



# PRESENT DAY TRUTH

*How Did the Original Church Change? — Constantine, Laodicea & the Sabbath-to-Sunday Story*

*"Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ."*

— **Colossians 2:8**

*"And he shall speak great words against the most High, and shall wear out the saints of the most High, and think to change times and laws."*

— **Daniel 7:25**

THE DOCUMENTED HISTORY · EVERY QUOTATION SOURCED · SCRIPTURE: KJV

The first Christians kept the seventh-day Sabbath (see Part 1 of this series). Most churches today worship on Sunday. Somewhere between the apostles and us, the day of worship changed — and the change is **one of the best-documented stories in all of church history**. An emperor, a civil law, a church council, and an anathema. This pamphlet gives you the original documents, word for word, with their dates and sources — because you deserve evidence, not slogans. **"Prove all things; hold fast that which is good"** (1 Thessalonians 5:21).

## PART I — THE CHANGE SCRIPTURE NEVER MADE

### I First: No Verse Ever Moved the Sabbath *the silence of Scripture on Sunday*

Before any history, establish the foundation: **there is no command — Genesis to Revelation — transferring sacredness from the seventh day to the first**. The Sabbath commandment was spoken by God's own voice and written by His own finger on stone. Jesus denied coming to change the law. And His followers' conduct after the cross proves they understood Him literally.

**Exodus 20:8–11**

*"Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy... **the seventh day is the sabbath of the LORD thy God...** For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth... and **blessed the sabbath day**, and hallowed it." — grounded in creation, not Sinai.*

**Matthew 5:17–18**

*"Think not that I am come to **destroy the law...** For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, **one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law.**"*

**Luke 23:56 · 24:1**

*After the cross: the women "rested **the sabbath day according to the commandment**" — then came to the tomb "upon the **first day of the week**" to work. Luke, writing decades later, still distinguishes them.*

**Matthew 24:20**

*Prophesying Jerusalem's fall in **AD 70** — nearly 40 years after His ascension — Jesus said: "Pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, **neither on the sabbath day.**" He expected His church to honor it for decades to come.*

**Count the evidence:** Paul preached in Corinth **"every sabbath"** for 18 months — more than seventy Sabbaths — persuading "the Jews **and the Greeks**" (Acts 18:4, 11). Meanwhile the first day of the week appears only **eight times** in the whole New Testament (Mt 28:1; Mk 16:1, 2, 9; Lk 24:1; Jn 20:1, 19; Acts 20:7; 1 Cor 16:2) — and not one contains a command, a blessing, or a title of honor. The change did not come from Scripture. So where did it come from?

### II The Slow Drift — AD 100 to 300 *exactly as the apostles warned*

Paul warned the Ephesian elders on the record that corruption would rise **from within** (Acts 20:29–30), and told Thessalonica the mystery of iniquity was "already" at work (2 Thess 2:7). The paper trail of that falling away begins early — and significantly, in specific cities.

#### Ignatius, To the Magnesians 9 (c. AD 110)

Speaks of those "**no longer observing the Sabbath, but living according to the Lord's day**" — one of the earliest hints of the new vocabulary, appearing barely a decade after the last apostle died.

#### Justin Martyr, First Apology 67 (c. AD 155, in Rome)

First clear description of a Sunday gathering: "And on **the day called Sunday**, all who live in cities or in the country gather together to one place..." His reasons? Not a command of God — but that light was made on the first day, and Jesus rose on it.

#### Epistle of Barnabas 15 (c. AD 130)

Spiritualizes the Sabbath command and argues for "**the eighth day**" as a new celebration — allegory replacing commandment.

#### The Pressure Behind the Drift

After the Bar Kokhba revolt (AD 132–135), Emperor Hadrian crushed Judea and **banned Jewish practices — including Sabbath-keeping**. Anything "Jewish" became dangerous in the Roman world. Distancing the church from the seventh day was a human solution to a human problem — tradition stepping in where Scripture had not spoken.

**Notice the geography:** the earliest promotion of Sunday comes from **Rome** (Justin) and later **Alexandria** — the same two cities the fifth-century historians will name as the exceptions (Section VI). Even so, through AD 300 the drift remained partial and regional. The decisive acceleration required something the church had never had before: **an emperor's sword**.

