

Worship the Beast of Revelation or Die

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The Great Tribulation is a Time of Testing

Someone has said that truth can be stranger than fiction. If this is true, then here is a truth that could be stranger than fiction: *The Bible predicts the final generation will face a life and death controversy over the question of worship.* Many people think worship means "going to church," but worship involves far more than going to a worship service. Worship means submission and obedience to God – as in fulfilling a divine obligation or duty out of love for God. A terrible controversy over worship will occur during the Great Tribulation because salvation will come through the worship of Jesus Christ (John 5:23,24) and condemnation will come through the worship of the Antichrist. (Revelation 14:9,10)

When Abel sacrificed the *required* lamb, he worshiped God. When Cain offered fruit to God, he did not worship God – he offended God because he did not do what God commanded. Often, worship is considered a casual matter. When and how (or if) an individual worships is a personal matter for the most part. Worship is sometimes described as a celebration service or meditation. Worship is regarded as an expression of devotion to God and each religious body is free to worship according to what it believes is God's will. When the Great Tribulation begins, the topic of worship will suddenly change from that of personal taste to that of corporate responsibility. Suddenly, the issue of how God is to be worshiped will be debated because people will assume that they can appease God's wrath by worshipping Him properly. According to Revelation, the people of Earth will become sharply divided over the worship of God during the Great Tribulation. Ultimately, there will be two camps of worshipers, one will worship the Lamb (the sheep) and the other will worship the lamb-like beast (the goats).

The Bible predicts the first four trumpet judgments of God will kill 25% of the world's population. (Revelation 6:8) As a result, despair, anxiety and depression will be pandemic. In this awful and desperate setting, consider the simplicity of these words: "**All inhabitants of the Earth will worship the beast [Babylon] – all whose names have not been written in the book of life belonging to the Lamb that was slain from the creation of the world.**" (Revelation 13:8, insertion and italics mine) The words "all inhabitants of the Earth" are inclusive. The *only* people who will refuse to worship the beast will be the saints. It is hard to believe that millions of people will rebel against God and submit to the authority of Babylon, but it is true. When the devil appears on Earth, he will consolidate the diversity of Babylon's religions into a one world church/state. At that time, wicked people rebelling against both God and the devil will have no choice but to worship the devil or die. Notice the horrible consequences that will befall people who worship the devil: "**If anyone worships the [lamb-like] beast and his image and receives his mark on the forehead or on the hand, he, too, will drink of the wine of God's fury, which has been poured full strength into the cup of his wrath. He will be tormented with burning sulfur in the presence of the holy angels and of the Lamb.**" (Revelation 14:9,10, insertion mine) This verse contains one of the most solemn warnings found in the entire Bible. God means what He says and we can be sure that death by burning sulfur will not be a pleasant

experience.

The other side of the controversy will have deadly consequences also. Many saints will be tortured and killed by the devil's forces for refusing to worship the beast! ". . . **He [the lamb-like beast] ordered them to set up an image in honor of the beast who was wounded by the sword and yet lived. He was given power to give breath to the image of the first beast, so that it could speak and cause all who refused to worship the image to be killed.**"

(Revelation 13:14,15, insertion mine) Revelation says a huge number of saints will be killed during the Great Tribulation: "**When he [the Lamb] opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain because of the word of God and the testimony they had maintained. They called out in a loud voice, 'How long, Sovereign Lord, holy and true, until you judge the inhabitants of the earth and avenge our blood?' "** (Revelation 6:9,10) When the devil gains control of Earth, he will not tolerate rebellion against his authority. The devil will be more cruel and ruthless than Hitler. Millions will be martyred. John writes, "**This calls for patient endurance on the part of the saints who obey God's commandments and remain faithful to Jesus.**" (Revelation 14:12) There is a profound point about martyrdom which you must know. God will give a martyr's faith to everyone facing a martyr's death. Jesus said, ". . . **And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.**" (Matthew 28:20) "**All this I have told you so that you will not go astray. They will put you out of the synagogue; in fact, a time is coming when anyone who kills you will think he is offering a service to God. They will do such things because they have not known the Father or me.**" (John 16:1-3)

While we are considering the coming martyrdom of saints, consider God's wrath upon those who kill His saints: "**The third angel poured out his bowl on the rivers and springs of water, and they became blood. Then I heard the angel in charge of the waters say: 'You are just in these judgments, you who are and who were, the Holy One, because you have so judged; for they have shed the blood of your saints and prophets, and you have given them blood to drink as they deserve.'**" (Revelation 16:4-6) This verse describes the third bowl which occurs during the seven last plagues (God's destructive wrath). God pours the third bowl of His wrath – full strength – upon those people who participated in killing His saints during the Great Tribulation. God avenges the innocent blood of His saints by giving these bloodthirsty people blood to drink. These evil people will suffer horribly for their crimes against humanity. In addition to this horrible suffering, their lives will be sustained so that they might perish in burning sulfur. The wrath of God is far worse than anything man can do. Jesus warned, "**But I will show you whom you should fear: Fear him who, after the killing of the body, has power to throw you into hell. Yes, I tell you, fear him.**" (Luke 12:5)

