

Exodus 16:22-30

22 On the sixth day they gathered twice as much bread, two omers each. And when all the leaders of the congregation came and told Moses, **23** he said to them, "This is what the LORD has commanded: 'Tomorrow is a day of solemn rest, a holy Sabbath to the LORD; bake what you will bake and boil what you will boil, and all that is left over lay aside to be kept till the morning.'" **24** So they laid it aside till the morning, as Moses commanded them, and it did not stink, and there were no worms in it. **25** Moses said, "Eat it today, for today is a Sabbath to the LORD; today you will not find it in the field. **26** Six days you shall gather it, but on the seventh day, which is a Sabbath, there will be none." **27** On the seventh day some of the people went out to gather, but they found none. **28** And the LORD said to Moses, "How long will you refuse to keep my commandments and my laws? **29** See! The LORD has given you the Sabbath; therefore on the sixth day he gives you bread for two days. Remain each of you in his place; let no one go out of his place on the seventh day." **30** So the people rested on the seventh day.

We are continuing on in our Sabbath Study this morning.

Last week we talked about the complete lack of evidence that **Sunday** is in the **New Testament** what **Saturday** was in the **Old Testament**.

This is what I hope was proven.

1. **Sunday** is not the new **Saturday**. There is no New Testament directive that tells us to keep **Sunday** like the Jews were to keep the Old Testament **Sabbath**.
2. There however **IS** a New Testament precedence initiated by God Himself where the most important events in the formation of the church happened on **Sundays**. There is also precedence that the church met on Sundays at least several times.
3. There is historical evidence from first century sources that shows that not all believing gentiles kept the Sabbath, even prior to both the Catholic Church and the Roman Government **prohibiting** worship on the **Sabbath**.
4. The evidence that the first century Christian Gentiles kept the Sabbath, and were **expected to do so** is sketchy at best. The point simply cannot be proven one way or the other historically. I believe this means that our conclusions must be arrived at through the Biblical record.

I discovered something after having recorded last Sunday's sermon. The Westminster Confession of Faith was completed in 1646. I did not realize that it contained a **Sunday Sabbath** section that essentially says Sunday is the new Saturday and we are to keep Sunday holy. It also contains some holdover Catholic doctrines arising from Covenant Theology from which come things like **infant baptism**. The motives for this confession were very good, but many of the reformers, in my opinion, weren't able to divorce themselves far enough from **the catholic doctrines** they were trying to divorce themselves **from**. The Presbyterians tend to rely upon this confession as a standard of doctrine even today. They also tend to give more authority to church traditions than Baptists do.

I am happy to say though, that there was a group that **was** able to divorce themselves more fully. The London Confession of faith was made by Anabaptists in 1644 and it reflects **very closely** what we teach and believe at Ferndale. It reflects reformed doctrines without the carried over traditions of the church. You will find a link to it on our web page.

Anyway, the London Confession omits any specific reference to the Sabbath. I think it was because scholars disagreed about the **day** the Sabbath was **to be kept** or whether it needed to be **kept at all**. The London Confession allows those with different views to be able to fellowship together.

I find it interesting that those who support the **Westminster Confession** argue the same points as the **Seventh Day Sabbatarians** until these reformers pull, what I regard, as a theological slight of hand. They say that scriptures demand we change the Sabbath keeping from Saturday to Sunday. And they can only use their tradition to support their claim. If I were a seventh day Sabbatarian I would find their position easy prey by the simple 4 word statement- **prove it from scripture**.

This morning I hope to respectfully present the position that Seventh day Sabbath keepers hold. I am sure my bias will come through at times, but I hope to be fair in my presentation.

I believe the three most common sources of this belief come from teachings from the **Seventh Day Adventist church**, offshoots of the World Wide Church of God founded by Herbert W Armstrong, and Seventh Day Baptists. There may be more, but these are the ones I am aware of.

