

# **THE SABBATH QUESTION**

**By Max Nunley**

The subject with which this tract deals has been a problem with no small number of religious observers for years. Some, even, of God's own people, have been bothered by the question of, the proper day for worship.

To some sects evolves the question not only on which day shall we worship, but also what has it to do with salvation or perseverance.

## **THE MEANING OF SABBATH**

"The root means to cease, desist. The idea is not that of relaxation or refreshment, but cessation of activity" (W.E. Vine, "Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words", vol. 3, pg. 311). In Exodus 20:8-11, God commanded Israel to cease from all activity, and to keep the day holy.

## **THE DAY OF REST IN GENESIS TWO**

The seventh day in Genesis two was certainly a day of cessation from the activity of creation.

"And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made" (Genesis 2:2).

As ceasing to create is called resting, and being refreshed it was a Sabbath.

"For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it" (Exodus 20:11).

"It is a sign between me and the children of Israel forever: for in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day he rested, and was refreshed" (Exodus 31:17).

Notice that it was God's sabbath, and not man's, though it is stated that Adam enjoyed it. (See Mark 2:27,28 which we will explain in this tract).

### **WHEN THE SABBATH WAS GIVEN?**

One will search the scriptures in vain for any mention of the word sabbath as a religious principle, springing from the command of God, and given to the antediluvian world! Of all the saved before command to keep the sabbath. Search for it, it is just not in the word of God!

After the flood there was not a direct prohibitive command given to the world of men concerning the sabbath.

"For until the law sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed when there is no law. Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come" (Romans 5:13,14). The similitude of Adam's transgression is against a direct command of God.

Certainly neither the Egyptians nor their Israelite slaves observed the sabbath during the four hundred and thirty years of the slavery of Israel.

"Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree: That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith. Brethren, I speak after the manner of men; Though it be

but a man's covenant, yet if it be confirmed, no man disannulleth, or addeth thereto. Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ. And this I say, that the covenant that was confirmed before God in Christ, the Law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect. For if the inheritance be of the law, it is no more of promise: but God gave it to Abraham by promise. Wherefore then serveth the law? It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made; and it was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator" (Galatians 3:13-19).

After Israel's exodus from Egyptian slavery, God practically opened the way for the institution of the sabbath as one of the Ten Commandments.

"Six days ye shall gather it; but on the seventh day, which is the sabbath, in it there shall be none" (Exodus 16:26).

As Moses, by the hand of God, began to lead the children of Israel out of Egypt, he gave instruction, by the use of the manna, concerning the sabbath.

It was at Sinai that the sabbath was officially given to men! and it was by the hand of Moses that it was made known!

"Thou camest down also upon mount Sinai, and spakest with them from heaven, and gayest them right judgments, and true laws, good statutes and commandments: And madest known unto them thy holy sabbath, and commandedst them precepts, statutes, and laws, by the hand of Moses thy servant:" (Nehemiah 9:13,14).

### **TO WHOM THE SABBATH WAS GIVEN?**

The sabbath was never given to the Gentile world (non-Jewish); Neither was any part of the moral law, as a covenant!

"Speak thou unto the children of Israel, saying, verily my sabbaths ye shall keep: for it is a sign between me and you through your generations; that ye may know that I am the LORD that doeth sanctify you. It is a sign between me and the children of Israel for ever: for in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day he rested and was refreshed" (Exodus 31:13,17).

### **JESUS AND THE SABBATH**

"And he said unto them, The sabbath was made for the man (**literal translation, gk. roe arepwros**), and not man for the sabbath: Therefore the Son of man is Lord also of the sabbath" (Mark 2:27,28).

As the article *roc*, ;i.e., *the*, is present in the greek text (Textus Receptus), it has reference to a particular man; i.e., ADAM. Before sin entered into the world Adam enjoyed God's sabbath and was Lord over it. "And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit" (I Cor. 15:45); "And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth" (Genesis 1:28).

Christ, as the Second Adam was made a quickening (life giving) Spirit, and he also is Lord over the Sabbath (Mark 2:28).

As Jesus Christ is the life giving spirit and Lord over the sabbath, there remains a sabbath (to cease, desist) to the people of God. "There remaineth therefore a rest (gk. *rapikvrtepot* a sabbath), to the people of God" (Hebrews 4:9). It is in the future, though now God's people have rest by

faith. "For he that is entered into his rest (gk. xarlt-iravcris,), he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his. Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief" (Hebrews 4:10,11).

## **THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH, AFTER THE DEATH OF CHRIST, NEVER KEPT THE SABBATH!**

### **Jesus arose on the first day of the week!**

"Now upon the first day of the week, very early in the morning, they came unto the sepulchre, bringing the spices which they had prepared, and certain others with them. And they found the stone rolled away from the sepulchre. And they entered in, and found not the body of the Lord Jesus" (Luke 24:1-3).

### **He met with his disciples on the first day of the week!**

"Then the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled, for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you.

"And after eight days again his disciples were within, and Thomas with them: then came Jesus, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, Peace be unto you" (John 20:19,26).

### **The Holy Spirit's descent to the waiting church was on the first day of the week!**

"And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place" (Acts 2:1).

Pentecost means fiftieth and refers to the feast of Pentecost being fifty days after the feast of unleavened bread. As Jesus arose on the first day of the week after the feast of unleavened bread, fifty days later would make it another first day of the week or Sunday!

### **The church at Troas met on the first day of the week!**

"And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight" (Acts 20:7).

### **The churches in the provinces of Achaia and Galatia met on the first day of the week!**

"Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye. Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come." (I Cor. 16:1,2).

### **LET NO MAN JUDGE YOU CONCERNING THE SABBATH**

*Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of a holy day, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath (**days is in italics which marks it as an insertion**)* (Col. 2:16).

The Roman Catholic Church did not instigate the change from the sabbath to the first day of the week, or Sunday. The Lord and his apostles, by example and by instruction, has shown the day of worship for this age to be the first day of the week or Sunday.

### **THE SABBATH DOES NOT CONCERN OUR SALVATION**

All believers are free from the law, all the law as a covenant.

"And they wrote letters by them after this manner; The apostles and elders and brethren send greeting unto the brethren which are the Gentiles in Antioch and Syria and Cilicia: Forasmuch as we have heard, that certain which went out from us have troubled you with words, subverting your souls, saying, Ye must be circumcised, and keep the law: to whom we gave no such commandment: It seemed good unto us, being assembled with one accord, to send chosen men unto you with our beloved Barnabas and Paul, Men that have hazarded their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. We have sent therefore Judas and Silas, who shall also tell you the same things by mouth. For it seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things; That ye abstain from meats offered to idols, and from blood, and from fornication: from which if ye keep yourselves, ye shall do well. Fare ye well" (Acts 15:23-29).

"Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God" (Romans 7:4).

We are not saved by keeping the Law, nor do we remain saved by keeping the Law. As we are ordained unto good works (Ephesians 2:10); growth comes by reading and listening to the word of God.

"As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby (I Peter 2:2).

"According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness through the knowledge **(gk.**

**irgytwOolco, - to observe, fully perceive, lays stress on participation in the truth" W.E. Vine "Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words", vol.2, pg. 299)** of him that hath called us to glory and virtue: Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: That by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust" (II Peter 1:3,4).

We are saved by the blood (Ephesians 1:7), and are kept by the power of God through faith (I Peter 1:4,5).

*"Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us to be kings and priests unto God and his father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen."*  
(Revelation 1:5b,6).