The 144,000 Share an Opposing Message

When God's judgments begin, God's servants, the 144,000, will tell a dazed and reeling world that God is angry because there is no respect for His laws or His authority. They will remind everyone that God's Ten Commandments are ten demands the Creator imposes on all creation. Specifically, the fourth commandment requires the cessation of work on God's seventh day Sabbath. Ironically, the leaders of the religious coalition will say the same thing!

The problem will be that Babylon's Sabbath and God's Sabbath will be two different days! This disparity will make the issue of "worship" very interesting. The religious leaders of Babylon will say with a united voice that God has sent judgments upon mankind because Earth's inhabitants have sinned greatly and have become degenerate. They will call for immediate action to appease God. The religious leaders of Babylon will *sincerely* demand laws from their legislators requiring everyone to honor and worship the God of Heaven. Hindu and Buddhist leaders will solve the worship problem by imposing their views of worship upon their nations. Moslem leaders will impose their views upon their nations. Jewish rabbis, Catholic priests and Protestant clergy will all do the same.

God Alone Expresses How He Should Be Worshiped

God has clearly expressed in the Bible how His subjects are to worship Him. This is not a matter left to human design, for if it was, humans would have greater authority than God. *The one dictating the time and manner of worship has highest authority.* Unfortunately, the devil has obscured God's truth about worship and implemented false religion around the world. During the end time, Babylon will face a peculiar problem. Each religious system in Babylon will demand that God be worshiped in a variety of ways. For example, Moslems regard Friday as a holy day, Jews regard Saturday as a holy day and Christians regard Sunday as a holy day! So, each religion will ask its lawmakers to enact laws exalting *their* day of worship. The Bible says that when people obey the laws of Babylon, they will be worshipping the devil because the devil is the power within Babylon. **"Men worshiped the dragon [devil] because he had given authority to the beast [Babylon], and they also worshiped the beast [Babylon] and asked, "Who is like the beast [Babylon]? Who can make war [rebel] against him?"** (Revelation 13:4)

The story of Cain and Abel is recorded in the Bible because it illustrates the primary difference between true worship and false worship. Both men built altars. Abel worshiped God by obediently sacrificing a lamb according to God's instruction. Cain refused to obey God. Instead, he chose to do what he thought was best. In effect, Cain presumed to tell his Creator how He would be worshiped. By doing this, Cain insulted God and God rejected Cain's offering. (Genesis 4:1-16)

Cain's rebellious heart led to Cain's rejection. Because of rejection, Cain became violently angry and killed his brother. John warns, **"Do not be like Cain, who belonged to the evil one and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his own actions were evil and his brother's were righteous. Do not be surprised, my brothers, if the world hates you."** (1 John 3:12,13) John says Cain's "act of worship" was evil! In fact, God considered it a blasphemous act because Cain assumed the prerogatives that belong only to God. Cain thought he could tell God how He should be worshiped! Look at this from God's perspective for a moment. If a created being can tell his Creator how or when He is to be worshiped, then the created being is greater than his Creator. Remember, *the one dictating the time and manner of worship has highest authority.*

The crux of the matter is this: God accepts our worship if we worship Him in Spirit and in truth;

that is, if we honestly worship God according to all that we know to be right and true. At the present time, many people worship God thinking they are doing the right thing, when in reality they are not worshipping God as He commands. God kindly winks at our ignorance. However, during the Great Tribulation, God has determined that the whole world must be informed about worship. This is why worship will become the central issue during the Great Tribulation. The 144,000 will preach the gospel of Jesus Christ to every nation, kindred, and tongue as a testimony to all nations (Matthew 24:14) and the gospel of Jesus Christ contains specific information about the worship of Jesus. The 144,000 will proclaim ". . . **Fear God and give him glory, because the hour of his judgment has come. Worship him who made the Heavens, the Earth, the sea and the springs of water.**" (Revelation 14:7) The 144,000 will present the first message which will be "fear God" and "worship the Creator" because a vast majority of the world's population does neither. God understands Earth's spiritual darkness and He has winked at our ignorance for a long time, but overnight, He will remove the darkness that covers the subject of worship *by displaying His wrath*. After Jesus tears the Earth up with a display of awesome power, He will have everyone's attention. Then, He will send His servants throughout the world and with Holy Spirit power, they will expel the darkness that Satan has placed around the subject of worshipping God on His holy Sabbath, the seventh day of the week. The honest in heart within every religion will hear the call to worship Jesus and they will receive Christ as their Savior and worship Jesus according to our Creator's demands.

