

Five Myths About the Lord's Day

It's an often-heard question: "Why do you keep Saturday for Sunday?" As questions go, this one is pretty simple and straightforward. So too is the usual response: "There is an abundance of Scripture in which God declares the seventh day of the week is His holy day. The sacredness of the seventh day, which we call Saturday, is well established. However, if there can be found in the Bible even one passage stating that God says He has changed His sacred day, all controversy and doubt regarding which day is God's holy day would be removed."

Although not intended to put anyone on the defensive, such a response usually does. Why? Because in truth most Christians have never studied for themselves what the Bible has to say about which day is God's chosen day of worship. Rather, they have relied upon religious leaders to tell them which day. As a result, typically there are several explanations offered as justification for choosing to worship God on a day other than one that He chose, the seventh day.

1) The Lord's Day?

The major text offered by many in defense of choosing to worship on the first day of the week is John's declaration in Revelation 1:10: "I was in the Spirit on the Lord's Day." Interestingly, John never says what day he is referencing. So why would it be assumed he meant the first day? Indeed, not one mention of the first day in God's Word suggests that it represents a change in God's original directive, "but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord your God" (Exodus 20:10). Any assumption that the "Lord's Day" refers to the first day of



the week ignores biblical evidence of only two occasions that the Lord's name is associated with a day. Matthew 12:8 and Mark 2:28 are the only two passages that connect the Lord with a specific day. And in each case the Sabbath day is the day specified.

2) Resurrection holiday?

Another popular myth is the keeping of the first day in honor of the resurrection of Jesus. As added proof of their claim, some observe that the fact Jesus appeared to His disciples several times on the first day, after His resurrection, is significant. But a careful study reveals that in not one of those accounts of first-day encounters does God's Word tell us that Jesus gave instructions to now worship God on the first day.

3) Keeping them all?

In the absence of any biblical support, some fall back on: "As Christians we keep every day holy." It certainly sounds pious enough, but such thinking ignores the plain Word of God. Exodus 20:10 and Exodus 23:12 tell believers

that six days are to be spent laboring, but on the “seventh-day” there is to be no ordinary work. Notice it doesn’t say choose one day in seven. The Bible is clear. God intended that His designated seventh day be kept holy. Furthermore, we find in Leviticus 23:3, 7, 35, and Numbers 28:25 that on a holy day common work was not to be done. So if every day were kept holy, then the redeemed could work no days of the week. Without work, it’s not possible to meet the needs of the family. And 1 Timothy 5:8 is clear on this point, such behavior would mark one worse than an infidel.

4) Sabbath as a philosophical rest?

Yet another teaching concerning disregarding God’s Sabbath is wrapped in the thought that “the Sabbath rest is not about a day, but about resting in Jesus because of the salvation God makes available through Him, ‘For by grace you have been saved through faith’” (Ephesians 2:8). Although this may feel like a solid basis for departing from God’s commandments, where do we find the Biblical authority for denying the power of the fourth commandment? Besides, in Matthew 11:28 Jesus says “Come unto me and I will give you rest” (KJV). He does not say, “I will be your rest.” Keeping the Sabbath in no way suggests salvation earned by human strength and power. It speaks to acceptance of what Jesus did for humanity on Calvary.

5) Should we be judging the days?

Finally, Paul’s words in Colossians 2:16 are held out as justification for choosing to worship God when we choose. “Let no one judge you” is offered as a biblical comeback. While it is true we are not to judge one another, it is clear from God’s Word that as the Righteous Judge He has that prerogative. Just as in an earthly courtroom to ignore a judge’s orders brings consequences, so too in the last judgment will those who have chosen to ignore God’s orders through disobedience discover the dreadful harvest of dire consequences. As Hebrews 5:9 reminds us, Jesus is the “author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him.”

Truthfully, God’s people do not take Saturday for Sunday. We take God at His Word. He has promised in Isaiah 58:13, 14 that when we honor Him by worshipping Him on His holy day, we shall find our delight in Him, while we ride upon the high places of the earth. That, we take as gospel.