

# Questions/answers on the Sabbath

by James Blaine Chapman

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*The sermon addresses misconceptions about the Sabbath, emphasizing the significance of the Christian Sabbath and spiritual rest over traditional observance.*

**Scripture:** Acts 20:7, Romans 14:5, Galatians 5:1, Colossians 2:16, Hebrews 4:9

**Topics:** "Sabbath Observance", "Spiritual Rest"

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## Description

James Blaine Chapman addresses the misconception that the Roman Catholic Church changed the Sabbath day from Saturday to Sunday, clarifying that the Christian Sabbath has always been observed on Sunday to commemorate the Lord's Resurrection. He explains the historical context of the Jewish Sabbath and the Christian Sabbath, emphasizing the spiritual rest and holiness that believers experience through the Holy Spirit. Chapman encourages believers to focus on entering into the spiritual rest provided by God, rather than getting caught up in legalistic debates about specific days of the week.

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## Transcript

QUESTION #261 -- My Roman Catholic neighbor claims that the Catholic Church changed the Sabbath day from Saturday to Sunday. Now if we broke away from the Catholic Church in other matters why do we not break away on this and return to keeping the day that Jesus kept?

ANSWER #261 In the first place, the Roman Catholic Church did not change the Sabbath day from Saturday to Sunday. The Seventh Day Adventists usually say that Constantine, the Roman emperor made the change. But neither is this claim true. What Constantine did was to issue a decree which exempted the soldiers from drill service on Sunday, and far from marking the beginning of the observance of Sunday as the Christian Sabbath, this was but an admission that its observance was a well established custom already.

The Christian Sabbath is as much "the seventh day" as the old Jewish Sabbath, for as informed people know, the Jewish Sabbath did not go in unbroken succession throughout one year, much less throughout long periods of years. The subject is too complicated for me to discuss it here, but the Jews followed the lunar or moon calendar, and in order to make their weeks correspond with the solar or sun year, they added in days between certain weeks at certain seasons of the year, and these days did not count in the regular succession.

That resulted in the Sabbath coming on various days of the week, and in the course of time every day of the week was observed, so that Seventh Day Sabbath people are more rigid and hidebound than the ritualistic Jews, and the Sabbath they keep today-I do not know when they made their start on calculation-may be any day of the old Jewish week, and there is no record that any Sabbath at all was kept for 2,500 years after creation. So that assuming they are in the succession established by that first week of days mentioned in Genesis is utterly without either proof or likelihood.

And what is more, in the calendar of today the days do not agree with what they were before the calendar was corrected. Even George Washington was not born on February 22. He was born on February 11. But when the calendar was corrected eleven days were lopped off, and February 22 took the place of what was February 11 in 1732, 50 we have gone on celebrating the 22nd which does now mark the anniversary of Washington's birth, but neither the day of the month nor the days of the week correspond.

And more yet, Seventh Day people around the world do not keep the same day right now. They cannot do it. At the International Date Line in the middle of the Pacific Ocean there is a change in the days of the week and month, and part of the Seventh Day Sabbath people in the world are keeping Saturday, and the others are keeping either Friday or Sunday, counting by the calendar of the other group. It is just all a lot of nonsense and illustrates how impossible it is to put the wine of Christianity into the worn-out bottles of Judaism.

The Jewish Sabbath was given to a special people to be observed in a special country -- Palestine and its extension to the Gentiles and to the whole face of the earth is a fallacy and an impossibility. The Christian Sabbath, on the other hand, belongs in the list with "the new song," "the song of the Lamb." It commemorates the Lord's Resurrection, and has been the "Lord's Day" with Christians from the earliest times of the present age. It is the Church's principal occasion for propagation and evangelism, and is more significant than either the Saturday Sabbath of the Jews or the Friday Sabbath of the Mohammedans.

I suggest that you send to the Nazarene Publishing House for a copy of Dr. Corlett's book on "The Christian Sabbath." It is inexpensive and yet convincing. In the meantime, do not listen to any who would spy out this liberty we have in Christ and get you to turn back again into bondage.

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QUESTION #262 -- What is meant in the fourth chapter of Hebrews where a day of rest is mentioned so many times? Especially the eighth verse seems almost to indicate that we should keep Saturday as a rest day.

ANSWER #262 -- This "rest" in the book of Hebrews has no fundamental reference to any weekly rest day whatsoever, but to a spiritual rest which is the heritage of all God's people. It is the rest of holiness, the rest of soul experienced by those who, after they were born again, have been baptized with the Holy Ghost and fire by means of which they are cleansed from all sin and filled with the perfect love of God. This is the rest that is essential and the Sabbath that is satisfying. Let us by all means "labor" (and here you have the same idea as that used in Joshua when it is said the people "made haste to pass over") to enter into this rest.

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QUESTION #263 -- Do you think it is necessary for a person who has been taught to say "Sabbath" from his childhood to change to saying, "Sunday," as seems to be the general custom in our church?

ANSWER #263 -- Sabbath and Sunday are not really interchangeable words, and if you want to be really accurate you will say Sabbath when you refer to the religious significance of the day and Sunday when you refer to the day in the ordinary sense. For example I may say, "I will come over to your house next Sunday and we will attend the Sabbath services at your church." But here again is a distinction that is not generally observed. But if you have been taught to say Sabbath and want to continue to say it I believe you should train yourself to make the distinction more than is expected of those who have grown up to use the secular name. For instance, in enumerating the days of the week, say Sunday, and in speaking of any thing, like a birthday or the other idea not connected with the religious significance of the day, say Sunday, otherwise you are degrading the more significant name.

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