## PART II — EMPEROR, LAW, AND COUNCIL

### III Constantine's Sunday Law — March 7, AD 321 the first Sunday law in history came from the state, not the church

In AD 313 Constantine legalized Christianity (Edict of Milan) — yet he kept the pagan title *Pontifex Maximus*, kept minting coins to *Sol Invictus* ("the Unconquered Sun"), and was not baptized until his deathbed in AD 337. A statesman seeking to unify an empire needed one shared day of rest. The empire already had one beloved by pagans: **the day of the sun**.

**The law itself, preserved in the Codex Justinianus (3.12.3):** "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 so suitable for grain-sowing or for vine-planting; lest by neglecting the proper moment for such operations the bounty of heaven should be lost." — **Emperor Constantine, March 7, AD 321**

#### Read the law carefully

The day is named not "the Lord's day," not "the Christian Sabbath," but by its old pagan title: **the venerable day of the Sun** (Latin: *dies Solis*). No reference to the fourth commandment. No reference to the resurrection.

#### Philip Schaff, church historian

The law was framed under "**its old astrological and heathen title, Dies Solis**... so that the law was as applicable to the worshippers of Hercules, Apollo, and Mithras, as to the Christians." — *History of the Christian Church*, vol. 3, p. 380, note.

#### The very next day — March 8, AD 321

Constantine issued another edict — regulating pagan **soothsayers (haruspices)** inspecting entrails when lightning struck public buildings (*Codex Theodosianus* 16.10.1). The Sunday law stands in its true context: the policy of a sun-honoring emperor.

#### Ezekiel 22:26

"Her priests have **violated my law**, and have profaned mine holy things: they have put **no difference between the holy and profane**... and have **hid their eyes from my sabbaths**, and I am profaned among them."

### IV Nicaea and Eusebius — The Motive, in Their Own Words

Four years after the law, Constantine convened the Council of Nicaea (AD 325). Beyond its famous creed, the council — backed by the emperor — severed Easter from the biblical Passover. Constantine's own letter states the motive with startling plainness. And his court bishop, Eusebius, left history a candid confession of who moved the Sabbath.

#### Constantine's Easter letter, AD 325 — Eusebius, Life of Constantine 3.18

"It appeared an unworthy thing that in the celebration of this most holy feast we should follow the practice of the Jews... Let us then have **nothing in common with the detestable Jewish crowd**." — *The stated reason for altering Christian practice was not Scripture. It was contempt for the Jews.*

#### Eusebius, Commentary on the Psalms (on Ps. 92), c. AD 330

"All things whatsoever that it was duty to do on the Sabbath, **these we have transferred to the Lord's day**, as more appropriately belonging to it, because it has precedence, and is first in rank, and more honorable than the Jewish Sabbath." (*Migne, Patrologia Graeca*, vol. 23, cols. 1171–1172.)

**Notice the pronoun:** "these **we** have transferred." Not "Christ transferred." Not "the apostles transferred." **We** — the fourth-century church and its emperor. Eusebius, bishop of Caesarea and the father of church history, knew exactly who made the change — and said so in writing. It is one of the most candid confessions in all of Christian literature, hiding in plain sight.

### V The Council of Laodicea — The Anathema when persuasion failed, condemnation began

By the mid-fourth century, large numbers of ordinary Christians were **still keeping the seventh-day Sabbath** — and the institutional church stopped persuading and started cursing. The Synod of Laodicea in Phrygia (dated by scholars between AD 343 and 381, most often c. AD 363–364) issued sixty canons. Canon 29:

**Canon 29, Council of Laodicea:** "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**."

#### What the canon proves — 1

**Sabbath-keeping was still widespread** among Christians in the mid-300s. You do not pass a law against something nobody is doing.

#### What the canon proves — 2

The church acknowledged it was requiring **work on the seventh day** — the exact opposite of the fourth commandment: "in it thou shalt **not** do any work" (*Exodus* 20:10).

What the canon proves — 3

The weapon chosen was **anathema — a formal curse**. Tradition was now enforced by condemnation — the very thing Paul forbade (Colossians 2:16: "Let no man therefore judge you...").

Matthew 15:9

"But **in vain they do worship me**, teaching for doctrines **the commandments of men**."

