

Where Did Jesus Command You to Observe SUNDAY?

The resurrection of Christ was NOT on Sunday morning. Yet today it is almost a universal custom among professing Christians to celebrate Sunday as the "Lord's Day." WHY? The incredible TRUTH about the origin of Sunday observance is published for the first time in The PLAIN TRUTH.

by Herman L. Hoeh

BELIEVE it or not, Sunday was celebrated by pagans as the "Lord's Day" over 2000 years *before* the resurrection of Christ!

It was *on Sunday* that the worshippers of BAAL met every week. How did this heathen practice invade the Christian Church?

It is time we peer behind the curtain for the *facts!* It is time we understand **HOW, WHEN** and **WHERE** Sunday observance originated. The facts of history will shock you!

Christ NOT Resurrected on Sunday

You have probably assumed that Sunday was called the "Lord's Day" to honor the resurrection of Jesus Christ. But have you ever stopped to prove on which day of the week Christ was resurrected? How can you figure three days and three nights between Friday sunset and Sunday morning? Did you ever notice that Jesus Christ *was not there* when the women came to the tomb Sunday morning?

"But on the first day of the week, at early dawn, they came unto the tomb, bringing the spices which they had prepared. And they found the stone rolled away from the tomb. And they entered in, and *found not the body* of the Lord Jesus" (Luke 24:1-3). Of course not! He was already risen the evening before—exactly three days and three nights after he was buried.

There is not space in this article to explain it in full. But you can have the full proof in Mr. Armstrong's astounding free booklet "The Resurrection Was Not on Sunday!" It explains which day was the resurrection, which day the crucifixion. In it you will find the Biblical proof that Jesus was resurrected shortly before sunset on the Sabbath,

Most of our subscribers will have read the three previous issues of the Plain Truth containing Mr. Armstrong's series "Which Day Is the Christian Sabbath?" They will shortly be published in booklet form. If you have not read them be sure to request the new booklet: "Which Day Is the Christian Sabbath?"

exactly 72 hours after He was buried.

Then there is a companion article "The Crucifixion Was Not on Friday." It contains the seven proofs from history that in the year Jesus was crucified the Passover was not on Friday.

Now to continue.

Since Christ is not the "Lord" whose resurrection is honored on Sunday, then who is the "Lord" whom the churches worship today when they observe Sunday?

Why Pagans Named Sunday the "Lord's Day"!

How did Sunday become known as the "Lord's Day"?

The answer is found in I Corinthians 8:5. "Gods many, and lords many," wrote Paul to the Corinthians, filled the heathen world. Each of these gods and lords was honored on certain specific days. The chief day of the heathen Mysteries was known as the "Lord's Day." It was celebrated in honor of the supposed *Sunday* resurrection of Baal, the Sun God. Baal means "Lord" in the Semitic languages. That is how Sunday became known as the "Lord's Day"—Baal's day—more than 2000 years before the resurrection of Christ.

WHO WAS THIS "LORD" BAAL WHOSE FABLED RESURRECTION WAS CELEBRATED BY THE PAGANS ON SUNDAY?

It is none other than Nimrod, the world's first recorded *false* Messiah! He is mentioned in your Bible in Genesis 10:8-10.

The heathen had been led by their priests into commemorating the death of Nimrod on Friday and his supposed resurrection on Sunday morning. The Gentile nations celebrated their Mysteries every Sunday in Abraham's day and in Paul's day, and professing Christians are celebrating Nimrod's supposed resurrection on Sunday to this very day without knowing it!

But how is it possible that Nimrod—who was known among the heathen as "Baal," the "lord," and the "Sun-God"—came to be honored on Sunday as the "Lord" among Christians? How is it that *his* day—Sunday—instead of God's Sabbath, has become the chief of "Christian holidays"?

Prophesied to Happen

"Why," you might ask, "does the Bible not warn us that Sunday would be substituted for the Sabbath?"

The answer is that the Bible **DOES WARN US!** It was prophesied in advance—over 800 years before Sunday crept into the professing Christian world!

Turn to the Book of Hosea. The prophet had a message for the future—for our day! It is a warning to the churches of our land.

Read it!

"And I"—God is speaking—"will punish her"—our people Israel—"for the FEAST DAYS OF THE BAALS."

