

20th Century Bible Course

LESSON FOURTEEN

Dear Student:

Put yourself in the driver's seat-and \$2000 in your pocket. Just find the "missing verse" and it's all yours. Thousands of people will swear they've read it many times, and their minister just preached on it recently. But a Wisconsin businessman, Mr. A. D. Chilson of Marinette, doesn't think it's there, and has offered a new car to anyone who can furnish a Bible text for Sunday sacredness. And a clergyman, R. H. Blodgett of Indiana, offers \$2000 (deposited in the First National Bank of Warsaw, Indiana) to anyone who can show him from the Bible that Sunday is the correct day of worship for Christians.

How do *you* feel about the matter of a day of rest? Here's a check list for you.

- ☐ I'm sure God doesn't care about a little thing like that.
- ☐ I think that it is just a minor technicality that really doesn't matter.
- ☐ I think that those who observe the Sabbath on Saturday are good but misguided people.
- ☐ I'm sure the day of rest has been changed from Saturday to Sunday. I've read it somewhere.
- ☐ I think if God says it, we ought to do it. Otherwise how can we say we love Him?
- ☐ Nobody knows which is the seventh day anyway. So how can we keep it?
- ☐ I don't want to be a legalist.

Multitudes have been told, and honestly believe, that the keeping of the seventh-day Sabbath was abolished at the cross, and that the first day of the week-the day we now call Sunday-became the Lord's day in honor of the resurrection.

Another group of Christians, equally sincere, believe that the original seventh-day Sabbath that came from the hands of the Creator, that was kept by the Saviour as our example, is the true Lord's day to be observed by all-even this side of the cross.

I speak with an understanding heart, for I realize that many sincere, devoted men and women are walking where their forefathers walked without once thinking to question why they keep the first day of the week. Yet we must learn,-and I believe you have learned-one vital truth. It is this: *We must have Scripture support for every Christian practice that we follow.* If we are wrong-wrong either way-God's Word will certainly reveal that error. Surely every honest person wants to know the truth, even if the truth turns out to be different from what he expected it to be. If the Scriptures reveal that I am keeping the wrong day, then I ought to be perfectly willing to change.

May the Holy Spirit be with you as you search the Word of God for answers. Whether or not you come up with the \$2000 and the car, you will reap a profit, for this lesson offers you confidence in God, security in His worship, and a hope of a destiny beyond the stars!

Very sincerely,

Your Bible Instructor

LESSON 14

A DAY TO REMEMBER*

SCRIPTURE READING: EZEKIEL 20:1-24

Part 1--The Lord's Day

1. How is the expression "Lord's Day" used in the Bible? Revelation 1:10 "I was in the Spirit on the _____."

To be "in the spirit" means to be having a vision (cf. Revelation 4:1, 2).

2. Of which day did Jesus claim to be Lord? Matthew 12:8 _____

3. Which day is the Sabbath? Exodus 20:8-11 _____

Putting these scriptures together, we see that the Lord has a day. That day is the Sabbath. And the Sabbath, according to the ten commandments, is the seventh day.

4. What did Jesus have to do with the giving of the ten commandments? 1 Corinthians 10:1-4

The children of Israel

"did all eat the same spiritual meat; and did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was _____." **Nehemiah 9:9-14** Thou . . . "didst see the affliction of our fathers in Egypt. . . . Thou didst divide the sea before them... Moreover thou leddest them in the day by a cloudy pillar; and in the night by a pillar of fire. . . . Thou earnest down also upon _____, and gavest them right judgments, and _____, good statutes and _____; and madest known unto them thy _____."

Surprising words? Paul says that it was Christ who, through Moses, led His people out of Egypt. Nehemiah says that the same One who led Israel out of Egypt also gave the commandments on Mount Sinai-including the Sabbath commandment.

5. Who created all things? John 1:1-3, 14; Colossians 1:14-16

Jesus had every right to say He was the Lord of the Sabbath, for He had made it. He also had every right to say, "If ye love me, keep my commandments" (John 14:15), for He gave them.

6. What three things made the Sabbath different from the other six days? Genesis 2:2, 3 God _____ on it. He _____ it, and _____ it.

At the close of creation week God set apart the seventh day as a memorial of His loving act of creating the world. He "sanctified" it (made holy, set apart), and placed a special blessing upon it, making it the birthday of the world-a day to remember!

Thought question: What makes something holy? _____

*This is the title of George E. Vandeman's fascinating book on the seventh-day Sabbath.

