

Rome's *Challenge*



Why do Protestants worship on Sunday?

In 1893, the Catholic Church released a series of four articles in the *Catholic Mirror*. These articles were later published in the book *Rome's Challenge: Why Do Protestants Keep Sunday?* In these articles, the Catholic Church asks Protestants why they go to church on Sunday if the Bible refers to the Sabbath as Saturday, "the seventh day" (Ex. 20:10). The articles say the Catholic Church changed the Sabbath to Sunday without any support from the Bible. The articles go on to say that since Protestants stand on the Bible as their sole authority, then they are worshipping on the wrong day since the Catholic Church openly admits to changing the day without the Bible. As a result, the articles challenge all Protestants to see if the Bible actually endorses Sunday worship. "Let the Bible decide whether Saturday or Sunday be the day enjoined by God. One of the two bodies must be wrong." With such a bold challenge before us, let's take a moment to consider Rome's challenge.

In the beginning of the Bible, we are told that "God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because in it He rested from all His work which God had created and made" (Genesis 2:3). While some claim that the Sabbath was only for the Jews, we cannot rationally consider this claim since the Sabbath was instituted long before the Jewish nation

even came into existence. If the Sabbath was only for the Jewish nation, then marriage also, which was instituted at the beginning, is only for the Jewish nation. Of course, we know this is not true. The Sabbath was not made for the Jews. "The Sabbath was made for man," as in all mankind (Mark 2:27).

Moving beyond creation, we find that God put the Sabbath in the Ten Commandments tagged with the word, "Remember," saying, "Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord your God" (Ex. 20:8-10). In Rome's Challenge, the publication states, "In the Old Testament, reference is made one hundred and twenty-six times to the Sabbath, and all these texts conspire harmoniously in the voicing of the will of God commanding the seventh day to be kept, because God Himself first kept it, making it obligatory on all as 'a perpetual covenant.'"

Of course, this is all Old Testament. As most are aware, the change of the Sabbath from Saturday to Sunday had to take place somewhere in the New Testament. The principal argument explaining the change is that "Jesus changed the Sabbath from Saturday to Sunday in honor of the resurrection," but throughout the publication, the Catholic writer reveals point by point that there is no evidence for this theory found anywhere in the Bible. Instead, we find that the

apostles continued to keep the original Sabbath after the resurrection (See Acts 13:42, 16:13, 17:2; 18:4). It wasn't until after the apostles all died off that the change was made by the Catholic Church. Again, the articles affirm this, admitting, "The Catholic Church for over one thousand years before the existence of a Protestant, by virtue of her divine mission, changed the day from Saturday to Sunday."

The Catholic Church openly tells us that they changed the Sabbath from Saturday to Sunday without any support from the Bible. This confirmed in another Catholic publication, which states, "Sunday is a Catholic institution...from the beginning to the end of scripture there is not a single passage that warrants the transfer of the weekly public worship from the last day of the week to the first" (*Catholic Press*, Aug. 25, 1900). These are not isolated quotes. While we do not have room to add them all, quotes of Catholic admissions on this subject are exhaustless.

Of course, one might ask, if the Catholic Church admits that they changed the Sabbath from Saturday to Sunday without any support from the Bible, why do Catholics continue to worship on Sunday? Well, those who understand Catholicism realize that the Catholic Church holds the traditions of the church equal with the Bible. As the articles state, "the Catholic yields his judgment in spiritual matters

implicitly, and with unreserved confidence, to the voice of his church," while "the Protestant recognizes no teacher but the Bible." Since Catholics say church authority and tradition are equal to the Bible, they can justify keeping Sunday without biblical support. What perplexes the Catholic, according to the articles, is that Protestants claim to stand on the Bible alone as their rule of faith, but they continue to go to church on Sunday, when the Catholic Church admits that they changed the day without any support from the Bible!

To prove that there is no clear evidence from the Bible to support the observance of Sunday, the publication investigates every New Testament verse that references the first day of the week. In the end, the author concludes that those who try to use these verses to say that the Sabbath was changed are twisting the Bible to suit their own ideals. While many insist that the change is found in the Bible, the Catholic Church itself has told us openly that they made the change without any support from the Bible. They have shown us the smoking gun. The articles tell us plainly, "we have demonstrated that it is the Bible against their Sabbath. We have shown that no greater contradiction ever existed than their theory and practice. We have proved that neither their Biblical ancestors nor themselves have ever kept one Sabbath day in their lives."

The fact is, there is no evidence that the Sabbath was changed to Sunday in honor of the resurrection. If God was going to change one of the Ten Commandments, Jesus would have made it clear, but He said nothing about the change. While some say, the resurrection proves the Sabbath was changed to Sunday, the fact that Jesus rested in the grave on Sabbath and His followers “rested on the Sabbath according to the commandment” while He was in the grave shows that the Sabbath was still in effect (Luke 23:56). Just as God rested on Sabbath after creation, Christ rested on Sabbath after the work of redemption. Ironically, Christians today take the very thing Jesus used to show that the Sabbath was still binding to claim that the Sabbath was changed!

According to the articles, Protestants have been breaking the fourth commandment in order to observe a day that was established by the Catholic Church, accepting “the teaching of the Catholic Church in direct opposition to the plain, unvaried, and constant teaching of their sole teacher,” the Bible. If this is true, both Protestants and Catholics are guilty of the same thing that Jesus accused the Pharisees of when He said, “in vain they worship Me, teachings as doctrines the commandments of men” (Matt. 15:9). Christians today are following a man-made teaching in place of one of God’s Ten Commandments. While

many have twisted Bible verses to say the Sabbath was changed or to claim the law is no longer binding, the facts are out. We have the smoking gun. Sunday is an invention of the Catholic Church. They have admitted this repeatedly over the years, and many have blindly followed the authority of the church.

Shortly after their release, the same publication referenced the articles stating that honest Protestants have only two real choices—either stop worshipping on Sunday and keep Saturday or become Catholic. “Reason and common sense demand the acceptance of one or the other of these alternatives: either Protestantism and the keeping holy of Saturday, or Catholicity and the keeping of Sunday. Compromise is impossible.” If the foundation of your faith is on the Bible alone, there is no rational alternative. The publication states that among Protestants, only “Seventh-day Adventists have the exclusive weight of evidence on their side, whilst the Biblical Protestant has not a word in self-defense for his substitution of Sunday for Saturday.” Without radically twisting the Scriptures, we cannot escape that the fact that “the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord your God” (Ex. 20:10). God could have made it no clearer if He had written it in stone. Oh, that’s right. He did.

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