Sunday is a feast day of BAAL.

Israel "forgot Me, says the Lord"—because they rejected the Sabbath. "And in that day"—the very near future when Christ intervenes in world affairs—"you [Israel] will call Me, 'My husband,' and

no longer will you call me, 'My Baal.' For I will remove the names of the Baals from her mouth, and they shall be mentioned by name no more' (Hosea 2:13, 16-17, RSV).

How plain! Israel today—and that means the English-speaking world—has adopted the feast days of Baal—and *that includes Sunday!* Here is a prophecy that the churches of Israel would be celebrating the festivals of Baal—that they would even call God by the names of Baal! That is exactly what they do when they call Sunday the "Lord's Day"—that is, Baal's Day—thinking that they honor Christ.

Our land is filled with the names of Baal. The greatest of Church holidays—Easter—is named after Ishtar, the wife of Nimrod, and yet Christians think that they honor Christ by celebrating this Babylonish feast!

God warns in this prophecy that He will punish our people—and the ministers who have misled them—for rejecting His way and His Sabbath (Ezek. 20:18-21) and adopting the ways and feasts of the Babylonian 'mysteries.

The apostle Peter sounded the same warning: "But there were false prophets among the people, even as *there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them*"—by substituting the doctrines and customs of Baal worship and the Babylonian Mysteries in place of the Bible, but still calling these heathen customs "Christian."

Peter continues: "And many"—not the few, but the MANY—"shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth"—the teachings of your Bible, the practice of the original, inspired true New Testament Church—"shall be evil spoken of"—people call it "Jewish" today! (I Peter 2:1-2.)

These false teachers—conspirators of the Babylonian priesthood—deliberately, but secretly, entered into the Church in order to clothe their religion with the name of Christ and present it as a new religion to the world.

Now let us consider when and how the Babylonian priesthood wormed its way into the New Testament Church, took the name of Christ, then left—but still claimed to be the true Church—and

finally introduced sun worship in the cloak of Christ.

The Surprising Answer

Sunday is directly connected with Easter. Easter is the pagan counterfeit for the New Testament Passover, or Communion service. It was at the Passover—not the Sabbath—that the Babylonian priests, who masqueraded as Christ's ministers, struck first!

Anyone who keeps the Passover *knows* that Jesus Christ was not resurrected on Sunday. And without a "Sunday resurrection" they could not attach the name of Christ to their Babylonian sun worship!

They knew that they could not introduce Sunday worship services until they had first counterfeited the New Testament Passover, or Communion service, which Paul and the whole New Testament Church celebrated once each year as a memorial of Christ's death. (The booklet "How Often Should We Observe 'The Lord's Supper'?" explains this New Testament ordinance.)

Those who kept the paschal MEMORIAL of Christ's DEATH were taunted as "Jewish." The Gentiles, of course, didn't want to be called "Jewish." They wanted to do what their pagan neighbors are doing.

And what was that?

They were celebrating each Sunday a kind of communion called the "sacred mysteries" in honor of the supposed RESURRECTION of the false Babylonian savior Nimrod, known as Baal or Tamuz. The *natural* thing to do was to introduce this pagan custom into all the churches each week supposedly to honor the resurrection, instead of commemorating the death, of Christ.

This is exactly what occurred!

But wait—since Christ was resurrected on Saturday, that would mean weekly communion would customarily be held on the Sabbath. The Sabbath, remember, was the day on which *all* Christians were meeting.

Does that mean that the early Babylonian priests who entered the New Testament Church as ravening wolves to devour the flock (Acts 20:29) actually induced the people to observe communion *every Saturday?*

Indeed it does!

Weekly Communion On Saturday

Here is the testimony of Socrates, the Catholic historian who lived after 400 A.D.:

"In Asia Minor [that was where Paul mainly preached, and where John spent his last years] most people kept the fourteenth day of the [first] month"—the true date of the Passover. "While therefore some in Asia Minor observed the above mentioned day, OTHERS IN THE EAST KEPT THE FEAST [THE COUNTERFEIT OF THE PASSOVER — EASTER] ON THE SABBATH indeed. . . ." [The "SABBATH" always means Saturday, not Sunday, in early Catholic literature.]

Why the Sabbath? Because it was still the common knowledge, *even among those who had fallen away*, that Jesus rose on the Sabbath!