Worship Jesus Our Creator

This may come as a surprise, but 95% of the references about God in the Bible refer to Jesus. The Father rarely speaks in the Bible. Jesus is the God of the Old Testament and He is the God of the New Testament. (Isaiah 45; John 5:39,40; 8:58) Jesus is the Creator of Heaven and Earth. (John 1:1-14; Colossians 1:16-19; Hebrews 1:1-3) These facts are presented because Jesus is not a lesser God than the Father as many suppose. (John 5:23; Colossians 2:9) Jesus is fully God and He did not leave worship to human design. Jesus clearly explains in the Ten Commandments how *He* is to be worshiped. Carefully review His first four commands. They are found in

Exodus 20:3-11:

Commandment 1. "You shall have no other gods before me."

Commandment 2. "You shall not make for yourself an idol in the form of anything in heaven above or on the Earth beneath or in the waters below. You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me, but showing love to thousands who love me and keep my commandments."

Commandment 3. "You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God, for the Lord will not hold anyone guiltless who misuses his name."

Commandment 4. "Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord your God. On it

you shall not do any work, neither you, nor your son or daughter, nor your manservant or maidservant, nor your animals, nor the alien within your gates. For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the Earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but he rested on the seventh day. Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy."

These four commandments outline the basics of worship. They explain the reverence and respect due our Creator. We are not to obey or reverence any other God. We are not to create an idol and bow down before it. We are not to use or represent the name of God in a careless way. And, we are to observe the *seventh day of the week* as a memorial to our Creator and our Redeemer by resting from our labors on Saturday, just as He rested from His.

The Sabbath Was Not Nailed to the Cross

When confronted with the demands of the fourth commandment, most Christians argue that the seventh day Sabbath was abolished or nailed to the cross. The implication is that when Jesus came to Earth, He did away with the Ten Commandments, including the "Sabbath of the Jews." The Bible disagrees. The fourth commandment does not grant ownership of the Sabbath to the Jews. Rather, it says the **"the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord your God."** The Bible indicates the seventh day was made holy long before there was any Jew on Earth! In fact, the seventh day Sabbath was created and set apart as a special day at Creation. When properly understood, the beauty of God's Sabbath shines from Creation's week revealing a special gift that Jesus gave to mankind. Think of it – God's Sabbath was the first full day of life for Adam and Eve! Jesus created the Sabbath, He made it holy at Creation and He gave it to man: **"Thus the heavens and the earth were completed in all their vast array. By the seventh day God had finished the work he had been doing; so on the seventh day he rested from all his work. And God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it he rested from all the work of creating that he had done."** (Genesis 2:1-3) Four thousand years later Jesus said, **". . . The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath, so the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath."** (Mark 2:27,28)

If the topic of the seventh day Sabbath is a controversial subject in the best of times, what will it be during the worst of times? God's seventh day Sabbath will prove to be highly controversial during the Great Tribulation for three reasons: First, our carnal nature is inherently opposed to obeying God's law: **"The sinful mind is hostile to God. It does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so."** (Romans 8:7) Second, few people have enough time to get everything done that needs to be done throughout the week. Asking most people to "give up" 24 hours each week to worship God seems to be asking too much. Last, God's Sabbath has a very determined adversary. The devil has made sure that Saturday observance puts a person at odds with the social and religious orders of life. The observance of Sabbath interrupts every aspect of life. This is why God created the Sabbath in the first place. Jesus wanted to interrupt man's relentless pursuit for money and pleasure every week with a whole day of rest. Because Jesus knew that mankind would stray from His Sabbath, God bound the observance of His Sabbath upon mankind with the authority of law. When these factors are added together, it is easy to see why most of the world prefers to worship God according to their own ideas. They believe that, "Jesus wants too much."

The Ten Commandments are divided into two groups, and therefore, they were written on two tablets of stone. (Exodus 34:29) The first four commandments deal with man's relationship to God, and the last six deal with man's relationship to his neighbor. Actually, the Ten Commandments summarize the two essential laws of life. Jesus summarized them saying, ". . . **'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.'** This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: **'Love your neighbor as yourself.'** All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments." (Matthew 22:37-40; Jesus quotes from Deuteronomy 6:5; Leviticus 19:18.)