By the way, I will list my resources on the pdf I will post in Sermon Audio this week. I heavily relied heavily upon these resources and others. I will post this

whole sermon in pdf form on Sermon Audio so you can check the sources there.

From Sabbath to the Lord's Day: A Biblical, Historical and Theological Investigation by DA Carson

Birth of the Church: From Jesus to Constantine AD30-312

I also have websites that I referred to.

<https://www.sabbaths.org/Exodus.html>

<https://www.bible.ca/H-sunday.htm>

<https://www.gotquestions.org/Jesus-Sabbath.html>

<https://www.gotquestions.org/Sabbath-keeping.html>

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sabbath_in_seventh-day_churches

<https://www.sabbaths.org/sabbath.html>

<https://www.gotquestions.org/worship-on-Sunday.html>

<https://www.gty.org/library/sermons-library/90-380/why-sunday-is-the-lords-day>

There may be more that I did not remember accessing.

I prepared this sermon ahead of time and gave the parts of this section that I had completed to those who are **most partial** to this position. I hope that, with their help, I can represent their position fairly, even though it is not a position that I hold.

So let's get started.

I will start out with this.

I think the Seventh Day Sabbath position is so strong because of the simplicity of the logic. This is the logic.

The 10 commandments are still applicable to a Christian.

Christ did not come to undo any of the law, especially the 10 commandments.

Therefore we must still keep the 4th commandment just like we would keep any of the others.

I believe that is an accurate 10 mile high evaluation of the position.

Now let's take some of the most popular points in support of keeping the Seventh Day Sabbath one by one.

Reasons Why we should take the command to keep the Sabbath seriously.

1. God made the rule

While it was not in the greatest **2 commands**- first- to love God with all your heart soul and strength /Or second, love your neighbor as you love yourself, it **was** found in the first **subdivision** of those 2 commands where they were broken into the 10 commandments. God Himself wrote them in stone.

Exodus 20:8 “Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. **9** Six days you shall labor, and do all your work, **10** but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God. On it you shall not do any work, you, or your son, or your daughter, your male servant, or your female servant, or your livestock, or the sojourner who is within your gates. (notice the reason here.) **11** For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.

Then prior to entering the land of Canaan, the laws were read again. Listen for the additional reasoning given for the command.

Deuteronomy 5:12–15 (ESV)

12 “ ‘Observe the Sabbath day, to keep it holy, as the LORD your God commanded you. **13** Six days you shall labor and do all your work, **14** but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God. On it you shall not do any work, you or your son or your daughter or your male servant or your female servant, or your ox or your donkey or any of your livestock, or the sojourner who is within your gates, that your male servant and your female servant may rest as well as you. (notice a different reason given here) **15** You shall remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and the LORD your God brought you out from there with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm. Therefore the LORD your God commanded you to keep the Sabbath day.

So the Sabbath day was Saturday.

No work was to be done on it. Other scriptures define what is meant by work. The reasoning given for the command appears to be based on **creation** the **first time** it was given in the law and the **freedom from Egypt** on the **second time** it was read. Given that the command was originally based on **Genesis 2:2–3 (ESV)**

2 And on the seventh day God finished his work that he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all his work that he had done. **3** So God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it God rested from all his work that he had done in creation.

The Seventh day Sabbath view makes the point that because this command was **based on creation** after the **creation of man** and prior to anything Jewish, the command is intended as a **universal** command, a command intended for all mankind. Jesus also said the Sabbath was **made for man**. He did not say Hebrew man. He just said man. This is important to their argument because it counters any debate about whether the Sabbath command was part of a Jewish covenant, and therefore able to be ignored by Gentile Christians, just like we ignore circumcision and the feasts.