But this is not all the evidence! Here are more incredible facts from the pen of the church historian Socrates:

"For although *almost all churches* [the *false churches*, not God's Church] throughout the world celebrate the sacred mysteries ON THE SABBATH of every week"—this was about 400 years after Christ—"yet the Christians of Alexandria and at Rome, on account of some ancient tradition, *have ceased to do this* [though they did so at a prior time]. The Egyptians in the neighborhood of Alexandria, and the inhabitants of Thebais *hold their religious assemblies on the Sabbath*, but do not participate of the mysteries in the manner usual among Christians in general." (*Ecclesiastical History* of Socrates, book V, chapter 22. Quoted from Vol. 2 of *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, pp. 131-132.)

Do you really grasp the astounding significance of this historical record? If the Sabbath had not been kept—if the resurrection were not on the Sabbath, there would have been no reason to introduce the pagan "sacred mysteries"—the heathen counterfeit of the passover—on every Sabbath.

Here is absolute testimony to the *Sabbath resurrection* of Christ. If Christ had been resurrected on Sunday, certainly the Catholics would have instituted the "sacred mysteries" on Sunday, the day that their heathen neighbors always celebrated the "sacred mysteries,"

which originated in Babylon! Though they adopted the "sacred mysteries"—the mass or communion—from the pagans, they celebrated it on the true day of Christ's resurrection!

Notice further that it was at Rome and at Alexandria—in Egypt, the land of SIN—that Sabbath services first ceased! And it was at Rome—as we shall see—that Sunday was first introduced as a "Christian holiday."

The Testimony of a Roman Governor

In support of Sunday, many preachers and writers turn to a letter written about 112 A.D. by Pliny, the Roman governor of Bythynia-Pontus. This was the area to which Peter addressed his first letter (I Pet. 1:1).

But Pliny's letter does not say what most ministers claim!

Pliny wrote to his superior, Emperor Trajan, seeking to know the legal steps he should take against Christians accused of crimes pertaining to their religion [These so-called Christians were those who had followed the leadership of the Babylonian priests who had secretly entered the Church of God to steal the name of Christ so that they could label their pagan religion "Christian."] Of these Christians under his jurisdiction Pliny related:

"They affirmed that the whole of their guilt or error was, that they MET ON A CERTAIN STATED DAY, before it was light and addressed themselves in a form of prayer to Christ, as to some god, binding themselves by a solemn oath . . . never to commit any fraud, theft, or adultery . . . after which it was their custom to separate, and then reassemble to eat in common a harmless meal" (Coleman's *Ancient Christianity*, pp. 35-36).

This letter, it is claimed, proved that Christians observed Sunday as early as 112 A.D.! But it proves no such thing! Pliny's letter merely mentions that Christians—these were apostate Christians—met "on a certain stated day," but he does not tell the Emperor which day it was! Let us not assume.

History proves that it was the Sabbath! As late as 400 A.D. the professing Christians of Bithynia-Pontus, and all the Eastern Roman Empire in general, met on Saturday to celebrate the pagan

"sacred mysteries." So wrote Socrates.

It was not on Sunday but on Saturday that early Catholics celebrated, without Biblical authority, the resurrection of Christ with the pagan "sacred mysteries"—the "common meal" mentioned by Pliny.

Why Apostate Christians Met Before Dawn

The New Testament Church never followed these customs. So widely spread and in such numbers were *these* professing Christians that "the temples were almost deserted, and the sacrificial ritual was interrupted" (Ramsey, *The Church in the Roman Empire*, p. 198). Truly converted Christians were to be a "little flock" (Luke 12:32-40), not multitudes of Gentiles coming wholesale into the churches and bringing heathen customs with them!

Notice also that they met at dawn!—"before it was light." This was the common time for pagans to hold religious services in honor of the rising sun! Then they bound themselves *by an oath*—oaths are forbidden in Scripture (James 5:12). After dismissal, they would "reassemble to eat in common a harmless meal"—the "sacred mysteries" of Babylon!

Remember, Socrates admitted these apostates met on the Sabbath—just as some *apostate* churches still meet on the Sabbath today. Sunday—in Pliny's day—had not yet been widely introduced among professing Christians. Pliny's letter, then, is not proof for Sunday, but for church services on Saturday!