Love and faith are the foundation of salvation. Love makes submission a joy, and faith (believing God's Word) is the basis for obedience. The two "love" commandments that Jesus mentioned are defined by the Ten Commandments. *The meaning of love is not left to human definition.* Unfortunately, the word "love" today, commonly means sex, lust or passion. What a perversion! According to Jesus, true love is a high and holy principle that produces joyful obedience! **"Whoever has my commands and obeys them, he is the one who loves me. He who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love him and show myself to him. . . . If anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching. . . . He who does not love me will not obey my teaching"** (John 14:21-24)

As we would expect, Satan has effectively led the human race to diminish the importance of the Ten Commandments. The devil has especially tried to hide the requirement of the fourth commandment which contains instruction on *how* to worship and *when* to worship our Creator. Satan's purpose for doing this is simple. Bible history confirms that when people ignore the Sabbath of their Creator, they also forget their Creator. When people forget their Creator, they soon create false gods that are compatible with the carnal nature because mankind inherently needs something to exalt and worship. God created this desire within us. Satan has enjoyed enormous success displacing our Creator with false gods. Many people have no idea that God demands rest on the seventh day of the week. God has winked at man's ignorance and darkness on this subject for a very long time. This is not God's loss; it is man's loss because the Sabbath was created for man by an all knowing Creator! Every violation of God's law diminishes the quality of life that God wants for His children. Degeneracy is the result of rebellion and separation from the renewing power of God. If a person does not love and obey his or her Creator, he or she has broken the first commandment because that person will love and obey another god. **"Who foretold this long ago, who declared it from the distant past? Was it not I, the Lord? And there is no God apart from me, a righteous God and a Savior; there is none but me. Turn to me and be saved, all you ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is no other."** (Isaiah 45:21,22)

Jesus will use the first four trumpets to strip away our financial security and our foolish attraction for gods of wood, metal, stone, pleasure, materialism and self reliance. A \$75,000 Mercedes will be of no value without fuel or roads on which to drive. A \$500,000 house will be worthless if it is reduced to a pile of rubble by the first global earthquake. God is about to awaken people all over the world. Then everyone will get a chance to see how great our corporate rebellion is against Him. This rebellion will center on the issue of worship, specifically on the observance of our Creator's Sabbath.

Jesus Declared the Seventh Day Holy

Knowledge of an omnipotent and angry God will explode all over the Earth during the Great Tribulation! No one will be able to deny God's wrath. God's silence with the transgression of His law will end and all creation will know that He sits enthroned in Heaven. He is Almighty God. He is Sovereign over Heaven and Earth and He will send a clarion call throughout the Earth to worship Him on His holy day – Saturday, the seventh day of the week. The call to worship Him as He dictates will separate the sheep from the goats.

Consider these three points:

1. God declared the seventh day of the week holy at Creation because He rested on the seventh day to commemorate His creation of this world! The word *holy* means "set apart." God made the seventh day uniquely different from the other six days at Creation – not at Mount Sinai! It was God who set the seventh day apart from the others. (Genesis 2:2,3)
2. Because God foreknew that Satan would successfully lead the world to forget or deny the holiness of the seventh day Sabbath, the fourth commandment begins with the word "Remember." (Exodus 20:8)
3. Contrary to what religious leaders say, God Himself declared the seventh day of the week to be holy and He has not rescinded this declaration. *All* other days, according to God, are for work and common activities. (Exodus 20:9)

No Part of the Ten Commandments Has Been Abolished

If you ask most Christians about the Ten Commandments, they will agree that nine of the ten are good. (The implication, of course, is that one is bad.) They will agree that it is wrong to steal, kill another human being, commit adultery, use God's name in vain or worship idols. In fact, much of the Christian world will tell you that nine of the Ten Commandments benefit society. But when you ask questions about the fourth commandment, you will hear how the Ten Commandments were nailed to the cross and are no longer binding upon humanity. Why this contradiction?

For centuries, Catholic and Protestant clerics have said the Ten Commandments were nailed to the cross. This explains why most Christians today see no reason to be concerned about the demands of the fourth commandment. If we could reason from cause to effect, we would immediately recognize that our world finds itself in a dismal state today singularly due to lawlessness. Parents have not taught their children the importance of man's laws, not to mention God's higher laws. When the importance of law and obedience is neglected in childhood, moral absolutes evaporate and another law, the law of the jungle, prevails. In the jungle of evil, the strongest players rule by deceit or whim (i.e., machine gun, brute force, etc.). The United States has incarcerated more people than any other developed nation. Why is this? When the beauty and necessity of law is ignored in childhood, lawlessness takes over. Safety, virtue and nobility of character disappear when lawlessness rules. Painful suffering, broken

relationships, greed, drugs, sexual depravity and needless deaths are evidences of lawlessness. When the beacon of moral law declines, decadence, chaos and misery overtakes society. This cause to effect progression explains why God has had to destroy civilizations from time to time. When the cup of iniquity becomes full, total destruction is the *only* solution.