It was a hot day. Over against the mountain a man was herding sheep. Suddenly his thoughts were interrupted by the sight of a burning bush. There was nothing so strange about a bush burning in the desert, but this one didn't burn up! As he approached to investigate, a voice spoke from the flames, a voice he recognized as the voice of his God. "Take off your shoes, Moses, for you are standing on holy ground."

What made that ground holy? Was it the bush? The flames? The weather? Moses' tak-ing off his shoes? No. It was holy because God was there. His presence made it holy.

Now, what would you think had Moses said to God, "Lord, It's too hot here. There's a little shade on the other side of the mountain where I usually pray. Let's talk over there." What would you think? Moses, however, was not so presumptuous as to specify the time and place for meeting God. He let God choose the place of meeting-and the time!

If God had blessed and sanctified all seven days and told us to keep any one of them, we would have a choice, but He blessed and sanctified only one day. To say it makes no difference which day we keep is to say that God's blessing and His word are not important.

7. For whom was the Sabbath made? Mark 2:27,28 _____

The word "man" is used here in the generic sense-mankind. Many claim that the seventh-day Sabbath was given to the Jews only. Not so. It was given to all mankind in Eden more than 2000 years before the first Jew was born. At that same time marriage was instituted, but no one claims that marriage is for the Jews only!

8. What does the Sabbath commemorate? Exodus 20:9,10 _____

As men forgot this weekly appointment with God, they also forgot who made them, and began to spin theories about man's origin. No wonder God said, "*Remember the Sab-bath!*" Is it mere chance that those who substitute another day of rest are the ones who have largely forgotten God's creative power, while those who have preserved God's specified day of worship have remembered and been untouched

by the doubts of this century?

9. Of what is the Sabbath a sign? Ezekiel 20:12 _____

By keeping holy the seventh-day, we acknowledge our faith in Jesus as our Saviour, for like creation, sanctification requires creative power (Psalm 51:10; John 3:3, 6). As the Sabbath is an appropriate sign, or memorial of God's creative power, so it is also a beautiful sign of His redemptive, or re-creative power.

Part 2-- THE NEW TESTAMENT SABBATH

1. What example did Jesus give? Luke 4:16 "He came to Nazareth,... and, as his _____ was, he went into the synagogue on the _____."

2. Which day of the week is the seventh day according to Luke 23:52-24:1? The preparation day was the day Jesus _____. (verse 56) The day following the preparation day was _____. (verse 1) The resurrection of Jesus took place on the _____ day of the week.

These verses speak of events which took place on the weekend of Good Friday and Easter Sunday. Friday was called "the preparation day"-a day in which to prepare for the Sabbath. The next day-Saturday-is "the sabbath day according to the commandment." The day after the Sabbath is "the first day of the week"--Sunday, the resurrection day.

Some people think that the Old Testament Sabbath is the seventh-day, or Saturday, but that the New Testament Sabbath is the first day, or Sunday. Such is not the case. Not once in the New Testament does the word "Sabbath" apply to Sunday. The Sabbath of the New Testament, as in the Old, is always the day before the first day of the week.

3. What did Christ say that indicates He expected His followers to keep the Sabbath after He was gone? Matthew 24:20 _____

This prophecy refers to the flight of the Christians from Jerusalem just before its destruction (verse 16) in 70 A.D., nearly 40 years after Christ's death. Jesus' words plainly imply that He expected the Sabbath would still be kept at that time. Was it? Paul lived until about four years before that terrible event. What day did he keep?

4. What does Luke, the author of the book of Acts, say of Paul's worship day?

Acts 13:14-16 In Antioch Paul worshipped on _____. **Acts 13:44** The next _____ he preached to the Gentiles. **Acts 16:13** In Philippi, where there were no Jews or synagogue, Paul went out by the river to worship on _____ day. **Acts 18:4,11** In Corinth he "reasoned in the synagogue _____ Sabbath" for a year and a half, or a total of 78 Sabbaths. **Acts 17:2** In Thessalonica, "Paul, _____ went in unto them, and three _____ reasoned" from the Scriptures!

Part 3--SUNDAY IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

But, you say, we keep Sunday in honor of the resurrection. Where is such a command found in God's Word? Where does Scripture tell us to keep Sunday to honor the resurrection? If there is a change in the fourth commandment, then the statement about that change ought to be just as clear as the original command in the ten commandments. Let us look at the eight New Testament texts which mention the first day of the week and see if God has indicated in any of them a change of worship day.

1. Do any of the following passages tell us Sunday (the first day) is to be kept holy? Matthew 28:1

Mark 16:1, 2 _____ **Mark 16:9** _____ **Luke 24:1**

John 20:1 _____ **John 20:19**

Although Jesus did meet with His disciples on that first Sunday evening, it could not have been a resurrection rally, since they gathered behind closed doors "for fear of the Jews," and were not yet convinced He was alive (Mark 16:11, 13, 14).