And this was more than 80 years after the resurrection of Christ!

Sunday Emerges for the First Time —at Rome

Now we come to the astounding origin of Sunday in the professing Christian world! Here we shall find WHO began to enforce the first "Sunday worship services"!

It is at Rome particularly that we first notice the custom to observe the "sacred mysteries" on Sunday! This was a result, Socrates wrote, "of an ancient tradition." But how early was the Sunday tradition?

Here are the facts!

Irenaeus, a bishop in France, living

toward the close of the second century, wrote a letter to bishop Victor of Rome. He names specifically the men who first began to enforce not only every Sunday, but also "Easter Sunday" and who forbade the passover and the Sabbath to be observed in accordance with the practice of the apostles! Here is what Irenaeus wrote:

"We mean Anicetus, and Pius, and Hyginus, and Telesphorus, and Xystus. They neither observed it"—the true passover on the 14th of Nisan—"nor did they permit those after them to do so."

Who were these men?—bishops of the Church of Rome!

Here is the first record, by a Catholic, of the fact that the Roman bishops ENFORCED the "sacred mysteries" *on a Sunday!*

It was bishop Xystus (his name is also spelled *Sixtus*) who was the *first* recorded individual to *prevent* the proper observance of the Sabbath and the passover, and to celebrate the "sacred mysteries" each Sunday morning and on "Easter Sunday." Irenaeus speaks further of him, declaring that his doctrine was in direct "opposition" to the practice of the remainder of the churches. Bishop Sixtus was living at the *beginning of the second century*, just after the apostle John died! According to Roman Catholic tradition, he enforced his new practice not later than about 115 A.D. to 125 A.D.

Thus it was *not until nearly 20 years after the death of the last apostle* that the first "Sunday worship service" is recorded in the professing Christian church!

Here you have the astounding origin of the first ecclesiastically enforced annual Easter Sunday in the Roman Church.

The "sacred mysteries" were also observed thenceforth in Rome every Sunday!—instead of every Saturday.

Roman Custom Spreads

Now notice how this local Roman custom spread throughout the churches.

While at Rome, Polycarp, bishop of Smyrna, discussed the matter of Easter Sunday with the Roman bishop, Anicetus, about 150 A.D.

Irenaeus continued: "For neither

could Anicetus persuade Polycarp not to observe it"—the passover—"because he had always observed it with John the disciple of our Lord, and the rest of the apostles, with whom he associated; and neither did Polycarp persuade Anicetus to observe it, who said that he was bound to follow the customs of the presbyters before him" (Quoted from Eusebius' *Ecclesiastical History*, book V, chap. 24, in the *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, Vol. 1).

Notice that bishop Anicetus had no Scriptural grounds—he determined to follow the "customs" of men!—Easter Sunday! It was Polycarp who followed the example of the apostles.

Shortly after Polycarp left, there appeared an amazing letter—said by many scholars to be a *deliberate forgery*. This letter is described by Bingham as follows:

"Pope Pius, who lived about 147, had made a decree, That the annual solemnity of the *Pasch* (*Pasch* is the Greek word for *Passover*), should be kept only on the Lord's day"—Sunday—"and in confirmation of this he pretended, that Hermes, his brother, who was then an eminent teacher among them, had received instruction from an angel, who commanded that all men should keep the *Pasch* on the Lord's day"—"Baal's Day"! (From pp. 1148-1149 of Bingham's *Antiquities of the Christian Church*. See also *Apostolical Fathers*, by Donaldson, p. 324.)

If this letter was a deliberate forgery, it was invented after Polycarp's time in an effort to lend weight to the pagan custom of Anicetus, bishop of Rome, who falsely maintained the Sunday observance of the eucharist. If it were not a forgery, then Pius himself was the author of this deceptive letter. (Pius died just prior to the visit of Polycarp to Rome.)

This is the kind of deception by which Sunday was introduced into the professing Christian world!

Other Spurious Letters Appear

As soon as the tradition of Good Friday-Easter Sunday had official Roman support, fraudulent letters, masquerading as apostolic letters, were circulated. These fraudulent letters are often quoted today as proof of the observance of Sunday in the *true* New Testament

Church!