VI The Historians' Window — What the Church Was Still Doing in AD 450

Here is the fact that surprises most readers. Even a century **after** Laodicea, the majority of the Christian world still honored the seventh day. Two independent church historians, writing around AD 439–450, tell us the real state of affairs:

Socrates Scholasticus, Ecclesiastical History 5.22 (c. AD 439)

"For although **almost all the 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**, have ceased to do this."

Sozomen, Ecclesiastical History 7.19 (c. AD 440–450)

"The people of Constantinople, and **almost everywhere, assemble together on the Sabbath**, as well as on the first day of the week, which custom is **never observed at Rome or at Alexandria**."

**Weigh what these orthodox historians just said:** more than four hundred years after the resurrection, **almost all the churches throughout the world** still kept the seventh-day Sabbath. The two great exceptions were **Rome and Alexandria** — the very cities where Sunday had been promoted earliest, and Rome was the seat that would grow into the medieval papacy. And note Socrates' own explanation for Rome's departure: not a commandment of Christ — "**some ancient tradition**." The change was a tradition of men, centered in Rome, resisted for centuries by most of the Christian world. The historians themselves say so.

PART III — THE PROPHECY THAT FORETOLD IT ALL

VII God Saw It Coming — Six Centuries in Advance

None of this took Heaven by surprise. Six hundred years before Constantine, Daniel was shown a power arising out of the Roman Empire — a "little horn" (Daniel 7:8) that would persecute the saints and attempt the unthinkable: **to change God's own law**.

Daniel 7:25

"And he shall speak great words against the most High, and shall wear out the saints of the most High, and **think to change times and laws**..." — *Of the Ten Commandments, only one is both a time and a law: the fourth.*

2 Thessalonians 2:3–4, 7

"Except there come **a falling away first**, and that man of sin be revealed... who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God... For the mystery of iniquity **doth already work**."

Revelation 14:12

"Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that **keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus**." — *God's end-time people carry the original church's double mark.*

Revelation 12:17

"And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which **keep the commandments of God**, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ."

VIII "But Doesn't the New Testament Authorize Sunday?" every text, examined honestly

A fair question deserves a full answer. Here is every passage commonly offered — and what each actually says:

The resurrection texts — Mt 28:1; Mk 16:1–2, 9; Lk 24:1; Jn 20:1, 19

Yes, Jesus rose on the first day — gloriously true. But the disciples gathered that evening **"for fear of the Jews"** (Jn 20:19), not to worship — they didn't even believe He was risen (Mk 16:11–14). No text calls the day holy. God already gave memorials of the resurrection: **baptism** (Rom 6:3–5) and **the Lord's Supper** (1 Cor 11:24–26) — never a new weekly day.

Acts 20:7 — the Troas farewell

A first-day gathering where Paul preached until midnight. By Bible reckoning, days begin at sunset (Gen 1:5; Lev 23:32) — this was a **Saturday-night farewell meeting**, and breaking bread happened **daily** in that era (Acts 2:46). No command, no recurring example.

1 Corinthians 16:2 — the famine fund

"Let every one of you **lay by him in store**" — a private, at-home setting-aside of relief money for Jerusalem, precisely so no collections would be needed when Paul arrived. Nothing about a worship service.

Colossians 2:16 — "sabbath days"

The "sabbaths" bundled here with meat offerings, drink offerings, feast days, and new moons are the **annual ceremonial sabbaths** of Leviticus 23 — shadows pointing forward to Christ. The weekly Sabbath points **backward** to creation (Gen 2:3; Ex 20:11) — made before sin, before shadows.

Romans 14:5 — days and scruples

The chapter is about eating, fasting, and personal scruples (14:2–3, 6). The Sabbath commandment is never in view. **Conscience texts cannot repeal commandments**.

Revelation 1:10 — "the Lord's day"

Which day does the Lord call His? "My **holy day**" — the Sabbath (Isaiah 58:13). "The Son of man is **Lord also of the sabbath**" (Mark 2:28). The Lord has a day — and He Himself tells us which one it is.

**The verdict of Scripture is unanimous:** the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord — before the cross, at the cross, after the cross, in the early church, and in the world to come: "from one sabbath to another, shall **all flesh** come to worship before me, saith the LORD" (Isaiah 66:23). "There remaineth therefore **a rest**" — Greek: *sabbatismos*, a keeping of Sabbath — "**to the people of God**" (Hebrews 4:9).

