's Day, on which also our life has sprung up again by Him and by His death-whom some deny, by which mystery we have obtained faith, and therefore endure, that we may be found the disciples of Jesus Christ, our only Master...Let us therefore no longer keep the Sabbath after the Jewish manner...And after the observance of the Sabbath, let every friend of Christ keep the Lord's Day as a festival, the resurrection-day, the queen and chief of all the days [of the week].” The Epistle of Ignatius to the Magnesians, Chapter IX - titled Let Us Live with Christ, in Early Church Fathers, Ante-Nicene Fathers, Vol. I, <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/anf01.v.iii.ix.html>, accessed 3-5-13.

St. Victorinus of Pettau (about 270 A.D.)

“On the seventh day He rested from all His works, and blessed it, and sanctified it. On the former day we are accustomed to fast rigorously, that on the Lord's day we may go forth to our bread with giving of thanks. And let the *parasceve* become a rigorous fast, lest we should appear to observe any Sabbath with the Jews, which Christ Himself, the Lord of the Sabbath, says by His prophets that "His soul hateth;" which Sabbath He in His body abolished...” St. Victorinus of Pettau, On The Creation of the World, in Early Church Fathers, Ante-Nicene Fathers, Vol. VII, at <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/anf07.vi.i.html>, accessed 2-27-13.

Lucius Caecilius Firmianus Lactantius (about 311 A.D.)

“But they alleged other causes for their anger and envy, which they bore shut up within in their hearts-namely, that He destroyed the obligation of the law given by Moses; that is, that He did not rest on the Sabbath, but laboured for the good of men; that He abolished circumcision; that He took away the necessity of abstaining from the flesh of swine; -in which things the mysteries of the Jewish religion consist. On this account, therefore, the rest of the people, who had not yet withdrawn to Christ, were incited by the priests to regard Him as impious, because He destroyed the obligation of the law of God, though He did this not by His own judgment, but according to the will of God, and after the predictions of the prophets.” Lucius Caecilius Firmianus Lactantius, The Divine Institutes, Book IV, Of True Wisdom and Religion, Chapter XVII - titled Of the Superstitions of the Jews, and Their Hatred Against Jesus, in Early Church Fathers, Ante-Nicene Fathers, Vol. VII, at <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/anf07.iii.ii.iv.xvii.html>, accessed 3-5-13.

St. Basil - The Great (377 A.D.)

“And the theological works of Apollinarius are founded on Scriptural proof, but are based on a human origin. He has written about the resurrection, from a mythical, or rather Jewish, point of view; urging that we shall return again to the worship of the Law, be circumcised, keep the Sabbath, abstain from meats, offer sacrifices to God, worship in the Temple at Jerusalem, and be altogether turned from Christians into Jews. What could be more ridiculous? Or, rather, what could be more contrary to the doctrines of the Gospel?” St. Basil - The Great, Letter CCLXIII, To the Westerns, #4, in Early Church Fathers, Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Series II, Vol. VIII, <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/npnf208.ix.cclxiv.html>, accessed 3-5-13.

St. Aurelius Augustine, Bishop of Hippo (about 400 A.D.)

“...the Church admits and avows the Jewish people to be cursed, because after killing Christ they continue to till the ground of an earthly circumcision, an earthly Sabbath, an earthly passover, while the hidden strength or virtue of making known Christ, which this tilling contains, is not yielded to the Jews while they continue in impiety and unbelief, for it is revealed in the New Testament. While they will not turn to God, the veil which is on their minds in reading the Old Testament is not taken away. This veil is taken away only by Christ, who does not do away with the reading of the Old Testament, but with the covering which hides its virtue.” St. Aurelius Augustine, Bishop of Hippo, Augustine-Anti-Manichaean Writings, Reply to Faustus the Manichaean, Book XII, #11, in Early Church Fathers, Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Series I, Vol. IV, at <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/npnf104.iv.ix.xiv.html>, accessed 3-5-13.

St. John Chrysostom (around 400 A.D.)

“Say to him [your enemy]: "art thou not ashamed and dost thou not blush before the Jews who keep their sabbath with such great strictness, and from the evening of it abstain from all work? And if they see the sun verging towards setting on the day of the Preparation they break off business, and cut short their traffic: and if any one who has been making a purchase from them, before the evening, comes in the evening bringing the price, they do not suffer themselves to take it, or to accept the money." And why do I speak of the price of market wares and transaction of business? Even if it were possible to receive a treasure they would rather lose the gain than trample on their law. Are the Jews then so strict, and this when they keep the law out of due season, and cling to an observance of it which does not profit them, but rather does them harm: and wilt thou, who art superior to the shadow, to whom it has been vouchsafed to see the Sun of Righteousness, who art ranked as a citizen of the Heavenly commonwealth, wilt thou not display the same zeal as those who unseasonably cleave to what is wrong, thou who hast been entrusted with the truth, but although thou art summoned here for only a short part of the day, canst thou not endure to spend even this upon the hearing of the divine oracles? and what kind of indulgence, pray, could you obtain? and what answer will you have to make which is reasonable and just?” St. John Chrysostom, Homily - titled To Those Who Had Not Attended the Assembly, #3, in Early Church Fathers, Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Series I, Vol. IX, at <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/npnf109.xiii.ii.html>, accessed 3-5-13.