These deliberate frauds demonstrate the foulness of the Babylonian Mystery. Neither the apostles, nor the Church of God ever had recourse to frauds! God's Sabbath is based on inspired Scripture. Sunday is based on a fraud—a LIE!

The first and most important letter was the spurious "Epistle of Barnabas." One fable claims that it was the work of the companion of Paul. Anyone reading it knows better. The weight of scholarship proves that *it is a deliberate forgery*—a spurious letter—composed about the commencement of the second century by *another* person assuming the name of Barnabas.

This epistle, or letter, is filled with many inaccuracies, triflings and absurdities. It is a complete contrast to the inspired New Testament epistles. It is written in *confused*, mysterious language. Yet this is the kind of rubbish that is used to support Sunday. Its origin is of the Devil himself.

The next letter—or rather forgery—to consider is that of Ignatius. His work, "The Epistle to the Magnesians," written shortly after the turn of the first century, is usually regarded as one of several spurious letters written by another and attributed to Ignatius. Whether or not Ignatius wrote it is of no importance. For it still typifies the satanic Babylonian Mystery which cleverly foisted on the world a day in honor of Baal!

There are two forms of his letters, one Greek, the other Syriac. Each is entirely different from the other. They are probably both forgeries. The Greek version of Ignatius was strongly influenced by Rome. It calls Sunday "the queen and chief of all the days"—an expression derived from the Babylonian mysteries.

But there is a longer Eastern version in Syriac that is truly remarkable. It indicated that in the Eastern churches, where the apostolic tradition was strongest, the false teachers had a much more difficult time uprooting the Sabbath. Here is what it reads in part:

"Those who were conversant with the ancient Scriptures came to newness of hope. . . . Let us therefore no longer keep the Sabbath after the Jewish manner, and rejoice in days of idleness; for

'he that does not work, let him not eat.' For say the . . . oracles, 'In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat thy bread,' *But let every one of you keep the Sabbath after a spiritual manner*, rejoicing in meditation on the law, not in relaxation of the body, admiring the workmanship of God, and *not eating things prepared the day before. . . .* 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. Looking forward to this, the prophet declared, 'To the end, for the eighth day,' on which our life both sprang up again, and the victory over death was obtained in Christ."

These words from the Syriac version of the forgery of Ignatius clearly demonstrate how difficult it was to suppress the Sabbath shortly after apostolic days.

The letter was deliberately forged in order to persuade the Gentiles that they should *no longer keep the Sabbath as they had been doing*. Henceforth they should work on the Sabbath day after attending church services on it. This command would not have been necessary if the Sabbath was not being observed. IT IS PROOF THAT THE SABBATH WAS STILL BEING KEPT BY MULTITUDES OF GENTILES!

The Spurious Apostolic Constitutions

During the second, third and fourth centuries, many documents appeared purporting to be written by the apostles. These were falsely called "Apostolic Constitutions."

They were circulated to create the impression that pagan tradition had Apostolic blessing! Although deliberate frauds, these documents, nevertheless, express the corrupt church teachings which filled the Christian-professing world during the centuries after the death of the apostles.

The following (from *Ante-Nicene Fathers*) are certain of the constitutions or statutes in part that formed the practices, not of the scattered remains of the true body of Christ, but in the Catholic churches, especially the Eastern. Here is what they say regarding the sabbath as a day of public worship:

"I Peter and Paul"—remember, *this* (Please continue on page 27)

"You must fast on the day of Preparation, because on that day the Lord suffered the death of the cross under Pontius Pilate. But keep the Sabbath and the Lord's day festival, because the former is the memorial of the creation, and the latter of the resurrection" (p. 469).

Notice that Saturday and Sunday are being observed side by side!

"But assemble yourselves together every day, morning and evening, singing psalms and praying in the Lord's house: in the morning saying the sixty-second Psalm, and in the evening the hundred and fortieth, but principally on the Sabbath-day. And on the day of our Lord's resurrection, which is the Lord's day, meet more diligently" (p. 423).

"Every Sabbath-day excepting one, and every Lord's day, hold your solemn assemblies, and rejoice" (p. 449).

Notice—Gentiles assembling on the Sabbath as well as on Sunday centuries after apostolic days. It took centuries before the ecclesiastical power was able to suppress the Sabbath!