IX The Timeline — Creation to Constantine to Today

| Date       | Event                                                                                                        |
|------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Creation   | God blesses and sanctifies the <b>seventh day</b> (Genesis 2:3)                                              |
| AD 27–31   | Jesus keeps the Sabbath " <b>as his custom was</b> " (Luke 4:16)                                             |
| AD 31      | After the crucifixion, the women rest "the sabbath day <b>according to the commandment</b> " (Luke 23:56)    |
| AD 31–66   | The apostles preach on the Sabbath throughout Acts — Gentiles included (13:42–44; 16:13; 17:2; 18:4)         |
| c. 110     | Ignatius uses new "Lord's day" vocabulary ( <i>Magnesians</i> 9)                                             |
| c. 130     | <i>Barnabas</i> spiritualizes the Sabbath, promotes an "eighth day" (ch. 15)                                 |
| 132–135    | Bar Kokhba revolt crushed; Rome bans Jewish practices; anti-Jewish pressure mounts                           |
| c. 155     | Justin Martyr describes a Sunday gathering — <b>in Rome</b> ( <i>First Apology</i> 67)                       |
| 313        | Edict of Milan legalizes Christianity                                                                        |
| 321        | <b>Constantine's Sunday law (March 7): rest on "the venerable day of the Sun"</b> — Codex Justinianus 3.12.3 |
| 325        | Nicaea severs Easter from Passover — "nothing in common with the detestable Jewish crowd"                    |
| c. 330     | Eusebius: "these <b>we</b> have transferred to the Lord's day"                                               |
| c. 363     | <b>Laodicea, Canon 29:</b> work on the Sabbath; <b>anathema</b> on "judaizers"                               |
| c. 440–450 | Socrates & Sozomen: <b>almost all churches worldwide still keep the Sabbath</b> — except Rome and Alexandria |

X The Invitation — Repairers of the Breach

This is not an argument about a square on a calendar. It is a question of **authority**: whose word governs your worship — the commandment God spoke and wrote in stone, or a tradition an emperor signed and a council enforced? Elijah's question on Carmel still stands:

*"How long halt ye between two opinions? **if the LORD be God, follow him:** but if Baal, then follow him."*  
— 1 Kings 18:21

**Isaiah 58:12–13**

*"And they that shall be of thee shall build the old waste places... and thou shalt be called, **The repairer of the breach, The restorer of paths to dwell in.** If thou turn away thy foot from the sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on **my holy day**; and call the sabbath **a delight**, the holy of the LORD, honourable..."*

**Matthew 15:3, 6, 9**

*"Why do ye also **transgress the commandment of God by your tradition**?... Thus have ye made the commandment of God of none effect by your tradition... In vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men."*

**Your next step:** (1) Verify every quotation in this pamphlet — the sources are printed below; check them yourself. (2) Read Exodus 20:8–11 and ask who has authority to edit it. (3) Ask us for Part 3: **"Did the Original Church Even Exist?"** — the manuscript, archaeological, and prophetic evidence. (4) Talk to God honestly about what you're discovering. His promise: "Their soul shall be as a watered garden" (Jeremiah 31:12) — and the Sabbath, kept by faith, becomes not a burden but "a delight."

*"Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that **keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.**"*  
— Revelation 14:12

**Primary sources cited in this pamphlet:** Codex Justinianus 3.12.3 (AD 321; trans. P. Schaff, *History of the Christian Church*, vol. 3, p. 380 n.) · Codex Theodosianus 16.10.1 · Eusebius, *Life of Constantine* 3.18 · Eusebius, *Commentary on the Psalms* (Migne, PG 23:1171–72) · Synod of Laodicea, Canon 29 (*NPNF*, Ser. II, vol. 14) · Socrates, *Eccl. History* 5.22 · Sozomen, *Eccl. History* 7.19 · Ignatius, *Magnesians* 9 · *Epistle of Barnabas* 15 · Justin Martyr, *First Apology* 67 · All Scripture quotations: King James Version · Full article: **originalchristians.info**

Questions? Skeptical? Check the sources — we printed them so you can. This is Part 2 of a series. Part 1 covers what the original Christians believed and practiced; Part 3 presents the manuscript, archaeological, and prophetic evidence that the record can be trusted. Write us — no pressure, no cost, no obligation.

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*"Prove all things; hold fast that which is good." — 1 Thessalonians 5:21 · "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth." — John 17:17*