

Sabbath School Today **With the 1888 Message Dynamic**

Preparation for the End Time **Lesson 6. The “Change” of the Law**

On most calendars that are used worldwide, the seventh day is called Saturday. To make it doubly sure, we can check by reading Luke 23:54, which tells of the crucifixion of Jesus: “That day was the Preparation, and the Sabbath drew near.” Millions observe Good Friday in honor of the death of Jesus; that pinpoints the true Sabbath, for the next day of the week is the regular weekly seventh-day Sabbath.

And again we can pinpoint the true Sabbath day by reading the next verses in Luke: “The women who had come with Him ... 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” (vss. 55, 56). The next verses tell of His resurrection on Sunday: “Now on the first day of the week, very early in the morning, they ... came to the tomb ... But they found the stone rolled away” (Luke 24:1, 2). Christ had risen!

It is so clear a child sees it immediately: *“the Sabbath according to the commandment” comes between Friday and Sunday.* (“The Lord’s Day” of Revelation 1:10 is the Sabbath, for God calls the Sabbath “My holy day,” Isaiah 58:13). His presence is in the Sabbath. To the extent that we love Him, we also love His holy day.

But, there are many sincere people who do not see this truth. Has God changed His holy Sabbath day? We must examine some of the reasons why they are confused.

No, God says, He has not changed His law regarding the Sabbath. “I am the Lord, I do not change” (Mal. 3:6). There is nothing in the Bible to suggest that He made any change in His holy law. “The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul” (Psalm 19:7). Why should He change anything that is “perfect”? He loves us too much to change such a blessed gift!

Jesus regularly kept the seventh-day Sabbath, for we read in Luke 4:16 that “He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up. And *as His custom was*, He went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day.” Yes, when He said to the Jews, “I have kept My Father’s commandments,” He told the truth (John 15:10).

All of the apostles followed His example in keeping the Sabbath on the seventh day. For example, the Book of Acts tells of 84 sabbaths that the Apostle Paul kept, but not one Sunday!

“But,” someone may ask, “doesn’t it tell of one first day of the week that Paul kept?” No, Acts 20:7, 8 tells of one *Saturday night farewell meeting* that Paul held with the Christians in Troas, because he was planning to walk 16 miles next day (Sunday) to Miletus, and they would never see him again. (No apostle would have walked 16 miles on the holy Sabbath day.)

Luke describes that night meeting as being on “the first day of the week” because the Bible says the Sabbath begins at sundown Friday evening and ends at sundown on Saturday evening (Lev. 23:32). Any night meeting on “the first day of the week” would therefore have to be on Saturday night. And Mark 1:32 tells how on one Saturday “at evening, when the sun had set,” the Sabbath being over, the people brought many sick people to Jesus to be healed.

That is a delightful way to keep the Sabbath, “from evening to evening,” sunset to sunset. If you try to keep it from midnight to midnight, you’re asleep and you can’t consciously welcome God’s holy day! How could you welcome some special visitor who came at midnight while you were asleep?

Why do many observe Sunday, and not the holy Sabbath day that the Lord “blessed and hallowed”? It is simple: someone without the authority of God changed it. He instructed His holy prophet Daniel to predict that this would happen. In chapter 7 the prophet described the rise of four world empires in history (Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome), after which there would arise another great power, the “little one [horn] ... speaking pompous words” (vs. 8) that would combine church and state and would “intend to change times and law” (vs. 25). Both Daniel and Revelation state that he would exercise his great power for 1260 years.

Paul described the same power in 2 Thessalonians 2:4 as one “who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.”

John’s book of Revelation describes the same power: “And he was given a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies, ... And authority was given him over every tribe, tongue, and nation. All who dwell on the earth will worship him, whose names have not been written in the Book of Life of the Lamb” (13:5-8).

We have to decide then which “power” we will follow—the holy One who created the earth in six days and sanctified His holy Sabbath for us to keep, or the one who has dared to change God’s law and direct people to observe Sunday instead.

The Unique Adventist Concept of the Everlasting Gospel

Ellen White was overjoyed when she heard what the two messengers (A.T. Jones and E. J. Waggoner) presented at and after the 1888 Conference. She was glad that the message went beyond what she called “the good old doctrines,” for she said it was “fresh light.” “Justification by faith” is “fresh” to us and to the Evangelical world for “it is the third angel’s message in verity.” [1]

“Every fiber of my heart said amen,” she said, because here at last was the unique, distinct Seventh-day Adventist concept of the everlasting gospel “which is made manifest in obedience to all the commandments of God.” [2] Thus it had to go beyond that of the popular Sunday-keeping churches.

In fact, the Sabbath truth comes to be implicit in a full and complete view of justification by faith because the Sabbath is the “sign” of true faith. [3] Where the Sabbath truth is denied, there has to be either a counterfeit or immature view of justification by faith. [4]

One wonders if Seventh-day Adventist evangelism has given these grand truths a fair trial. Rightly conceived, with no “mixture of poisonous error,” justification by faith becomes the message that will raise up people all over the world who will “keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus.” The fruitage will be phenomenal, and believers will prepare for the coming of Christ in their generation. [5]

Just now the Holy Spirit is calling people worldwide to keep holy His Sabbath day; for that’s the special day when He meets with them to teach them. And His great fourth commandment assures all who will believe, they will know the joy of Sabbath-keeping rest “in Christ.”

—From the writings of Robert J. Wieland

Endnotes:

[1] *Review and Herald*, April 1, 1890.

[2] MS 5, 1889; *Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers*, pp. 91, 92.

[3] See E. J. Waggoner, *Christ and His Righteousness*, pp. 37-45 (Glad Tidings ed., 1999); *The Glad Tidings*, pp. 140-144 (CFI ed., 2016).

[4] See A. T. Jones, *1893 General Conference Bulletin*, pp. 243-245, 261, 262, 342-343, 358.

[5] See Ellen G. White, *Review and Herald*, Nov. 22, 29, 1892.

Notes:

Pastor Paul Penno’s video of this lesson is on the Internet at:

<https://youtu.be/gTw1VFIRI4>

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