2. There are many mentions of penalties and rebukes for not keeping the rule.

Exo 31:14 said there will be a death penalty for breaking it. Lev 16:31 says it is a statute forever. Numbers 15:32 a man was put to death for breaking the command. Neh 13 Nehemiah rebukes those not keeping the Sabbath. Isa 56:2 those who kept the Sabbath were blessed. God made it very clear that in the old testament, breaking the commandment was worthy of death. It was a big deal.

3. Isa 66 appears to say that in eternity the Sabbath will be kept, or at least used to track time.

18 “For I know their works and their thoughts, and the time is coming to gather all nations and tongues. And they shall come and shall see my glory,

22 “For as the new heavens and the new earth that I make shall remain before me, says the LORD, so shall your offspring and your name remain.

23 From new moon to new moon, and from Sabbath to Sabbath, all flesh shall come to worship before me, declares the LORD.

24 “And they shall go out and look on the dead bodies of the men who have rebelled against me. For their worm shall not die, their fire shall not be quenched, and they shall be an abhorrence to all flesh.”

So the point I am trying to make from this scripture is that there are commands and references in the Old Testament that appear to make the Sabbath day concept binding in the New Testament period as well. Words like **forever** in this Isaiah text, and referring to a **New Earth** where the Sabbath is referenced would make it seem like it spans our period of time into eternity. The point is that it is not just an Old Testament concept.

4. The New Testament has no clear teaching where the Sabbath day was transferred to the first day of the week.

We dealt with this topic last week.

5. The switch from Sabbath to Sunday was mandated by earthly rulers and the Catholic church, not scripture. Up until this time I believe the Sabbatarian view holds that Gentile converts were keeping the Sabbath until they were gradually taught and then forbidden to do so.

In AD 135 Emperor Hadrian destroyed Jerusalem, expelled the Jews, and forbade Sabbath keeping.

AD 321 Emperor Constantine decreed Sunday a public holiday in the Roman Empire. (Augustine of Hippo taught that Christians don't need to keep the Sabbath)

Between 314-335 AD Pope Sylvester 1 decreed a transfer of the sabbath to Sunday.

I think it is fair to say that Seventh Day Sabbath believers believe that ordinary Gentile believers would have continued to keep the Seventh Day Sabbath if the **Early church fathers**, the **Catholic Church** and earthly governments had not restricted or redirected the practice.

6. The Catholic Church is the beast mentioned in Daniel 7, and the whore of Babylon mentioned in Revelation 17. Both are teaching false doctrines intended to distort true religion and following their teaching should be avoided at all cost.

Remember how in Daniel 7 we saw the fourth beast that appeared to be the final beast in world history. A horn shall rise from the beast and speak words against the most high. Verse 25 says **He shall speak words against the Most High, and shall wear out the saints of the Most High, and shall think to change the times and the law; and they shall be given into his hand for a time, times, and half a time.**

It is easy to apply verse 25 to the changes the Catholic church made by changing Saturday to Sunday and changing Resurrection Sunday to Easter and using a pagan holiday to celebrate Christmas. So they fit the prophesy well.

Then in Rev 17 we see more prophesy that the Catholic church easily fits. Revelation 17:1–14 (ESV) (I will be skipping verses)

“Come, I will show you the judgment of the great prostitute who is seated on many waters, 2 with whom the kings of the earth have committed sexual immorality, and with the wine of whose sexual immorality the dwellers on earth have become drunk.”

I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast that was full of blasphemous names, and it had seven heads and ten horns

John couldn't figure out who it was so the angel said-

“Why do you marvel? I will tell you the mystery of the woman, and of the beast with seven heads and ten horns that carries her. 8 The beast that you saw was, and is not, and is about to rise from the bottomless pit and go to destruction.

Many scholars believe that this is the Catholic Church centered in Rome. The next sentence is the important one for this morning.

And the dwellers on earth whose names have not been written in the book of life from the foundation of the world will marvel to see the beast, because it was and is not and is to come.

Then it goes on to tell us the intent and end of this beast.