The Harmony Between Law and Grace

Many people are confused about the close harmony that exists between God's law and God's grace, even though we routinely apply these concepts in our lives. Law and grace are brother and sister – they are inseparably related. In fact, they cannot exist without each other. We need grace because law is present. If God had no law, God's grace would not be necessary! Paul and John say that when there is no law, there is no sin! (See Romans 4:15 and 1 John 3:4-6.) However, grace does not lessen the obedience that laws demand either! (Romans 3:31)

If a judge pardons a speeding ticket, does this act of "grace" release the offender from the requirement to obey the speed limit in the future? Not at all. In this example, the law remains intact and grace provides forgiveness to the offender for that one offense. In practice, the harmony between law and grace is easy to understand. For example, when two people are united in love, there are certain nonnegotiable rules the couple must follow if they are to maintain fidelity within the relationship. Faithfulness is one nonnegotiable rule. So it is with our Creator. If we love Him, we have to abide by His nonnegotiable rules, not for the purpose of salvation, but to maintain that all important relationship with Him. **"Can two walk together, except they be agreed?"** (Amos 3:3, KJV) A person cannot have a relationship with God without obeying Him. God is not our equal. **"When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the Lord [Jesus] appeared to him and said, 'I am God Almighty; walk before me and be blameless.'**" (Genesis 17:1, insertion mine) Jesus is Sovereign God of the Universe. Jesus said, **"If you love me, you will obey what I command. . . . You are my friends if you do what I command."** (John 14:15; 15:14)

The world will soon hear the message that God's Ten Commandments are nonnegotiable. Religious leaders have declared God's commandments void, and many people, including Christians, are ignorant of God's laws. However, Jesus will remove this ignorance with a display of powerful judgments and the preaching of the 144,000. God's judgments are coming on the world because a majority of the world's population do not honor the other nine commandments! God is justifiably angry with humankind. He owns a planet that is constantly at war. Humankind has little love or trust for one another. Instead, they prefer to kill, cheat, lie, commit idolatry and adultery, and steal from each other. On top of this, few people on this planet really love God enough to do what He commands. Each sin adds to the cup and when the cup spills over, God acts. God's patience with sin has a limit.

Let me be clear, obedience does not bring salvation, for salvation is not based on a perfection obtained through obedience. Salvation is based on faith. Faith in God is expressed by our "willingness" to obey Him. Obeying God's laws are for our benefit, not His. Think about it. Why would anyone reject the idea of having the seventh day set aside to rest each week? Disobeying God's laws always reduces the quality of life. If we live in harmony with God's

laws, we can live life to the fullest, as God created life to be lived. If we ignore God's laws, death and misery are the end result. If we live according to God's laws, we can enjoy the pursuit of happiness and the fullness of life that He wants us to have. If we ignore them, the consequences are self-evident. Magazines and newspapers print the horrible results every day.

A Test of Faith

God has thoughtfully designed a final exam for Earth. He will grant Satan and his forces complete control of the world's religious and political systems for a short time. Individuals who love God above all else will, on pain of imprisonment, torture and death, obey His law! A watching universe will clearly see who would rather die than obey the devil. The sheep will be separated from the goats. Consider this contest carefully. Circumstances will be so desperate during the Great Tribulation that obeying the Ten Commandments will be impossible, except through faith! In other words, the only way a person will be able to obey Jesus and keep His commandments will be through faith in God's promises. This is why John identified the remnant of God's people as follows: **"Then the dragon [the devil] was enraged at the woman and went off to make war against the rest of her offspring – those who obey God's commandments and hold to the testimony of Jesus."** (Revelation 12:17)

Are There Reasons to Worship on Sunday?

During the Great Tribulation, the United States (and many other nations that have a Christian majority) will make and enforce laws regarding the sacredness of Sunday, even though there is not a hint of a command in the Bible to worship God on Sunday. Sunday is not, nor has it ever been, God's day of worship. Many God-fearing people mistakenly believe that Sunday is the Lord's day. Eloquent scholars have produced volumes offering sophisticated logic to whitewash the error, but *the Bible does not teach that Sunday replaced Sabbath as God's day of worship after Jesus died on the cross*. There are eight texts in the New Testament that mention the first day of the week. Therefore, direct biblical support for the sacredness of Sunday has to come from these eight verses. Here are the texts:

Matthew 28:1	Mark 16:2
Mark 16:9	Luke 24:1
John 20:1	John 20:19
Acts 20:7	1 Corinthians 16:2

The texts in Matthew, Mark, Luke and John state Jesus was resurrected on the first day of the week – a well accepted fact. However, none of these texts mention anything about the sacredness of Sunday. In fact, Luke 23:56 points out that a group of women did not prepare the Lord's body for burial late Friday afternoon, but instead rested on the Sabbath "according to the commandment." Their behavior indicates that Jesus did not inform His disciples that the fourth commandment would be made void after His death. Since the first six texts say nothing about the sacredness of Sunday, we are left with two remaining verses:

Acts 20:7

Some people believe Acts 20:7 offers evidence to support Sunday worship. They use this text to prove the apostles worshiped on Sunday. But notice what the text says, **"On the first day of the week we came together to break bread. Paul spoke to the people and, because he intended to leave the next day, kept on talking until midnight."** (Acts 20:7) In Bible times, a day began at sunset and ended the following evening. Since Creation, the rotation of the Earth has produced this unchanging process. (See Genesis 1:5.) The Jews in Christ's time regarded a day from evening to evening, and they observed the Sabbath from Friday sundown to Saturday sundown. This practice remains intact among orthodox Jews today. (Compare Luke 23:50-56 with Leviticus 23:32.)

Therefore, the timing described in Acts 20:7 is as follows: Paul stayed with the believers at Troas for seven days. (Acts 20:6) On the evening of the first day of the week, at supper time, the believers met to eat supper with Paul and to say good-bye to their dear friend. Remember, the first day of the week in Paul's time began Sabbath evening at sundown, or what we now call Saturday evening and of course, Saturday night followed. After supper, Paul preached until midnight, or Saturday midnight. A few hours later on Sunday morning, the first day of the week, he left Troas for Assos. So, Paul met with believers for supper and preached until midnight, Saturday night. Does a farewell supper and a Saturday night meeting change or abrogate the fourth commandment of God? No. Even if Paul chose to hold a worship service on Wednesday night, would his behavior make God's law void? No. Only God can declare His law void.

Some Bible students claim that the term "breaking of bread" indicates Paul's visit was a communion or worship service. This is not true. In Luke 24:13-31 Jesus "broke bread" at supper time with His disciples after walking more than seven miles to Emmaus with them on the first day of the week. The breaking of bread, even to this day, remains a Middle Eastern custom since bread is often baked so firm that it has to be literally broken in order to be eaten. We know that Jesus "broke bread" on Thursday night with His disciples at Passover and the road to Emmaus experience happened Sunday evening just as Monday was beginning. Why would Jesus conduct a worship service at sundown in Emmaus, as the second day of the week was beginning? Even if it was a worship service, where is God's command to make void His fourth commandment? Certainly not in Acts 20:7.

Paul did not conduct a Sunday worship service in Troas because the day of worship had been changed. Actually, Paul held a farewell meeting on Saturday night – the first part of the first day of the week – after resting on the Sabbath. This story confuses a lot of people today, because we reckon a day from midnight to midnight. So, if Christians want to follow Paul's example as to "when" they should worship, they would need to worship on Saturday night (sundown to midnight). But still the question remains – where is the authority in this text for Sunday observance?

1 Corinthians 16:2

Some Christians argue that Paul insisted on taking an offering for the poor on the first day of the week. Notice: **"Now about the collection for God's people: Do what I told the Galatian churches to do. On the first day of every week, each one of you should set aside a sum**

of money in keeping with his income, saving it up, so that when I come no collections will have to be made. Then, when I arrive, I will give letters of introduction to the men you approve and send them with your gift to Jerusalem." (1 Corinthians 16:1-3)

In Paul's day, money as a medium of exchange was not as common as it is today. Instead, trading was done through a barter system. For example, a person might trade a chicken or some other item for cloth or pottery. So, Paul instructed the church in Corinth to start early – begin the week with an attempt to exchange items for currency since it might take six days to do so. Paul wanted to carry money with him to help persecuted believers in Jerusalem. Paul did not want to travel with roosters, goats, pottery and other things of value, so he asked that they take care of this matter, **"first thing after the Sabbath."** (Compare with Nehemiah 13:15.) Again the question has to be raised, does Paul's instruction change or make void the fourth commandment of God? The answer is "No."