Daniel prophetically gazed upon this ecclesiastical system that would "think to change times and laws" (Daniel 7:25). Jesus condemns it as "Mystery, Babylon the Great, the mother of harlots and abominations of the earth"! (Rev. 17:5.)

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is a forgery—"do make the following constitutions. Let the slaves work five days; but on the *Sabbath-day* and the Lord's day let them have leisure to go to church for instruction in piety. We have said that the Sabbath is on account of the creation, and the Lord's day of the resurrection" (Ch. XXXIII, p. 495).

These spurious laws continue:

"*Thou shalt observe the Sabbath*, on account of Him who ceased from His work of creation, but ceased not from His work of providence" (Ch. XXXVI, p. 413).

"On the day of the resurrection of the Lord, that is, the Lord's day, assemble yourselves together, without fail" (Ch. XXX, p. 471).

But the resurrection was not on Sunday! This decree is nothing but the tradition of MEN—inherited from Babylon! The Constitutions continue:

Origen Instructs Gentiles How to Observe Sabbath

Now we come to Origen who wrote about 230 A.D. What did Origen of Egypt say about the Sabbath?

He spoke in no uncertain terms about Sabbath keeping within the Gentile churches in Egypt. What follows is not said by a Judo-Christian, as those who obeyed God were called. This was written by a Catholic to Catholics concerning *the seventh day of the week* at the beginning of the third century:

"But what is the feast of the Sabbath except that of which the apostle speaks, 'There remaineth therefore a Sabbathism' (Hebrews 4:9), that is, *the observance of the Sabbath* by the people of God? [Notice how this man understood his native Greek tongue!] Leaving the Jewish observances of the Sabbath, let us see how the Sabbath *ought*

to be observed by a Christian. On the Sabbath day all worldly labors ought to be abstained from. If, therefore, you cease from all secular works, and execute nothing worldly, but give yourselves up to spiritual exercises, repairing to church, attending to sacred reading and instruction . . . this is the observance of the Christian Sabbath" (*Origen's Opera*, Book 2, p. 358).

These are mighty strong words, expressed by an Egyptian church leader. Here is the teaching of this world's churches 200 years after the crucifixion!

This is not spoken of Sunday, *but the seventh day of the week*—around 230 A.D.!

Constantine Enforces Sunday!

The opening of the fourth century was tumultuous for the Roman Empire. It witnessed a final struggle between the pagan Roman Empire and a pagan religion masquerading in the garb of Christianity. It was a deadly fight in which the State sought to protect itself against church domination. *The State did not triumph*. Diocletian, Maximian and Galerius were the Roman Emperors foremost in proscribing every form of Christianity. The persecutions lasted nearly a decade. But they failed.

The professing Christian religion suddenly emerged to freedom under an Edict of Toleration. The nature of such an edict could mean but one thing, that Christianity was looked upon by the political leaders of the Roman Empire as the future State religion. Events now happened fast.

In 321 A.D., on the seventh of March, an unusual edict was issued by Crispus and Constantine, often designated as the earliest Sunday law. It read thusly:

"On the venerable day of the sun let the magistrates and people residing in cities rest, and let all workshops be closed. In the country, however, persons engaged in agriculture may freely and lawfully continue their pursuits; because it often happens that another day is not suitable for grain sowing or for vine planting; lest by neglecting the proper moment for such operations the bounty of heaven should be lost." (*Codex Justinianus*, lib. 3, tit. 12, 3; translated in *History of the Christian Church*, by Schaff, Vol. III, p. 380).

This edict was a civil statute, *not* an ecclesiastical one. It was a *heathen institution* of which Hutton Webster says:

"This legislation by Constantine probably bore no relation to Christianity; it appears, on the contrary, that the emperor, in his capacity of Pontifex Maximus [a title the popes later took from the emperors], was only adding the day of the Sun, the worship of which was then firmly established in the Roman Empire, to the other ferial days of the sacred calendar" (*Rest Days*, pp. 122, 123).

That is how Sunday became the official "MARK of the Beast." (The Beast is the Roman Empire.) It was imposed by the STATE! The professing Christian world voluntarily accepted it. All who would not obey the new decree were forced to flee the confines of the Western Roman Empire. *Only in the East did Sabbath keepers remain*.