14 They will make war on the Lamb, and the Lamb will conquer them, for he is Lord of lords and King of kings, and those with him are called and chosen and faithful.”

It is undeniable that the symbols here could easily refer to Rome. And since that is where the catholic church is headquartered, the Pope and the Catholic church really fit the bill. A lot of reformers also thought this passage spoke of the Catholic church.

So the Sabbatarian view says that it is a very scary thing if we are found following the dictates of the great prostitute. After all, it is only those who do not have their names written in the book of life that will be enamored with what she says. The reasoning is that, by following what she says, we show ourselves to be unsaved. So at that point we become very concerned that we don't willingly follow her teachings. This is a great fear that Sabbatarians often hold toward those who are not Sabbatarians, and reasonably so. And since Sabbatarians hold that not keeping the Sabbath was something decreed by the Catholic church, anyone not keeping the Sabbath because of the Catholic church's decree is falling prey to the false teaching of the prostituted religious system.

7. Jesus kept the Sabbath, and did not abolish the law. Anyone

relaxing the commandments will be least in the kingdom of heaven.

[Mat 5:17-20 ESV] 17 "Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. 18 For truly, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the Law until all is accomplished. 19 Therefore whoever

relaxes one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever does them and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. 20 For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.

There is no denying that Jesus kept the Sabbath. He certainly did. And we also cannot say that the Old Testament commandments don't matter because Jesus said that they **do** matter. He did not come to undo all the Old Testament laws. And if we are fast and loose with Old Testament scripture, we can be in trouble.

It is undeniable that the 10 commandments fit into what Jesus calls the law and the prophets. Any of us would regard anyone who taught that **it is ok to commit adultery** as being a false teacher. The Sabbatarians argue that the same should be true of the fourth commandment. If we relax the fourth commandment, we are least in the kingdom of heaven. Teaching wrongly about the 10 commandments is not a model **to follow** but a model to **completely avoid**.

8. Jesus continually said that if we love Him we will keep his commandments.

The Sabbath position says that we cannot argue that the 10 commandments are not part of Christ's commandments. So we must keep all 10 if we love Jesus. If we do not keep all 10, they would logically hold that we do not love Jesus.

9. Jesus made statements that appeared to say his followers would keep the Sabbath when He was gone.

Matthew 24:15-20 19 And alas for women who are pregnant and for those who are nursing infants in those days! 20 Pray that your flight may not be in winter or on a Sabbath. The assumption is that whatever future time this is referring to people would be keeping the Sabbath so that escape would be impaired somehow if it fell on a day when they were keeping the Sabbath.

10. The fourth commandment is not primarily Jewish but intended for all mankind.

Gen 2:2,3 And on the seventh day God finished his work that he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all his work that he had done. 3 So God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it God rested from all his work that he had done in creation.

The Sabbath Keeping position holds this as being a very important text in their beliefs. This text makes it very hard to believe that the Sabbath day mandate was just part of a Jewish set of laws, since it predated the giving of the law.

It is assumed that God communicated the need to keep the Sabbath prior to giving the law in tablets of stone. They hold that when God put the law in stone he was not issuing **new commands** but **re-codifying** them. The rest of the laws that were made specifically for the Jewish people were not included in the 10 commandments. For instance, there are no civil or ceremonial laws in the 10 commandments. That is evidence that the 10 commandments were universal and not primarily Jewish in nature. The Sabbatarian view says they are for **everyone**.

11. **Worship on Sunday and not keeping the Sabbath is problematic because it does away with a distinction that should set God's people apart.** Keeping the Sabbath is a way that Sabbatharians believe we draw attention to our faith and challenge people to come to Christ and repent. It is a way that Christians can emphasize how important it is to obey God in all of life. Showing unbelievers that they are regularly and systematically breaking the Sabbath is an easy way to show people their need for repentance. This is true since nearly no one in our society keeps the Sabbath. The Sabbatarian position argues that if Christians do away with the Sabbath rules and choose arbitrarily not to follow them, which **other laws** do we keep or not keep? And don't we get lost in an arbitrary mess with no way to tell **what we must obey** and **what is no longer important**? This would be confusing to non believers and believers alike. Keeping the Sabbath provides an easy "light on the hill" expression of our faith in God.