The Canons of the Holy and Ecumenical Seventh Council (787 A.D.)

“Since certain, erring in the superstitions of the Hebrews, have thought to mock at Christ our God, and feigning to be converted to the religion of Christ do deny him, and in private and secretly keep the Sabbath and observe other Jewish customs, we decree that such persons be not received to communion, nor to prayers, nor into the Church; but let them be openly Hebrews according to their religion, and let them not bring their children to baptism, nor purchase or possess a slave. But if any of them, out of a sincere heart and in faith, is converted and makes profession with his whole heart, setting at naught their customs and observances, and so that others may be convinced and converted, such an one is to be received and baptized, and his children likewise; and let them be taught to take care to hold aloof from the ordinances of the Hebrews. But if they will not do this, let them in no wise be received.” The Seventh Ecumenical Council, The Second Council of Nice, The Canons of the Holy and Ecumenical Seventh Council, Canon VIII - titled That Hebrews Ought Not to be Received Unless They Have Been Converted in Sincerity of Heart, in *Early Church Fathers, Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Series II, Vol. XIV*, at <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/npnf214.xvi.xiv.viii.html>, accessed 3-5-13.

Catholic Church Today

“St. Paul enumerates the Sabbath among the Jewish observances which are not obligatory on Christians (Col., ii, 16; Gal., iv, 9-10; Rom., xiv, 5). The gentile converts held their religious meetings on Sunday (Acts, xx, 7; 1 Cor., xvi, 2) and with the disappearance of the Jewish Christian churches this day was exclusively observed as the Lord's Day. (See SUNDAY.)” The Catholic Encyclopedia, Volume XIII, Section titled- The Sabbath in the New Testament, publisher by Robert Appleton Company, New York, 1912, Nihil Obstat. February 1, 1912. Remy Lafort, D.D., Censor. *Imprimatur*. +John Cardinal Farley, Archbishop of New York, at <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/13287b.htm>, accessed 3-5-13.

“Sunday was the first day of the week according to the Jewish method of reckoning, but for Christians it began to take the place of the Jewish Sabbath in Apostolic times as the day set apart for the public and solemn worship of God....The express teaching of Christ and St. Paul prevented the early Christians from falling into the excesses of Jewish Sabbatarianism in the observance of the Sunday, and yet we find St. Cæsarius of Arles in the sixth century teaching that the holy Doctors of the Church had decreed that the whole glory of the Jewish Sabbath had been transferred to the Sunday, and that Christians must keep the Sunday holy in the same way as the Jews had been commanded to keep holy the Sabbath Day.” The Catholic Encyclopedia, Volume XIV, Section titled - Sunday, published by Robert Appleton Company, New York, 1912, Nihil Obstat. July 1, 1912. Remy Lafort, S.T.D., Censor. *Imprimatur*. +John Cardinal Farley, Archbishop of New York, at

<http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/14335a.htm>, accessed 3-5-13.

“We all gather on the day of the sun, for it is the first day (after the Jewish Sabbath, but also the first day) when God, separating matter from darkness, made the world; and on this same day Jesus Christ our Savior rose from the dead. [St. Justin, I Apol. 67: PG 6, 429 and 432.]”

“Sunday is expressly distinguished from the Sabbath which it follows chronologically every week; for Christians its ceremonial observance replaces that of the Sabbath. In Christ's Passover, Sunday fulfills the spiritual truth of the Jewish Sabbath and announces man's eternal rest in God. For worship under the Law prepared for the mystery of Christ, and what was done there prefigured some aspects of Christ: [Cf. 1 Cor 10:11 .] Those who lived according to the old order of things have come to a new hope, no longer keeping the Sabbath, but the Lord's Day, in which our life is blessed by him and by his death.” [St. Ignatius of Antioch, Ad Magn. 9, 1: SCh 10, 88.]” Universal Catholic Catechism, Article 3 - The Third Commandment, II - The Lord's Day, #2174-2175, at <http://www.christusrex.org/www1/CDHN/comm2.html#CHRISTIAN>, accessed 3-5-13.

So you can clearly see, that the teaching of the seventh day Sabbath of God was only given for the Israelites and now has been replaced with Sunday worship, is not a modern belief at all, but it has been around since the second century A.D. You can also plainly see that this belief is not found written in the Bible at all, but was first found originating in the writings of Catholic church fathers. Thus this belief is not a doctrine of God taught in the Bible, but is purely Catholic in origin and a doctrine taught in the Roman Catholic Church.

This then means that for any Protestant or non-Catholic believer to use the argument that the seventh day Sabbath of the Lord was strictly for the Jews and now has been replaced by Sunday worship, in their efforts to try and prove that Sunday is God's Sabbath day today, is forced to rely upon the teachings of Catholicism and not the truth of God's holy Scriptures in order to do so!

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