Now we shall see how all Sabbath keeping was finally stamped out of the Eastern Roman Empire.

The Council of Laodicea Prohibits Sabbath Keeping

About 365 A.D. the Council of Laodicea was called to settle, among other matters, *the sabbath question!* One of its most famous canons was the twenty-ninth, which reads thus:

"Christians must not judaize by resting on the Sabbath, but must work on that day, rather, honouring the Lord's Day; and, if they can, resting then as Christians. But if any shall be found to be judaizers, *let them be anathema from Christ.*" (*Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, Vol. XIV, p. 148).

The force of the Roman State had already been utilized in 325 A.D.—after the Council of Nicaea—to confiscate the property and to destroy the lives of any who obeyed God's command to keep the Passover. So now, in 365 A.D., the heavy hand of the State fell upon any who would be faithful in resting on the Sabbath and worshipping God as commanded in the Bible.

Why give such a command if there were no true Christians observing the Sabbath?

Although Sabbath keeping was absolutely prohibited by this Council, yet

the whole Greek world still continued to attend church services on the Sabbath and work the remainder of the day!

Notice what canon sixteen of the Council reads: "The Gospels are to be read *on the Sabbath*, with the other Scriptures" (*Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, p. 133). The "Sabbath" mentioned is the seventh day of the week!

Notice. Although the people were required to work on Saturday, they were still commanded to attend church that day! *Saturday then was observed much as Sunday is now!*

Says Socrates, the Catholic historian, in speaking of the Eastern churches during the life of Chrysostom (345-407). "'Saturday and the Lord's day [were] the two great festivals, on which they always held church assemblies.' And Cassian takes notice of the Egyptian churches, that among them the service of the Lord's day and the sabbath was always the same" (*Bingham's Antiquities*, p. 656).

Public worship on the Sabbath was far from expelled in the churches of the East even after four centuries!

Gregory, Bishop of Nyassa, a representative of the Eastern churches, about ten years after the Council at Laodicea dared to tell the world: "With what eyes can you behold the Lord's day, when you despise the Sabbath? Do you not perceive that they are sisters, and that in slighting the one, you affront the other?"

Sunday Finally Made a Rest Day

Observance of Sunday as a day of total rest was not strictly enforced for almost two centuries more. We even find *Jerome, the translator of the Latin Vulgate Bible, working after the Sunday services several years following the enactments at Laodicea*.

But Augustine, around 400 A.D., declared: "*The holy doctors of the church [not the Bible, but men] have decreed that all the glory of the Jewish Sabbath is transferred to it [Sunday]. Let us therefore keep the Lord's day as the ancients were commanded to do the Sabbath*" (Sabbath Laws, p. 284).

It was the Church which sanctioned the Roman Sunday as a rest day—and not merely a secular holiday. It was

the Church which claimed to have altered God's law (Daniel 2:21) and transferred the law of the Sabbath to Sunday.

It was another six hundred years before the last recorded semblance of public worship on the Sabbath was extirpated from the Eastern churches.

Pope Gregory of Rome, who reigned from 590-604, anathematized "Those who taught that it was not lawful to do work on the day of the Sabbath" (*History of the Popes*, Vol. II, P. 378).

That stamped the Sabbath out of the churches of the British Isles and the continent where, according to Webster's *Rest Days*, "The Celts kept Saturday as a day of rest, with special religious services on Sunday (A. Bellesheim, *History of the Catholic Church in Scotland*, Edinburgh, 1887-1890, i, 86)."

That's the record of history!

The Protestant Attitude

Carlstadt was one of the few men in the Reformation who observed the Sabbath. But his teachings were rejected by the leaders of the Protestant movements. Luther admitted in His book *Against the Celestial Prophets*: "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."

The only reason Luther could think of as an excuse for perpetuating the Roman Sunday is given in his Larger Catechism. Luther reasoned that "to avoid the unnecessary disturbance which an innovation would occasion, it should continue to be Sunday." (*Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge*, article "Sunday").

This is why Protestants observe Sunday today! They have voluntarily adopted the MARK of the Beast—the ROMAN EMPIRE'S national holiday!

The question you face today is What are you going to do? Follow the pagan traditions of men—or OBEY THE WORD OF GOD WHICH IS GOING TO JUDGE YOU?