2. Upon what part of the first day did Paul hold a meeting in Troas? Acts 20:7, 8 _____

The *New English Bible* says, "On Saturday night, when we were together" In order for it to be dark and also be the first day of the week, it would have to be the evening which followed the Sabbath, or Saturday night, because in the Bible the days began at sunset (Mark 1:21, 32 ; Leviticus 23:32. Paul spent most of Sunday walking from Troas to Assos (nearly 20 miles) to catch his ship-hardly an activity for a sacred day! Without question this was a special farewell service, for Paul did not expect to see them again (verse 25). "Breaking bread" may refer to a common meal or to a communion service. If it were the latter, it could hardly indicate a sacred day, for Acts 2:46 (NT 107 [83]) states that they broke bread daily as they went from house to house.

3. What did Paul ask the Corinthian believers to do on the first day of the week? 1 Corinthians 16:1,2 _____

To "lay by in store" does not mean to give an offering in church. *Weymouth's* translation reads, "to store up at his home." They were to lay aside something regularly so that Paul could take generous help to the famine-stricken Christians of Jerusalem. No religious service is even hinted at in this passage.

Have we found any Scriptural authority for Sunday observance? None whatsoever. That the disciples and His mother knew nothing of such a change is obvious, for not even the sacred task of anointing Christ's body prevented them from dropping their work in time to keep holy the hours of the Sabbath.

From beginning to end the New Testament is utterly silent about any change in God's rest day. And *this is significant*, for it was written from 20 to 65 years after the resurrection, and any change would surely have excited great notice. The Jews accused Paul of heresy regarding much less important matters than the Sabbath. Had he advocated the keeping of another day in place of the ten-commandment Sabbath, the New Testament would certainly have contained a record of the opposition such teaching would have stirred up.

As glorious as is the resurrection, God did not intend to commemorate it with a weekly Sabbath, for that would set aside one of His commandments. We honor Christ by obeying Him, not by following man-made ideas in place of His (Luke 6:46 ; John 14:15 ; Mark 7:7-9). And please remember that Christ's ten commandments are the same this side of the cross as they were the day He gave them on Sinai (Lesson 13). The cross has only confirmed their unchangeable nature. Jesus designated baptism as a memorial of His resurrection (Romans 6:3-5).

4. What will be our relationship to the Sabbath in the new earth? Isaiah 66:22, 23 _____

The Sabbath runs like a golden thread from Genesis through Revelation. Since it was part of God's original plan for man to keep the seventh day holy, since it will also be kept by the redeemed throughout eternity, and since there is no Biblical authority for observing any other day, should it surprise us that God would expect Christians to be observing it now? "If ye love me," Jesus said, "keep my commandments" (John 14:15).

5. Whose example are we to follow? 1 Peter 2:21 _____

6. What does obedience indicate? 1 John 5:2, 3 _____

7. How important is it to keep all the commandments? James 2:10 _____

8. In God's last message to this rebellious planet, to what does He especially call attention? Revelation 14:6, 7 "Worship him that _____

How the Saviour must grieve to see the almost universal disregard of the very commandment He cautioned man to remember! How it must pain Him to see the widespread denial of His Creatorship that resulted from forgetting what He said to remember.

If you break a finger you call the doctor's attention to the broken finger- not the nine good ones. Just so, it's the broken commandment that God is concerned about. Nearly the whole world is breaking His Sabbath, and He hurts. No wonder He repeatedly urges us to worship Him in *His way- not our own*. And His way includes His day, for the worship that honors the God of creation cannot be separated from God's memorial of that creation.

Many people sincerely believe that it doesn't matter which day they set aside for worship. They reason that all days are alike- 24 hours long. So what's the difference? If you owe a man \$5, does it matter which five dollars in your wallet you use to pay him? We owe God one day in seven. Why should it matter which 24-hour period is used to settle the account? But is that straight thinking? You see, we aren't settling an account; we're keeping an appointment. And how can two people meet without agreeing on

the day?

Remember the burning bush? Was the ground holy the day before? Was it holy the day after? No. It's God's presence that makes a *place* sacred. And it's His presence that makes a *day* sacred. God put His presence into the seventh day- not the day before or the day after. That's why you receive a blessing from worshiping on God's day that you can never get from worshipping Him on any other day.

We come now to the big question that demands an answer. Since the Bible is so plain that the seventh day is the Sabbath, why do most Christians keep the first day of the week? Who changed it? When and how was it done? That is the subject of the next lesson.