12. **There is evidence that the New Testament believers kept the Sabbath.**

Acts 13:14, 13:42-44, 16:13, 17:2, 18:4, we see Paul on the Sabbath in the synagogue teaching.

In Luke 23:56 the women rested on the Sabbath prior to visiting Jesus's tomb. When Paul went to Damascus to hunt down Christians, he went to the synagogues. Acts 9:2

It is important to understand this. If a person concludes that a believer is required to keep the seventh day sabbath, it is going to be difficult for this person to view the person who **refuses to keep the sabbath** any **differently** than a person who is living in adultery. That is logical to their position. So it puts them in a spot that is very difficult to fellowship with a person who refuses to keep the Sabbath.

We also need to think about this. If any theological position holds that all believers who do not agree with them about their position are **at best** living in sin, and **at worst** not true believers, it falls upon those **position holders** to proclaim their position in such a way that theologically counters and **destroys** any other position contrary to theirs. (I am not trying to say that all Sabbatians believe keeping the Sabbath is a core doctrine. I am just applying this to those who do.) If they believe that only their position is a faithful obedient position, the **burden of proof** falls upon **them** to prove more than simply that their position **might** be right. They must prove it is **absolutely** right

If their position is a core issue, a believer studying the Bible with good bible study principles should easily be convinced that their position is true. The issue should be as clear as all other core issues, like the deity of Christ, salvation by Christ alone, the atoning work of Christ, etc.

A debatable issue is one where **two people reading the same scripture** with **good bible study principles** can conclude two different things, and they can accept their differences and still fellowship together. The difference between Arminianism and Calvinism would be a good example of that kind of difference. They both **adhere to scripture**, but they add different **emphasis** to different **scriptures**. They **both believe the Word**, but they think it means different things.

I firmly believe that the Sabbath keeping issue is a peripheral issue. I can easily fellowship with those who have a different point of view. That is why I do not need to convince a Sabbatarian to believe **like I do**. But if the Sabbatarian view is held to be a **core issue**, something has to give.

I think there are only three likely outcomes.

1. They can either conclude from scripture that Sabbath keeping **is not a core issue** because there is obviously scriptural ambiguity allowing for legitimate opposing views,
2. they can lay out a position so strongly from scripture as to remove any opposing views, or
3. they can split company.

That is the logical dilemma that makes this topic so important to discuss. At this point I want to make something else clear. Many of the people who keep the Sabbath exhibit a very honorable trait that we would be wise to emulate. They will obey scripture no matter what anyone thinks about it. Every believer should have that trait. Many of the brothers who keep the Sabbath have many traits worth copying.

Will **we** obey scripture even when it tells you something that will cause us to be very misunderstood or disliked or inconvenienced? We should.

These people also understand that just because something is **popular**, that does not make it **true**. That is another trait we are wise to share.

As I have studied and thought about the Sabbatarian position over the last month, I think the Sabbatarian position has one serious weakness. I think it fails to differentiate between the **assumptions it holds** and the **facts it can prove**.

It's most significant assumption is that the 4th commandment is the same in intent and function as the other 9 commandments. If scripture presents evidence that this assumption is false, the whole Sabbatarian position falls apart. In the next two sermons I hope to show that scripture presents 8 ways that the 4th commandments is different than the other 9.

And please remember, my goal is first to be true to scripture. Assuming I am being true to scripture, my second goal is to foster loving fellowship and remove obstacles to that fellowship. If I am in error about scripture, my error should be obvious enough that it can be easily corrected.

We will look at the Sabbath study again next Sunday, which is not the Sabbath, Lord Willing.