Thoughts on Romans 6

Many Christians, without offering any biblical support, claim that Sunday worship is God's will because Jesus arose from the dead on Sunday morning, the first day of the week. Yes, Jesus rose from the dead on Sunday and the resurrection is very important, but the Bible provides a celebration of the resurrection and it is not Sunday worship! It is baptism. Notice what Paul says, **"What shall we say, then? Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase? By no means! We died to sin; how can we live in it any longer? Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life."** (Romans 6:1-4) Paul makes a beautiful analogy of baptism by comparing the resurrection of Jesus from the dead with the experience of being resurrected from the deadness of sin through being born again! Baptism is a public statement that life in Christ has begun. Still we have to ask, does baptism change or abrogate the fourth commandment? Not at all. In fact, not one of the eight texts in the New Testament says that the holiness of the seventh day was transferred to Sunday! There is no text in the Bible indicating that Sunday is a sacred day! In fact, the fourth commandment says Sunday is a work day!

Herein lies a big part of the coming controversy over worship. Satan has duped the religions of the world on the subject of worship and when God's truth shines upon humanity, reinforced by overwhelming destruction everywhere, what will people do? The current mind set goes like this: If the Ten Commandments were nailed to the cross, and there is no command from God in the New Testament to worship God at any particular time, then God cannot be offended by man's diversity in worship. This mind set will be reversed when God's wrath spills over.

What Was Nailed to the Cross?

Many Christians argue that the Ten Commandments were nailed to the cross. Yet, this argument does not solve the problem. Whatever happens to the fourth commandment, happens

to the other nine! If we do away with the fourth commandment that declares the seventh day to be a holy day, we must also do away with the commandment that says adultery is wrong. About 30 years after Jesus ascended, Paul wrote, "**What shall we say, then? Is the law sin? Certainly not! Indeed I would not have known what sin was except through the law. For I would not have known what coveting really was if *the law had not said, 'Do not covet.'***" (Romans 7:7, italics mine) To what is Paul referring when he says "the law," if not the Ten Commandments?

So, what was nailed to the cross? When Jesus died, the Levitical system came to an end. The ceremonial system was terminated. Many Christians do not realize the ceremonies under the Levitical system were a shadow or illustration revealing the plan of salvation. The key word here is *shadow*. These shadow services pointed toward realities! (Hebrews 7 and 8) Paul writes, "**For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form, and you have been given fullness in Christ, who is the head over every power and authority. . . . When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your sinful nature, God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins, having canceled the written code, with its regulations, that was against us and that stood opposed to us; he took it away, nailing it to the cross. . . . Therefore do not let anyone judge you by what you eat or drink, or with regard to a religious festival, a New Moon celebration or a Sabbath day [feast]. *These are a shadow* of the things that were to come; the reality, however, is found in Christ. Do not let anyone who delights in false humility and the worship of angels disqualify you for the prize"** (Colossians 2:9-18, insertion and italics mine)

If you look at these verses carefully, you can see that Paul is discussing things that were *shadows* of things to come. Of all the concepts taught in the Bible, the services in God's temple are among the most profound, intricate and beautiful. A proper understanding of these services ties all Bible themes together and they provide a backdrop against which all conclusions about God's will and ways can be tested and verified. This is a crucial point. God commanded Moses to set up a careful parallel or *shadow of the plan of salvation* so that human beings could study, test and validate their understanding of His marvelous ways by studying the shadow. God warned Moses to follow the pattern that God gave him. This makes sense because if the model was flawed, our study of Heaven's temple would also be flawed. Notice this verse: "**They [the priests] serve at a sanctuary that is a copy and *shadow* of what is in heaven. This is why Moses was warned when he was about to build the tabernacle: 'See to it that you make everything according to the pattern shown you on the mountain.'**" (Hebrews 8:5, insertion and italics mine)

New Moon observances and Sabbath day feasts were shadows required under the Levitical system. The "Sabbath day" that Paul is referring to is not the seventh day Sabbath of the fourth commandment. Rather, the term "Sabbath days" applies to feast days, such as the Passover, Pentecost or the Day of Atonement. (Leviticus 16:30-31) Certain feast days fell on different days of the week (like our birthday) because they occurred on the *same date* each year. These feast days were considered special Sabbaths of rest (or Sabbath days) that pointed forward to different aspects of the plan of salvation. For example, the Passover not only reminded the Jews of deliverance from Egypt, it also pointed forward to the time when the Passover Lamb – Jesus Christ – would die on the cross so the blood of God's firstborn Son could be applied to

the doorposts of our hearts.

The Jews confused the Ten Commandment law of God with the laws of Moses much like Christians do today. The Jews did not understand the vibrant relationship between the covenant (written by God's finger) and the ceremonial laws (written by Moses' hand). One law was permanent, and the other was temporary. The greater law, the covenant or the Ten Commandments written by Jesus Himself, was kept inside the ark. (Hebrews 9:4) This is why the ark was called the ark of the "covenant." The lesser law of Moses, containing the *shadow* rules, was kept in a pocket on the outside of the ark. (See Deuteronomy 10:1,2; 31:26.) When Jesus died, the ceremonial rules, which were shadows of realities from their inception, ended. The relationship between the Ten Commandments and the laws written by Moses can be compared to the lesser/greater relationship that exists between state and federal laws in the United States. A state law cannot make a federal law void, but a federal law will eventually terminate a state law. This feature is necessary to preserve the union of the states.

Romans 14 and Sabbath Worship

Some Christians use Romans 14 to prove that it does not matter which day of the week we use to worship God. Notice the text: **"Accept him whose faith is weak, without passing judgment on disputable matters. One man's faith allows him to eat everything, but another man, whose faith is weak, eats only vegetables. The man who eats everything must not look down on him who does not, and the man who does not eat everything must not condemn the man who does, for God has accepted him. Who are you to judge someone else's servant? To his own master he stands or falls. And he will stand, for the Lord is able to make him stand. One man considers one day more sacred than another; another man considers every day alike. Each one should be fully convinced in his own mind. He who regards one day as special, does so to the Lord. He who eats meat, eats to the Lord, for he gives thanks to God; and he who abstains, does so to the Lord and gives thanks to God. For none of us lives to himself alone and none of us dies to himself alone. If we live, we live to the Lord; and if we die, we die to the Lord. So, whether we live or die, we belong to the Lord. For this very reason, Christ died and returned to life so that he might be the Lord of both the dead and the living. You, then, why do you judge your brother? Or why do you look down on your brother? For we will all stand before God's judgment seat."** (Romans 14:1-10)

These verses do not imply that we can worship God whenever we want. No, this text addresses a specific problem that early Roman Christians had to deal with; namely, the religious customs of newly converted Jews. In other words, if a new believer in Jesus felt he needed to continue to observe Passover, Paul did not condemn the new believer except to say that his faith was weak. Also, if the new believer could not consciously eat meat purchased in the marketplace for fear it had not been killed correctly or that it had been offered before idols, Paul's counsel was to leave him alone! (The Jews could not purchase nor eat meat unless it was killed according to Mosaic code. Leviticus 19:26) Today, many Christians use this text to support Sunday worship, although it says nothing about Sunday! I seriously doubt religious leaders will offer the freedom mentioned in these verses when they seek the exaltation of their country's day of worship

through the enforcement of law during the Great Tribulation.

The Sabbath Commandment is Mentioned in New Testament

Some Christians claim that nine of the Ten Commandments are mentioned in the New Testament, but the fourth commandment is not restated. Therefore, because the fourth commandment was not mentioned in the New Testament, it *proves* the Sabbath commandment was voided when Jesus died on the cross. This statement is blatantly false because the fourth commandment is clearly affirmed in the New Testament! Paul wrote, "**There remains, then, a Sabbath-rest for the people of God; for anyone who enters God's rest also rests from his own work, just as God did from his.**" (Hebrews 4:9,10) Believers in Christ will rest from their works "just as God did." *When* did God rest from His labors? Genesis 2:1-3 says He rested on the seventh day. Can the obligation of the seventh day Sabbath in the New Testament be any clearer? Paul faithfully observed the seventh day Sabbath during his lifetime. (See Acts 13:44; 16:13; 17:2; 18:4,11.) Even more, Jesus Himself, called attention to the fact that the seventh day Sabbath would remain sacred long after His ascension! (Matthew 24:20)

The Eternal Nature of the Ten Commandments

The apostle Paul knew the Ten Commandments were intact after the cross. He said, "**For I would not have known what it was to covet if the law had not said, 'Do not covet.'**" (Romans 7:7) Likewise, James knew the Ten Commandments were intact after the cross. He wrote, "**If you really keep the royal law found in Scripture, 'Love your neighbor as yourself,' you are doing right! But if you show favoritism, you sin and are convicted by the law as lawbreakers. For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles at just one point is guilty of breaking all of it. For he who said, 'Do not commit adultery,' also said, 'Do not murder.' If you do not commit adultery but do commit murder, you have become a lawbreaker.**" (James 2:8-11) If the royal law includes "Do not commit adultery" and "Do not commit murder," the royal law has to include "Remember to keep the Sabbath holy." James highlights an important point about God's law we have to understand. James says that we have to obey *all* of the Ten Commandments. If we break one, we are guilty of breaking them all because the King's law is fulfilled through *total* submission to a God of love. Our love for God must be unlimited – with all our heart, mind and soul and also love for our neighbor should be equal to the love we have for ourselves. Jesus said, "**If you love me, you will obey what I command.**" (John 14:15)

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